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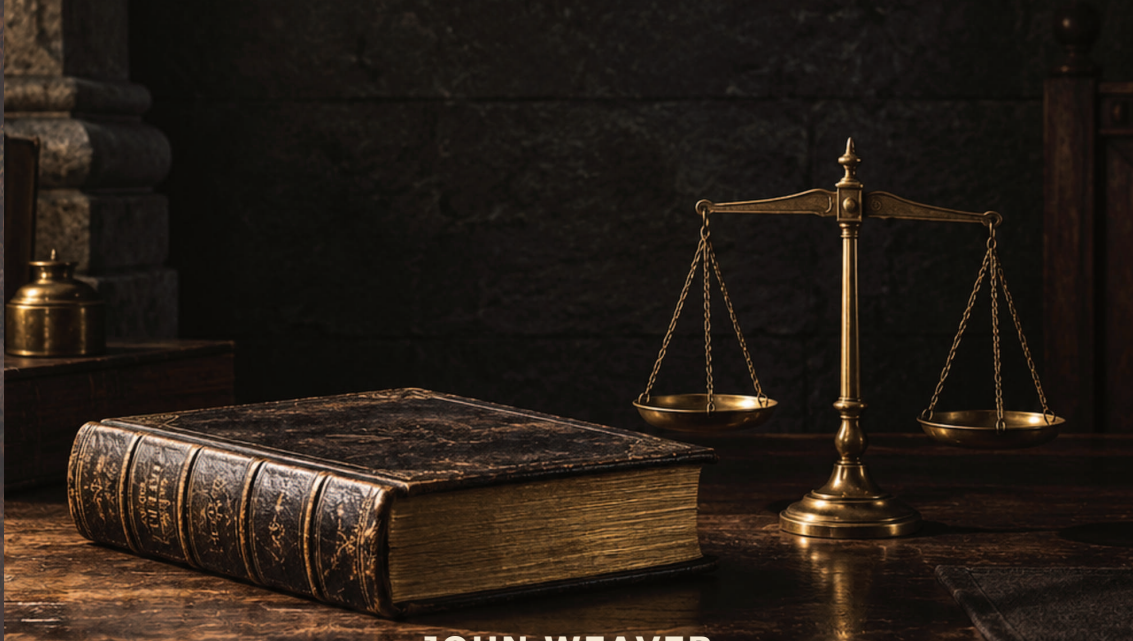
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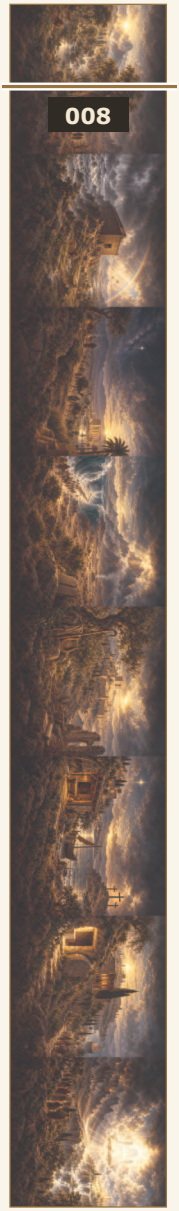
"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

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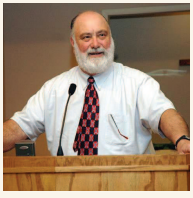
For he is the minister of God to thee for good.

ROMANS 13:4, EXCERPT

What limits and duties does Scripture place upon civil authority? This collection considers magistracy, Romans 13, biblical law, and the responsibilities of rulers and those they govern. John Weaver presents his theological arguments through sermons, scriptural exposition, and historical illustrations, inviting readers to examine public authority under the standard of God's Word.

“Nowhere in the Bible does God commend tyranny. In fact, the Bible condemns tyranny.”

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Civil Government

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Civil Government: Magistracy, Authority, and Romans 13

John Weaver

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CHAPTER 1

The Warrior Priest

February 2, 1997

Introduction: The Believer's Priesthood

I hope—genuinely hope—that some of you will say, “Brother Weaver, some of this material sounds familiar,” because I preached along this theme here four years ago. I am preaching this message today for three particular reasons: first, because I want to include it in this series; second, because some of you have probably already forgotten what you heard four years ago; and third, because many of you have never heard this at all. I want to make sure that this is included in the study on the biblical doctrine of war.

In 1 Peter 2:5, we read, “You also as lively or living stones are built up a spiritual house and holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” I want you to note verse 5: “You also as lively or living stones are built up a spiritual house.” Note this next phrase: “a holy priesthood.” Then, in verse 9, he says, “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that you should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

Revelation 1:5–6 says, “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth, unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” The Bible says that Christ has made us kings and priests unto our God.

Definition and Divine Appointment of Priests

I have entitled this message “Warrior Priest.” I think you will understand when you see the context of what I am dealing with. Let me begin by giving you a definition of priest: a priest is a duly authorized minister in sacred things.

In order to become a priest, one must be chosen by God. Hebrews 5:4 says, “And no man taketh this honor unto himself.” In other words, a priest is one who is chosen by God. You do not become a priest by self-appointment, by election of the people, or by political influence; rather, you must be chosen of God.

The priesthood is a divine institution, and therefore the priests were divinely appointed. Not only were priests divinely chosen and appointed in the Bible, but their duties were divinely appointed as well.

Simply because one happened to be a priest did not mean that he could do whatever he wanted. Aaron was the high priest, and only the high priest could enter into the Holy of Holies, and that only once a year, and not without the shedding of blood. The other priests could not enter into the Holy of Holies. There were Levitical priests who had duties and functions that the Aaronic priest did not have. Moreover, the Aaronic priest had duties and functions that the standard, or average, Levitical priest did not have.

Old Testament Foundation: A Kingdom of Priests

Scripture specifically speaks of our priesthood in 1 Peter 2:5, where we are called a holy priesthood, and in verse 9, where we are called a royal priesthood. Moreover, in Revelation 1:6, 5:10, and 20:6, the Bible also speaks of our priesthood.

The truth that God's people are to be a kingdom of priests began in the Old Testament. Exodus 19:5-6 says, "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." Thus, Old Testament Israel was to be a kingdom of priests.

Adam's Guardianship

We are now in the New Testament priesthood era, and as New Testament priests, we have certain duties and responsibilities unto God. One of those, according to 1 Peter 2 and verse 5, is that we are to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto God. According to 1 Peter chapter 2 and verse 9, we are to, as priests, show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. According to Hebrews 13, verse 15, as priests, we are to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto God, that is the fruit of our lips through the Lord Jesus Christ. In Romans 12, verse 1, as New Testament priests, we are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service.

The Warrior Priest Function Introduced

You ask, "Well, are those all of our duties and responsibilities?" Well, of course not. There are many others. Let me name a couple in particular. First of all, as priests, we have the ministry of intercession. That is, we pray not only for ourselves, but we also pray for others as well. But there is another particular function that most people never entertain in their minds. That function is what is known as a warrior priest. This is not a carnal function, but rather it is a spiritual function—a function that has not been delineated from the Word of God on a regular basis. And so the warrior priest is indeed a spiritual function.

In order to understand this concept, we have to go clear back to the beginning. We will first consider the historical context of the warrior-priest, beginning with Adam's guardianship. We are going clear back to the Garden of Eden and looking at Adam's guardianship so that you can understand this function. In Genesis

chapter 2 and verse 15 we read, “And the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden to dress it and to keep it.” What did God do? God created Adam, and he placed Adam in the garden to dress it and to keep it.

You see, Eden was originally organized as a sanctuary, and in that sanctuary it was a temple in which God could meet with the creatures that he had created in his image. In this sanctuary, God placed Adam, and he gave him two particular functions.

Adam's Guardianship and Failure

Look in verse 15 again. He put him into the Garden of Eden, first, to dress it, and second, to keep it. The Hebrew word for “dress” is abad, A-B-A-D, literally meaning to serve, tend, or till. Adam therefore had the function of serving, tending, or tilling the garden. But that is not all. The Bible says he was not only to dress it, but also to keep it. The word “keep” is the Hebrew word shamar, S-H-A-M-A-R, meaning to keep, guard, and protect. Please understand this: the word “keep” means to guard and protect.

For instance, if I happened to have a thousand-dollar bill—which I do not have, and I do not think they are even in existence anymore—and gave it to Dr. Bracey, saying, “Doc, would you keep this for me?” what would I mean by “keep”? Guard it and protect it. I would not be telling him to spend it or throw it away. I would be asking him to guard and protect it. Adam therefore had a responsibility not only to serve, tend, and till the garden, but also to guard and protect it. What happened? Adam failed to guard and protect the garden.

The serpent came in and deceived his wife, and Adam failed to protect his wife. According to Genesis chapter 3, God sent Adam out of the garden. Genesis 3:23 says, “Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.” He retained one function but lost the other. He still had to tend the ground. But verse 24 says, “So he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” Adam lost his guardianship. When he sinned, disobeyed, and failed to keep and guard what God had committed to his charge, God

literally defrocked him. He took his guardianship away and sent him out of the garden.

So, he forfeited his position and his privileges by his disobedience. I want to show you several passages where the same Hebrew word, "shamar," is used so that you can understand the importance and significance of it.

Everyone knows the story of Cain and Abel, how Cain murdered his brother Abel. In Genesis 4:9, "And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother?" And he said, "I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?" Now, the word "keeper" here is the word "shamar." Literally, what Cain said is this: "Am I my brother's bodyguard? Am I my brother's protector? Am I my brother's guardian? Do I have time just to run around and guard and protect my brother?" So very obviously, in this context, the word "keep" means more than to hold. It means to guard and to protect.

In Genesis 28:15, God is speaking to Jacob. God says, "And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places where thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land, for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." God tells Jacob, "And, behold, I am with thee and will keep thee in all places where thou goest." Now, what does the word "keep" there mean? God says, "Jacob, I want to guard you. I want to protect you everywhere you go. I'm going to make sure that nothing happens to you." So the word "keep" means to guard or protect.

In Deuteronomy 4:9, note what God says: "Only take heed to thyself and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thine heart all the days of thy life, but teach them thy sons and thy sons' sons." Note the warning: "Only take heed to thyself and keep," that is, guard and protect your soul diligently. How do you guard and protect your soul? By keeping in mind the plain teachings of the Word of God and communicating those teachings to your children and to your children's children as well.

Here is Adam's guardianship. We find that God had constituted Adam a warrior priest. Adam failed to protect his charge, and thus God defrocked him, kicked him out of the garden, and gave his

protecting privileges to the cherubim. Now, let us continue with the Levitical guardianship, because God chose the Levites to serve Him. These two terms, working and guarding, appear very frequently in the lives of the Levites.

The Levitical Guardianship: Warrior Priests in Action

In fact, this theme is developed throughout the Bible. In Numbers 1:53, God says: “But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel, and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of the testimony.” The Levites were to keep the charge of the tabernacle of the testimony. Where were the Levites to camp? They were to camp surrounding the tabernacle. God charged these Levites with keeping, or guarding, or protecting the tabernacle. They were appointed to stand around it so that no wrath would come upon the congregation of the children of Israel. Their service involved both working and guarding the holy place entrusted to them.

In verse 53, he says, “And the Levites shall keep the charge.” The Hebrew word for “charge” there is mishmareth, and it literally means a watch, a sentry post, or an act of custody. So, around this tabernacle, the Levites were the guards, the sentries who were protecting and guarding the tabernacle.

The word “charge,” as you may have well guessed, is a military term: “Keep the charge of the tabernacle.” In Numbers chapter 3, we see how thoroughly this is developed in the Bible and how serious God was when he gave the Levites this guardian-protector position. “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest; that they may minister unto him. And they shall keep his charge.” That is, they were to guard and protect his charge. Who was to protect the high priest? The Levites.

“And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.” They were to keep all the instruments of the tabernacle and “the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle.” The charge was the sentry

post. “And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons.” They were wholly given to him out of all the children of Israel. Aaron and his sons were appointed to wait on their priest’s office, but “the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.”

Who was doing the killing? The Levites. Who were given the charge? The Levites. Whom were they to protect? Not only the tabernacle; they were to protect Aaron and his sons. God said that if a stranger came near, that stranger was to be killed. Who would do the killing? Very obviously, it would be the Levites.

This is not simply being made up. Look first at verses 32 and 38 of the same chapter. Watch verse 32, because you will come back to it in a little while: “And Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, shall be chief over the chief of the Levites and have the oversight of them that keep,” or guard or protect, “the charge,” the sentry post, “of the sanctuary.”

The Levites had a chief, but the chief of the Levites had someone over him: Eleazar, the son of Aaron. These Levites were given to guarding and protecting not only Aaron but the sanctuary as well. Now look at verse 38: “But those that encamp toward the tabernacle toward the east, even before the tabernacle of the congregation eastward, shall be Moses and Aaron and his sons,” keeping, or guarding, “the charge of the sanctuary for the charge of the children of Israel, and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.”

That is two times God has said it. If only the Levites are surrounding the tabernacle and the stranger who comes near is to be put to death, then the Levites are the ones executing the stranger. If you were alive in the Old Testament days and thought you could run into the tabernacle unannounced and uninvited to speak with Aaron or one of his sons, you were mistaken. You would end up dead. In the days of the temple, if you thought you could simply run into the temple and do your thing, you were mistaken. You would end up dead, because these Levites had a charge and responsibility to protect Aaron and his sons, and also the tabernacle.

Now, I want us to look in chapter 4 and verse 3. I'm going to read several verses and then I'm going to call your attention to a special fact. Look in Numbers 4 and verse 3. He is now telling how the

Levites are to be numbered. He says in verse 3, "From 30 years old and upward, even until 50 years old, all that enter into the host to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation." Now, I want you to note that phrase "to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation." Now look in chapter 4 and verse 23. Once again, he says the same thing, essentially. "From 30 years old and upward until 50 years old, shalt thou number them all that enter in." Now he says "to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation." To do the work in the tabernacle of congregation, look in chapter 4 in verse 30, "From 30 years old and upward, even unto 50 years old, shalt thou number them."

"Everyone that entered into the service to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation." Isn't that interesting? I'm going to show it to you one more time, whole chapter 4, but look in your Bibles, Numbers chapter 8 and look at verse 24. Numbers 8 verse 24. Worded a little differently, but it's the same principle. Numbers 8 verse 24, "This is it that belongeth unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation." Now, we have read "to wait upon the service" or "to do the work." How many of you have marginal references and there is a Hebrew translation in your margin of what it means "to do the work of the tabernacle"?

Who has it in their Bible? Anybody have it in their little margin? I have it in my Bible. Do you have it in yours, Don? Oh, did you hear that? Say it a little louder, Don. The Hebrew says they are to war the warfare. That's what the Hebrew is when it's translated here "to do the work of the tabernacle." It's "to war the warfare." So God then has appointed these Levites as warrior priests literally to war the warfare. Now I'm going to go further and show you once again this protecting or guarding that the Levites were to do. Look in Numbers chapter 8 and verse 26. We're still talking about the Levites. In fact, verse 25 says, "And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service thereof and shall serve no more." That is, they shall cease doing the warfare. Watch verse 26, "But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the charge, and thou shalt do no service."

"Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge." The Levites could be relieved of their warfare when they reached fifty, but they still had certain guarding and protecting responsibilities, which will be explained later.

We are still talking about the Levites. Looking back at verse 2, we read, "And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi." Then, in verse 3: "And they," that is, Levi, "shall keep," or guard, "thy charge," or sentry post, "and the sentry post of all the tabernacle. Only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they nor ye also die." There were limitations that the Levites had. "And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep," that is, guard, "the sentry post of the tabernacle of the congregation for all the service of the tabernacle. And a stranger shall not come nigh unto you."

Notice verse 5: "And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary and the charge of the altar, that there be no wrath anymore upon the children of Israel. And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel to you. They are given as a gift for the Lord to do the service," or to do the warfare, "of the tabernacle of the congregation."

"Therefore, thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for everything of the altar and within the veil, and ye shall serve. And I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift, and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death. And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Behold, I have also given thee the charge of mine heave offerings of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel, and to thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons by an ordinance forever." Verse 7 repeats, "And the stranger that cometh near to thee is to be put to death." Who was to put him to death? Once again, the Levites.

How many times does God have to say something to make it true? Once. If something is repeated over and over, it is done so for emphasis.

That is three specific times God has told us exactly the same things. So God is telling us that these Levites, these Levitical priests, had a warrior function. They went around armed. I will show you more later.

Look in your Bibles now to the book of Numbers, chapter 31, verse 30. Once again, this shows you the word "shamar," which means to guard and protect, and how God took care of these Levites as they executed their office. He says, "Of the children of Israel's half, thou shalt take one portion of fifty, of the persons, of the beeves, of the asses, of the flocks, of all manner of beasts, and give them unto the Levites, who keep," who guard, who protect, "the sentry post of the tabernacle of the Lord."

In verse 47, he says the same thing: "Even of the children of Israel's half, Moses took one portion of fifty, both of man and beast, and gave them unto the Levites, who kept," or guarded, "the charge of the tabernacle of the Lord, as the Lord commanded Moses."

Now turn to 1 Samuel, chapter 7, verse 1. Here is the passage that makes exceedingly clear the guarding and protecting responsibilities of the priest.

You remember that the children of Israel had a war with the Philistines and were defeated. In fact, they were so apostate that they said, "Let us send forth and fetch the Ark of the Covenant that it may save us," not the God of the Ark. They were treating the Ark much like modern-day folks treat a rabbit's foot or a four-leaf clover: "It's going to bring us good luck." Of course, there is no such thing as luck in a world ruled by God, and the Ark did not save them. The Israelites were defeated, and the Ark was captured by the Philistines. It was taken to the house of Dagon, their god, and Dagon fell over in front of the Ark.

The next day they came in and picked him back up. The next day he fell over again, and they set him back up. On the third day, they went in, and his hands were broken off, his neck was broken off, and that was not all: God smote the lords of the Philistines with emerods.

Whatever happened, the Philistines did not want any more of the Ark of the Covenant. They kept moving that Ark, and finally all the Philistines said, "Let's send this jewel back. We don't want it anymore." So they got a cart with heifers that had never been broken to yoke. They put the Ark on it, and sure enough, those heifers went straight to the land of Israel, taking it right back where it was to be.

In 1 Samuel 7, verse 1, the Ark comes to Kirjath-jearim. In fact, look at chapter 6, verse 21: “And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord; come ye down and fetch it up to you.” Now watch verse 1: “And the men of Kirjath-jearim came and fetched up the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill,” and “sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord.”

What do you think Eleazar was doing? He was guarding it. He was protecting it. He did not want anyone to come back and try to steal it or to claim it. He did not want anything to happen to it. Eleazar was sanctified to guard or protect.

Armed Guards in the Temple and Historical Examples

Now, let me tell you something that may shock you. Did you know that in the Old Testament, in the tabernacle and in the temple, there were armed guards at the doors? Armed guards. These Levites protected. You may say, “Brother, you’ll have to show me that in the Bible.” Turn to 2 Kings, chapter 12. Look in verse 9. Jehoiada the priest was collecting money for the temple. In fact, let’s read verse 9.

“But Jehoiada the priest took a chest and bored a hole in the lid of it and set it beside the altar on the right side, as one cometh into the house of the Lord. And the priests that kept the door,” that is, the priests that guarded the door, “put therein all the money that was brought into the house of the Lord.” Notice that: there were priests, armed priests, guarding the doors, and anybody who brought money put it in that chest.

In 2 Chronicles 34:9, we find another illustration of the same fact: “And when they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim and of all the remnant of Israel and of all Judah and Benjamin, and they returned to Jerusalem.” The Levites kept, or guarded, the doors.

That throws a little different light on what David said in Psalm 84:10: “I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.” He was saying, “I’d rather be one

of those armed guards who did nothing but stand at the door of the temple and protect it than to dwell in the house or the tents of wickedness."

In 1 Chronicles 23, we have a listing of the duties of the Levitical priests. This passage is absolutely amazing to me. I remember reading it about five or six years ago, and all of a sudden it jumped out at me. I thought, "How many times have I read this and have never seen this truth?" If you want to know what the functions of the Levitical priests were, here they are listed. Beginning with verse 27: "For by the last words of David the Levites were numbered from twenty years old and above, because their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the Lord in the courts and in the chambers and in the purifying of holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God." David is now going to delineate the duties of the Levites.

Here is what they did: "Both for the showbread, and for the fine flour for the meal offering, and for the unleavened cakes, and for that which is baked in the pan, for that which is fried, and for all manner of measure and size." That was not all. These Levites were also singers, and they had to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord. Likewise, they offered music morning and evening.

"Moreover, they had to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the Lord in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set days by number, according to the order commanded of them continually before the Lord." In addition to those functions, they had to "keep"—that is, guard and protect—"the charge, the sentry post of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the sentry post of the holy place, and the sentry post of the sons of Aaron, their brethren, in the service of the house of the Lord."

Yes, they sang and praised God. That was not all. They helped with the meal offerings and with the offerings that were burnt. Beside that, they had the charge of guarding and protecting the tabernacle, Aaron, and all the holy things.

Now, let me show you something that may set your mind aflame and get you to thinking. Turn to 2 Chronicles, chapter 23.

I have been preaching for the last fourteen weeks on the biblical doctrine of war, showing you many things from the Bible about war. This one truth ought forever to settle something in your mind. I spent four weeks on the concept of holy war, showing that war was not evil and sinful in and of itself. Many times in the Bible, God not only commanded war but engaged in war Himself. In fact, I showed you the Scripture that says God is a warrior.

Many people think weapons are somehow hurtful or sinful in themselves. That is not so. A few years ago, when the federal government went against the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas, and literally murdered those people, burning them to death, one thing they said was that weapons were stored in that building. How horrifying.

What they did not tell you was that a couple of those men had a federal firearms license. They made money by buying weapons, reconditioning and reworking them, and selling them; everything they did was perfectly legal and lawful. They also did not tell you that David Koresh had invited the ATF to come in, check all the weapons, and make sure there were no illegal weapons, but the ATF refused to come in.

I am not taking up for the Branch Davidians when I say that. By that I mean their theology. I do not even know what all they believed, and I certainly would not agree, I am sure, with their theology, because they were a branch, or a break-off, of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But the point is this: the news media tried to horrify Christians everywhere by saying that this church—they never even called it a church, but called it a compound—had weapons in it.

Let me show you something that may shock you. I want to show you what was in the temple of the Lord: 2 Chronicles chapter 23, beginning with verse 6.

Josiah is being crowned. He is the boy who is seven years old, and his grandmother, Athaliah, had murdered all of her grandchildren. She was on the throne. Jehoiada, the high priest, was making sure that the king was not murdered. Here is what Jehoiada, the high priest, says: “But let none come into the house of the Lord, save the

priests. And they that minister of the Levites, they shall go in, for they are holy, but all the people shall keep the watch of the Lord. And the Levites shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand, and whosoever else cometh into the house, he shall be put to death. But be ye with the king when he cometh in and when he goeth out."

Jehoiada says, "We're going to have the Levites in the temple with their weapons. They're going to be surrounding the young king. You army men, you stay outside and guard the outside of the temple. If anybody tries to come in here, the Levites will kill him."

Look very carefully at verse 7: "And the Levites shall compass the king round about, every man with his" what? Were the Levites armed? Of course they had their own weapons. Why? Because they had a charge.

Moreover, Jehoiada the priest delivered to the captains of hundreds—we are talking about the army now—spears and bucklers and shields that had been King David's, which were in the house of God. Where did they store the weapons? In the temple. If you understand that the Levites were supposed to be warrior priests, and that God had given them a ministry of guarding and protecting, then it makes perfect sense that they had weapons and kept weapons in the temple.

There are a multitude of Scriptures I could show you on the word "shamar." These are sufficient. I want you to understand that the word means to guard and to protect.

New Testament Continuity: Captains of the Temple

I want to get into the New Testament, because it is impossible to understand the New Testament without having a concept of the Old Testament warrior-priest function. For instance, turn in your Bible to the book of Acts, chapter 4.

If I were to ask you who the Pharisees were, most of you could tell me. If I asked who the Sadducees were, most of you could tell me that as well. If I asked who the Herodians were, some might be able to answer, and probably some of you could tell me. We know about

the scribes and the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians. But there is a group that most people know nothing about.

Look in Acts 4 and verse 1: "And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them." Who is this captain of the temple? There happens to be more than one captain of the temple. Look at Acts chapter 5, beginning with verse 24: "Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow." Skip down to verse 26: "Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence." Why? "For they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned." Did the captain and his officers have the authority to do violence? Yes. Were they armed? Yes. Why did they bring these disciples without violence?

Only because they knew they were outnumbered. They said, “We’re afraid if we start something, we’re going to be the ones that end up dead. They’ll stone us.” So far, we have read two passages, Acts 4 and Acts 5. We have seen that these captains of the temple were armed and had authority to use weapons.

Now look in Luke 22:4: “And he”—this is Judas—“went his way and communed with the chief priests and captains,” plural, “how he might betray him unto them.” So there was more than one captain of the temple.

In verse 52 of the same passage, Jesus said “unto the chief priests and the captains,” plural, “the captains of the temple, and to the elders who were come out against him, Be ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves?” Did these captains come out against Christ armed? Yes.

Did they have authority to use those weapons? Yes. Jesus did not deny their authority to have or use them. He said, “Why are you coming against me? I ain’t done anything.” It is just like today. We see a policeman walking down the street with a .357 on his side, and most of us do not question whether he has authority to wear that pistol.

But if you are walking down the street, turn a corner, and see a cop pull that pistol out, throw it in your face, and point it between

your eyes, the first thing you will say is, “Why are you pointing that thing at me?” You are not questioning whether he has authority to have or use it. You are asking why he is pointing it at you. You have not done anything. That is what Christ said: “Why are you coming out as against a thief? I’m not a thief. You don’t need weapons against me.” They had weapons, and they had authority to use those weapons.

The word “magistrates” appears five times in Acts 16. To save time, I’m not going to read all these verses; I’m just going to point them out and point out the word. In verse 20, “And they brought them to the magistrates.” Verse 22 says, “And the multitude rose up together against them and the magistrates.” Verse 35 reads, “And when it was day, the magistrates”; verse 36 continues, “and the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates”; and verse 38 says, “and the sergeants told these words unto the magistrates.” The word appears five times in this short passage.

The Greek word for “magistrates” is “strategos.” And someone tell me what English word we get from it, okay? We get our English word “strategy.” Do you realize that strategy is a military term? “Strategos” comes straight from the Greek word “strata,” which means army.

Now, let me tell you something interesting. If you will take a Greek lexicon, which is much like a dictionary, and look up the Greek word "strategos," you are going to find an interesting thing. The word "strategos" means a general, a governor, a commandant, a military officer, or the chief of the Levites. Do you remember that verse I told you about back in Numbers 3 and verse 32, that you would see again? Numbers chapter 3 and verse 32 says, "And Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, shall be chief over the chief of the Levites and have the oversight of them that guard the sentry post of the sanctuary."

And so what does the word "strategos" mean? It means a military officer, a commandant, a governor, or the chief of the Levites. Now, the interesting thing is this: the captains of the temple in the New Testament are no one else other than the Levites who guarded the Old Testament temple and tabernacle. They are the same people. That is why they are there around the temple in the New Testament.

Now let me show you something. Look in your Bibles to Psalm 42. We are not going to read the psalm; we are going to read the heading of it. The heading says, "David's zeal to serve God in the temple," and then under that it says, "To the chief musician, Maschil," which means an ode or a song, "to the chief musician, Maschil, for the sons of Korah." What does that mean? It means David wrote Psalm 42, which is a song for the sons of Korah to sing. The Levites had the responsibility of singing to the Lord morning and evening, so he wrote this psalm for them to sing.

Do you remember who Korah was? You may not, so turn back in your Bibles to the book of Numbers, chapter 16, and look there, beginning with verse 1. There were three men who united in rebellion against God, Moses, and Aaron. Who were they? Numbers 16, verse 1, says, "Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi." What tribe was Korah of? Levi. Then there was Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben. Dathan and Abiram were Reubenites. Korah was a Levite.

Consider the word “Korah” in verse 1. He was the son of Izhar, who is the son of Kohath, who is the son of Levi. Sometimes in the Bible you will see people listed as the Korahites and the Kohathites. All that is, is a family of the Levites: the family from Korah and the family from Kohath.

I am explaining this because somebody is going to say, “Now wait a minute, Brother Weaver, I read Numbers chapter 16. I know what happened. Moses came along and told the people, ‘Separate yourself from these evil men.’ Most of the people did. Then Moses got on his knees and prayed, ‘Lord, I pray that a new thing will happen. I pray that the earth will open up and these folks will go down alive in hell.’ And guess what? The earth opened up, and down went Dathan and Abiram and Korah and all that were with them.”

But wait a minute: if Korah and his family died, how could David write Psalm 42 for the sons of Korah to sing? Look at Numbers chapter 26 and verse 11. We need to read the whole story. This is talking about the death of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Watch what the Bible says. Verse 10 says, “And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died,

what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men, and they became a sign. Notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not."

How did the children of Korah not die? Because when Moses said, "Separate yourself from these men," the children of Korah left their father and went with Moses.

Now turn in your Bibles to 1 Chronicles 9. I did all that to show you that these Korahites are Levitical singers; they are Levites. Remember that. Let us see what some of these Korahites did. Notice verse 19. We are talking about the Korahites, who were sons of Korah, who were Levites. Verse 19 says, "And Shallum, the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brethren of the house of his father," there it is, the Korahites, "were over the work of the service."

Watch now, "keepers of the gates of the tabernacle," or the doors of the thresholds, "and their fathers being over the host of the Lord, were keepers of the entry." Now, what did some of these Korahites do? They guarded the gates. They guarded the threshold. They were some of the Levitical guards. Now, watch this, "and their fathers being over the host of the Lord." Someone tell me what the host of the Lord was? The army. So some of the Levitical priests then were leaders in the army. That's not all.

I want you to look at this. Turn in your Bibles to 1 Chronicles chapter 12. 1 Chronicles chapter 12, here is a listing of some of David's mighty men. Now these were men that were valued in warfare. Let's see who some of them were. Let's read verses 1 and 2. "Now these are they that came to David to Ziklag, while he kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish. And they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war." Did you get that? They were among the mighty men, helpers of the war.

"They were armed with bows and could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows out of a bow." Now, watch this. Let's see who some of these mighty men were, these skillful fighters. All right, skip down, if you would, to verse 6. Here are some of them named. There was Elkanah, and Jesiah, and Azriel, and Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korahites. Who were the Korahites?

They were Levites. They were Levitical priests. And here they are listed as David's mighty men of war.

I want you to turn in your Bibles to 2 Chronicles chapter 15. 2 Chronicles, and hang on with me because I'm going to try to tie everything together for you. 2 Chronicles chapter 15. I want to show you what happens when a priest fails to keep his charge. OK. Watch closely, 2 Chronicles chapter 15. Let's begin reading with verse 1. "And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded, and he went out to meet Asa and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin."

Consequences of Priestly Failure and the Church's Mandate

"The Lord is with you while ye be with him. If ye seek him, he will be found of you. But if ye forsake him, he will forsake you."

"Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God and without a teaching priest and without law. But when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Israel and sought him, he was found of them. In those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in. But great vexations were upon the inhabitants of the countries, and nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city. For God did vex them with all adversity."

First of all, in verse 3, he says, "Now for a long season Israel has been without the true God." How can a people be without the true God? Here is how: they did not have a teaching priest who taught the law of God. They abdicated their responsibilities of guarding and protecting the Word of God and the people of God. Since the people did not have the Word of God, they did not have anyone to teach them the Word of God. They were without the true God because God only makes himself known through his Word.

Now let me show you the result. In verse 5: "In those times"—what times? In those times when they did not have the law of God, and when they did not have people who taught the law of God—"there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries,

and nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city, for God did vex them with all adversity."

What happened when the priests abdicated their position? Confusion, turmoil, trouble, and war.

This has happened in my lifetime. When I was a boy, every year my father used to take us down to Miami, Florida, for a two-week vacation. Because we had relatives there, we would visit and stay with them. We lived out on a farm. When my father and his whole house left for Miami for two weeks, the doors and windows were left unlocked. When we came back, everything was exactly as we had left it. No one bothered us. Go off today and leave your house unlocked, and you will consider yourself blessed if you even have a house standing. Leave a car on the interstate with car trouble for a few hours, and when you return, you may not have tires or even a radiator. People steal everything.

Drive-by shootings, murders, rapes, and thefts make us say, “Man, this country is going to the dogs.” Do you know why? There is no true teaching of God and the law of God, and we have great vexation and great trouble. Every time a priest abdicates his position, there is trouble.

Paul dresses down Israel as a nation for forsaking her priestly function of guarding and protecting. Dealing primarily with the Levites, priests, and teachers, he says: “Thou therefore, who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law, but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.”

What good has it done you to know the law of God and know the truth? You have not obeyed it yourself.

Now, let us put this in the Christian, or New Testament, context. What happened when Adam failed to keep his charge? God

defrocked him; God took it away from him. What happened when Old Testament Israel failed to keep her charge? God defrocked her and took it away from her as a nation.

Jesus, speaking to the leaders, says: “Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, and whosoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”

"And when the chief priests and the Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them." They got the message. He said, You lost it. So what do we have in the new covenant? In the new covenant in Jesus Christ, it is Christ who has made us kings and priests unto God. We have inherited the priesthood. That means we as Christians have the responsibility to lead the world in righteousness, to protect ourselves, and to protect others by holy, godly living in obedience to King Jesus, who is the great high priest.

Jesus Christ himself in Matthew 28 looked at his disciples and said, "Go into all the world and make disciples," and "baptize them." That's not all. What else did he say? "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I've commanded you." What are we supposed to be doing? We're supposed to be duplicating ourselves as warrior priests by teaching people, after they've been converted by the grace of God, how they're to stand and how they're to fight.

Have you forgotten 1 Timothy 3, verse 15? The Bible says that the church is the pillar and the ground of truth. Where is the truth today? The truth is reposited in the church because we have the Word of God. It's our responsibility to teach and to establish the truth of God. The best way to protect and guard the truth is to establish it squarely in every sphere and in every area of life. We must declare it, pronounce it, enunciate it, insist upon it, and seek to establish it. That is our mandate.

The Church as Warrior Priests: Armor and Offensive Mission

Everyone can probably tell you what Ephesians 6:10–18 is all about. You remember what Paul wrote: “Put on the whole armor of God,” and then he described the helmet, the breastplate, the shield, the shoes, and the sword. The interesting thing is that when most people talk about the armor Paul mentions in Ephesians 6, they try to equate it with a Roman soldier. Paul had no such thing in his mind when he wrote Ephesians 6. You say, “How do you know?” Because Paul knew the Word of God. If you study Exodus 28, Isaiah 59:17–21, and Isaiah 61:10, you will find that what Paul had in mind was the military uniform of the high priest. In 1 Thessalonians 5:8 and Romans 13:12, this armament is called the armor of light. In other words, it is a righteous armor. It is a godly armor.

What most of us have forgotten is that the Bible pictures Jesus Christ as a great warrior priest who leads His people against the enemy and defeats them. Read Psalm 110. Read Revelation 19. Jesus Christ is the great High Priest leading an army of warrior priests. One of our biggest problems in America is that, as Christians, we have retreated from and abdicated our position as warrior priests. We have left it. We do not fight for anything. We do not stand for anything. Pornography comes in, and nobody lifts up a voice. New dancing clubs come, and no one says anything. We have abdicated our positions.

Remember what Jesus told Peter in Matthew 16:18. He said, “Verily, I say unto thee, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock,” that is, Peter’s confession, “and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Gates in the Bible speak of authority. That is where the courts were held, in the gates. That is where the rulers sat. Suppose we are in this room. This room is made of concrete blocks, all except the doors, which are made of wood. If we were going to defend this building from the inside, where would the weakest point of our defense be? The doors. That is very obvious. So here you have a walled city. What is the weakest point? Gates.

Now let me ask you a question. Listen to what Jesus said: “Thou art Peter and upon this rock I'll build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” It is not that hell is attacking the church.

No. The church is at the gates of hell, attacking hell itself. You see that? The problem is, dear friend, that we have all developed a defensive posture. Our attitude is, “I'll leave them alone if they'll leave me alone.” But even if they leave us alone, what they do is still wicked and wrong and contrary to the Word of God. We are still to lift up our voices like a trumpet and do everything within our power to stop wickedness and ungodliness. That is the power we have as warrior priests.

Let this sink down in your mind. James 4 and verse 7 says, “Submit yourselves unto God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” What is the most powerful leader that the wicked and ungodly have? The devil. What does God say? If we submit to Him and then resist evil, what will evil do? Evil will flee. If the head honcho of the evil forces will flee when we resist, what will all the other underlings do?

The trouble is that we are not resisting. We say, “Well, if they leave us alone, we'll leave them alone,” and we let them go their way and do their thing. Lord willing, in the next few weeks I am going to bring a message on what our attitude should be toward ungodly rulers. I had a verse jump out at me as I was reading through my Bible this past week, and I thought, “Man, that's strange.” I checked the word out, and you will be amazed at what the Bible says.

The pattern I have just told you is repeated again and again in the Bible. Adam failed to protect his charge, and the whole earth was crushed under the judgment of God. In the book of Numbers, Aaron, the high priest, failed to protect his charge when he made that golden calf, and 3,000 people were killed in the judgment of God. The book of Judges, which we have gone over, illustrates this over and over.

Call to Action and Warning

The truth of the matter is, folks, we have so compromised the truth of God's Word today that there are professing Christians who advocate premarital sex, extramarital affairs, therapeutic divorce, compassionate abortion, Christian homosexuality, benevolent socialism, and governmental tyranny, which is nothing more than legalized fraud and theft. We have lost our minds because we do not

know the law of God. Moreover, we have lost our willingness to fight and resist evil. Adam was a warrior priest until he lost it. The Levites were warrior priests until they lost it. If we do not wake up and fight, we are going to lose our nation, too, to the very same judgment, the judgment of God. God calls us to be warrior priests.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to thee this day. We ask you to teach us, to build us up in the most holy faith, and, Lord, let us see, let us know, let us understand the importance of fighting against wickedness and standing for righteousness and truth. Enable us, Lord, to live for Thee. In Thy name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

God's Preachers-The Enemies of the State

May 2, 1999

Introduction: The Reality of Enemies

First Kings chapter 21, beginning at verse 17: “And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria. Behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it.” Of course, everyone knows that Ahab had Naboth and his family murdered. “And thou shalt say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.” And Ahab said to Elijah, “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” And he answered, “I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.”

I want to deal mainly with verse 20: Ahab, who was the king, said to Elijah, “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” And he answered,

"I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord."

The term "enemy" upsets and bothers many Christians because they erroneously and unbiblically believe that Christians, and especially preachers, should not have any enemies at all. The modern-day philosophy is that we are to love everyone at all times, regardless of what they do, their wickedness, rebellion, disobedience, and outright defiance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That idea is totally false and totally wicked. God Himself, who is the most holy and, I might add, the most loving being that ever was or ever will be, has enemies Himself. If holiness, righteousness, or being a loving individual will keep you from having enemies, then God Himself should not have enemies. Yet Scripture says in Psalm 21:8, "Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies. Thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee." God has enemies, and God shall find them out and judge them.

Look in Psalm 68 and verse 1: "Let God arise. Let His enemies be scattered. Let them also that hate Him flee before Him."

"Let God arise. Let His enemies be scattered." God's holiness, righteousness, and love do not keep Him from having enemies. There are individuals who hate and despise God simply by virtue of the fact that God is God.

Look at Psalm 68, verse 21: "But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses." Verse 23 says: "That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same."

Look at Psalm 92, verse 9: "For, lo, thine enemies, O Lord, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish. All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered." I could multiply these verses, but this is sufficient to show that there are enemies of God.

God's People Have Enemies

Then look at Psalm 110, verses 1 and 2. The Father says to the Son: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy

strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." It is very obvious that God has enemies.

Let us go a step further. The Bible clearly teaches that God's people, God's saints, have enemies. As you read through the Bible, especially the Psalms, you find numerous prayer requests from the saints to be delivered from their enemies. Psalm 58 is replete with an imprecatory prayer. We will not read the entire Psalm, but notice what the saints are praying against their enemies and against the enemies of the Lord, beginning with verse 7:

"Let them melt away as waters which run continually. When he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces. As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away, like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun. Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.

"The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance. He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked, so that a man shall say, Verily, there is a reward for the righteous. Verily, he is a God that judgeth the earth."

David's prayer in Psalm 59 gives us an example of the fact that saints do indeed have enemies. In the first three verses, he prays: "Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God. Defend me from them that rise up against me. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity and save me from bloody men. For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O Lord." Here is one example of the fact that saints do indeed have enemies.

In fact, we have enemies simply by virtue of the fact that we have been saved by the grace of God. Our Lord Jesus Himself explains this in John 15: "If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you." Now watch His explanation: "If you were of the world, the world would love his own. But because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you. The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours

also." Here is another example, from the mouth of the Lord Jesus Himself, showing that we have enemies simply by virtue of the fact that we have been saved by the grace of God.

It should therefore come as no surprise that we have enemies as the people of God, or that preachers have enemies. It is true that we have enemies, but our enemies should not be those of our own making because of our own crankiness, wickedness, or lack of friendliness. If we have enemies like that, it is because of our sin and rebellion against God. But those who are enemies for righteousness' sake—those who are our enemies because we are biblical, holy, right, and godly—are not only understandable; they are also acceptable with God.

For instance, look in Psalm 139. The Psalmist says, "Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God. Depart from me, therefore, ye bloody men." He says, "I don't want to be around them. I don't want to have anything to do with them." Why? "For they speak against thee wickedly"; that is, they are talking against God.

Note, "and thine enemies take thy name in vain." We are talking about God's enemies now. Watch what David says: "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred. I count them mine enemies."

David says, "God, I hate those that hate you. I'm grieved with those that rise up against thee. Lord, I count them mine enemies. If they're your enemy, God, they're my enemy." To show you that David's attitude was right, that what he was praying was a righteous prayer, and that his enunciations were righteous enunciations, look at what he says in verse 23. After saying, "I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies," he says, "Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting."

It is possible to have a holy hatred toward the enemies of God and still be exceedingly righteous before God and acceptable before God. I heard a preacher on television—though I very seldom listen to preachers on television—talking about another Christian pastor who was protesting abortions. This preacher said, "We should not center

our focus on hate and opposition. We should center our focus on love, for God is love."

It is true, dear friend, that God is love. But that preacher was doing something totally, absolutely unethical: elevating one attribute of God above all the others and saying that this is the central attribute, that this is what God is. It is true that God is love, but it is also true that God is just, God is righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. David says it is quite possible to have a holy hatred against the enemies of God and still be righteous and acceptable with God.

The Question Asked: 'Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?'

Now, in order to understand the lesson today, I'm going to expound, Lord willing, 1 Kings chapter 21 and verse 20, because I told you the title of this message was "God's Preachers, the Enemies of the State." In order to understand how a preacher can be considered the enemy of the state, we must look at the context. Notice, if you would, in 1 Kings chapter 21 in verse 20, "And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" I want you to know, first of all, that this question originated with the civil ruler. The question originated with the king. And when the king asked this question, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" in asking that question, he was also issuing a declaration. And that declaration is a declaration of fact, that the king and the man of God were enemies. "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" What he was saying is this: "Elijah, we're enemies. We're on separate sides of the fence. Hostilities exist between us. There is a war going on."

Now, I want you to understand that King Ahab did not hesitate, nor did he try to conceal the fact that he considered God's prophet his avowed enemy. And by the way, the word "enemy" here is a very strong word. It's used often in the Old Testament. It's the word oyeb, and it literally means hating, adversary, foe, or enemy. I want to just show you two examples of how this word is used. I want you to look in your Bibles, hold 1 Kings 21, but go to the book of Judges chapter 16 and verse 23. I want you to see how strong a word the word "enemy" is.

It actually indicates a state of war and a state of hostilities. In the book of Judges, chapter 16 and verse 23, here's what the lords of the Philistines said concerning Samson. Watch. Judges 16, verse 23: "Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand." Would you like to tell me what Samson was doing to the Philistines? He was killing them. What were they trying to do to Samson? They were trying to kill him. Here is the same word, oyeb, it is an enemy, and he is saying here is a state of war, a state of hostility that is existing between the Philistines and Samson. Look in your Bibles to 1 Samuel chapter 18. 1 Samuel chapter 18. And note, if you would please, verse 29. 1 Samuel 18 and verse 29. And I think you can see the same in this context. 1 Samuel 18, verse 29: "And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually."

Would you please tell me what Saul tried to do to David? He tried to kill him.

Now, the fact is this: the word “enemy” actually means enemy. It means there was an act of hostility, an act of war that existed. So Ahab then asked, “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” What does the word “found” mean? The Hebrew word is matsa, and it literally means to find, to meet with, or to be present. For instance, look in 1 Kings 20:36.

Here is a prophet of God who did not obey the voice of the Lord, and a lion met him and killed him. The old prophet said to the younger prophet, “Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the Lord, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee.” And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him and slew him. What does “found” mean? It means the lion met him. The lion was right there to take care of business. So Ahab asked, “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?”

Now this question implies several truths. First, it implies that the king did not initiate or desire the confrontation. The king did not go out looking for Elijah. If he could have gotten away with his foul deeds—the murder of Naboth and his family and the stealing of Naboth's property—he would gladly have done so.

Criminals do not like to be confronted with their criminal acts. Wicked people do not like to be confronted with their wickedness, and it makes them exceedingly angry and vindictive when they are confronted. All you have to do is witness the present administration to discover that fact. So the king was not necessarily initiating or desiring this confrontation.

But secondly, there is another truth in the question, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Although the king did not initiate or desire it, he expected to be confronted. He knew that Elijah was on the prowl for him and was looking for him, and Elijah had found the perfect time and the perfect place to confront Ahab.

When Ahab asked the question, it was not as if Elijah did not know where he was. Very clearly he knew where Ahab was. He knew where the palace was, where Samaria was, where Jerusalem was, and the geographical locations in that country. But had Elijah gone to the palace, do you think he would have gotten in? Oh, no. Ahab would have been very protective of the palace and would have made sure Elijah did not get in. Elijah had found Ahab not in the palace, but in Naboth's garden. He had him outside the palace, outside the safety zone that he had, and had caught the king off guard.

Now here is a third implication of the question, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" It is the duty of God's preachers to find out God's enemies, even his political enemies, and confront and rebuke them, even if they happen to be the highest civil ruler in the land. There is no such thing as an off-limits issue with God or his preachers.

In fact, let us look in 1 Kings 21, beginning in verse 17. Let me show you that it was God Himself who sent Elijah: “And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria. Behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.”

It was God who sent Elijah to confront and rebuke Ahab, to tell him that God would judge him and take his life. So, far from preachers having no role in confronting political rulers, God Himself sent one to confront a political ruler.

Do not assume that preachers have no role in the political arena. They most certainly do. If we had the time, we could look at Psalm 82. There, the preacher of the temple becomes the prophet of the court. Asaph, the preacher of the temple, rebukes the judges of the land and confronts them. One of our greatest failures—and I am speaking particularly of the failures of preachers—is our failure to confront civil rulers with their wickedness, sin, and rebellion.

This country was founded upon that principle. You do not have to go far in history, nor look with great difficulty, to find an election sermon. In early America, whenever anyone was elected to political office, it was standard operating procedure for that elected official and his staff to sit publicly before a preacher who preached to them concerning the duties they owed to God, their country, and the people. It was called an election sermon. When those same individuals rebelled against God, they were confronted by the same preachers, who said, “We declare to you what God demanded of you.”

It is astonishing that so few preachers have cried out against Clinton and his administration and the present course of Congress. I will tell you plainly why Clinton was found not guilty in the Senate: most of them were guilty of exactly the same thing, and he knew it, and so did everybody else.

The Question Answered

There should have been an uproar in this country, not just from the people, but from the preachers. Do you remember when Elijah was taken up into heaven in a whirlwind, and Elisha got his mantle? Elisha went back and smote the Jordan River and said, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" The river departed, and he went across on dry ground. What did he do when he hit that river with the mantle? He cried, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

You know what we could do today? We could reverse that and cry, "Where are the Lord God's Elijahs?" Where are the men who are going to cry out and confront the Ahabs of this world? Unhappily, most of the preachers are like those in Obadiah's time. They are hiding in caves, feeling sorry for themselves, or trying to get out of harm's way rather than confronting tyrants and wickedness.

Preachers, God's preachers, have a responsibility to deal with the issues of the day in light of God's law and God's word. The question is asked by the king, by the civil ruler, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" We have looked at the question asked. Let us look secondly at the question answered: "And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee."

The Question Answered: 'I have found thee'

The question answered emphasizes that there is a line of separation between God's friends and God's enemies. Righteousness and unrighteousness do not coexist very well. Do you remember Amos chapter 3, verse 3? "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" The answer is no. Inevitably, there is going to be a division.

Our Lord Himself said it in Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with me is against me. And he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Can two walk together except they be agreed? The answer is no. If you are not with Christ, then you are against Him. If you are against Him, you are His enemy. If you are not gathering with Him, then you are scattering abroad. It is absolutely impossible for God's men to align themselves with God's enemies and still claim to be the representatives of God. What did Christ say?

"He that is not with me is against me." The line is as clearly drawn today as it was in the days of Moses. When Moses came off that mountain and saw the wickedness, rebellion, and sin that were prevalent, the Bible says in Exodus 32:26 that he stood in the gate of the camp and cried, "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come over unto me." The Lord has a side, and the world has a side. The cry today is still the same: "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come over unto me."

It is absolutely necessary that our answer be emphatic, clear, and definitive: We are on the Lord's side, and therefore we will go over unto Him. Now note something about this answer. Look back in 1 Kings 21:20. Here is the question: "And Ahab said unto Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Here is the question answered. Elijah said, "I have found thee." Elijah did not try to neutralize or distort the fact, or water down the truth. When the apostate king asked, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Elijah answered, "I found thee."

Elijah did not squirm, flinch, or mealy-mouth around. He did not say to the civil ruler, "You should not use the term 'enemy.' That's too negative and too strong. What we need to do is put this thing in a positive light and try to work together." He did none of that. "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" "Yes, I found you."

What was Elijah saying? He was acknowledging that he was Ahab's enemy because Ahab was his enemy and the enemy of God. They were enemies because they served two different kings, represented two different kingdoms, and represented two totally different law systems. Ahab represented himself, his will, his word, and his way; Elijah represented the Lord God, His law, His word, and His way. Therefore, there could be no conciliatory gesture on Elijah's part. He could not say, "Let's get together and cooperate the best we can." No, because two different kingdoms and two different kings were represented. God demands that His enemies surrender, not His preachers. Look in your Bibles to Psalm 97, and note verse 10.

“Ye that love the Lord.” What are those next two words? “Hate evil.” “Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.” Do not try to be reconciled to evil. Do not try to compromise with evil. “He preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.”

Look back to Psalm 94 and verse 16. Look at the question that God asked: “Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? Or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?” Wow, did you see that? “Who will rise up for me against the evildoers?” Not compromise with them, “or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?”

Elisha's attitude, who followed in Elijah's stead, was the same as Elijah's. When the civil ruler asked God's man, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Elijah answered, "I found you." And you got it right: we're enemies.

Let me show you how Elisha followed Elijah's attitude. Look in your Bibles to 2 Kings chapter 3. You talk about a powerful, powerful passage. Jehoshaphat, who happened to be the king of Judah, unhappily teamed up with the king of Israel and the king of Edom. They were going to fight against the king of Moab, who had rebelled against the king of Israel. The king of Israel was a wicked, ungodly man. In fact, let's begin reading with verse 8, 2 Kings 3:8.

"And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom. So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey: and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them." Now that was a smart military maneuver, wasn't it?

"And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab! But Jehoshaphat said"—he's the godly one, although he compromised at this point—"Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of the Lord by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah. And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the Lord is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him." Now watch: "And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee?"

"Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother." What am I to do with you? You're not one of God's people. You do not love God, and you do not love God's preachers. Go back to your own false prophets. Watch verse 13: "And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab. And Elisha said, As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee."

Let me put that in good South Georgia language: "I wouldn't spit on you if you were on fire." That is what he told him. He said, "If it were not for Jehoshaphat, I would not look toward thee or see thee." In other words, "I'd let you die." Why? Because he was God's enemy, and therefore he was the enemy of Elisha. The only thing that saved the king of Israel was the fact that he was in the presence of Jehoshaphat.

The point is this: we must understand that there is a line of separation between God and His enemies, and between God's preachers and God's enemies. God demands that His enemies surrender, not His preachers. When Ahab asked Elijah, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" the answer came back, "I have found thee."

Now let us look at the third point. We have seen the question asked, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" and the question answered, "I have found thee." Here the question is analyzed. Look in verse 20: "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee." It is analyzed in these words: "because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord."

The Question Analyzed: 'Because thou hast sold thyself to work evil'

Why were the civil ruler and the spiritual ruler enemies? Let me answer that by asking another question. Are not the civil sphere and the ecclesiastical sphere aspects of the kingdom of God? The answer is yes. God has created only three institutions: the family, which is a ministry of education; the church, which is a ministry of grace; and the state, or the civil sphere, which is a ministry of justice.

The state is just as accountable and responsible to be Christian and biblical as are the family and the church. God requires individuals and family members to repent, believe in Christ, and obey Him. The church is required to be biblical and obedient, and the state is likewise required to be biblical and obedient. If the family, the church, and the state functioned according to their God-ordained roles, each would be obedient to God and would complement the others. The family would receive from the church

what it needed and from the state what it needed. All of it would be for God's honor and for the good of society and civilization.

In Romans chapter 13, verse 4, concerning the civil ruler, Paul says, “For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.”

Now, let’s stop there first. Twice in verse 4, the civil ruler is called the minister of God. The word “minister” here is the Greek word diakonos. It is where we get our English word “deacon” from, and it literally means the servant of God. So God has ordained the civil ruler, and God has ordained civil government, to be His deacon, His servant.

Secondly, in verse 4, the civil ruler is called a revenger. The word “revenger” is from the Greek word ekdikos. Ek is a preposition which means “out of,” and dikaios is righteousness. The word “revenger” literally means one who exacts God’s righteousness, one who gives forth justice.

Then, when you skip down to verse 6, he says, “For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers.” Here the word “ministers” is the Greek word leitourgoi, from which we get our English word “liturgy,” which is a public form of worship. So God says in verse 6 that civil government is to be a public liturgy, or a public form of worship.

Now watch this. God said He ordained civil government—why? To be His deacon, to be His servant, to be His exactor of righteousness, and to be His public worship. May I remind you that God is the one who ordained the family. God is the one who ordained the church. And God is the one who ordained civil government. Each sphere, each institution, is answerable, accountable, and responsible to God.

Now, you’ve got to ask yourself this question: How could this institution that God ordained become His enemy? How could civil government become the enemy of God? How could it become the enemy of God’s preachers? How could it become the enemy of God’s people? The answer is found in 1 Kings chapter 21, verse 20. When Ahab asked the question, he said to Elijah, “Hast thou found me, O

mine enemy?" And Elijah answered, "I have found thee." Here it is analyzed. Here's why: "Because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord."

How did the civil government become the enemy of God, God's preachers, and God's people? The answer is because of their rebellion against God. Let me show it to you in the Bible. Turn in your Bibles, first of all, to Psalm 2. We will read the first three verses. Psalm 2, beginning with verse 1. Watch this passage: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?"

Now look: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." What are they saying? "We don't want to serve God. We don't like his limitations. We don't like the boundaries that he has set. We don't want to do what he tells us to do. We're going to do what we want to do."

Now turn in your Bibles to the book of Hosea, Hosea chapter 5, right after the book of Daniel. Look in Hosea chapter 5 and verse 10. Look at what God says concerning the princes of Judah: "The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound" or the boundaries. "Therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water." What is he saying? The princes of Judah did not like the limitations that God placed upon them. They did not like God's boundaries, so they removed the boundaries. That is, they went into areas that God never gave them authority in.

Let me put it to you plainly: They stole. They usurped the authority that God never, ever gave them. Whenever any government—whether family government, church government, or civil government—usurps authority and takes to itself that which God has never given it, it is in rebellion against God. It is a grasping, a stealing, a usurpation of that which God never gave it. You must remember that the terms sin, transgression, disobedience, and rebellion can equally be applied to governments.

God ordained government for churches, families, and individuals. He has the sovereign right and authority to tell governments what they can do and what they cannot do. There is no such thing as

unlimited government in any sphere. I may be the pastor of this church, but I do not have unlimited authority here; my authority is limited by the Word of God. I may be the head of my wife, but my authority over my wife is limited by the Word of God. The civil ruler may have authority, but his authority is limited by the Word of God—and, in our land, by the constitutions as well. Only God has unlimited authority. Only God is sovereign.

To postulate that government can do whatever it wants, or to postulate an unlimited government for the federal or state governments, is to postulate another God. It is to erect another idol and worship a false God. Why? Because there can be only one sovereign, one ultimate, and one absolute. God alone has all authority and power; God alone is without limits and boundaries. When you say government is unlimited, you establish another God, or at least a rival God. There is only one ultimate: the one true and living God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ.

Manifestations of Governmental Rebellion

How, then, did governments become the enemies of God? By their rebellion against God and His law. How does governmental rebellion and evil manifest itself? There are numerous ways, but let me mention a couple: by its laws and by its rulings.

Look in your Bibles to Psalm 94:20: “Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?” First, we are dealing with a government, because it is a throne; a throne speaks of governmental rulership. Second, it is a wicked throne, or a wicked government, because it is called the throne of iniquity. Here is the question: Shall a wicked civil government have fellowship with God when that wicked civil government frames mischief by law?

The word “mischief” is another word in the Bible for sin. Can a wicked, rebellious civil government have fellowship with God when that wicked, rebellious civil government makes sin legal? It is legal to murder in America, as long as you do it before the baby’s born. It is legal to steal as long as you are a congressman, legal to commit adultery as long as you are the president, and legal to lie. If you are a congressman, that is what they do best. You heard the old joke about

the congressman who got kicked out of office. He was carrying a sign around town that said, “Will lie for food.”

It has become legal to steal in this country because of socialism and fraud. Shall a wicked civil government have fellowship with God when that wicked civil government makes sin legal? What is the answer? No. If it is not in fellowship with God, what did our Lord say? “He that is not with me is against me. He that gathereth not scattereth abroad.” I hope you are concluding that our government has become the enemy of God. If you have not come to that conclusion yet, hang on.

In 2 Kings chapter 17, Israel is sent away into captivity into Assyria, and God tells you why He sent them away. Watch carefully the wording of this verse. “For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods.” The children of Israel sinned against God by fearing other gods.

We may think they worshiped Molech or Ashtoreth. Of course, some of them did, but there is more to fearing other gods than falling down before idols. He says they “feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the heathen,” walked in the laws of the heathen, “whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.” Thus, the kings of Israel were passing laws that were ungodly, unbiblical, and contrary to God, and the children of Israel were obeying those laws.

So how did this wicked government manifest itself? By issuing laws that were contrary to God and His law. In 2 Kings 17, verse 19, the same thing happened to Judah, and it is spelled out plainly: “Also Judah kept not the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the statutes” or laws “of Israel which they had made.” What did they do? They changed God’s law for man’s law. The same truth appears in Micah 6:16: “For the statutes of Omri are kept.” Omri was a wicked king of Israel, and his statutes were man-made laws that replaced the commandments of God. Thus this wicked government manifested its rebellion by establishing human statutes in opposition to the law of the Lord.

"And all the works of the house of Ahab. And ye walk in their counsels; that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people." What did God say? "For the statutes," or the laws, "of Omri"—he was the father of Ahab—"are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels," that is, in their laws and rulings. You obey them rather than Me, said God. And so you are going to bear your iniquity. I am going to judge you.

Let me tell you something, folks. The way a wicked civil government manifests its evil is by issuing laws, regulations, executive orders, and rulings that are contrary to Christ, Christianity, and the Word of God. I want to read to you something. Some of you have heard this because I brought some tapes to give out last week. This is absolutely horrifying.

David Barton, on his tape "America's Founding Fathers, Deist or Christian," quotes a court ruling from Jane Doe versus Santa Fe Independent School District. Individuals wanted to have prayer at a graduation service in a public school. The court said, "Well, sure. Prayer is absolutely fine as long as you pray the right way." You can interpret "the right way" to mean their way.

I am reading to you verbatim what the judge said. Look up Jane Doe versus Santa Fe Independent School District. You will find these words: "This court will allow prayer if it is a typical non-denominational prayer. The prayer can refer to God or the Almighty, but the prayer must not refer to Jesus. And make no mistake, this court is going to have a U.S. Marshal in attendance at graduation. If any student offends this court and mentions the name of Jesus in a prayer, that student will be summarily arrested and will face six months incarceration. Anyone who violates these orders is going to wish that he or she had died as a child when this court gets through with him."

End quote. Did anyone do it? I do not know, but I wish I had been there. I am going to tell you, that court has no honor to offend. And I have news for you: that judge has offended the honor of another court. When that time gets through with him and when that judge finishes with him, it will be more than incarceration. He will wish that he had died as a child. I can assure you.

Santa Fe, New Mexico—that was pretty recent. Those in authority today are doing exactly what Ahab did. They are selling themselves to work evil in the sight of their Creator, rebelling against their Creator, and denying His sovereign authority. Their attitude is the same as that found in Luke chapter 19 and verse 14, where those wicked people said, "We will not have this man to reign over us," speaking of Jesus Christ. That is the attitude of those in civil and judicial authority today: "We will not have Jesus Christ to reign over us."

This is the very essence of rebellion. It is a denial of God's sovereignty. Why do they deny God's sovereignty? So that they may establish their own. Why do they deny God's law? So that they may establish their own. All who refuse to submit to God and His law are in rebellion against Him. That is how government becomes the enemy of God. Ahab was substituting his law for God's law, his authority for God's authority, and his will for God's will. He was the enemy of God, and thus the enemy of God's preacher as well.

That is exactly what has happened in America today. God has been kicked out, and we now have humanism running rampant. According to the Supreme Court, God's law is no longer valid. They will not even allow the Ten Commandments to be posted in the schoolhouse, because some student might see them and read them. That is a big assumption; most of them cannot read. They say some student might see them, read them, and obey them, and that would be coercion of religion.

Why are all those kids being murdered around this country? It is not because of guns. Guns never killed anybody. It is because of wickedness and rebellion in the heart of man. When the Supreme Court and the federal government kick God, the Bible, and prayer out of school, they are simply reaping what they have sown. It is the government's and the court's fault for what is happening in Colorado, Arkansas, and Kentucky, not the fault of weaponry. If they ban all the guns, they will use knives; if they ban the knives, they will use limbs; if they ban the limbs, they will pick up bottles. You will not stop people from murdering when their hearts are taught that there are no absolutes, no morals, and that everything is relative.

Choosing Whom to Obey

Do what you want to do. The fault lies not with the weaponry, but with the feds and with the courts. That's where it goes. And it lies with us because we have put up with that kind of perversion in our court system and in our government.

Applications: Choosing Whom to Obey

Let me make just a couple of applications. The first one is this: Since modern-day civil government has become the enemies of God, we must make a choice as to whom we obey.

In John 19:12, these wicked people who wanted Christ crucified hit the nail on the head. Pilate knew that Christ was innocent. "And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him. But the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar." You get the picture? You have a man, Caesar, who's claiming to be king, and you have Christ, who is King, enunciating His kingship. So they tell Pilate, "If you side with Christ, you can't be Caesar's friend." And I got news for you: If you're Caesar's friend, you can't be the friend of Christ.

It ought not to be this way. If government simply submitted to God and obeyed Him and His law, we would not be forced to make these choices. But look at Acts 17:6-7: "And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus." The early Christians had a choice to make, and when Caesar's laws conflicted with King Jesus's laws, they said, "We're obeying King Jesus." It's just that simple.

Acts 5:29 says, "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men." God's authority is primary and original. His law is primary and original. If there's ever a choice, we must obey God rather than men.

One other quick point: When we aid and abet and seek to establish rulers who are ungodly and rule unbiblically, we're joining in their rebellion against God.

Hosea 8:4 says concerning God's people, "They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not." Does that mean God did not know who was elected? Of course not. God is sovereign and omniscient. He knows everything and overrules everything. But when He says, "They have set up kings, but not by me," He is saying they set up kings that He did not approve of—rulers contrary to the qualifications He laid down in His book, in His law. When He says, "They made princes, and I knew it not," they did not consult Him; they did not even desire to know whether it was His will that this individual be a ruler.

"Of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off." What is He saying? "I'm going to destroy the people," because their civil idolatry stems from their spiritual idolatry.

Hosea 5:10 says, "The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound"; that is, they do not like the boundaries or limitations. God says, "Therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water." He will judge those rulers for usurping and stealing authority that He never gave them.

Verse 11 says, "Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment." Why? "Because he willingly walked after the commandment." In other words, the people willingly obeyed the unbiblical and ungodly laws those kings made. God said, "Therefore, I'm going to judge the people for obeying their ungodly laws and ungodly rulers." Why? Because that is idolatry. In 2 Kings, they feared other gods and followed the statutes of the heathen and the statutes of the kings of Israel, which they made. Remember this: a king rules by his laws. When you and I help establish ungodly rulers, we are joining in their rebellion against God. I realize we are in a pickle in this country.

Conclusion: Enemies of the State Because the State is God's Enemy

He said, "Brother Weaver, who do I vote for?" Let me tell you something: you vote for the lesser of two evils, and you are still voting for evil. I would like for a state, or even the nation, to have an election day and nobody come. Until you give us men, or until we can run men who are fit for office, we are not voting for anybody.

We need to make sure that we try to establish the godly and the righteous. I would rather have men as my enemies than have God as my enemy. I can whip or outrun men, but I cannot whip or outrun the Lord. So God's true preachers and God's true people are enemies of the state today because the state has turned out to be the enemy of God.

Father, we ask for your blessing and help. We pray that you would teach us, build us up in the most holy faith, and make us obedient and godly. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

Biblical Methods of Dealing with Tyrants

December 13, 1999

SCRIPTURE READING - 2 Kings 17:1-23 (KJV)

Introduction and Scripture Reading

In the twelfth year of Ahaz, king of Judah, began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him. Against him came up Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, and Hoshea became his servant and gave him presents. And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea, for he sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up and bound him in prison. Then the king of Assyria came up through all the land and went up to Samaria and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria and placed

> them in Halah and Habor by the river Gozan and in the cities of the Medes.
>
> For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel which they had made. And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. And they set them up images and groves in every high hill and under every green tree. And there they burned incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the Lord carried away before them, and wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger. And they served idols, whereof the Lord had said unto them, 'You shall not do this thing.' Yet the Lord testified against Israel and against Judah by all the prophets and by all the seers, saying, 'Turn ye from your evil ways and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.' Notwithstanding, they would

They did not hear, but hardened their necks like to the neck of their fathers that did not believe in the Lord their God. They rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He testified against them. They followed vanity and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them that they should not do like them. They left all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

They caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger. Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them out of His sight. There was none left but the tribe of Judah only. Also Judah

kept not the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they had made. And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until He had cast them out of His sight.

For He rent Israel from the house of David, and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. And Jeroboam drove Israel from following the Lord, and made them sin a great sin. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them, until the Lord removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.

Exodus 20 says: "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, who hath brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Idolatry is very plainly and clearly forbidden in the Scripture. One of our greatest problems in this land is our concept of idolatry. Most of us, when we think of idolatry, think simply of an idol somewhere—perhaps of gold, wood, or silver—and of people bowing down before it. That is our concept of idolatry. It is true that this is an aspect, a type, of idolatry. But idolatry is much broader than that in the Word of God.

The Broad Definition of Idolatry

In Ephesians 5:5, the Apostle Paul makes this statement: "...for this you know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Isn't that amazing? Paul says a covetous man is an idolater. Covetousness, then, is part and parcel of idolatry. In Colossians 3:5, this is plainly spelled out: "...mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

The tenth commandment is that we are not to covet anything that is our neighbor's. Idolatry is very broad. It really and truly involves any and every attempt by man to be guided by his own word rather than the Word of God. Idolatry is any and every attempt by man to be governed by his own will rather than the will of God. Idolatry is

any and every attempt by man to be governed by his own law rather than the law of God.

All of us can clearly understand what happened in Genesis 3. God created the earth. God created Adam. God created Eve. God placed them in the garden and said, “Look, here is my law.” God entered into a covenant with Adam and Eve, saying, “Of all the trees of the garden, you may freely eat,” but forbidding them to touch one particular tree. Adam and Eve determined that they were not going to live by the will of God. They were not going to live by the Word of God. They were not going to live by the law of God. They were literally going to become a law unto themselves. They were going to do whatever they wanted to do.

You and I can stand back and look at the Garden of Eden and say that Adam and Eve were idolaters. They denied the sovereignty of God. They denied the authority of God. They took it upon themselves to live however they wanted to live. Modern-day men and women who, just as stubbornly, rebelliously, and wickedly, substitute their will for God’s will, their word for God’s Word, and their law for God’s law are equally idolatrous.

Treason: Against God or the State?

The basic question we have to answer is this: What is treason? Is treason unfaithfulness to the state, or is treason unfaithfulness to God? If you answer that treason is unfaithfulness to the state, then you have just given the answer that has allowed governments all down through history to persecute God's people. Every one of us knows that Christians were put to death in the Roman Empire.

They were thrown to the lions and slain in various ways. Even Nero, wicked as he was, one of the emperors, used Christians for torches. When he wanted to go out and view his garden at night, he had Christians tied to stakes. He dumped a flammable liquid on them and lit them, and he walked around looking at his flower gardens while Christians literally burned to death.

How in the world could a government put people to death like that because of its concept of treason? In the Roman Empire, those people were not put to death because they were Christians. You

could believe anything you wanted to believe. If you wanted to be a Christian, fine. If you wanted to worship Zeus, have at it. If you wanted to worship Aphrodite, go for it. They could not care less. Rome had its own hill of the gods. They had many, many gods.

How, then, could Christians be put to death because they worshiped Jesus Christ? It did not matter which god you worshiped in the Roman Empire, just so once a year you swore by the genius of Caesar, gave an offering to Caesar, supported the emperor cult, and said, in essence, "Caesar is Lord." The Christians refused to do it. They refused to acknowledge the lordship of Caesar. They said, "Caesar is not Lord. Jesus Christ is Lord." The word Lord means boss, owner, master, and sovereign. They said there is only one, and that is Jesus Christ.

Christians were put to death in the Roman Empire not for being Christians, but because they were classified as traitors to the state. They were guilty of treason against the emperor cult. In 30 A.D., Augustus Caesar sent men throughout his empire, and they proclaimed this message: "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby you must be saved other than the name of Augustus Caesar." When Peter, in Acts 4 and verse 12, took that very same saying and applied it to Christ, he said, "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved other than the name of Jesus Christ." It was a declaration of war between Christ and Caesar.

Christians were put to death not simply for being Christians, but because they were counted as traitors and treasonous to the state. For the Christian, we must understand that idolatry, above all, constitutes treason to God, treason to our culture, and treason to our social order. Disobedience and unfaithfulness to God is treason.

Many of you can quote the United States Constitution, Article 3, Section 3, when it says, "Treason against the United States consists only in levying war against them, or adhering to their enemies, or giving aid or comfort unto their enemies." But what if the enemy of the citizen and the enemy of the Christian turns out to be the state, turned traitor against the law of God and its own constitution?

If we as citizens obey any government while that government is guilty of idolatry and issuing laws contrary to God, then we become idolaters along with that idolatrous government, and we receive part and parcel of the judgment of God.

Government as an Idol

Consider the definition of statism prevalent among the people in this country today. Statism is simply the concept that the state is always right, that the state can basically do what it wants to do. Have you ever heard, “You can't fight against city hall”? Or, “You can't fight the federal government”? What we are saying is that the government is God. We are saying that it possesses authority and power above and beyond not only what the Constitution gives it, but above and beyond what the Word of God gives it. When you ascribe authority, reverence, and honor over and above that which God says it deserves, it is idolatry, plain and simple.

Government can be an idol just as easily as silver and gold or wood. All throughout the Bible, it was civil government that always led the way in idolatry.

Throughout the Bible, it is civil governments and civil rulers that push and shove idolatry upon the people. Consider 1 Kings 11. The question will be answered in a moment, but this passage establishes the point plainly. Here the biblical record directs our attention to the ruler and to the way his wives influenced his heart. Verse 3 says that Solomon had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines, and his wives turned away his heart. Verse 4 explains: “For it came to pass that when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods. And his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.”

For Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom or Molech, the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord as did David his father. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, that is, an idol or false god, the abomination of Moab in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the children of Ammon. Likewise did he for all his strange wives, who burned incense and sacrificed unto their gods. And the Lord

was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared unto him twice and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he kept not that which the Lord commanded.

It was Solomon who was introducing idolatry into the land. It was the king, the civil ruler, who was building these false altars and false gods so that he could worship them, or at least so that his wives could, which undoubtedly was an incentive for other people to worship them as well.

In 1 Kings chapter 12, beginning with verse 25, Jeroboam built Shechem in Mount Ephraim, dwelt therein, and went out from thence and built Penuel. Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David. If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah." Whereupon the king took counsel, made two calves of gold, and said unto them, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made a house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah. And he offered upon an altar, so did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made, and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart, and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel. And he offered upon the altar and burnt incense.

What had happened? The ten tribes had split. Rehoboam had Benjamin and Judah, and Jeroboam had the rest. Jeroboam feared that if the people continued going to Jerusalem to worship where the tabernacle, and later the temple, was, they would turn against him and return to Rehoboam. So he initiated a new idolatrous religion in

the land: his own calves, his own priests, and his own feast. He told the people, “These are your gods.”

Practically all of the children of Israel fell for it. A few did not, but most did. The civil rulers were pushing idolatry. In 2 Kings chapter 21, we read about Manasseh. If asked who the most wicked king in Israel was, I would expect the answer Ahab, for he was. But if asked who the most wicked king in Judah was, I would expect the answer Manasseh, for he was. The Bible says in 2 Kings 21, verse 1: “Manasseh was 12 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 50 and 5 years in Jerusalem, and his mother's name was Hephzibah. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord after the abominations of the heathen whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel, for he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed, and he reared up altars for Baal and made a grove, as”

Manasseh did everything exceedingly wicked and idolatrous. He even built altars in the house of the Lord to false gods. He had sodomites in the house of the Lord.

Everywhere you read in Scripture, whether Old Testament or New Testament, it is the civil rulers who push idolatry upon the people. You have to ask yourself: Why is government so prone to idolatry? Why are civil rulers so prone to idolatry? Let me answer that for you. The first answer is this: government deals with law.

Why Government is Prone to Idolatry

Do you realize that all law is inherently religious? There is no such thing as a non-religious law. When Washington, D.C., says, “We’re unbiased in this matter,” that is hogwash. When Columbia says, “We didn’t consider anything in this matter,” that is hogwash as well. The truth is, all law is inherently religious. Why? Because when a lawmaker makes or passes a law, or signs for a bill to be made into law, he places a value judgment upon it—whether that law is good or bad, right or wrong. His religion determines rightness and wrongness, goodness and badness. All law is religious. It may not be the Christian religion, but it is religious.

Secondly, it is the nature of government to perpetuate itself. Why did Jeroboam initiate a false religion? If you go back and read 1 Kings 12, he said, "It will come to pass, If this people continue to go down to Jerusalem, then they will turn again to their lord, Rehoboam, and they'll kill me." What was Jeroboam interested in? Was he interested in the health and wealth of the people? Was he interested in the blessing of the Lord upon the people? Of course not. The only thing Jeroboam was interested in was himself: preserving his kingdom, preserving his rule, and preserving his family.

Have you ever known a politician who did not want to be reelected? Have you ever known a politician or a party that did not want to stay in power? Do you realize that parties and politicians will literally do anything to keep their power and authority? Let me show you that. Look in your Bibles to John chapter 11. Let me show you how far men will go.

In John 11:47, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What do we? For this man doeth many miracles." That is Jesus Christ. The chief priests and Pharisees were having a meeting and asking what to do about Christ because He was performing many miracles. They could not deny them; everybody was seeing them. Then they said, "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and our nation." They had to get rid of Jesus Christ or lose their power, authority, and clout. The chief priests and Pharisees, the leaders of the people, were willing to crucify the Son of God simply so they could stay in power. Do you think for one minute that a politician would not hand you to the wolves to stay in power? He would.

If they would crucify Christ to keep their power, I can assure you they would sacrifice a Christian in a heartbeat. Did you notice the headlines in some of the news lately? I am sure you have seen them in the mainstream news: Is being a Christian a hate crime? Read World Net Daily. Read Newsmax. The Southern Baptist Convention has now been accused of being hateful because it wants to witness to the Jews and to other groups. Thus, it is being accused of being a hate monger because it believes those other people are not saved.

But I have news for you: anybody who has not come savingly to Jesus Christ, repented, and believed on Him is not saved, period.

I do not care who he is, where he is, what religious affiliation he has, or what denomination he belongs to. Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ alone, is salvation. The truth is, politicians will do anything to keep their power and authority. Remember this, which I will deal with a little more tomorrow night: government is power; government is authority.

Corrupt, depraved, wicked men, instead of exercising dominion over God's creation, want to exercise dominion over other people. Do you remember Genesis 3? What was the serpent's temptation? "Ye shall be as gods."

If I claim to be a god, then, to demonstrate my godhood, I have to exercise my control and power. I have to ask you to bow to me and subject yourself to me; and if you do not, I will make you, because I am a god. Unsaved men like to play God.

The Bible says that when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart, and he began to build all of these altars to all of these false gods. One of those altars was to Molech. Molech worship is the worship of the state, or of government. The very name Molech means king or kingship. Molech worship is the concept of divine kingship, or the king as God—as you and I have known in history, the divine right of kings.

Molech Worship as Statism

Molech worship is basically the worship of the state. Solomon had known power like no one else had ever known, but as he grew old and lost his grasp, losing his grip, he appealed not to the sovereign God of heaven and earth, who has all power, but to Molech, the god of the state. What does he do? Molech worship was political power manifested in a political religion. The king became identified with God as he exercised total, complete, and absolute power.

Thus, Molech worship is a religion that claims total jurisdiction over man. Statism, totalitarianism, tyranny—whatever you want to call it—that is Molech worship. The Molech religion claims unlimited jurisdiction and claims to be the total governor of man in his

completeness. In other words, it claims jurisdiction from the cradle to the grave, or from the womb to the tomb. Molech worship exercises authority over welfare, education, family, business, farming, and building.

You say, "Oh, come on, Brother Weaver." If you do not believe that, try to do anything just suggested without a license and without permission. Someone may say, "Bless God, it is my farm. I will grow whatever I want to grow." Help yourself. You cannot sell it unless you sell it by the roadside. Do you realize the agricultural business has been so sewed up ever since Franklin Delano Roosevelt? It is unbelievable. A farmer cannot plant what he wants to plant, nor can he plant as much as he wants to plant. He has to plant what the government gives him his quota for. The farmer cannot say, "I think there will be a need next year for peanuts. Instead of planting one hundred acres, I will plant five hundred acres of peanuts." No, he has a quota for only eighty-five acres, and that is all he can plant. It is absolutely, totally controlled by the government.

Let me show you how far we are. I have a pastor friend in Texas; in fact, he is still there. They used to hold their church service early in the morning. Every family would bring a picnic lunch and extra sandwiches. Then they would go downtown into the homeless area and gather all the homeless folks, derelicts, and drunks they could find. They would share their picnic lunch with them, give them sandwiches, and then he would preach to them.

This continued for several months until one day the city health inspector drove by and saw them sharing food with homeless people. He stopped and wanted to know where their permit was and whether they had obtained a license. My pastor friend said, "The only license I need is the authority of the Word of God, and God tells us to do this."

"No, no, no," he said. "In this city, you have to have a special permit." The permit was only about 25 bucks, but without it they could not feed these people. The food had not been inspected, and they did not know whether it was good or not. They came every week and wrote him citations, which he kept until they amounted to several thousands of dollars. It looked as though there would be a major court battle. Finally, he got them out there again and asked,

“You mean to tell me that I can’t share this food with this homeless man over here without a license from the city?”

He said, “Let me ask you a question. Suppose I take this food that I have prepared, and my families have prepared, and we dump it in the garbage can and walk off. Then all these homeless folks come up, fish down in the garbage can, get it out, and eat it. Well, he said, you don't need a license for that. That's just them doing it.”

The next week, he had garbage cans there full of food. He said, “This is the food supplied by the city.” It was trash food. Then he had all this other food over here on the tables: “This is the food supplied by such and such—choose whichever one you want.” The city was willing for him to eat out of the dumpsters and trash cans, but they weren't willing for anyone to give them some decent and clean food without a permit.

You see what I'm saying? Do you realize that in Fairfax, Virginia, you can't even cut down a tree in your own yard without permission? That's probably the way it is in some areas around here.

There was a young man in Jesup, Georgia. He lived at the edge of the city, in the county. He had five acres of land and a mobile home on it. Somehow the county health inspector found out that the man did not have a septic tank. He went to see him and said, “Sir, I've received a report that you don't have a septic tank.” The man said, “Yes, sir, that's true. I don't have one.”

The inspector asked, “Where do you go to the bathroom?” He said, “Out in my woods. It's just me. There's nobody around but me. I'm not married and don't have any children.” The inspector said, “You can't do that.” He asked, “What do you mean I can't do that? I've done it for years. I was born and raised that way. People did it in this country for years. Why cannot?” He said, “Well, you don't understand.”

We've got ordinances, and you have to have a septic tank. The man said, “No, sir, you don't understand. I'm willing to have a septic tank. I'm willing to have one. I want one. I'd much rather have an indoor toilet,” he said. “But I'm one of these unique people that believes that you have to have cash. I don't go in debt for anything. I paid cash for this land. I paid cash for this trailer. And when I save

up enough money, I'm going to put in a septic tank so you don't have to worry about that."

That county health inspector said, "No, you don't understand. Unless you have one in, you can't live in this house, and you can't live on this land." The boy said, "You mean to tell me I can't live on this land and can't have this house, can't even go to the bathroom in my own woods?" The county health inspector said, "That's right." That young boy said, "You mean to tell me? I served those years in Vietnam. I got wounded twice. I'm still carrying shrapnel around in my body. You mean to tell me that I fought for a country, that I can't even go to the woods and go to the bathroom in my own woods?"

He said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll get my rifle out of the closet right now and I'll blow your brains out. You get off my property right now." He jumped up to get the rifle, and guess what? The county health inspector left and never went back. Now, I'm not recommending that. I'm just telling you that's how far we've come in this country. You mean to tell me a man out in the country—where did people go to the bathroom before there were bathrooms?

Of course, there were rules for sanitation in the Bible. But you've got to have a permit. Do you realize you cannot even put a septic tank down unless you've got a permit? And if your ground will not pass the percolation test, you can't put one down, even if you've already bought the ground. You see, we've gotten this thing so far out of proportion.

The state, the civil government, is always limited by the Word of God. God is the one who ordains civil government. Just read Romans 13. God prescribes the limits and boundaries of government, not man. Government is not God, and it cannot do whatever it wants to do. When we say that government has absolute power, we are ascribing deity to government; we have become idolaters. Government is limited not only by the Word of God, but, in our country, by the Constitution. Unhappily, most of us do not even know the Constitution or the Bible, and consequently we let them get away with everything.

I had a run-in with a bureaucrat who represented the state of Georgia. We had had numerous interviews—which is the nice way of

saying confrontations—and, after writing letter after letter, decided to have one more meeting and try to settle it. He came to my office with his associate, while seven or eight of my men sat around. I had a tape recorder on my desk and started it; I always record anything when I am dealing with a bureaucrat.

He began, "Now, Pastor Weaver, I did not come here today to argue theology with you." I said, "Well, I am glad. I am thankful to hear that, because I do not think you are quite able to argue theology." I was not being unkind; I was simply being truthful. "But, sir, I have so many constitutional objections to what you are trying to do to this church and ministry that I will forego the theological arguments. Here is the deal: I will not bring up theology if you do not bring it up. But the minute you bring up theology, I want to retain the absolute right to argue with you and prove you wrong from the Word of God."

That conversation did not last five minutes. Before one of the men could ask his question, the bureaucrat began to answer. Here are his exact words: "Well, you see, sir, the state in its infinite wisdom—" When he said that, I hit my desk and jumped up. "Sir, you told me you were not going to argue theology!" His eyes bugged out, and his mouth fell open.

The state, in its infinite wisdom? Infinity is an attribute of God. God alone is infinite—not man, not government. The problem is this: We serve two different gods. You worship the state; I worship Jesus Christ. There is never, ever going to be agreement between us as long as you think government is God and I believe Jesus Christ is God.

That conversation and meeting ended rather quickly. In just the last month or so, I had another bureaucrat confront me in an emergency situation. Thankfully, there were witnesses, because I had no tape recorder. He said, "The state will not allow this." Then, with fire in his eyes, he said, "I am the state and I can do whatever I want." I answered, "Sir, I don't believe you are the state, and I don't believe you can do whatever you want. You better leave these premises and don't ever, ever, ever come back on this property again, or you'll be in trouble." The state is not God. God is God.

We are not to fear other gods; we are to fear only the one true and living God. Go back in your Bibles to 2 Kings, chapter 17. Why did Israel get into trouble? Verse 7 says: "For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods." God was chastising and punishing Israel because they feared other gods. They did not fear the one true and living God; they feared false gods.

The Fear of God vs. Fear of False Gods

What does it mean to fear a false god? What does it mean to fear the one true and living God? In the Bible, there are two different types of fear. There is the fear of punishment, the fear of hell, as we would call it. But that is not the fear God is talking about here. There is a filial fear, a reverential fear—a fear that acknowledges that God is the absolute sovereign. That fear leads us to a loving obedience.

For instance, look in your Bibles to Proverbs chapter 16, while keeping 2 Kings 17 in view. Proverbs 16:6 says, "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil." The latter part of the verse is particularly important. What makes a man cease from his wicked, rebellious, disobedient, ungodly activities and ways? He fears God. All of a sudden, he realizes that God is not only all-powerful, but that God is the loving, majestic Heavenly Father, and he ought to fear Him; thus, he ought to obey Him.

Now consider Job 28. If you have not underlined this verse, you ought to do it. If you have not memorized this verse, you ought to do it. Job 28:28 says, "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." What in the world is the fear of the Lord? The fear of the Lord is when we depart from evil and wickedness, turn to God, and in loving affection embrace Him and obey Him. What do you do when you fear false gods? You obey them. You worship them.

Now go back to 2 Kings 17 and look at verse 7 again; then tie it together with verse 8: "For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt,

and had feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the heathen." What is fearing other gods? It is walking in their laws. The heathen were worshiping false gods. They had laws that were in line with their false worship and the worship of their false god, and they were obeying those laws: "...and walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made."

In 2 Kings 17:13–16, the Lord testified against Israel and Judah by all the prophets and seers, saying, "Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets." Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their necks like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God. And they rejected His statutes, and His covenant which He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He testified against them. And they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them that they should not do like them. And they left all the commandments of the Lord their God.

What were they doing? When you fear other gods, you are leaving the commandments of the one true and living God and obeying the false god. You are turning your back on the one true and living God and obeying the false God.

Why did God send the children of Israel into captivity? The first reason, in verse 8, is that they walked in the statutes of the heathen; that is, they feared other gods and walked in the statutes of the heathen whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. Then it says, "and of the kings of Israel, which they had made." In other words, the kings of Israel had made statutes and laws much like the heathen kings.

God sent the children of Israel into captivity for obeying their civil rulers. They obeyed the laws of these heathen kings and of the kings of Israel which they made, but their laws were contrary to God's law. God sent them into captivity because they obeyed the laws of the land. Look in 2 Kings 18:12.

In 2 Kings 17:11, we see the context: “And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel into Assyria and put them in Halah and Habor by the river of Gozan in the cities of the Medes, because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed His covenant, and all that Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded them, and would not hear them nor do them.” They quit obeying God and obeyed man, and God sent them into captivity because they obeyed man’s laws and not God’s laws.

Look back in 2 Kings 17:21 at what is said about Jeroboam: “For he rent Israel, that is, God rent Israel from the house of David, and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. And Jeroboam drove Israel from following the Lord and made them sin a great sin.” He drove them away. The word drave there, in the Hebrew, is nidachah, which literally means he thrust them out, he banished them. Jeroboam willingly, freely drove Israel from following the Lord. He drove them away from God by taking them away from God’s law and giving them his law, and by taking them away from the true worship of God and giving them an idolatrous worship.

Look in your Bibles to 2 Kings 21:9. Verses 10 and 11 explain this. Here is Manasseh, the most wicked king in Judah: “But they hearkened not, and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel.” How did the king seduce the people to do evil? “And the Lord spake by His servants the prophets, saying, Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all the Amorites did which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols.” What did he do?

He instituted a false religion and undoubtedly passed laws which would favor those who worshiped with him and would be contrary to those who refused. And so he seduced them. We are in this same situation today in America. Here is a man who wants to do what is right, who wants to obey God and honor God, but the laws of the land are such that we cannot do what we know we ought to do, because if we do, we know we are going to get in trouble with the government.

The IRS will be sicked on us, or the state will be sicked on us. And what are we doing? We are vacillating. What we are actually being

doing is being seduced away from the worship, service, and laws of the one true and living God. Because of the pressure being put upon us by false government, most of us have forgotten that idolatry and sin many times come under the color of law.

Psalm 94:20 asks, "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?" Let us analyze this verse. "The throne" speaks of government or power. A throne speaks of government. Secondly, it is called "a throne of iniquity," meaning a wicked civil government. Shall a wicked civil government have fellowship with thee—that is, with God—when that wicked civil government frames mischief by a law? Or, to paraphrase it so that we understand what the Hebrew is saying, shall a wicked civil government have fellowship with God when it makes sin legal?

"Mischief" is another word in the Hebrew for sin. In other words, they make sin lawful. It is lawful to murder in this country, as long as you do it before the baby is born. It is lawful to steal as long as you are a politician. It is lawful to be a sodomite. You see what I am saying? Government is making sin legal. Now here is the question: Shall that wicked civil government have fellowship with God when it makes sin legal? What is the answer? No. It is not in fellowship with God; it is contrary to God.

When you and I take the attitude, "That is the government. It can do whatever it wants to do," we are guilty of idolatry. No, it cannot. We are ascribing power and authority to government that God never, ever gave it.

Consider Exodus 1:15–16: "And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other, Puah. And he said, When ye do the office of midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him."

Obedience to God Over Man

"But if it be a daughter, then she shall live." The midwives feared God. What does that mean? It means they obeyed God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. Pharaoh asked why they had done this and saved the

men children alive. They answered that the Hebrew women were not as the Egyptian women, for they were lively and were delivered before the midwives came in unto them. Therefore, God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and waxed very great. Because the midwives feared God, he made them houses.

Here these two Hebrew midwives had two sets of commands: one from God, “Thou shalt not kill”; and one from the high civil ruler, “Thou shalt kill.” What determined which set of laws they obeyed? The fact that they feared God. That is, they reverenced Him and worshipped Him. They knew that His law was greater than man’s law, and thus they refused to obey the law of man. God blessed and rewarded them because they stood by God and His law.

Had the two Hebrew midwives gone with Pharaoh, they would have been idolaters and brought upon themselves the judgment and curse of God, along with the house of Pharaoh. Acts 5:29 sums up the principle: “We ought to obey God rather than man.” When civil rulers tried to get Peter and the other disciples to act contrary to God and His Word, their response was, “We ought to obey God rather than man.”

It is quickly coming in our country, as it did in the first century in the Roman Empire, that we will be faced with a soul-trying question: Who is Lord? Is Jesus Christ Lord, or is government Lord? Who has ultimate authority? Who has the right to dictate and rule our lives, God or government? The question that was so crucial in the first century has come full circle. In this century, it is the same question: Who is Lord?

We had better understand what God said in Isaiah 42:8: “I am the Lord, and besides me there is none other, and my glory will I not share with another.” We cannot acknowledge government as God. Government is nothing more than a servant of God, created by God to be His deacon, according to Romans 13.

Government is to be His avenger, to be His public worship. Government is nothing more than a servant, any more than we are. Just as God has defined and limited the family and defined and limited the church, likewise He's defined and limited the government. There's only one God. To ascribe the attributes of God

to the state is to become an idolater. Only God is infinite. Only God is sovereign. Only God has total jurisdiction. Only God has all authority in heaven and earth.

Father, we are thankful today for Jesus Christ. We acknowledge tonight His Lordship, His sovereignty, His greatness, and His glory. We ask You, Father, for courage to stand in these trying times. As the Apostle Paul says, in having done all, to stand. We ask for Your mercy. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 4

Application & Practicality of Biblical Law

August 15, 2000

Introduction to the Week's Topic

The subject this week is biblical law. Tonight will be a very general introductory statement, showing that there is indeed a real difference between God's law and man's law. Tomorrow night will be more specific, but Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights will be the most specific, with the most applications. I would encourage you to be faithful to each meeting, because one message will build upon the other.

The Fall of Man and Original Sin

By the time the week is over, you should have an excellent grasp of where we are in this country—not only individually, familially, and ecclesiastically, but nationally as well—and why we are where we are. Tonight, open your Bibles to Genesis chapter 3, and let us look at the first eight verses.

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat."

"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden." Everyone recognizes this passage as relating to the fall of man. The fall of man is one of the most notable events in history. In fact, all religions record a fall, or an original sin, of some sort. They may differ as to the account of the fall, but they all record a fall. It is impossible to explain sin without reference to a fall.

If you would hold Genesis 3, but look in your Bibles to Romans 5, verse 12. This is the only way that you can explain sin and rebellion in history. The Word of God says, "Wherefore, as by one man"—and of course, that was Adam—"wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

We know that Adam sinned, and we know that we sinned in Adam. Adam was our federal head; Adam was our representative. What he did, we did. I have had people tell me, "Brother Weaver, had I been in the garden at that time, had I been in Adam's position, I would not have eaten that fruit." The truth is, you would have. You would have done exactly as he did, because Adam was a mutable creature.

Adam did sin, and because of this original sin, sin is now imputed to his posterity. The word imputation literally means to charge to one's account. There are only three instances of imputation in the Bible. First, there is Adam's sin to his posterity. Secondly, there are the believer's sins to Christ. Thirdly, there is the righteousness of Christ imputed to the believer. The one we are dealing with tonight is the fact that Adam's sin is imputed to his posterity.

In reality, original sin is one of the easiest doctrines in the Bible to prove, because actual sin comes from original sin. In other words, you and I actually sin; we actually do what is wrong.

We trace the fruit back to the root. The fruit is actual sin, which we have in our daily lives. It goes all the way back to the root, which is the original fruit, or the original root, I should say.

The Bible says in Romans 6 and verse 23, “For the wages of sin is” what? Death. How do we know that we are actual sinners? Because we die. Had there not been actual sin, we would not be dying. Had there not been original sin, there would not be actual sin. So the very fact that we die indicates that we are sinners, for the wages of sin is death. In fact, in Romans 5 and verse 14, the Bible tells us, “Nevertheless death reigned even from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.” The fact is, everyone dies and everyone is a sinner. It is impossible to deny death and sin.

Some people have tried it. I remember hearing a story one time about a little boy who came running into the house to his mother. His mother was one of these individuals who did not believe in sin. She did not believe in sickness. He said, “Mother, Mother, you know that lady down the street that’s been sick so long?” She said, “No, no, son. You mean the lady that thinks she’s been sick?” He said, “Now she thinks she’s dead.” It is impossible to do away with death.

There have been some individuals who have tried to deny original sin. What they tried to do was deny the effects and the consequences of original sin. One of those men was named Pelagius. Pelagius said Adam’s sin affected no one but himself. Basically, he taught that every man came into this world his own Adam.

But although Pelagius taught that and believed that, Pelagius died, proving that his theory was very clearly unbiblical. In fact, Scripture says, “As in Adam, all die.” It is not the effects of Adam’s sin that I want to deal with tonight, nor even the consequences. What I want to deal with is the sin itself. Before I get started tonight, I want to lay down two simple propositions.

Two Foundational Propositions

The first proposition is this: God the Creator is the sovereign King and Lord of all. This was true at creation. It is true today. The Bible says in 1 Timothy chapter 6 and verse 15 concerning the Lord, He is the only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords. The word potentate literally means the all-powerful one. Jesus Christ is the only all-powerful one. He is the King of the reigning kings and Lord of the reigning lords. The Bible says in Daniel chapter 4 and verse 35 that He that is God doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and in the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, "What doest thou?" God is the Sovereign. God is the King.

Have you ever stopped to think that without God, Adam would not have had an existence? Without God, Adam would not have had any direction. Without God, Adam would not have had any commands.

The fall of man not only necessitates the doctrine of God; it also necessitates the doctrine of God's sovereignty. The reason it necessitates the doctrine of God is that Adam could not have sinned against a non-entity. Someone had to have a being, had to exist, for Adam to sin against. That someone also had to be the sovereign God, because if God were not sovereign, Adam may have sinned in some area that God did not have jurisdiction over. Since Adam sinned, it not only necessitated the doctrine and the being of God, but it necessitated the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty.

The very first proposition that I want to lay down is this: God is the sovereign King and Lord of all. The second proposition is this: a king rules by his law. Law is an expression of the king's will. Genesis 2 and verse 16 says, "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat."

The Hebrew word translated commanded literally means to put under an oath or to put under a charge. God literally put Adam under an oath that Adam would obey God and listen to God. Adam was therefore covenantally engaged to obey God. What was God doing? God was laying down the law for Adam. He was saying, "Adam, this is what you may do, this is what you may not do." Since God is the Sovereign and the Creator, God is the One who lays down the limits and the boundaries.

I want you to hold Genesis 3, but turn in your Bibles to Isaiah 33 and look at verse 22. This passage is where our founding fathers got the three divisions of our government: the executive, the legislative, and the judicial. The Bible says, “For the Lord is our judge”—that is, the judicial branch. “The Lord is our lawgiver”—that is, the legislative branch. “The Lord is our king”—that is, the executive branch. “He will save us.”

Note that God is the King, the Lawgiver, and the Judge. As King, the sovereign God laid down His law, because He is not only King but also a Lawgiver. He is also the Judge, and He seeks to enforce His law as well. God laid down the law for Adam. God not only laid down the law for Adam; He laid down the law for all of His creatures and all of His creations—that is, the institutions that He ordained.

Man's Original Sin: Government Without God

Now, before I go any further, let me ask a question. Do not answer this out loud. Let us suppose that our entire governmental structure collapsed tomorrow and you had an opportunity to rebuild it. What would be the foundation upon which you rebuilt it? Would you build upon God’s law or upon man’s law? I want you to understand that those are the only two alternatives. You either have God’s law or you have man’s law.

So God laid down the law. With these two propositions in mind—number one, that God is sovereign, and number two, that the sovereign laid down His law—what was man’s original sin?

Look at Genesis 2:16–17: “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But

of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

Man's original sin was an attempt at government without God. God had said, "Adam, here's your boundaries. Out of every tree in this garden thou mayest reap, but of this one you are not to eat it. I have reserved that one for myself." The tree was not poisonous or evil in and of itself. It could have been any fruit tree; it did not necessarily have to be an apple tree, a pear tree, or a pomegranate tree. It could be any tree. The tree would teach the knowledge of good and evil simply because it was forbidden. God had given them His law. By viewing that tree and contemplating that law, Adam and Eve could have learned good and evil as God knew it. They would then have been masters of the law and not slaves to sin.

But what happens in Genesis chapter 3 is this: the serpent comes along and attempts to remake man in his image. He attempts to seduce Adam and Eve into sin, into rebellion. What is the temptation? The temptation is for Adam and Eve to set themselves above God. How could Adam and Eve set themselves above God? The answer is: by denying God's law and establishing their own law.

The whole temptation was this: You do not need God to tell you what to do or how to live. You do not need God to set your boundaries; you can set your boundaries yourself. You may do whatever you want to do. When Adam and Eve obeyed that temptation, they were, in essence, dethroning God and enthroning themselves. Look in Genesis 3, verse 5. In fact, let us read verse 4.

"And the serpent said to the woman, Ye shall not surely die." Watch verse 5: "...for God doth know that in the day that ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened," and "ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Let me give you the force of the word knowing. The Hebrew word has the force of determining. Then you shall be as gods, determining good and evil for yourself. In other words, you do not need God to tell you what is right and wrong, good and evil. You can be your own god and make that determination for yourself. All you have to do is dethrone God, deny His law, enthrone yourself, and establish your own law.

Satan then casts dispersion upon God, as if God were some evil individual trying to keep Adam and Eve from accomplishing and being everything they could and should be. He said, “For God doth know that in the day that ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened.” How shall we refer to this? How about the open-eyed view of history? After they disobeyed, sinned, and rebelled, what does Scripture say in verse 7? “And the eyes of them both were opened.” Was the serpent right? In a sense, yes. Their eyes were now opened.

Reason vs. Faith and the Two Law Systems

However, they saw things not from God’s perspective, but from Satan’s perspective. They no longer interpreted things in relationship to God, but in relationship to themselves, in their rebellion and wickedness. Their eyes were opened, all right, but not to holiness, righteousness, or God’s law. Their eyes were opened to sin, rebellion, and wickedness.

The woman saw that the tree was good for food: there was the lust of the flesh. It was pleasant to the eyes: the lust of the eyes. It was desired to make one wise: the pride of life. These three lusts pushed her to make a rational choice. She took thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband, and he did eat as well.

Here is the great contradiction, the great battlefield: reason versus faith. This does not mean that our faith is unreasonable or illogical. In fact, the Christian faith is the most reasonable and logical explanation of reality there is. We should not be dummies going around saying, “I believe, I believe,” with no foundation for what we believe. The Bible does not teach that at all. Our faith is based upon fact and reality.

Since the fall of man, man has established his reason, his thinking ability, and his mind in opposition to God. His mind, by nature, is contrary to God. That is what the Bible says in Ephesians 4, verse 18: men are ignorant of the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their own heart. Therefore, those of us who believe have a rational, logical faith because we have submitted our minds to the Word of God.

What about unconverted individuals? Their mind is their God, which I shall explain a little later. Thus, the reason, or the act of reason, in man's fall and the act of faith involved in man's restoration are fundamentally pitted against each other.

Individual men, peoples, and nations seek to become gods by virtue of their own fallen nature. How do men and nations seek to become God? By establishing their own law system and law order based upon human reason instead of submitting to the law of God. The heart of fallen man's contention with God is his own reason and his own law order, founded upon that reason. Man's kingdom and law order are established by following his own reasoning ability. God's kingdom and law order are established by obedience to His law.

These two systems are diametrically opposed to each other. It is often easy to discern which system someone embraces. You can go into the marketplace, the courthouse, the college, or the grocery store, wherever you meet people, and begin to talk about certain sins. Inevitably, the person you are talking to will say something like this: "Well, I don't see anything wrong with it."

But the Word of God condemns it. "But I don't see anything wrong with it." It does not matter to them that the Word of God condemns it. They have their own law, based upon their own reasoning ability. Since they do not see anything wrong with it, then it must undoubtedly be all right.

Some years ago, I was flipping through the television trying to get some news and came upon one of these talk shows. I despise them and never listen to them, but I stopped for a moment because the talk show host was interviewing a teenage girl who had become a movie star. The teenage girl was living with a married man. Even the talk show host, as ungodly as he was, asked her, "Well, don't you think that's wrong? That you're living with a man who's married to someone else?"

This young girl gave the classic answer: "It may be wrong for others, but it's all right for me." Do you know what she had just said? "I am my own God. I establish my own law system. I determine what is right and what is wrong. I don't have to listen to God or obey Him.

He doesn't set the rules for me; I set my own rules." When someone says, "It may be wrong for someone else, but it's not wrong for me," he is saying, "I am my own God."

Christians are a little different. We would never come out and say something like that. Instead, when someone begins to point out something in the Bible, we say it a little more piously: "Well, I haven't been convicted of that yet." I have news for you: It does not matter whether you have been convicted or not. If it is in the Word of God, God's Word is right and you are wrong. You are to obey His law and His Word. It is not based upon whether you understand it, comprehend it, or have been convicted of it. It is there. Another thing we say is, "Well, that's not the way I see things," or, "It really doesn't matter what God says; I see things a little differently."

One of the latest ones, and I've heard this in many churches, is this: You begin to talk about God's Word, God's Law, God's Righteousness, and God's Truth, and inevitably some Christian or some pastor is going to say, "But we do things a little differently here." What are they saying? They're saying, "We don't need God. We don't need His Law. We don't need His Word. We are our own law."

As soon as Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, as soon as they ate it, they ceased to obey God. As soon as they ate it, they established a law system other than God's law system. As soon as they ate it, they established another order rather than God's law order. How did they establish it? By denying and disobeying God and doing their own things. Obedience is the key to establishing God's kingdom and God's law order. Disobedience to God is the key to establishing man's kingdom and man's law order.

You and I can see this very simply when we're dealing with individuals. Here are Adam and Eve. God had laid down the law. God said, "Thou shalt not eat of this tree." Adam and Eve ate of the tree. What have they done? They disobeyed God. They've established their own law system. They said, in essence, "God's not going to tell me what to do. I'll do what I want to. I'm my own God."

Nations as Rival Gods

It can be a member of your family or a member of your church. They can fall into grievous and open sin, and you can confront them. Maybe it's adultery. Maybe it's drunkenness. It doesn't matter what it is. You say, "What you're doing is wicked and wrong." They say, "Hold it right there. Back up. It may be wrong for you, but it's all right for me."

You and I can understand that as long as it is related to individuals. But what about nations? What about nations? If God is our God, then we will personally obey Him. If God is our personal God, then we will personally obey Him. If God is our God nationally, then we will obey Him as a nation. Now, let me explain. Look in the book of Galatians, chapter 6 and verse 16. Galatians, chapter 6 and verse 16. Watch this passage very carefully.

He says, “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy upon the Israel of God.” The little word rule is very important. It is where we get our English word canon. The Greek word is kanon. We talk about the Old Testament canon, the New Testament canon, or the canon of Scripture. The word canon literally means a rule, a standard, or a measuring rod.

“As many as walk according to this rule”—according to this standard, this measuring rod—“peace be upon them and mercy upon the Israel of God.” If God is our God personally, we will obey Him personally. If God is our God nationally, we will obey Him nationally.

That does not mean that everyone in the nation has to be a Christian. It is just like having a Christian school: that does not mean everyone in the school is a Christian. It means the school is run by the principles in the Word of God, based upon the Christian religion. So how can you determine who is the king of a nation? How can you determine who is the God of a nation?

The answer is that you examine that nation’s laws, its theory of laws, and its customs. If our nation is a Christian nation, it means our laws are going to be based upon the Word of God.

A government may submit to God, be His true minister of justice, be a true deacon and servant, obey Him, honor Him, and worship Him. In fact, that is one of the reasons why God set government up, according to Romans chapter 13. In Romans 13:4, the civil ruler is called the minister of God. The word is deacon, or diakonos, meaning a servant. God ordained civil government to be a servant. In the same verse, he is called the revenger, ekdikos, one who exacts righteousness. In verse 6, they are again called ministers. This time the Greek word is leitourgoi, from which we get our English word liturgy, meaning public worship. Thus God ordained civil government to be His servant, His exactor of righteousness, and His public worship. It is possible for a government to submit to God, obey God, and become God's servant exactly as God has ordained.

But it is equally possible for a government to rebel against God, deny Him, and establish a humanistic, rationalistic law system. A government that seeks to act autonomously or independently from God, His Word, and His law does not merely become wicked, rebellious, and humanistic; it does become that. But it becomes more: a rival god. How? It makes its own laws and forces its people to obey those laws contrary to God's law. It takes the tithes, obedience, and honor of the people to itself, thereby subverting the true worship and honor of the one true God. A government that turns from God and His law is therefore not merely a wicked, humanistic government.

It is that, but it's more. It actually becomes a rival God.

God said in the book of Isaiah 42, verse 8, "I am the Lord. Beside me there is none else, and my glory I will not share with another." God will brook no rivals. Psalm 94, verse 20, asks, "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee which frameth mischief by a law?"

First of all, note that it is a throne. It is speaking of government, rulership, power. "Shall the throne of iniquity"—a wicked government, a wicked throne, a wicked power—have fellowship with God when that wicked civil government frameth mischief by a law? The question is directed toward the relationship between civil authority and God.

Let me paraphrase that. The word mischief literally means sin. Here is the question: Shall a wicked civil government have fellowship with God when that wicked civil government makes sin legal? This is not merely a question about what government permits; it is a question about whether government can establish its own standard against God and still claim fellowship with Him.

Is it legal to murder in America? Of course it is, if you do it before the baby's born. Is it legal to steal in America? Of course it is, if you're a congressman, or a politician, or into socialism. You follow me? It's legal. You may steal legally. Read Frederick Bastiat's book, The Law, where he distinguishes for you the difference between legal and illegal plunder. The fact that an act is legal does not make it righteous.

Is it legal to be a sodomite in America? Yes. In other words, what wicked civil governments do, as rival gods, is make sin legal. They make their own law contrary to God and God's law. Shall a wicked civil government, making its own law contrary to God and God's law, have fellowship with God? What's the answer? No. Why? Because it is a rival God.

The Seductive Stage

The problem is that most Americans do not view government thusly, and most Christians do not even view government thusly. Why not? Because such a wicked, humanistic government does not announce, “Look, folks, I’m God. Worship me or else. Obey my laws or else.” If a government did something like that, not only would every Christian flee, but many unconverted people would as well.

So what the government does is assume its powers, lay its claims, and encompass its citizens slowly and in stages, so as not to frighten or alarm everyone. It lays the groundwork slowly, surely, and deliberately until it has assumed total control. If a government claims to be God, it must demonstrate that it is God by demanding obedience and demanding tithes.

Four Stages of Governmental Apostasy

I remember being in a meeting in Arizona where Senator Wayne Stump was speaking. He stood behind the pulpit and said, “I’ve been asked to speak on government. You ask me, Senator Stump, what is government?” He said, “I’ll show you.” He reached into his jacket, pulled out a .357 Magnum, and laid it on the pulpit.

Needless to say, he got everyone’s attention. He picked it back up and said, “This, dear friend, is government without God. It is nothing but pure, raw, undiluted power.” That is a tyrannical government, but the reason we do not see it is that government comes along and does this in stages.

How does our government become a rival god to the one true and living God without our ever becoming aware of it? By stages. The very first stage is what I am calling the seductive stage. In this stage, your government begins to seduce men away from the truths that define the one true faith. In so doing, it endeavors to draw men away from the worship of God and get them to idolize or worship the government. It does so in a way that is very practical, very reasonable, and very economical—and yet it is idolatry.

Everyone in here who has seen the news knows that two nights ago, a tornado swept through central Florida. Thirty-eight people were killed, six are still missing, 250 were injured, and homes were demolished. Who are the first individuals to come and say, “Don’t worry, we’ll take care of you”? The federal government. I heard one person say on the news that night, “It’s all we’ve got.” Folks, if the federal government is all we’ve got, we are in deep trouble.

But let me tell you, did you realize that when Grover Cleveland was president, a state experienced a huge disaster and asked him for funds, and he said no? “If the Christians of this country will not help their neighbor, the nation is not worth saving anyhow.” Of course, the Christians took care of it. The point I’m trying to make is this: What government does, very slowly and very surely, is get us to pay total attention to it.

It doesn’t matter if it’s floods, droughts, hurricanes, or tornadoes. Everyone cries instantly and immediately to the federal government.

Now, let me show you some of the ways that government draws us away from the one true faith. If I were to mention the word evolution, let me tell you something: If evolution is true, the Bible is a lie. If the Bible is true, evolution is a lie. And yet, who promotes evolution more than anyone else? The governments, state and federal. They teach it in government schools; it's mandatory.

Is it any wonder that our kids grow up acting like animals when they think they came from animals? They try to make it so reasonable and logical that the kids automatically accept it. Look what has happened in our country as to morals. It's our own government that has kicked God out of schools—government, city, county, state, and federal. What our government is trying to do today is have morality without God. Is it any wonder that kids murder their parents, murder each other, and shoot each other at school when they are taught there are no absolutes, when the Ten Commandments are taken down where they cannot be seen?

One court said, "We need to take them down unless somebody see them and believe them and follow them." How horrid. They had rather someone take an AK-47 and go in and murder fifteen or twenty of their fellow students than to believe, "Thou shalt not kill." But when you kick God and the Bible out, you kick that morality out. We have been seduced from the true faith of what is right by denial of God in His Word.

Let me give you another example: economics. We have been seduced from real money. We pull out some of this green stuff and ask, "How much money do I owe you?" That, dear friend, is not money. This is a note, an obligation of debt. Money, according to the Bible, is silver and gold. Money, according to the Constitution, is silver and gold: "No state shall make anything but gold and silver legal tender. Congress shall have the power to coin money and to regulate the value thereof." Not print it, but coin it.

Do you realize that our grandparents, and some of our parents, hardly ever went into debt for anything? If they wanted something, they saved up, bought it, and paid cash. Our founding fathers despised debt. Our grandparents despised debt. But today we are a debt-oriented people. We cannot live without credit cards or charge

accounts. I heard a statistic that surprised me: the average American owes seven thousand dollars on his credit card.

We have become a debt-ridden society. Why is it that we no longer have real money? We have been seduced from money and drawn away. The Bible says in Proverbs 22:7 that the borrower is slave to the lender. You go to the bank and borrow twenty thousand dollars to buy a new Cadillac, and you become a slave of that bank until you pay it off. You are not working for yourself; you are working for the bank. It is just that simple. We have been literally seduced.

It may surprise many people to find out that the leading proponents of idolatry in the Bible were civil rulers, or civil government. Civil government forced idolatry upon the people. Let me give you an illustration. Look in your Bibles at 2 Kings, chapter 17, verse 21.

2 Kings 17, verse 21, says concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat: "For he"—God—"rent Israel from the house of David, and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king." Then it says, "And Jeroboam draved Israel from following the Lord and made them sin a great sin." The Bible says Jeroboam drove Israel from following the Lord. The word drove in the Hebrew is nedarba. It literally means spontaneously, abundantly, willingly, freely, voluntarily. So Jeroboam the son of Nebat willingly, freely, and voluntarily drove the people into idolatry. Why would a king, why would a civil ruler, do that?

Look back in your Bibles to 1 Kings 12, and I'll show you his reason. The split had come. Rehoboam had kept the two southern tribes, and Jeroboam had the ten northern tribes. "And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David. If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even to Rehoboam king of Judah." He continued, "And they shall kill me and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah."

"Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of

Egypt." He set one in Bethel and the other in Dan, "and this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one even unto Dan."

What did he do? He said, "If this people continues to go back down to Jerusalem and worship God truly, their heart is going to turn back to Rehoboam because he is of the lineage of David and I am not. They are going to kill me. I'll lose my life, my kingdom, my position, and my power." The Bible says, "Whereupon the king took counsel." He purposely, deliberately, willingly set up these two golden calves and said, "These be thy gods, O Israel." He pushed idolatry upon the people to save his own hide—his position, power, and kingdom. He was looking out for number one. Now folks, if you think that a corrupt, ungodly politician is really looking after your best interest,

Every politician who is not a statesman wants one thing: to stay in power. Consider another illustration in 2 Kings 21, beginning with verse 8. Here is what God tells the people: "Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers." Now watch the qualification: "Only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them." God says that for His people to be safe, prosperous, and unmoved, they must do one thing: obey Him.

But watch verse 9: "But they hearkened not." They would not listen to God. "And Manasseh"—that is, King Manasseh—"seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel." Manasseh was the son of Hezekiah. Hezekiah was a good king, but Manasseh was the most wicked king in Judah. The Bible says that he seduced the people to commit more sins and to become more vile than the people whom God destroyed and drove out before the children of Israel.

The word seduced here literally means to vacillate, to reel, to wander out of the way, to stagger back and forth.

How did Manasseh seduce the people? He seduced them by passing his own laws that were contrary to God's laws. In other words, he made it easy for the people to sin and difficult for them to

obey God. He made it easy for them to do wrong and difficult for them to do what is right.

We say in America that we have freedom of religion. But do you know how our ruling elite define freedom of religion? They define it like this: You have freedom to think what you want to think as long as you keep it between your two ears. They do not define it as freedom to act and freedom to obey. But here is what is happening in America. There are many Christians who know what is right and wrong. They know what God demands, but they also know what our humanistic rival god has instituted as law. What our government says is contrary to what God says.

And here are the people: "Well, I will not obey God, but I do not want to go to jail. I will not obey God, but I do not want to lose everything I have. I will not obey God, but, but, but…" What are they doing? They are vacillating. Until, guess what? They do nothing. They have been seduced, taken away, and drawn from the one true faith.

The first stage in establishing an alien law system is to seduce the people away from the old established law system. The very first stage is seduction. The second stage is vilification and ostracization. You ostracize them. The word vilify means to make fun of, ridicule, mock, and ostracize. You cut them out in a little group over here. In other words, you pick out your target group, begin to make fun of them, vilify them, and then ostracize them. You cut them off. Real Bible-believing Christians have been vilified and ostracized in this land for years.

Criminalization of Religion

All you have to do is turn on a television program. If there is a pastor or a religion on it, or if you see a Hollywood movie with a preacher, usually he is a whoremonger or a thief. In other words, he is ridiculed and made fun of. No one is going to show real, genuine Christianity. In fact, one New York district attorney prosecuting two pro-life Christians—whose only offense was praying in front of an abortion clinic—said in the courtroom that they were rabid Christians. Look up the word rabid in your dictionary.

It means fanatical, fierce, furious, insane, raging, rampant, virulent, and violent. Thus, any Christian who stands for God and God's truth is pictured and portrayed as absolutely insane, a violent individual. Especially if you believe in the Second Amendment; that seals it right there. You are a fanatic of the worst kind. Let me tell you something, folks: Nero used exactly the same tactics.

In Rome, he blamed everything on the Christians. According to Nero, it was the Christians who burned Rome. So the second stage is vilifying and ostracizing. After you begin to seduce the people away as a whole, you pick out your target groups and vilify and ostracize.

The third stage is criminalization of religion or religious practices. I am going to show you from the Bible in just a moment how our government can get rid of every pastor in the country with one stroke of the pen—that is, every godly pastor, and that is the only kind they are interested in getting rid of anyhow. Government does indeed know how to criminalize religion and religious practices.

Do you remember back in First Kings chapter 17 and 18, when there was a king and queen named Ahab and Jezebel? They made it unlawful to be a prophet of Jehovah in the land of Israel. They killed all of God's preachers. Obadiah took a hundred of them and hid them by fifty in a cave; that is the only reason they were not killed. It was legal to be a prophet of Baal. If you were a prophet of Baal, you ate at the king's table. But if you were a prophet of Jehovah, you were either killed or hidden in a cave to have your life spared.

And eating bread and water. Why? It was against the law to be a prophet of Jehovah. Go back and read about Jeroboam II. You will find him mentioned specifically in the book of Amos. Amos, the prophet, comes along and preaches against Jeroboam II and the wicked kingdom that he has. He prophesies that God is going to kill him and destroy his kingdom. In Amos chapter 7 and verse 10, Amos, the prophet and preacher, is charged with conspiracy.

That is the growing charge today. Everybody is charged with conspiracy. We have conspired in this room simply by my preaching and your coming to hear me preach. The word conspiracy literally means? Con is a preposition meaning with, and spire means to breathe. When you conspire, you breathe with someone because you

agree with them; you have gotten together. So the charge was that Amos and God had gotten together to pick on poor old Jeroboam II simply because he was a reprobate. What did the priest, the state preacher, tell Amos?

He said, “You better get out of here. You go down to Judah and you prophesy. You do not preach here. This is the king’s court, the king’s house, and the king’s worship place. If you hang around here, we are going to kill you. You better make it while you can make it, boy.”

It is so simple for government to get rid of every godly man with one stroke of the pen. There are two terms you need to learn: mala in se, M-A-L-A I-N S-E, two words, and mala prohibita. You will find these in Black’s Law Dictionary, Bouvier’s Law Dictionary, or any good law dictionary. Mala in se refers to that which is evil in and of itself, like adultery, murder, kidnapping, and sodomy. Those things are wicked in and of themselves. Mala prohibita refers only to something being evil because man prohibits it.

Here is an illustration. You are going down Wade Hampton Boulevard, and there is a speed-limit sign that says 45. You look down and discover that you are doing 46 1/2. Have you become inherently evil in and of yourself just because you have done 46 1/2 instead of 45? No. What if you are doing 55? Does that make you evil in and of yourself? No.

You might get a ticket. But did you get the ticket because you were evil in and of yourself? No. Only because man prohibited it. You might drive just as safely at 55 as you could at 45. Here is another sign that says, "Stay off the grass." If you walk on the grass, does that mean that you are inherently evil in and of yourself because you have stepped on it? No. You have only become evil because you violated some prohibition of man.

That is like, file this form, do not file this form. Congressman George Hansen went to jail for four or five years because he failed to file a form. It really was not because he failed to file the form. He also wrote a book, Against the IRS and Time to Harass Our People. The prosecuting attorney, the United States District Attorney—his name slips me right now—had not filed the very form himself. Most

of the congressmen had not filed that form, yet Hansen was singled out. He went to jail for about five years because he failed to file a form. Was he wicked in and of himself? No. It was wrong only because man said, "We do not want you to do it."

It was man's law, not God's law. Look very closely at this, because I am going to show it to you in the Bible. In 1 Peter chapter 4, beginning with verse 12, Peter writes: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you."

"On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified." Verse 15 is a mala in se verse: "But let none of you suffer as a murderer or as a thief or as an evildoer or as a busybody in other men's matters." Those things are evil in and of themselves. Verse 16 is a mala prohibita verse: "But if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf."

God said, "Don't you suffer because of mala in se. Don't you suffer because you do something because it's evil in and of itself, violating my law." But if you suffer as a Christian because you violate man's law, don't be ashamed. To get rid of God's preachers in America, all that has to be done is to pass a law that the preachers say, "We cannot obey that law," out of conscience toward Christ and His Word. Then we are criminals, based upon mala prohibita.

I could tell you of preachers I know who have been in jail all across this country. Some are still in jail. Some had to flee even the state of Kentucky because Louisville, Kentucky, was trying to make them take a license from the city in order to preach. When they refused, they were thrown into jail, not one time, but several times.

The third stage is when government begins to criminalize either religion or religious practices. If you have noticed some of the proposed legislature, especially, I believe, H.R. 1685, it had been changed. They have already appointed someone to go around investigating religious persecution. They have literally already made

a czar of religion in America. Once religion or religious practice is criminalized, God's people can be easily incarcerated.

The fourth stage is confrontational, or out-and-out, persecution. This is where the anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-Bible program becomes apparent to everyone. This is the period when tyrannical government attacks individuals just because they want to be different, live by the dictates of the Word of God, or be viewed as politically incorrect.

Matthew 23, beginning with verse 34, says: "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes, and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city."

When it becomes open day, open hunting season every day on God's people and God's preachers, it is what we know as the confrontational stage, or out-and-out persecution. If you have not noticed how God's people and God's preachers are being attacked, you need to sit up and pay attention.

Applications and Conclusion

There can only be two law systems: God's law system or man's law system. You have no other choice. William Penn, the Quaker and founder of Pennsylvania, said it like this: "He that refuses to be ruled by God condemns himself to be ruled by man." There can be nothing but total war between God-centered and man-centered law orders, between God-centered and man-centered kingdoms. Why? God said, "I am God and beside me there is none else."

"I will not share my glory with another." God is the only God there is. Government is not God, and man is not God. When we turn from God, we establish an alien law order and an alien system based upon humanism and rebellion.

Nations are like individuals, especially since they are made up of individuals. As an individual, you either obey or disobey God. It is that simple. Nations either obey or disobey God. You either recognize God or you do not recognize God. Nations either recognize God or they do not recognize God. It is that simple.

Secondly, man does not exist for the state. Marxism, Communism, and Communitarianism are all wrong. If you take Scripture seriously, civil government exists for man. God ordained government for the punishment of evildoers and the protection of doers of good. Government has to be God's minister, God's servant, God's deacon. That is why God ordained and established it. Just as man is required to obey God, so is government. An individual is required to obey God; a family is required to obey God; a church is required to obey God. How is it that some think governments are not required to obey God? Government is just as much an institution of God as the family and the church are, and God holds all accountable.

Thirdly, understand that governments or nations do not have souls. You and I will face God and be judged by God in eternity. Nations and governments are judged by God in time and in history. Proverbs 11:31 says, "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth," that is, paid back. It is true that we do not receive every blessing and reward God will give us in the earth, but we receive many of them. We get plenty of blessings and plenty of rewards. He says, "Behold, the righteous shall be paid back in the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner." God said, If I give my people what they deserve in time, in history, and in the earth, how much more will I give the wicked what they deserve in time, in history, and in the earth?

The nations that disobey God, establish their own law systems, and set themselves up as rival gods shall be judged and destroyed by God. The way to establish God's kingdom and God's law order is by obedience. The way to establish man's kingdom, humanism, and man's law order is by disobedience: disobey God and obey man. The issue comes down to this: Who is God—God or government? God or man? Will you be ruled by God's law or by man's law? There is no other choice. If God is God, and He is, then let us love Him, serve Him, and obey Him.

Peter said it in Acts chapter 5. When confronted with man's laws contrary to God and His laws, Peter said, “We ought to obey God rather than man.” Why? Because God is supreme, and He rules by His law, and His law is supreme.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we thank Thee for Your love, Your Word, and Your truth. Lord, we must confess that all of us have attempted to rule ourselves, rule our families, and run our lives without reference to Thee or Thy Word. Our country is doing that and has been doing that. We've sinned against Thee. May we repent, bow to Thee and to Thy Word, and obey Thee in every area. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 5

Christ and the Adulterous Woman

October 20, 2002

SCRIPTURE READING - John 8:1-11 (KJV)

I am working on several different messages. Hopefully I am going to have one prepared for next Lord's Day, and it may end up being in two different parts. Dr. Brissey has asked me to deal with a subject which I already know will end up taking two or three messages to deal with. There is another message I want to bring as well. I have an awful lot of studying to do, as well as preparation, so some of these are a little different, and they require a little more attention.

"Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives, and early in the morning He came again unto the temple, and all the people came unto Him, and He sat down and taught them. And the scribes and the Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery, and when they had set her in the midst, they said unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery in the very act.

> "Now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned, but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. And when they heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last, and Jesus was left alone and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers?
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> "Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more."

Introduction and Context of John 8

I would venture to say that most of you have never heard this passage preached before. In fact, many individuals have never even considered this passage or its implications. This passage is a hotbed of controversy because it is usually not only misunderstood, but even taken out of context. Some try to deny the authenticity of this passage. Others say that it should never have been in the Bible to begin with, which I believe is outright blasphemy and heresy and denies the infallibility and inspiration of the Bible. But many individuals take this passage and use it to teach antinomianism. I hope you understand the term antinomianism.

The Greek word nomos is the word law. Antinomianism refers to someone who is against God's law. An antinomian is someone who either does not believe that God's law is valid, or at least lives as if God's law had no effect at all upon him. Usually, when people come to John chapter 8, they try to say that love supersedes the law. In other words, the law is the Old Testament; in the New Testament we have love, and what matters is that we just love, love, love, love, while God's law does not matter at all.

I can quote this, but hold John 8 and look in your Bibles to the book of Romans chapter 13. I am not wanting to give an exposition of this truth this morning; I have done it in time past. But look in Romans chapter 13, verses 9 and 10. Watch carefully. He says, "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet."

Everybody understands this is the Ten Commandments, right? "And if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor. Therefore, love is what? The fulfilling of the law."

What is biblical love? Biblical love is not sentimentalism. It is not emotionalism, a funny feeling, or goosebumps. It is not overlooking sin. Biblical love is the fulfilling of the law of God. You understand that? When people say that love has superseded the law of God, they do not know what they are talking about, because biblical love is the fulfilling of the law of God.

Let me give you an illustration. I've given this to you in time past, but it's one that you can understand very simply. If I reach my hand over in Henry's pocket, steal a $100 bill from him, and say, “Henry, I love you, I love you, I love you,” do I love him? Not biblically, because love is the fulfilling of the law. If I love him, I keep my hand out of his pocket. Whether I ever tell him I love him or not is immaterial. Whether I ever get teary-eyed or sentimental is immaterial. Whether I ever get emotional is immaterial. I love him because I'm fulfilling God's law toward him. Love is the fulfilling of the law.

There are individuals who try to take this and say, “Well, love has superseded the law of God.” In order to understand this passage, it is almost imperative that you take it in its entire context.

The Accusers: Scribes and Pharisees

Note first who it is that is causing the problem here. Look in verse 3: “...and the scribes and the Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery.” Back in John 8, verse 3, it says, “...and the scribes and the Pharisees.” You have to ask yourself, who were the scribes

and who were the Pharisees? The scribes were supposedly the students of Scripture. They were to be the scholars of the law, men who gave their entire lives to studying it in order that they might teach others.

The Pharisees were the most religious, zealous sect of the land. They believed in absolute obedience, supposedly. However, as you read Scripture, you find that it was obedience to their traditions more than to the Word of God. The Pharisees would have been considered the fundamentalists of the day.

The Sadducees were another group, but they were the liberals. They denied the existence of angels and the bodily resurrection of the dead, but the Pharisees believed both. Thus, you have two groups bringing this woman to our Lord: the scribes, supposedly the scholars and students of the law, and the Pharisees, one of the main fundamentalist religious sects of our Lord's day.

In every one of the first seven chapters of John, you will find the scribes and the Pharisees mentioned. In John chapter 1, verse 14, they were ignorant of John the Baptist, who was the forerunner of Jesus Christ. In fact, they sent messengers to him saying, “Who art thou?”

They did not even know who John was. The Old Testament had prophesied about John, so the students of the law were ignorant concerning the forerunner of Jesus Christ. In verse 26 of chapter 1, they were ignorant of the divine presence in their midst. What did John say? “There standeth one among you whom you know not.” He was referring to Christ. Thus, the scholars, students of Scripture, and leading religious leaders of that day did not even know who Jesus Christ was.

When you get to John chapter 2, you have our Lord’s first miracle: He turned water into wine. You heard the old story about the state trooper who pulled the black preacher over because he had been weaving a little bit. The trooper asked, “What do you have in that bottle?” He said, “Water.” “Water?” “Let me have that.” The preacher handed him the bottle. He sniffed it and said, “That’s not water, that’s wine.” He said, “Praise the Lord, he done done it again.”

Sometimes it works like that, I guess. But when they lacked wine, it symbolized a joyless nation, for wine in the Bible is a symbol of joy. Read the book of Psalms: He says he has given wine "that maketh glad the heart of man."

So the scribes and Pharisees were ignorant of the forerunner of Jesus Christ and of Jesus Christ Himself. They were a joyless nation. In John chapter 3, Nicodemus, a ruler of the Pharisees, came to Jesus dead in trespasses and sins. Jesus Christ said to him, "Verily, verily, I say to you, you must be born from above"; that is, you must be born again. One of their rulers was absolutely, totally lost and dead in trespasses and sins.

In John chapter 4, Israel was absolutely callous toward the Samaritans, who were basically half-breeds because they had intermarried. Jesus sat on the well and asked the Samaritan woman for a drink of water.

"How is it thou, being a Judean, ask water of me, a woman of Samaria? For the Judeans have no dealings with the Samaritans." In fact, they called the Samaritans dogs. Here, then, was a joyless nation, totally callous and indifferent to its neighbors. In chapter 5, Israel is portrayed as a nation of blind, impotent folk, halt and maimed. There was the man who had been at the pool for thirty-eight years. In chapter 6, Jesus Christ is the bread of life, but the nation is presented as hungry indeed, while indifferent to and having no desire for the true bread of life, Jesus Christ. In John chapter 7, the leaders reject Christ as the living water and send officers to arrest Him. When the officers return, they ask, "Why have you not brought him?" The officers answer, "No man has ever spoken like this man." Then they say, "What's wrong with you? Do you believe on him?"

When we come to John chapter 8, it is the same group—the scribes and Pharisees in verse 3—who bring this woman to Jesus. This is the same group that caused all the heartache and problems, and who were totally ignorant of the Word of God. Now they are the ones bringing this woman to Jesus Christ.

The Dilemma: A Trap for Jesus

Here is a principle we must learn: even the enemies of truth can often quote Scripture and use it against us. These scribes and Pharisees had no love for the truth and no desire for it; they were enemies of the truth. Yet they tried to take the truth of God and use it to entrap Jesus Christ. Verse 6 explains the whole scenario: "This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him."

When they brought this adulterous woman to Jesus Christ, they did not do so because they were shocked at her immorality, grieved and heartbroken over her sin, or concerned that God's law had been dishonored and broken. They used this sinful woman for one simple reason: to ensnare and entrap Jesus Christ. They were using someone else's sin. Their object was not to help the woman, but to exploit her for their own evil designs. They wanted to ruin Christ, entrap Him, make Him contradict Himself, and essentially destroy His testimony.

Since we know who it was that brought this adulterous woman to Jesus Christ, let us look first at the dilemma. Early in the morning, He came again into the temple. Now, someone tell me where He is? He is in the temple. "And all the people came unto him, and he sat down and taught them." What is He doing in the temple? He is teaching and preaching, so here is a public exposition. "And the scribes and the Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery, and when they had set her in the midst, they said unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery in the very act." "Now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned, but what sayest thou?" Notice that the Bible says they brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery. Did she come voluntarily? No. They brought her—probably dragged her in, but they brought her. She did not come voluntarily.

Evidently, the scribes and Pharisees had what we would describe as police powers. As you read through the Bible, you find references to the officers of the temple. In John chapter 7, they sent officers to arrest Jesus Christ. Undoubtedly, they had some control over what we would call the temple police or temple officers. Thus, they went out, physically brought this woman to Jesus Christ, compelled her to come, and set her in the midst.

Try to get the picture in your own mind. Jesus Christ is sitting in the temple teaching. All of a sudden, religious leaders barge in, dragging this woman. They pull out a chair, put her in the midst of everyone, and say, "Master, here's a woman taken in adultery in the very act."

"Now, Moses says she's to be stoned, but what do you say?" You talk about brash and arrogant. Not only were they interrupting His message and teaching, they were demanding that He preside as a judge and give them an answer. I do not know about you, but something inside me recoils against people who are so brash and arrogant.

Yet they brought this woman and said, "Look, she was caught in adultery in the very act." I know you are thinking the same thing I am thinking, and you want to ask a question: Where was the man? Why did they just bring the woman? It takes two to commit adultery. Why did they bring only the woman? I do not know the answer.

There could be several answers. Maybe the man was one of their own. Who knows? But I do know this: you get far more emotionalism involved when you start condemning a woman than you do a man. They were designing this entrapment, this scheme, to trap Jesus Christ.

They said, “Moses in the law says she is to be stoned.” The law did demand a death penalty for adultery. Leviticus 20:10 says, “And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.” Deuteronomy 22:22 says, “If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman and the woman.” “So shalt thou put away evil from among Israel.” God says both the man and the woman are to be put to death. Of course, they only brought the woman.

Here is the dilemma confronting Jesus Christ. Remember, He is in the temple, teaching, and it is a public situation. They barge in, interrupt His message, put the woman in the midst, and say, “Now look, Moses' law says she is to be stoned, but what do You say?” They

did this while He was teaching publicly, and now all these witnesses are waiting for His answer.

If our Lord had said, “Let her go,” He would have been accused, and rightly so, of violating the law of God, which demanded that she be put to death. The issue was not whether the law prescribed death; the law plainly demanded it. Moreover, what would they do with His public claim in Matthew 5:17 that He had come to fulfill the Law? If Jesus Christ said, “Let her go,” they could charge Him with violating the Law of God and violating His own Word.

But suppose Jesus Christ said, “Stone her, put her to death.” What then would be the understanding of the people? Jesus Christ was known as the friend of publicans and sinners, and certainly He would not be showing Himself their friend if He said to stone her. The people would see Him pronounce the death sentence upon the woman whom they had brought before Him. Moreover, John 18:31 reveals where they were really going with this. That passage points to the purpose behind their demand and shows that this was more than a question about the Law.

"Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." The Romans had taken away the death penalty power from the nation. So if Jesus Christ says, “Take her out and stone her,” what would have happened? They would have reported him to the Roman government. They have him trapped, or at least they think they have him trapped, because if he says, “Let her go,” then he is no friend of the law. If he says, “Stone her,” then he is no friend of sinners and is in trouble with the Roman government.

Jesus' Response and the Ordeal of Numbers 5

Now look at the actions of our Lord. Go back to John chapter eight. Let us read verses six through nine: “This they said, tempting him that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down and with his finger wrote on the ground as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. And when

they heard it being convicted by their own conscience, they went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last, and Jesus was left alone and the woman standing in the midst."

The Bible says in verse 6 and in verse 8, twice, that Jesus Christ stooped down and wrote something on the floor of the temple. Most of us have often wondered what he wrote. Some have suggested that perhaps he began writing the names of people with whom they had committed adultery, or listing dates. I do not know. However, remember two things, and I believe this is the answer. First, Jesus Christ is the High Priest. Secondly, where did this take place? In the temple.

What significance does that have? Hold John 8, but turn back in your Bibles to Numbers, chapter 5. Begin reading with verse 11 and continue through verse 31, a lengthy passage. It is important that you understand the background before I give you this quote: Numbers chapter 5, beginning with verse 11.

SCRIPTURE READING - Numbers 5:11-31 (KJV)

> "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying..." So here then is something that the Lord Himself has ordained. "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside and commit a trespass against him, and a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be defiled, and there be no witness against her, neither she be taken with the matter." In other words, basically she's gotten away with it. Nobody's talking, no one has seen it, no one knows about it. "And the spirit of jealousy come upon him." In other words, he becomes extremely suspicious, although he has no evidence. "And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled." That is, she's actually guilty. "Or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled," that is, she could be totally innocent. "Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal, he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon, for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance. And

> the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the Lord. And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel, and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle, the priest shall take and put it in the water."
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> Notice the dust of the floor of the tabernacle. He takes it and puts it in the water. "And the priest shall set the woman before the Lord and uncover the woman's head and put the offering of the memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering. And the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse. And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thine husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse. But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thine husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man hath lain with thee beside thine husband, then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing. And the priest shall say unto the woman, The Lord make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the Lord doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell."

"And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly swell, and thy thigh to rot. And the woman shall say, Amen, Amen. And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and shall blot them out with the bitter water. And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse, and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her and become bitter. Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the offering before the Lord, and offer it upon the altar. And the priest shall take a handful of the offering, even the memorial thereof, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water. And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass that if she be defiled, that is, if she is actually guilty, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that caused the curse shall enter into her and become bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot, and the woman shall be a curse among her people."

That is, she is going to have a living death for a while; everybody will know her sin, and then she is going to die in misery. Verse 28 says, "And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean, then shall she be free, and shall conceive seed." In other words, God will bless her and she will have a child.

"This is the law of jealousies. When a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled, or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the Lord, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law, then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, and the woman shall bear her iniquity." So if she is guilty, the man is guiltless.

Remember that it was the scribes and the Pharisees who brought this woman to our Lord. Our Lord is the high priest, and He was in the temple. The temple, of course, replaced the tabernacle.

Dean Burgon, one of the scholars in times past, has said this: "The scribes and the Pharisees bring a woman to our Savior on a charge of adultery. The sin prevailed to such an extent among the Jews that the divine enactments concerning one so accused have long since fallen into practical oblivion."

Adultery was so prevalent in our Lord's time that no one was enforcing the law against it—almost like it is today. Even today, adultery and fornication are considered personal, private acts. They are no longer considered condemned by God, nor even condemned by the state, although most states still have laws against them. The laws are simply on the books. Thus, it was a prevalent sin.

Our Lord is observed to revive His own ancient ordinance after a hitherto unheard-of fashion: the trial by bitter water, or water of conviction, from Numbers chapter 5. This was a species of ordeal intended for the vindication of innocence and the conviction of guilt. The ordeal therefore resulted either in conviction or in vindication of innocence.

But according to traditional belief, the test proved inefficacious unless the husband himself was innocent of the crime wherewith he charged his wife. Let the provisions of the law contained in Numbers chapter 5 be considered. The accused woman, having been brought near and set before the Lord, was examined as the priest took holy

water in an earthen vessel and put dust from the floor of the tabernacle into the water. Then, with the bitter water that caused the curse in his hand, he charged the woman by oath.

Next, he wrote the curses in a book and blotted it out with the bitter water, causing the woman to drink the bitter water that caused the curse. Whereupon, if she were guilty, she fell under a terrible penalty, her body visibly testifying to her sin. If she was innocent, nothing followed. And now who sees not that the Holy One dealt with His hypocritical assailants as if they had been the accused parties?

Into the presence of the incarnate Jehovah verily they had been brought. Perhaps, when He stooped down and wrote on the ground, it was a bitter sentence against the adulterer and the adulteress which He wrote. We have but to assume some connection between the curse which He thus traced in the dust of the floor of the tabernacle and the words which He uttered with His lips. He may with truth be declared to have taken the dust, put it on the water, and caused him to drink of the bitter water which causeth the curse.

For when, by His Holy Spirit, our great high priest in His human flesh addressed these adulterers, what did He but present them with living water—that is, Himself—in an earthen vessel? Did He not further charge them with an oath of cursing, saying, “If you have not gone aside to uncleanness, be ye free from this bitter water”? That is, when He said, “Whoever is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone.” But if ye be defiled, on being presented with which alternative, did they not, self-convicted, go out one by one? And what else was this but their own acquittal of the sinful woman, for whose condemnation they had shown themselves so impatient? Surely it was the water of conviction, as it is six times called, which they had been compelled to drink. Whereupon, convicted by their own conscience, as John relates, they had pronounced the other's acquittal.

Finally, by Himself declining to condemn the accused woman, our Lord also did, in effect, blot out those curses which He had already written against her in the dust when He made the floor of the sanctuary His book. What Dean Burgon is saying is basically what

our Lord did in John chapter 8. It is what the priest did in Numbers chapter 5.

The Clean Hands Doctrine

Now, let me ask you a question, and I want you to think this through. Suppose Don steals $100 from Al. I go to Al and say, "Al, you know that Don stole this money from you." He says, "Yes, I know that." I ask, "Well, if you were to swear a warrant against him and have him arrested…" He replies, "No, I'm not going to do that." I say, "Well, if you don't, I will." What is going to happen when I go and swear a warrant, or at least try to swear a warrant, because I believe that Don stole $100 from Al? What are they going to tell me? "You can't swear out a warrant." If I go and file a lawsuit, what are they going to tell me? "You have no standing." Why do I have no standing? It did not happen to me. I have not been hurt. You follow what I am saying?

These Pharisees and scribes, in reality, had no standing even to bring suit against this woman. Who was the victim? First of all, her husband. Was he not the victim? He should have been the one who could have come to our Lord and said, "Look, here's my wife. She was taken in adultery," but he was not there. Now, here is what the scribes and Pharisees had done: They inserted themselves in the place of the husband. They stole his authority, they stole his right, and then they came as the victim, which they were not, demanding that our Lord judge this woman and condemn her.

Now, it is in the Bible as well, but it is also in our law. If you would like to understand a little more, look at Black's Law Dictionary, under the term Clean Hands Doctrine. Do you know what the Clean Hands Doctrine is? Let me put it very simply. If I am going to accuse Henry of something and try to get him prosecuted for it, I had better be innocent of it myself. Clean hands means that I am not a guilty party. I have not participated in the sin.

Now, turn in your Bibles. Hold John 8; we are coming back there. Turn to Deuteronomy chapter 19, and look, if you would please, at verse 15. Deuteronomy 19 and verse 15. God says, "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth." "At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established." Then, if you look in

verse 16: “If a false witness rise against any man, testify against him that which is wrong.”

God says it takes more than one to condemn an individual. You have to have two, at least—more preferably, but at least two. Not only must you have at least two witnesses, but they must have clean hands. Look in your Bibles to Deuteronomy 17:7. Here is why they must have clean hands: “The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death and after the hands of all the people; so shalt thou put the evil away from among you.”

Suppose Henry does something that deserves death, and yet I have done the same thing that he has done. I prosecute him, have him prosecuted, and am a witness against him. When I put my hand on his head and testify—when I pick up the first rock and hit him in the head to kill him, and everybody else follows me—what have I, in essence, done when I have condemned him? I have condemned my own self, because I am guilty of the very thing that he is guilty of. I may have actually helped execute him, or I may have been responsible for his execution, but in reality I have actually condemned myself.

Now go back to John 8. I want you to see this, because this is exactly what our Lord is talking about. In John chapter 8, after He stooped down and wrote on the ground, note what He says in verse 7. And by the way, I like what happens in verse 6. Let us read it: “And they said of him, this they said of him, tempting him that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.” He simply acted as though He ignored them, stooped down, began writing on the ground, and looked.

“So when they continued asking him”—they were pressuring Him now; they thought, We have Him—“He said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” First of all, that does not mean an individual has to be perfectly sinless before he can testify or condemn a guilty individual. If “He that is without sin” meant that one must have no sin in general, how many criminals would ever be prosecuted? None, because everybody has sin. Here is what He actually says: “He that is without the sin among you.” What

sin was He talking about? The sin of adultery. He said, "You have charged this woman with adultery, which means the death penalty."

All I am demanding is what the law demands: that you come with clean hands, that you have not engaged in this sin yourself. Because if you condemn this woman, then in reality you are condemning yourself.

These men had been plotting against Christ. Undoubtedly, they had been gathering information on Him. They had their own CIA and special police, and their FBI dossiers on Christ. If you are doing that to other people, it does not take much to convince you that someone might be doing the same to you. I do not know what He wrote. Maybe He wrote those curses. Maybe He listed other names. Maybe He listed dates. I do not know.

But all of a sudden they realized, "We are guilty of the very things that we are accusing this woman of, and He knows about it. When we condemn her, He is going to turn around and press charges against us." Being convicted by their own conscience, they turned and walked out, one by one, beginning with the eldest, even to the youngest. They all left.

Civil vs. Religious Forgiveness

"And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even to the last, and Jesus was left alone and the woman standing in the midst. And when Jesus had lifted up himself and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? And she said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more."

People have tried to say that in John chapter 8 our Lord destroyed or did away with the death penalty for adultery. That is not true. Our Lord did not do away with the death penalty for adultery. He fulfilled the law. Our Lord demanded what the law demanded: honest witnesses with clean hands.

When the witnesses left, there was no one to prosecute the woman. What does the judge do when there are no witnesses against the man? He dismisses the case. That is exactly what our Lord did.

The witnesses had disappeared, so there was no civil case against her. Our Lord says, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Who's going to stand up now to accuse you? Hath no man condemned thee?" "No man, Lord."

In verse 11, there was evidence of a changed heart in this woman. Undoubtedly, she was guilty and had been taken in the very act. But she answered, "No man, Lord." The word Lord is the Greek word Kyrios. It means sovereign, owner, master, or boss. When an individual calls Jesus Christ Lord, he is saying, in essence, "I am throwing down my weapons of rebellion. I am repenting and turning from my sins and bowing to You. You are my boss, my owner, and my master. I will now live the way You tell me to live. I will act the way You tell me to act, do what You tell me to do, and say what You tell me to say."

She said, "No man, Lord," and then our Lord gave her a religious forgiveness. He said, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." There is a difference between civil forgiveness and religious forgiveness. Was the woman out of the woods? Not yet. Although the Pharisees had left her, we are not told what her husband did. He was the one who could have brought charges against her, but he did not, or at least we are not told that he did at this particular time. It is important to understand that civil forgiveness and religious forgiveness are not identical, although they are intertwined.

Consider a simple forgiveness. Suppose Ed steals from me and is caught in the act before he has time to dispose of the goods. He owes me twofold. If he disposes of them, he will owe me four- or fivefold, depending upon my position, as well as what was stolen. If Ed wants civil forgiveness, what must he do? He must make restitution. There is no civil forgiveness without restitution.

If he wants religious forgiveness, he still must make restitution. If I steal a hundred-dollar bill from Ed and say, "Lord, I got this from Ed. Please forgive me. I am confessing," then put the hundred dollars in my pocket and go on my way, is that forgiveness? Is that confession? No. If I really want forgiveness, I must give Ed back his money. I must make restitution.

Consider, in modern colloquial terms, a man who has robbed a bank. In this day and time, hardly anyone has to make restitution. He goes to prison for seven years at the expense of the taxpayers. After seven years, he walks out, and what do people say? “He has paid his debt to society.” What they mean is that he is now civilly forgiven. He may still be a thief, but he is civilly forgiven.

When you come to religious forgiveness, although the two are intertwined, it is possible for a man to be religiously forgiven and not civilly forgiven. You say, “What in the world are you talking about?” There is a religious condemnation and a civil condemnation. You remember, a number of years ago, the uproar over a woman in Texas who had murdered, I think, not only her husband but several other people. Then she was converted, and people said she should now be forgiven and pardoned because she was a Christian, and should not have to face the death penalty. You remember that?

Can God truly save a murderer? Yes. Does that mean, therefore, that God's law is not to be executed against the murderer? No. You may be religiously forgiven, but you still must face the penalty for your sin. If I pull out a pistol and shoot Henry in front of everybody, the Lord would forgive me for that. But that does not mean that I do not face the death penalty. When they execute me, I may indeed be converted by the grace of God, but I am still to be executed because I am a murderer.

The Bible says, whosoever taketh a life, he shall give his own life, forfeit his own life for it: life for life. So you can have a religious forgiveness and not have a civil forgiveness. You can have a legal condemnation, or a civil condemnation, and not have a religious condemnation, or vice versa. Today in our land, a woman can have an abortion. There is no civil condemnation for that, but there is a religious condemnation for that.

Application: Church Discipline and Lawless Judges

This woman acknowledges Christ as Lord. Evidently, there is indeed a real change in her life. Our Lord says, “Neither do I condemn thee.” Then He says, “Go and sin no more.” Our Lord knew that she was guilty. She needed a religious forgiveness, and she also needed a civil

forgiveness, but there were no witnesses. Therefore, there was no trial. He had no choice but to dismiss the trial.

What do we do today as Christians for this sin that is so prevalent in our society? It not only destroys families and personal lives, but will in essence destroy society as well. What remedy do we have left? You and I both know that the church does not have the power to execute the death penalty. The family does not have that power. Only the state now has the power to execute the death penalty. What do you do when you have a reprobate state or a reprobate civil government that will not honor God's law or recognize God's law?

I get extremely frustrated when I hear of all these cases of child rape and child abuse. I've got news for you folks: I know how to stop that stuff. I can assure you that those who are executed will never commit those vile acts again. The reason we have such an outbreak is that they know they are not going to face the death penalty. They will go to some asylum or prison for a year or two and then be turned right out to do it again.

But what can we do? Let me show you one answer. Turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 5, and let us look at the first thirteen verses. Here is what the church can do, but which most churches will not do. The reason they will not do it is manifold, but it is certainly biblical. That is what you and I would call church discipline, and let me explain this very quickly.

“It is reported commonly there is fornication among you, and such fornication is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And you are puffed up and have not rather mourned that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed.

“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth a whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump. As

you are unleavened, for Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

"I wrote unto you in an epistle not to accompany with fornicators, yet not altogether with fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with the idolaters, for then must you needs go out of the world. Now watch, but now I have written unto you not to keep company with any man that is called a brother. Be a fornicator, or a covetous, or a idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one know not to eat.

"For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not you judge them that are within, but them that are without God judges. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

Now here was a man in the Corinthian church who was living with his father's wife. Undoubtedly, this was his stepmother. Paul says that this such wickedness was so great that even the heathen were not even doing it. Leviticus 18 and verse 8 specifically condemns this as incest. So it is not just simply adultery; it is incest, and of course it is here covered under the broad term fornication. Please remember, fornication is a broad term.

It covers many sexual sins and other sins as well. Here was a man living with his stepmother while his father was still alive; she was his father's wife. What does the Apostle Paul say? "Put that wicked one out from among you." You exercise church discipline.

In the early church, they had to face this same dilemma. Do you know what term was used to describe Christians who had been guilty of adultery, repented, and were allowed back into the church? They were called the living dead. Why were they called the living dead?

Murder is also a capital crime. Suppose I killed Joe and no one knew about it. I was never prosecuted or brought to trial. Does that mean I will escape the death penalty? No. God is the judge, and the death penalty is still there. I would be a walking dead man; in other words, God would execute that judgment in His own time.

So the adulterers who had repented and were allowed back into the church were known as the living dead because they realized that, although the church did not have the power to execute the death penalty and the Roman government certainly would not execute it over that, God would.

This is exactly what he says: “You deliver such an one to Satan. You put him out of the church, that the body may be destroyed.” And in chapter five and verse 13 he says, “But them that are without God judges.” You execute church discipline, put him on the outside, and say, “God, until he repents, he cannot come in; and even when he repents, it is up to You to execute the judgment that You demand.” Church discipline is not only biblical, but there are specific reasons given for it in the Bible. The purity of the church is one of them. The benefit of those who have not sinned is another. The benefit of the one who has sinned is another. The early church restored those who had repented, but recognized that they were indeed the living dead.

Note two things. First, our Lord harmonized justice and mercy. Those concepts are difficult for us because some take the attitude, “Justice, justice, justice,” while others take the attitude, “Forgive, forgive, forgive.” The person who wants justice many times has no mercy, while the one who wants mercy many times will never demand justice. These two were balanced in our Lord. There is a time for justice and a time for mercy. We must learn when and how to exercise those attributes.

Second, lawlessness cannot enforce the law. These scribes and Pharisees were lawless, although they were the ones who had the law. Look at the mess our judicial system is in in this country. Most of our judges are absolutely lawless. They follow neither the Word of God nor the Constitution. The reason most people are upset in this country is that there is no such thing as justice left any longer.

I read this week in an article a friend sent me that one IRS agent had failed to file and pay his taxes for five years until he was caught. He said he had not paid his taxes to support his wife's spending habits. He admitted that he had been a fool, threw himself on the mercy of the court, and the judge graciously gave him nine months' probation. If that had been you or me, do you think we would have gotten nine months' probation?

If you have never read George Orwell's The Animal Farm, I encourage you to do so. The animals made up all these rules. Napoleon the pig and Snowball drove the farmer out of the house and took it over, while the rest of the animals had to stay in the barn. When some animals became discontented, they went back to read the rules, but the rules had been changed: “All animals were equal, but some were more equal than others.”

Lawless men cannot enforce God's law. Lawless men will either be too merciful and not give justice, or too demanding and not give mercy. A godly man who knows the law of God can give true justice under God, though even that will sometimes be without error because man is not omniscient. Only God is omniscient, and only God can give what we would call true justice. But in John 8, Jesus Christ did not destroy the law of God, nor did He do away with the death penalty for adultery.

Conclusion: Harmonizing Justice and Mercy

He simply said, “There’s no case because there are no witnesses.” The only thing He could give the woman was religious forgiveness, which she received and evidently was changed by the grace of God. I pray that those who are in prison who are there lawfully, rightly, and justly would receive religious forgiveness—that they would indeed find Jesus Christ. There are very few like that today, especially since prisons are unbiblical anyhow. But just because someone finds Jesus Christ does not mean that, if guilty of murder, he goes free from the death penalty. We must distinguish between civil forgiveness and religious forgiveness.

It is absolutely amazing that justice and mercy are so absent in our judicial systems. People are frustrated because they do not understand that the lawless cannot enforce the law.

Father, thank You for Your grace, mercy, and truth. We ask, Lord, that You would teach us, build us up in the most holy faith, and enable us to live for Thee, righteous and godly. May we obey the totality of Thy Word and, in this wicked, ungodly, licentious, and immoral age, live holy, righteous, moral lives in obedience to Thy law. In Thy name we ask it, amen and amen.

CHAPTER 6

Warrior Priests

November 7, 2002

Introduction and Review of Series

For those who have not been here all week, I have been dealing with the biblical doctrine of war. The first night I dealt with the fact that God is a warrior and showed it from the Word of God. The next night I dealt with the concepts of holy war and just war, and last night I dealt with Deuteronomy 20 on military regulations in the Bible. Tonight I want to bring the last message, dealing with the subject of warrior priests. I have not even scratched the surface, because there are fifteen tapes in the series, and I have had to do a great deal of condensing.

New Testament Priesthood of Believers

Look first at 1 Peter chapter 2. Peter writes, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” He writes to these Christians and says that they are a holy priesthood. Then, in verse 9, he says, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the

praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Once again, he calls us a royal priesthood.

Then look in Revelation chapter 1, beginning with verse 5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth, unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." Now watch carefully verse 6: "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

Peter writes that we are a holy priesthood and a royal priesthood, and now we find that we have been made priests and kings to God our Father through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Divine Institution and Limitations of Priesthood

A priest is a duly authorized minister in sacred things. In order to be a priest, one must be chosen by God. Hebrews 5:4 says, "And no man taketh this honor unto himself." It is God alone who can make an individual a priest. A man is not a priest by self-appointment, by the election of the people, or by political influence.

The priesthood was and is a divine institution, and therefore priests are divinely appointed. A priest could not perform simply any function he wanted to perform; he could perform only those functions appointed to him by God. For instance, a regular priest could not enter into the holiest of all in the tabernacle or in the temple. As most of you know, he could mainly go to the holy place, but he could not go into the holiest of all, because that was reserved for the high priest. The high priest went in only once a year, and that not without the shedding of blood. Likewise, a normal Levite could do nothing but simply serve the tabernacle. The main offerings and sacrifices were reserved for the priests of the house of Aaron.

Certainly the Levites helped, but they were restricted in what they could do. Scripture speaks emphatically of the fact that Christians are priests. First Peter 2:5 says that we are a holy priesthood, and First Peter 2:9 says we are a royal priesthood. Revelation 1:6, Revelation 5:10, and Revelation 20:6 each enunciate the fact that we are priests. The truth that God's people are to be a kingdom of priests began in the Old Testament.

Old Testament Background: A Kingdom of Priests

Exodus 19:5–6 says, “Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant. Then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine.”

The Warrior-Priest Function

God said, “And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and holy nation. And these are the words which I shall speak unto the children of Israel.” So, once again, the fact of God’s people being a kingdom of priests goes back to the Old Testament.

Now, as New Testament priests, we certainly have certain duties. According to the Word of God, we are indeed to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ. According to 1 Peter 2 and verse 9, we are to show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. The Bible, in the book of Hebrews 13 and verse 15, tells us that we are to offer up the sacrifice of praise continually. That is the fruit of our lips giving thanks unto His name. And then, in Romans 12 and verse 1, as priests, we are to present our bodies unto Him, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto Him, which is our reasonable service.

The Warrior Function of Priests Introduced

Are those all of our priestly duties? The answer is no. There are many more priestly duties. We could list, for instance, intercession—not only praying for ourselves, but for others as well. But there is a priestly function that most of us have never heard about, or at least have never thought about. That function is known as a warrior function. This is not what you would call a carnal function. It certainly is not carnal. It is spiritual, but it certainly differs from what you and I would normally think of as priestly functions.

Priests, as I will show you from the Bible, had a duty of guarding and keeping over and above their normal priestly duties. To understand the context of the warrior-priest, we must go back in our Bibles all the way to Genesis, and we need to look at Adam’s guardianship in the garden. These Scriptures are important, and we

need to understand their impact. We are looking at Adam's guardianship in Genesis chapter 2.

Adam's Guardianship and Failure in Eden

Eden was originally organized as a special sanctuary, a special temple, so to speak, where God could meet with His creatures, which He had created in His image. In the sanctuary, He placed Adam as a priest and gave Adam specific responsibilities. What were they? Genesis 2:15 says, "And the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."

Note those two simple functions: to dress it and to keep it.

The word dress is the Hebrew word abod, which literally means to serve, to tend, or to till. Adam therefore had a responsibility to serve the garden, to tend the garden, and to till the garden. But that is not all the Bible says. In verse 15, the Lord God put the man into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. What does the word keep mean? The verb is the Hebrew word shamar, and it literally means to keep, to guard, or to protect.

All of us understand this. If I came to you and said, "Here is my pocket knife. I want you to keep it for me," I would be asking you to protect it and to make sure that it did not get lost or stolen. If you kept my pocket knife, you would have a responsibility to protect it.

That is exactly what this word means: to keep or to protect. Adam had a responsibility not simply to till the garden, not simply to dress it, but to guard it and protect it. Although Adam tilled the garden, he failed to guard and protect it.

Look in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 3, verses 23 through 24. What happened when Adam failed to protect or keep the garden? God basically defrocked him. He took away his guardianship. God drove him out of the garden.

Adam still had the responsibility to tend and keep the ground, but he lost his guardianship because he was unfaithful. He was no longer considered a warrior priest. He had forfeited the privilege of his position, and that office was given to others, to the cherubims, who guarded and protected the Tree of Life.

Now consider several other passages where the Hebrew word shamar is used. Look in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 4 and verse 9. Every one of these passages, and many others, uses the same Hebrew word shamar. The emphasis is that this word means to keep or to protect. Everyone knows the story.

"And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?" That is, am I my brother's protector? Cain's argument is this: Lord, what do you think I am? Do you think I am simply the guardian of my brother? Do you think all I have to do is run around and protect him? That is the essence of Cain's question.

Look in your Bibles to Genesis 28. Jacob is given a promise by God. Beginning with verse 13: "And behold the Lord stood above it and said, I'm the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Remember, Jacob is on his way to Laban; he is on his way out of the land, so to speak. But look at verse 15: "And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee," using the same word, Shemar, "I will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land. For I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee."

What did God tell Jacob? Jacob, you are leaving the land, but I am going to keep you. I am going to guard you and protect you. You will come back into this land, and I will fulfill everything that I told you. You can see the emphasis on guarding and protecting.

In Deuteronomy chapter 4 and verse 9, you will see the same word, Shemar, used in a little different sense, but it still emphasizes guarding and protecting. After the Shema Israel—"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one"—God tells us, in Deuteronomy chapter 4, about the greatness of His law and the greatness of His person.

And then he says in verse 9, "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things thine eyes have seen,

and lest they depart from thine heart all the days of thy life. But teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." But when he says, "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently," what is he saying? Guard your soul. Protect your soul. The word is translated keep, but it means to guard and to protect.

God placed Adam in the garden. He said, "Adam, I want you to till the ground," but that was not all. "You guard it. You protect it." Adam failed in that guardianship.

The Levitical Guardianship: Armed Guards of the Sanctuary

Now, let us look secondly at the historical context of Levitical guardianship. These two terms, working and guarding, go hand in hand, not just in the life of Adam, but also in the life of the Levites. In fact, this theme is developed throughout the entire Bible. There are two terms here that we need to understand before we go any further, because we need to see them over and over in the Bible. Numbers 1:53 says, "But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel, and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of the testimony." The Levites camped around the tabernacle. Notice the final phrase: "And the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony."

Once again, the word keep is the word shamar. It means to guard; it means to protect. So it literally says, "And the Levites shall guard or protect the charge of the tabernacle of testimony." The word charge is interesting as well. The Hebrew word is Mishmareth, and literally it is a military term. It means a watch, a sentry, an act of custody, or a charge. Some of you men who were in the service remember how you had to walk a sentry post or were placed on sentry duty. On that post, you had a charge that you had to keep. You could let no one pass that way unchallenged. It was a military term with a military responsibility.

That is exactly the same word. So in the latter part of verse 53, he says, "And the Levites shall keep"—that is, they shall guard and protect—"the sentry post of the tabernacle of testimony." It sounds to me like some of these priests had a warrior function.

Now look in Numbers chapter 3. Let me show you how plainly this is taught in the Bible. Beginning with verse 5, the Word of God says: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him." The Levites are given to Aaron that they may minister to him. Verse 7 says, "And they shall keep his charge," that is, his sentry post, "there to protect and to look out for Aaron, the high priest, and the charge of the whole congregation," around the tabernacle, "before the tabernacle of the congregation, and there to do the service of the tabernacle." It continues: "And they shall keep," that is, guard and protect, "all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge or the sentry post of the children of Israel to do the service of the tabernacle."

God says, "All right, you Levites, I'm giving you to Aaron and his sons. You've got a charge. You must protect Aaron. You must protect the instruments. You must protect the tabernacle." Then verse 9 says, "And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons. They are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel. And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest office."

"Watch, and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death." If someone ran into that tabernacle and tried to attack Aaron, who do you think would have put him to death? Those Levites. If someone tried to get into that tabernacle and steal those instruments, who would have killed him? Those Levites. They had a charge. They had a sentry post. They were charged with guarding and keeping and protecting Aaron.

This is not all that is given to us here in Numbers chapter 3. For instance, look in verse 32. This is a very important verse. I want you to underline this verse, or at least mark it down, because I am going to refer to this verse a little bit later. The Bible says, "...and Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, shall be chief over the chief of the Levites, and have the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary." Eleazar, the son of Aaron, was chief. Watch carefully: he was head over the chief of the Levites. The Levites had chiefs, but they were answerable to Eleazar, who was the son of Aaron. He had

the oversight of them that keep, that guard or protect, the sentry post of the sanctuary.

Look in verse 38: “But those that encamp before the tabernacle toward the east, even before the tabernacle of the congregation eastward, shall be Moses and Aaron and his sons,” keeping the charge of the sanctuary for the charge of the children of Israel, “and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.” Once again, anyone who got around that tabernacle who was not supposed to be there, and later on around the temple when they were not supposed to be there, was executed by the Levites because the Levites were warrior priests.

Now look in Numbers chapter 4. Some of you have marginal references in your Bible; others do not. For those who do not have the marginal reference, here is another way that the same Hebrew is translated. In Numbers chapter 4 and verse 3: “From 30 years old and upward, even into 50 years old, all that enter into the host to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation.” Note the phrase, “to do the work.” Verse 23 says, “From 30 years old and upward until 50 years old shalt thou number them, all that enter in to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.” How many of you have a marginal reference that translates “to do the work” something differently?

Numbers 4 describes the service of the tabernacle as “to war the warfare of the congregation,” or “to war the warfare of the tabernacle.” To do the work of the tabernacle was to war the warfare. Numbers 4:30 says, “From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, shalt thou number them, every one that entereth into the service, to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

Numbers 8:24–26 gives the same instruction: “Now this is that which belongeth unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service of the work, and shall serve no more: But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the charge, and shall do no service. Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge.”

These passages emphasize that the Levites had a guardianship. They were protectors of Aaron, the instruments, and the tabernacle. The word “keep” means to guard, to protect the sentry post.

Numbers 18 repeats this truth: “And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die.”

Everyone had separate duties. The Levites were joined unto the priests to keep the charge of the tabernacle—that is, to guard the sentry post of the tabernacle congregation—for all the service, or all the warfare, of the tabernacle. A stranger was not to come nigh unto them. The priests were to keep the charge, or guard the sentry post, of the sanctuary and the altar, that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel.

God said, “I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel. To you they are given as a gift for the Lord to do the service, or to do the warfare of the tabernacle and congregation. Therefore, thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for everything of the altar, and within the veil, and you shall serve. I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift, and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.” Once again, God said, “I've given all these Levites.”

They could not touch that inner sanctum or anything that the high priest and the sons of Aaron were to do. They were to guard the tabernacle, assist Aaron, guard its instruments, and guard the high priest. The word shemar means to guard, or to protect.

The Ark of the Covenant had been taken by the Philistines. God smoked the Philistines with emerods, and they sent the Ark back on a cart pulled by oxen. The children of Israel received the cart and the Ark, took it off the cart, and brought it to the house of Abinadab. First Samuel 7:1 says, “And the men of Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of

the LORD." When Eleazar was sanctified to keep the ark of the LORD, what was he to do? He was to stand there and guard it, to stand there and protect it.

What many of us do not realize is that in the tabernacle and in the temple, later on, there were armed guards. You did not simply enter the temple or tabernacle. If you had no business there, or no function or ministry there, you were not allowed beyond the court where you could go, if you were supposed to go there.

In 2 Kings 12:9, the Bible says, "But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bore a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar on the right side, as one cometh into the house of the Lord ... and the priests that kept the door put therein all the money that was brought into the house of the Lord." Notice the expression: "the priests that kept the door."

The same principle appears in 2 Chronicles 34:9: "...and when they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of Judah and Benjamin, and they returned to Jerusalem." There were Levites stationed at the doors. There were guards.

I have been in two churches in this country, one out west and one down south, where they literally had to have guards posted and the doors locked. They were not afraid of vandalism or of people merely trying to break in and create problems, but because of our government. Local governments had passed rules and laws saying that the pastor could not even preach unless he was licensed by the state.

One of those pastors said, "You're out of your mind. I'm not going to pay you money and take a license to do what God's already commanded me to do." They had to keep their doors locked and have men standing guard because this pastor had already been arrested three or four times and thrown in jail for preaching without a license.

Now they had armed guards. Everybody can quote this verse, yet we quote it all the time and never even think about it. Do you

remember what David said in Psalm 84 and verse 10? David said, “I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.” What does he mean by a doorkeeper? He means a guard who stood there by the door. David said, “I’d rather be a guard in the house of God, just standing there, than dwell in the tents of wickedness.”

Look back in your Bibles to 1 Chronicles chapter 23. There the normal priestly functions and this warrior function are listed for us in the Word of God. Begin with verse 27: “For by the last words of David, the Levites were numbered from 20 years old and above.” At first the age was 30, then it went down to 25, and now it is down to 20. He says, “...for by the last words of David the Levites were numbered from 20 years old and above, because their office...” Here was the Levitical office: “...their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the Lord in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of the holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God.” So the Levites helped the priest do certain things. That’s not all.

Notice that some of the Levites' duties were specified for the showbread, the fine flour for the meal offering, the unleavened cakes, and that which was baked in the pan or fried, along with every manner of measure and size. The Levites measured everything and got it ready. Verse 30 says that they were to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at evening. Morning and evening, another duty of the Levites was to praise God.

Verse 31 says they were to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the Lord on the Sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number and according to the order commanded continually before the Lord. They could help in those areas. But look at verse 32. In light of all these other duties, they were also to keep the charge—to guard the sentry post—of the tabernacle of the congregation, the holy place, the sons of Aaron, their brethren, and the service of the house of the Lord. The Levites did all these things: they guarded Aaron, guarded the instruments, and guarded the sanctuary.

Now, the interesting thing is this. Turn in your Bibles to 2 Chronicles chapter 23, because I want to show you a different mentality. I get tickled sometimes when I read the Scripture and

think about the mentality we exhibit today. Do you remember Waco and the Branch Davidians? I certainly do not know much about them, and I probably would not agree with Koresh's theology. I do not even know whether he was a Christian. But I know one thing the ATF charged: they had weapons in the church building. You remember that?

What they did not tell you was that a number of the men had federal firearms licenses, which was how they made money. They took weapons, reconditioned them, and sold them. Everything they had was perfectly legal, but they did not tell you that. We begin to think about weapons in the church house and say, “Oh man, come on, are you out of your mind?” Well, let me show you how the Bible teaches.

Here in 2 Chronicles 23, Jehoiada is the high priest. Joash is about to be anointed king, but Joash is a child—only about nine years old. His father, Ahaziah, died, and his grandmother, Athaliah, did a very un-grandmotherly thing: she murdered all of her grandchildren so she could be queen. The only reason she did not murder Joash was that his nurse snatched him and hid him. Now Jehoiada is going to make him king, while Athaliah sits on the throne as queen. They are having to do this thing rightly, so look at it.

Let us begin with verse 4: “This is the thing that ye shall do.” Jehoiada tells the people what they shall do: “A third part of you entering on the sabbath of the priests and of the Levites shall be porters of the doors.” A third of them shall guard the doors. “And a third part shall be at the king’s house, and a third part at the gate of the foundation, and all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the Lord.” Verse 6 continues: “But let none come into the house of the Lord, save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites; they shall go in, for they are holy: but all the people shall keep the watch of the Lord.”

The people were to keep watch outside, while the priests and Levites kept watch inside, because that was where they were supposed to be. Verse 7 says, “And the Levites shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand: and whosoever else cometh into the house, he shall be put to death: but

be ye with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out." Remember, we are talking about priests, preachers, and teachers. They were to guard the king, weapons in hand, even in the temple.

Look what Jehoiada said: "You folks stay out here in the court and on the outside. The priests and Levites are in here, and the priests and Levites are armed to the teeth. If anybody comes in this temple who is not supposed to be there, they are going to be put to death." But there was a problem: some of the others did not have weapons as they should have.

Watch verse 8: "So the Levites and all Judah did according to all the things that Jehoiada the priest had commanded, and took every man his men that were to come in on the Sabbath, with them that were to go out on the Sabbath: for Jehoiada the priest dismissed not the courses. Moreover Jehoiada the priest delivered unto the captains of the hundreds spears and bucklers and shields, that had been king David's, which were in the house of God." Where did they keep the weapons? In the temple.

The interesting thing is that, in the battle of Lexington, one of the men killed was old Caleb Monroe. Where did he fall? On the church house steps, running into the church building to get more powder for the colonial soldiers. They kept their weaponry in the church building. Here, when the captains of hundreds did not have enough weapons, Jehoiada said, "Hold it. I have a stash right here in the temple. I will share with you." Isn't that interesting?

We have dismissed the idea of a warrior function in the priesthood. I am going to show you the consequences of that shortly. But every time I have read the word keep in these passages, it has been the same exact Hebrew word, shemar, which means to keep, guard, and protect.

It is impossible to understand the New Testament without knowledge of the background of the Old Testament. We cannot understand the function of a warrior priest unless we understand that background. For instance, there are certain men in the New Testament about whom you may have wondered. Turn in your Bibles to Acts, chapter 4. Let me show you. Some of you may know, but I would guarantee that most of you would not know.

New Testament Captains of the Temple and the Greek Word Strategos

If I were to ask you who the Sadducees were, you could tell me. If I were to ask you who the Pharisees were, you could probably tell me. If I asked you who the scribes and the lawyers were, you could probably tell me. But look at Acts chapter 4, verse 1: "And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them." Who in the world was the captain of the temple? A little later we will find out there was more than one captain. Here, however, is a man designated as the captain of the temple.

Look in Acts chapter 5, verse 24: "Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow." Notice: the high priest and the captain of the temple. Skip down to verse 26: "Then went the captain with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned." Here was a captain with officers. He went and brought in the disciples without violence—not because he did not have authority to use violence, and not because he was not armed, but because he feared the people. They were outnumbered. Yet he is designated here as the captain of the temple.

Look in Luke chapter 22, verse 4. I told you there was more than one captain. Judas, betraying the Lord, "went his way, and communed with the chief priests and with the captains, how he might betray him unto them." Now he is dealing with the captains. Then, in verse 52, Jesus said unto the chief priest, and the captains of the temple, and the elders which were come to him, "Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves?" These captains and officers were armed. Our Lord says, "You have come out to take me as a thief. You have come out with swords and with staves." It is very obvious, as you read the New Testament, that there was more than one captain and that there were plenty of officers of the temple. It is very clear that these men were armed.

It is very clear that they had the authority to use those weapons. But where in the world did these men come from? Let me show you. Look in your Bibles to Acts chapter 16, beginning with verse 20. The

only reason I am going to read these verses is to show you one word, and then I am going to tell you what that one word is.

Acts 16:20 says, "...and brought them to the magistrates." You see that word magistrates? Look in verse 22: "...and the multitude rose up together against them, and the magistrates ran off their clothes." Verse 35 says, "...and on this day the magistrates sent the sergeants." Look in verse 36: "And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, the magistrates." Then, in verse 38, "and the sergeants told these words unto the magistrates." Every time you see the word magistrates here in Acts 16, it is from the Greek word strategos. That is the source of our military word strategy. It also comes from strategos, which is the Greek word for an army.

You can get a Greek lexicon and look up the word strategos. You will find its definition, written there in the Greek lexicon: a general, a governor, a military officer, the chief of the Levites.

Do you remember when we were in Numbers chapter 3 and verse 32? I told you there was a verse you needed to underline or mark. It was when Eleazar, the son of Aaron, was chief over the chief of the Levites. Here is the word strategos, translated magistrates, but it means not simply a magistrate. It means a general, a governor, a commandant, a military officer, the chief of the Levites.

Where did these captains of the temple come from in the New Testament? They were the Levites from the Old Testament who had the warrior function. They were the ones who were armed and protected the tabernacle, Aaron, and the instruments. Go back in your Bibles to Psalm 42. We are not going to read Psalm 42; we are only going to look at the heading, and I am going to tell you why.

The Korahites as Mighty Men of War

It says, "...to the chief musician, Maschil, for the sons of Korah." So Psalm 42 was a song, an ode, written for the sons of Korah, who were Levites, by the way, to sing. Psalm 42 was a psalm written specifically for the sons of Korah, that they might sing. Why is that important? Let us go back in our Bibles to the book of Numbers, chapter 16. In Numbers 16 there was a rebellion against Moses and Aaron. Numbers 16:1 says, "Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of

Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab and On, the sons of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men, and they rose up before Moses." These were men who rebelled against Moses and Aaron. Who were they? They were Korah, who happened to be the son of Izhar, who happened to be the son of Kohath, who happened to be the son of Levi.

The other two men were sons of the children of Reuben. The reason this is important is that whenever you see the word Korahites or Kohathites in your Bible, it refers to a family of the Levites, because Korah had sons. He was the son of Kohath and the son of Izhar, who was the son of Levi. Thus you have the Korahites, the Kohathites, and the Izharites, as well as the Levites. They were all Levites, but they were different families of the Levites.

God killed Korah, all the men involved in his rebellion, and the 250 princes who joined with him. In Numbers chapter 26, verse 11, Moses said, "Notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not." Many people left Dathan, Abiram, and Korah and came over to Moses. The children of Korah came over to Moses also. Therefore, when you come to Psalm 42, David writes that psalm for the children of Korah, who were Korahites, who were Levites, to sing.

I want you to look in your Bibles to 1 Chronicles 9:19. You see, these Korahites were very brave men.

"And Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brethren of the house of his father the Korahites," who were all Levites, "were over the work of the service, keepers, guardians, protectors of the gates of the tabernacle: and their fathers, being over the host of the Lord, were keepers of the entry." Their fathers were over the host, or army, of the Lord, and they were also keepers of the entry. The passage carefully identifies the Korahites as Levites, while identifying their fathers with responsibility over the army of the Lord.

Now look at 1 Chronicles 12:1–2. "Now these are they that came to David to Ziklag while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish. And they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war. They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand

and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows out of a bow, even of Saul's brethren of Benjamin."

In verse 6, among the mighty men, are Elkanah, Jesiah, Azareel, Joezer, Jashobeam, the Korahites, and Joelah and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham, of Gedor. The Gadites were men who were separated unto David and behold of the wilderness, men of might and men of war, fit for the battle, able to handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions and were swift as roes upon the mountains. Isn't it interesting? Right in the middle of those names, you have the Korahites, who were nothing more than Levites, listed as some of David's mighty men of war. They appear in the same company as men prepared for battle, men able to handle weapons, and men marked by courage and speed.

Failure of the Priests and National Judgment

Now let me ask you a question: What did Adam do? Adam failed to guard, protect, and keep his charge. What happened in the Levitical ministry in the Old Testament? Basically, they failed to guard, keep, and protect their charge. The very people appointed as keepers and guardians failed in that charge.

Look at 2 Chronicles 15:1–6. "And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: And he went out to meet Asa, and he said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah, and Benjamin. The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you."

Now look at verse 3: "Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law. But when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in. But great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries, and nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city. Watch, for God did vex them with all adversity."

How in the world could Israel be without the true God? The true God revealed Himself unto Israel. The true God chose Israel. How could Israel be without the true God? Here is how: they were without

a teaching priest and without the law. You must remember that a king rules by his law, and there had to be someone to teach that law.

Basically, these Levites had abdicated their position. They were not teaching the law of God. Consequently, it is said that the nation was without the true God. Look at the consequences. In verse 5: "And in those times"—that is, when they did not have the teaching priests, when they were not obeying the law—"there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in. But great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries. And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city, for God did vex them with all adversity."

Let me give you an illustration. When I was a boy—and contrary to popular opinion, that had not been all that long ago—my father was a farmer. We lived on a farm, and Dad had all kinds of expensive farm equipment: combines, tractors, whatever it took to farm five or six hundred acres. Yet about every Christmas, or at least sometime in December, Dad would take us on a two-week vacation down to Florida, where we had relatives, and we would stay and visit with them for two weeks.

We never locked a door. We never locked a window. When we came back, everything was exactly where we left it.

We are practically in the same position today. We are without the true God, basically, because we are without true preachers who truly preach the Word of God. Consequently, we have a country of violence, wickedness, theft, and ungodliness. Basically, the Levites failed in their guardianship. If you look in your Bibles to Romans chapter 2, you will see Paul really rebuking them for that. Remember, it was the priests and the Levites who were charged with teaching the law of God and the way of God. Look what Paul says, beginning in verse 21:

"Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? And thou that sayest to man should not commit adultery, dost thou not commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law through breaking the law, dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you as it is written."

The Church as Warrior Priests Today

He is saying, “Look, you failed. You did not protect anything. You went under.”

Now let me give you the Christian context. When old Israel apostatized from the faith, God defrocked her from the priesthood. In Matthew 21, beginning with verse 42, Jesus is speaking to the rulers:

“Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard these parables, they perceived that he spake of them. They understood. But look what he told them: the kingdom of God is taken from you.

You failed in your charge. You did not guard and protect. And now, just as I defrocked Adam, I am defrocking you. I want you to understand that we, as the true Israel of God, the new creation in Christ Jesus, have inherited the mantle of the priesthood. What does that mean? It means that our responsibility as Christians is to lead the world in righteousness. It is to protect ourselves and others by holy, godly living in obedience to King Jesus, who is the great High Priest.

In fact, we have a specific command from our Lord. Do you remember what He said in Matthew 28, verses 19 and 20? He said, Go in all the nations, preach the gospel, baptizing them, making disciples of them, and teach them to observe everything that I have commanded you. Guess what has happened in this land? We may have made a few disciples and baptized somebody, but we have not taught anybody anything. We are living in a land of absolute, total, abysmal ignorance when it comes to the Word of God.

Do you know what the Bible says in 1 Timothy 3:15? The church is the pillar and ground of truth. Where is truth today? It is vacant in

most of our churches; it is not there. The truth of the matter is this: we have a responsibility to protect and guard the truth. The way to protect and guard the truth is to declare it and establish it in every area of life, bringing our lives and the lives of others into full obedience to the Word of God.

Every one of you can probably quote Ephesians 6, verses 10 through 18. You remember where he said, Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand? We are to have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, the helmet of salvation, and the shield of faith. We are to have in our hand the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Do you realize that when most people quote that passage, they envision a Roman soldier and talk about his helmet and all this?

I've got news for you. Paul was not talking about a Roman soldier. Paul had in mind the armor of the high priest. All you have to do is read Exodus 28, Isaiah 59, and Isaiah 61, and you will find that Paul had in mind the military uniform of the high priest. Do you know the Bible, in 1 Thessalonians 5:8 and Romans 13:12, calls that the armor of light? Have you ever noticed in the Bible that it always depicts the Lord Jesus Christ at the head of an army—an army of warrior priests doing battle with the forces of darkness and winning decisive victories? Read Psalm 110. Read Revelation 19. What does our Lord do?

He comes on a white horse, and His army follows Him, and He makes war. You know what our biggest problem is as Christians? We have abdicated our position as warrior priests. We have literally given in and given up.

Look in your Bibles, in Matthew 16:18. I know you can quote this verse, but look what our Lord Jesus tells Peter: “And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock, that is, upon his confession, I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Now, you can go all through the Bible. Any time you read about the gates, it speaks of authority and power. The gates of hell shall not prevail against the church. The gate was the only way into a city in

Bible times, because the cities had walls around them. When our Lord said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail," it was not that hell was attacking the church. It was the fact that the church was attacking hell. Our Lord said the authority and the power of hell will not prevail.

You talk about abdicating our positions—we have basically retreated. We have given up. We have given over. We will not fight because we are afraid we might offend someone. Do you remember what our Lord told His disciples? They came up to Him and said, "Knowest thou not that thou hast offended the Pharisees?" Our Lord said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone."

Call to Courage and Repentance

"They be blind leaders of the blind, and they shall both fall in the ditch." Did it really upset our Lord that He had offended them? No. He said, "Let them alone." They were lost as a hound dog anyhow. Let them be upset.

The pattern I am trying to show you tonight is repeated over and over in Scripture. God provides a priest and gives him a charge not merely to work, but to protect, keep, and guard. That priest fails in his charge, and consequently the earth is crushed under the judgment of God. Adam failed to protect his bride in the Garden of Eden. She failed in the temptation, and as a consequence, the whole world is cursed.

Even Aaron the high priest deserted his post in Exodus chapter 32 and lapsed into idolatry; he was responsible for 3,000 people being executed. You remember how he built that golden calf? Aaron knew better.

The whole book of Judges illustrates this truth: God gives a man, the man fails, and the judgment of God comes on the country. We have so compromised the truth of God today that many professing Christians—please understand, I am using the word professing—advocate premarital sex, extramarital affairs, therapeutic divorce, compassionate abortion, governmental tyranny,

and legalized fraud and theft, all in the name of Christianity. I have news for you, folks.

There is no such thing as a benevolent socialism. There is no such thing as a Christian sodomite. There is no such thing as a biblical abortion. There is no such thing as a Therapeutic divorce. But you see what we have done? We have retreated. We have backed up. We have said, "All right. We give up. We give in. We give out. Have it any way you want it," instead of saying, "No! The world is wrong. Our society is wrong. And the government is wicked. That is wrong, and that is wrong. This is what God says, and here we stand."

That is where we ought to be. We ought to be fighters. We ought to be fierce. We ought to be courageous. Why? Because we have the sovereign God of the universe behind us. He has commanded us, "Be strong and of good courage." We are witnessing firsthand the death and demise of America, our culture, and our society—and it is our fault.

I do lay the charge primarily at the feet of the preachers. I understand that because they are responsible to teach and preach. But, dear friend, I might have a responsibility to teach and preach, but you equally have a responsibility to study, listen, heed, and obey. God can stir up a congregation in two ways. He can reach that pastor directly, and it is wonderful when He stirs up the preacher. But sometimes God does it in a roundabout way: He bypasses the preacher and stirs up a church member. Suddenly, that member starts asking questions. It is embarrassing to preachers when someone asks a question we cannot answer. We are supposed to know everything, are we not? Then the preacher becomes embarrassed and shamed into studying because some members have more insight than he does.

I do not care how God does it. I do not care whether God deals with preachers directly or shames us into studying and taking a stand. I care only that we wake up, that God gives us men, and gives us grace to serve Him effectually with reverence and godly fear.

If we lose our country or culture, do not blame wicked civil rulers or the ungodly. God said, "If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, turn from their wicked ways, and call upon

me, then I'll hear from heaven and heal their land." It's not the wicked with whom we must contend first and foremost, but our own wicked hearts. We must stand as warrior priests and say with Martin Luther of old, "God help me. Here I stand. I can do no other."

Let's pray. Father, thank You for the Lord Jesus Christ and the truth of God's Word. Thank You, Lord, that there were men, men that were truly mighty warriors in the faith. We're so cowardly and so scared, even of our own shadows, so many times. Like the disciples of old, when they prayed, the whole building was shaken and they were filled with holy boldness to preach and teach Your Word. O God, give us holy boldness and courage to praise, worship, and serve the only One who is God of gods and King of kings. In Jesus Christ's name we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 7

The Temple Tax

May 4, 2003

In Matthew 17:24–27, when Jesus and His disciples came to Capernaum, those who received tribute money came to Peter and asked, “Doth not your master pay tribute?” Peter said, “Yes.” When he came into the house, Jesus asked whether the kings of the earth took custom or tribute from their own children or from strangers. Peter answered, “Of strangers.” Jesus said, “Then are the children free.” Nevertheless, lest they should offend them, He instructed Peter to go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the first fish that came up. In its mouth Peter would find a piece of money, which he was to give for Jesus and himself.

Introduction: Misuse of Matthew 17

Matthew 17:24–27 is a passage that has been misused, abused, and taken out of context innumerable times. Just this week I was asked once again to explain it. It seems that a number of people wish to use this passage to prop up their views on unlimited submission to civil government. Let me make a statement, and please remember it: Civil government is not God. God is God.

God's Limited Delegation of Authority

It is difficult for me to comprehend that so many people have failed to grasp the truth that God alone is sovereign. God alone has unlimited jurisdiction, and consequently only God is to be given unlimited submission. All government outside God's government is limited, confined, and delegated.

It does not matter what kind of government we discuss—family, church or ecclesiastical, or civil. God has ordained each of these three institutions and has properly limited its authority, or sphere. As a husband and father, I can go only as far as God allows me to go in my proper role and sphere. I have no authority outside the Word of God, no authority to go beyond the Word of God, and certainly no authority to act contrary to it.

As a pastor and as a body of believers, we can function as a church only in the sphere God has ordained. We have no authority to go beyond the Word of God, even as a church. For instance, a church cannot discipline its people for non-sins. Church discipline may be exercised only for that which is sin.

Let me remind you once again what sin is. According to 1 John 3:4, the Bible says, "...whosoever committeth sin transgresseth the law, for sin is the transgression of the law." What is sin? Sin is a violation of the law of God; it is a violation of the Word of God. Sin does not mean something that you and I do not like, something with which we disagree, or something we do not understand. Sin does not rest upon our understanding, our agreement, or our likes. Sin is declared by the Word of God, especially the Law of God. Therefore, we cannot discipline people for what we know as non-sin.

Civil Government's Biblical Role

Even as a church group, then, we are limited by the Word of God. Romans 13 declares civil government to be God's deacon, His exactor of righteousness, and His public worship. Civil government, according to Romans 13, is not merely a power, an authority, or a jurisdiction. It is more than that.

In Romans 13:4, when God calls government His minister, the word diakonos occurs twice. Diakonos is where we get our English

word deacon, and deacon means minister or servant. Very obviously, God has ordained government to be His deacon first and foremost—that is, His servant. Secondly, the word exactor signifies an exactor of righteousness. God has ordained government to be His exactor of righteousness. In verse 6, the word for minister is once again leitourgos, meaning public worship; it is where we get our English word liturgy. Civil government, then, has been ordained not merely to be a power, authority, or jurisdiction, but to be God's deacon, God's exactor of righteousness, and God's public worship. Consequently, in verses 3 and 4, God limited civil government to two simple functions.

Protection of the innocent and the punishment of the unrighteous. Just as it is improper and sinful for a father and a husband to leave his sphere of authority and go over and beyond the word of God, and just as it is improper and sinful for a church to leave its proper sphere of authority and go over and beyond the word of God, likewise it is improper, and sinful I might add, for civil government to leave its proper sphere of function and go over and beyond the Word of God as well.

God only ordained three institutions. He ordained the family to be a ministry of education, the church a ministry of grace, and civil government to be a ministry of justice. Since God is the Sovereign, the Originator, and the Author and Creator of each of these three institutions—family, church, and civil government—is it reasonable to assume that He must therefore be in subjection to at least one of the institutions which He has ordained?

The answer is, of course, not. No one would say that we expect God to be the servant of the family, or the servant of the church; yet so many people want God to be the servant or slave to civil government. It is unreasonable to assume that God would have to be in subjection to anything that He created. God is transcendent; that is, God is above His creation. He is the transcendent God.

Christ's Exaltation and Headship

It is true that as a child, Jesus Christ was subject to His parents. But that is quite different. Christ came into this world to be our Lord and Savior, and part and parcel of that salvation was His obedience to

the law. He was sent here, and His time on earth, including His death and suffering, is known as His humiliation. After His humiliation, after He suffered and bled and died and gave a perfect obedience to the law of God, God raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His own right hand. That is referred to as His exaltation. Now that Jesus Christ has been exalted and raised from the dead, He is the Head of everything.

In Matthew 28:18 He said, "All authority in heaven and earth is given unto Me."

Let me ask you a question. If all authority in heaven and earth is given to Jesus Christ, how much is left for anyone else? None. What does that mean? It means that if I am a father and a husband, my authority is derived from Him. If I am a pastor and we are a church, our authority is derived from Him. If we are civil leaders and we have a civil government, what does it mean? Our authority is derived from Him and for Him alone. Listen carefully: Jesus Christ is not now in subjection to an earthly family, an earthly church, or an earthly civil government.

Scriptural Proof of Christ's Headship

He is the head of all things. Scripture specifically states that Christ is the head of everything. In 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 3, the Apostle Paul writes, “But I would have you to know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.” Now, who is the head of every man? The answer is Jesus Christ.

Turn to Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 22. Here we are talking about Jesus Christ and the fact that God has raised Him from the dead. Paul writes, “...and has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church.” God has put all things under His feet and has given Him to be the head over the church.

In Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 15, Paul writes again, “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, or who is the head, even Christ.” Then, in Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 23, he declares, “For the husband is the head of

the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body."

The Bible says concerning Christ, "For He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning and the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He, Christ, might have the preeminence." Colossians 2:10 says, "And you are complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power." It doesn't matter what the power is. It doesn't matter what the principality is. Christ is the head of all of it. The Bible says in 1 Peter 2:7 that Jesus Christ is the head of the corner. In other words, no matter how you look at it in Scripture, Scripture tells us that Jesus Christ is the head of everything. Scripture tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:27 that He, God the Father, hath put all things under His, God the Son's, feet.

So all things are put under His feet. What does that mean? It means that Jesus Christ is the Sovereign.

Having understood that Jesus Christ is the Head of everything, consider the implications of Matthew 17. There are individuals who try to interpret Matthew 17 as referring to a tax to the Roman government. Matthew 17:24 says, "And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? And he said, Yes. And when he was coming to the house, Jesus prevented him saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute?"

"Of their own children or of strangers? Peter said unto him, Of strangers. Jesus said unto him, Then are the children free."

If Matthew 17 refers to taxes of the Roman government, then Christ the Creator, Christ the Sovereign, Christ the Lord, Christ the Head of all things, by paying those taxes, would be bowing to the demands of a pagan, heathenistic, ungodly ruler.

Even if one tries to avoid this implication by saying, "But this was during our Lord's humiliation. This is while he was on earth," even then one must remember 1 Timothy 3:16: "And without all controversy, great is the mystery of godliness."

"God was manifest in the flesh." In other words, Jesus Christ was equally God in His humiliation as He is in His exaltation. Thus, you

would still have God bowing to the demands of a pagan, heathenistic, ungodly king.

Before we even get to Matthew 17, turn to John chapter 19. When Pilate tried to assert his authority over Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ told him how the cow ate the cabbage. John 19:9 says, "And he went again into the judgment hall and said to Jesus, 'Whence art thou?' But Jesus gave him no answer. Then said Pilate unto him, 'Speakest thou not to me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and I have power to release thee?' Jesus answered and said, 'Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.'"

What was He saying? "You're not my authority, Pilate. The only reason you have any authority is that God put you where you are. You have no rightful authority over me." The only reason Pilate was there was that God had given him the little bit of authority he possessed.

Now see the grave theological implications of an erroneous view of Matthew 17:24 through 27. If you interpret this passage as Jesus Christ paying tribute to the Roman government, then the kingdom of God is in subservience to the kingdom of man. Jesus Christ did not come to serve the Roman government. Jesus Christ came to serve His Father.

How do we get out of this dilemma? You might say, “Well, Pastor, how in the world do we get out of this dilemma? Because very obviously, the tax is paid.” We get out of the dilemma by studying Scripture and examining it in its context. Do you realize the tax, or tribute, demanded in verse 24 of Matthew chapter 17 was not a Roman tax? It was a temple tax.

The Tax in Matthew 17 is the Temple Tax

The temple tax was not something dreamed up by the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. It was a tax imposed by God Himself. The temple tax was what you and I would call the redemption money. It was the ransom price which every Israelite twenty years old and older paid, and was ordered to pay, for the support of the sanctuary.

Every Israelite twenty years old and over was to pay this half shekel. Exodus 30, beginning with verse 12, says, “When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord. When thou numberest them, that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them, this they shall give everyone that passeth among them that are numbered half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary, a shekel is 20 gerahs, a half a shekel shall be the offering of the Lord.”

Thus each Israelite twenty years old and older had to give this temple tax. It was an offering for the support of the sanctuary. Exodus 38:26 says, “...a bekah for every man, that is, a half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for everyone that went to be numbered from 20 years old and upward, were 600,000, 3,000, and 550 men.” The number was given there, and there was the half shekel. In 2 Chronicles 24, verse 6, we see how some of this was taken even in temple times.

In 2 Chronicles 24:6, the king called for Jehoiada, the high priest, and asked why he had not required the Levites to bring from Judah and Jerusalem the collection according to the commandment of Moses, the servant of the Lord, and of the congregation of Israel for the tabernacle of witness. The king was asking, “Why are you not observing God’s law? Why are you not receiving this half shekel the way God commanded it?” Verse 9 says, “And they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem to bring into the Lord the collection that Moses, the servant of God, laid upon Israel in the wilderness.” It was the collection commanded by Moses, the servant of the Lord, and by the congregation of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness. It was the collection laid upon Israel in the wilderness. The proclamation went through Judah and Jerusalem so that the collection would be brought into the Lord according to that commandment.

What you have in Matthew 17 is not a Roman tax; it is the tax of the temple. The tax amounted to a half shekel, equal in value to what we would call a didrachma. Matthew 17:24 says, “And when they came to Capernaum, they that received tribute money,” or the didrachma, “came to Peter and said, ‘Does your master pay the

didrachma?'" The didrachma was not a Roman coin but a Greek silver coin equivalent to the half shekel.

Remember that in the temple the money changers had their tables set up—the ones Jesus Christ drove out. They would say, "You can't bring that didrachma to the temple. That's a Greek coin. We're going to make you change it for a Jewish coin, but we're going to charge you a little interest or a little exchange rate." That is how they made their money. The didrachma was the coin of the time equal to the half shekel.

Therefore, the tax in Matthew 17 was not man-made, governmental, or a tax of Rome. Rome was not trying to assert its authority over Christ. This tax was the ransom given for the support of the sanctuary.

Let us go back to verse 24. There are innumerable questions that have to be answered. Verse 24 says, "And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter and said, 'Does not your master pay tribute?'" Verse 24 makes it clear that the men asking for the didrachma were men from Capernaum. Why did they ask Peter, "Does your master pay the didrachma?" We are not exactly sure, but there are several possible reasons.

They could have asked because they already knew Jesus Christ had several confrontations and conflicts with the scribes and Pharisees, and that He had destroyed their traditions and gone contrary to them. Secondly, they could have been asking in a reproachful manner, trying to cast aspersion upon Jesus Christ. Thirdly, according to the Word of God, the priests and Levites were exempt from this tax. They may have wanted to know, "Is your Master going to claim exemption as a priest?"

We do not really know why they asked Peter that particular question. But note in verse 24 that it was the men of Capernaum who asked this particular question about the ransom money. Why in the world would the men of Capernaum be asking this question?

Let me show you why. Hold Matthew 17, but go back in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 4, verse 13. Someone tell me very quickly: where was Jesus raised? Nazareth. He was brought up there and was called a Nazarene. But Matthew 4:13 says, "And leaving Nazareth,

He came and dwelt" in Capernaum, "which is upon the sea coast and the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim." So where was Jesus living at the time? In Capernaum.

Where did Peter live? Look in Matthew chapter 8 and verse 5. "And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him a centurion beseeching Him." I am calling this to your attention to show you this particular truth. Jesus entered where? Capernaum.

Jesus took care of the centurion's servant. He said unto the centurion, "Go thy ways, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." And his servant was healed at the same hour. When Jesus came into whose house? He saw Peter's wife's mother laid and sick of a fever, and He touched her. Where did Peter live? In Capernaum. That is where they were. So why then did the men of Capernaum come and ask Peter, "Does your Master pay the didrachma?" Both Peter and Christ were living in Capernaum at the time. Before Matthew 17, Peter and Christ had been away on a preaching mission. Matthew 16:13 says, "When Jesus came into the coast of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, 'Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?'" Thus, in Matthew 16, He was in the coast of Caesarea Philippi preaching, and in Matthew 17 He came back into His home in Capernaum. The men in Capernaum, who were responsible for the temple tribute, now asked Peter, "Does your master, does your teacher, pay the didrachma?"

Peter's Rash Vow and Christ's Rebuke

Notice an important truth in Matthew 17:27: "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up. When thou openest his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money, that take, and give it unto them, for me and thee." Christ said, "Peter, you go catch a fish. The first one you catch, only one you need to catch, open his mouth." There would be a coin there, sufficient to pay the tax for him and Peter. Why did Christ not order Peter to pay the tribute for all His disciples?

Now, let us think about that for a moment. First of all, the obvious answer is that only Peter and Christ lived in that area. We do not know exactly where all the others lived, but Peter and Christ were certainly living there. The second, and more important, reason is

that Peter had already volunteered Christ to pay in verse 25. They asked, “Doth your master pay tribute?” He said, “Yes.” Peter had volunteered, “Yes, my Master is going to pay this temple tax.” He did not volunteer anyone else; he only volunteered Christ. Regardless of whether Christ was obligated to pay for the support of the temple, Peter rashly volunteered Him to do so.

Let me tell you something about the Word of God and about giving your word: when you give your word, God expects you to keep it. Remember Joshua chapter 9. The children of Israel were going into the land, and God had told them to take their sword and kill all the Amorites, Hittites, and Jebusites. Suddenly, some men came to Joshua wearing rotten cast clouts for clothes, with their clothes falling to pieces. Their wine bottles were moldy, and their cheese and food were moldy. They said, “We want to make a treaty with you.” Joshua and the men asked, “How do we know that you are not of these people whom we are supposed to kill?” They answered, “Look at our clothes. We just got these before we left home. Look at our bread; it is fresh out of the oven. Look at our wine bottles. We have come from a long way off.”

No one checked with the Lord, and Joshua and the elders entered into a covenant with the Gibeonites. Only afterward did they discover that the Gibeonites were Amorites, the people they were supposed to have killed. God said, “Now you cannot kill them. You have given them your word. I expect you to keep it.” They made them drawers of water and hewers of wood, making them servants, but they could not kill them. They had given their word.

Ecclesiastes 5 shows us something about vows. Verse 2 says, "Be not rash with thy mouth and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God. For God is in heaven and thou upon earth, therefore, let thy words be few." God says, Watch what you say, and watch what you obligate yourself for.

“When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it. For he hath no pleasure in fools. Pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin. Neither say thou before the angel that it was an error. Wherefore, should God be angry at thy voice and destroy the work of thine hands?"

What does God say? When you give your word to Him, He expects you to keep it. He says you do not have to vow to Him, but when you vow, you keep your word. When you give your word, you keep it. You remember the old saying, “A man's word is his bond?” That used to be true in this country. Of course, it is not true any longer, but it should be true regarding the children of God. We should be men and women who give our word and keep our word.

So Peter was asked, “Does your master pay the didrachma?” He said, “Yes. Sure, we do. We pay it.” These men evidently came to Peter while he was out on the street. In Matthew 17:24, they asked him, “Doth your master pay tribute?” In verse 25, he answered, “Yes.” Then the next statement says, “And when he was coming to the house.” He was outside the house when these men approached him. When he walked into the house, undoubtedly he was probably going to tell Christ about the conversation. But before he could open his mouth, Christ said, “Peter, I've got a question for you.” Then He asked, “What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute?”

"Of their own children or strangers?" The word custom refers to toll, usually taxes in general, but especially a tax on wares—something like a sales tax or an import and export tax. The word tribute is actually the word for census, and it refers to a poll tax. It is the exact same word used in Matthew 22:17, when they come to Christ and say, "Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute or a poll tax unto Caesar, or not?" It really refers to a poll tax. Custom would refer to indirect taxes, and tribute would refer to direct taxes.

Our Lord says, "What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take indirect and direct taxes? Of their own children, or of strangers?" The word strangers literally means belonging to another, not one's own; foreign, strange, not of one's family, even an enemy.

So the question is, "Simon, of whom do the kings of the earth take custom, or toll? Of the children, or those whom they consider not their own family—those who are strangers and foreigners, even enemies?" Christ asks him this simple question, and Peter answers in verse 26, "And Peter said unto him, 'Of strangers.'" Kings do not

tax their own families. They do not tax their own children. Taxes always come from strangers, usually in the form of tribute, which means they come from a conquered territory or a conquered people. It is not the family who pays; it is the strangers who pay.

Then our Lord asks, "What thinkest thou, Simon, of whom do kings of the earth take custom and tribute, of their own children or of strangers?" Peter says unto him, "Of strangers." Then our Lord makes a remarkable and astounding observation. He says in verse 26, "Then are the children free." First of all, this statement, "Then are the children free," is an absolute rebuke to Peter.

He is not merely instructing Peter; He is rebuking Peter. You say, “How in the world can it be a rebuke to Peter?” Hold Matthew 17, but go in your Bibles to the book of Hebrews, chapter 3. Hebrews 3, and let us begin with verse 1. Very clearly, verse 1 tells us we are talking about Jesus Christ: “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.” We are considering Christ. Verse 2 tells us that Christ was faithful to the Father. Then he says in verse 3, “For this man,” that is Christ, “was counted worthy of more glory than Moses inasmuch as he who hath built the house hath more honor than the house. Now watch. For every house is built by some man, but he that built all things is God.”

“For Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son was over His own house. Whose house are we? If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”

Christ is the head of His own house. Was not Jesus Christ the Son of God by nature? Yes. Was not the temple His Father's house? Do you not remember in Luke 2 and verse 49, when His parents sought Him, He said, “Why is it that you sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?” And do you not remember in John 2 and verse 16, He told those people, “You've made My Father's house a den of thieves.” Christ was the head of His own house. And was He not, according to His own words in Matthew 12 and verse 6, greater than the temple? Well, of course. Was He not therefore free

from the temple tax? Yes. Was not Peter therefore free? Yes. Why? Because Peter was a son by adoption.

What does the Bible say in Galatians 4, 4–6? "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons, and because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

Our Lord was not simply instructing Peter; He was rebuking Peter, teaching Peter, and, I might also say, teaching us to think before we speak. When asked, "Does your master pay the temple tax?" Peter should have said no. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. As a son, He is free. Jesus Christ is head of His own house, and we are His sons by adoption. Therefore, we are free.

Go back to Matthew 17 and look at verse 26: "Jesus said unto him, 'Then are the children free.'" I told you there were astounding implications in what our Lord is saying. Here is the second one: Is it not clearly observable and undeniable that the government of this country was founded upon this principle? From where did our original, organic, constitutional, and republican form of government derive its money? Read the Constitution of the United States. It got it from duties, from imports and exports. That is it.

Why did it derive its money from imports and exports? Because the children were free. That is the way our founding fathers set it up. We were free until 1913, until the institution of the Federal Reserve Act and the progressive graduated income tax. Everywhere I go, I hear people say, "Well, I need to pay my taxes so I can support my government." If you think your tax monies run our government today, you are sadly mistaken.

How did our government fund itself under the Constitution from 1789 to 1913 and remain basically debt free? Debt free! Imports and exports, and that was it. The current taxation scheme does not fund or run the federal government. Our government gets its money by borrowing it. It borrows it into existence, without any regard to the Constitution. Taxes today merely help pay the interest of the

international bankers on the national debt, which itself, by the way, is based upon fraud.

I recently received an article written by Douglas Baker, a writer who lives and works in Washington, D.C., a professing Christian. I excerpted two paragraphs from it. The name of the article is "Taxation, a Moral Issue." He writes, "Nearly a century ago, the 16th Amendment to the Constitution, 1913, enabled the government to legally redistribute wealth under a law code touted at that time as just and fair."

In 1913, the tax was mainly to be imposed upon the rich—only the rich—because the common man would not be paying anything. When Franklin Delano Roosevelt instituted the Social Security tax, he promised that it would never be over $35 a year.

The 16th Amendment to the Constitution, in 1913, enabled the government to legally redistribute wealth under a law code touted at that time as just and fair. The amendment accomplished this goal through direct taxation on income. Proponents of the income tax defined justice in terms of forced compliance that would level society and create social equality. Opponents of the income tax saw it as theft by statute, a confiscation of wages earned through the efforts of hard work. Both sides understood something: government policies have far-reaching influence for good or ill on society. To impose a policy on the wages of workers, rich or poor, was a new level of intrusion that had only been used thus far in United States history for national emergencies such as the Civil War.

Such an action could not help but have a dramatic effect on the country's future. Taxes, when viewed under Scripture's guidance, are laden with theological implications. Understanding this, the framers of the Constitution crafted principles for a moral fiscal code prohibiting direct taxation of income and blocked off many blind alleys of escape for those who might later seek to use the law as a means for private gain at public expense.

With the passage of the 16th Amendment, an inevitable expansion of government has taken place, and with it a certain shaping of the nation's soul. Government is now seen more as a savior and less as a servant. The federal bureaucracy is so large and the tax code so

complicated that even the likes of Albert Einstein once declared, “The hardest thing in the world to understand is the federal income tax.”

Since 1913, there has been a drastic change in this country. President Ronald Reagan said, “There's a clear cause and effect here that is neat and predictable as a law of physics. As government expands, liberty contracts.” As government expands, liberty contracts.

As we neglect and turn from the truth of the Word of God, our liberty contracts or diminishes more and more. Do you realize that God's plan for His children is that we be free? Paul said in Galatians 5:1, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” We as God's children are free from the guilt and pollution of sin. We are free from traditions and tyranny. In 1 Corinthians 7:23, he tells us that we are not to be the slaves of any man. We are to be free, not under tyrants and not under dictatorships.

However, freedom is to be found only in obedience to Jesus Christ and His Word. Christ emphasizes this truth to Peter when He says, “Then are the children free.”

I encourage you to go back and read 1 Samuel 8. There the children of Israel chose a man for their king and rejected God. The only way to understand that chapter is to see it as a transition from one law structure to another. They were leaving God's law structure and submitting themselves to man's law structure. God said, “If you want a king, I will give him to you, but I am going to tell you what he is going to do to you.” Then look at everything that king would do and compare it with what is happening in this country today. The government that we have today is the price we are paying as a people and as a nation for rejecting God and His law.

Christ's Gracious Provision and Peter's Responsibility

You may say, “Brother, we understand everything that you have just told us, but Christ did pay the temple tax.” Yes, He did. But notice where the money to pay the temple tax came from. In Matthew 17:27, our Lord says, “Notwithstanding this, we should offend them,

go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up: and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee." So where did the money come from? From a fish.

The money did not come out of the treasury. The disciples had a treasury, and Judas carried the bag. Look in the book of John, chapter 12 and verse 6. The Word of God says, "This He said," speaking of Judas, "not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief and had the bag and bare what was put therein." There was a treasury, and there was money in it. Look in John chapter 13 and verse 29: "For some of them thought because Judas had the bag that Jesus had sent unto him, 'Buy those things that we have need of against the feast,' or that he should give something to the poor." Thus, the disciples possessed a treasury, Judas had the bag, and money was kept there for necessary purchases and for giving to the poor.

Why did Jesus Christ not simply take the money out of the treasury? The money was there. It was because Peter had gotten them into this situation, and the rest of the disciples were not responsible for Peter's rash actions. Why should they suffer for something Peter had done? The rest did not have to go fishing; only Peter had to go. Peter was the one who got them into the mess. Therefore our Lord said, "All right, Peter, you go and get the money. It is not coming out of the treasury."

Since Peter had given his word and had already volunteered to pay the tax, our Lord said, "Lest we should offend them." That is, lest they give them a ground for rejecting the message of Christ. Since Peter had given them his word, Christ expected him to keep it: "You go catch the fish, get the coin, and pay for it." Neither Christ nor Peter owed the tax.

The "them" does not necessarily refer to the men collecting the temple tax. It could refer to other persons in Capernaum who would not understand the spirituality or reality of Christ's message and might think that, by not paying the tax, He was setting Himself in opposition to the temple. Peter had opened his mouth and committed them rashly. He had to take care of it: go fishing, catch the fish, do the work, and pay the temple tribute.

Let me make several applications. The first should be obvious: see the wondrous omniscience of our Lord. He not only knew Peter's conversation; He knows everything. Peter had been outside talking with the men who gathered the temple tax, and when he walked inside, our Lord already knew exactly what was happening. The omniscience of Jesus Christ means that He knows everything possible, everything actual, all past, all present, and all future.

Applications: Omniscience, Grace, Sovereignty, and Freedom

It was the psalmist in Psalm 139 who said, “...thou hast beset me before.” He said, “...such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high. I cannot attain unto it.” He said, “...there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.” Our Lord knows our words. Even when we think no one else is around or listening, God hears and God knows.

So we need to make sure we guard our mouths. Better, he says, that thou shouldest not vow, and thou shouldest vow not pay. Why should you allow your mouth to suffer you to sin?

Here's the second application, and to me, this is astounding. I want you to consider the marvelous graciousness of Christ in helping His children out of situations that they have rashly gotten themselves into without thinking. Have you ever gotten yourself in a mess because of your own stupidity? I mean, man, I have. And isn't it marvelous and a miracle of grace that when you realize it, you say, "Oh God, how could I have ever been so stupid? Lord, if You just get me out of this mess, I won't ever do it again." And guess what? He gets you out, and you do it again. And He still gets you out again.

"Peter, you shouldn't have said yes, but now that you've said yes, I'm going to get you out of it. But you're going to be the one doing the work, and you're going to be doing the footwork. You go catch the fish. You go pay the temple tax."

The third application is this: We must also observe Christ's absolute knowledge and His control over all creation. You know, the amazing thing to me is not just that Christ knew a specific fish that had a specific coin in its mouth or stomach that would be sufficient.

Peter went, and our Lord said, "You drop the hook in, and the first fish that comes up." The Lord sent that one fish out of all the fishes in the sea—the one fish that had the coin in its mouth. You know, the Bible says in Psalm 50, verse 10, God says it like this: "For every beast of the forest is mine and the cattle upon a thousand hills." Our Lord controls all creation.

I will tell you this, and those of you that know me know it's true: The Lord has blessed me in hunting many times. I'm thankful because we love venison, and that's basically the meat we eat all the time. But I'll give you a little secret. One reason why I've been so successful in hunting is that when I go hunting, I pray. I say, "Lord, please send me the deer that You've appointed to die this day." Well, they die every day, don't they? Well, sure they do. "Lord, You just send me the one that is going to meet our needs."

He has control of them. Let me tell you something, folks: If God doesn't send an animal to you, you hunt in vain. It's that simple. You remember how, when Jacob was deceiving Isaac, his father, he went out and got that goat, and his mother fixed it up and made it taste like venison?

Now, she was a cook. And so Isaac did not discern Jacob, and he said, "How is it thou returnest so soon, my son?" And Jacob said, "The Lord thy God sent it to me." That's what I ask the Lord to do: send it to me, Lord. Well, he sent that one fish to Peter. You know, that just gives me an idea. Maybe this year I'll ask the Lord to send me a deer with a gold coin in his mouth. Now, that would be wonderful, wouldn't it? Or gold-plated antlers or something.

Here is the fourth application. Look in verse 26: "Peter said unto him, 'Of strangers.' Jesus said unto him, 'Then are the children free.'"

Think about this. If we as Americans were free until 1913, and are no longer free now but are held under tribute, the only deduction that can be made is that we have been taken over by an alien law order, one that is no longer constitutional. Do you realize that in 1913 there was a change in our form of government without a shot ever being fired? We no longer have a constitutional republic and, consequently, we are no longer free in our own land. There has to be

a different form of government operating rather than the one established by our founding fathers, because under them the children were free. Today, the children are enslaved.

Here is the fifth application. The children of the kingdom, the sons of God, are the living Temple and cannot be brought back into bondage by legalism, traditionalism, and Phariseeism. Read Ephesians 2, verses 19 through 22. We are living stones. We are the house of God. One of the greatest dangers to the church of Jesus Christ is that people keep trying to bring the church into bondage to that which is not biblical and that which is not scriptural.

The Church's Separate Jurisdiction

There are so many churches that are overrun and eaten up with traditions. It is unbelievable. We cannot be bound by traditions; we must be bound by the Word of God.

Let me give you one final application. I want you to think about this. This is so serious. For the record, if you have not been able to make the necessary deduction from Scripture, allow me to say it plainly: The Church of Jesus Christ is not, will not, and cannot be dominated by any other institution or jurisdiction. Such submission or domination would be nothing less than a denial of the headship, lordship, and sovereignty of Jesus Christ.

Civil government has no authority over the Church of Jesus Christ. It is a totally separate jurisdiction. Civil government does not have the right to dictate anything, demand anything, or mandate anything. Why? Because Christ is Lord over His own house. All government—family, church, and civil—is subject to Christ. Christ is subject to none, for He is the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth.

Now, let me point this out, because I want you to understand that the concept I am teaching you today has been around and has been believed for centuries. If you say, "Well, I've never heard of it," you need to come to church more often, because I've preached it before. Let me give you one clear illustration. During the Byzantine Empire, which lasted a thousand years, the church was a totally separate jurisdiction. If a murderer—and the Word of God certainly does not condone murder; I am just using this for an illustration—got away

from the civil authority and made it into a church building, guess what? All the civil authority and army could do would be to surround the property. They would not step one foot onto that church property or go into that church building because they had absolutely no authority and no jurisdiction.

What they did was simply keep outside and wait until either the pastor talked the man into giving himself up or the man voluntarily came out. They would not go into the church building after him. They had no authority.

Did you know that in England there were crosses set up at specific intersections throughout the country? Do you know where the term crossroads came from? Not just because two roads crossed. If the civil authority was after you for some reason, whether you were guilty or not, and you made it to one of those crossroads where a cross stood and held on to it, the civil government could not touch you until the church came and got you, listened to you, and found out whether you had really committed any crime worthy of civil government's punishment. If so, they turned you over to the civil government.

All I am trying to point out is this: the church has always been a separate jurisdiction. It is only in times of apathy, ignorance, and apostasy that civil government has usurped the throne of God. If someone tries to take Matthew 17 and says, “Well, Christ pays a tribute,” interpreting that as a Roman tax, it is absolutely blasphemous. For that would be to say that the kingdom of God is in subjection to the kingdom of man, which is absolute and utter blasphemy. The kingdom of man does not rule over everything. The kingdom of God does, for God alone is sovereign.

Father, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ for Your grace, Your mercy, and Your love toward us. Teach us, build us up in the most holy faith, and help us to see and comprehend the principles of the Word of God and make the proper applications to our lives. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 8

An Election Sermon

April 18, 2004

Weaver's Introduction

Introduction to the Historical Sermon

I am presenting a sermon by Pastor Gad Hitchcock, preached in Massachusetts in 1774. The first part of this message is my introduction, spoken as Hitchcock to explain the historical significance of election sermons. His original message begins with the second reading of the Scripture. I have shortened his sermon because of time constraints, while trying to preserve its continuity. In one or two places I added a word to clarify its reference to the text.

Our forefathers were highly educated men, as were the people to whom they preached. Consider the straightforwardness of their biblical teaching and preaching. No wonder our country was founded on such a biblical basis.

Gad Hitchcock was born in western Massachusetts in 1718 and educated for the ministry at Harvard University. He became the first

pastor of a newly organized Congregational church in Pembroke, on the outskirts of Boston. In 1746 the West Precinct erected a meetinghouse and asked Hitchcock, an outspoken patriot and tremendous preacher, to be their pastor. He served that congregation for fifty-five years, until his death. George Barstow came in 1803 and served until his death in 1826.

When Hitchcock was asked to preach this election sermon, he did not know that he would preach before General Thomas Gage, newly appointed governor of Massachusetts by King George III. Gage came with a shipload of British troops to straighten out the rebellious colonists. Hitchcock did not flinch or hold back because of who was in his congregation. He preached before the Council and House of Representatives on May 25, 1774.

The Purpose of Election Sermons

Proverbs 29:2 says, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. But when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn."

One intent of the election sermon is to provide a means whereby our people can be effectually educated as to the nature and duties of civil government. Election sermons will have a tradition spanning many years into the future. Hopefully, their influence upon our country will never fall into disuse. An election sermon is preached on the morning of a general election in a township or city.

The Purpose and Importance of Election Sermons

These sermons, ordered by the state legislatures, have a fivefold purpose: to instruct the people on the biblical foundations of social order; to declare the true nature and legitimate functions of civil government; to teach the duties of citizens under God; to teach the duties of civil magistrates under God; and to present the biblical qualifications of those fit for leadership.

It is the common belief that a nation well instructed in biblical politics will be preserved from tyranny and the common corruption of nations which ignore God's laws. Our election sermons are therefore preached, printed, and widely distributed through the colonies, often becoming the object of discussion for weeks. They

expose the tyranny of King George and the English Parliament, reveal their usurpation of authority belonging to God alone, and teach the people how to respond.

Samuel Cook's sermon of 1770 says, "Rulers are appointed to be ministers of God for good. The people have a right to expect this from them and to require it, not as an act of grace, but as their reasonable due."

The Gospel Applied to Government

It is the express or implicit condition upon which they were chosen and continued in public office that they attend continually upon this very thing. In justice to the people, and in thankfulness to God, they must either sustain it with fidelity or resign the office.

This preaching provokes the charge that ministers preach politics instead of the gospel. We reply that we are indeed preaching the gospel, for it teaches that there is one King whom men should worship and serve, and one law which ought to be honored by all men and nations.

All of God's Word is good news and should be obeyed by everyone, including rulers. God's Word is to be applied to every sphere of life, including government. Many think of rulers as gods and treat them as if they sat upon God's throne. Such action is a denial of God's sovereignty and is contrary to Scripture.

Warning Against Neglecting Election Sermons

I foresee and fear that a problem will arise in our beloved country: our nation shall turn away from the election sermon. Consequently, we will become ignorant and uneducated as to the responsibilities of civil government. We will not know what we owe the government, nor what the government owes to us. Due to our ignorance, we will either become apathetic or rebellious. In our apathy, we will think that nothing can be done, so there is no use in trying. In our rebellion, we will not care whether things change or not.

A covenant-breaking people are not going to be given covenant-keeping rulers. Even when God moves upon godly men to run for office, we will scorn them. We will not vote for, follow, or

support them. Men desire leaders like themselves. We will have immoral, childish leaders because we will have become an immoral, childish people. We will desire rebellious leaders because we are rebellious people. We will not want biblical, godly leadership because we will not want to be a biblical, godly people.

Election sermons are as much a part of the stately and imposing ceremonies as the election itself. The ablest divines of the colony are invited to deliver them—not as a mere compliment to religion. They are not listened to simply with ordinary worship's decorum, but with the deep interest of those seeking light and instruction. Our preachers do not confine themselves to doctrinal truths or mere exhortation to godly behavior. We grapple with the great question of the rights of man, especially the rights of the colonists in their controversy with the mother country.

In listening to and reading our discourses, we desire that our people come to possess a thorough knowledge of the origin, nature, character, and end of all true government. We are not interested in empty or high-sounding phrases like liberty and equality. We wish to demonstrate the foundations of society, show what the natural rights of man are, and how those rights become modified when men gather into communities; how all laws and regulations are designed to be for the good of the governed; and that the object of concentrated power is to protect, not invade, personal liberty.

The Right of Resistance to Tyranny

When government fails to protect and oppresses instead, when it assails rather than defends rights, resistance becomes lawful, yea, obligatory. Election sermons are regarded as the political pamphlets of the day. Through them, thorough instruction in the duties and powers of government and the reciprocal obligations of the people and the mother country is reduced to a system.

God is upon His throne. Whatever the circumstances, He rules sovereignly and supremely. We must never give up in despair. As surely as God judges and destroys nations, He revives and blesses them. The God who judged Israel restored them in response to the prayers and labors of a very small minority who set their hearts to honor Him.

If we desire our nation's restoration, we must repent of our own sin and the sins of our nation. Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, and others confessed both. We must devote ourselves to true Christian education, training a generation wise in the things of God. We must give ourselves to preaching the gospel, teaching all things Christ has commanded. The people will never desire godly leaders until they desire God.

We must pray. Our God delights in bringing victory out of apparent certain defeat. Now is the time to seek Him, fast and pray, and beg God to turn to us again. Samuel Langdon said in an election sermon in 1775, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

The enemy has reproached us for calling on His name and professing our trust in Him. They have made a mock of our solemn fasts and every appearance of serious Christianity in the land. On this account, by way of contempt, they call us saints, that they may keep themselves at the greatest distance from this character. Their mouths are full of horrid blasphemies, cursing and bitterness, and then all the rage of malice and barbarity.

And may we not be confident that the Most High, who regards these things, will vindicate His own honor and plead our righteous cause against such enemies of His government as well as our liberties. Oh, may our camp be free from every accursed thing. May our land be purged from all its sins. May we be truly a holy people in all of our town's cities of righteousness.

Only when God's people are devoted to righteousness in public and private can we have confidence that God will fight for us. Let us humble ourselves and turn from our wicked ways, that God may hear our cries from heaven and turn and heal our lands.

Hitchcock's Sermon as Delivered

SCRIPTURE READING - Proverbs 29:2 (KJV)

> "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. But when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn."

This is the observation of a wise ruler relative to civil government and the different effects of its administration according as it is placed in good or bad hands. And it having been preserved in the

sacred oracles, not without providential direction, equally for the advantage of succeeding rulers and other men of every class and society, it will not be thought improper by any who have a veneration for revelation that the instruction of princes to make it the subject of our present consideration, especially as our civil rulers, in acknowledgment of a superintending providence, have invited us into this temple this morning to ask counsel of God in respect to the great affairs of this anniversary and the general conduct of government. Accordingly, I shall take occasion from it to make a few general remarks on the nature and end of civil government, point out some of the qualifications of rulers, and then apply the subject to the design of our assembling together. The people mentioned, that is in Proverbs 29 and verse 2, are already a body politic. Civil government is already established among them. The measures which rulers pursue are generally good or bad, promotive of the public happiness, or the contrary, as they are in their moral character. Whether righteousness is to be restricted merely to the venue of justice, or considered as comprehensive in the entire character of piety and religion, where it is said, as in the place before us, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice." It may justly be affirmed that many such character are by far the fittest, other accomplishments being equal, to be entrusted with the civil interest of a community, and the people are the most likely to feel the salutary effects of government and be happy in their administration. Religious rulers are, in every view, blessings to society. Their laws are just and good, their measures mild and humane, and their example morally engaging.

"Veneration for the authority of the supreme ruler of the world prevailing in our hearts is the most effectual security of affection to the public, which is a qualification absolutely indispensable."

Here I pause Hitchcock's sermon: it is absolutely necessary that the ruler be a believer.

He continues, "The vices of a ruler pervert the due exercise of his authority to the disadvantage of the community and mark his public conduct with oppression and ruin."

And we are not to think it strange if the people fall into perplexity and mourning in consequence. The safety of society greatly depends

on the good disposition of rulers and the regard they have to the equity in their measures of government. If they rule in the fear of God, they will make His laws their pattern in framing and executing their own. In such a government, rulers have their distinctive powers assigned them by the people who are the only source of civil authority on earth, with the view of having them exercised for the public advantage. And in proportion as this worthy end of their investiture is kept in sight and prosecuted, the bands of society are strengthened and its interests promoted. But if it be overlooked and disregarded, and another set up as the object of their pursuit, we will suppose it should be but by one of the supreme branches, or indeed by a single member of any, who happens to be of the leading influence and great abilities, it will go far into making a schism in the body. Calamity and distress may be expected in a measure to ensue. We need not pass the limits of our own nation of sad instances of this, whether or how far it has been exemplified in any of the American colonies, whose governments in general are nearly copies of the happy British original, by the operation of ministerial unconstitutional measures, or the public conduct of some among ourselves, is not for me to determine. It is, however, certain that the people mourn. May God turn their mourning into joy and comfort them and make them rejoice from their sorrow. Rulers are under the most sacred ties to consult the good of society. It is the only grand design of their appointment. For the promotion of this valuable end, they ordained of God and clothed with authority by men. But it has been objected that the doctrine which teaches that the people are the source of civil authority, and that they may lawfully oppose those rulers who make ill use of it, is likely to be attended with the worst of consequences, occasioned disturbance, revolutions in the states, and render the situation of rulers perpetually unsafe and dangerous. If the rulers are of the latter character mentioned in our text, that is, wicked, the safety of the community forbids any attempt or disposition to make their situation easy. And I trust the objection is without force in regard to those of the former, that is, righteous. It is altogether unreasonable to suppose a number of persons, by a free and voluntary contract, should give up themselves their families and estates so absolutely into the hands of any rulers as not to make a reserve of the right of saving themselves from ruin. And if they should, the bargain would be void as counteracting the will of heaven

and the powerful law of self-preservation. It must be granted that the people have a right in some circumstances, or they have no right in any, to oppose their rulers. There is no medium.

A sober and rational inquiry into the consequences of each supposition is the best method to determine on which side the truth lies. Now listen carefully. If it be true that no rulers can be safe where the doctrine of resistance is taught, it must be true that no nation can be safe where the contrary is taught. If it be true that this disposes men of turbulent spirits to oppose the best rulers, it is as true that the other disposes princes of evil minds to enslave and ruin the best and most submissive subjects. If it be true that this encourages all public disturbance and all revolutions whatsoever, it is true that the other encourages all tyranny and all the most intolerable persecutions and oppressions imaginable. The end of government certainly requires men of such righteous dispositions and sentiments to rule over the people. Prerogative itself is not a power to do anything it pleases, but a power to do some things for the good of the community in such cases as promulgated laws are not able to provide for it. On these principles, it is reasonable to expect that His Excellency who is lately appointed to the government of this province, and of whose candor and moderation we have heard with pleasure, will enter on the duties of this high station with honor to himself and advantage to the public, and make the happiness of the people the great object of his administration, which is the surest way to conciliate their affections and establish his own authority. We wish His Excellency much of the divine presence and guidance. the supports of religion, and the plaudits of his final judge. The ancient advice dictated to Moses by the priests of Midian and approved of God is admirably calculated, civil fathers, for your direction on this occasion. It is a significant compendium of the qualifications of the persons whom you ought to favor in your suffrages. "Thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over you." The present situation of our public affairs requires good degrees of knowledge, firmness of spirit, patriotism, and the fear of God in those who stand at the helm and guide the state. They should be men able to investigate the sources of our evils, point out adequate remedies, and then have resolution and public spirit to apply them.

Qualifications of Righteous Rulers

I pause to emphasize what Hitchcock has said about the public affairs of 1774: the civil rulers needed knowledge, firmness of spirit, patriotism, and the fear of God. They needed to investigate the sources of the evils, identify adequate remedies, and possess the resolution and public spirit to apply them.

He continues, "Our danger is not visionary, but real. Our contention is not about trifles, but about liberty and property. And not ours only, but those of posterity to the latest generations. And every lover of mankind will allow that these are important objects, too inestimably precious and valuable enjoyments to be treated with neglect or tamely surrendered. For however some few I speak it with regret and astonishment, even from among ourselves, appear sufficiently disposed to ridicule the rights of America and the liberties of its subjects." His plain, St. Paul, who was a good judge, had a very different sense of them. He was on all occasions for standing fast, not only in the liberties which Christ had made him free from the Jewish law of ceremonies, but also in that liberty with which the laws of nature, the land of the Roman state, had made him free from oppression and tyranny. If I am mistaken in supposing plans are formed in executing subversive to our natural and charter rights and privileges, and incompatible with every idea of liberty, all America is mistaken with me. Our continued complaints, our repeated humble but fruitless unregarded petitions and remonstrances, and if I may be allowed the sacred illusion, our groanings which cannot be uttered, or at once indications of our sufferings and the feelings since we have of them. Let the Governor and his Chair of State hear it. We not only mourn but with groanings which cannot be uttered, and all because the wicked rule. The castle cannot shelter him from that scorching thunderbolt. Families are divided. Brother is arrayed against brother. Friend against friend. Society is cut loose from its moorings, and hate and consternation reign on every side, and all because the wicked bear rule. King George may say that the evils that produce the state of things are imaginary, but I tell you, and I tell the tyrant to his face, it's because the wicked bear rule. We think we're injured. We believe we're denied some of these privileges enjoyed by our fellow subjects in

Great Britain, which have not only been insured us by royal charter, but which we have a natural independent right to.

Exhortation to Trust God and Maintain Order

And it bears harder on our spirits when we recollect the deep and wrought affection we have always had for the parent state, our well-known loyalty to our sovereign, and our unremitting attachment to his illustrious house, as well as the ineffable toils, hardships, and dangers which our fathers endured, unassisted but by heaven, in planting this American wilderness and turning it into a fruitful field. But in such circumstances, we place great confidence in the wisdom and patriotism of our civil rulers. Our eyes are fixed on them. And under the smiles of heaven, we expect a redress of our grievances by their instrumentality, or at least that they will not be wanting in anything in their power consistent with the duties of their station to affect it. We sincerely hope and trust the elections of this day will turn on men who shall be disposed in their proper department to restore and establish our rights. Men acquainted with the several powers vested in this honorable board and determined with persevering spirit to assert and uphold them. Men, in every view, friendly to the constitution of government in this province and resolved to maintain it undiminished and entire. You will please remember, gentlemen, that in this weighty affair, you do not act merely for yourselves. You act for the whole community. Every member has an interest in this transaction. But above all, suffer me to remind you that you act for God and under His inspection, by whose providence this trust is committed to you, and that you must one day give an account to Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire for the motives of your conduct. But while we are disposed to assert our rights and hold our liberties sacred, let us not decline from our former temper and despise government, but may we always be ready to esteem and support it in its truest dignity and majesty. Let us respect and honor our civil rulers as much as possible, lighten their burdens by a cheerful obedience to their laws, without which the great end of government, that is the public safety and happiness, cannot be promoted. Under the pressing, drawing weight of our public troubles and difficulties, our hearts, though perplexed, have not fainted. We wait for the salvation of God. It is better to put trust

in the Lord than to put confidence in princes. Let us go on to trust in Him till God Himself rise to save us. Let us not divide and crumble into parties on little irregularities, which, however aggravated by some, are in our circumstances almost unavoidable. But may we have that wisdom which is profitable to direct and distinguish between what has and what has not, a tendency to remove our burdens and prolong our just rights and liberties.

Especially, let us be on our guard against the spirit of licentiousness, which is the reproach of true liberty and has been the overthrow of free governments. By whatever titles and characters we may be distinguished in the limited governments of this world, let it bear on our hearts that we are all subjects of the divine universal government which is administered in righteousness and must shortly render an account of our conduct under it to God the judge of all. If this important consideration was duly impressed on the minds of all ranks and orders of men, it would lead us to acquire and cultivate the spirit of the gospel which is a spirit of love and benevolence, and beget a conduct which, while it ripens us through grace for immortality and glory, would be greatly promotive of the present benefit of human society. And when, by the efficacious influence of the Blessed Spirit, our rational and immortal part is established in its just supremacy, when our appetites and passions are subject to its authority and our desires regular, modest, and just, shall our righteousness go forth as brightness, and our salvation as a lamp that burneth. Amen.

Weaver's Commentary

Weaver's Modern Application

His preaching was a little different from mine. Do you know why this man simply spoke the truth and did not show you chapter and verse over and over? Because back then everyone already knew those truths. They were not only well-rounded in Scripture; they were well-grounded in a lot of the ancient writings. They already knew Samuel Rutherford's book, Lex Rex. They already knew Vindiciae contra Tyrannos, that is, A Vindication of Liberty Against Tyrants. They already knew Thomas Comber's book, A Christian View of the

Civil Magistrate. And so this man was able simply to lay out the truth to these people.

May I ask you, was I not right in the introduction when I was speaking as Gad Hitchcock, when I said, I fear that if these election sermons ever cease, we will degenerate into an ignorant people full of apathy and rebellion? The average American—I am going to go further, the average Christian—knows nothing of the biblical teaching on civil government. They know nothing of what government owes us or what we owe government. If you were to ask the average individual today, what does the government owe you?

They would say, "A welfare check, Social Security, and retirement." Government does not even owe you any of those—not according to the Bible. All the government owes us is justice and to protect us by punishing the wicked. We have indeed degenerated into what Gad Hitchcock was fearful of. I find it amazing, as I study history, that those pastors trained their people so thoroughly that the people were one with their pastors, not only in understanding but also in attitude and determination.

Everyone here has heard of the shot heard around the world. You remember the first shot fired at Lexington and Concord, when men assembled on the Village Green to confront the English invaders. But what most people do not know is that the Village Green was actually right in front of a church; it was a churchyard. The pastor of that church was Jonas Clark. The night before, John Hancock and Sam Adams had to get out of Boston, and they fled there and spent the night with Jonas Clark. They were up late during the night. They knew the English were coming, and they asked Jonas Clark, "Will your men fight?" Jonas Clark assured them that his men would fight.

"I have taught them and trained them for this very hour." Do you know who the leader of that resistance was? Who was their pastor? When those men assembled on that green, they knew that some of them would not walk off it. Five were killed that day. One of the strongest wrestlers in Lexington was killed. He had vowed that he would never run from a British ball or a British bayonet, and he did not. He was not only shot through, but bayoneted as well. One old gray-headed man was killed, and he fell on the church steps while

running to get more powder for the men. The ball and powder were stored in the church building.

Now do you see why Gad Hitchcock was saying that there comes a time when resistance is not only lawful, but obligatory? We are obligated to defend our lives, our families, and our posterity. God does indeed lay down the qualifications for rulers. He does indeed lay down the fact that He instituted civil government. But He also laid down the limitations of that government. Government is not sovereign. Government is not supreme. Only God is sovereign. Only God is supreme. All authority is limited and confined by the sovereign God of the universe.

I do not care if it is a husband, a pastor, a government, a state, or a nation. All are limited, confined, and bounded by the sovereignty of God. Picture Gad Hitchcock standing before British General Thomas Gage, with hundreds of redcoat soldiers surrounding the newly appointed Governor of Massachusetts. Picture Gad Hitchcock saying to the general, "The castle cannot shelter you from the coming thunderbolt. Let the governor in his chair hear it."

King George may say that the evils we are experiencing in this country are imaginary, but I will tell you—and I will tell the tyrant to his face—it is because of the wicked bear rule. Now picture a modern-day pastor at a presidential inauguration. Do you know why we are in the mess we are in in this country? Because we do not have the preachers that we had in 1774, 1775, and 1776. We do not have the men who know the truth, and therefore they cannot communicate the truth. May God raise up real, genuine men.

Questions and Further Illustrations

Janet asked whether George III was wicked toward his subjects in England as well as toward the colonists: was he just in England and unjust toward the colonies?

He was more unjust toward the colonies. George III was king of England, but also king of Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia. Each colony had its own royal charter and constitution, in which he had agreed to certain rights and privileges. He was now allowing Parliament to make laws governing the American colonies,

although the colonies had their own legislatures and were never under Parliament in any measure.

When Parliament demanded a stamp tax or another tax, the colonies said, "You're mistaken. We're not giving you anything. You have no authority over us." Parliament had authority in England but none in America. George III was allowing it to usurp authority over the colonies.

It was not the amount of the tax but its principle. Our forefathers fought over a few pennies. They realized that allowing Parliament to pass laws affecting them would make their own legislatures and laws null and void. They would be slaves to Parliament rather than free, independent people, and they would not put up with that.

Henry asked whether there was a separation of powers like the one that later developed in this country: was the king over Parliament?

No. That is why the English Revolution took place under Cromwell. Charles I and some other kings claimed to rule by divine right. Parliament was often merely a rubber stamp in their hands. They assembled it at their pleasure, whenever they wanted something, to make it appear that the nobles and rulers supported them. After the English Civil War, when Cromwell defeated Charles I, Parliament actually became something. Even after Charles II returned to the throne, however, there were periods when matters went hither and yon.

Basically speaking, the King or Queen of England is now a figurehead without real power. Parliament is the real power, but it had no authority over the colonies. That was the bone of contention.

Janet clarified that we cannot assume everything in England was just and its government good, with injustice confined to the colonists.

That is right: not everything was just in England. George III did things there as well. William Pitt the Elder warned Parliament and the British throne that their actions were wrong and wicked and would destroy the relationship. Men there cried out against those actions, but were powerless to stop them.

I wish I could invite Gad Hitchcock, Jonas Clark, Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg, or some of those old men who really preached. Muhlenberg was a pastor in Dunmore County, Virginia. He announced a Sunday afternoon sermon on the duties men owe to God and their country. At three o'clock the building was packed, with people standing inside and outside. He took his text from Ecclesiastes chapter three: "There's a time to fight."

He preached with patriotic fervor, wearing the long, flowing black robe the preachers wore then. He had a young boy come to the front with a drum. At the close he pulled off his robe and stood in full military uniform. "The time to preach has passed. The time to fight has come." He pointed to the boy, who began drumming for recruits.

That afternoon he recruited 300 men and marched at their head as military leader. He went to George Washington at Yorktown and helped defeat Cornwallis.

Here was a preacher who took 300 men from his community and marched to war. I do not have the quotation before me, but in defending his actions he said, "So far from believing that I was wrong, I believe that I am right." He said, "Shall I sit still while the best blood in this country is spilling? God forbid."

"If America should lose, do you think that I should be safe? Heavens, no. And would you not rather fight like a man than die like a dog? Were I a bishop, even a Lutheran one, I would immediately feel it was my duty under God to do so."

He let her fly. God used him and those 300 men to help defeat General Cornwallis. What a rich history we have. All history is God's history.

Young people, do not think history is merely dates, names, and places. History is nothing less than the eternal decrees of God coming to pass in time. If you want to know something about God, study history. Study His Word and His acts in time, for He is the sovereign, providential ruler over everything. He brings His eternal decrees to pass in time, and we know them as history.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You once again for Your love and Your grace to us. Lord, we do pray that You raise up men like Gad Hitchcock and Jonas Clark. Raise up men, Father, like Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg, and Father, I pray that you will give us wisdom to study and to learn the truth and give us grace to apply it. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 9

Who Were The Rebels?

July 18, 2004

Introduction and Scripture Reading

In 1 Samuel 12, beginning with verse 14, Samuel says: “If you will fear the Lord and serve Him, and obey His voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall both you and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the Lord your God. But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you as it was against your fathers.”

Then, in verses 24 and 25: “Only fear the Lord and serve him in truth with all your heart. For consider how great things he hath done for you. But if you shall still do wickedly, you shall be consumed, both you and your king.”

The official history of the War of Northern Aggression is known as the War of Rebellion. Many books have been written concerning that war with “The War of Rebellion” somewhere in the title. One such book in my personal library is entitled The Great American Rebellion. Its first picture is General Ulysses S. Grant. The opening

sentences are these: “We now approach the most momentous period in the history of the United States, the culmination of the great conspiracy on the part of the Southern politicians to bring about dissolution of the Union. This was not a calm, deliberate determination of the people of the South, but a conspiracy originating with a few ambitious politicians.”

Thus, the South is openly accused of acting the part of the rebel and seeking to destroy the Union. Yet this volume does not accuse the South as a whole, but a few disgruntled politicians who led the poor, ignorant, uneducated, and uninformed populace astray.

The Labeling of the South as Rebels

In other words, we were duped by ambitious politicians. This view was popular with a number of northern historians. To embrace it, however, one must forget that each state seceded through its legislature, which passed the ordinance of secession, and that the document was legally recorded and publicly issued. One must also forget that the overwhelming majority of the people agreed with secession and did everything they could to effect it; that serious religious, economic, political, and constitutional issues were involved, and everyone in the states knew it; and that Southerners knew why they were fighting and did not need a northern historian to give them the politically correct view of history. Down through history, Southerners have been called rebels, fire eaters, fire breathers, and Johnny Rebs.

These names indicate that it was the South that was in rebellion and that the people of the South as a whole were classified as rebellious. I have often asked myself this simple question: If the South was in the right—and I genuinely, honestly believe the South was in the right, and believe I could demonstrate that if I had time today—why were we labeled as rebels?

Historical Pattern of Labeling Patriots as Rebels

I realize that the first person to stigmatize someone else usually makes that stigma stick. If I looked at Dr. Root and said, “You’re a racist,” whether he is or not would be immaterial. He would be put on the defensive and have to defend the fact that he is not a racist.

Usually, people label their adversaries and enemies with what they themselves are. Thus, the term “rebel” is significant in several ways. During the first war for American independence—the war of 1776—the true patriots were castigated, despised, and called rebels. George Washington was classified as the arch rebel.

A poem written by an inmate in the old capital prison in Washington, D.C., in 1864 stated: “Washington a rebel was, Jefferson a traitor, but their treason won success and made their glory greater.” Very obviously, they were called names. John and Sam Adams, Patrick Henry, and many others were likewise stigmatized and branded as rebels and traitors.

The pastors during the American Revolution were so hated and so despised that they were called the Black Robe Regiment, and the British would do any and everything to kill or to capture a pastor. Why? Because those pastors were leading the people, and they also were classified as arch rebels. Now basically all of the colonies were classified as rebels. Have you ever stopped and asked yourself this question? Why in the world would our forefathers fight over a puny little tea tax or a puny little stamp tax that only amounted to a penny or so? Why would they expend lives and fortunes over a few cents’ worth?

The Real Rebels in the American Revolution

Were there rebels during the American Revolution? The answer is yes. But you must ask this question, then: Who were the rebels? It certainly was not the colonists. It certainly was not the legislatures in the colonial states. It was not the militias in those states. It was not the citizens in those states. Who were the rebels? The rebels were King George III and the British Parliament.

You may ask how in the world such a statement could be true. You and I have been so propagandized, so brainwashed, so ignorant of Scripture, and so ignorant of history that it does not ever enter into our minds that civil rulers and civil governments can be rebellious as well as individuals. This is not only a fact of history, but it is also a fact of Scripture.

All government, no matter what kind, is covenantal in nature. In 2 Kings 11 and verse 17, Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people that they should be the Lord's people; between the king also and the people. I want you to understand that this establishes a biblical principle.

Here are two covenants mentioned in relationship to government. First of all, the king and the people entered into a covenant with the Lord, where the king agrees to be God's king and the people agree to be God's people. Secondly, there is a covenant entered into between the people and the king, whereby the king agrees to rule faithfully and the people agree to obey as long as he does rule faithfully.

In 2 Samuel chapter 5 and verse 3, everyone knows that David was king of Judah and then was made king of Israel. The elders of Israel came to David to make him king: "So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron, and King David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel." King David made a league with the elders of the people. What in the world is a league? In 1 Chronicles chapter 11 and verse 3, the same exact verse appears, but the word "league" is translated just a little differently: "Therefore came all the elders of Israel to the king to Hebron and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the Lord. And they anointed David king over Israel according to the word of the Lord by Samuel."

Then, if you look in 2 Chronicles chapter 23, at verses 2 and 3 and then at verse 16, you see the covenantal nature of government: "And they went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of Israel. And they came to Jerusalem. And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the Lord has said of the sons of David." Note that all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. Then, in verse 16, Jehoiada the high priest made a covenant between God, all the people, and the king: "And Jehoiada made a covenant between him, that is, between God, and between all the people, and between the king, that they should be the Lord's people."

When you talk about the covenantal nature of government, it is a scriptural as well as a historical fact. Government is covenantal in

nature. I do not care what government you are talking about. You can refer to a family government, an ecclesiastical government, or a civil government. It does not matter; all government is covenantal in nature. Do you realize that George III was not only king of England, but also king of Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina? He was king over all the thirteen original colonies.

Each colony had its own legislature, charter, constitution, and covenant—an agreement—with George III. There was never a colony under Parliament. Every colony had its own state legislature. Therefore, when Parliament began to issue laws and demand taxes from the colonists, they said, "Oh, wait a minute. No, this is not right. We are not under Parliament. We have our own legislatures. We're only under George III. Parliament has absolutely nothing to do with us."

Parliament had no authority to tax the colonists or to issue laws for their benefit. Neither did George III have the right or authority to violate his covenant and give Parliament that authority. Now, there were rebels; but the ones who were usurping and seceding authority happened to be George III, the King of England, and the British Parliament. These were the rebels in the American Revolution in 1774.

In order to head off a war, George Washington, George Mason, Charles Broadwater, and some other men met at Fairfax County Courthouse in Fairfax, Virginia, and, on July 18, 1774, wrote what was known as the Fairfax Resolves.

The Fairfax Resolves and Colonial Grievances

There were, I believe, twenty-four of these resolves, and I am going to read a couple of them. Basically, these resolves were beseeching and imploring George III, the king of England, to keep his end of the covenant. Originally, the American colonists did not want to be independent or separate from England. They wanted to be under the authority of George III, but they expected him to keep his covenant with them.

It seems as if these things were written yesterday. Here is Resolution No. 5, written in 1774: "Resolved that the claim lately

assumed and exercised by the British Parliament of making all such laws as they think fit to govern the people of these colonies"—that almost sounds like Congress, doesn't it?—"and to extort from us our money without our consent"—that is Congress—"is not only diametrically contrary to the first principles of the Constitution, and the original compacts by which we are dependent upon the British Crown and government, but is totally incompatible with the privileges of a free people and the natural rights of mankind, will render our own legislatures merely nominal and nugatory, and is calculated to reduce us from a state of freedom and happiness to slavery and misery." Did you hear that? What did they say?

Parliament has no authority to take our money without our consent. It has no authority to make laws that affect us without our even knowing about them. We refuse that. We will not submit to it.

Listen to number six. This ought to shock you. Here is Resolution No. 6: "Resolved that taxation and representation are in their nature inseparable. Here it is. The right of withholding or of giving and granting their own money is the only effectual security of a free people against the encroachments of despotism and tyranny, and that whenever they yield to the one, they must quickly fall prey to the other."

Do you have the right to withhold your own money from your government? You say, "Yes, I do have that right, sure." When you exercise that right, you are going to have to fight. You will probably end up in jail, and your property may be confiscated.

What did our forefathers say? They said that when you did not have the right to grant or withhold your money from your government, you were a slave, under despotic and tyrannical rule. Let me read Resolution No. 7: "Resolved that the powers over the people of America now claimed by the British House of Commons, and whose elections we have no share and in on whose determinations we can have no influence." Now, wait a minute. You say, "Well, we were."

That certainly does not apply to me because I get to vote. Has anybody ever read the book "Vote Scam"? If you have not read it, you should. Once everything is done by computer, you do not know who

you are voting for. You may say, "I saw it. Check it," but that is immaterial. Do you realize those machines can be controlled from anywhere in the country? Read the book, "Vote Scam." There was a humongous scandal down in Miami, Florida.

When the newspapers were giving the exit polls, they were right on the money to the exact percentage. Why? Because the whole election was rigged. And when you get the opportunity to vote for Socialist A or Socialist B, it really does not matter which one you vote for.

Now listen to what they say: "Resolved that the powers of the people of America now claimed by the British House of Commons, and whose election we have no share, on whose determination we can have no influence, whose information must always be defective and often false"—that is Congress—"who in many instances may have a separate and in some an opposite interest to ours."

Just think about this: does your congressman represent your interests? What burns me up is when you write your congressman and tell him how you want him to vote. If he ever deigns to answer you, you will get a little letter something like this: "Sir or dear Alan, thank you for contacting me. I appreciate your views on this subject. But may I remind you that I must vote my conscience."

We did not send him up there to vote his conscience. We sent him up there to represent us, our conscience. And so these founding fathers said, "Look, you are violating everything that we agreed to."

The Boston Port Bill came when the king was going to close the Boston Port because of the Boston Tea Party. As the Fairfax Resolves said—I do not have it right in front of me—the colony declared, "We will not hold such binding upon us. But we will do everything we can to support our brethren and maintain our liberty." The Boston Port Bill did not make the Bostonians yield because people in the other colonies sent them food and merchandise, everything they needed. What King George III was going to do was starve them into submission, but it did not work.

The colonists resolved, “That it is our greatest wish and inclination, as well as interest, to continue our connection with and dependence upon the British government.” They wanted to remain

British subjects: “But, though we are its subjects, we will use every means which heaven hath given us to prevent our becoming its slaves.” They were willing to be George’s subjects, but not his slaves.

The twenty-third resolve stated: “Resolved that it be recommended to the deputies of the General Congress to draw up and transmit a humble and dutiful petition and remonstrance to His Majesty, asserting with decent firmness our just and constitutional rights and privileges, lamenting the fatal necessity of being compelled to enter into measures disgusting to His Majesty and Parliament, or injurious to our fellow subjects in Great Britain, declaring in the strongest terms our duty and affection to His Majesty's person, family, and government, and our desire to continue our dependence upon Great Britain, and most humbly conjuring and beseeching His Majesty not to reduce his faithful subjects of America to a state of desperation and to reflect that from our sovereign, there can be but one appeal.”

In effect, they were saying, “George, if you force us, we'll fight.” Who were the rebels? The colonists were doing everything they could to avert a war. They said to George III and Parliament, “All we want you to do is keep your end of the covenant.” There were rebels, but clearly the rebels in the American Revolution were the civil authorities in England, not the colonies. The colonists only wanted George III to keep his word and not violate his covenantal agreement.

Biblical Principle: Rebellion Is Only Against Lawful Authority

Here is a vital historical and scriptural principle: rebellion is only to lawful authority. Where there is no lawful authority, there is no rebellion, but merely resistance. If I said to Mrs. Rood, “Get up and go get me a glass of tea,” and she answered, “Brother Weaver, if you ask me, I'll be more than happy and gracious to get you a glass of tea, but don't go ordering me around and telling me what to do,” I could not call her rebellious.

If I looked at her husband and said, “The problem with your wife is that she's just rebellious,” could she be rebellious to me? No. I have no lawful authority over her. She might be rebellious to her

husband, but she cannot be rebellious to me. You can only be rebellious to lawful authority. If there is no lawful authority, it is not rebellion; it is resistance.

In 1 Samuel chapter 12, notice verse 14. Samuel says, "But if you will fear the Lord, and serve Him, and obey His voice—and not rebel against the commandments of the Lord, then shall both you and also the king that reigns over you continue following the Lord your God." It is possible for the people to rebel, but it is also possible for the king to rebel as well. Why? Because the Lord and His Word are the ultimate and absolute authority.

Romans chapter 13 tells us that governments were instituted by God: "There is no power but of God." Since governments—family governments, ecclesiastical or church governments, and civil governments—have been instituted by God, it therefore remains true that all government is answerable and accountable to God and His Word. Why? Because God is the lawful and ultimate authority.

First Samuel 12:25 shows that God holds the civil rulers equally responsible as the people. He says, "But if you shall still do wickedly, you shall be consumed, both you and your king." Since government is covenantal in nature, that means there are two parties to a covenant, a minimum of two parties, and either party can violate the covenant. The ruler may violate the covenant, or the ruled may violate the covenant; either one is capable of violating it.

Once you have understood this principle of God's absolute sovereignty, and the fact that God is the absolute, ultimate, and total authority, consider this question. Abraham Lincoln tried to get a joint resolution passed stating that the South had rebelled against the lawful authority of the government of the United States. What is the lawful authority of the United States?

The U.S. Constitution as the Lawful Authority

I know that God is absolutely sovereign and that He is our ultimate authority, but I am speaking humanly. What is the lawful authority of the United States? It is certainly not the president. It is not the executive office, the legislative branch, Congress, the judicial branch, or the Supreme Court. If we ask exactly what the lawful authority of

the United States is, the answer is the Constitution of the United States. Why? That Constitution is our covenant with the federal government; it is our agreement with the federal government. What does Article 6, paragraph 2 of the United States Constitution say?

The Constitution says: "This Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof"—that is, the laws that are made must agree with the Constitution—"this Constitution of the United States and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof, and all treaties made, or which shall be made under the authority of the United States"—what is the authority of the United States? It is the Constitution—"shall be the supreme law of the land, and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any state to the contrary notwithstanding."

Every officer is bound by the Constitution. No state can make any constitution that conflicts with the Constitution of the United States. If the Supreme Court rules against some law that is constitutional, the Supreme Court is wrong. If Congress passes a law that is unconstitutional, the Supreme Court has already ruled that law null and void, ab initio, that is, from the beginning. It has no binding influence on anyone because the Constitution is the supreme law of the land.

One of the main problems between the North and the South in the 1860s was a differing view concerning the Constitution. There were many problems that brought on and agitated the war, but, basically speaking, the South wished to abide by the Constitution when the North did not. The Southern politicians were strict constructionists. They wanted a limited government, not an expansive, centralized bureaucracy. It was the North that violated the Constitution over and over and over.

Ardent abolitionist Wendell Phillips said: "The Republican Party is in no sense a national party. It is a party pledged to work for the downfall of democracy, the downfall of the Union, and the destruction of the United States Constitution. The religious creed of the party was hate of democracy, hate of the Union, hate of the Constitution, and hate of the Southern people."

Northern Violations of the Constitution

He ought to know, excuse my English, he were one. He also said: "The Republican Party is the first sectional party ever organized in this country. It does not know its own face and it calls itself national. It is sectional. It is the party of the North pledged against the South. It was organized with hatred of the Constitution. The Republican Party that elected Abraham Lincoln is pledged to the downfall of the Union and the destruction of the United States Constitution."

William Lloyd Garrison, whom Dr. Rood quoted yesterday, believed in the constitutional right to hold slaves, although he was an abolitionist. He believed in that right and said the Union must be dissolved to free them. He also believed in the constitutional right of secession, so he was willing to burn the Constitution publicly to destroy that right, calling it "a compact with death and a league with hell."

Most Northerners knew that the Constitution allowed both slavery and secession. Without going into it, it was the North, I believe at least three or four times previously, that had threatened to secede from the Union before the South ever did. They knew that the Constitution taught not only the right to hold slaves—you cannot deny that it is very black and white—but also the right to secede by implication, because it was a compact, an agreement between the states and the federal government.

It was radical Republican Senator Charles Sumner's Boston Commonwealth that printed the following: "How dare anyone pray for the preservation of that sin and shame, the Union? Unity of the states is a crime. May the tongue wither that prays for the preservation of that festering shame, the Union." Remember, Charles Sumner, as a United States Senator, took an oath to uphold the Constitution. The radical Republicans and the abolitionists were dead set on violating it. Even Secretary of State William Seward said loyal men had to put the country ahead of the Constitution because a nation on fire made any debate on the sanctity of law out of order. Southern statesman John C.

Calhoun had similarly predicted what would happen when the northern faction, such as the Republican Party, managed to gain

control of the federal government. Is he not right even today? Calhoun said: “The Constitution will be viewed by the majority as shackles on their power. To them, it will have no value as the means of protection. As a majority, they require none. Their numbered strength and not the Constitution is their protection. The powers that be, they view the Constitution as shackles on their power.”

Was it not Jefferson? Who was it—Jefferson or Washington—who said, “Chain them down with the chains of the Constitution”? The Constitution was never meant to limit the people. It was never meant to limit the states. It was only meant to limit the federal government.

While the Democratic leaders were calling for a return to the Union as it was, and the Constitution as it is, the leaders and spokesmen of the party, which had gained the majority—the Radical Republicans—that had installed Abraham Lincoln as their political puppet in the executive office, condemned the Constitution.

Listen to the terms they used. They condemned the Constitution as “a mistake, the superstition of a people, a sheepskin government deserving no respect, and the foundation of our troubles,” while members of Lincoln’s cabinet called it “a paper kite” and “the rotten rail of Virginia.” Seward believed the written Constitution was dangerous to the North because the South used it as a shield. Did not North and South enter that compact with the federal government? Yes.

Radical Republican Thaddeus Stevens was blunter: “The talk of restoring the Union as it was, and under the Constitution as it is, is one of the absurdities which I have heard repeated until I have become sick of it. There are many things which make such an event impossible. The Union never shall, with my consent, be restored under the Constitution as it is. The Union as it was and the Constitution as it is, God forbid it!” He said, “We must conquer the southern states and hold them as conquered provinces.” As long as Stevens lived and had anything to do with it, it would never be the Union as it was and the Constitution as it is.

Consider thirteen ways in which Congress and President Abraham Lincoln violated the United States Constitution; there were many more. First, the Missouri Compromise of 1820 violated it by

restricting slave territory from carrying slaves into the territories, without constitutional authority, denying the South's right to carry its property into other territories. Second, the Tariff Acts of 1828 and 1833 violated the requirement that the tariff be uniform, discriminating against or favoring no section. Third, the Fugitive Slave Law was violated, Article 4, Section 2, Clause 8.

Fourth, coercion in 1861 violated Article 4, Section 4. Fifth, the laws of neutrality were violated in the Trent Affair: Article 6, Clause 2, and international law. A northern ship stopped the British vessel Trent, boarded it, removed the Confederate representatives Secretary Mallory and Slidell, and imprisoned them.

There was a war over Britain doing that during the War of 1812. The captain of the northern ship received a medal and was promoted, until England said, "You will release those men and apologize, or you are going to have war on two fronts." The Confederate representatives were released, and there was an apology. Union officers kept their medal and promotion.

Here was a violation of international law: Lincoln suspended the writ of habeas corpus, violating Article 1, Section 9, Clause 2. War was declared without the consent of Congress, violating Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 2 and 12. The Emancipation Proclamation, as I discussed yesterday, violated Article 4, Section 3, Clause 2. West Virginia was made a state in violation of Article 4, Section 3, Clause 1. The seizure of property after surrender without compensation violated Articles 4 and 6. Liberty of the press was taken away, violating the First Amendment. Freedom of speech was denied in the Vallandigham case in Ohio, violating the First Amendment.

Ports of states that the federal government held still to be in the Union were blockaded. These are thirteen constitutional violations, and there are many more. Some Lincoln did, some Congress did, and some both did. When Abraham Lincoln was planning another unconstitutional scheme, Secretary of the Treasury Salmon Portland Chase learned it and cautioned, "There is one little obstacle in the way which makes the plan impractical, and that is the United States Constitution."

Lincoln's Attitude Toward the Constitution

When Chase's concerns were relayed to President Lincoln, Lincoln responded, "Go back to Chase and tell him not to bother himself about the United States Constitution. Say that I have that sacred instrument here at the White House and I'm guarding it with great care." Later, Lincoln called Chase: "Chase," he said, "down in Illinois I was held to be a pretty good lawyer. Now this thing reminds me of a story. An Italian captain ran his vessel on a rock and knocked a hole in her body."

He sent his men to pumping and went to prayers before a figure of the Virgin Mary in the bow of the ship. The leak gained on them until it looked as if the vessel would go down with all on board. The captain, in a fit of rage and not having his prayers answered, seized the figure of the Virgin Mary and threw it overboard. Suddenly, the leak stopped, the water was pumped out, and the vessel got safely into port. When docked for repairs, the statue of the Virgin Mary was found stuck head foremost in the hole.

“Chase, I didn't intend precisely to throw the Virgin Mary overboard, by that I mean the Constitution, but I will stick it into the hole if I can.” Lincoln went on to say, “The South has violated the Constitution to break up the Union”—which is not true—“and I'm ready to violate it to preserve the Union, and between you and me, Chase, before we get through, this Constitution is going to have a tough time.” Who were the rebels?

Charles Francis Adams, the Massachusetts historian, not a southern historian, said, “When the federal constitution was adopted, in the case of final issue, to whom did the average citizen owe his allegiance? Was it to the union or to his state? Sweeping aside all legal arguments and metaphysical dispositions, I do not think the answer admits of doubt. Nine men out of ten in the North, and 99 out of 100 in the South would have said ultimate allegiance was due to the state.”

“How then can we justify the acts of Lincoln's administration? An unconstitutional platform, call for an unconstitutional policy. An unconstitutional policy, call for an unconstitutional coercion. An unconstitutional coercion, call for an unconstitutional war. An

unconstitutional war, call for an unconstitutional despotism. Authority uncontrolled and unlimited by men, by Constitution, by Supreme Court, or by law was Lincoln's war policy." That was Charles Francis Adams, our Northern historian.

Southern Leaders' Commitment to the Constitution

General Robert E. Lee said, "All that the South has ever desired was that the union as established by our forefathers should be preserved and that the government as originally organized should be administered in purity and truth." Lee also said, "The South has contended only for the supremacy of the Constitution and the just administration of the laws made in pursuance to it." That's what we want.

Alexander Hamilton Stephens, Vice President of the Confederacy, said: "The real object of those who resorted to secession, as well as those who sustained it, was not the overthrow of the government of the United States, but to perpetuate the principles upon which it was founded. The object in quitting the Union was not to destroy, but to save the principles of the Constitution."

R.G. Horton, in his youth history of the Civil War, said: "At the very time the abolitionists were preaching a mad crusade against the Union and educating a generation to hate the government of our fathers, Southern men, the great leaders of the South, were begging and imploring that the Union might be preserved. If the original American ideal of federalism and constitutionalism had survived to 1860, the South would not have needed to secede. The North and the federal government left the Constitution, and the South left the Union because of that breach."

Economic Motivations and Conclusion

Here is a little tidbit from the pro-Lincoln New York Evening Press, March 2, 1861. The paper wrote: "Either the revenue from the duties must be collected in the ports of rebel states or the port must be closed to importations from abroad is generally admitted. If neither of these things be done, our revenue laws are substantially repealed. The sources which supply our treasury will be dried up. We shall have no money to carry on the government. The nation will become

bankrupt before the next crop of corn is ripe. There will be nothing to furnish means of subsistence to the army, nothing to keep our navy afloat, nothing to pay the salaries of public officers. The present order of things must come to a dead stop. What then is left for our government? Shall we let the seceding states repeal the revenue laws for the whole Union in this matter? Or will the government choose to consider all the foreign commerce destined for those ports which we have no custom houses and no collectors as contraband and stop it when offering to enter the collection districts from which our authorities have been expelled?"

What were they saying? If we let the South go, we will be broke in the North. Between 75 and 95 percent of all monies the federal government had in the 1860s came from the South. I have at my home the taxes paid that year by the South and those paid by the North. The North paid only something like one or two million, while the South was far up in the millions. If we do not stop the South, they were saying, our milk cow is gone.

This is not an isolated case. British newspapers favoring the North or the South said the same thing: basically, the North did not care about the Constitution; they were going to invade the South to make sure they had their tax money. I want to give you a quote from someone who was alive then. Listen carefully to his name: Karl Marx, the communist. Here is what he said: "The war between the North and the South is a tariff war."

"The war's further, not for any principle, does not touch the question of slavery and in fact turns on the northern lust for sovereignty." Karl Marx, as an observer, said that what the North wanted was power, and that they wanted someone else to give them the money. Marx was wrong in one area. When he said the war was not about principle at any level, it was about principle in the South. It may not have been about principle in the North, but it was about principle in the South, because the South believed it had the right of self-determination, the right of independence, and the right not to be taxed to support a foreign and alien regime. Who were the rebels? Not the South. It was the North.

Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in 1835, "If ever the free institutions of America are destroyed, that event may be attributed to the

unlimited authority of the majority, which may at some future time urge the minorities to desperation and oblige them to have a recourse to physical force. It will have been brought about by the despotism of the majority."

Try to take these principles and make them applicable today. Do you think most of the people in America are tired, or at least are heading that way, of having abortion and sodomy pushed down their throat? How about socialism? How about fraud, lies, deception, and treason? It is the same thing.

If you and I really want to know who the rebels were, we have to remember this principle: rebellion can only be to lawful authority. If there is no lawful authority, there is no rebellion. It is only resistance. If you resist, you are not a rebel; rather, you are a patriot trying to establish once again that which is just, right, and holy.

If standing for truth and righteousness is rebellion, then I am a rebel. If standing for liberty and freedom is rebellion, then I am a rebel. If standing for a limited government as provided by our forefathers is rebellion, then I am a rebel. If standing for the right of self-defense is rebellion, then I am a rebel. If standing for the authority of God's Word in its fullest and widest application is rebellion, then I am a rebel. But I am not rebelling against authority.

One of the most beautiful poems I've ever read, by an unknown author, is titled "Rebels." Listen carefully.

"Rebels, 'tis a holy name, the name our fathers bore when battling in the cause of right against the tyrant in his might in the dark days of yore. Rebels, 'tis our family name. Our father Washington was the arch rebel in the fight and gave the name to us a right of father unto son. Rebels, 'tis our given name. Our Mother Liberty received the title with her fame in the days of grief, of fear and shame, when at her breast we were. Rebels, 'tis our seal name, a baptism of blood, the war cry, and the din of strife, the fearful contest, life or life, the mingled prism flood. Rebels, 'tis a patriot's name. In struggles it was given."

We bore it when the tyrants raved, and through their curses was engraved on the doomsday book of heaven. "Rebels!" It is our fighting name, for peace rules over the land until they speak of

craven woe, until our ranks receive a blow from foe or brother's hands. "Rebels!" This is our dying name. Although life is dear, yet freedmen born and freemen bred, we would rather live as freemen dead than live in slavish fear. Then call us rebels. We glory in the name.

Bending under unjust laws and swearing faith to an unjust cause is a greater shame. If one who stands for right is a rebel, we will bear the name. But if you know who the rebels were, they are those who refuse to submit to lawful authority.

Father, speak to our hearts. Help us to live for Thee. Give us the backbone that forefathers had, character and courage. May we stand for what's right. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 10

The Bible & Treason

October 10, 2004

Introduction: The Unusual Topic of Treason

I am going to bring a message today which is probably a little unusual. The title of the message is “The Bible and Treason.” I do not often sit down and say, “Well, I am going to preach on such and such subject.” Sometimes that does happen, but usually the messages come as I do my own private reading and private devotion. In other words, I see something that piques my curiosity and say, “Well, let me check into that.” Then that is how a message develops. I was reading through 1 Kings and 2 Kings, and I came across the word “treason.” Once I got to it the second time, I thought, “Well, I wonder how many times the Bible speaks about treason?”

Biblical Occurrences and Definition of Treason

Hobie came over one day and helped me with this message because we sounded it back and forth off each other. I thought, you know, most people have probably never thought this thing through. I want to share it with you from the Bible. We are going to look in 1 Kings chapter 16 at verse 20, and we are going to be looking at a lot of

Scriptures. Look what the Bible says about Zimri: "Now the rest of the acts of Zimri and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?" Note that the Bible specifically talks about the treason which Zimri wrought.

Now, if you look at 2 Kings 11 and verse 14, you will read about Athaliah, and we will come back and get the context of all these passages. "And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced and blew with trumpets." And Athaliah rent her clothes and cried, "Treason, treason." Treason is a word that reeks of treachery, subterfuge, espionage, and death. Treason is usually a word or term associated with such names as Judas, Benedict Arnold, and the Rosenbergs. I am not sure that you are aware of this, but treason is one of the few crimes specifically mentioned in the United States Constitution, and treason is also defined in that document.

While many people are aware of the political ramifications of treason, most of us are woefully ignorant of what the Bible teaches upon the subject. The word "treason" occurs five times in our Bible, and then only in three passages. However, the root word for treason is the Hebrew word "kesher," which is translated "treason" five times, "conspiracy" nine times, and "confederacy" two times. So it can be specific, and it can also be a very broad term.

According to my understanding of history, I believe I am correct in saying that since the inception of our Constitution, only about thirty people have ever been charged with treason in our Republic. The United States Constitution, in Article 3, Section 3, describes treason as follows:

The U.S. Constitutional Definition of Treason

"Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort. No person shall be convicted of treason unless on the testimony of two witnesses to the same overt act or on confession in open court. The Congress shall have power to declare the punishment of treason, but no attainder of treason shall work

corruption of blood or forfeiture except during the life of the person attainted."

According to the United States Constitution, in order to be convicted of treason, there must be at least one overt act—that is, one open, public act. There must also be two witnesses to confirm that act, or at least a confession in open court.

One of the most noticeable things about this definition is the plurality used in defining the United States. Listen again: "Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them"—not "it," but "them"—"in adhering to their enemies." In other words, treason then was against one of the numerous states that had entered into this agreement, and not necessarily against a federalized bureaucracy.

The point is very important. Treason against the United States, the Constitution said, shall consist in levying war against "them," and adhering to "their" enemies. Evidently, then, the crime of treason was initially against any of the confederated states, individually or collectively, which made up the United States. It is true that only Congress had the power to declare the punishment of treason, but originally Congress was to represent the United States. The federal government did not create the states; the states created the federal government. Congress was therefore to represent those confederated states. That is why the definition says "them," plural, and "their" enemies. The states were the master, and the federal government was the servant. Thus, according to the definition given in the United States Constitution, any attempt to overthrow the union of the states and subvert the Constitution of the United States, which was the glue binding the states together, was or should be considered treason.

In other words, treason, basically speaking, was an act against our constitutional republic. Do you understand that? You remember that the Constitution was accepted in 1789. In 1789, we had a constitutional republic.

If we meditate upon this line of thought, even momentarily, we can come up with a number of names that would have qualified for the crime of treason. The first name that comes to my mind

automatically would be President Abraham Lincoln, because Lincoln destroyed the Union in order to preserve the Union. He overthrew the Constitution of the United States and was responsible for dissolving the Union by unconstitutional acts. Lest you want to argue with me, Abraham Lincoln himself confessed to and acknowledged six constitutional violations when he tried to get Congress to ratify his unconstitutional acts, which they did not and would not. Abraham Lincoln knew very well that he was seeking to overthrow the Constitution.

The interesting thing is that, if we were to think about it, probably a lot of modern-day names could be added to that list as well. Do you realize that any civil ruler who attempts to overthrow the Constitution of the United States is guilty of treason? What we have failed to remember is that it is not simply a citizen who can be guilty of treason. It can also be a civil ruler. Anyone who seeks to overthrow the Constitution of the United States would be guilty of treason in the sense that he is seeking to overthrow the constitutional republic.

Historical and Legal Background on Treason

Article 3, Section 3 of the Constitution states, "but no attainder of treason shall work corruption of blood or forfeiture except during the life of the person attainted." What does that mean? An attainder of treason was a practice in Europe that was forbidden in the United States. Suppose Ed committed an act of treason. Under an attainder of treason, not only would Ed be punished, but so would his wife, his children, and any member of his family, whether they had anything to do with it or not. The family would be ostracized and banished as traitors, and any inheritance they might have would be dissolved. That would be totally unbiblical, because it would punish people for something they did not do.

The Scripture is very plain on that. In Ezekiel chapter 18 and verse 20, God said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither the father bear the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." God said the son is

not to die for the crimes of the father, nor the father to die for the sins of the son. Every man shall die for his own sin.

That is why our Constitution said there shall be no attainder of treason. If Ed is guilty of treason, Ed is convicted and condemned—not Eddie, not Dixie, not Carrick, and not anybody else in his family.

This principle was understood and carried out by numerous individuals who wanted to do that which was right, though it was overlooked by those who wanted to do what was wrong. In 2 Kings chapter 14 and verse 6, we read concerning King Amaziah of Judah. He was avenging the murder of his father: “And it came to pass as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand that he slew his servants who had slain the king, his father. But the children of the murderers he slew not.”

According to that which was written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the law commanded, saying, "The father shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for their fathers, but every man shall be put to death for his own sin." Amaziah wanted to do what was right. Those who murdered his father, he put to death; those who had no hand in it, he allowed to live, even though they were the children of the murderers.

Very obviously, then, there is a biblical principle here. Let me give you a quick historical overview before we get to the Bible. I took this from Black's Law Dictionary, the sixth edition. Black's defines treason as "a breach of allegiance to one's government, usually committed through levying war against such government or by giving aid or comfort to the enemy." It further defines it as "the offense of attempting by overt acts"—that is, open acts—"to overthrow the government of the state to which the offender owes allegiance, or of betraying the state into the hands of a foreign power."

Black's Law Dictionary then gives the constitutional statement that treason consists of two elements: adhering to the enemy and rendering him aid and comfort. A person can be convicted of treason only upon the testimony of two witnesses or confession in open court. It also identifies different types of treason.

Constructive treason is treason imputed to a person by law from his conduct or course of actions, though his deeds really do not amount to treason. That doctrine is not particularly known in the United States, but it is in England. High treason is treason against the king, the queen, or some magisterial person in English law.

One definition I found exceedingly interesting was petit treason. We have a grand jury and a petit jury. In old English law, petit treason was "the crime committed by a wife in killing her husband, or a servant his lord or master, or an ecclesiastic his lord or ordinary." Thus, petit treason involved a wife killing her husband, a servant killing his lord, or someone else killing a higher authority. That was simply known as petit treason. This has been a brief political and historical overview of treason.

The Treason of Zimri (1 Kings 16)

Here is the question: What does the Bible say about treason? To answer it, we should look closely at and compare 1 Kings 16 and 2 Kings 14. In 1 Kings 16:20, the Bible says, “Now, the rest of the acts of Zimri and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?” Note that the Bible specifically calls Zimri’s acts treason and identifies them as that which he wrought.

To understand this, begin in verse 8: “And in the twenty-sixth year of Asa, king of Judah, began Elah, the son of Baasha, to reign over Israel in Tirzah two years. And his servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots, conspired against him as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, steward of his house in Tirzah. And Zimri went in and smote him and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa, king of Judah, and reigned in his stead.”

"And it came to pass when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on the throne, that he slew all the house of Baasha, and he left not one that pisseth against the wall, neither his kinfolks nor his friends." There is no reason to be embarrassed by that expression. It is simply a graphic and pictorial way of saying that he would kill every male in that family. You will see that several times as you read through the history of the kings. Neither of his kinfolks, nor his friends, were left.

"Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet." Now watch: it was "for all the sins of Baasha, the sins of Elah, his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities." Zimri reigned seven days in Tirzah. The people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, and they heard that Zimri had conspired and had slain the king. Therefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp. Omri went up from Gibbethon with all Israel, besieged Tirzah, and took the city. When Zimri saw that the city was taken, he went into the palace of the king's house, burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died.

"For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord, and walking in the way of Jeroboam, and his sin which he did to make Israel sin. Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason which he wrought, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?"

The interesting thing is this: Zimri murdered Elah, who was the son of Baasha. It is true that Elah was a wicked and ungodly king. In fact, all of the northern rulers were wicked and ungodly. While Elah was in the process of drinking himself drunk, Zimri seized the opportunity and murdered the king.

What made Zimri's acts unlawful and treasonous? Certainly murder is wrong. Self-will is wrong. I am sure that the only reason Zimri had for killing Elah was to elevate himself, usurp authority, and steal the kingdom for himself. In all probability, he had no desire to serve God. In fact, we already know that; the Scripture tells us that. He had no desire to serve the people. He only wanted to serve himself. So how is it, then, that Zimri's act of killing a wicked, ungodly, reprobate king could be called and classified as treason?

The Legitimacy of Elah's Reign

One of the main problems with the murder of Elah was that he did have some legitimacy to his rule. Every time I use that word, I think of an incident when Alice and I met a pastor friend from Yugoslavia. He was talking to me, and although he was speaking plainly, of

course he had an accent, I could not follow what he was saying. He began to talk about some “legitimacy.” “Legitimacy, there's no legitimacy.” What was he saying? Then it dawned on me: that was how he was pronouncing legitimacy—“legitimacy.” After I figured that out, we were able to communicate.

So I am saying that Elah did have some legitimacy. He did have a little legitimacy. In order to understand that, you must understand that God had originally given Jeroboam ten of the twelve tribes.

In 1 Kings 11:26, the Scripture says: “And Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, the Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king. And this was the cause that lifted up his hand against the king. Solomon built Millo and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father. And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valor. And Solomon, seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over the charge of the house of Joseph. And it came to pass at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way, and he had clad himself with a new garment, and they two were alone in the field.”

“And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it into twelve pieces. And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces. For thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee. But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, because they have forsaken me and worshipped Ashtaroth, the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh, the god of the Moabites, Milcom, the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways to do that which is right in my eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose because he kept my commandments and my statutes. But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes.”

“And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem in the city, which I have chosen to put my name there.” So ten of the twelve tribes, by God's direction, were given unto Jeroboam.

Jeroboam made all Israel to sin because he made those two golden calves. He put one in Dan and the other in Bethel. He said, “These be thy gods, O Israel. You don't have to go down to Jerusalem and worship. You just worship right here.”

So what does God do? God now pronounces judgment against Jeroboam and against his lineage for his apostasy. In 1 Kings chapter 14, beginning with verse 10, God says, “Therefore, behold, I will bring evil against the house of Jeroboam and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall and him that is shut up and left in Israel and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam as a man taketh away dung, till it all be gone. Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat, and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat, for the Lord hath spoken it. Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house, and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.”

Moreover, the Lord shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day. For the Lord shall smite Israel as a reed is shaken in the water. He shall root up Israel out of this good land which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the Lord to anger. And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin and who made Israel to sin.

Once God pronounces judgment against the house of Jeroboam, the man God raised up to smite that house was Baasha. Look in 1 Kings chapter 15, beginning with verse 27: “And Baasha, the son of Ahijah of the house of Issachar, conspired against him—as against Nadab, the son of Jeroboam—conspired against him, and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. For Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. Even in the third year of Asa, king of Judah, did Baasha slay him and reign in his stead.

And it came to pass, when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam. He left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he destroyed him, according unto the saying of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite, because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he sinned, and which made Israel sin by his provocation, whereof he provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger."

The rest of the acts of Nadab and all they did are written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel. There was war between Asa and Baasha all the days of their lives. Baasha had been raised up by God to slay Jeroboam and all of his house.

Look in 1 Kings chapter 16, verse 2. In fact, let us read verse 1: "Then the word of the Lord came to Jehu, the son of Hanani, against Baasha, saying, Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel, and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, and to provoke me to anger with their sins." Who said that he exalted Baasha out of the dust and raised him up? God. God made Baasha king in the place of Jeroboam and Nadab. Since Elah was the son of Baasha, whom God had raised up specifically to cleanse the house of Jeroboam, there was some legitimacy to Elah's reign.

Psalm 75:6 says, "For promotion cometh neither from the north, nor from the south, nor from the east, nor from the west, but it is God who is the judge. He putteth up one, and He taketh down another." What did God do? God was the One who put up Jeroboam and Nadab, and God took them down. God was the One who put up Baasha and Elah, and God took them down.

The problem with Zimri is that he was neither chosen by God nor by the people to do what he did. In verse 16, we read, "And the people that were encamped heard say, Zimri had conspired and also had slain the king, wherefore all Israel made Omri the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp." God did not raise up Zimri specifically to be king and to have the authority to do what he did, and neither did the people.

Remember that many times God chose a man to be king, as He chose David, the man after God's own heart. Although God chose David to be king, He chose him immediately through the will and

recognition of the people. The people came to David and made a covenant with him. David was not only God's chosen; he was also the chosen of the people.

What was the problem with Zimri? Zimri was nothing more than a murderer. He wanted the kingdom for himself. He could care less about God, God's word, serving the people, or being a minister to the people. All he wanted was the kingdom for himself.

Contrast with David's Attitude

Contrast the attitude of Zimri with the attitude of David. I do not know that Elah had done anything particularly wrong to Zimri. Zimri saw him drunk, seized the opportunity, killed him, and took the kingdom. David, however, had been harassed, hounded, and persecuted by King Saul. Saul had purposely and deliberately tried to slay David on numerous occasions. When David had the opportunity to slay Saul over and over, did he do it? No. When Abishai said, "There's the king. God hath delivered him into your hand, David," David still did not take Saul's life.

"Let me smite him to the ground, I pray thee. I'll only smite him one time. It won't take me two blows, David. I'll dispatch him quickly and I'll do it with the first blow." David said to Abishai, "Destroy him not. For who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?" David understood that Saul, although wicked in doing him wrong, was still God's king because God had elevated and anointed him. David's attitude was, "His time will come that he'll either die in battle or by natural causes."

David had already been promised the kingdom. He knew he was going to be king, but he was not willing to take the kingdom by rebellion, murder, or anything contrary to God. He was willing to wait and receive the kingdom in God's time. Zimri, on the other hand, was unwilling to wait. He was not chosen by God or by the people; he simply murdered the king. When the people chose Omri, Zimri, in a final act of rebellion, burned the palace down upon himself and died there. He stole authority that neither God nor the people had given him. Zimri, by the way, did not prosper.

He only reigned seven days. Look in your Bibles to 2 Kings chapter 9 and verse 31.

There is a lesson here. Even reprobate Jezebel learned a lesson from Zimri and erroneously tried to apply it to Jehu. Ahab had been killed, and his son had been killed by Jehu. When Jehu came to get rid of Jezebel, she said, “Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?”

What was she saying? “Jehu, you had better learn a history lesson. Zimri conspired against his master. How long did it last? Seven days.” The only problem was that God had raised up Jehu, anointed him to be king, and sent him on the specific mission of killing the house of Ahab and all that he had. You can read that in 2 Kings 9, verses 5 through 10. Although Jezebel was trying to give Jehu a history lesson, what Zimri did and what Jehu was doing were two totally separate and different things. Zimri was in rebellion; Jehu was in obedience.

Now I want you to see the contrast, because it is very important. Look in your Bibles at 2 Kings chapter 14. The contrast is clearly seen in comparing the history of Zimri with the history of Athaliah. In 2 Kings chapter 14, begin reading with verse 1. You are talking about an un-grandmotherly act. I am so thankful this woman was not my grandmother.

The Case of Athaliah and Jehoiada (2 Kings 11)

“In the second year of Joash, son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, reigned Amaziah, the son of Joash, king of Judah. He was 25 years old when he began to reign. He reigned 29 years in Jerusalem, and his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not like David his father. He did according to all things that Joash his father did. Howbeit the high places were not taken away, as yet the people did sacrifice and burn incense on the high places. And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, that he slew his servants, which had slain the king and his father.”

In 2 Kings chapter 11, we read that “when Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal.” But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Joram and

sister of Ahaziah, took Joash, the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons, which were slain. She hid him, even him and his nurse, in a bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain. He was with her, hidden in the house of the Lord six years, and Athaliah did reign over all the land.

Now, the interesting thing is that Athaliah did a very ungrandmotherly thing: she murdered all of her grandchildren. When she saw that her son was dead, she decided she wanted to be the ruler of the land. So, to make sure she was ruler, she simply killed all of her grandchildren. The only one who escaped was Joash. The only reason he escaped was that his aunt Jehoshabeath took him and hid him and his nurse in the temple. So Joash was hidden there for six years, while Athaliah ruled over the land for six years.

Who in the world was Athaliah? This is very important for you to know. Look in your Bibles to 2 Kings 8 and verse 18. Speaking of Joram, the son of Jehoshaphat, verse 17 says, "Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the Lord." Who did Joram marry? He married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

No wonder you can see her wickedness. In 2 Chronicles 21 and verse 6, the Bible says that because of this, Jehoram walked in all the ways of the house of Ahab. In other words, all the sins that the northern kingdom had committed were now being committed in the southern kingdom because of Athaliah. Athaliah is also called the daughter of Omri in 2 Kings 8:26, but Omri would have been her grandfather.

You will find many times in Scripture that grandchildren are usually referred to simply as the children of their grandparents. And one says the word that's true. In fact, on this trip, someone asked me, "Are those your children?" I said, "Sure, they are." Tripp said, "You're not my dad." I said, "No, but I'm your grandfather, and you're still my children." I mean, that's all there is to it. But you'll find that in Scripture.

But Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Not only did Athaliah have absolutely no authority to rule and no authority to murder her children, but look at Isaiah chapter 3 and verse 12 at what specifically is said to be a curse: “As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err and destroy the way of thy paths.” One of the curses of God against the people is when women and children rule the land. Athaliah had ascended to the throne, and for six years she sat upon that throne. Now, what happened?

Jehoiada, the high priest, had taken Joash and hidden him in the temple. All that time, he was instructing the young king in the ways of God. When the young king was seven years old, he held a coronation service for him. Of course, soldiers were therefore stationed around the young king to protect him.

The passage is not 2 Kings chapter 14, as I had written in my notes, but 2 Kings chapter 11. Skip down to verse 4: “And the seventh year, Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds with the captains and the guard and brought them to him into the house of the Lord and made a covenant with them and took an oath of them in the house of the Lord and showed them the king's son.”

Jehoiada commanded them: “This is the thing that you shall do. A third part of you that enter in on the Sabbath day shall be keepers and watch of the king's house. And a third part shall be at the gate of Sur, and a third part at the gate behind the guard. So shall you keep the watch of the house, that is guard duty, that it be not broken down. And two parts of you that go forth on the Sabbath even, they shall keep the watch of the house of the Lord about the king. And you shall compass the king round about every man with his weapons in his hand, and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be slain, and be ye with the king as he goeth out and as he cometh in.”

Jehoiada the high priest had sent guards around this young boy. He was not left alone for a moment. Anyone who came around was to be put to death. Thankfully, no one came around, and they proceeded with the coronation service. “And the guard stood every man with his weapon in his right hand round about the king from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, along by the altar in the temple. And he brought forth the king's son and

put the crown upon him and gave him the testimony, which is the law of God. And they made him king and anointed him. And they clapped their hands and said, God save the king."

When Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people in the temple of the Lord. When she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced and blew with trumpets. "And Athaliah rent her clothes and cried, Treason! Treason!"

Can you even imagine a difference between 2 Kings 11 and 1 Kings 16, a difference between Athaliah and Zimri? God never ordained Athaliah. God never, ever gave her any authority. The people never, ever gave her any authority. In fact, the only way she got to be queen was by murdering her own grandchildren.

When Athaliah comes into the temple and hears all this noise, she wonders, "What in the world is going on?" She sees the one grandson who had escaped, and all the people clapping and saying, "God save the king." She turns, rends her royal robe, and cries, "Treason, treason!"

First of all, let me point out that when she cried treason, it was a charge and an indictment against Jehoiada, the high priest; Joash, the young king; and all the people who had helped Jehoiada. She was saying, "You are guilty of treason." At the same time, it would have been an order for her followers to kill Jehoiada, Joash, and all those who followed the young king.

Now, the interesting thing is this. Look what happens. Begin there with verse 15. Jehoiada, the priest, commanded the captains of the hundreds and the officers of the host, saying, "Have her forth without the ranges and him that follow her kill with a sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the Lord." They laid hands on her, and she went by the way to which the horses came into the king's house, and there was she slain. Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people, and also between the king and the people.

At the same time, Jehoiada was commanding the soldiers to kill Athaliah. In obedience to his command, the soldiers killed Athaliah and all who followed her. You will find that in verse 20: "And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet, and they slew Athaliah with a sword beside the king's house," which included all of her followers.

I want you to understand something. What Jehoiada and the soldiers did in killing Athaliah was the highest justice, yet by her it was branded as the highest crime. Think about what I just said: what Jehoiada and the soldiers did was the highest justice, and yet at the same time Athaliah branded it as the highest crime. Athaliah was the greatest traitor, yet she was the first and the loudest in crying, "Treason, treason." Those who are themselves oftentimes most guilty of something accuse and reproach others of the same thing who are undeserving of that charge.

The Doctrine of Interposition

Before making applications, I want you to see a very important doctrine in Scripture: the doctrine of interposition. Jehoiada was the high priest. The king had died, and the queen had acquired the throne only through murder. She had no recognition by God and no recognition by the people. When there was no one else to take over, Jehoiada did so. He stepped in, although he himself was not a civil ruler but a spiritual one, and ordered the execution of Athaliah and all who followed her. That is called the doctrine of interposition. You will find it throughout Scripture and throughout history.

That is what happened in the foundation of this country. King George III had sent governors here to rule for him, and they were doing his bidding, completely contrary to the Constitution and covenants that the king had with the colonies. What did the colonists do? They nominated, elected, and chose their own rulers. Their own rulers led them in fighting the tyranny of George III and the British Parliament. That is the doctrine of interposition.

Now let me make some applications and tie things together. Zimri murdered a king whose reign had been appointed by God in the sense that God had appointed his father. His father had accomplished what he had done, and Elah had some of that

authority. When Jehu obeyed God in wiping out Ahab and his house, God promised him seven descendants would sit on the throne for his obedience in wiping out Ahab. Elah therefore did have some authority. What did Zimri do? Out of covetousness and willful malice, he murdered a man. He had no divine authority and no human authority to do so. Zimri acted as a murderer and a thief. Jehoiada, on the other hand, did not rebel against a God-ordained or appointed authority. He resisted a murderer and a thief.

Applications: Allegiance and Modern Treason

Although the reigning power, that is Athaliah, attributed its actions to treasonous actions, they were not treasonous, but rather it was nothing but pure justice. Now here's a principle I've enunciated in time past. I want to enunciate it again. Here it is: It is not treason to resist an unlawful unauthorized government. If there is no lawful power, resistance is neither rebellion nor treason. It is just simply resistance to wickedness and evil. You got that now?

Let me say it again. It is not treason to resist an unlawful and unauthorized government. If there is no lawful power, resistance is neither rebellion nor treason. It is simply resistance to wickedness and evil.

Now, let me go back because I want to clarify our thinking. Let me go back and give you the quote that I originally gave you from Black's Law Dictionary on treason. Here it is: "The offense of attempting by overt acts to overthrow the government of the state to which the offender owes allegiance. Or betraying the state into the hands of a foreign power." Now I want you to stop and think about that. Here is treason defined: "the offense of attempting by overt or outward acts to overthrow the government of the state to which the offender owes allegiance." Let me stop right there.

And ask you a question. To what government do you owe allegiance? First and foremost, of course, it would be to Jesus Christ. But secondly, I'm talking about in this country. To what government do you owe allegiance? Let me ask, do you owe allegiance to a bureaucracy? Do you owe allegiance to a democracy? Do you owe allegiance to a one world government? Do you owe allegiance to a United Nations government? To what government do you and I owe

allegiance? We owe allegiance only to a constitutional republic that was handed down to us by the lives and fortunes and sacrifices of our forefathers. And by the way, I could ask the same question. To what government do our civil rulers owe their allegiance? Do they owe their allegiance to the oil cartel, the Zionist lobby, the CFR, the Bilderbergers, the United Nations, the One World Government? No. They are supposedly to owe their allegiance to the Constitution of the United States, which is supposedly based upon the Word of God and giving us a constitutional republic. Let me give you, from Article 6, Clause 2 and 3 of the United States Constitution.

Here it is, black and white: "This Constitution and the laws of the United States, which shall be made in pursuance thereof"—that is, in agreement with the Constitution—"and all treaties made, or which shall be made under the authority of the United States"—what is the authority of the United States? The Constitution—"shall be the supreme law of the land, and judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the constitutional laws of any state the contrary notwithstanding."

What does the Constitution say? It is to be the supreme law of the land, and judges are to be bound thereby. Clause three says: "The senators and representatives before mentioned, and the members of the several state legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers, both of the United States and of the several states, shall be bound by oath or affirmation to support this Constitution."

To what government do our civil rulers owe their allegiance? They are supposed to owe that allegiance to the constitutional republic given to us by our founding fathers. That is the government to which you and I owe allegiance.

Black's Law Dictionary goes further in defining treason. Treason is not only the offense of attempting by overt acts to overthrow the government of the state in which the offender owes allegiance; it also consists of betraying the state into the hands of a foreign power. Who has done that? Who can do it most effectively? The answer is the civil government, or its civil leaders.

Has America been betrayed and given over to a foreign power monetarily and economically? Has America been betrayed and

handed over to a foreign power politically? Is not an attempt to subvert, destroy, and mutilate American sovereignty treason? Who committed this treason?

Not the citizens of the United States. Treason is a two-way street. Do the citizens of America owe allegiance to a bastardized, bureaucratized, and democratized one-world government? No. We owe allegiance to nothing except, first of all, Christ and His Word, and secondly, the constitutional republic handed down to us by our forefathers. It is not treason to expose wickedness, rebellion, and ungodliness.

Many of you will remember when Patrick Henry was giving his speech before the Virginia House of Burgesses. In that speech, he said that some good American would do to George III what Brutus had done to Caesar. Speaker John Robinson flew into a rage and accused Patrick Henry of treason. To which Patrick Henry responded, "If this be treason, then make the most of it." What was he saying? It is not treason to speak the truth. If speaking the truth and acknowledging justice be treason, then nothing else is left.

We must come to this position: right is right and wrong is wrong; truth is truth and error is error. And God, by His grace and mercy, will deliver us from error and always lead us into His truth and His right. It is not treason to resist a wicked, ungodly, unauthorized, unlawful civil government. Disobedience to tyrants is obedience to God.

Wicked governments may not acknowledge this fact, and they may not acknowledge the truth of the Word of God, but God's Word is truth and God is right. God and His Word will always stand the test of time. Tyrants have risen and fallen; empires have come and gone. But the truth of the sovereign God of heaven and earth is still here, and we will always have that truth. The highest form of treason is not treason against the civil government, but treason against the sovereign God of heaven and earth.

We substitute man's law for God's law, man's sovereignty for God's sovereignty, and man's word for God's Word; that is the highest form of treason. I was looking at another passage, and probably in the near future I may be preaching on why there are

wars and what you and I would call natural disasters in this country. It is amazing what the Word of God reveals in that.

When you forsake God, you incur the judgment and wrath of God. We must learn, first and foremost, to be true to the God of heaven and earth. Then, second, we need to be true to what our forefathers fought and died for and revive those principles. We live in a day and time when, when you begin to talk about history or some of these principles, it is unbelievable.

Conclusion and Prayer

This week I heard on the news that they want samples of DNA from everyone. They were discussing a database that the FBI and others could search, considering all the criminals they might catch and the crimes they might solve. But this could only come to pass if people were willing to give up their rights: their right to privacy and their right to be left alone.

When you reject God and His law, you suffer the consequences. Treason against God is the most vile and wicked act. We need to learn the principles of Scripture, the principles of history, and what our forefathers gave us. I would love to see Patrick Henry here on earth, before our present-day Congress, for five minutes—or John or Sam Adams. What a mess we are in this country. We have been traitors to God, traitors to our Constitution, and traitors to ourselves.

May God help us. Let us pray. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, give us grace and mercy always to stand for You, Your Word, and Your truth. Give us a desire to learn what is right and to stand for it. Help us to have backbone, character, and courage, and always to do what is pleasing and honoring to Thee. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 11

Exploits & Death of Riley Crawford

November 30, 2008

SCRIPTURE READING - Hebrews 11:32-38 (KJV)

Introduction: Defining 'Yankee' and Hemlock Justice

The message is on the exploits and death of Riley Crawford. Hebrews chapter 11, beginning with verse 32:

"And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again, and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder,

> were tempted, were slain with a sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains and dens and caves of the earth."
>
> "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise."
>
> Let me begin with an explanation, because this will be a historical message. Hopefully, it will explain not only the biblical principles from last week, but also show where we are headed in our country under the present situation.
>
> You have often heard me speak in historical messages about Yankees. The term Yankee does not refer simply to everyone ever born or living in the North. It refers specifically to a certain group of people who have an unbiblical and ungodly attitude toward everything—not only the world, but life, God, the Bible, and the South. There were plenty of people in the North who supported the South during the War of Northern Aggression. These people were hated by the Yankees and were referred to as Copperheads. They were called Copperheads because a copperhead is an extremely poisonous snake that can bite without warning. A rattlesnake, at least, will give you warning before it strikes.

There were plenty of people in the North who held Southern ideas and were Southern sympathizers. What you are discovering in this day and time is that there are Southern Yankees as well. In other words, there are people who were born and raised in the South but have a Yankee mentality because of Reconstruction. Reconstruction did not stop in 1876 or 1879; it is still going on today.

Let me give you two definitions of a Yankee. The first comes from Chaplain Nicholas Davis, originally from Limestone, Alabama. He was a member of the 4th Texas Volunteers, Confederate States of America—a chaplain who was a Confederate soldier. Here is how he defined Yankees: "Yankee. The popular name for the citizens of New England." That is what Webster says it means: a name for the people of New England.

“And their history is well known to the civilized world. The whole world will understand us. The word extends to all their 10,000 schemes of deception and fraud and comprehends their every act of lying and stealing from the days of Washington till the present hour in all their political, legislative, executive, commercial, civil, moral, literary, sacred, profane, theological, and diabolical history. The word Yankee, when thus applied, means meddlesome, impudent, insolent, pompous, boastful, unkind, ungrateful, unjust, knavish, false, deceitful, cowardly, swindling, thieving, robbing, brutal and murderous. This Yankee country has given birth to socialism, Mormonism, spiritualism and abolitionism and every other devilism that has cursed the nation of unionism.”

The only thing I can say is that, if he had been just a little more explicit, we could have understood what he meant. He is saying that not everybody in the North is a Yankee, but that a Yankee is someone who has this mentality, particularly one originating with the folks from New England.

Professor Clyde Wilson continues to define the term Yankee. He is a present-day author, a professor at Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina—I think. He is retired now, but he was a professor of American history. He uses the term this way: “The term Yankees is used to designate that peculiar ethnic group descended from New Englanders who can be easily recognized by their arrogance, hypocrisy, greed, lack of congeniality, and penchant for ordering people around.”

"Puritans long ago abandoned anything that might be good in their religion, but have never given up on the notion that they are the chosen saints whose mission is to make America and the world into the perfection of their own image." Can you think of Clintons? Can you think of Chuck Schumer? Can you think of that political crowd who indeed are what you and I would call real Yankees? When you hear the term Yankee, do not just think of a northerner, because it is not just a northerner. A Yankee is someone with these attitudes and dispositions, holding everything contrary to Scripture, and wanting to ruin and rule the lives of other people.

To begin today, I want to remind you of the message I preached last week from Amos 6:12 on hemlock justice. God said that the civil

rulers had turned judgment, or justice, into gall, and the fruits of righteousness into hemlock. Hemlock justice is not really justice. It is a perversion, an injustice, a fraud, and a corruption. It produces only death.

Last week I stated that if we knew from where we had come and where we were at present, then we would have a pretty good idea where we were headed. I did not mean that statement to be taken simply individually; I wanted it understood nationally as well. Karl Marx said that a people deprived of their history are easily persuaded. Certainly that is true. If you do not know where you have come from, you certainly do not know where you are going.

The Importance of Knowing History

I want to give you an illustration of the type of society hemlock justice produces. Our Lord said it plainly in Proverbs 8:36: "All they that hate me love death." Hemlock justice can only produce a society and culture of death. As I share with you today the exploits and death of Riley Crawford, I could ask this question: Who has ever heard of Riley Crawford?

Introducing Riley Crawford: An 'Other' Hero

I had this message basically prepared for a year or more, maybe longer, but I never knew when I was going to preach it until last week, when I preached the message on hemlock justice. I thought, Here is a perfect illustration of the truth of hemlock justice. But who has ever heard of Riley Crawford?

We have heard of a host of Confederate heroes. We have heard of Lee, Jackson, Ewell, Quantrill, and Stuart. We have heard of a host of Biblical heroes: Abraham, Isaac, Noah, Daniel, Samuel, Jephthah, Samson, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. We have heard of a host of these people. But who in the world has ever heard of Riley Crawford?

I want to point something out in the passage that I read. Look in Hebrews 11, verse 36. If you were to read down through Hebrews 11, you would find Abraham, Moses, Daniel, Samuel, Jephthah, Barak, Gideon, and David mentioned by name. But when you look at verse

36, the Scripture says, “and others,” who “had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonments.” Notice those words, “and others.” Not all Biblical heroes are listed in Hebrews 11. There were a multitude of others.

Likewise, not all Confederate heroes are known today. Not all of them have gone down in history because of their exploits and their deeds. Most real heroes, whether Biblical heroes, Confederate heroes, or Southern heroes, are the others. They are unnamed, unknown, and basically unremembered. Yet, in spite of their lack of rewards and their lack of recognition, they were faithful, loyal, sacrificial, and dedicated.

Riley Crawford was the son of Jephthah Crawford and Elizabeth Harris. The Crawfords had nine children, the youngest of whom was only five years of age. Jephthah Crawford was a farmer, and while he was indeed a Southern sympathizer, he had never personally taken up arms against the federal government. The very fact that he was a Southerner who lived in Missouri was sufficient reason for the government to seek his destruction. He was never charged with any crime. He was never indicted for any reason. Yet, simply because of orders issued by federal commanders in that area, he was hunted down and murdered in a most hateful and despicable manner. Riley Crawford was from Missouri. His parents were from Missouri. Missouri suffered greatly during the war.

The Injustice Against the Crawford Family

In all my studies on the war of northern aggression, I know how awful and wicked it was when you read about the burning of Columbia, South Carolina, and Sherman's march through Georgia. But let me tell you something: when you read the history of Missouri, I do not believe that any state really suffered the way Missouri suffered. In fact, the war actually began ten years earlier in Missouri and lasted about twenty years: ten years before the war, the five years during the war, and another five years of cleansing after the war was over. Missouri suffered greatly. It experienced a history of hate, usurpation, tyranny, and despotism, as evidenced by all the orders of the Union commanders who were in Missouri.

For instance, as early as August 30, 1861, General John C. Frémont, the Union commander of the West, declared martial law in Missouri and stated that no quarter was to be given to Southerners. Part of his order declared: "I do hereby extend and declare martial law throughout the state of Missouri. All persons who shall be taken in arms against the Union government will be shot. The property, real and personal, of all persons in the state of Missouri who shall take up arms against the United States, or who shall be directly proven to have taken an active part with their enemies in the field, is declared to be confiscated."

If one disagreed with General Frémont, or with any of the Union commanders, he not only lost his life; he lost his property as well. General Frémont, General Ewing, and a whole host of other Union commanders, in their usurpation, tyranny, and hatred for the South, especially Missourians, only consolidated Southern sympathy and determination in Missouri.

Let me give you an illustration. This is a direct quote: "They, the Kansas Federal Red Legs"—United States troops—"tried to make my Uncle Harrison into an informer, but he wouldn't do it. He was only a boy. They tried to hang him. Time and again they tried it."

“Stretching his neck,” they called it. But he didn't say anything. I think he'd have died before he said anything. He's the one that I'm named after. And I'm happy to say that there were people around at that time who said I took after him.” These were the words of Harry S. Truman, President, speaking about what the Kansas Red Legs did to his uncle at age thirteen during the War of Northern Aggression.

They stretched up a thirteen-year-old boy by the neck, released him, stretched him up again, and released him again, trying to make him an informer and trying to make him talk. Thirteen years of age.

Quantrill said, “The most direct factor contributing to the great insurrection which took place on the western border in 1861 lay in the abuses visited upon the civil population by the Union military forces. The population which was created to support guerrilla warfare against the Union had grown larger and larger during the winter of 1861 to 1862 because of the outrages perpetrated against the people of Missouri by the occupational forces.”

We are talking about federal soldiers. I have told you before about the General Orders issued from Union headquarters by Union General Thomas Ewing. I told you about those orders when I preached on the world in times of Jesse James and also the message the unions wore against women and children. However, as I bring this message, I want to refresh your mind about those orders again, to show you what the civilian population of Missouri was going through. Understand how government forces then could come after innocent and harmless men and women, and how they can do the same time anytime they so desire.

The order issued from Union headquarters on January 20, 1863, said, "All persons who shall knowingly harbor, conceal, aid or abet by furnishing food, clothing, information, protection, or any assistance, whatever, to any emissary, confederate officer, or soldier, partisan ranger, bushwhacker, robber, or thief shall be promptly executed."

If you were a mother and your Confederate son came in hungry and cold, what would you do? If your husband were a Confederate soldier and came home wounded and sick, what would you do? If you gave food, clothing, comfort, or any aid—man, woman, boy, or girl—you were to be promptly executed according to the orders issued by Union commanders.

Those orders were further defined on April 22, 1863: "a person dwelling within a district under military occupation and giving information to the enemies universally treated as a spy, a spy of a peculiarly dangerous character, whosoever shall be convicted of holding correspondence with or giving information to the enemy, either directly or indirectly, shall suffer or such other punishment as shall be ordered by the sentence of a court-martial." Persons engaged in carrying such correspondence would be held liable to the same punishment as the correspondence themselves. You could not even write to your Confederate husband or son, nor carry letters to Confederate soldiers. If you did, you were treated as an absolute spy and were to be promptly executed.

General Ewing further enforced these measures in General Orders No. 10, issued August 18, 1863: "Such officers will arrest and send to the district provost marshal for punishment all men and all women,

not just heads of family, who willfully aid and encourage guerrillas. The wives and children of non-guerrillas and also women who are heads of families and are willfully engaged in aiding guerrillas will be notified by such officers to move out of this district and out of the state of Missouri forthwith."

Thus, there were not only orders to kill; there was also an order requiring Southerners to leave their homes, counties, and the state. General Orders Number 11, issued August 25, 1863, gave the population until September 9—merely two weeks—to leave the area.

Southerners were literally driven from their homes simply because they were Southerners. Here is part of the order General Ewing issued: "All persons living in Jackson, Cass, and Bates Counties, Missouri, and in that part of Vernon included in this district are hereby ordered to remove from their present places of residence within 15 days hereof." They had two weeks to pack their bags and get out of town. Remember, there were no automobiles in those days. The population of Cass County before General Ewing's order was 9,794 people. After his order was executed, there were less than 600 people left in Cass County.

In order to bolster General Order Number 10, General Order Number 11 was issued, and it read thus: "The provisions of General Order Number 10 from these headquarters will at once be vigorously executed by officers commanded in the parts of the district." In other words, either you get out or you get killed. Anyone who did not leave would be killed.

Author and historian Albert Castel wrote this concerning General Order No. 11: "Order No. 11 was the most drastic and repressive military measures directed against civilians by the Union Army during the Civil War. In fact, it stands as the harshest treatment ever imposed on United States citizens under the plea of military necessity in our nation's history." He says there was nothing like General Order Number 11.

One of the Union colonels, Basil F. Lazier, wrote his wife and described the scene when southern families were trying to get out of these counties or be murdered by federal soldiers. Colonel Lazier wrote: "You ought to have been with me coming down from Kansas

City and saw the secesh women and children and the few men with them fleeing from the raft to come. They were all from Jackson County and were leaving in accordance with General Ewing's order. It is heart-sickening to see what I have seen. A desolated country and many women and children, some of them almost naked and some on foot and some in old wagons. Oh, God help us."

Federal commanders who believed guerrillas were in the neighborhood were authorized to shoot anyone who failed to report the guerrillas, or any contact with them, to Union officers within forty-eight hours. If Phil knew that a group of guerrillas was camping two miles from his farm and did not report the encampment, he was killed, and his family was killed. They were authorized to kill all who knew about the guerrillas—not merely those who helped them.

One Union officer who was extremely vigorous in following those orders was Colonel William Bill Penick. Here is what he wrote: “It is impossible to fight these guerrillas on their own ground in the brush where they have every advantage over us. We must make it unhealthy for the neighborhoods where they harbor them. It is my intention whenever I find a camp of bushwhackers to take some revenge on those who I have satisfactory reason to believe have knowledge of the existence of such a camp and did not report it.”

He was not merely interested in killing the guerrillas. He intended to kill anybody whom he suspected of knowing their whereabouts and failing to report them.

As a sidelight, Company V, which had earlier been commanded by Colonel Penick, was known as Penick’s thieves. Penick was known to assassinate anyone he suspected of being a Southern sympathizer, or anyone who even knew about any of the guerrillas. He hanged Sam Kimberling, a fifty-one-year-old farmer with six children, from a rafter in Kimberling’s own barn. Kimberling had never taken sides during the war, had never taken up arms against the Union, and had no charges against him. Colonel Penick hanged him simply because he did not want him, did not like him, and thought he was a Southern sympathizer.

Penick was known as a rough and uneducated man. He was a radical unionist who placed bounties on the heads of Southern soldiers: $1,000 for the head of Cole Younger, $500 for either of the McCorkle brothers, and $100 for the head of any guerrilla. He believed that the guerrilla problem could be wiped out if fire, hemp, and gunpowder were freely used. In other words, his resolution to the problem of Southerners was simply to kill them all.

And he practiced what he preached. In late January 1863, he burned down thirteen homes of Southern sympathizers, along with the Baptist Church building in Oak Grove, Missouri. Penick pillaged, burned, and murdered without remorse.

On or about February 18, 1863, while stationed at Independence, Missouri, Union commander Colonel Bill Penick sent out approximately seventy-five scouts. They went to the house of Colonel Jim Sanders and divided into two groups. One remained at Colonel Sanders's house, while the other headed for Uncle Jephthah Crawford's house.

Here is the absolute wickedness of these Union soldiers, and, on the other hand, the kindness and hospitality of the Southerners. When the Federal soldiers came to Mrs. Saunders's house, she and her daughter prepared dinner for all of them. Colonel Saunders provided food for all their horses. Everything went well until dinner was over.

It was winter. Snow was fourteen inches deep, and the temperature was ten below zero. After dinner, Colonel Saunders was placed under guard. The house was then burned to the ground, and the women and children were not even allowed to get a bonnet or a shawl.

The Southerners had fed these men and provided for their horses. Yet they arrested Colonel Saunders, burned his house, and told Mrs. Saunders they would take him to Independence and make him take the oath of allegiance. On the way to Independence, they stopped at the house of James Burris, dismounted Colonel Saunders, and shot him to death. Here was a Southern family that had just provided food and nourishment for them.

They rewarded them by burning down their home and murdering an old man. It did not fare well at the Crawford house either. No one was given an opportunity to take or refuse the oath. In those days, if a person did not take the oath of loyalty, he immediately faced the death penalty.

Here is the account of an eyewitness who saw what transpired at the Crawford farm. William H. Gregg, one of Quantrill's lieutenants, was not only a fierce fighter but also an excellent writer and author. This account is taken from his little history, without embellishment, from an eyewitness who was there:

"Mr. Crawford, an old man with a large family of children, was a Southern sympathizer, but had never taken up arms against the government. He went to the mill one day with a sack of corn to have it ground to make bread for his wife and children. He left home early in the morning and was to be back by noon.

"Noon came. The wife had prepared dinner as best she could, but was waiting for her husband to return so she could have bread for their dinner. Two o'clock came, and the husband was still absent. The children were hungry, crying for something to eat. The mother would say, ‘Papa will soon be here; then my darling shall have something to eat.’ Three o'clock came, and the mother saw a company of soldiers approaching.

"They rode up to the door. The mother looked out and saw her husband, a prisoner in their midst. He was told to dismount. After he did so, they shot him down before the eyes of his wife and children—shot him down like a wild beast. The mother was told to get out of the house with her children, as they were going to burn the house. She asked them to let her give her little children something to eat, as they had nothing to eat since early morning.

"In answer to her appeal, one of them snatched a brand from the fire and struck it to a straw bed. Everything was soon in flames. The mother hastened from the house, snatching up a few things as she went. Her husband killed, her house burned, she and her children were turned out in the cold world, homeless and destitute. The witness went on to say, ‘Oh, how strange that men made in the image of God could be so cruel and heartless.’ Mrs. Crawford and her

children were thrown out in the freezing weather without food and without proper clothing."

You've got to remember: fourteen inches of snow, ten degrees below zero. They were deprived of all their necessities. The only thing left them was an absolute burning hatred for anyone and anything that wore a blue uniform. Thankfully, a kind, caring, gracious Christian and Southern family took in the Crawfords, regardless of the orders from General Ewing. Mrs. Crawford heard that Quantrill was in a camp nearby. She took her four sons—William, who was twenty-two; the twins, Marshall and Marion, who were fifteen; and Riley, of whom this message is about—to Quantrill and said, "These are all I have left. Take them and make soldiers out of them."

Riley Crawford's Transformation into a Guerrilla Fighter

Riley, of whom we are speaking, was not only the youngest of Quantrill's soldiers; he was also one of the fiercest fighters. Any and all of Quantrill's men were great fighters. They knew their enemy and exactly what to do when confronted by their enemies. Confederate General E. Kirby Smith said this concerning Quantrill's men: "No better force could be employed than that of Quantrill's Missourians. They are bold, fearless men composed of the very best class of Missourians. They have suffered every outrage in their person and their families at the hands of the Federals, and being outlawed and their lives forfeited, have waged a war of no quarter whenever they have come into contact with the enemy."

Riley Crawford was no exception. He learned quickly and became adept at killing Yankee soldiers. He had learned he had to either kill or be killed. He had to either kill or let his enemies kill him.

Union General Curtis had issued General Orders No. 30, which not only defined a guerrilla but also gave the punishment for a guerrilla. Here is what General Orders No. 30 said: "Whosoever shall be convicted as a guerrilla shall suffer death. They deserve no quarters, no terms of civilized warfare, pursue, strike, and destroy the reptiles." If you were a Confederate guerrilla, you were considered a reptile who was to be pursued and destroyed.

Quantrill took his men, along with the Crawford brothers, and ambushed a group of federal soldiers waiting for a patrol from Independence, Missouri. Quantrill and his lieutenant, George Todd, shot five federal soldiers from their saddles instantly and killed four more as they tried to retreat. Quantrill then put the dead Union soldiers in a wagon and sent them back to Independence with a note for Colonel Penick. It said that the same fate awaited all Federal soldiers who ventured into Quantrill country.

On one occasion, when Quantrill and his men had whipped Union General Blunt, they were plundering the Federal wagons. Young Riley Crawford was playfully shouting commands to fallen Union soldiers. To one prostrate Union soldier, he yelled, "Get up, you Federal SOB!" To everyone's amazement, the Federal soldier stood up, thinking that young Riley had found him feigning death. As he stood up, he did not have to pretend any longer because young Riley quickly dispatched him.

To understand the driving force behind Riley Crawford, you have to recall the message preached several years ago on the Union's war against women and children. A number of Southern women, especially younger women, had been arrested by General Ewing for no other reason than that they were Southerners, espoused Southern sentiments, and, in some cases, were related to Quantrill soldiers. General Ewing was trying to hold these women as hostages, using them as pawns and bargaining chips against Quantrill and his men.

The women were later placed into a building that was undermined by federal soldiers, many believing at the orders of General Ewing. Five women were murdered, crushed to death when the building deliberately fell. Two of those young women were Susan Crawford Vandiver and Arminia Crawford Selvey, sisters of Riley Crawford. After his sisters were killed so viciously, Riley Crawford was never known to spare a Union soldier.

The Murder of Riley's Sisters and Its Aftermath

In a newspaper article dated November 11, 1911, Elizabeth Harris, the sister of Nannie Harris, one of the captured girls, wrote: "I was a girl of eleven at the time as I remembered that the Union men sent three caskets containing my cousins to Little Blue. With the caskets

was a satchel of trinkets and dry goods that my sister and Charity had gone to town to buy."

The dead were buried in the Old Smith Cemetery near Raytown. They did not have much time for funerals in those days, and the three were buried in one grave. A little after the guardhouse fell, Order No. 11 was issued, and their house at Little Blue was burned. They went down near Glasgow, and Riley's sister Nanny walked there after she escaped from the Union guardhouse—almost a hundred miles. After the guardhouse fell, the remaining women were taken to some hotel and kept there for a period of time. Can you imagine walking a hundred miles?

But after the murder of his two sisters, Riley refused to take federal prisoners. He killed every Union soldier who fell into his hands. He had reason enough to hate the federal soldiers because of the murder of his father, the destruction of his family home, and the burden they placed upon his mother. Now he had two additional reasons. Riley became as efficient in killing Union soldiers as Bloody Bill Anderson. When Bloody Bill Anderson was killed, he had a silk kerchief with fifty-four knots in it, one for each Union soldier he had killed. Riley Crawford was with Quantrill as they raided Lawrence, Kansas.

You must remember that Lawrence, Kansas, was commonly known as the Citadel of Stolen Goods. All of the goods stolen from Missouri by the Red Legs and other Union soldiers were taken to Lawrence, Kansas, where they were auctioned or sold. A lot of Southerners were killed or murdered when they went to Lawrence to try to recover their stolen goods.

By the way, I despise what Hollywood does to history. If you watch the Hollywood movie Ride with the Devil, which is supposed to portray one of Quantrill's raids into Lawrence, Kansas, you will see women being shot. No, there were no women shot. Quantrill gave the order, “Kill every federal soldier that you see.” Then he had a list of men, and only men, who were to be killed. Quantrill said, “Kill no woman and child.” He said, “Harm no woman and child.” He said anyone who harmed a woman or child would answer to him. Young Riley was with Quantrill when they rode into Lawrence. After the attack, on their way back to Missouri, they stopped at the home

of Lathrop Bullene, and food was prepared for the Confederate soldiers. It does not matter if you are a Yankee and a hundred Confederate soldiers ask for food; I am sure you are going to give it. If you are a Southerner and a hundred federal soldiers ask for food, you are going to give it.

They stopped at the home of Lathrop Bullene, and Riley specifically asked for food. Food was given to these Confederate soldiers. The woman of the house was from Wisconsin, and she voiced her opinion. She believed it was outrageous that men had been shot down in the streets of Lawrence.

Young Riley Crawford fiercely replied, "I had two sisters arrested in Kansas City by Union men for entertaining Southern sentiments. They were imprisoned in a building used as a guardhouse. The building was known to be unsafe and, besides, it was undermined. One night that building fell, and my two sisters and three other ladies were crushed to death." Riley paused for a moment and then said, "Jennison has laid waste our homes, and your red legs have perpetrated unheard-of crimes. I'm here for revenge, and I've got it."

Young Riley was admitting that the raid on Lawrence, Kansas, was precipitated by what the Union soldiers had done to the women and children when they undermined that building. After his sister was killed, he never spared a Yankee. He was an intrepid, courageous, and valiant warrior. His last battle was fought in Cooper County, Missouri. Riding with George Todd, he encountered Union troops and led the charge. He was shot from his saddle with a load of buck and ball—buckshot in a big ball—fired by a Yankee soldier hidden in ambush behind a fence corner. His death was lamented by his comrades, but in revenge they fought furiously and won a victory: 114 federal troops were killed, 80 horses captured, 50 recruits gathered up, and a half a million dollars of federal property destroyed.

Riley Crawford's Death and Legacy

After his father, Jephthah Crawford, was murdered by federal troops and his home was burned down, his mother and children were put out in the cold without anything. Mrs. Crawford took her four sons to Quantrill and asked him to make soldiers out of them.

Her oldest son, William, was 22. The twins, Marshall and Marion, were 15. Young Riley was 13 years of age. He was a hardened, intrepid, courageous, and extremely dangerous combat veteran when he was shot down at the age of 16. A few researchers list his age at 17, but in the book James Simeon Whitsett, Quantrill Raider, a man who wrote with Quantrill, said that young Riley did not live to see his 17th birthday.

Hemlock justice—injustice, whether done by individuals, groups, or governments, always leads to reprisals. When one is denied justice, he will either seek it by overthrowing those who refuse to give it or by personal revenge. Either way, the results are catastrophic.

Governments composed of wicked men cannot and will not issue true justice. Remember, I told you last week that true justice is biblical justice, and it is based upon the precepts laid down in God's law. When the wicked are justified and the righteous are condemned, according to Proverbs 17, verse 1, both are an abomination to God. Such wicked rulings only serve to harden the determination of others to seek real justice. You know what the Bible says in Proverbs 29, verse 2? "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. But when the wicked bear rule, the righteous mourn." Why? Because there is no justice.

Applications: The Consequences of Hemlock Justice

Children are just as easily and just as quickly affected by injustice as are adults. When you consider that a 13-year-old boy can become a hardened combat veteran and be killed in battle fighting for what he believes is real justice at the age of 16, you have to understand that injustice does affect everyone. It should open our eyes to the results of a wicked, ungodly civil government that is not interested in justice.

Thirdly, remember this: God ordained civil government. Why did God ordain civil government? He tells you in Romans chapter 13: "for he," the civil ruler, "is God's minister of thee for good." How is he to be God's minister for us for good? If you read in Romans 13, verse 4, the role of civil government is twofold. On the one hand, they are to punish the wicked, and on the other hand, they are to

protect the righteous. That is it. God instituted civil government so that civil government may protect the righteous and punish the wicked.

Who determines what righteousness is? Who determines what wickedness is? The answer is God; it is given to us in His Word. Civil government is bound and obligated to be biblical—not only because God ordained it and because it is answerable and accountable to Him, but because it can render true justice only as it renders biblical justice.

Do you realize that one of the most potent reasons to fight against injustice is self-preservation? You do not have to fight for your life, but for your family, your home, and your friends—for the protection of life. One of these days, if God allows me to live long enough and gives me the time, I am going to bring a message on outlaws. I will show you that all of the famous—or, if you prefer the term, infamous—outlaws in this country were made so by government when it refused to give true justice.

Conclusion: A Warning for Modern America

I wonder, in light of present-day circumstances, where we are going in this country and what will happen when the people become fed up with the wickedness, corruption, fraud, and injustice being perpetrated upon us. If you know where you have come from and where you are, you probably have a pretty good idea where you are going.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for Your grace, mercy, goodness, and kindness. Teach us, Lord; open our eyes, make us aware, and make us alert. May we understand our times, that we may prepare our hearts and lives and be more holy, godly, and obedient. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 12

Biblical Principles of Secession

July 26, 2009

Biblical Principles for Secession

SCRIPTURE READING - 1 Kings 12:1-11 (KJV)

> And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king. And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;) that they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying, Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee. And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed. And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? And they spake unto him,

saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.

But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him: And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter? And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

SCRIPTURE READING - 1 Kings 12:1-24 (KJV)

So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day. And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him; And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat. So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee

> to Jerusalem. So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day. And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only. And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying, Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren, the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD.
>
> Biblical principles for secession. Let me just point out the fact that some of you may or may not be aware, but there are numerous states in this country that are very seriously considering seceding.

Introduction: The Question of Secession

In fact, secession has been discussed openly in Hawaii, Alaska, Vermont, and Montana. Northern California has wanted to secede from Southern California for years, and a confederation is discussing it at this particular time. There have been numerous conferences throughout this land—I can think of about four—that have seriously entertained seceding from the United States.

The question must be asked: Should we go, or should we stay? Put another way, is it time to consider leaving the Union of the States as it now exists and forming a new union or confederation of states? We could boil it down further: Do we wish to remain under the regime of Washington, D.C., as it now is? Or under the regime of many state capitals as they now are? Unhappily, many state capitals are just as wicked, corrupt, and perverse as Washington, D.C. I do

not want to be under Atlanta, Georgia, any more than I want to be under Washington, D.C. To me, both are equally corrupt.

Force Does Not Negate Right

Someone will say, "Why this talk about secession? Don't you know that the war settled that principle once and for all?" No. The war did not settle the principle of secession. Force never negates right, righteousness, or a principle of truth. Just because a bully wins does not make the bully right.

You would not adopt that attitude if you were walking down the street and a larger, stronger man stepped around the corner with a weapon, held it between your eyes, demanded all your money, and robbed you of several thousand dollars. Suppose he thankfully left you your life. As he escaped, would you think, "That's settled. The money is gone. I no longer need it or want it. It is over and done with. I do not have to call the law, try to see him captured, or try to get my money back"? No, no, no.

You would say that what he had done was wicked and wrong. He may have been stronger and able to take your money, but that does not make what he did right. So, simply because the North won a war does not mean that it negated a historical, constitutional, or biblical principle. When we ask the question, "Should we go, or should we stay?"

Biblical Principles of Secession

There are many ways to look at the answer. One is historically. I have done that before, but I am not going to do it today. If you will listen to the message I preached, "Was Secession Treasonous?" I give many historical illustrations concerning secession. When you look to history for direction and guidance, you certainly will get some. But for the child of God, the question has to be resolved based upon the Word of God. So I want to give you a biblical principle, or point out several principles, that lead to secession.

Definition and Historical Context of Secession

The term secession is derived from the Latin word “secedere,” which literally means an act of withdrawal. Secession is not revolution, nor is it anarchy. It is simply a withdrawal from one union or government in order that you might establish another union or government.

Secession was understood even by many in the North who hated and despised the South. Horace Greeley, certainly no friend of the South and editor of the Republican New York Tribune, declared on February 23, 1861, after a confederacy had been formed by the seven Gulf states, or cotton states:

“We have repeatedly said that the great principle embodied by Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, that governments derive their powers from the consent of the governed, is sound and just. And that if the cotton states, or the Gulf states only, choose to form an independent nation, they have a clear moral right to do so. Whenever it shall become clear that the great body of Southern people have become conclusively alienated from the Union, and anxious to escape from it, we will do our best to forward their views.”

Listen to what Horace really said: If the South wants to secede, let them go. It is their right.

In our text in 1 Kings chapter 12, the ten northern tribes seceded from King Rehoboam. Rehoboam was the son of Solomon, who was the son of David. God had entered into a covenant with David and told him that as long as his sons obeyed Him, he would not want for a son to sit upon the throne of Israel.

Matthew Henry gives this overview of Rehoboam: “Solomon had a thousand wives and concubines, yet we read of but one son he had to bear up his name, and he is a fool.”

Rehoboam's Foolishness and Tyranny

It is said in Hosea 4:10, “They shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase.” Sin is a bad way of building up a family. Rehoboam was the son of the wisest of men, yet did not inherit his father’s wisdom, and it stood him in little stead to inherit his father’s throne. Neither

wisdom nor grace runs in the blood. Solomon came to the crown very young, yet he was then a wise man. Rehoboam came to the crown at forty years old, when men will be wise, if they ever will, yet he was then foolish. Wisdom does not go by age, nor is it the multitude of years, nor the advantage of education that reaches it. Solomon's court was a mart of wisdom and the rendezvous of learned men, and Rehoboam was the darling of the court, yet all was not sufficient to make him a wise man. The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. No dispute is made of Rehoboam's succession.

Upon the death of his father, he was immediately proclaimed king. Neither wisdom nor grace runs in the blood; just because you are the son of a wise man does not make you wise. Rehoboam was indeed a lawful descendant of David, yet he had none of David's godliness nor any of Solomon's wisdom. He had been lawfully appointed to rule, but he had no inclination to rule lawfully.

He had no intention of governing covenantally or constitutionally. Solomon, in his last days, fell into idolatry and tyranny, and those two things always go together. It is impossible to be a tyrant and rule according to the Word of God. Tyrants are made when they forsake God and God's law. If you rule biblically and lawfully, it is impossible to be a tyrant. But when you forsake God and His law, tyranny is always the result, because fallen man always wants to play God.

Lord Acton of England said, "There is no worse heresy than that the office sanctifies the holder of it." The office does not make a man wise or graceful or sanctified in any way. Many times you will find a fool in office. William Pitt of England rose in the House of Lords to defend the freedom of speech. In part, he said, "Unlimited power is apt to corrupt the minds of those who possess it. And this I know, my Lords, that where law ends, there tyranny begins." Whenever one allows the law of God to be set aside, tyranny will be the result.

Whenever one allows the law of God to be set aside, tyranny will be the result. You want to know what happened in this country, and why we are where we are? Because we have allowed the law of God to be set aside.

When Rehoboam took over the kingdom, Israel wanted and needed relief from the excessive burdens placed upon them during the last days of King Solomon. In 1 Kings chapter 12, verse 4, Jeroboam has become the spokesman for Israel. They speak to Rehoboam in verse 3: “And they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam the king, saying,” and in verse 4: “Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he hath put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.” All they are asking at this point is that the grievous load imposed by his father be lightened.

The People's Request and Rehoboam's Counsel

They were ready to stay and work things out if Rehoboam would listen, do what was right, and grant them relief. That was exactly the position of our Founding Fathers. They did not initially want to be independent of England. Listen to the Declaration of Independence: “That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it and institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such a form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.”

“Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.” If things could be made right, our Founding Fathers were not willing to abolish the form of government to which they were accustomed.

That is why the Fairfax Resolves were written in 1774. Our founding fathers were beseeching George III to keep his end of the covenant. They were saying, “We're willing to be your servants, but we're not willing to be your slaves.” Israel, according to verse 4, was likewise willing to suffer and keep Rehoboam as king so long as he granted relief and ruled benevolently. They stated plainly, “we will serve thee.”

Their initial plan was to stay. They did not ask the king to resign, withdraw, or violate the covenant. All they wanted was for the king to rule covenantally or constitutionally.

When they came to Rehoboam in verse 4 and said, “Make everything lighter, do what you're supposed to do and we'll serve thee,” the only wise thing Rehoboam did throughout this entire situation was to ask three days to consider their request. “And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.” He asked for three days so that he might consult and get some counsel.

There is a difference between the counsel of old men and the counsel of young men. There is a vast difference between the counsel and thinking of old men and the counsel and thinking of young men. Have you ever noticed why the military always wants all young men? Police departments always want young men. You will see why in just a moment.

King Rehoboam consulted with the old men who had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, “How do ye advise that I may answer this people?” They answered, “If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.” But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him. He said unto them, “What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?”

The young men advised him, “Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us;” and, “Thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.”

The old men told Rehoboam, “If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.”

Covenantal Nature of Government

The word servant in verse 7, when they tell the king, “If you will be the servant of this people,” is the Hebrew word Ebed, which literally means a slave, a bond slave, or a manservant. They said, “Now look, King, if you are willing to be the slave or servant of this people, and if you are willing to recognize that you reign not only by the decree of God but also by the consent of the governed, fine.” If you will be their servant, then, as verse 7 says, “they will be thy servants for ever.” In other words, if you will be a slave to the people, and the same word is used in the latter part, then they, the people, will be a slave to you. There is a reciprocity in covenantal obligations. The king, then, is covenantally obligated to be a slave or servant to the people. As he serves them, they in return serve him.

All government is covenantal in nature. This applies to family government, church government, and civil government. When David was made king of Israel, he was chosen by God, but that did not mean God simply imposed him upon the people as their king whether they liked it or not. Although David was chosen by God to be king, he was also chosen by the people. In 1 Chronicles 11:3, we read: “Therefore came all the elders of Israel to the king to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by Samuel.” God chose David, but He chose him mediately—that is, through the will and recognition of the people—and the people then entered into a covenant with David.

There was a kingly covenant. There was a kingly constitution. It was true under David. It was true under Solomon. It certainly was true under Rehoboam as well. Why did God choose David? Why did God allow David to ascend to the throne? We could enlarge that question and ask, why does God allow anyone to have a position of authority?

Look in your Bibles to 2 Samuel chapter 5 and verse 12. David understood what most civil rulers fail to understand: “And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.” Why did God establish David? Why did God exalt his kingdom? For his people Israel's sake. In other words, a true ruler does not rule for

himself. He does not rule for his position. He does not rule for his program. He does not rule for his party. He rules for the people over which God has placed him. A true ruler is always a servant.

We used to have in this country a phrase referring to our rulers. We called them public servants. You use that today on a bureaucrat, and he will be very visibly upset, because no politician today ever thinks he is your servant. He thinks he is your master.

If secession is biblical, if it is lawful, if it is constitutional, what are the principles that lead to it? These young men said, "You answer the people this way, my little finger will be thicker than my father's loins." What was he saying? "My little finger"—in other words, "I am going to be tougher, rougher, crueler, and meaner than you can ever dream of."

Biblical Principles Leading to Secession

"My father beat you with whips. I'll beat you with scorpions. I'll have something that will really sting. My father made your yoke heavy. I'm going to make it heavier. I'm going to add to that yoke." There is a difference between the thinking of old men and the thinking of young men. Old men usually think biblically. They think of working things out. Young men always think of force and aggression.

What are the principles that will lead to secession? According to the Bible, it is time to secede when rulers are wicked, ungodly, and tyrannical—when civil rulers are wicked, ungodly, and tyrannical. When power and authority become tyrannical, resistance is a duty. God has never ordained a tyrannical or despotic form of government.

Understand this especially in light of Rehoboam. Hold 1 Kings chapter 12, and look at Romans chapter 13, verses 3 and 4, to see why God established civil government to begin with. He says:

"For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

Notice that God said He ordained civil government for our good. Here is my question: How can one who steals your wealth, takes away your freedom, destroys your liberty, and enslaves your family be for your good? The subjection and the obedience that God demands from everyone in Romans 13, verses 1 and 2, is dependent upon the civil rulers being what God demands for them to be in verses 3, 4, and 6.

Romans 1 and 2 are indeed conditional. Why did God ordain civil government? Romans 13:1 says, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” The word powers is exousia, meaning powers, authorities, or jurisdictions. Thus, all jurisdictions are basically ordained by God. Verse 2 says, “Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.” Ordinance is diatage, literally that which has been established, an arrangement. In other words, God has given an orderly arrangement for authority in the family, the church, and civil government.

In verse 3, the civil rulers are simply referred to as rulers, meaning chief ones or leaders. But verse 4 says, “For he is the minister of God to thee for good.” Later in that same verse, it says, “For he is the minister of God.” Twice in verse 4 the civil ruler is called a minister. The Greek word is diakonos, from which we get our English word deacon, and it literally means a servant. God has ordained civil government to be His servant, His deacon. If civil government is to be His deacon and His servant, what does that mean? It means that it is to carry out God's word and God's will, honoring God by being His servant and being submissive to Him.

Verse 4 continues: “For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” Revenger comes from ekdikos. Ek is a preposition meaning out of or from, and dikaios is the Greek word for righteousness. What is a revenger? It is someone who exacts righteousness. God ordained civil government not merely to be a ruler, but to be His deacon, His servant, exacting righteousness.

In other words, God ordained civil government to fulfill and carry out His law and apply His law according to the authority He gave them. In verse 6, they are again called ministers, attending

continually upon this very thing. This is a different word from deacon: leitourgos, or leitourgoi in the plural, from which we get our English word liturgy. What is a liturgy? It is a public worship. We come in, have music, and have prayer; that is worship.

I don't care if you're in a Roman Catholic church, an Episcopal church, or the most independent Baptist church you'll ever find. Every church has a liturgy. It's a public worship.

Why did God ordain civil government? Not just to be a raw power, not just to be an ordinance, not just to have chief ones or leaders, but God gave authority, God gave the ordinance of government to be His deacon, His exactor of righteousness, and His public worship. Period. Most people today are willing to admit the government's power, but they are not willing to go as far as God goes and say that it has its power and authority from God, and that this power and authority is only to be used according as God has directed.

Now, if government is to be God's deacon, who must it obey? The answer is God. If it is to be God's exactor of righteousness, whose righteousness must it exact? The answer is God's. If government is to be His public worship, whom then must it publicly worship? The answer is God.

So how do we know whether secession is to be even entering into our mind? The answer comes when your civil rulers are ungodly, wicked, and tyrannical. It is time to think of secession when rulers constantly and consistently violate their covenantal obligations.

The Role of God's Law and the Constitution

When these people came to Rehoboam and said, “Make thou our burdens lighter. We will serve thee,” it never entered Rehoboam's mind to read their covenantal agreement or paraphrase it—to read their constitution. He said, “I'm going to consult. I'll get the counsel of the old man, and I'll get the counsel of the young man.” He forsook the counsel of the old man and followed the counsel of the young man.

All rulers in Israel were to rule and judge according to the law of God. They were to be governed, controlled, and limited by that covenant and by God's law. God said to the judges in 2 Chronicles

19:6, “And said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment.” You judge not for man, but for the Lord. In Deuteronomy 17:18–20, the law of God required the civil ruler to have his own personal copy of the law of God, and he was to read therein day and night.

Why? So that he could rule covenantally, so that he could rule biblically. In 2 Samuel 23, David claims direct inspiration from God for one simple statement. “Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the LORD spake by me.” That is once. “And his word was in my tongue.” That is twice. “The God of Israel said,” that is three times. “The Rock of Israel spake to me,” that is four times. Four times David claims direct inspiration from God for this simple statement: “He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.” Notice: he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

It is impossible to rule in the fear of God apart from the Word of God. If you rule justly, you must rule biblically, for justice is only found in the Word of God. You cannot rule justly. You cannot rule righteously without ruling biblically.

Let me point this out very clearly. Our fathers understood this principle. When this nation was founded, our forefathers required that their rulers be Christian and that they rule according to the Bible. There is a message, “The Biblical Attitude Toward Ungodly Rulers,” in which I quote a number of these examples, but let me give you a few to demonstrate that our forefathers understood that the Bible is to be our law book.

The New Haven Colony Charter, April 3, 1644, adopted rules for governing the courts of the New Haven Colony, stating, “the judicial laws of God, as they were delivered by Moses, are to be a rule in all the courts in this jurisdiction.” Isn’t that simple? Do you realize that juries used to determine verdicts based upon the Word of God? Judges used to walk into the courtroom with an open Bible, and men stood out of respect for the Bible. Then they kicked the Bible out, and now they want you to stand in respect of them. The Charter of Delaware in 1701 says this.

"And that also all persons who also profess to be believers in Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, shall be capable, notwithstanding other persuasions and practices in point of conscience and religion, to serve this government in any capacity, both legislatively and executively." If you wanted to serve in Delaware in 1701, you had to be a Christian. You did not have to be a Baptist or a Presbyterian, but you had to be a Christian.

The Constitution of Delaware in 1776, Article 22, says this: "Every person that shall be chosen a member of either of the houses or appointed to any office or place of trust, before taking his seat or entering upon the execution of his office, shall take the following oath or affirmation." You had to put your own name there: "I, [blank], do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed forevermore, and I do acknowledge the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration."

You could not hold office when this country was begun unless you were a Christian—unless you professed faith in Jesus Christ and believed the Bible to be the word of God. John Jay said this: "Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers. And it is their duty as well as their privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers."

We have done exactly what Rehoboam did in this country: we have set aside the law of God as our covenant.

We adopted a constitution. Even if you want to go constitutionally, listen to Article Six, paragraph two, of the United States Constitution: "This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States," and which shall be made under the Authority of the United States, "shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding." The Constitution is to be the supreme law of the land, and every officer is to take an oath that he will uphold it.

For years, presidents took their oath of office with their hand upon Deuteronomy 28, which contains the blessings and the curses. The Constitution is known as an express-powers document, or a limited-powers document. When you refer to it as an express-powers document, it means that the only authority or power the federal government has is that which is expressed in the Constitution. When you call it a limited-powers document, it means similarly that the only power or authority the federal government has is that which is limited to the Constitution. In other words, if it is not expressly stated in the Constitution that the federal government has such and such power, then it does not have it.

You say, "Well, how did they get all this power?" The answer is simple: They stole it. They usurped it. Any authority that has not been given to the federal government by the states or the people thereof has been usurped and stolen. Patrick Henry said, and I am quoting, "The Constitution is not an instrument for the government to restrain the people, it is an instrument for the people to restrain the government lest it come to dominate their lives." All I can say is, we have not been doing too much restraining, have we? Because it certainly has come to dominate our lives.

There is a principle in the Bible, and also in law, that when one party violates the covenant, it releases the other party from obedience to the covenant. You remember the covenant entered into by the spies and Rahab in Joshua chapter 2. They agreed to spare Rahab and her family if all her family remained in the house and the red cord hung from it, because their men did not know who her family was or which house was hers. If any of her family came into the street and was killed, that was their responsibility; they should have stayed in the house. But if the spies entered her house and killed anybody, their blood would be upon them.

Once they agreed to this covenant, as Rahab let the spies down, one spy said in Joshua 2:20, "And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear." In other words, Rahab, if you violate your end of the covenant, we are not obligated to keep our end; we will kill you as we kill everyone else.

So here we find that all government is covenantal in nature. We find that even our Constitution says that this Constitution shall be the supreme law of the land.

Has the federal government consistently, constantly, and repeatedly usurped authority that was never given to them? Does the federal government consider, follow, and obey the Constitution? We have failed to realize that rebellion can be on the part of government equally as it can be on the part of the people.

When our forefathers seceded and left the Union in 1861, our only president, Jefferson Davis, said, "I love the Union, but I had rather leave the Union with the Constitution than remain in the Union without the Constitution." When the South seceded, it was not to destroy the Constitution, but to preserve the principles in that Constitution. The Confederate Constitution embodied all the principles of the original Constitution, except that it outlawed slavery, which the Federal Constitution did not. Benjamin Franklin Grady of North Carolina said in 1899, "The cause of the South was the cause of constitutional government, the cause of government regulated by law, and the cause of honesty and fidelity in public service. No nobler cause did man ever fight for."

When is it time to think about secession? Not only when rulers are ungodly, wicked, and tyrannical, but also when they consistently and constantly violate their covenantal and constitutional oath. Thirdly, it is time to think of secession when rulers endeavor to rule by force rather than by consent.

The Declaration says, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Just powers come from the consent of the governed. If there is no consent, power is only acquired by usurpation and force. Look back in 1 Kings 12 and verse 14.

Rehoboam spake to the people after the words of the young men, and he said, “My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your

yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."

What was Rehoboam planning to do? He intended to use force rather than consent to make the people serve him—to force them to obey his will. He planned to use hurtful, harmful, humanistic force to obtain submission. He threatened not only to squeeze them by taxes, but to chastise them with cruel laws and severe exactions, not merely as whips, but as scorpions with whips, fetching blood at every lash. In short, Rehoboam said, "You are my sheep to be sheared. You are my brute beast to be laden with as heavy burdens as I put upon you."

"I don't care whether you love me or not. I don't care whether you respect me or not. But you will serve me because I will make you serve me." That was Rehoboam's attitude. Whenever there are penalties to force recognition of power and authority, and penalties to force submission and recognition, it is time to consider secession. Martial law, heavy-handed tactics, a police state, and laws and regulations that rely upon force are all indicators that secession needs to be considered.

Thomas Jefferson said, "Tyranny is defined as that which is legal for the government, but illegal for the citizens." Think about that. If it is legal for the government to do something that is illegal for you, if it is lawful for them to do something that is unlawful for you, he said that is tyranny. Jefferson also said, "When the government fears the people there is liberty, when the people fear the government there is tyranny."

The fourth principle we find from 1 Kings chapter 12 is this: it is time to consider secession when rulers seek to steal from the people to support a government that is contrary to the consent and will of the people.

Historical Parallels and the Fairfax Resolves

When the king answered the people roughly, he said, "You think I'm going to make things lighter for you? I'm going to make it worse. My father beat you with the whips, I'm going to whip you with scorpions." In verse 16 we read, "So when all Israel saw that the king

hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David?"

"Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents." Israel left Judah and Judah's king. There was a formal declaration of secession: "We have no right in David. We have no right in you. To your tents, O Israel. What portion have we in David? What inheritance do we have in this son of David? No. We're leaving. You take care of your own business. We'll take care of ours."

Evidently, Abraham Lincoln learned from Rehoboam. Like Rehoboam, Lincoln planned to collect taxes from people who did not owe them—from states that had seceded from the Union. Israel had withdrawn, but Rehoboam said, in effect, "You are going to pay for my government anyhow."

In verse 17 we read: "But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them. Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem." Rehoboam sent Adoram, his head tax collector, to Israel to collect the taxes, and went along to make sure they understood that he had royal authority to collect them. The people of Israel stoned Adoram, and when Rehoboam saw that things were not working out as he wished, he hurried back to Jerusalem.

King George III of England was going to do the same thing. He intended to force the collection of taxes upon the American colonists, although they did not owe those taxes. They had never been under Parliament; they had their own legislatures. Knowing that war was coming, George Washington, George Mason, and Charles Broadwater met in Fairfax, Virginia, in July 1774. In an effort to head off war, they drew up the Fairfax Resolves, of which there were twenty-four.

Consider resolve number five, written in 1774: "Resolved, that the claim lately assumed and exercised by the British Parliament of making all such laws as they think fit to govern the people of these colonies and to extort from us our money without our consent is not

only diametrically contrary to the first principles of the Constitution and the original compacts by which we are dependent upon the British Crown and government, but is totally incompatible with the privileges of a free people, and the natural rights of mankind, will render our own legislatures merely nominal and nugatory, and is calculated to reduce us from a state of freedom and happiness to slavery and misery." They further resolved: "Resolved, that the claim lately assumed and exercised by the British Parliament of making all such laws as they think fit."

What is Congress doing? It is trying to force upon you a nationalized health care system while exempting itself from that same system. Congress is trying to make such laws as it thinks fit, regardless of whether you consent to them or want them. The founders said that government would "extort from us our money without our consent." Such action is diametrically opposed to the covenants and constitutions we had with George III, which they said were calculated to reduce them from a state of freedom and happiness to slavery and misery.

Consider this declaration: "Resolved, that taxation and representation are in their nature inseparable, and the right of withholding or of giving and granting their own money, is the only effectual security to a free people against the encroachments of despotism and tyranny, and that whenever they yield to the one, they must quickly fall prey to the other."

George Mason and Charles Broadwater said that if you do not have the right to withhold your money from government or give it to government at your pleasure, you are a slave. The right of withholding, giving, or granting one's own money is the only effectual security of a free people. If we do not like what government does, we do not support it; it cannot do it because it has no money. If we like what it does, we support it. But if government can force us to give it our money, then we are slaves. According to these men, despotism and tyranny consist in the inability to withhold or grant one's money.

Jefferson, in 1826, said, "The mass of mankind has not been born with a saddle on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God." He also said,

"to compel a man to furnish funds for the propagation of ideas he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical." Is secession biblical? Of course it is.

God's Ordination of Secession

We are bidden over and over in Scripture, though all the passages have not been quoted, to separate ourselves from wickedness and ungodliness. In fact, if you look in verse 15, we know that it is biblical because the Bible says, 1 Kings 12:15, "Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people, for the cause was from the LORD." In verse 24: "Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me."

God said, I am the one that ordained the secession and separation. God oftentimes uses the wickedness, the impotence, the stubbornness, and the stupidity of rulers to bring about a separation of His people from them. You say, "Now wait a minute, Brother Weaver. If you are trying to tell me that Israel seceded here and that this thing was from God, how do you explain verse 19?" Look at verse 19: "So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day."

The answer is very simple. The root word for rebel there literally means to step, to march, to step forward, or to step away. Literally, what it says is this: So Israel stepped away, marched away from the house of David unto this day. That is exactly what secession is. Secession is a stepping away. It is a walking away. It is leaving one confederation and beginning a different one.

Before I close, I want to give you one vastly important application, and I want your undivided attention. Secession is biblical. Secession is constitutional. In fact, I have preached several messages on the biblical doctrine of secession before. I pointed out that it is a state's right, a sovereign's right, and a scriptural right. But I want you to note something. Here is my application; here is my warning.

Warning: Do Not Trade a Bad for a Worse

We cannot, and we must not, trade a bad for a worse. What do I mean by that? Israel left Rehoboam. It is true that Rehoboam was a

tyrant. It is true that he was wicked, unbiblical, and ungodly. But stupid Israel turned around and made Jeroboam their king, who was also idolatrous and a tyrant as well—an idolatrous man and a tyrant as well. You cannot replace humanism with humanism.

Why in the world would you jump out of the frying pan into the fire? If we have to withdraw from a wicked, ungodly, humanistic confederation, we have to have something better to replace it with. You cannot replace something with nothing. Let me ask you this question, and you answer it in your own mind. Think about this: If our society as we know it collapsed today, what would replace it?

I mean a complete collapse. You would have to rebuild this society from scratch. What law structure would you use? Would you use God's law structure or man's law structure? If you say, "We're going to use man's law structure," then you are headed right back to the same place you wanted to leave.

The theme of the book of Judges appears in Judges 17 and 21: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." When you build on humanism, inevitably and invariably, you will end up either in anarchy or totalitarianism. Only God's law is designed for liberty, freedom, and responsibility. Man's law is designed to enslave and destroy. You remember what our Lord said in Proverbs 8? "All they that hate me love death."

The only society man can build apart from Jesus Christ and without Him is a society of death. John Winthrop said, "Men in a word must necessarily be controlled either by a power within them or by a power without them, either by the word of God or by the strong arm of man, either by the Bible or the bayonet." Those who will not be ruled and governed by the Bible will have to be ruled by the bayonet. If you cannot rebuild a society based upon the Word of God, you are rebuilding it to be destroyed again.

John Quincy Adams said, "The law given from Sinai, that is the Ten Commandments, was a civil and municipal as well as a moral and religious code." Charles Carroll, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, said, "Without morals a republic cannot subsist for any length of time. They therefore who are decrying the Christian religion, whose morality is so sublime and

pure, are undermining the solid foundation of morals, the best security for the duration of free governance." George Washington said, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."

You say, "Brother Weaver, do you think some of these states will ever secede?" I don't know. I surely hope so, but I will give you this warning: If you successfully secede and do not build upon the Word of God, having the Lord Jesus Christ as your true and only King, you are wasting your time. You will end up again in servitude and slavery.

Conclusion and Prayer

Do not trade a bad for a worse. If we secede, let us rebuild based upon the Word of God. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank Thee for Thy Word, its principles and truth. Help us clarify our thinking. Give us wisdom, Lord, that we may serve and obey Thee in every area of our lives. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 13

Jack Hinson, Confederate Sniper

August 16, 2009

Introduction and Biblical Foundation for Justice

All right, let's open our Bibles to the book of Ezekiel chapter 45, Ezekiel 45. We're just going to read one verse. I was asked this week by one of our men. He said, "Pastor, you haven't brought anything on Southern history in a long time." I said, "Well, just wait till Sunday, because this is not only Southern history, this is biblical truth." So I'm going to bring a study today. Actually, it's a study on justice, but it's going to be built around a man by the name of Jack Henson, who was a Confederate sniper.

So I want you to listen very carefully. Ezekiel 45 and verse 9: "Thus saith the Lord God, Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord God." Now, I want you to note what God said to the princes, to the civil rulers of Israel. He said, "Let this be sufficient for you." What? "Remove violence and spoil. And you then turn around and execute judgment

and justice." And then He said, "Take away all of your exactions from my people." Throughout the Bible, justice is important. In fact, justice is one of the main functions of civil government. I've told you repeatedly that Romans chapter 13 teaches there is basically a twofold responsibility of civil government, and that twofold responsibility is, number one, punishing the wicked and number two, protecting the righteous. So basically it is a function of justice. If you would turn in your Bibles very quickly to Psalm 82 and notice, if you would, verse 3. In fact, Psalm 82 is a psalm directed against judges particularly.

And he says this in Psalm 82 and verse 3. Note, if you would. God—in fact, let's read verse 2. God asked the judges, "How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?" And then God says, "Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy." God is indeed the God of justice. God demands justice. And if you look at Psalm 89 in verse 14, since you were that close, notice what the Scripture says concerning God's throne. Psalm 89 verse 14: "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face." But notice, judgment and justice are the habitation of God's throne. God desired justice even above sacrifice. One of the Scripture—if you would turn right over to Proverbs, look in 21 and verse 3, Proverbs 21 verse 3. Notice, if you would, what the Scripture says. Proverbs 21 and verse 3 of the Word of God says this: "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice."

Think about that: to do judgment and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than to do sacrifice. Let me spell it out. God had rather have us living righteously and obediently than all the sacrifice that we could ever give.

The Failure of Government and God's Response

What happens when civil governments fail in their responsibility to provide justice? Justice is determined by God. Justice is that which is in accordance with God's law. The Hebrew word for justice and the Hebrew word for righteousness are one and the same word. Whatever is just is right, and whatever is right is just. You cannot have justice without righteousness. I get not only perturbed, but

sometimes downright tickled, when I see courthouses and federal buildings with the inscription "Department of Justice," knowing there is no real justice there. Justice is determined by God.

Look very quickly at Isaiah 59 and verse 14, and you will see what happens when governments fail to give true justice. God is charging Israel and all of their leaders with injustice. Isaiah 59:14 says, "And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter."

In other words, when governments fail to do that for which God has established them, judgment is turned away backward, justice stands far off, truth is fallen in the street, and that which is right cannot enter. Why can it not enter? Because there is no truth and there is no justice.

Ask yourself this question: What happens when governments fail to exercise God's justice? The Bible says in Proverbs 17 that they which condemn the just and justify the wicked, even they both are an abomination to the Lord. It is an abomination, a stench in God's nostrils, when there is no true justice. When men justify the wicked and condemn the just, everything is upside down, and God says it is indeed a stench in His nostrils. What is going to happen when governments invariably and inevitably refuse to give justice? God, in His absolute justice and sovereignty, will always raise up someone or some group to administer justice.

The individual that God raises up will be uniquely qualified to execute justice, not only because of the call of God upon his life, but also usually because he and his family have been recipients of repeated injustices so that he hungers and longs for true justice. Now, before someone gets all bent out of shape and says, "Now wait a minute, Brother Weaver, that is nothing more than pure vigilantism." No, it is not vigilantism. And before I go any further, let me give you a perspective on vigilantism that you may not have considered, or at least you've not thought of in a while. You see, the word "vigilantism" is a word that is misused and misunderstood. The term "vigilantism" did not originally signify what modern-day politicians want it to mean. It did not signify just someone, quote-unquote, taking the law into his own hands. The term "vigilantism" actually refers to the creation and enforcement of law

by organized extra-legal groups in the supposed absence of adequate law enforcement and justice. So, in other words, when there is a failure on the part of the state to administer justice, then vigilantism was a rise of an extra-legal group, that is someone outside of the legal system, that arose to defend and to execute justice in the absence of adequate law enforcement or in the absence of adequate justice.

So I could say that the word "vigilantism" probably has a good and a bad connotation. Vigilantism began in the United States in 1767 in South Carolina, where the South Carolinians, backcountry people, suffered widespread depredation from outlaws. There was no law enforcement. There was no one to execute justice, and therefore the people then banded together and they undertook to defend themselves and to exact justice to the extent that they could do so.

Now, if you would be wise enough to look up the word "vigilantism" in Black's Law Dictionary or Bouvier's Law Dictionary, you would find this. Here is a quote from Black's Law Dictionary that the word "vigilantism" comes from the word "vigilant" or "vigilance." And Black's Law Dictionary defines vigilance as this: "Watchfulness, precaution, a proper degree of activity and promptness in pursuing one's rights, or guarding them from infraction, or in making or discovering opportunities for the enforcement of one's lawful claims and demands."

Now, I want you to notice what that definition says: "Watchfulness, precaution, a proper degree"—not an improper, but a proper degree. And then it says, "...in pursuing one's rights, or guarding them from infraction, or in making or discovering opportunities for the enforcement of one's lawful claims and demands." So technically and legally, all vigilantism is, and all vigilantes are doing, is protecting and guarding themselves and their rights and enforcing their lawful claims in the absence of real justice, and in the absence of a state who will not do it for them.

When governments fail to give forth true justice, God is invariably going to raise up someone, or some group, that will ensure justice is done. If we were to look at Black’s Law Dictionary and consider its definition, we could probably classify men such as Ehud, Jephthah, and Gideon as vigilantes.

Introduction to Jack Hinson

It is true that they were called of God. Yet they also acted individually in some instances and collectively in others. Neither of these men was elected to office by the people, but they were called of God. That call was demonstrated only by their godliness, obedience, and successes.

One such man whom God used in the War of Northern Aggression was John S. Henson, also known as Jack Henson, or Captain Jack. Jack Henson was a sniper, and he kept Federal soldiers in absolute terror. He was hunted, tracked, and sought after, but he was never captured.

The primary goal of a sniper or guerrilla is to harass, ambush, hit and run, and destroy all the enemy's transports, property, and materials that he possibly can—and to do all this without getting caught. Individual snipers and small bands of guerrillas often cut telegraph lines, tore up railroad tracks, burned bridges, and destroyed Union properties. When repair parties were sent out, they were ambushed. Seldom did the Yankees ever see such an enemy. When confronted with larger numbers, the sniper or guerrilla would simply fade into the forest and disappear.

Jack Henson became a guerrilla fighter who operated alone. He moved like a ghost through the forest. Such men were designated by the Yankees as bushwhackers and were not to be treated as regular soldiers. If captured, they were not to be treated as prisoners of war, but were to be shot or hanged on the spot.

Union Atrocities and Hinson's Neutrality

Brigadier General Clinton B. Fisk, a Yankee soldier, sent orders to Lieutenant Colonel Daniel M. Draper on April 18, 1864: "Try the bushwhacker"—they had caught one—"try the bushwhacker by drumhead court-martial tonight and let every soldier in Macon shoot him if guilty, as he doubtless is."

He closed with these words: "Don't allow in the future such prisoners to be brought in." In other words, kill them; do not bring them in. That same day, General Fisk telegraphed another subordinate to make clear that he had not misunderstood the policy:

"Tell the party who have the bushwhacker at Honeywell that I want no such prisoners. Your orders are correct. Let that be the rule from henceforth." General Rosecrans gave the order to kill any bushwhacker found engaged in his hellish work. General Fisk then wrote to Major Samuel Garth:

"We must during the winter and spring kill these disturbers of the peace and in your sub-district, I trust that the work will begin at once and continue until the last imp expires. Hesitate not to burn down every house where it can be demonstrated that the occupants harbor and conceal the murdering fiends and destroy everything on the premises, deal summarily with the parties who harbor and conceal. They are equally guilty with the bushwhacker and must share his fate."

The attitude was: kill everybody and everything, and burn down every house.

Everyone knows the wickedness of General William Tecumseh Sherman. Sherman was indeed a wicked man. He offered advice to John A. Logan concerning snipers who hindered river traffic. In December 1863, Sherman wrote to General Logan: "For every bullet shot at a steamboat, I would shoot a thousand 30-pound parrot"—that is, rifle cannon shells—"even into helpless towns." For one shot at a steamboat, he would shoot a thousand 30-pound Parrott shells into neighboring towns. The towns had nothing to do with it, but that was how he said he would handle it. In other words, he would murder everyone and everything.

Jack Henson became a nightmare for Yankee transports, gunships, and boats carrying Yankee supplies and troops. He became an avenging angel, dealing out what I am calling .50 caliber justice. Snipers and sharpshooters were so effective that by October 1862, Rear Admiral David Dixon Porter ordered boats never to tie up to the banks, to keep deck guns loaded and trained on them, and to keep small arms loaded and ready to repel boarders.

When sniped at or attacked from the banks, they were to shell and destroy any houses near the attack, doing it with spirit regardless of casualties among innocent civilians. Porter said that if innocent

civilians were hurt or killed, it was their own fault; they should not have been there.

Jack Henson was not actually a Confederate soldier, although he fought for the Confederacy. When the war began, he was too old—fifty-seven—and originally tried to maintain neutrality. He was friends with Union General Ulysses S. Grant, as well as with numerous Confederate generals. Jack Henson saw the fall of Fort Donelson.

He had first-hand knowledge of the situation. In fact, he was called a year later to testify concerning the ineptitude of Confederate Generals Pillow and Floyd. Also during the war, he worked as a scout for General Nathan Bedford Forrest.

Jack and his wife, Elizabeth, had twelve children, five of whom survived their parents. Jack was a very successful farmer, a real estate investor, a land developer, and overall a very sharp businessman. He may not have been a multi-millionaire, but he was certainly not poor by any stretch of the imagination. His home was known as Bubbling Springs because there were numerous springs where the house was built and on the land that he possessed. Jack also had a number of slaves.

The interesting thing is that, when you read about his family, it speaks of the White Hensons and the Black Hensons. In the summer of 1862, Jack understood that his Black family would have a better chance of survival if they were free. So he voluntarily freed every one of his slaves. He asked them to stay and help him, and said that he would pay them for their labor. Every slave to the man stayed. None wanted to leave. Jack gave his slaves their freedom papers. At that time, his slave property was valued at over $50,000.

The Black Hensons stayed on the White Henson land and remained with the family through every ordeal they faced. You do not have—I cannot even give you in this message today—the ordeals that just this one family went through. But the Black Hensons stayed with the family as well.

The Murder of Hinson's Sons

Later, when the Yankees came after Jack, his wife, and the other children, Jack had to hide his weapons because he had not yet started a war with the Union Army. But when Jack hid his weapons, the Black Hensons hid their weapons as well. In other words, all of Jack's slaves were armed.

The way this thing really started was that two of Jack's sons, George and John, were arrested after the fall of Fort Donelson as spies. They were not spies. They were not even soldiers; they just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. It took the federal government about a month to figure out, "Hey, we've got two innocent boys here," and they let them go. Atrocities were committed by the Union Army as a matter of policy. One way they tried to subdue the Southern people was through fear, and so they would be as brutal as they possibly could be.

Major General Stephen G. Burbridge, a Yankee general, practiced a form of retaliation that he called atonement. Whenever any Yankee soldier or sympathizer was killed, he would immediately march four Confederate prisoners into the town square and have them shot down like animals. They had nothing to do with the murder or the killings of other people. That was simply his method of atonement: he would take four for everyone, march them out, and shoot them down.

Yankee Colonel Fielding Hurst, in July of 1863, captured six Confederate soldiers. He had them march down the road a distance of one mile, and at every mile he would shoot one of them, bury him in the ground with his head sticking out, and leave them as mile markers.

You and I cannot conceive of some of the atrocities that took place. It is difficult to imagine the horrendous atrocities committed regularly by Yankee soldiers. There was a common technique used against southern civilians called "putting their feet to the fire." The purpose was to make the civilian tell where his money or jewels were. It was an exquisite method of torture used to discover where the money was.

In 1863, there was a prominent man named James Gray, who was not only a farmer but also a preacher. He had served in the state assembly of Tennessee, was a framer of the Constitution of the state of Tennessee, and had fought with Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans. When Yankee soldiers came to him and demanded his money, he told them he had none.

They threw a rope over a tree and hanged him three times. They would pull him up until it choked him, then, just before he died, release him and let him get his breath back. This was called "stretching the neck." After three times, he continued telling them he did not have any money.

Finally, exasperated, they tied him to a board, built a fire under his feet, and roasted them until the flesh fell off. He still said he had no money. They left him in agony, but the old man lived through it all. He was crippled, but he survived the torture. These kinds of atrocities fomented and steeled Southern resistance against the Yankees.

Indiscriminate looting and killing was everywhere in the county and neighboring counties, as well as where the Hensons lived. For a time, it seemed that Henson's friendship with General Grant allowed him and his family a little security and safety. However, that was certainly not to last. Tragedy was going to strike, and it was going to strike very hard.

Jack's oldest son, William, was a Confederate soldier fighting in Virginia, not Tennessee. George, his twenty-two-year-old son, had not joined the army. Neither had John, his seventeen-year-old son. One morning, these two boys left home very early, before daylight, to go deer hunting. They went to one of their favorite hunting spots. Just at the break of day, they heard horses and riders approaching.

It was a patrol from the 5th Iowa Cavalry. The boys could have disappeared into the forest, but they did not. Their reasoning was, "We're not soldiers. We're not doing anything wrong. We're just out here deer hunting. Why should we run? Why should we try to get away?"

When the lieutenant saw them, he immediately halted his patrol and aimed his carbine at them. All the other soldiers did so

instantaneously. The boys had been falsely arrested before, as you remember, and it had been worked out. It took them a month to get back home, so they supposed this was the same thing: "They'll find out the truth and they'll let us go."

However, the lieutenant had been on the prowl for bushwhackers. Now he had found two with a weapon in their hand, and he was caught. He began marching the boys down the road. When he accused them, they protested, although they had not resisted: "No, we were out deer hunting. We're not soldiers. We're not bushwhackers. We weren't waiting for you. We were waiting for deer."

At that point, the lieutenant stopped them and leveled his carbine at them again. The other soldiers did so as well, and they very brutally murdered the boys. Murder was bad enough, but what the soldiers did next was unforgivable. The lieutenant raised his heavy saber and severed their heads from their bodies. They then tied their bodies behind the horses and drug them into town around the town square.

Everyone knew they were the Hinson boys. Jack was an upstanding man in the community who had tried to remain neutral, and he was General Grant's friend. Dr. J. W. Smith, a local physician, immediately headed for the Henson farm when he saw the boys. He was going to prepare the family for the monstrous news, and he got Jack away from Elizabeth and the rest of the family.

He told them what had happened. Thankfully, he had arrived a great deal before the soldiers got there. The problem was simple for the soldiers: since Jack's sons had been labeled and killed as bushwhackers, Jack and the rest of the family were guilty as well, and they too were to be executed. Colonel Lowe had demanded that his men show no mercy to bushwhackers, their families, or their neighbors.

At this point, Dr. Smith helped Jack and his family hide all their weapons. They took them out of the house—not putting them in the barn, but hiding them in an old tree or stump. The Black Hensons hid their weapons as well. Dr. Smith and Jack were standing outside when the soldiers rode up. The lieutenant immediately pulled his

pistol and pointed it at Jack. Dr. Smith intervened, explaining that Jack was an upstanding man and General Grant's friend. All of a sudden, Jack was standing there as one soldier from the 5th Iowa Cavalry reached into a blood-soaked sack, took the heads of his two sons, and crammed them onto the gatepost.

Jack was full of grief and rage at the same time, yet he kept his tongue. Dr. Smith prevailed with his reasoning. Still, the soldiers searched the house and barns, turning over everything, emptying every drawer, and looking behind everything, leaving the house an absolute mess. They found no weapons and turned around and left.

Hinson's Preparation and Vengeance

Jack Henson was a deliberate man. He always thought things through before he acted. After retrieving his boys' bodies and heads and giving them a proper burial, he formulated his plan. He decided he was going to teach the Yankees the truth of what the Bible meant when it says, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." He was going to give them a lesson in the law of sowing and reaping.

To do that, Jack needed a rifle—not the old smooth-bore musket he had, but a special rifle that could shoot accurately at long distances. He needed a rifled barrel, with grooves in it, and a caliber so large that a hit above the legs would be fatal. Jack knew exactly what he was going to do. He had a rifle specially made, custom-made for himself. The barrel would be octagonal and rifled, and he would shoot the latest pointed-nosed minié balls for greater accuracy. It would have to be a rifle he could shoot accurately out to and over a thousand yards.

He knew he would need time to obtain all the materials. Remember, Jack was a land investor and often rode to different parts of the counties, and to different counties, buying and selling land. He used those trips to purchase powder, balls, caps, and everything else he would need, without attracting attention to himself.

Jack knew that once he put his plan into action, he would be a hunted man. However, Jack Henson never imagined in his wildest dreams exactly how hunted he would become. Before the war was

over, the Union would have at least two cavalry regiments, seven infantry regiments, and one specially equipped amphibious task force of sailors and marines, both infantry and mounted, searching for him. Jack Henson and his custom-made rifle would kill over 100 of them before the war was over.

When Jack received his rifle, its stock was made from the best maple wood available at that time. The octagonal barrel was 41 inches long, an inch and a half thick, and weighed 18 pounds. It was too heavy to shoot offhand, so he needed a support, or he had to shoot from a tree limb or something similar. When Jack got the rifle, he practiced with it. He knew exactly what it would do and what it would not do. You will find out shortly how good he was with it. In order to throw suspicion from himself and protect his family, Jack went down to the Yankee fort and voluntarily took the oath of allegiance.

And he did so on a day when no one else would be there. At that particular time, Jack was not necessarily going to make war against the federal government. He was going to make war against those men who murdered his sons. Jack was a thoroughly reasonable man. What he was about to do was not taken in the heat of passion or in an emotional response. He had a well-thought-out plan, and he was going to make sure those murderers were brought to justice. Jack scouted and knew the routes the patrols took going out of the fort and returning to it.

And so he watched the patrol go out and saw the lieutenant. He found his spot where they would be returning. He then took his specially made, custom-built rifle, measured out a hundred grains of powder, stuck the minié ball down into the barrel, capped the nipple, set the set trigger, laid it to the side, and waited. The patrol came back exactly where he knew they would. He knew he could escape because of the foliage around him. He knew they would never get him the way he was then. As the patrol came back, they were talking and laughing. Jack heard them.

He surveyed his field of view, took the rifle, laid it over a stump, and waited. Sure enough, the lieutenant was in the lead, and someone was talking to him. The lieutenant turned to look back and saw Jack with a .50 caliber aimed right at him. Before he could say

anything, a .50 caliber minié ball hit him in the throat and knocked him off the horse. The other men sat there and shot for a moment, but by this time Jack had escaped; he was nowhere around.

Jack began to ask himself, “Is it over? Have I finished?” But he knew that was not quite it. It was not going to be over. Events would soon heat up for the Henson family and for all the pro-Southern families in that area. Union General George H. Thomas advocated depopulating the area of all people who were pro-Confederate. He wrote, “This report exhibits a state of affairs by no means peculiar to Tennessee. The state of Kentucky is in the same condition. The conciliatory has failed and however as much as we may regret the necessity, we shall be compelled to send disloyal people of all ages and sexes to the South or beyond our lines.” Thus, as in the state of Missouri, the Southern people in Tennessee and Kentucky were to be driven from their homes simply because they were Southern.

The Union officer in charge where Jack lived had determined to do something concerning the guerrilla problem. He wanted to exterminate all the rascals and burn them out, and planned to burn out everyone he thought supported the guerrillas. Proof was not necessary; suspicion would suffice.

Many have heard of General Lewis B. Puller, United States Marine Corps, better known as Chesty Puller. Chesty Puller, the most decorated United States Marine, told of his widowed grandmother’s death at the hands of Union soldiers. Her home was burned, and she was left in the snow to walk ten miles through it to find shelter. From that ordeal she ultimately died.

Why did the Yankee soldiers burn this widow woman’s home? Because when they went to her house, they found her dead husband’s spurs hanging on the wall; therefore, she was guilty of possessing war supplies. They burned her house to the ground. The Yanks finally came to get the Henson family and burn them out. Thankfully, it was wintertime, and snow, ice, muddy, slick roads slowed down the Yankee soldiers.

Word reached the Hensons that they were next on the list. They took as much food, supplies, and money as they could and hid it well. The family was quickly put in a sled with all the money and

provisions they could carry, then covered with hay. Several of the black Hensons accompanied Mrs. Henson and the children, were charged with their safety, and declared that they would give their lives to protect them and get them to safety.

They did indeed accomplish their mission. Jack went with them only about a mile to make sure they had gotten away, knowing that he could not remain with them. He sent them on their way, then turned to find a place to live and continue his mission. When the Yankees reached Bubbling Springs, the Henson home, they were infuriated that they had missed their target.

Aunt Sarah, the black slave, had moved into the house to take care of it. When she told them the Hensons were not there, they searched the house and, of course, tore everything up again. Then they told her to get out: they were going to burn it to the ground and burn everything in it. All the black Hensons came around and begged them not to burn the barn or the black Henson homes. The lieutenant was going to burn everything, but the black servant said, “If you burn everything, the only place that we can go is to the fort. And you'll have to support us. Wouldn't it be better if you left us alone and left us a house and something to live in where we can take care of ourselves?”

Finally, the lieutenant agreed, and he spared their homes and the barn. Before Jack left, he had given the Black Hensons a sufficient amount of money and hidden a large amount of food so that they would be well taken care of until spring.

When Jack left his family, not knowing at that time that the house was being burned, he set out to find a place to live. He found a cave high above the river, so concealed that you could not see it, and even after coming close, you would not know it was there unless you had been there before. He made a good bed, built a fire, and made it as comfortable as possible. The cave was directly above the river, where the Yankee boats had to pass through a chute.

Going downriver, they flew through that chute. But coming upriver at full speed, they seemed almost to be standing still. Jack could shoot effectively over a thousand yards, and he found plenty of targets coming up the river, many of them more than six hundred

yards away. At six or seven hundred yards, they would never even see the smoke from that .50 caliber rifle, especially because of the mist on the river.

Jack always targeted the officers, usually shooting the captain of the boat first. On one occasion, as a transport entered the chute, Jack shot the naval officer in command of the troops on board, then another naval officer. Some men began firing frantically at the riverbanks, but nowhere near Jack's location. He then took the life of another officer, and the deck was literally covered with blood. Coolly, he laid down officer after officer.

Confusion, chaos, and carnage reigned. Then an unusual thing happened. The captain of the transport, which was carrying troops and supplies, commanded the engines to be cut, and a white flag was raised. The transport was surrendering. It was the first time in naval history that a transport ship loaded with troops and supplies had surrendered to a lone shooter.

Naturally, Jack could not accept the surrender because he was alone. When no one attempted to board the ship, the captain finally realized, "I might as well lower my flag and start going through the chute."

According to Tom C. McKinney, author of "Jack Henson's One Man War," it was the only time in recorded history that a fully armored naval vessel embarked with combat troops ever surrendered to one man. Jack took out captain after captain and ship after ship. By this time, he had a price on his head. He was not wanted dead or alive; he was wanted dead. Jack got a hammer and a little piece of metal that would make a little round mark. For every officer he killed, he tapped on the barrel of his rifle. He had thirty-six little holes on his rifle before he ran out of room. Jack was quite a man.

Hinson's Skill and Legacy

While Jack was scouting for and helping General Nathan Bedford Forrest on his raid to Johnsonville, Tennessee, he was asked about his campaign as a sniper and the growing price on his head by Major Charles W. Anderson. Jack replied, "They murdered my boys and

they may kill me yet. But the marks on my barrel of my gun will show that I'm a long way ahead in the game now and I'm not done yet."

Major Anderson gave this description of Jack Henson: "Henson's clear gray eyes, compressed lips and massive jaws clearly indicated that under no circumstances was he a man to be trifled with or aroused. And under the great bereavement inflicted upon him by the wanton slaughter of his sons, he kept his oath"—that is, of killing all those men—"until the close of the war."

In those days, especially toward the end of the war, men simply raped, robbed, murdered, and pillaged. They were not necessarily soldiers; some were and some were not. They did not care whether their victims were pro-Union or pro-Confederate. Usually they preyed upon helpless women and children and old men. Jack Henson identified some of these leading murderers and looters, and somehow, one by one, they began to disappear from the scene. Jack had the gratitude and appreciation of both pro-Union and pro-Confederate people in that area. He made sure that those doing these things were taken out.

I wondered whether this was where we got the expression, "He just needed killing." Evidently, those men did, and Jack took care of it. Let me give you one quick story to illustrate how good Jack was with his rifle.

There was a field referred to as the 100-acre field. It had been cleared and had sawgrass in it. Jack rode into that field and immediately saw two Union soldiers. Very quickly and quietly, he took off his possibles bag and rifle and laid them in the grass where they would not be seen. Then he slowly but surely rode straight toward the two soldiers.

When he reached them, they asked, “Did he know Jack Henson?” “Why, yes,” he said. “I know Jack Henson.” They asked, “Have you seen him lately?” “Well,” he said, “yes, I have. In fact, this morning he was back at such and such a place,” and he described the area where he had seen Jack Henson. “If you go this way,” he said, giving them directions, “you will probably find him, because he will

probably still be around the area." With that, they took off after Jack Henson.

Jack turned around, went back to where he had dropped his rifle and supplies, picked them up, and took a shortcut to the place where he had directed the soldiers. He knew he would have to be fast. Remember, although he was shooting the most modern weapon of that day, it was still a muzzleloader. You had to put in the powder, put in the bullet, ram it down, put a cap on the nipple, and pull the set trigger. When the set trigger was snapped, it made the real trigger very light and easy; you only had to touch it, and the gun would go off. Jack found a spot and laid out all his equipment, knowing once again that he would have to be very fast. Sure enough, he arrived only two or three minutes ahead of the soldiers.

He picked out his field of view. As the soldiers came into view, he quickly aimed at one and shot him, and the soldier fell from his horse. The other soldier immediately knew where the shot had come from. He was trying to steady his rearing horse while drawing his pistol. As he threw up the pistol to shoot at Jack, Jack pulled the trigger and killed the second soldier.

Jack shot, reloaded, aimed, and shot again in six seconds. He had practiced, knowing that speed and agility would save his life. Here was a man who shot one man, reloaded, aimed, and killed another before the second man could even get his weapon on Jack. In six seconds, two were dead. Some of Jack's kills were over a thousand yards.

That is 3,000 feet. A mile is 5,280 feet, which means Jack was using that rifle and shooting men from three-quarters of a mile away. He is credited with over 100 kills during the war. Although many Yankee troops sought him, none ever found him. Although many wanted him, their wants never materialized. This courageous woodsman and outdoorsman finally died in 1874.

His last years had been tough, but he lived and loved his family until the end. Jack died a natural death at the age of 67 in July 1874. He was truly a sniper and a marksman par excellence.

Applications: Trusting God's Justice

We must learn that all injustice, tyranny, and despotism will at last be righted in some manner. Do you remember what David said concerning King Saul? Saul was a tyrant who persecuted David and countless others wrongfully and wickedly. David said in 1 Samuel 26 and verse 10 concerning King Saul, "As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle and perish." David was emphasizing the fact and reality that sooner or later Saul would be judged by God one way or the other. God would either smite him supernaturally, he would die naturally, or God would see that his life was taken in battle. In other words, it does not matter which way: God was going to judge him and take care of him. So it was with Saul, and so it will be with all those who follow after King Saul.

And act like Saul. The second application is this: We must learn that there are some men not to be trifled with. Sooner or later, the wicked will pick on the wrong man, or the wrong group of men. God will raise up, empower, and enable those whom He has chosen to exercise His just wrath upon the ungodly.

Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 149. I want you to follow me, because this is a very important passage. Look at Psalm 149. Let us begin reading with verse 4: “For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord.”

What does that tell you? Do you remember what God did to Israel when He brought them out of the land of Egypt, put a sword in their hand, and said, “You go in the land, you take care of the Amorites, the Jebusites, the Hittites, the Hivites and all the other -ites, you just kill them”? But notice: “to execute upon them the judgment written”—not our judgment, but God’s judgment. In God’s time, when God’s time comes, He will make it known. He will raise up a

deliverer, a leader of His people who shall deliver His people as He has always done in time and in history.

The third application is this: We must learn to trust and obey.

When I read the life of Jack Henson, I got excited. I liked it. But as exciting and as romantic—and I am using that word purposefully—as war sounds, I can assure you it is not always as we like to think it is. Unhappily, it is not always the enemies who die. Sometimes it is you. Sometimes it is your family. I understand that death is not the end for the child of God. Yet listen, if war and carnage

Can be averted by our trust and obedience—that is the best avenue to take. You have to understand this: our trust and obedience are necessary in peace and in war. Just because there is a war does not mean that you can throw obedience to the wind or do whatever you want to do. No. If you and I fight, we have to fight on God's terms, according to God's Word. If we do not, we will be in rebellion to Him. God is not going to bless rebellion, whether it be in war or in peace.

When you stop to think, as wicked as we are in this country, as wicked as our government is—and it is wicked—as wicked as Sodom and Gomorrah were, God was willing to spare them if He found ten righteous people.

I can assure you there are some people that need killing, but I would rather let God do it. He can do a far better job. But I can tell you this: if it comes to war, God will use those men who are trusting in Him and obedient to Him. You study Ehud. You study Gideon. You study all of these men—Jephthah. They were men who wanted to obey God and do what God used them to do in battle. That is a fact. But they were men who usually trusted in God before they went into battle.

How do we sing that song? “Trust and obey, for there is no other way.” And that is a fact.

Let us pray. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for Your blessing and Your help. We pray that You would teach us and build us up in the most holy faith. Lord, we do pray that Thou wouldst indeed execute Thy divine justice in this day and time in history. We do pray, Father, that You may do anything that You please. You may

regenerate, restrain, or remove. But Father, we commit our ways unto Thee and ask You to establish our thoughts. Help us, Lord, to thank Thee for Your grace and mercy and Your protection in our lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 14

Shall We Listen to our Founding Fathers?

January 16, 2011

Shall We Listen to Our Founding Fathers or Our Modern Day Politicians?

SCRIPTURE READING - 1 Kings 12:1-17 (KJV)

Introduction: The Question of Counsel

The title of the message today is, "Shall We Listen to the Old Man or to the Young Man?" Now I have a subtitle and it is this: "Shall We Listen to Our Founding Fathers or Our Modern Day Politicians?"

"And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king."

Scripture Reading: 1 Kings 12:1-17

"And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence

> of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;) that they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying, Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee. And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed. And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him."
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> "And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter? And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day. And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him; and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke."

“My father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.” Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat. So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, “What portion

have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David." So Israel departed unto their tents. But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

The Principle of Wisdom with Age

It is true that wisdom comes with age. Each one of us can see the errors, mistakes, and sins of his youth. If the Lord allowed us to relive our lives with the wisdom, knowledge, and understanding we have now, we would live very differently. It is amazing that young people are headstrong, self-willed, and determined. Unhappily, they act just the way we did when we were young. Try convincing your teenage children that you know what is best for them, and they usually act as we did when we were children.

While it is true that wisdom comes with age, that does not mean that all older people are wise. I know of older men who have acted stupidly, wickedly, and rebelliously by forsaking the wife of their youth and marrying a much younger woman. It has never dawned upon them to ask why a twenty-year-old woman would want a sixty-five-year-old man. They probably hate to admit it, but she likely wants what he has accumulated over the years, and not his manliness. Old men are not always wise; sometimes they act very foolishly and stupidly.

Elihu was trying to straighten out the old men as well as Job. "And when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled. And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old."

"Wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom. But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment." Elihu said he was afraid to answer at first because he thought days should speak and multitude of years should teach wisdom. Yet the three men had nothing, and he said he would teach them.

Although there are exceptions to this principle, I believe it remains sound that wisdom comes with age. It certainly was true of the old men during Rehoboam's time. Old men, through the years, have experienced many trials and tribulations. Having experienced so many things, they are able and willing to share their knowledge.

Let me read from Joel, chapter 1, verses 1 through 3: "The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel. Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation."

In context, God is speaking about judgment. He commands the old men to tell their children and grandchildren, and to let them tell another generation what they have gone through, experienced, and know. Old men are admonished to share their knowledge, especially concerning enduring the judgment of God. They are generally willing to share, particularly with children and grandchildren, provided they can find some who will listen.

Biblical Mandate to Honor the Aged

The Book of Proverbs, chapter 17, verse 6, says, “Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.” Children's children are indeed the crown of old men. When you get grandchildren, you understand that they are the crown of old men. The glory of children is their fathers. One of the leading problems we are experiencing in our society, in our families, and in our churches is a lack of respect for the knowledge, authority, and wisdom of the aged.

Leviticus 19:32 says, “Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD.” There is to be respect, recognition, and honor for the old man, together with the fear of God. One of the leading reasons to honor and respect the elderly is simply because God commanded it. Moreover, God has tied respect for the aged, and respect and recognition of their age, to His honor and His glory.

Look at it again: “Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD.” In other words, if you fear God, you will indeed rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of the old man. If you do not fear God, then you will not do those things. Thus God has tied recognition and honor of the aged, the elderly, and the old people with fearing the Lord. To disregard the aged is therefore not merely a social failure; it is a failure to fear God and to acknowledge His authority.

Another reason is given in Proverbs 16:31 why we are to honor the aged: “The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.” The hoary head, or gray head, is a crown of glory if it is found in the way of righteousness. Age itself is not presented as the whole of the matter; the crown of glory is found in the way of righteousness.

Age is one thing; age with godliness and righteousness is quite another. God is saying that double honor is to be given to an aged individual who has been holy, godly, and righteous all their lives. Proverbs 20:29 says, "The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the gray head." One thing that makes old men beautiful is the wisdom that comes with age. The gray head, or gray beard, is a sign of age and wisdom. The word "age" in this verse is the Hebrew word "zaqen," which literally means "a bearded one."

You could read it this way: "The glory of young men is their strength and the beauty of old men is the hanging gray from the chin." Isn't that interesting? We have old sayings that we have never really thought about. When you were a child, you were told that you should listen to your elders. Why should you listen to your elders? Because of the wisdom and knowledge they have attained over the years.

What about this saying: Children should be seen and not heard? It means children should sit still, sit quietly, and listen to their elders as they discuss things, so that they may learn to avoid many of the mistakes and sins the old folks made.

One of the qualifications for an elder, or pastor, in 1 Timothy 3:6 is: "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the

condemnation of the devil." A novice is a newly planted one, a neophyte, or one recently converted. He has not had time to mature or become a bearded one in the faith; thus, he does not qualify as an elder.

Rehoboam's Foolishness and the Covenantal Context

Unhappily, we are not born wise, and wisdom is not conveyed in our genes. A person can have a wise father and yet be utterly foolish. Some of the godliest kings of Judah had some of the most foolish and wicked sons. Adam Clarke says of Rehoboam, Solomon's son: "Rehoboam was probably the only son of Solomon, for although he had a thousand wives, he had not the blessing of numerous offspring, and although he was the wisest of men himself, his son was a poor, unprincipled fool."

Had Solomon kept himself within reasonable bounds in matrimonial affairs, he would probably have had more children, and such children would have had common sense enough to discern the delicacy of their situation and rule according to reason and religion. Matthew Henry said it like this: "Solomon had a thousand wives and concubines, yet we read but of one son he had to bear his name, and he was a fool."

It is said in Hosea 4:10, "They shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase." Sin is a bad way of building up a family. Rehoboam was the son of the wisest of men, yet he did not inherit his father's wisdom. It stood him in little stead to inherit his father's throne. Neither wisdom nor grace runs in the blood.

Solomon came to the crown very young, yet he was then a wise man. Rehoboam came to the crown at forty years old, when a man will be wise if he ever will, yet he was then foolish. Wisdom does not go by age, nor is it in the multitude of years, nor in the advantage of education. Solomon's court was a mart of wisdom and the rendezvous of learned men, and Rehoboam was the darling of that court; yet all was insufficient to make him a wise man. The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, in their commentary, said this concerning the situation: “The incident here related took place after

the funeral of the late king and the time for public mourning had passed, that is, after Solomon had died. When all Israel came to make him Rehoboam king, it was not to exercise their old right of election, for after God's promise of the perpetual sovereignty of David's posterity, their duty was submission to the authority of the rightful heir. But their object was, when making him king, to renew the conditions and stipulations to which their constitutional kings were subject, to the omission of such rehearsing which, under the peculiar circumstances in which Solomon was made king, they were disposed to ascribe the absolutism of his government."

Although Rehoboam succeeded Solomon as Solomon followed David, that did not mean these kings could simply do as they pleased. They had a constitutional and covenantal obligation to the people. Rehoboam was appointed king by Solomon, but he could not rule apart from the covenant. Covenants were made with each king, as well as covenants with the LORD. In 2 Kings 11:17, the high priest Jehoiada made a covenant not only with the LORD, but with the king and the people: "Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people that they should be the LORD's people; between the king also and the people." Here are two covenants. The first was between the king, the LORD, and the people. In that covenant, the king agreed to be the LORD's king, and the people agreed to be the LORD's people.

The second covenant was between the king and the people. In that covenant, the king agreed to rule faithfully, and the people agreed to obey him as long as he did. Even when David was chosen by God to be king, God did not make David king without the will and recognition of the people. The Bible says in 2 Samuel 5:3, "So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel."

The interesting thing is that the word "league" in 2 Samuel 5:3 is translated as "covenant" in 2 Chronicles 11:3. David made a covenant with the elders of Israel. In other words, although those kings understood that God had chosen and appointed them, they were still to rule by covenant. It is true that kings often violated that covenant, but it was the duty and responsibility of the people to remind each

king of it and to remind them that they were ruling by the consent and agreement of the governed.

When you come to 1 Kings 12, Israel is not challenging Rehoboam's succession to the throne. They are saying, "Yes, you are the son of Solomon. Yes, the throne is yours, but here is the covenant, and here are some problems that we are having. We want you to address these problems." First Kings 12:1 says, "And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king." Why did Rehoboam go to Shechem?

Was not Jerusalem the capital? Was not Jerusalem the city of David? Jerusalem was in the Southern Kingdom, and he was now dealing with the Northern Kingdom. The people of the Northern Kingdom said, "We're not going to the capital of the Southern Kingdom. If you want to rule over us, you come to our city. You listen to our grievances. You listen to our stipulations."

When everything went wrong for Rehoboam, look what happened: "Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem." He was getting out of danger, heading back to Jerusalem.

Rehoboam had come to Shechem to be made king. "And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;) that they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying…"

Why did they send for Jeroboam? God had already told Jeroboam that he was going to be king. He told him that by Ahijah the Shilonite. Look in 1 Kings 11: "And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of

Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:) Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father."

He had already given ten tribes to Jeroboam. Notice that they sent and called him out of Egypt. Why was he in Egypt? In verse 40 we find the answer: "Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon." Solomon knew about the prophecy and, seeking to prevent it, was trying to murder Jeroboam. Therefore Jeroboam fled into Egypt.

When you look in 1 Kings chapter 12, verses 2 and 3, the people of Israel summoned Jeroboam out of Egypt and brought him back so that he might be their spokesman. When they spoke to Rehoboam, they said, "Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee."

Interestingly, the Israelites complained only about the taxes, the burdens, and the heavy yoke laid upon them by Solomon. They did not complain about the idolatry that caused the problems. In 1 Kings chapter 11, verse 33, we find the root of all those problems. God says, "Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father."

Very obviously, the cause of all the burdens and taxes was idolatry, which produced tyranny and despotism. They were trying to deal with the symptom rather than the root cause. They complained about the taxes and burdens, but not about the idolatry—the symptoms, and not the cause.

The Counsel of the Old Men: Servant Leadership

But at least Rehoboam is being confronted by the people. They said, “It's unbearable. It's insufferable. We cannot live under this. You have to make everything lighter and easier.” The only wise thing that Rehoboam ever did is found in verse 5. He says, “Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.” The only wise thing he did was give himself time to think about this and receive some counsel.

Now, I want to examine the counsel that was given to Rehoboam by both the old men and the young men. I think you see clearly that the old way is better than the new way and that the old men had far more wisdom than the young men. You need to memorize this verse, or at least write it down. I will quote it again before I close. It is Jeremiah 6 and verse 16: “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, wherein is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.”

It is usually the old men that remember the old ways and long for the old ways. The young men in the new generation have no desire to remain in the old ways. What happened in Israel is basically what happened in Judges chapter 2, and what has happened in America is basically what happened in 1 Kings 12 and in Judges chapter 2. Judges 2:10 says, “And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers.” That is Joshua and all of those people who had led in the fight in Canaan and dividing the land. “And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.” So the new generation is equal to another generation. That is basically what we have in this country. I've said this before. I really believe that my generation was the last one

We long to enjoy just a little tiny bit of liberty and freedom—the good times and the good things of life—because, since I was a child, everything has gone downhill like a sled on snow with greased runners. I want you to see the differences between the counsel of the old men and the counsel of the young men, because that main difference is of vast importance.

The old men viewed civil government and the civil ruler as the servant and slave of the people. The young men viewed the people as a servant and slave of civil government and the civil ruler. The view and counsel of the old men was the biblical view; the view and counsel of the young men was humanistic and tyrannical.

Let us look first at the counsel of the old men, found in verses 6 and 7: "And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever." The counsel of the old men to King Rehoboam was that he was to be a servant to the people.

The word "servant" in the Hebrew is "ebed," which literally means a slave, a bond slave, or a manservant. Thus the old men counseled the king—the highest civil ruler in the land, the man who claimed to have all the authority and power he needed—to become a slave and servant to the people. Their understanding of the civil ruler's role was that he was there to serve the people and not himself. The idea of a public servant is a biblical idea. Perhaps that is why the designation is so hated and despised today. Yet this was the counsel of the old men: that the king become a servant or slave to the people.

I want to emphasize something: Do you realize that the way to serve the Lord is by serving His people? What can you give the Lord? What can you do for the Lord? He is sovereign; He owns everything, created everything, and has everything. You know what the Bible says in Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 10? "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which you showed toward his name in ministering to the people of God. Do you remember what our Lord said in Matthew 25 and verse 40?

He said, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." So the way to serve Him is by serving His people. Why did God ordain the civil ruler, or civil government, to begin with? God ordained the civil ruler to be a servant, His servant. The civil ruler serves God by

serving His people and by obeying God's law. That is why the Bible says in Romans 13, "For he is the minister of God to thee for good."

"But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." The word "servant," or "minister," there is the word "diakonos"; that is where we get our English word "deacon," and it literally means servant. So he says, he is the deacon of God, or the servant of God. He says that twice in verse 4.

You may object, "But Romans chapter 13 wasn't written back then." No, it wasn't. But the same truth is revealed in the Old Testament. In 1 Kings 11:37–38, God told Jeroboam, "And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee."

What did God tell Jeroboam? If you will do what is right, obey Him, submit yourself to Him, serve Him, obey His law, and serve His people, He will build you a sure house. He told that to Jeroboam. By the way, the first thing Jeroboam son of Nebat did after he became king was apostatize and make two golden calves. Now look in your Bibles to 2 Samuel 23.

This is one of my favorite passages. It is not only important, but so clear that there is no way in the world anyone can misunderstand what David is saying. Note how many times David claims direct inspiration for this saying. In 2 Samuel 23:1–3 we read: "Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

David understood this principle. In 2 Samuel 5:12 we read, "And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake."

Why did God establish David king and exalt his kingdom? The answer is, for his people Israel's sake. It was not for David's sake; it was for the people's sake. God did not establish civil government for rulers to lord it over the people and tyrannize them, but for the benefit of the people.

It is much like the relationship between a pastor and the church. Pastors are given to the church; the church is not given to the pastor to lord it over, becoming a despot and a tyrant. God told the preachers, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." How is a pastor to lead the church? Not only through the Word of God, but by example—by teaching and by example.

I do not come in here and say, You will do this or else. That would be tyranny, and tyranny in the church is just as bad as tyranny in civil government. I do not come up to Alice and say, "You will do it, girl." She normally does what I ask, but she knows that I love her and want to rule in love, not by force. It is the same principle: God established David king and exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

Look again in your Bibles to 1 Kings chapter 12, verse 7. Here is the counsel of the old men: "And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever." The word "servants" is the same Hebrew word translated "servant." It is the word "ebed."

The old men counseled the king to become a slave or a servant to the people, and in return, as he served them, the people would become a servant and a slave to him. In other words, the ruler and the ruled would each develop a servant's heart. As government serves the people by obeying God's law and seeking their liberty and freedom, the people will seek to establish that civil ruler and that type of civil government because it blesses, serves, and benefits them. The counsel of the old men was: You serve them, and they will serve you. You do what is right, and they are going to do what is right.

The Counsel of the Young Men: Tyranny and Force

Very quickly, look at the counsel of the young men: “And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.”

Notice what they advised and counseled him to answer: “My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.” Think of the thigh: My little finger is going to be thicker than my father’s thigh. Where he laid you heavy with a yoke, I am going to add to it. He may have beaten you with whips; I am going to beat you with scorpions. This proverbial expression expresses the fact that Rehoboam was saying, My power and my authority are going to so far exceed what my father did to you that you will not believe what I am going to do to you. I am going to employ every bit of my power to make sure you do exactly what I say to you.

The answer that the young men gave is the answer of force, tyranny, and despotism. Rehoboam was saying to the people, “I have the power. I have the authority. I am going to make you know it, feel it, sense it, and suffer under it. There is not one thing you can do about it.” Rehoboam was proud, arrogant, and stupid, much like modern-day politicians. His attitude was, “I have as much and more absolute power over you, your persons, and your goods than my father ever had, and I can force you to do my will.” The counsel of the young men was rash, humanistic, tyrannical, and unbiblical.

God has never ordained a tyrannical form of government. All you have to do is read Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2. God has never ordained a tyrannical, despotic form of government. That is not God’s government. God has only ordained a government that is obedient to Him. It will be His servant, and it will serve His people. Rehoboam, of course, followed the young men’s counsel and advice.

The Consequences and Modern Application

When he sought to apply his usurped authority, he was in for a surprise. “So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.” In other words, they separated. They said, “You think you are going to force us and rule over us. You think your little finger is going to be thicker than your father’s. We do not need you, and we do not want you.”

“But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.” They did not leave. Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute, the official royal tax collector. He was going to force Israel to pay his taxes. “And all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.” Isn’t that amazing? They knew how to take care of the tax collector when the tax collector was coming from a tyrant. I hope you know that even the war of northern aggression had an aspect of taxes, and Lincoln was going to try to collect those taxes even in lawfully seceded states. Inevitably, each tyrant will learn his lesson and meet his demise.

God has not given His people over to be slandered, sheared, and slain. You remember what He said in Zechariah 2 in verse 8, "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye." It is the younger generation, or as Scripture says, another generation, that has arisen and does not know or understand the biblical principles of government. Neither do they possess a biblical worldview. The average educated young person today has a humanistic worldview and is humanistic to the core. They do not understand biblical principles or biblical law.

Some of you may have seen this on the internet, and probably on television. Recently, one such young man who was a liberal, reported to be a star blogger, Ezra Klein, stated—I heard him with my own ears and saw him—that the Constitution, speaking of the United States Constitution, has no binding power on anything and is confusing because it is over 100 years old.

It is amazing how much nonsense and stupidity is easily, clearly, and quickly revealed by liberals. What Klein and those like him meant by that is this: We do not like the view that the Founding Fathers had in mind when they established the Constitution. What we want to do is change everything according to our plans and what we think.

The Constitution is not confusing. The problem is that no one reads it, heeds it, or obeys it. When they read the Constitution in Congress the other day, that was probably the first time many of them had ever heard it read or even seen it. Some who participated in the reading were so smirky; their whole attitude was, “We do not need this.”

Let me give you one quick illustration. Shall we listen to the old men or shall we listen to the young men? Shall we listen to our founding fathers or shall we listen to modern-day politicians? I will give you one example: the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Let me read to you the Second Amendment. Here it is.

"A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

I'm going to give you a quote by some of the old men or the founding fathers. Then I'm going to give you a quote by some of the new men or young men or the modern day politicians. I want to just compare the attitude, the knowledge, and the wisdom between the old men and the young men. Then we'll close with a few choice quotes from some of the founding fathers.

The Second Amendment: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." George Mason, 1788: "To disarm the people is the best and most effectual way to enslave them." What is the militia? It is the whole people, except for a few public officials.

Barack Obama, 2008: "Americans may own guns for the purpose of hunting and target shooting. There's an individual right to bear arms, but it's subject to common sense regulation." Thomas

Jefferson wrote in 1776, "No free man shall ever be debarred the use of arms." Hillary Clinton, 2008: "I would also work to reinstate the assault weapons ban."

Noah Webster wrote in 1787, "Before a standing army can rule, the people must be disarmed; as they are in almost every kingdom in Europe. The supreme power in America cannot enforce unjust laws by the sword; because the whole body of the people are armed." Bill Clinton, 1997: "Assault weapons in the hands of civilians exist for no reason but to inspire fear and wreak deadly havoc on our streets." Sam Adams, 1788: "The said Constitution shall never be construed to authorize Congress to prevent the people of the United States who are peaceable citizens from keeping their own arms."

Carolyn McCarthy said, "You want an assault rifle? Join the Army." Patrick Henry said, "The militia is our ultimate safety. We can have no security without it. The great object is that every man be armed." Dianne Feinstein, 1993: "Banning guns addresses a fundamental right of all Americans to feel safe." How stupid.

William Pitt, 1783: "Necessity is the plea of every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves." Chuck Schumer said, "We're going to hammer guns on the anvil of relentless legislative strategy. We're going to beat guns into submission." Henry Waxman said, "If someone is so fearful that they're going to start using their weapons to protect their rights, it makes me very nervous that these people have weapons at all."

Why do you think our founding fathers gave us the right to keep and bear arms? Benjamin Franklin said, "A nation of well-informed men who have been taught to know and prize the rights which God has given them cannot be enslaved. It is in the region of ignorance that tyranny begins."

John Trenchard, who died in 1723, said, "To avoid domestic tyranny, the people must be armed to stand upon their own defense, which if they are unable to do, they shall never be put upon it. But their swords may grow rusty in their hands, for that nation is surest to live in peace that is capable of making war, and a man that hath a sword by his side shall have at least occasion to make use of it."

Noah Webster said, "Before a standing army can rule, the people must be disarmed; as they are in almost every kingdom of Europe. The supreme power in America cannot enforce unjust laws by the sword; because the whole body of the people are armed, and constitute a force superior to any body of regular troops that can be, on any pretence, raised in the United States."

Conclusion: Choose the Old Paths

Like Joshua, as for me and my house, I prefer the counsel of the old men rather than the young. If you listen to young men and young politicians, you may never live to be old. I prefer the truth of God and the truths set forth by our founding fathers.

The way to rule is to serve: to do good, to stoop to become all things to all men, and so win their hearts. Those who sit most safely in power and authority are those who serve with a genuine heart of a servant. Our Lord, who had absolute power and authority, said, "Behold, I am among you as he that serveth."

The old ways, the old men, and the old counsel are superior to the younger humanistic and idolatrous generation. God has set before us the way of life and the way of death. We must choose which way to walk, and I pray that we choose life. Jeremiah 6:16 says, "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, wherein is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein." If you refuse to walk in God's ways, you will find death and destruction. The old ways and the old counsel will lead you into life and happiness.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Your Word and for Your truth. Lord, I pray especially for our young people today, that You would help them avoid the sins, mistakes, and errors their parents and grandparents made. Give them a willing heart, a listening heart, and an obedient heart. Lord, those of us who are old need to hear and listen and be willing to learn and obey as well. I pray, Father, that You would speak to Your people in this country, giving us repentance, faith, and obedience. Once again, restore our dominion. We pray for the overthrow of tyranny, despotism, and wickedness, and ask that Jesus Christ

would be exalted, honored, and glorified in our lives. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 15

Richard Cameron

June 5, 2011

Richard Cameron, the Lion of the Covenant

Introduction: The Importance of History and Faith's Heroes

We deprive ourselves of a great deal of truth by not studying history, not only biblical history, but history in general. God is the God of history; all history belongs to him. History is linear, with a definite beginning and ending, and it is nothing less than God's eternal decree coming to pass in time. Therefore, history is indeed important. Hebrews 11:32 begins, "And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they

might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

Not every hero of faith is listed in Hebrews 11. Many heroes of faith lived during the New Testament era who were not listed in Hebrews 11. Likewise, many biblical heroes of faith have lived and died since New Testament times and are not recorded in Scripture, because the canon had been closed. Yet we have the history of these saints who stood, lived, and died for Christ, standing firm in the gospel. Richard Cameron was one such martyr. Most people have never heard of him. He is known as the Lion of the Covenant, a Scottish Presbyterian, and many do not know of the incidents surrounding his martyrdom.

We live in a day when principles and convictions are usually a thing of the past. Most people do not consider even the few remaining convictions worth suffering for, especially not worth dying for. Thankfully, some understand that truth is worth fighting for and dying for.

No one likes to suffer. We want everything comfortable, and most people will do a great many things as long as comfort is involved. In Hosea, God condemns Israel for sacrificing under oak trees because the shade was good. They wanted to worship their pagan idols, but to remain cool and comfortable while doing it.

The Call to Suffer for Christ

Scripture teaches that the right way is not always easy or comfortable. Hebrews 11:24 says, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."

Moses refused the throne of Egypt, one of the wealthiest and most powerful countries in the world. He was not interested in following Pharaoh. Verse 25 continues, "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt."

He chose affliction with God's people over the pharaohship and treasures of Egypt. He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches because he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

Moses saw the beauty and wonder of salvation in the one true and living God. No one will choose suffering, affliction, and persecution until he understands and rightly estimates the beauty, glory, and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Moses was willing to suffer because he esteemed the reproach of Christ above all Egypt's treasures.

Philippians 1:29 says, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."

Faith is God's gift, and so is suffering. God does not give either to every individual. Just as there are degrees of faith—little faith, great faith, small faith—there are degrees of suffering. He does not call everyone to suffer immeasurably, although some do. To some He gives the greater gift of suffering. Remember that those who suffer more also receive greater grace and mercy.

After Saul of Tarsus was convicted and converted, Ananias protested when the Lord told him to visit Saul. Acts 9:15 gives the Lord's answer: "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

Verse 16 says, "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

Paul describes some of those sufferings in 2 Corinthians 11:24: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one."

"Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by

mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." Notice that the Apostle Paul is listing only a small number of the things he suffered; moreover, he had his head chopped off in the end.

The Killing Time

Like Paul, many in Scotland and England were persecuted for faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and sought to leave so they could worship freely. We know the Mayflower and the pilgrims' journey from England to Holland and then to America. Many do not understand that King Charles Stuart's persecution forced people to go.

Historical Context: The Killing Time and the Covenanters

The king probably meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. Charles of the Divine Right began forbidding people to leave Scotland or England. Had Charles I known what he was doing, he would never have done it: Oliver Cromwell and John Hampden were scheduled to leave on the next ship. By forbidding their departure he sealed his own destiny, retaining the two men most responsible for charging him with treason and insisting on his execution. What divine justice! He kept the very men who would bring about his death because of his sin.

This period is known as the killing time for the Covenanters, because many were killed for their faith in Jesus Christ.

We're talking about the 1670s and 1680s. Here is a Covenanter's wedding. John Brown was a very close friend of Richard Cameron, known as the Lion of the Covenant, and of Alexander Peden, known as the Prophet of the Covenant. Peden married John Brown to Isabel Weir in 1682. After the ceremony, Peden said to Isabel, "You have a good man to be your husband. But ye will not enjoy him long. Prize his company, and keep linen by you for his winding sheet, for you will need it when you are not looking for it, and it will be a bloody

one." What an amazing thing to say right after a marriage ceremony. A few short years later, Lord Claverhouse, the murderer, hunted down John Brown and asked why he did not attend the Anglican or the Episcopal Church and whether he would pray for the King. John Brown gave the usual covenant answer, and Claverhouse said, "Go to your knees, you shall immediately die." John Brown prayed so fervently that the dragoons' eyes began to moisten. After praying, he turned to his wife: "Do you remember at the time that I proposed to you? I told you that this might come to pass. I must ask now. Are you willing to part with me?" Her reply was heartily willing. John Brown said, "This then is all I desire. I have nothing else to do but to die." Then he kissed his children and said, "May all purchased and promised blessings be upon you." Claverhouse shouted, "No more of this," and ordered his five or six dragoons to fire. But the dragoons stood motionless, refusing to murder John Brown. Enraged and fearing mutiny, Claverhouse drew a pistol, pointed it at John Brown's head, pulled the trigger, and blew his brains out. Then he looked at Isabel and said, "What do you think of your husband now?" She replied, "I ever thought much good of him and more so even now." Isabel set her child upon the ground, gathered up her husband's brains, tied his head together, straightened his body, covered it with a sheet, and sat on the ground and wept. Those were the kind of times Richard Cameron lived in. Richard Cameron was much like the Apostle Paul: he suffered in life as Paul suffered, and he lost his life at the hands of the enemies of the gospel of Christ, just like Paul. Richard Cameron was a Scottish Covenanter.

Christ's Crown and Covenant

The Covenanters were Scottish Presbyterians who supported the National Covenant of 1638, which declared Jesus Christ the head of the church. It opposed the king's attempt to establish a Scottish Episcopalian church like the Anglican church in England.

They believed Jesus Christ alone was head of the church and of the conscience, and that He alone was Lord. They refused the king's claim to either headship. He had no right or power to direct, lead, or force the church. Consequently, the king cast such believers out of their churches and replaced their preachers with men who would agree with him.

The expelled preachers began preaching in the open fields. Their meetings were called conventicles. Those who believed the truth refused to attend the king's church and met there instead.

In 1670 the conventicles were declared illegal. In 1678 an act authorized military forces to suppress them: forces raised to put down gospel preaching and men who would not follow the king concerning religion. A law also demanded a cess, a tax supporting the military raised to persecute the field preachers. The faithful were forced to pay for their own persecution and destruction. If they refused, the king's dragoons had a commission to plunder and kill. Some Scottish and English believers submitted at bayonet point. Others refused and gave their lives.

James Gavin's ears were cut off and he was banished to Barbados. Donald Cargill, James Guthrie, John Nisbet, David Haxton, and many others lost their lives. Richard Cameron and his younger brother Michael died together. Their sister Marion also died at the hands of the king's troopers.

Cameron's bold gospel preaching remained a treasured memory long after his death. His willingness to die for Christ's right to rule His church emboldened many Covenanters to persevere. The bold preaching and stand of Cameron, Haxton, and Guthrie should embarrass most of us today. Their lives and deaths rebuke our compromise, lukewarmness, and unwillingness to stand for Christ and take up His cross.

These men knew suffering and knew how to stand. They believed Jesus Christ alone was King of the conscience, the church, the nation, and everything. They were willing to fight and die for His kingship. Hence their slogan, "For Christ's crown and covenant."

Henry Inglis summarized Cameron's life and death in this couplet: "Cameron of the Covenant stood and prayed the battle prayer, then with his brother side by side took up the cross of Christ and died upon the Moss of Ayr."

John Knox, one of Scotland's principal reformers, was a tremendous preacher feared by Bloody Mary. She said she feared his prayers more than all Scotland's troops, and rightly so. Knox taught that lesser magistrates had the right and duty to resist the tyranny

and totalitarianism of higher magistrates, including king or queen. Cameron and the other Covenanters were applying his teaching and doctrine.

Richard Cameron's Life and Ministry

Richard Cameron was born about 1648 and gave his life on July 22, 1680. He led Presbyterians resisting the Stuart monarchs' attempts to control the Church of Scotland through bishops. His followers became known as Cameronians, later the Scottish Rifles, which were not disbanded until 1968. Their history extended from 1680 to 1968.

His father, Alan Cameron, was a merchant in Falkland Fife. Richard was the eldest of three sons. Michael and Alexander were also believers following the blue covenanting banner. Their only sister, Marian, was a sincere Christian who died at the hands of the king's dragoons. After university, Richard became a schoolmaster, but did not yet know the Savior.

Conversion and Ordination

He would go out and occasionally listen to the field preachers, to the outcast, attending some of those conventicles. One day, as he listened, he heard unto life. The Lord regenerated him, convicted him, converted him. And when God saved him, he became exceedingly zealous, white hot for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Richard Cameron had a disposition that had absolutely no use for anything lukewarm, and by his sincere and genuine example he stood up many in that day. Even just before his death, people were testifying to the blessings of God in his ministry and upon their lives through him.

Richard Cameron, also known as Ritchie, soon left Scotland temporarily to study theology in Holland. Holland was where many Puritans and pilgrim preachers went for safety, to teach and preach and worship freely. While there, he was ordained a minister in the Church of Scotland—in 1679, at the Scotch Church in Rotterdam. He was in safe Holland, studying theology, but even there he had a longing to go back to Scotland, to what was then known as the Land of Blood. So he was ordained into the ministry.

Here is the ordination of a Scottish Covenanter. During the ceremony, after Brown and Coleman, a Dutch minister, lifted their hands from Cameron's head, the great Robert McWard kept his hand upon Cameron's head and said: "Richard. The public standard of the gospel is fallen in Scotland. And if I know anything of the mind of the Lord, you're called to undergo your trials before us and go home and lift up the fallen standard and display it before the world. But before you put your hand to it, you shall go to as many of the field ministers as you can find and give them your hearty invitation to go with you. And if they will not go, go you alone, and the Lord will go with you."

"Behold, you spectators, here is the head of a faithful minister and servant of Jesus Christ who shall lose the same for his master's interest, and it shall be set up before the sun and the moon in the public view of the world."

How would you like to be ordained like that? McWard said, "Here is the head of a faithful minister of Jesus Christ who shall lose the same for his master's interest." He continued, "and it, that is his head, shall be set up before the sun and the moon in the public view of the world." Such was the ordination of a Scottish Covenanter.

Cameron secretly returned to Scotland in October 1679. His name soon became associated with Cargill, Welwood, and Hall, all martyred: Donald Cargill, a blessed, singular Christian and faithful minister; Henry Hall, a worthy gentleman and partaker of Christ's sufferings; and John Welwood, who, seeing his last day from the cold den of his native hills, said, "Welcome eternal light, no more night or darkness for me."

Cameron's course resembled a blazing meteor. His life was short, but he shone brightly. Fiercely hunted, he was kindly housed. Despite the high price on his head, no one betrayed him. Closely sought, he was continually sheltered and greatly loved, with Michael by his side even in death. Thousands wept as they listened to his sermons, and he often wept as he preached. His sermons warmly welcomed poor, simple sinners to the love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

At the end of one sermon he asked, "Would you take him?" He continued, "Tell us what you say. These hills and mountains around

us witness that we have offered him to you this day. Angels are wondering at this offer. They stand beholding with admiration that our Lord is giving you such an offer this day. They will go up to and report at the throne what is everyone's choice."

He emphasized, "They will go up to the throne and report your choice, whether you would have him or whether you would not."

Preaching Mercy and Judgment

He preached from such texts as Jeremiah 3:19, "But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations?" Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Isaiah 32:2, "And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." Isaiah 49:24, "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty?" And John 5:40, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Here was an excellent, wonderful preacher, preaching with great passion and power.

God's hand was indeed upon him. John Howie in Scots Worthies tells of an incident where Cameron was opposed by one singular wicked man and two leaders in that city. As he preached, Cameron told the people to mind that they were in the presence of a holy God and that all were hastening to an endless state of either weal or woe. At that point, Andrew Dalziel cried out, "Sir, we neither know you nor your God." Richard Cameron replied, "You and all who do not know my God in mercy shall know him in his judgments, which shall be sudden and surprising in a few days upon you, and I, as a sent servant of Jesus Christ, whose commission I bear, and whose badge I wear upon my breast, give you warning and leave you to the justice of God." A few days later, Dalziel, being in perfect health, ate a very hearty breakfast, but as soon as he finished, he began to vomit and then died in a most frightful manner. The two leaders, on understanding the death of Dalziel, asked for a meeting with Cameron and asked for his forgiveness. Cameron said that from his heart he forgave them for what wrongs they had done to him, but for the wrongs they had done to the interest of Christ, it was not his part to forgive them.

But he was persuaded that they would be punished remarkably for their sins. And soon, both men were remarkably punished and died. Here was a man who had God's power and blessing and understood His justice in the midst of his sermons. He not only gave forth the blessings and the promises of God, he also warned of God's judgment, and he always sought to make a covenant between those who heard him and the Lord Jesus Christ. God rewarded his faithful preaching of the word, and many came to Christ savingly through that preaching. Cameron's preaching, his praying, and his practicing were all the same. He lived what he preached. He lived that which he believed. It was while he was in Scotland that came the famed Sanquhar Declaration. This was three weeks before the fierce battle of Airds Moss. Three weeks before the Sanquhar Declaration, Richard Cameron said, "I shall be but a breakfast to the enemies of Christ shortly." After a day of prayer, twelve days from the end, his word was this, "My body shall dung the wilderness within a fortnight." He seldom prayed, whether at a meal, or with a family, or with friends, except that he asked the Lord to give him patience to wait until the Lord's time come. Sanquhar town, June the 12th, 1680. Richard Cameron, along with his brother Michael, and a few others rode into town. And when people saw them, they began to cry, "It's Richie! It's Richie!"

The Sanquhar Declaration

"The hill men are coming." It was indeed Richard Cameron, known as the Lion of the Covenant, along with some of his faithful remnant. He and his brother Michael dismount, the others form a circle around them, and as the circle is completed, a psalm is sung and a prayer is offered. It is the first anniversary of the Bothwell Bridge slaughter, where many Scottish Covenanters had been literally murdered by the forces of Charles I. On this anniversary, Richard Cameron has an answer: the Sanquhar Declaration. His brother Michael opens the Declaration and reads it aloud before it is posted in Sanquhar town. "Although we be for government and governors, such as the word of God and our covenant allows, yet we for ourselves and all that will adhere to us as the representatives of the true Presbyterian Church and covenant nation of Scotland, considering the great hazard of lying under such a sin any longer, do

by this disown Charles Stuart, who have been reigning, or rather tyrannizing, as we may say, on the throne of Britain these years bygone, as having any right, title to, or interest in the said crown of Scotland for government, as forfeited several years since by its perjury and breach of covenant both to God and His Church, and usurpation of His crown and royal prerogatives therein. And also as being under the standard of our Lord Jesus Christ, the captain of our salvation, do declare a war with such a tyrant and usurper and all the men of his practices as enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ and his cause and covenant, and against all such as have strengthened him. As also we disown by this the recent reception of the Duke of York that professed papist as repugnant to the principles and vows to the Most High God." They said: we're for government and governors, such as the Word of God and the covenant allows, but we're not for tyrants. King Charles I has been reigning, or rather tyrannizing, these years. The Duke of York, whom they denounced as the papist, had sneeringly said that he would make Scotland a hunting field—that is, he would kill all the Scottish people he could—and the Scottish people referred to him as the devil's lieutenant. Thomas Campbell then took the declaration and nailed it upon the wall. After that, another verse or two of scripture was read, a psalm was sung, and those men who had stood for righteousness left into the hills. They had cast off the usurped authority of a tyrant, not in anarchy or rebellion.

They made their refusal a religious act, beginning with prayer, Scripture, and singing. They disavowed Charles I and ended with singing. They disowned the unworthy ruler to enthrone the sovereign Lord Jesus Christ, refusing a tyrant to honor Christ the Supreme Ruler. They chose a theocracy over a despotism, reversing 1 Samuel 8, where Israel cried, "Give us a man that he may reign over us." They said, "No, we do not want a man to reign over us. We want God." It demonstrated Acts 5:29: "We ought to obey God rather than man."

Cameron spent his last Sunday with Donald Cargill and preached from Psalm 46:10, "Be still, and know that I am God." During the sermon he said, "that the Lord was going to lift up a standard against Antichrist, and would take it to the gates of Rome and burn it with

fire, and that blood would be their sign and no quarter would be their word." He earnestly wished it might begin in Scotland.

The next Sunday Cargill preached over Cameron's death from the words "Know ye not that a great man and a prince has fallen this day in Israel" It was what the Covenanters called a time of eating the bread of affliction.

Cameron spent his last week with about sixty others. Patrick Walker, the Covenanter peddler and the Covenanting John Bunyan, is named in this account. Remember that Bunyan spent fourteen years in prison for refusing a license to preach. He was a Covenanter as well. Walker and Bunyan wrote of Cameron's last week: the men were of one heart and soul, their company and conversation edifying and sweet. Having no certain dwelling place, they stayed together waiting for further light and "that none such juncture of time." They were somewhat armed, and about twenty had horses.

Some may think they should not have taken arms. Many Covenanters believed suffering gave a better testimony than resistance. Their outlawed ministers and writers counseled them to be like jewels surrounded by cutting irons, to learn from experience the sweetness of suffering for Christ, for there is an inherent glory in it. Others could endure much themselves but could not bear seeing others subjected to the utmost misery and cruelty while every man had his sword upon his thigh.

Airds Moss

The Battle of Airds Moss and Martyrdom

Some Scottish Covenanters said, "Well, we'll just suffer and die." Others said, "No, we will fight. And we will only try to protect ourselves, but we'll try to protect others who are suffering as well." Whatever anyone may think, you cannot help but love these men because they were so brave and so glorious. Richard Cameron, the Lion of the Covenant, spent his last night on earth at Meadowhead Farm, the home of William Mitchell. In the morning, he washed his face and hands in the old stone trough. On drying them, he looked at Mrs. Mitchell and her daughter and said, "This is their last washing. I have need to make them clean, for there are many to see them."

Mrs. Mitchell wept, and seeing her weeping, he said, "Weep not for me, but for yourselves and yours, and for the sins of a sinful land, for you have many melancholy and sorrowful weary days before you."

That afternoon, about four o'clock, a hundred and twenty of the king's dragoons came upon the little Bible-reading band in Airds Moss. There were about sixty-two of them, praying and reading the Bible. The governmental troops outnumbered the Covenanters two to one and had greater arms. When Richard Cameron saw the King's troops coming, he led the little band in prayer three times. Each time he prayed, "Lord, spare the green and take the ripe." Then he looked at his brother Michael and said, "Come, Michael, let us fight it out to the last, for this is the day that I have longed for to die fighting against our Lord's avowed enemies. And this is the day that we shall get the crown." To his beloved fellows, he said, "Be encouraged, all of you, to fight it out valiantly. For all of you who follow this day, I see heaven's gates cast wide open to receive you."

Then with their eyes turned toward heaven and calm resignation, the little band of Bible-praying, Bible-reading men sang their last psalm to the God of their salvation. The dragoons were emboldened by greater numbers and better arms and attacked at once. The Covenanters were sometimes called Wanderers because they wandered about having no certain dwelling place. David Haxton, who was with Richard Cameron, wrote before he died as the dragoons attacked: "The rest of us advanced fast on the enemy, a strong body of horse coming hard upon us. Whereupon, when we were joined, our horse fired first and wounded and killed some of them, both on horse and on foot. Our horse advanced to their faces and we fired on each other."

"I being foremost after receiving their fire and finding the horse behind me broken, I then rode in amongst them and went out at a side without any wrong or wound. I was pursued by several with whom I fought a good space. Sometimes they followed me, sometimes I followed them. At last, a treacherous and unfair blow," David Haxton was struck down and he says, "they gave us all testimony being brave and resolute men."

Nine of the Covenanters were slain that day. Among them were Richard Cameron, the Lion of the Covenant, and his brother

Michael, who was always inseparable. According to the Dragoon's own testimony, Cameron's men fought like madmen; 28 of the King's Dragoons were killed and only nine Covenanters, yet the battle was lost. Two stanzas from a wonderful, lengthy poem on the slaughter at Airds Moss, attributed here to Shepherd Lad, describe it:

"When the righteous had fallen and the combat was ended, a chariot of fire through the dark clouds descended. Its drivers were angels on horses of whiteness, and its burning wheels turned on axles of brightness. A seraph unfolded its doors bright and shining, all dazzling like gold of the seventh refining, and the souls that came forth of the great tribulation have mounted the chariot and the steeds of their salvation."

Richard Cameron was no more than 32 years of age, his brother Michael younger, when they gave their lives for Christ's crown and covenant. Six prisoners were taken: William Manuel, John Valiance, John Pollock, David Haxton, John Malcolm, and Archibald Allison. From the severity of his wounds and the harsh treatment he received, William Manuel died as he was being carried to Edinburgh. John Valiance died the day following from his wounds. John Pollock was most cruelly treated, but in the midst of it was steadfast and cheerful, and was banished as a slave to the American plantations with the marks of his torture still upon him.

The Fate of Fellow Prisoners and David Haxton

The other three prisoners were executed. David Haxton was shockingly murdered on the scaffold and John Malcolm and Archibald Allison were hanged. Right before John Malcolm was hanged, he said to the audience, "Let His cause be your cause in weal and woe, O noble cause, O noble work, O noble heaven, O noble Christ that makes it to be heaven. And He is the owner of the work I lay down my life, not as an evildoer, but as a sufferer for Jesus Christ." Before Archibald Allison was hanged, he said, "What think you of heaven and glory that is at the back of the cross?"

After the Battle

"The hope of this makes me look upon pale death as a lovely messenger to me. I bless the Lord for my lot this day. Friends, give our Lord credit. He is good, but oh, he is good in the day of trial, and he will be sweet company through the ages of eternity." Many escaped that day at Airds Moss, and some even wept that they did not die. But Patrick Walker says those who died on the spot with him went ripe and longing for the day of death.

After they had killed, they dug a hole and pushed the bodies of the dead covenanters into it. Only after they had taken Richard Cameron and cut off his head and his hands. They also cut off the head and hands of Richard Fowler, thinking he was Michael Cameron. They put the heads and hands in separate sacks. On their way to Edinburgh, they stopped at Lanark, where they saw a lovely young lass named Elizabeth Hope and asked if she would like to buy some calves' heads. She said, "I know not." They emptied the sacks on the ground, took Richard Cameron's head, and kicked it like a soccer ball until Elizabeth Hope fainted.

Upon reaching Edinburgh, the dragoons put the heads upon halberds and cried, "Here are the heads of the traitors, the rebels." One man who knew Richard Cameron personally, having heard his preaching, recalled Cameron's fair complexion and hair. He saw them stick a halberd in the blessed mouth from which many gracious words had previously proceeded.

Robert Murray, as he delivered the head and hands to the council, said concerning Cameron, "These are the head and hands that live praying and preaching and died praying and fighting." Richard Cameron died at about the same age as our Savior. Before the hangman set the head and hands of the bloodstained Richard Cameron upon the Netherbow port, there was a hero saint lying in prison. The head and hands were taken to this saint imprisoned for the faith's sake: Alan Cameron, father of Richard and Michael, imprisoned for supporting the field preachers. They thrust them toward him and said, "Do you know them?" Alan Cameron took his son's head and hands, kissed them, and said, "Yes, I know them. I know them. They are my sons. My own dear sons. It is the Lord."

Good is the will of the Lord who cannot wrong me or mine, but has made goodness and mercy to follow me all the days of my life. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Here was a man broken, battered, imprisoned, the father of martyred sons and a martyred daughter. Yet when he saw the head and the hands of his son, all he could do is praise the Lord. And when he quoted from Psalm 23, "Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me, and in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be," he was assured of the faith of his sons and his own faith.

David Haxton had been captured. He had been wounded, but lived. Haxton was so hated by the King that eight days after his capture, the King's sentence came down. Here is the sentence passed upon David Haxton for his fellowship and association with Richard Cameron: "But that his body be drawn backward on a hurdle to the Mercat cross. That there be a high scaffold erected a little above the cross, where in the first place his right hand is to be struck off. And after some time, his left hand. Then he is to be hanged up and cut down alive. His bowels to be taken out and his heart shown to the people by the hangman. Then his heart and his bowels to be burned in a fire prepared for that purpose on the scaffold. And afterwards, his head to be cut off and his body divided into four quarters, his head to be fixed on the Netherbow, one of his quarters with his hands to be affixed to St. Andrews, another quarter at Glasgow, a third at Leith and a fourth at Burntisland, that none be presumed to be in mourning for him, or any coffin brought, that no person be suffered to be on the scaffold with him, save the two baillies, the executioner and his servants, that he be allowed to pray to God Almighty, but not to speak to any of the people, that Haxton's and Cameron's heads be fixed on higher poles than all the rest."

Do you remember Richard Cameron's ordination when the great McWard said, "Here is the head of a servant of Jesus Christ who shall lose it for his master's interest. It shall be in public view of the sun and the moon." And so it was: Richard Cameron's head and his hands, along with David Haxton's, were lifted up above the others who had died for their faith in Jesus Christ. Thus lived and died Richard Cameron, the Lion of the Covenant, who stood for Christ's crown and covenant. At times like these we remember our Lord's words in John 16:1–3:

SCRIPTURE READING - John 16:1–3 (KJV)

> "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me."

A Call to Faithfulness

Application: A Call to Zeal and Courage

The time will come when whoever kills you will think he does God service. All this was done by King Charles I to establish his church.

This account should convict us of our lukewarmness, lack of love, and lack of zeal for Jesus Christ. It should also stir us in the times in which we live to pray that God raise up Richard Camerons, David Haxtons, Donald Cargills, and James Guthries: men who stand against tyranny, totalitarianism, and despotism because they stand for Christ, His Word, His crown, and His covenant. May God give us men like Richard Cameron.

Closing Prayer

Father, in Thy name we bow to Thee this day. We thank You. We acknowledge, Lord, all of Your mercy and all of Your grace to us. And we're so thankful, Lord, for these men that Thou hast allowed to live and die for Your honor and Your glory. Give us a holy determination, Lord, that we would have grace to live for Thee. Don't even need to think about dying for You, Lord. We need to think about living for You, because if we will not live for You, we certainly will not die for You. So, Father, give us living grace right now. And when it comes time to die, You'll give us dying grace. But give us, Lord, grace who we may be true witnesses and testimonies for Thee, and exalt Thy crown and Thy covenant. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray. Amen. Amen.

CHAPTER 16

God's Preachers: Enemies of a Godless State

November 2, 2014

John Weaver graduated from Bob Jones University undergrad over forty years ago, I believe, and maybe fifty—just kidding. He did some graduate work there as well. Since that time, he has been involved in starting Christian schools and planting churches. Pastor Weaver has a history of faithfulness to the Scriptures and of preaching on every part of Scripture, especially those parts that may be ignored in our modern churches.

He has some real credits to his name. One is that he has been called a racist and a hater by the Southern Poverty Law Center. If you know anything about the Southern Poverty Law Center, that is a racist and hateful organization if there ever was one. One of the things we as Christians need to understand is that we should never be loved by people who hate Christ. We cannot have people who hate Christ say, "I hate Christ, but that's the old saying—now that's a good guy, I like him." That is a problem.

One thing I appreciate about Pastor Weaver is his understanding of what has happened before—history—with the Scriptures. I listen to his sermons when I can. It takes me fifty minutes to get to work, usually not enough time to catch an entire sermon; it takes about an hour and ten minutes to get home, so I can generally catch the end of the first sermon and start another one.

The Apostle Paul forever connected history with the Gospel. We are studying 1 Corinthians right now, and in 1 Corinthians 15 he said that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and rose again the third day according to the scriptures. Paul was putting them together: the history—He died and rose again the third day—according to the Scriptures. We do not know how to judge even the present unless we know how to interpret the past, do we? Pastor Weaver is as good as anyone I have ever heard at interpreting the past in the light of the Scriptures.

God's Preachers: Enemies of the State

Five years ago, we met in Ryan's house, and I remember that. I'm thankful to see a larger crowd today. The pastor mentioned that no one was early this morning. We have had several early in times past, as well as several late when we spring forward. One of the funniest things that happened in our church involved a widow woman who was a sweetheart. She called me one day and asked, “Pastor, are we having church this Sunday?” I told her that we were. She asked whether we were starting at ten o'clock as usual, and whether I was preaching. I assured her that we were and that I was.

She said something was funny because she was at the church, while neither I nor anyone else was there. I told her that could possibly be because it was Saturday and the next day was Sunday. Yes, she was blonde. The following Sunday morning, I said, “One thing for sure, Jane is not late.” She was twenty-four hours early.

She was a trooper and took it all in stride. As she became a widow, she grew quite independent. Once, when we were going somewhere, I asked, “Jane, may I give you directions?” She replied, “Pastor, I know how to get there.” I looked at her and said, “If I can't give you directions, can I tell you where to go?” She was a fine, sweet lady.

I want you to open your Bibles to 1 Kings, chapter 21, verses 17 through 20. I want to bring a message entitled, “God's Preachers: Enemies of the State.” Notice, beginning with verse 17: “The word of the Lord came unto Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria. Behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he is going down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of God.”

Introduction: The Strange Idea of Enemies

The title of the message is “God’s Preachers: Enemies of the State.” It is absolutely strange that the term enemy bothers some Christians. The reason it bothers them is that they erroneously believe Christians are not supposed to have enemies, especially pastors. The interesting thing is this: We not only have enemies, but the infinite, holy God of heaven and earth has enemies as well.

Biblical Proof that God, Christ, and Christians Have Enemies

When you stop and think of the average pastor today, or the attitude and imagination most people have of the average pastor, he is some kind of sweet, syrupy, sentimental, effeminate individual who does not really bother anyone and whom no one bothers. He simply stays the same regardless of what is going on. Of course, most people think every pastor is supposed to love every individual, regardless of how wicked and sinful they are, regardless of how much they hate the Lord Jesus Christ, and how much they defy Him.

But the truth of the matter is that not only Christians and pastors, but even God Himself, has enemies. Hold 1 Kings chapter 21, but turn first to Psalm 21. Let me prove this point with a few passages. In Psalm 21, beginning with verse 8, notice what the Bible says concerning God Himself: “Thine hand shall find out all thine

enemies. Thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger. The Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them."

Note this: "Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies, and thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee." God certainly knows who His enemies are, and He is going to find them out. In Psalm 68, verse 1, the Word of God says, "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered, let them also that hate him flee before him." The psalmist goes on to say how those enemies should be destroyed. In verse 21, the Bible says, "But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses." Verse 23 says, "That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same."

If you look in Psalm 92 and verse 9, God says it very clearly concerning God's enemies. Remember, He is the most holy, just, and righteous being. And yet the Bible says, "For, lo, thine enemies, O Lord, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered." Notice how repeatedly the Bible says that God has enemies.

Psalm 110, concerning this great messianic psalm, is repeated in the New Testament a number of times in reference to Jesus Christ. The Bible says, beginning with verse one, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." So very obviously, God has enemies. The Bible says over and over that He does. There are those who are against God.

Whether you realize it or not, God's people have enemies as well. I wish I had time to bring those four messages that I did on imprecatory praying, that is, praying those imprecatory prayers. But if you look very quickly in your Bibles to Psalm 58 and Psalm 59, you will see a couple of these prayers where the psalmist is praying against his enemies, which happen to be God's enemies as well. Look in Psalm 58, beginning with verse 7.

He is talking about the aliens of God. In fact, go back to verse 3. He says, "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as

soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Lord. Let them melt away as waters which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces. As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun. Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath."

"The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth." Here is a prayer that David is praying against the wicked. He says, "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth God's vengeance, and yes, the righteous shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked."

In Psalm 59, David prays, "Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men. For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O Lord." In other words, David had done nothing to merit or draw forth their hatred, anger, and murderous desire. They were simply his enemies.

Very obviously, Christians do have enemies. We have enemies by virtue of the fact that we have been saved by the grace of God. Our Lord teaches in John 15:18-20, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also."

Our Lord said that we will be hated simply because we are not of the world. We do not think like the world, act like the world, or live like the world, and they think we are strange. Peter said similarly

that they think it strange that we run not with them to the same excess of riot—and obviously they do.

It should come as no surprise, then, that if our sovereign God has enemies, if His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, has enemies, and if Christians have enemies, pastors have enemies as well. It behooves us, not only as pastors but also as Christians, to examine ourselves and see exactly why we have enemies.

Examining Why We Have Enemies

We should make sure that, if we have enemies, they are not the result of our own crankiness or unfriendliness. We do not want enemies of our own making; we want enemies simply by virtue of being righteous and standing for God. If our enemies are of our own making, we need to repent and make things right with them.

Look at Psalm 139, beginning with verse 19, and notice the prayer that David prayed.

David says, “Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God.” Now, since God is going to slay them, notice this prayer request: “Depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.” In other words, I do not want to be around you, and I do not want to associate with you, because I know God's wrath is against you. Then, in verse 20, he says, “For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain.” It is not that they merely curse God; they do that as well. But they have no use for God, and they speak idly and worthlessly of God.

Now watch verse 21: “Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Isn't it interesting that David said, “Do not I hate them that hate thee, O Lord?” Yes: “I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.” Yet in his prayer he said, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Obviously, there is no contradiction between

hating God's enemies and those that hate God, and being holy and righteous in God, because that is exactly what David prayed.

How can a preacher be the enemy of the state? Some of you will remember a movie from a number of years back entitled Enemy of the State. It concerned an ordinary citizen, best I can remember. But the truth of the matter is this: many of God's preachers are enemies of the state. Everyone in this room probably has just heard where the sodomite mayor in Texas has tried to subpoena the sermons of certain preachers whom she knew were preaching against sodomy.

The Question Asked: 'Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?'

Go back to your Bibles to 1 Kings chapter 21. King Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel were on the throne. Ahab came to Naboth and said, "Tell you what, I want your garden. It's close by my palace. I want it for an herb garden. I will either buy it from you at a price or trade you another piece of land for it." Naboth said, "God forbid it me." What Naboth really said was, God forbids me to sell the inheritance of my father. I have no right to sell it; I cannot sell it.

What did Ahab do? He turned his face to the wall and pouted like a spoiled brat. Jezebel said, "What in the world is wrong with you?" He answered, "I wanted Naboth's vineyard and he wouldn't give it to me." "Why?" she asked. "Are you not the king in Israel? Go ahead and eat something. I'll get the garden for you."

She wrote a letter to the elders of Naboth's city: "You proclaim a fast, set him on high, let some sons of Belial come in, and let them witness against him. Then take him down and stone him." She sealed it with the king's seal. The heartless elders did it. They took an innocent man, proclaimed a fast, set him on high, brought in two men, and stoned Naboth to death for being a blasphemer: "He blasphemes God and the king."

If he blasphemes God, he deserves to die. If he blasphemes the king, he deserves to have his property confiscated. But they did not simply murder Naboth. If they had, the inheritance would have gone to his sons. They murdered Naboth and his sons. Jezebel told Ahab, "Go down to the garden and claim it, because Naboth is not alive, but

he's dead." He walked to the garden. Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite: "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria. Behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he is gone down to possess it."

“And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?”

The first point here is the question asked. King Ahab said to Elijah, “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” When he asked that question, Ahab was not simply looking for an answer. In the strictest sense of the word, he knew the answer to that question. What he was actually doing by asking it was making a declaration of fact: “Elijah, you are my enemy.”

Elijah was the representative of God, the prophet of God, and the preacher of God. Ahab was the king and the civil ruler, and Elijah happened to be his enemy. King Ahab did not hesitate, nor did he try to conceal the fact that he considered God’s prophet his avowed enemy.

The humanists and the wicked in this day likewise have no trouble stating the fact that we as Christians and God’s true preachers are indeed the troublemakers. That is what Ahab called Elijah when he met him after the drought, when God said, “Go show thyself to Ahab.” Ahab said, “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?” Elijah’s answer, paraphrased, was, “It’s not me, you wicked reprobate; it’s you and your filthy wife.” That is what he said, basically: “No, it’s not me.”

The king noted very clearly that Elijah was his enemy. The Hebrew word for enemy here is oyev, which literally means hating, adversary, a foe, or an enemy. It is a word frequently used in the Old Testament, and in each instance it denotes a real, active enemy. For instance, in Judges 16:23, the Philistines spoke about Samson: “Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said,

Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand." The word enemy in that verse is the same as the word enemy in 1 Kings 21:20.

Certainly Samson was an enemy to the Philistines. He killed them hip and thigh. Surely he was an enemy. They called him an enemy, a foe, someone they actually hated. If you look in 1 Samuel chapter 18, notice what is said of David concerning Saul. King Saul tried to kill David several times, but in 1 Samuel chapter 18 and verse 29, the Word of God says, "And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually." Notice that he became David's enemy continually. It is the same word. He became David's foe. He hated David.

And so Ahab asked Elijah, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" The interesting thing is the word found. Did you read that verse and say, "What? Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Did Elijah not know where the palace was? Of course he knew where the palace was. Did he not know where Ahab was in the palace? I am sure he probably did.

But if you look in 1 Kings chapter 20, here is the same Hebrew word, in 1 Kings 20 and verse 36: "Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the Lord, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him." This was where the man was to be smitten, but the lion found him and slew him because he would not smite the prophet, because the prophet had said it to him in the name of the Lord. The lion was there, but he was unseen until just at the right moment, when the lion finally slew this individual. So here is what Ahab was asking: "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?"

First of all, the question implies that the king did not initiate, nor did he desire, a confrontation. He did not want to face Elijah. Do you realize that Ahab knew he was wicked? He knew he was wrong. He knew he did not worship the true and living God. If Ahab could have gotten away with the murder of Naboth and his sons, he would gladly have done it. If he could have gotten away without being confronted, more power to him; he would have loved that. But he did not.

Criminals do not like to have their sins and wickedness discovered and pointed out. Look at all the whistleblowers in our own civil government, and what happened when they exposed corruption and wickedness inside it. They are the ones persecuted, imprisoned, and deprived of their goods. Ahab did not initiate this confrontation. He did not want it, and I can assure you no Bush, no Clinton, no Obama, or anybody wants a confrontation like this. Yet it happened.

The second implication is this: the king, in one sense of the word, expected to be confronted. He asked, “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” Remember, the lion found the man who refused to slay the prophet. The lion found him and slew him at the opportune time. Ahab knew that Elijah knew where the palace was and where he was. But since Elijah was considered King Ahab’s enemy, would you not tend to think that Elijah would have been classified as persona non grata? “You’re not coming in here. This is my house. This is my palace.”

The Duty of God's Preachers to Confront Wicked Rulers

Probably there were all kinds of instructions to the guards: “Don’t let that preacher in here. He’s a troublemaker. He’s an enemy. I don’t want to be around him.” But Ahab had left the protection of his palace and gone down to the garden to take possession. Like the lion that came out of the woods to slay the man who refused to smite the prophet, and like the lion that killed the prophet who disobeyed God when he prophesied against Jeroboam, a lion met him and slew him as well, Elijah had now come out of the woods and pounced upon Ahab. Elijah caught Ahab off guard at an inopportune time for Ahab, but it was the opportune time for Elijah and for God. Although the king did not want to be confronted, he expected to be confronted. Here is the third implication: “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?”

It is the duty of God's preachers to find out all of God's enemies, even in the political realm, and to confront and reprove them. It does not matter if they are the highest rulers in the land or what their position of office may be. Ahab happened to be the king. There is no such thing as being off limits when it comes to God's preachers or God's Word.

I have been going through the Bible, and I have several messages on this. I am going to develop at least one, maybe two, messages entitled “A Model for Secession.” The South tried it once, and we're going to do it again, I know. Territories will as well. As you go through the Bible, it is amazing to see how many of God's preachers confront wicked, corrupt rulers.

In fact, let me emphasize, it was God who sent Elijah. Look at 1 Kings chapter 21, verse 17: “And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria. Behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he is gone down to possess it.” God sent Elijah there.

If you look very quickly in 2 Kings chapter 1, Ahaziah was a wicked king. He fell down through a lattice and got cut and sore, and God sent Elijah to confront him as well. The Bible says in 2 Kings 1 and verse 3: “But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron?” Ahaziah had fallen down through a lattice, and his sores had evidently become infected. The god of Ekron was Baal-zebub, which means god of the filth or god of the flies.

When Ahaziah sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, God said to Elijah, “You go tell those messengers to turn around and go back, and you tell Ahaziah that he’s not going to come up off that bed of affliction where he’s laying.” In other words, God was going to kill him. Elijah confronted him. Do not assume that God’s preachers have no role in civil and political affairs. They do.

Read Psalm 82, which was quoted earlier. Psalm 82 is against corrupt judicial officers. In that psalm, the preacher of the temple becomes the prophet of the court. One of the greatest failings of pastors in this country is our failure to rebuke sin and expose corruption and wickedness in high places, even in civil places.

Our forefathers always held what were known as election sermons. At the founding of this country, no civil ruler could take office without being preached to by a preacher who showed him his

duties to God and to the people, and also the people's duty to the civil ruler under God.

It is astonishing to me today that very few preachers have opened up, chimed out, and shouted against our past civil rulers—especially Clinton, the Bushes, Obama, and the mayor in Houston—and against wicked civil rulers who openly despise God and God's Word. Consider the course of our Congress and our judicial system, which is absolutely corrupt.

Do you remember when Elisha followed Elijah, and God separated them and took Elijah to heaven by a whirlwind and a chariot of fire? Elisha had asked for a double portion of Elijah's power. Elijah said, "If you see me when I'm taken away, it shall be done unto you. But if you don't see me, it's not going to be done." As God took Elijah away, his mantle fell. Elisha picked it up, returned to the river, smote the water with it, and said, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

And the water parted hither and thither, and he walked across on dry ground. Today the question should be asked: Where are the Lord God's Elijahs? Where are the men who will cry out against civil corruption and civil wickedness? The truth is, unhappily, there are not very many. Most are hiding in caves, feeling sorry for themselves, or fleeing out of harm's way. They understand that if we get in the way of the king, or the civil rulers, they can take our tax exemption; they can take our building.

They can put us in prison. In other words, we would rather be safe than be representatives of God and cry out against sin and wickedness. God's preachers have a responsibility to deal with the issues and to deal with them biblically. They have a responsibility to confront wickedness, even if it is in the highest civil ruler. So here is the question: "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Look back in 1 Kings chapter 21 and verse 20, because here is the second thing, the question and answer: "And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee." The question and answer emphasize that there is a fine line of separation between God's enemies and God's friends.

The Question Answered: 'I have found thee'

Righteousness and unrighteousness do not coexist very well. Do you remember what the prophet Hanani said to Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 19 verse 2? He asked, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?" Because Jehoshaphat had done that, he said, "Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord." You remember what he asked in Amos 3 and verse 3: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

Can you envision Elijah or Elisha having prayer at a presidential inauguration today? The answer is no. Even our Lord said in Matthew 12 and verse 30, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." It is impossible for God's preachers to align themselves with God's enemies and still remain the representatives of God. The line is just as clearly drawn today as it was back in the Old Testament.

You remember when Israel had sinned, built the golden calf, and the people were dancing, jumping around it, and worshipping it? Moses came down from the mountain, threw the tablets down, broke them, and said, “Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me.” There was a clear line of demarcation. When Elijah answered, “I have found thee,” we must understand that this line should be definite, emphatic, and clear. Therefore, we should be against anyone who is against the Lord.

Remember what David prayed: “Do not I hate them that hate thee, O Lord?” David continued, “Yea, I hate them with a perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.” Then he added, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

There is a biblical doctrine of hatred. It considers the Sovereign's hatred, the Savior's hatred, and the saint's hatred. That is a hard message, but it separates the wheat from the chaff. A friend of mine, now with the Lord, once duplicated that message and passed it out like candy. I told him it was a hard message and asked why he did not pass out something lighter and easier, easing people into it before giving them that message. He said he could separate the wheat from the chaff right away. That is exactly what is happening

here. We must understand David's words: “Do not I hate them that hate thee, O Lord?” He counted those who hated the Lord as his enemies, while also asking God to search his heart and lead him in the everlasting way.

Now note something about Elijah. Ahab said, “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” What was Elijah's response? “I have found thee.” He repeated it: “I have found thee.” Elijah did not try to neutralize or soften the situation. He simply said, “Yep, you got it right, I found you.” He did not squirm, flinch, or mealy-mouth around. He did not say, “Oh, king.”

“Now, that word enemy is a very strong word, and it’s a negative word. Let’s try to put our relationship in a positive light. Let’s use some other softer word.” No, no, no. He didn’t do any of that. “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” “Yes, I found you. And you got it right. We’re enemies. We’re on different sides.” Elijah was acknowledging the enmity that existed between the wicked civil ruler and God’s preacher.

I remember years ago when our church was attacked by the state of Georgia. You can read my book and find out about it; I tell some of this in there. It was probably the stupidest thing you have ever heard of in your life. They wanted to give us a license to drink water out of our own well, and the well had already been in the ground for over forty years.

There had never been a problem. If you do not know what a license is, you can look it up in Black’s Law Dictionary. It means permission from a competent authority to do that which would otherwise be unlawful. In other words, it would be unlawful to drink water out of our own well without their permission. I wrote them letters, received threatening letters from them, and endured all that kind of thing.

Finally, they sent one man to resolve the situation, and he brought a witness with him. Since he brought a witness, I had four or five men in the office with me, along with my tape recorder, and recorded the entire situation. The state agent began: “Now, Pastor Weaver, I don’t want to get into theology. I’m sure that you know more theology and know more Bible than I do.” I replied, “Well, yes,

I do." I was acknowledging the fact because I knew he was scripturally ignorant. He said, "I just don't want to get in an argument over the Bible." I said, "I'm not interested in arguing the Bible either, but I have so many constitutional and statutory problems with what you're trying to do. I'm willing to discuss only the constitutional and statutory issues if you don't bring up theology. But if you bring up theology, I have every right to bring up theology. Is that understood?" He said, "Yes, that's understood." We did not go five minutes.

Finally, one of my men looked at him and asked him a question. The state agent said, "Look, you see the state in its infinite wisdom," and when he got that out of his mouth, I slapped my desk and said, "That's it, that's it, that's it." He looked at me, shocked. He said, "What is it?" I said, "You promised not to bring up theology. You just did. And since you brought it up, I want to bring it up. You just said the state has infinite wisdom."

"Infinity is an attribute of God. Only God is infinite. Here's the problem: We have two different gods. Your god is the state, and my God is the Lord Jesus Christ, who's revealed himself in Holy Scripture. You serve a different god than I serve. That's the problem right here." He said, "Well, I see there's not too much use to further this discussion." I said, "Well, please let it be for the record that you're ending this discussion and not me, but you're the one that brought up theology."

You have to understand something, folks. There is a real enmity that exists, and we can gloss over it and pretend like it doesn't exist, but it does exist. We cannot take a conciliatory measure to those who hate Christ. You say, "Well, I can pray for them." Sure. But you can't be reconciled with them in their wickedness, in their sin, and in their rebellion against God.

Look at Psalm 97, verse 10: "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." You can't love the Lord without hating everything contrary to the Lord. In Amos chapter 5, he says, "Hate the evil, and love the good." But look in your Bible at Psalm 94, verse 16. God asks, "Who will rise up for me against the evildoers?"

"Or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?" In other words, God is looking for individuals who will stand for Him against the workers of iniquity. Elijah said, "I found you. You are my enemy. You are the one that said it, and I'm acknowledging it."

It was not just Elijah who had that attitude, but Elisha as well, who was known as he who poured water on the hands of Elijah. In 2 Kings chapter 3, the king of Judah, the king of Israel, and the king of Edom had gotten together to fight against the king of Moab. They took a course through the desert, and there was not enough water to sustain them and their armies, so it appeared that they were going to die. Notice verse 10: "And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab!"

"And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of the Lord by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah. And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the Lord is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, who was an apostate, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay!"

The Question Analyzed

Elisha said, “As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.” In other words, he told the king, “I wouldn't spit on you if you were on fire. If it wasn't for Jehoshaphat, I'd let you die.” That is what he told him: “I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.”

So when Elijah answered Ahab's question, “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” he simply said, “I found you. And you nailed it. We're enemies. We're on different sides.”

Go back to 1 Kings chapter 21, because here is the third thing to see today: the question analyzed. “And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast

thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee." Here is the question analyzed: "Because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord."

The Question Analyzed: Why Civil Rulers Become Enemies

We must ask this question: Why are civil rulers and spiritual rulers enemies? Are not spiritual rulers and civil rulers spheres and aspects of the same Kingdom of God? The answer is yes. God created only three institutions: the family, which is a ministry of education; the church, which is a ministry of grace; and the state, or civil government, which is a ministry of justice. Each is indeed an aspect and sphere of God's kingdom.

In truth, if each of these three institutions, each of these three spheres, functioned biblically, each would complement the others, and there would be no animosity. If the state were scriptural, we would have no problem. If family and church were scriptural, there would be no problem. The problem comes when you try to move out of your sphere of authority.

In Romans chapter 13, verse 4, the civil ruler is designated as a minister of God. Each time you read the word minister in verse 4, it is the Greek word diakonos, from which we get our English word deacon. The word deacon literally means servant. Thus, the civil ruler is the deacon and servant of God.

Why did God ordain civil government? He ordained it first to be His servant, His minister, and His deacon. He is also called the avenger of God. The word avenger comes from the Greek word ekdikos. Ek is a preposition meaning "out of," and dikos is the word for righteousness. The avenger therefore literally means one who exacts out righteousness. Where do you find righteousness? Only in God and God's law.

God ordained civil government not merely to be His deacon and servant, but to exact His righteousness. Throughout the Bible, rulers, civil rulers, and judges are to judge according to God's law and therefore exact His righteousness.

In verse 6, the civil ruler is again referred to as a minister, but here the Greek word is different: leitourgoi; leitourgos is the singular. It is where we get our English word liturgy. What is a liturgy? It is a public form of worship. God ordained civil government to be His exactor of righteousness and His public form of worship. In other words, the state is just as required to worship God and worship Him scripturally as are the Church and the family, because it is an aspect of God's Kingdom.

Why did it become our enemy? Verse 20 gives the answer: "Because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord." When civil government becomes the enemy of God, it does so by doing that which is evil and contrary to God and His law. Verse 25 says of Ahab, "But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." The king, the head, had an obligation to serve God, yet became the enemy of God and of God's people. How do civil rulers become our enemies? Because of their rebellion.

Psalm 2:1–3 says, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

They said, "We do not like the limitations that God placed upon us. We do not like the definitions. We do not like the restrictions. We do not like the boundaries. We do not like the bands." So here is what they are going to do: "We are going to break those bands, and we are going to break those bounds, and we are going to do exactly what we want to do." They do not wish to remain within the confines God has ordained. In Hosea 5:10, the Bible says, "For they broke the bounds, and therefore God poured out wrath upon them like water." Do you realize that when God created three institutions, He gave them sphere authority?

The state, or civil government, has a proper sphere of jurisdiction as long as it remains within its sphere. So do the church and the family. In other words, I have no right as a pastor to come to the civil authority and say, "Look, you cannot execute that murderer. I am against the death penalty. You cannot execute him." God says they

can. The Bible says that he beareth not the sword in vain. God gave the civil government the power of the sword. That is its ministry—the ministry of justice.

Likewise, the civil government cannot come to me and say, “You cannot preach against sodomy.” Yes, I can, because the civil government has no authority to tell me that. It is not its sphere of authority. As long as each of these institutions remains in its own sphere and functions the way God ordained, there is no problem. But when it loosens and leaves its sphere of authority, it tries to steal, usurp, and take to itself authority that it never had.

Show me anywhere in the Bible, show me anywhere in our Constitution, where the civil government has the right of education. It doesn't. Where it has the right of welfare. It doesn't. I could mention numerous examples. What happens is that civil authorities usurp and steal authority that was never given unto them.

Now, listen very carefully to what I'm about to say. Any time you say that government, civil government, is unlimited, you divinize government. I don't care if you're talking about family government, church government, or civil government. The only unlimited government that exists is the government of God himself. For God alone is sovereign. Do you understand? There can only be one ultimate. There can only be one absolute. There can only be one sovereign. If government has unlimited jurisdiction, if government can do whatever it desires to do, then government is God and God is not God. So you have to ask this question: How does governmental rebellion manifest itself today? I want to show you this.

Modern Manifestations of Governmental Rebellion

Do you understand that we as individuals can rebel, sinners can rebel, but so can civil government? Psalm 94 asks, "Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? Who will stand for me against the workers of iniquity?" We just read verse 16 earlier, where God asked, "Who will rise up for me against the evildoers?" Then, in verse 20, comes the question: "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?"

We are talking about a throne, so it is a governmental entity. It is called a throne of iniquity, so it is a wicked civil government. Shall a wicked civil government have fellowship with God when that wicked civil government frameth mischief by a law? That is, it makes sin legal. Another word in the Bible for mischief is iniquity. Understand, abortion is legal in this country. It is legal to murder as long as you do it through abortion. It is legal to be a sodomite. It is legal to steal, as long as you're a politician. All I'm saying is that civil government makes sin legal.

Look at the next verse, verse 21. Here is what they do when they make sin legal: "They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood."

Turn to 2 Kings chapter 17, and notice verses 7 and 8. The Bible says concerning the children of Israel, “For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods.”

How do we know that Israel feared other gods? The Bible has told us, but in what fashion did that fear take place? Verse 8 says, “And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.” Israel turned its back against God and against God’s law. Then they began to follow the laws of the heathen and the laws of the kings of Israel, which they had made and which were absolutely contrary to God’s law.

Look down to verse 19: “Also Judah kept not the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.” And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until He had cast them out of His sight.

Why did God send the children of Israel into captivity? Because they rejected Him and His law. They substituted man’s law for God’s law and man’s authority for God’s authority. Do you understand that not all statutes, laws, rulings, executive orders, and regulations can nullify the Bible or nullify God? I do not care what the civil rulers say; it cannot cancel out God.

Let me give you an illustration. There was a court case in which a young girl wanted to pray at her graduation: Jane Doe versus the Santa Fe Independent School District. The court essentially said, “It’s all right to have prayer at a high school graduation if you pray the way we tell you. But if you don’t pray the way we tell you, then you can’t pray.” Listen to what the judge told this young Christian girl who wanted to pray at her high school graduation.

And I've often said, I wish she'd have said this to me, because I'd have had a few words back for him. I may still be in prison, but I'd have had a few words back, I can assure you.

Here's what the judge said. Listen carefully: “This court will allow prayer if it is a typical, non-denominational prayer. The prayer can refer to God or the Almighty, but the prayer must not refer to Jesus. And make no mistake, this court is going to have a United States Marshal in attendance at graduation. If any student offends this court and mentions the name of Jesus in a prayer, that student will be summarily arrested and will face six months in incarceration. Anyone who violates these orders is going to wish that he or she had died as a child when this court gets through with them.”

Why? Why? I've got news for you. Those in charge today are still selling themselves to work evil, exactly the way Ahab did. They're denying God's sovereign authority. Their attitude is the same attitude revealed in Luke 19, verse 14, where those wicked people said concerning Christ, “We will not have this man to reign over us.” In other words, we don't want God's law. We don't want God's sovereign authority. We want to rule ourselves.

Do you realize this is the very essence of rebellion? I don't care if you look at Adam and Eve or anyone else: the essence of rebellion is denying God's authority and trying to establish your own authority, denying God's law and seeking to establish your own law. And that's exactly what Ahab did. He was considered the enemy of God. He sold himself to work evil. Listen carefully.

You say, “Brother Weaver, what in the world is wrong in our country? Why is it that most people never see what’s happening?” May I answer that for you? Because unless you believe in and understand God’s absolute sovereignty, you’ll never understand

tyranny. You'll never understand it civilly, familiarly, or ecclesiastically. Until you say God is absolutely sovereign, and His word is supreme, His law real and true, you will never recognize tyranny.

Applications: Choosing Obedience and Recognizing Tyranny

The second application is that since government has become the enemy of God, we must choose whom we must obey. Do you remember when the Jews cried to Pilate, when he asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" What did they say? "We have no king but Caesar." We don't want Christ; we don't want His authority. Acts 17 says concerning those Christians who turned the world upside down that they had come, saying there was another king, one Jesus. And what did Peter and the rest of the apostles say in Acts 5:29, when they were forbidden to preach in the name of Jesus? "We ought to obey God rather than men." You have to determine whom you are going to obey. There is a line being drawn: I will either obey God or man.

When we aid and abet, and seek to establish, rulers who are ungodly and rule unbiblically, we are joining in rebellion against God. Read Hosea 8:4 and Hosea 5:11. You cannot support wickedness. The lesser of two evils is still evil. Ahab looked at Elijah and said, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Elijah answered, "I found you."

God shall find out all His enemies. As the psalmist said, He shall strike them through. It pays you to be on the Lord's side and not on the side of the wicked.

Lord God, we recognize You today as the sovereign. It is easier to say that in these difficult days than to act like it and live it. By Your grace, in everything we say and do, privately and publicly, may we be living testimonies of Your authority, rule, and power over everything. May we not give in to the lies being told to us, that it is acceptable for You to be sovereign in the church, but nowhere else. We pray to the God who is sovereign over everything.

That's who we pray to. Oh Lord God, may we as a church—all of us, parents, children, grandparents, and grandchildren—live like Elijah, who was jealous for the name of the Lord God of hosts. May that be us. We thank You again for Your mercy to us, for giving us life, and for giving us Your Son, who died a horrifying death that we might have life. We pray these things in the name of Christ, Savior and Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER 17

Captain Jack Hinson and Divine Justice

July 6, 2022

Introduction: The Biblical Mandate for Justice

Ezekiel chapter 45 and verse 9 says, “Thus saith the Lord God, let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice. Take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord God.” Justice is extremely important. In fact, justice is one of the two functions of civil government outlined in Romans chapter 13. There are basically only two reasons why God instituted civil government: for the protection of the righteous and for the punishment of the wicked. Judges, therefore, have been ordained by God to bring forth justice.

Psalm 82 and verse 3 tells judges to defend the poor and the fatherless and to do justice to the afflicted and the needy. Interestingly enough, Psalm 89 and verse 14 says that judgment and justice are the habitation of His throne. God is so interested in justice that He actually prefers justice before sacrifice, because Proverbs 21 and verse 3 says, “To do justice and judgment is more

acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." God would much rather have our obedience than anything else.

The Failure of Civil Government and God's Response

A question must be asked, because we are living in a day when justice has fallen and we no longer have justice: What happens when civil government fails in its responsibility? What happens when injustice prevails? We are in a position much like that of Isaiah's day, when Isaiah 59 and verse 14 said, "And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter." What happens when civil government refuses to execute the justice that God demands, and for which He instituted government to begin with?

Inevitably, God in His sovereignty will raise up someone who will administer His justice. Usually, that someone will be an exceptional individual or an exceptional group—someone upon whom God has placed His hand, and usually someone who has suffered innumerable injustices in himself or in his family.

You may say, "Well, Pastor, that almost sounds like vigilantism." Let me give you a concept of vigilantism that you may not have considered. Vigilantism is often misused and misunderstood. Originally, the term did not refer to a single man taking the law into his own hands. It referred to the creation and enforcement of law by an organized extra-legal group in the supposed absence of adequate law enforcement and justice.

Vigilantism began in the United States in 1767 in South Carolina, where backcountry people were suffering repeated wrongs and injustices from outlaws. There was no law or courts around, so the people gathered together and formed a group to protect themselves from those outlaws. The word vigilantism comes from "vigilance," or "to be vigilant."

Understanding Vigilantism

Black's Law Dictionary defines vigilance as "watchfulness, precaution, a proper degree of activity and promptness in pursuing one's rights or guarding them from infraction, or in making or

discovering opportunities for the enforcement of one's lawful claims and demands." Vigilantism, then, is not necessarily evil in and of itself. Technically and legally, according to Black's Law Dictionary, vigilantes are doing only what the law will not or cannot do. They are protecting themselves and their families and seeking to secure their rights and freedoms. Thus, they are introducing justice themselves. According to that definition, if you read the Bible, there are several individuals you might consider vigilantes.

For instance, there were Ehud, Jephthah, and even Gideon. These men had calls of God upon their lives, but they were not elected, chosen, or voted on by the people. God had His hand upon them and called them. Many times they acted individually, and sometimes corporately as well. They were doing the work of God and exercising justice. That is why God raised up all the judges.

If you read the Book of Judges, you will find that in 1774, when George III sent his governors over here, those governors cared nothing for the colonies; they were interested only in supporting George III and his rules and regulations.

What did the colonists do? They rejected and denied the governors whom George III sent over, chose and elected their own people, and followed them instead of George III's governors. Inevitably, when there is injustice and the state fails to do its duty, God always raises up someone who will execute that judgment and justice. One such man whom God used in the war of northern aggression was John S. Hinson, also known as Jack Hinson, or simply Captain Jack. Jack Hinson became a sniper and kept the federal soldiers in absolute terror. He was hunted, tracked, and sought after, but he was never captured.

Introduction to Jack Hinson

The primary goal of a sniper, a guerrilla, or even a group of guerrillas is to harass, ambush, hit, and destroy as much of the enemy's property and goods as possible, while avoiding capture. Usually, the sniper or guerrilla would cut telegraph lines, tear up railroad tracks, or set fire to property. When federal troops came to remedy the situation, they were ambushed and taken care of, in that sense of the

word. But when more than a few came out, the sniper or guerrillas would simply fade into the woods and disappear.

Jack Hinson became a guerrilla sniper, and he was par excellence in that. He acted alone and moved like a ghost through the forest. Men who fought this way were known as bushwhackers. I have a message on Bushwhacker Johnson, who was a Methodist preacher in Alabama, and you would be amazed at what he was able to do. But bushwhackers were not counted as regular soldiers.

If a soldier was captured in uniform, he was to be treated as a prisoner of war. However, when a bushwhacker was caught, that was a horse of a different color, because usually he was shot or hanged on the spot. Here is the order from General Clinton B. Fisk to Lieutenant Colonel Daniel M. Draper, written April 18, 1864: "Try the bushwhacker by a drumhead court-martial tonight. And let every soldier in Macon shoot him if he is guilty, as he doubtless is."

He closed with these words: “Don’t allow in the future such prisoners to be brought in.” In other words, he did not want anyone going through a court-martial if he was deemed a bushwhacker; he wanted them killed on the spot and left there. Again, the same day General Fisk telegraphed another subordinate to let him know that he had not misunderstood this policy: “Tell the party who have the bushwhacker Honeywell that I want no such prisoners. Your orders are correct.”

“Let that be the rule from now on.” They were not even to bother bringing them in, but were to shoot them, kill them, and leave them there. Union General Rosecrans ordered the killing of any bushwhacker found engaged in his hellish work. General Fisk once again wrote to Major Samuel A. Garth: “We must, during the winter and spring, kill these disturbers of the peace. And in your sub-district, I trust the work will begin at once and continue until the last imp expires.”

“Hesitate not to burn down every house where it can be demonstrated that the occupants harbor or conceal the murdering fiends, and destroy everything on the premises. Deal summarily with the parties who harbor and conceal; they’re equally guilty with the bushwhacker and must share his fate.” William Tecumseh Sherman

gave this advice to General John A. Logan concerning snipers who shot at Yankee river traffic: “For every bullet shot at a steamboat, I would shoot a thousand 30-pound Parrott shells, even into helpless towns.” A thousand rounds of cannon for one bullet, even into helpless towns. Jack Hinson would indeed become a nightmare for the Yankee transports, gunships, and boats carrying Yankee supplies and troops.

Moreover, he would become what is known as an avenging angel, dishing out .50 caliber justice. By October 1862, Confederate snipers and sharpshooters had become so effective that Rear Admiral David Dixon Porter issued orders to those on his ships: never to tie up at banks; to keep their deck guns loaded and trained on the banks; and to keep small arms loaded and ready to repel boarders. If they were sniped at or attacked from the banks, they were to shell and destroy houses near the sniping or attack, and they were to do it with spirit, regardless of casualties among innocent civilians. He went on to say that if innocent civilians were hurt or killed, it was their own fault—simply because they were there, even though they did not fire at the boat.

Although Jack Hinson was a Confederate sniper, he was not necessarily a Confederate soldier. When the war began, he was fifty-seven years old and too old to be a soldier. Moreover, Jack tried to maintain a position of neutrality because he was personal friends with General Ulysses S. Grant and with many Confederate generals as well. He also saw the fall of Fort Donelson. A year later, he was called upon to testify concerning the ineptitude of Generals Floyd and Pillow in allowing that great catastrophe at Fort Donelson. Later, Jack actually became a scout for Lieutenant General Nathan Bedford Forrest.

Jack and his wife, Elizabeth, had twelve children, only five of whom survived their parents. Jack was a very successful farmer, a real estate investor, and a land developer. Overall, he was a sharp individual and businessman. He may not have been what we would call extremely wealthy, but he was certainly not poor by any stretch of the imagination. Jack owned his home, named Bubbling Springs because of all the springs on the property.

Jack also had a number of slaves. His family included not only the white Hinsons but the black Hinsons as well. In the summer of 1862, Jack understood that it would probably be best if the black Hinsons were set free, giving them a better chance of survival. He therefore gave each of his slaves freedom papers. Every one of them agreed to stay with him and work with him. According to the monetary values of that time, those freedom papers would have been valued at over $50,000.

The black Hinsons were armed just as the white Hinsons were. When the Yankees later came to harass the Hinson family, both the white Hinsons and the black Hinsons hid their arms. Jack had two sons, George and John, who were arrested after the fall of Fort Donelson as spies. The boys were not spies or even soldiers; they simply happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. They spent about one month in confinement before their captors realized they had made a horrible mistake and let them go. These boys were not soldiers by any stretch of the imagination whatsoever.

Union Atrocities and the Murder of Hinson's Sons

Atrocities began to be committed everywhere in Tennessee, as well as in the other states, by the Yankees. Sherman's subordinate, Major General Stephen G. Burbridge, practiced what he called a form of atonement. Whenever a Yankee soldier or Yankee sympathizer was killed, he went to the prison, brought out four Confederate soldiers, and had them publicly shot. Those soldiers had nothing to do with the death of the Yankee, but that did not matter to Burbridge. He brought them out and had them publicly shot because he was atoning for the death of that Yankee soldier or sympathizer.

In July 1863, Yankee Colonel Fielding Black captured six Confederate soldiers. He walked them down the road, shot one, and buried him standing up, with his body covered except for his head. He did this one for each mile, leaving them as mile markers. It is difficult for us to imagine the horrendous atrocities the Yankees really committed.

If you want to read a good book, I encourage you to read Walter Brian Cisco's Crimes Against Civilians, which discusses the Yankee outrages against civilians. When you read it, make sure you do not

have any loaded weapons around, because it will make you angry to find out what the Yankees really and truly did to southern civilians.

The Yankees had a unique form of torture called putting one's feet to the fire. We use that illustration today when we say, "Hold his feet to the fire." By that, we mean make him keep his word, perform, and do what he said he would do.

The expression came about in this way. They inflicted this exquisite torture on those who refused to reveal where their jewels, silver, gold, and money were hidden. They captured an old man named James Gray. He was a farmer and a preacher; he had served in the state assembly of Tennessee and helped write the Constitution of Tennessee. He had also fought with Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans.

When they asked James Gray for his money, he said he had none. To make him reveal where it was hidden, they stretched his neck three times. They formed a noose, put it around his neck, threw the rope over a limb, and pulled him up with their hands, letting his feet dangle until he nearly choked to death, nearly smothered to death. Then they dropped him, let him catch his breath, stood him up, pulled him up again, and choked him down again. They did this three times.

Each time they asked him for his money, he said, "I have no money." They then designed this exquisite torture to make him reveal where his money was. They tied him to a board, took off his shoes, built a fire under his feet, and cooked them until the flesh fell off. Then they asked where his money was. He said, "I have none." And he did not.

Then they left the old man in suffering, agony, and pain. Believe it or not, he survived. He was certainly crippled, but he survived the torture. Indiscriminate looting and killing was everywhere in the county and in neighboring counties as well. For a while, the Hinsons were safe, or at least thought they were safe, because of his friendship with General Grant. But pretty soon, that was not to hold any favor at all with the Yankees.

Tragedy was going to strike, and it was going to strike hard. Jack's oldest son, William, was also a Confederate soldier. However, he was

fighting in Virginia, not in Tennessee, where Jack and his family lived. George, his twenty-two-year-old son, and John, his seventeen-year-old son, had not joined the Army. They were at home. One morning, George and John decided to go deer hunting. They went to one of their favorite spots and sat there with their weapons in their hands, waiting for the deer to come along.

All of a sudden, they heard the rattle of sabers and horse hooves, and they knew a Yankee patrol was coming. They could have run or disappeared into the forest, but they were not soldiers; they were out hunting. They had already been captured previously and let go, so clearly they were not frightful. It happened to be the 5th Iowa Cavalry. When the lieutenant saw these two boys with weapons in their hands, he had been looking for bushwhackers and assumed that he had found them. He leveled his carbine at the boys, and all the troops under him also pointed their carbines at them. Very quickly, the boys were disarmed, and they did not resist.

Finally, the lieutenant started making them walk down the road toward Dover, Tennessee. They assumed that soon this would be over: he would realize who they were, find out that they were not bushwhackers, and let them go home. But it did not turn out that way. They never went home again. They never saw another sunrise. The boys protested their innocence, but to no avail. The Union soldiers raised their carbines and shot and murdered these two innocent boys.

Murder was bad enough in and of itself. But what the soldiers did next was absolutely horrifying. The lieutenant took his heavy saber and cut the heads off the bodies. The soldiers then took the bodies of these two boys into Dover, Tennessee, tied them to the backs of their horses, and pulled them around town, further mutilating them.

The citizens of Dover had seen much carnage and much murder, yet they were absolutely horrified when they saw what had been done to these two boys. They recognized the bodies. They knew they were Hinson boys, that Jack Hinson was a leading man in the county, and that he was a friend of General Grant.

Dr. J. W. Smith, a local physician and a friend of the Hinsons, knew exactly who the bodies were. He made a beeline to the Hinson

farm to prepare the family for the shock and the news. Thankfully, he arrived a good while before the Yankees did.

The problem was simple. George and John had been labeled bushwhackers. According to the Union officers, if a family had boys who were bushwhackers, the family were bushwhackers as well, and the family was to share in the fate of the bushwhackers. Colonel Lowe had demanded that his soldiers show no mercy to bushwhackers, their families, or even their neighbors.

Dr. Smith helped the Hinsons hide their weapons, both the white Hinsons and the black Hinsons. All the servants were instructed to know nothing about any weapons. Jack thought he was prepared for the soldiers. When they arrived, the lieutenant got off his horse, drew his pistol, and pointed it directly at Jack's face. Dr. Smith was there, and Jack was absolutely flabbergasted.

But the next thing really shook him. The sergeant got off his horse with a very bloody sack. He reached into it, pulled out the heads of Jack's sons, and crammed them down on the gateposts. Dr. Smith had to talk very fast. He told the men that Jack Hinson was not a criminal, that Jack Hinson and his family were not bushwhackers at all, and that they had destroyed two innocent men. The lieutenant and his men then went into the house searching for weapons. They overturned the furniture and emptied the drawers.

They threw over the mattresses and went through the barns and everywhere else, but found absolutely no weapons, so they left. Jack was still consumed by grief and rage. He was stunned, shocked, and unable even to think for a moment. The only thing he could think about was retrieving the bodies of his sons, uniting their heads with those bodies, and giving them a proper burial. He did so. Jack Hinson was a very deliberate man, not one moved by passion, although he obviously raged against the men who had murdered his sons.

Hinson's Preparation and Vengeance

But a plan was forming in his mind. He determined that he would make these Yankee soldiers learn the law of sowing and reaping. To do so, he needed a special weapon. He had a smoothbore rifle, but

that would not serve him. He wanted one of the latest rifles, with a rifled barrel that would shoot accurately over long distances and a caliber so heavy that a man struck above the legs would receive a fatal shot. He wanted a weapon accurate to a thousand yards and beyond. Building such a weapon would take time, as would accumulating the equipment he needed—caps, powder, mini balls, and the like—without attracting attention. Jack was not only a farmer; he was also a land developer.

He was involved in real estate, and many times he rode through other counties looking at land and crops. While doing so, he began gathering all the equipment required to shoot his new rifle. Jack knew that once he put his plan into action, he would be a hunted man. However, he never dreamed how desperately he would be hunted before the war ended. Before the war was over, the Union would have two cavalry regiments, seven infantry regiments, and a specially equipped amphibious task force of sailors and marines, both infantry and mounted, all searching for Jack Hinson. With his new rifle, which I will tell you about, Jack Hinson killed over a hundred Union soldiers, mainly officers. When he received the rifle, its stock was made from the best maple wood available.

The octagonal barrel was 41 inches long and an inch and a half thick. The rifle weighed 18 pounds. It was impossible to hold this rifle and shoot it offhand, so it was designed to be fired from stumps, logs, limbs, or anything that would help support it. Jack was particularly concerned about the men who had murdered his sons. In order to throw suspicion from himself, he went down to the fort one day when hardly anyone was there.

He deliberately took the oath of allegiance. He did not intend to keep that oath; he was trying to throw them off his trail and keep them away from his family. At this point, he was not really and truly at war with the U.S. government. He was at war with the two men particularly responsible for the murder of his sons.

Jack was a thoroughly reasonable man. What he was about to do and undertake, he had thought out very well. His plan was ultimately to bring these murderers to justice. He scouted all the routes taken by the patrols and went to a spot where he knew the Yankee patrols

would be going up and down, finding a place where he could be well camouflaged and hidden.

He laid out his weaponry and made it ready. He put 100 grains of powder in the muzzleloader, put in his bullet, pushed it down with the ramrod, cocked it, put on the cap, and waited. Sure enough, the Yankee patrol came along, with the lieutenant leading. Jack pressed the set trigger, which made the firing trigger very light. When he saw the lieutenant, he took dead aim. Just as he pressed the trigger, the lieutenant turned and looked at him. The bullet hit him in the throat and killed him instantly.

He fell from his horse. The other Yankee patrolmen jumped down and tried to determine where the shot had come from, but Jack had gotten clean away. The lieutenant responsible for the murder of his sons was now dead. Jack then had another man in his sight: the sergeant who had taken the heads of his sons from the sack and, with a sneer, crammed them down on the gateposts. Again, Jack went out scouting. He saw the patrol, watched them pass, and saw the face of that sergeant.

He knew who he was, and so he waited. He cleared his spot and waited until the patrol came back. Once they returned, he had cleared the area in which he was going to shoot and had everything laid out. When the sergeant's sneering face came into view, Jack took dead aim and shot. The bullet went through his chest, killing him instantly. As he fell from the horse, however, his foot caught in the stirrup. The horse began to run, dragging the Yankee soldier. Some of the other soldiers ran to pull him away from the horse, while others fired needlessly into the brush.

No one knew where Jack was. By this time, he was gone; the confusion had helped him escape. Now Jack had to ask himself a question: Is it over? He had gotten the two men most responsible for murdering his sons. But events were heating up so greatly for the Hinson family—and for all Southern families—that it could not possibly be over. Union General George Thomas was advocating depopulating the area of Southern and pro-Confederate people.

He said, "This report exhibits a state of affairs by no means peculiar to Tennessee. The state of Kentucky is in the same

condition. The conciliatory has failed. And however, as much as we may regret the necessity, we shall be compelled to send disloyal people of all ages and sexes to the South or beyond our lines."

In other words, just like the state of Missouri, now in Tennessee they were going to take all the Southern people and drive them from their homes and farms simply because they were Southern people, because they believed they were disloyal to the Union. The Union officer in charge of that area where Jack lived determined that he must do something about the bushwhackers and the pro-Southern people. He decided to exterminate the rascals and literally wipe them out. Proof was unnecessary; mere suspicion was enough. If you were suspected of being a bushwhacker, helping bushwhackers, or harboring them in your home, you were guilty as well.

Most of you have heard of Lieutenant General Lewis B. Puller, United States Marine Corps, better known as Chesty Puller. Chesty Puller was the most decorated Marine in history. Before his death, he told of his grandmother's death at the hands of the Yankees. It was winter, cold, and the ground was covered with snow. The Yankees visited his grandmother and decided to burn her house down, and they did. She had to walk ten miles through the snow, in winter and in the dark, to a neighbor's house where she could find help.

She eventually died from the episode. They burned her house to the ground because they saw her dead husband's spurs hanging on the wall and said she was guilty of having war supplies in her house. The Yanks finally came after the Hinson family to burn them out, but thankfully it was winter, with snow, ice, muddy, slick roads, and those things slowed the soldiers down.

Word quickly spread to the Hinsons that they were next on the list. As much food, supplies, and weapons as could be hidden were hidden. The Hinson family was quickly put into a sled with all the money and provisions they could carry, and they were covered with hay. The black Hinsons accompanied Mrs. Hinson and the children, telling Jack that they would give their lives to protect his wife and children. Jack went with them for about a mile to see that they got away safely and that the Yanks had not come for them. The black

Hinsons were successful; they did get the white Hinsons away to safety. Jack, of course, then had to continue his mission.

When the Yanks reached Bubbling Springs, the Hinson home, they were infuriated that they had missed their mark and that the Hinsons were gone. The only people there were the black Hinsons. One black woman claimed that Bubbling Springs was now her home and that they should not burn it. But the Yanks were infuriated and were going to burn everything. They burned the Hinson home. Finally, the black servants said, "You cannot burn the barn and you cannot burn our houses." The Yanks answered, "We're going to burn everything." Then the black servants said, "Good, if you do so, please understand we're coming down to the fort and we're going to live with you, and you're going to take care of us and support us."

They did not want that, so they spared the barn and the homes of the black people, but burned Bubbling Springs to the ground. Jack had committed his family to the Lord and asked for His protection upon them. He also asked for His protection upon himself. Then he set off to find a place for him to live in the middle of winter, and he found it.

Hinson's Continued Campaign and Legacy

It was a cave high above the river that overlooked it, with a chute through which the boats had to come down. Descending, they traveled at great speed because of the current; coming up the river, they moved ever so slowly against it. From this place, Jack Hinson used that .50 caliber rifle with great efficiency. He always made it a point to target the officers first.

On one occasion, a Union transport full of Yankee soldiers and war supplies was making its way slowly up the river. Jack was 600 yards away. They would never see the smoke from his muzzleloader at that distance, and there was also the mist of the river. He singled out the Union officer commanding the troops and shot him first. When another Union officer stepped forward, Jack shot him second. Another came up, and Jack killed him.

There was blood all over the deck. The Yankee soldiers fired into the banks and bushes, but nowhere near Jack Hinson. Coolly,

calmly, and deliberately, he laid down one Yankee after another. Suddenly, something unusual happened: the boat cut its engines and hoisted a white flag. It was surrendering to Jack Hinson.

Jack could not come down and take command of the boat. After a while, when no one came to take control, the captain started the engines, lowered the white flag, and very slowly continued up the river. According to Tom C. McKinney, author of "Jack Hinson, One Man's War," it was "the only time in recorded history that a fully armed naval vessel with embarked combat troops ever surrendered to one man."

By this time, Jack had a price on his head—not wanted dead or alive, but just dead. His rifle bore 36 marks for the officers he had killed, each stamped onto the barrel. While helping General Nathan Bedford Forrest as a scout at Johnsonville, Tennessee, Major Charles W. Anderson asked him about his campaign as a sniper and the growing price on his head. Jack replied, "They murdered my boys. And they may kill me yet, but the marks on the barrel of my gun will show that I'm a long way ahead of them. And I'm not through yet."

Major Anderson gave this description of Jack Hinson: “Hinson’s clear gray eyes, compressed lips, and massive jaws clearly indicated that under no circumstances was he a man to be trifled with or aroused; and under the great bereavement inflicted upon him by the wanton slaughter of his sons, he kept his oath to the close of the war: to take care of all of those who were being unjust.”

During a time of war, many criminals take advantage of the situation. Men in Tennessee were raping, looting, and murdering, whether their victims were pro-Union or pro-Southern. Jack Hinson discovered some of their names, and one by one they began to disappear. Jack won the appreciation of both pro-Southern and pro-Union men, because most of those left at home were aged and elderly.

I suppose that may be where we get the saying, “He just needed killing.” Jack did take care of these men who just needed killing. Let me give one quick illustration of how good Jack was with his rifle. On one occasion, Jack rode into an open field and immediately saw two Union soldiers ahead of him. He quickly lowered his rifle into

the grass, took his possible bag off, dropped it in the grass, and continued riding toward them. When he met them, they asked whether he knew Jack Hinson. He replied that he did.

Then they asked, “Have you seen him lately?” “Yes,” he said, “I’ve seen him.” They asked where they might could find him. “Well, of course I do,” he said, and told them how and where to go. They galloped off. Jack Hinson turned around, picked up his rifle and possible bags, and took a shortcut to where he had told the two Union soldiers to go.

He got there just a few minutes ahead of them. He knew he would have to be quick and good. His weapon was laid out and loaded, with everything else prepared. When the two Union soldiers arrived, he took the first shot and killed the first Yankee soldier. He knew he had to be fast because the second soldier would be pulling out his carbine. Jack reloaded, shot, and killed him before the soldier could get a rifle on him and press the trigger.

Remember, he shot the first man and reloaded. He had to pour the powder into the barrel, push the bullet down, cock the weapon, cap the nipple, and pull the set trigger. He did all of that in six seconds. Jack Hinson’s weapon killed over 100 of Grant’s soldiers. Some of his shots were over 1,000 yards—3,000 feet, nearly three-quarters of a mile. Alice and I have been to some of the battlefields. On one, a Confederate soldier stood across a valley from the next hill, where a Union sentry was posted. He aimed, elevated his rifle, and killed the sentry at exactly one mile. Jack Hinson shot accurately to well over 1,000 yards with his specially made rifle. Although he was hunted, he was never found. Many wanted him dead, but their wants never materialized.

This courageous outdoorsman and woodsman died of natural causes at the age of 67, in July 1874. His last years had been tough ones, but he lived with his family. He loved with his family until the end. Jack was truly a sniper and a marksman par excellence.

Applications: Trusting God's Justice and Obedience

We must learn that all injustice, tyranny, and despotism will at last be righted in some manner. King Saul was a tyrant who did

everything he could to murder innocent David. David had the opportunity to kill Saul, but he would not. In 1 Samuel 26:10 he said, “As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle and perish.” David emphasized that sooner or later Saul would be judged by God. Saul was not going to escape.

It does not matter whether it is old age, a natural death, or battle. God is going to take him out. That is exactly what he is saying. Please understand this: I do not care how great a sinner is, how rich the sinner is, or how much power he has. He is not going to escape the wrath and judgment of God with his sin.

Here is another illustration, as well as an application. We have to learn that there are some men who are not to be trifled with. There are some men you had better not pick on. I have a young preacher friend—young, though he is now in his forties or fifties. He is a small man, probably weighing no more than 130 or 140 pounds soaking wet. He was also an ex-Marine.

He, his wife, and two children were eating in a fast-food restaurant. When they finished and started out the door, a big, burly man bumped into him, cursed him, and took God's name in vain in front of his wife and children before going outside.

My pastor friend was wearing one of those little belly pouches that go around here. He looked at the man and said, “Sir, you owe my wife and children an apology. You cursed when you walked past us and bumped into me. Moreover, you owe God an apology. You took His name in vain.” The man laughed and cursed again. My friend said to him, “Sir, you are not very observant, are you?”

He said, “You see my hand in my pouch?” Then he said, “If I have to pull my hand out, you are either going to the morgue or to the hospital.”

“Now, do we give you an apology?” The man said, “Yes, I will apologize, and I am sorry.” What I am trying to tell you is this: sooner or later, they are going to run into the wrong man.

God says, "Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds." Why should we sing aloud upon our beds? "Let the high praises of God be in their mouth." Why should the high praises

of God be in our mouth? "And a two-edged sword in their hand." Are you looking? "To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord."

When God brought Israel out of the land of Egypt and into Canaan, He put a sword in their hands and said, "Slay them all. Slay them all." No one is going to escape the righteous wrath and judgment of God. Here is the third application: We must learn to trust and obey.

I realize, especially to the young, that war seems very romantic. I had a cousin who is now dead. He was a machine gunner in a helicopter in Vietnam, was wounded, and was sent home medically discharged. He told me, "I am so thankful I got wounded." I asked, "Really? Why are you so thankful you got wounded? I'm sure it's painful." He said, "Yes, I know it was painful, but I was shooting at them."

Then he said, "I discovered something." I asked, "What's that?" He said, "They shoot back. They shoot back." Listen to me. It is true that many times the enemy dies, but sometimes we die. Our family dies. If war and violence can be avoided by obedience and trust, I would much rather take the easy way out, be obedient to my God, and trust in Him. War, no matter how romantic it may sound or how heroic you may think you are, does not always work out the way you think it will.

In that light, we had better learn to obey and seek God's protection for our lives. God has given us weapons, minds, and ability. But unless God gives you His grace and mercy, none of that is any good. People have asked me, "Do you have loaded weapons in your house?" I tell them, "Every weapon in my house is loaded." I have weapons in the corner and weapons by my bed.

Sometimes I have them under my pillow. I have, but let me tell you something. I could have .50 caliber machine guns stacked all around my bedroom. I could have a howitzer in my bedroom. I could have anything in the world in my bedroom. But if intruders came in with intent of murdering me, if God didn't awaken me in time and

enable me to shoot accurately, all of that machinery would be worthless and useless.

As the song goes, "Trust and obey, for there's no other way." If we can avoid problems by trusting and obedience, that's exactly the way we need to go. Jack Hinson, like Captain Jonathan Davis, was a man willing to fight and bring forth justice. God used him just as He used Jephthah, Ehud, and Gideon. How do we know? By the successes in their lives. How do we know God used Jack Hinson? By the success in his life.

There was no law and order in Dover, Tennessee, or in that area, because the Yanks were doing most of the atrocities and violating the law. But God used Jack Hinson to bring a measure of justice to that area. Inevitably, as unjust as our society becomes, God will raise up another Jack Hinson. He will raise up another Samson. He will raise up another judge, because justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Your Word and truth, and for the men whom You have used throughout the ages. Give us grace, Lord, that we may serve Thee acceptably. Use us, teach us, and build us up in the most holy faith. In Thy name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 18

God's Justice As The Standard For The Civil Magistrate

August 13, 2023

Justice and the Civil Magistrate

Introduction to the Conference Theme

This conference has focused on the biblical doctrine of justice. We have seen justice defined, demanded, deserved, and desired, as well as justice within the congregation. Now we come to justice in the civil magistrate, or civil government.

The theme of the conference has been Micah 6:8: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Psalm 82 is a psalm of Asaph that deals with civil government, magistrates, or judges. The Bible says, "God standeth in the

congregation of the mighty. He judgeth among the gods." I will explain that a little later. The psalm continues:

"How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked. They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations."

The Covenantal Nature of Government

The truth is that we have been brainwashed and propagandized to such an extent that the majority of Americans, and even Christians, cannot think clearly concerning civil government and justice. We have forgotten the covenantal aspect of government.

Each institution God has created is covenantal in nature. God has created only three institutions: the family, which is a ministry of education; the church, which is a ministry of grace; and civil government, which is to be a ministry of justice.

In the family, as a ministry of education, there is a covenant between husband and wife, and the children would be involved in that covenant as well. The church is also covenantal in nature because there is a covenant between God and His people. In one sense, there is also a covenant between the pastor and the people. If God has given me the obligation, duty, and responsibility to teach my people, then they have the duty, responsibility, and obligation to be there, hear, and apply as well.

There is a covenantal aspect of that as well. And, of course, there is the covenantal nature of civil government.

Now, hold Psalm 82, but turn back in your Bibles to 2 Kings 11 and look at verse 17, because we are going to see the covenants spoken of very plainly and clearly. Jehoiada happened to be the high priest, and the Bible tells us exactly what he was going to do when he anointed Joash king. In 2 Kings 11:17, we read: "And Jehoiada made

a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people; between the king also and the people."

Note that there are actually two covenants spoken of there. There is a covenant between the Lord, the king, and the people. In that covenant, the king and the people agree to be God's king and God's people. Secondly, there is a covenant between the king and the people. In that covenant, the king agrees to rule faithfully, and the people agree to obey him as long as he does.

Government, therefore, is basically covenantal in nature. We will look at this in Romans 13 later, but in Romans 13, civil government is referred to as the ordinance of God. In 1 Peter 2, it is referred to as the ordinance of man. God ordained it, but man sets it up; therefore, it is covenantal in nature. Many past scholars, as well as historians, have understood this concept.

There are three books that I have always recommended that people read: Hubert Languet's Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos, A Vindication of Liberty Against Tyrants; Lex Rex, The Law is King, by Samuel Rutherford; and Thomas Cobbett's A Christian View of the Civil Magistrate. The copy of Hubert Languet's book that I have was written in the 1600s, and there is evidence that it existed in the 1400s. These three books, plus the Bible, were the founding documents of this country.

Hubert Languet writes: "By the same reason the people are always called the Lord's people and the Lord's inheritance, and the king is governor of this inheritance, and conductor and leader of the people of God, which is the title"

The covenant was given to David, Moses, Solomon, Hezekiah, and other good princes, when also the covenant is passed between God and the king. It is upon the condition that the people be and remain always the people of God, to show that God will not in any case despoil Himself of His property and His possession when He gives to kings or to governors the government of the people, but establishes them to take charge of, and will use them no more or less than he which makes choice of a shepherd to look to his flock remains, notwithstanding himself the still master and owner of them. The

rulers, whom God chooses, are nothing more than shepherds, and the people always remain the people of God.

In 2 Samuel 5:3, we see the covenantal nature of government. God chose David to be king over Israel, but the Bible says, “So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord: and they anointed David king over Israel.” The word league is the Old Testament word for covenant. In 1 Chronicles 11:3, the same Scripture is translated as covenant. Thus, government is covenantal in nature. Although God chose David, He did not choose him apart from the will and recognition of the people, because David had to enter into a covenant with them.

We have failed to grasp the covenantal nature of government, and even the covenantal nature of the Constitution of the United States. It is a covenant. The states created the federal government; the federal government did not create the states. Therefore, the states are the masters, and the federal government is to be the servant.

Constitutional Limits and Unconstitutional Laws

The Constitution is an express-powers document, or a limited-powers document. When you call it an express-powers document, it means the only power or authority the federal government has is that which is expressed in the Constitution. When you call it a limited-powers document, it means that its power is limited to that which is in that document, period. Therefore, any power or authority that any government, federal or state, has over and above the constitution of the government or the state is usurped. That is, it is stolen; it is not real. Because the power is limited, it is expressed.

When you look up the word usurp in Webster's 1828 Dictionary, here is what it says: "To seize and to hold in possession by force or without right, to usurp a throne, to usurp the prerogatives of the crown, to usurp power, to usurp the right of a patron, is to oust him or dispossess him, vice sometimes usurps the place of virtue."

I am going to read two paragraphs from American Jurisprudence, Second Edition. In Volume 16, you will find what it says concerning

any law or statute that is in conflict with the Constitution. The Supreme Court has ruled on all these. Listen to this: "The general rule is that an unconstitutional statute, whether federal or state, though having the form and name of law, is in reality no law, but is wholly void and ineffective for any purpose.

"Since unconstitutionality dates from the time of its enactment, and not merely from the date of the decision so branding it, an unconstitutional law in legal contemplation is as inoperative as if it had never been passed and never existed. That is, it is void ab initio, which is Latin for the beginning. It is void from the beginning. Such a statute leaves the question that it purports to settle just as it would if the statute had not been enacted. Since an unconstitutional law is void, it follows generally the statute imposes no duties, confers no rights, creates no office or liabilities, bestows no power or authority on anyone, affords no protection, is incapable of creating any rights or obligations, does not allow for the granting of any relief, and justifies no acts performed under it."

"Once a statute is determined to be unconstitutional, no private citizen or division of the state may take any further action pursuant to its provision. A contract that rests on an unconstitutional statute creates no obligation to be impaired by subsequent legislation. No one is bound to obey an unconstitutional law, and no courts are bound to enforce it. A law contrary to the United States Constitution may not be enforced. Once a statute has been declared unconstitutional, courts therefore have no jurisdiction over the alleged violations. Persons convicted and fined under a statute subsequently held unconstitutional may recover the fines paid."

Am. Jur. says that any law that is unconstitutional is void ab initio, from the beginning. That is, it possesses no authority or power and confers nothing upon anyone. Am. Jur. goes on to say that you do not have to wait until the court declares it unconstitutional, because it is unconstitutional from the beginning. So why is it that we have so many unconstitutional laws in this country? It is because no one ever reads the Bible and no one ever reads the Constitution.

The point I am trying to make is this: America basically ceased being a constitutional republic a long time ago, because our government has violated the Constitution and its constitutional

obligations over and over. It was historian and statesman St. George Tucker who furnished all of the Jeffersonians the writing of the Constitution as a covenant. He said, "The Constitution of the United States of America is an original, written, federal, and social compact or covenant freely, voluntarily, and solemnly entered into by the several states of North America, and ratified by the people thereof respectively, whereby the several states and the people thereof respectively have bound themselves to each other, and to the federal government of the United States, and by which the federal government is bound to the several states and to every citizen of the United States."

Covenant Violation Releases Obligation

What does he say? He is saying the Constitution is indeed a covenant. Now I am going to share something with you from Scripture and show it to you. If you follow me, you are going to understand why there is so much injustice in this country, civilly, politically, and even personally. Listen carefully: in biblical covenants, when one party violates the covenant, the other party is released from its obligation or obedience to the covenant. This is a simple truth taught not only in the Old Testament, but also very clearly in the New Testament.

These are truly what we would call covenants or contracts between man and man. If Ernie and I entered into an agreement, a covenant, or a contract to do certain things, he would do some things, and I would do others. If Ernie then decided, “I know I have covenanted myself to do it, but I am not going to do it,” and refused to fulfill his end of the contract, I would not be obligated to fulfill mine. If he is not going to fulfill his end of the contract, I am not obligated to fulfill my end. The only opening I would have for resolution would be either to drop the matter or to sue him for breach of contract.

SCRIPTURE READING - Joshua 2:17-21 (KJV)

> We understand that in courts of equity. Here is a story that everyone knows, dealing with the spies and Rahab, and actually they are entering into a covenant. The Bible says this: "And the men said unto her, that is to Rahab, We will be blameless of this

thine oath which thou hast made us to swear." In other words, she made them swear an oath, they entered into a covenant. Notice what they are saying in verse 18.

"Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window, which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear."

"And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window."

The covenantal agreement was very, very simple. There were two parties: the spies and Rahab. The first stipulation was that Rahab had to get every one of her family members into her house, because they were going to conquer that city. They were going to destroy that city. God had said it shall be destroyed. So she had to have every one of her family members in the house.

The second thing was this: if any of those family members went out into the street when the fighting was going on and they got killed, that was their problem. They should have stayed in the house. The third stipulation was this: if any of the Israelites went in that house and harmed anyone, then they were accountable, because they would have violated the covenant. And then fourthly, or fifthly, I'm going to say, here's what they said to Rahab.

"If you utter any of this, our secrets, then we will be free of the oath which you made us to swear." If you violate your end of the covenant, I do not have to keep my end of the covenant. In other words, we will destroy you and your family as we would destroy everyone else. Whenever one party violates the covenant, the other party is loosed from obedience.

The Declaration of Independence and the Right to Resist

Where did such thinking come from? First of all, from the Bible; but secondly, from the Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

"Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security."

That is exactly what America did in 1776: it threw off the yoke of George III and the yoke of Parliament. The colonists were never under Parliament, because they had their own legislatures. Parliament was trying to make laws for them. It is like Ukraine passing a law that every American had to obey, or Cuba passing such a law. We would not do that, because we have nothing to do with Cuba, and they do not make laws respecting American citizens. Parliament had no right to make laws respecting the colonists.

This is not only true between man and man. It is also true between God and man. God has entered into covenants with men as well. In fact, when God enters into covenants with men, if men violate those covenants, even God is not obligated to keep His own end.

What am I trying to talk about? Read Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, where God gives the blessings and the curses. God says, if you obey, I am going to bless you; if you disobey, I am going to curse you. When Israel turned and violated the covenant, turned to idolatry and the worship of idols, despised God, and disobeyed Him, God judged them very strenuously. If you read 2 Kings chapter 17, you will find that He sent them into captivity and punishment.

When one party violates the covenant, the other party is free from obligation. If what I have just said is insufficient for you to put two and two together when it comes to doing this socially, civilly, politically, and governmentally, let me show it to you further. Romans chapter 13 is the main focus on civil government. The first six verses say:

Romans 13: The Civil Magistrate as God's Servant

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."

"For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing." Look, if you would, in verse 1: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Let me put it plainly: no matter how high you are in authority or power, there is always someone higher than you. God is the absolute highest.

He said, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." The word powers is the Greek word exousia, which literally means power or authority. Then he said, "The powers that be are ordained of God."

Only God is sovereign. Only God has all power and all authority. Any authority that any man has is delegated. What right does any husband have to be the head of his house and to rule over his wife and children? None, except that God designated the husband as the head of the house and the father.

What right do I have as a pastor to rule over my people? None, except the divine authority that God has given me in His Word. With every delegation of power, there is always a limitation. I may be the head of my house, but I am not the head of Brother Danly's house. He may be the head of his house, but he is not the head of Brother Mooney's house. Every time God gives a delegation of power, there is always a limitation.

Notice verse 2: "For whosoever therefore resisteth the power," once again exousia, the authority, "resisteth the ordinance of God." The word ordinance is the Greek word diatagē, which literally means a disposition, arrangement, an object, or ordinance. He is saying that God is the author of this ordinance; He is the one who set it up. To resist His government is to resist Him.

Now look at verse 3: "...for rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil." The word rulers is the Greek word archontes, which simply means chief ones or leaders. But note: "rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil."

Who defines good and evil? How do you know what is good? How do you know what is evil? If there is not an objective standard like the Word of God, if God is not the one who defines good and evil and man defines good and evil, look at what is happening in our country today. Christians are being assailed. We're being called terrorists, domestic terrorists—anyone who stands for the family, anyone who stands for the Constitution, anyone who is conservative, anyone who doesn't go along with the political agenda today.

There has to be an objective standard of good and evil, right and wrong, and that is God. He says very plainly, "For rulers are not a terror to good works," that is, those which are biblical and godly, "but to the evil."

Then he said, "Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same." According to

Romans chapter 13, there are only two delegations of authority to civil government: the authority to punish the wicked and to protect the righteous. That's it. Education was never given to the government; it was given to the family. Grace and gospel preaching was never given to the government; it was given to the church. Therefore, the government has no right to tell me I can't preach or teach this. I can. That's not their authority.

There is what you know in the Bible as sphere authority. I may have authority in my sphere, but if I leave my sphere, I don't carry that authority with me. I'm the head of my house, the head of my wife and my children. So I go to Brother Jacob's house, look at his wife, Kelly, and his children, and see dirty dishes in the sink, a floor that needs vacuuming, and toys scattered everywhere. I look at Kelly and say, "Woman, get in that kitchen and wash those dishes and sweep that floor and vacuum." I look at his kids and say, "Pick up those toys or I'll whip you." Now, is Brother Jacob going to sit there and say, "Out of the way to go, brother. You tell 'em"?

"You give it to 'em, preacher." You know what he's going to say? "What are you doing? That's my wife. That's my children. If anybody tells them what to do, it's going to be me." Do you understand? But I said, "Well, wait a minute, brother. You don't understand. I'm a husband. I'm a father. I've got husbandly authority and fatherly authority too." He said, "But not in my house, you don't."

Just because I have authority in one sphere doesn't mean I carry that authority with me when I leave that sphere. So God gives the family certain authority. He gives the church certain authority. He gives civil government certain authority. Any time you leave that sphere, you don't have the authority. You don't carry it with you. The church can't say to the civil government, "You can't put that murderer to death." Yes, they can. God said they could. But the civil government can't tell me, "You can't have that Christian school." Yes, I can. That's sphere authority.

Now notice what he said: "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same." Civil government should be praising the good and not condemning the good. And the good is defined by God.

But look at verse four. This gets interesting. “For he,” speaking of the civil magistrate, “is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God.” Twice in this verse, the civil magistrate, the civil ruler, is called the minister of God. That is a very, very interesting word. The Greek word for minister there is diakonos. That is where we get our English word deacon. He is saying that the civil magistrate is the deacon of God. Our English word deacon is transliterated and not translated.

Transliteration means taking the delta from the Greek and bringing it down to a D in English, and taking the epsilon from the Greek and bringing it down to an E in English. In other words, you are transliterating, bringing it letter for letter. If you translate the word, it means servant. What does the Bible say about the civil magistrate, the civil ruler? He is the servant of God. Government is to be the deacon of God. Government has been ordained by God to be his servant. Government is to carry out God's law, put into effect God's will, and honor God as an obedient servant.

“For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” The word revenger is very interesting. It is the word ekdikos.

Ek is a preposition which means out of. Dikaios is righteousness. What does it mean? What is a revenger? It is one who exacts righteousness, one who draws righteousness out and brings righteousness out. Whose righteousness is the government supposed to bring out? Whose righteousness is it to bring forth, carry out, and draw out? The answer is that it has to be God and God alone. If government is to be God's servant, it means it is accountable, answerable, and responsible to him and must serve him. If government is to be a revenger of righteousness, drawing righteousness out, it means it must draw out God's righteousness.

“For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.” The word ministers here is not diakonos. It is not where we get the word deacon from. This is a totally different word, leitourgos. The singular

and plural forms are where we get our English word liturgy. What is a liturgy? It is public worship. We had a liturgy in this church.

Government as Public Worship and Theological Issue

There was singing, there was praying, and now there is preaching. That is a liturgy; it is public worship. In fact, this word liturgy came from the Greeks when they offered sacrifice and public worship. Many people today are willing to say that government is power. Some would even say it is raw power. Others would say it is true authority. Government is power and government is authority, but here is the question: How many are willing to go as far as God does when He says, "I set up civil government to be My deacon, to be My servant, to be My exactor of righteousness, and to be My public worship"?

By the way, I hope you see where we are now on a spiritual level in this country, because our governments are so totally secular. It is unbelievable.

Government is a theological issue. You do not have to have, and you may not have, a state or national church. In England, they have the Anglican Church. You do not have to have the Baptist church or the Presbyterian church as the state church. There can be a separation between church and government, but there cannot be a separation between religion and government, because all law is religious.

Think about this often. I do not care if you are talking about Washington, D.C.; Montgomery, Alabama; or Atlanta, Georgia. When lawmakers sit and contemplate these laws, one of them will say, "I think this is right," "I think this is good," or "I think this is wrong." They are forming an opinion based upon their understanding of good and right, right and wrong. It is a religion. It may be the humanistic religion or secularistic religion, but it is religion. You can have a Christian religion or a humanistic religion, but it is still religious. Every law that is passed is religious. Every law may not be the Christian law, but it is still a religious law. Covenants are inescapable. As Van Til would say, it is never covenant versus no covenant, but whose covenant? You can have the covenant of man, which is humanistic, or the covenant of God.

William Penn said, “Man will be governed by God or he’ll be ruled by tyrants.” That is true. John Milton said it like this:

“It being very certain that the doctrine of the gospel is neither contrary to reason nor the law of nations, that man is truly subject to the higher powers who obey the laws and the magistrates so far as they govern according to law, so that St. Paul does not only command the people but princes themselves to be in subjection who are not above laws but are bound by them. But whatever power enables a man or whatever magistrate takes upon himself to act contrary to what St. Paul makes the duty of those that are in authority, neither is that power nor that magistrate ordained of God.”

When they leave biblical truth, they are no longer God’s magistrate. Milton continues: “And consequently, to such a magistrate, no subjection is commanded, nor is any due, nor are the people forbidden to resist such authority. For in doing so, they do not resist the ordinance of God, but they resist a robber, a tyrant and an enemy.”

God oftentimes gives us wicked rulers to chasten us and to punish us for our sins. However, men in their fallen state and humanistic minds can elevate wicked men to power. God is sovereign, but God denies that they are His. Hosea 8:4 says, “They have set up kings, but not by me. They have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off.”

It is not that God did not know what was happening. God is omniscient; He knows everything. Rather, God was saying, “I didn’t endorse those men. They didn’t fit my commands.” He said, “You set up these people that you might be cut off.”

Here is what I am trying to show you: if there is no civil justice, inevitably there is going to be judgment—God’s judgment. Now turn back to Psalm 82, because I want to show you exactly what God is saying in this passage. Verse 1 says, “God standeth in the congregation of the mighty.”

The Consequences of Injustice: Judgment

"He judgeth among the gods." God is not saying that there are other gods beside Him. The word gods here has a little G and refers to the magistrates, because the magistrates in the Old Testament and the New Testament were supposed to rule for God and declare His word.

If you do not believe that, read John 10:34–35, where Jesus Christ Himself quotes this verse: "If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came." In other words, the magistrates had the word of God, and they were to declare it. That is how they were to issue judgment. "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods."

Now look at what He asked these magistrates and rulers: "How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?" Then, in verse three, He tells them what to do: "Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked."

God says that instead of doing what He commanded, they are accepting the persons of the wicked. They are letting the wicked escape without justice. As I pointed out on Friday night, a lack of justice always brings violence, chaos, confusion, and turmoil. The magistrates who refuse to bring forth biblical justice are described in verse five: "They know not"—that is, they are ignorant. "Neither will they understand"; they will not listen. "They walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course." God says that they turn everything upside down.

Years ago, when I was extremely naive, I thought that if you went into a courtroom, told the truth, and stood for the truth, everything would work out as it should. That is the farthest thing from the truth today. Most folks are not interested in truth or righteousness. You have to know how to play the game, and the game is usually rigged.

This is why He says in verse six: "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High." You were supposed to be representing Me. "But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes." Then He says, "Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations." Where there is no justice civilly and governmentally, inevitably there will be judgment.

Civil justice brings the blessings of God, but civil injustice brings the judgment of God. In Jeremiah 22:1, the Lord says, “Thus saith the Lord; Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word, And say, Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates: Thus saith the Lord; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor.”

“And do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place. For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people.” The Lord blesses when judgment and justice are brought forth.

“But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the Lord, that this house shall become a desolation. For thus saith the Lord unto the king’s house of Judah; Thou art Gilead unto me, and the head of Lebanon: yet surely I will make thee a wilderness, and cities which are not inhabited. And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons: and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast them into the fire.” What is He saying? You do not do justice; I will bring My judgment.

Verse 13 says, “Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour’s service without wages, and giveth him not for his work; That saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion.”

Now look what God asks: “Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar?” You have the money and the property. “And do judgment and justice.” “Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice? and then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the Lord.” God says, just because you are in a position of authority and power, have acquired great riches, and possess great property, does that mean you will reign?

Do you think that is going to allow you to escape? Do you think that is why I put you there? No. He said, "Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice? And then it was well with him." That is what God requires: judgment and justice. And he said, "He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me?" I do not care what your profession is; if you do not obey the word of God, you do not really know him.

He said very plainly in Luke 6:46, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Most people today, most Christians today, have rejected the theology that insists there is an ethical cause and effect in history, because it is God who brings His sanctions, either blessings or curses, against those who obey or disobey. Biblical righteousness and justice brings the blessings of God upon a society, nation, and state; injustice brings the curse of God upon that nation, state, and society.

Historical Covenantal Warnings

Listen to what Pastor Winthrop said in his famous speech at the beginning of America, in the invocation of the covenant: "Thus stands the cause between God and us. We are entered into a covenant with him for this work," that is, the building of America. "We have taken out a commission. The Lord hath given us leave to draw our own articles. We have professed to enterprise these and those accounts, upon these and those ends. We have hereupon besought Him of favor and blessing. Now if the Lord shall please to hear us, and bring us in peace to the place we desire, then hath He ratified this covenant and sealed our commission, and will expect a strict performance of the articles contained in it. But if we shall neglect the observation of these articles, which are the ends we have propounded, and, dissembling with our God, shall fall to embrace this present world and prosecute our carnal intentions, seeking great things for ourselves and our posterity, the Lord will surely break out in wrath against us, and be revenged of such a people, and make us know the price of the breach of such a covenant."

The only way to avoid this shipwreck and provide for our posterity is to follow the counsel of Micah: to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. No individual, no family, no church, no

society, and no nation can escape accountability. Just as individuals are accountable, ecclesiastical and corporate bodies are accountable and answerable to God. God is the supreme ruler. He is sovereign, and He has said, "Vengeance belongeth unto me, saith the Lord. I will repay. I will recompense."

There is absolutely no way in the world that America could continue without real justice and the blessing of God upon it. Consider Isaiah 26: "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength: For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust. The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy."

“The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just. Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them. Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.”

So what is he saying? If we are righteous, if we are holy, if we are just, then we are going to be blessed. If we are not, then the fire of his indignation is going to fall.

Now, one last passage. Look at what David said, especially in light of civil justice, which has been the topic today. In 2 Samuel 23, beginning with verse 1, the Bible says: “Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up

on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

The Necessity of Ruling in the Fear of God

David has made one simple statement: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." You cannot be just unless you rule in the fear of God. But see how many times David claims direct inspiration from God for this one simple statement. He said in verse 2, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me." That is one time.

"His word was in my tongue." That is the second time. "The God of Israel said," is the third time. "The Rock of Israel spake to me," is the fourth time. He claims direct inspiration from God for this simple statement: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." If there is no fear of God, there will never be any justice. You remember the unjust judge in Luke chapter 18. He said, "Though I fear not God, nor regard man." If there is no fear of God, there will not be any regard for man—a widow, an orphan, or a victim. There will be no regard because there will be no justice, for there is no fear of God.

He that rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. God demands justice in our lives, in our churches, and in civil government. You see where we are today because of the lack of justice. All you have to do, if you want to understand this, is check how many criminals who are let out are put back in time after time after time. One article I read said it was sometimes as high as 90 percent. Where there is no justice, there is only chaos, confusion, and societal death.

Father, help us in the name of Jesus Christ to honor Thee and glorify Thee. Help us, Father, to see that Thou art a God of justice and dost demand justice. Help us to be just in our lives, righteous, holy, and godly. Lord, awaken the people in this nation to where we are and how we got here. Grant us repentance and faith. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 19

So, You Want To Be a Pharaoh

September 22, 2024

Introduction: The Question of Pharaoh

The title of the message is, “So, You Want to Be a Pharaoh?” Look in Exodus chapter 5, verses 1 and 2: “...and afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.”

Here is an opening question: What comes to your mind when you think of Pharaoh? Do not simply content yourselves with thinking about the Pharaoh of the Exodus. There were many Pharaohs. The word Pharaoh just simply means great house, and it was the common title for the kings of Egypt.

The Pharaohs were kings. They were not only kings; they were pagan kings. Moreover, they also viewed themselves as gods. If you look in Exodus chapter 12 and verse 12, you will find that when God

sent those ten plagues against Egypt, He sent them particularly against the gods of Egypt as well. God said, “For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both of man and beast, now look at this, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. I am the Lord.”

The judgments were not just simply against the Egyptians and against the people of the land, per se. They were also against the gods of Egypt. You have to remember that Egypt was polytheistic, and they worshipped many gods. They worshipped the bull. They worshipped birds. They worshipped the sun god. They also worshipped the Pharaoh because Pharaoh himself claimed to be a god. Yet this was the final plague, when God slew the firstborn, and Pharaoh could not even preserve his firstborn child alive, certainly not all the others in the land of Egypt as well.

The Riches, Pleasures, and Power of a Pharaoh

He was not a god. But look in your Bibles at Hebrews chapter 11, where several truths show what it was like to be a Pharaoh. Beginning with verse 24, the Scripture says, “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”

“Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” Let me give you three things that should be very clear and obvious. First, being a Pharaoh involved what you and I would call great riches, because the king of Egypt had access to whatever was in the land of Egypt. Moreover, he claimed to own everything in Egypt, including the land. Therefore, if you were a Pharaoh, you could have whatever you desired, whatever you wanted, because you had very extensive riches.

The second thing pointed out in this passage is that Pharaoh not only had great riches; he also had great pleasures. The Bible says that Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Pharaoh could enjoy any sinful pleasure he desired—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the

eyes, and the pride of the heart. It did not matter, and there was no one to rebuke or reprove him, because he could do as he pleased.

But the point is that it was temporary. He may have been a Pharaoh, but every Pharaoh died. He could enjoy those great pleasures only for a brief period of time. So a Pharaoh had great riches, a Pharaoh had great pleasures, and, thirdly, a Pharaoh had great power.

Genesis 41:41 says, “Pharaoh says unto Joseph, See, I've set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had, and they cried before him, Bow the knee, and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.” Now watch this: “And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” He was saying, “I have such power and I have such control; whatever you say is what is going to happen.” No man's going to lift up his hand. No man's going to lift up his foot without your say-so.

A Pharaoh had great riches, great pleasures, and great power. Here's the truth of the matter: every fallen man, every depraved man, every sinful man wishes to be a Pharaoh. Stop and think about this. Every sinful man wants great riches. He wants great pleasures, and he wants great power; that is for sure. In fact, if you want to look around and select a certain group, notice our politicians. Obviously, many of them get extremely wealthy very quickly, although it may be done deceitfully or fraudulently. There are great riches there. There are great pleasures there, because obviously they do as they please. And then, of course, there is great power, because what they are doing is basically demanding that we, the people, submit to their every whim and every desire. They are endeavoring to exercise the power of a Pharaoh.

Authority vs. Power: The Pharaoh's Interest

There is a difference between authority and power. Romans 13:1 tells us very clearly that every soul be subject unto the higher powers: “For there is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God.” The word “powers” there happens to be the Greek word

exousias, which actually means authority and jurisdiction. So literally it says, "There is no authority but of God. There is no jurisdiction but of God." God then basically ordained only three institutions and gave them authority and jurisdiction.

He created the family, the church, and what you and I would call civil government. He appointed these three institutions, ordaining each one to have a certain degree of authority or jurisdiction. But He not only gave each institution authority and jurisdiction; He also limited that authority and jurisdiction. No institution—whether family, church, or government—has any authority or jurisdiction from God to go over and above that which God has given to it. God has set the limits of each institution.

Pharaohs are not interested in authority because authority is limited; they are interested in power. You can have power without having authority. I could look at Joshua and say, "Joshua, you look to be a very rich man, and I know you have plenty of money, so just give me your money." He could say, "You have no authority to demand my money," and he would be right. But if I have a Glock and he does not, I have power to take his money. There is a difference between authority and power. Pharaohs are interested in power, not authority, because if you have power, you can take whatever you want.

If you have power, it is manifested in the fact that you can bully, manipulate, and control others. Power allows someone to manipulate, bully, and control others. Let me give you an illustration. I am sure you remember when Joe Biden said years ago that if you want to take on the federal government, you better have an F-16. You remember that?

One of these mighty warplanes—you better have an F-16. The truth of the matter is, that is a lie. It was an attempt to bully and manipulate people. You remember when Russia invaded Afghanistan, and the Afghans fought against Russia and defeated Russia? The Afghans did not have F-16s. I read one article that was absolutely astounding to me, describing how the Afghans brought down those mighty Russian helicopters.

I don't know how much those things cost, but all their firepower was basically useless in face of a simple instrument. The Afghanis would hide up on a mountaintop in bushes and wait for that helicopter to come over fairly low, right over the mountaintop. Then they would shoot an arrow from a bow that happened to have a rope attached to it, right through the rotors of that helicopter. The rope would get tangled, and the helicopter would come down. They didn't need all the weaponry of that helicopter. They didn't need an F-16. Just the bow and arrow took care of it.

During the war for independence, our colonial ancestors fought and won a war against the greatest power in Europe at the time, because England had the greatest army that existed at that particular time. Obviously and clearly, no, you do not need a vast array of expensive toys to fight against tyranny.

It is not my intent today to deal with tyranny. There is indeed a very important point I want to make before I get on with what I do want to teach today: Pharaohs are not concerned with the lives of others. The lives of others mean absolutely nothing to a Pharaoh. The only thing a Pharaoh is concerned about is his life and his house. You remember the name Pharaoh, or the title Pharaoh, means great house. So he's concerned about his house. He's not necessarily concerned about your house.

Pharaoh's Disregard for Human Life

If you look in your Bibles to the book of Exodus, chapter one, verses 15 and 16: "And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah. And he said, When you do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools, if it be a son, then you shall kill him, but if it be a daughter, then she shall live."

He is not interested in the lives of anyone except himself. Notice that he tells these midwives to murder any male child. In verse 22, when that did not work, Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, “Every son that is born you shall cast in the river, and every daughter you shall save alive.” Now every Egyptian who had the power and authority, so-called, from Pharaoh—although it was an illegitimate authority—could take any Hebrew male child and drown him in the

river. When Pharaoh commanded all his people, remember that the Hebrews were considered his people because they were his slaves. In Acts chapter 7, Stephen says that some of these people actually did drown their own children. But Amram and Jochebed did not drown Moses; they hid him in the river, in that ark. The point is that Pharaoh cared nothing for a family and nothing for lives.

Abortionists are Pharaohs who want to exercise the power of life and death themselves. They want to determine who lives and who dies. Unhappily, many doctors are like that today. When you consider euthanasia, it is the same principle. Eu is a Greek preposition meaning good or well, and thanatos is a Greek word for death. Euthanasia simply means a good death. In other words, we determine when it will be good for you to die, and we will determine what is good for you in dying. You will have a good death, a well death, because we will put you to sleep permanently very easily. That is a Pharaoh: he wants the power of life and death in his hand.

Now, what makes Pharaohs like that? What makes Pharaohs so wicked and vile? What makes Pharaoh concerned only, listen carefully, with his own safety and security and the extension of his own house?

In Exodus chapter 1, beginning with verse 8, we read: "Now there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. Come on, and let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply. And it come to pass that when there falleth out any war, they join also with our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land."

"Therefore did they set over them taskmasters to afflict them, with their burdens, and they built for Pharaoh the treasure cities of Pithom and Rameses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. Here is Pharaoh and those in power being grieved over the fact that someone is multiplying, progressing, and being blessed.

A Pharaoh is not concerned with the lives of others. To a Pharaoh, anyone else is nothing more than a serf, a slave, or cannon fodder.

You are a sheep to be shorn, someone to be used so that they may advance their position and power. They could care less about anything else.

The word Pharaoh means "great house." I suppose it can also mean great White House. If you genuinely believe that our government is concerned with your life, your health, and your economic prosperity, all I can say is that you are either deceived or have been asleep for a hundred years and do not know what is going on. Those who trust in the power of Pharaoh discover that their vaccines are not safe and effective—unless you count being sick and dead safe and effective. Dead, that is out of the way. They are safe and effective.

They will safely kill you. They will safely make you ill. As for Social Security, you may say, "I have paid into Social Security for forty or fifty years. I want to get something out of it." I understand that. But can you imagine if, for those forty or fifty years, you had taken the same amount you paid into Social Security and bought silver and gold? How much would you have today? You would not need Social Security; you would be far better off than you are now. So the point I am trying to make is this.

When a Pharaoh sees that the population is getting too large for him to control, he has to thin it down and thin it out. They purvey the myth of overpopulation, saying that we have to control this. I hope you remember a few years ago, when there was a big row over the fact that Bill Gates had supplied polio vaccines for folks in Africa. It was then discovered that the polio vaccine also had materials in it that caused the young girls to be sterile. Wow. Isn't that amazing? And now that's exactly what they're saying about the COVID vaccine. It is sterilizing men and women as well.

So here's my question: Why are Pharaohs like that? The Bible gives us an answer. Look back in your Bibles to Exodus chapter five, verses one and two: “And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.”

I am going to give you three truths about a Pharaoh, and those three truths are going to lead to a fourth truth. First of all, Pharaohs refused to honor God. Pharaoh of the Exodus said, “Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?” The reason this Pharaoh did not honor God was simply because he did not know Him. He did not know the sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, immortal God of heaven and earth.

The Root of Pharaoh's Wickedness: Ignorance and Contempt of God

He knew his false gods, but he did not know the one true, living God. Notice the question: “Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?” Here is what he was saying: Your God is nothing to me. I do not recognize Him; therefore, I am not going to obey Him. He may be your God, but He has no authority over me. I am the sovereign Lord of Egypt, and I own no superior. There is no one greater than me. Since I recognize no sovereign—especially you, God of you Hebrews—why should I obey Him?

What claim does he have upon me? Pharaoh's attitude was, I have no obligation to obey him. I have no obligation to serve him.

You have to remember that Egypt was a polytheistic land. They believed in many gods. The heathen in those days believed in what were known as tutelary gods. That is, every area had its own little god, and that own little god only had power over his certain area. You remember in 1 Kings 20, verse 23, when the Syrians came and attacked Israel in the hills, Israel defeated them. So the Syrians planned to come back and attack Israel on the plains.

This is what they said: "And there came a man of God and spake unto the king of Israel and said, Thus saith the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but he's not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord." They said the reason they were defeated was that Israel's God happened to be the God of the hills. But now they were going to fight against them in the valleys, in the plain. They thought they had to win because Israel's God could not be over the hills and the valleys as well. God said, I'll show you. I'm over everything.

Matthew Henry, commenting on Exodus chapter 5, verse 2, says: "Who is Jehovah? I neither know him, nor care for him, neither value him, or fear him. It is a hard name that he never heard before. But he resolves that it shall be no bugbear to him."

"Israel was now a despised, oppressed people, looked on as the tail of the nation, and by the character which they bore, Pharaoh makes his estimate of their god and concludes that he made no better a figure among the gods than his people did among the nations. Again, ignorance and contempt of God were at the bottom of all the wickedness that is in the world. Men know not the Lord, or have very low and mean thoughts of him, and therefore they obey not his voice, neither will they do anything for him."

Then Henry comments on "that I should obey his voice": "I, of a great people, obey the God of Israel, of a poor enslaved people, shall I that rule the Israel of God be ruled by the God of Israel?"

“No, it is below me. I scorn to submit to Him.” Do you realize that is the attitude of every Pharaoh? Why in the world would I bow to God? I am over Him. Unsaved men who like to be Pharaohs honor themselves and false gods, but they refuse to honor the one true, living God, because they do not know Him. If you remember John 17:3, our Lord said, “And this is life eternal, that they may know thee the one true, the living God in Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” Without a knowledge of the one true, living God through Jesus Christ, men are lost and know not God. Pharaohs, then, refuse to honor God.

Pharaohs also refuse to hearken unto God. Exodus 5:2 says, “And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.” A leading characteristic of any Pharaoh is that he will not hearken to the word of God. He will not heed it. Over and over in Exodus, God demanded that Pharaoh and the Egyptians listen to Him, but they did not. Today's Pharaohs are no different. They refuse to hearken unto God; they refuse to hear Him.

Pharaohs Refuse to Hearken to God

I could also say they refuse to obey Him. In reality and in truth, no one ever really hears the Word of God unless he heeds it. No one ever really hears the word of God until he obeys it. Augustine, the early church father, said, “I heard the gospel all of my life, and then one day I heard it.”

In 1 Samuel 15:22, when Samuel rebuked Saul for claiming to have obeyed God, though the sheep bleated and the oxen lowed, he asked, “If you've obeyed God, what means the bleating of the sheep in my ear and the lowing of the oxen?” Then Samuel said, “Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?”

He went on to say, “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken is better than the fat of the rams.” The fat of rams was the chief part of the sacrifice, which was always given to God. Now he is taking hearkening and obedience and tying them together. He says to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken is better than the fat of the rams. Let me give you a New Testament illustration.

In Matthew chapter 21, our Lord says, “But what think ye?” He was talking to the Pharisees: “A certain man had two sons. And he came to the first and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not. But afterward, he repented and went. And he came to the second and said, likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir, and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father?” They say unto him, “The first.” Jesus saith unto them, “Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.”

The publicans and the harlots repented and obeyed like the first son, whereas the Pharisees said they were obedient to God when, in reality, they were not. God is telling us that we do not really hear the Word of God until we obey the Word of God. If we really hear the Word of God and heed the Word of God, then we are going to obey the Word of God.

In Exodus chapter 7, God repeatedly told Moses and Aaron that Pharaoh was not going to listen or hearken. “But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring

forth mine armies, and my people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments." Pharaoh was not going to listen to them. Again, "And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments. And Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them as the Lord had said." Then, in Exodus chapter 11, we read, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt."

Pharaoh would not listen to God. He would not listen to Moses and Aaron. He would not even listen to his own counselors, or to anyone with what you and I would call common sense. For instance, look in Exodus chapter 10 and verse 7 at what his own magicians told him. Not only that, his servants said, "How long shall this man be a snare unto us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God. Knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?" Look what they say. What was wrong with him?

"Can't you see this country is being wiped out?" He wouldn't listen to God. He wouldn't listen to Moses. He wouldn't listen to Aaron. He wouldn't listen to his own servants. I am absolutely astounded, and I marvel at the stubbornness and rebellion of the Pharaoh of Exodus, but I also marvel at the stubbornness of modern-day Pharaohs who refuse to listen to God, who refuse to listen to common sense, and who refuse to see what is happening. I am not simply referring to politicians, although that would certainly be applicable to them; I am also talking about professing Christians who refuse to hear, refuse to heed, and refuse to obey.

They seem to think that somehow they know better than God and that they can escape God's punishment. They do not listen to Him because they are a Pharaoh; that is, they are a god unto themselves. God's people will listen to Him. In Exodus 15:26, notice how this is all tied together: "And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, that is, you've got to pay attention, you've got to diligently hearken, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that healeth thee."

Note how He connects hearkening to doing and hearing to obeying. It is all right there. This is the conclusion that we have to come to: God is sovereign, God is God, and God must be obeyed regardless of your feelings, thoughts, situation, or circumstances. God must be obeyed.

He is the Creator, and you are the creature. He is the sovereign, and you are the servant. He is the King, and you are the citizen. He is the Father, and you are the child. Therefore, we must hear and heed, but a Pharaoh will not.

Here is the third thing: in Exodus chapter 5, verse 2, we notice that a Pharaoh will not honor God or hearken unto God. Here is why: a Pharaoh refuses to humble himself. Look again at verse 2: "And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." The reason Pharaoh would not honor God and hearken to God was that he would not humble himself before God. He refused to recognize God as his superior and as the one true and living God. This points out the pride, arrogance, and haughtiness of the Pharaoh of the Exodus, as well as the pride, arrogance, and haughtiness of modern-day Pharaohs.

Pharaohs Refuse to Humble Themselves

That pride, arrogance, and haughtiness stem from a rebellious and wicked heart. We fail to soberly assess ourselves, our skills, and our knowledge. We tend to think that we know better than God and that we really do not need Him. Look at all the knowledge and technology we have today. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 8 that "knowledge puffeth up." Knowledge for knowledge's sake only makes pride, arrogance, and haughtiness prevalent.

Our own government, as well as independent researchers, are now trying to make people transhuman. They want to combine artificial intelligence with humanity so that we will be immortal, somehow transcend our humanness, and live forever. They are playing God. That is exactly what they are doing.

Knowledge puffeth up, and we think that we know better than God. Now look in Exodus chapter 10 and verse 3, because there is

another application of this. The Bible says: “And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews.” Look at this.

"How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? Let my people go that they may serve me." Pharaoh's failure to honor God and to hearken unto God was a result of the fact that he failed to humble himself before God. What happens when a Pharaoh, a ruler, fails to humble himself before God? Look back in Exodus 9 and verse 17. God says, "And yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go." So when a man refuses to humble himself before God, he will exalt himself against the people. I have pointed this out on numerous occasions, but I have to point it out again in light of this message.

Psalm 94, verses 20 and 21, asks, "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?" Or, by law, which frameth mischief by law. In other words, a wicked civil government makes sin legal or lawful. Shall a wicked civil government have fellowship with God? The answer, of course, is no.

But listen to the next verse, verse 21: "They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous and condemn the innocent blood." What did God just say? When a wicked civil government refuses to humble itself before God and makes sin legal, then ultimately it attacks the innocent and the people of God. Why? They gather themselves together. They plan. They conspire.

They want to do this. In refusing to humble himself before God, a Pharaoh—someone with power, force, and the ability to exercise that force—will strike at God's people if he cannot strike at God. "We don't recognize God. We don't recognize you. We hate him. We hate you." That's what our Lord said: "They hated me. They hated you. They hated me before they hated you."

"If you were of the world, the world would love you, but you're not of the world. Therefore, they hate you." That's what our Lord said. A Pharaoh will always fail to humble himself before God and therefore will always exalt himself against the people of God, either in an ungodly attitude, ungodly speech, or sometimes just ungodly actions.

Here is something you can put down: humility always results in submission and obedience to God, whereas pride always results in rebellion and defiance. We are not talking particularly about the Pharaoh of the Exodus, but about modern-day Pharaohs. Three things make a Pharaoh: a refusal to honor God, a refusal to hearken to God, and a refusal to humble himself before God.

The Result: A Hardened Heart

The result is that Pharaohs always have hardened hearts. When you talk about the hardening of a heart, there is a judicial hardening of the heart, something that God does because of sin and judgment. There is also the normal, consequential hardening of the heart, something that man does that is normal and natural because of his sin and disobedience.

Exodus 7:13–14 says, “And he,” that would be God, “hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearken not unto them, as the Lord had said. And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened.” He refuses to let the people go. So, in one sense of the word, God judicially hardened his heart. In another sense of the word, as the consequence of his rebellion, his heart was continually being hardened.

Verses 22–23 say, “And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments, and Pharaoh's heart was hardened. Neither did he hearken unto them, as the Lord had said, and Pharaoh turned and went into his house.” “Neither did he set his heart to this also.” Not necessarily that God did it here, but this is the consequence of it. He was not going to listen. Nothing was going to impress him. His mind was made up. That is all there is to it.

Exodus 9:7 says, “And Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.” Now here is the truth: the more you sin, the easier it is to sin. That is a fact. The more you disobey, the easier it is to disobey. The more you disregard the Word of God, the easier it is to disregard the Word of God.

When you first begin sinning and doing things that you know are wrong and wicked, your conscience smites you. It comes to your

mind: This is wrong; this is wicked. I ought not to be doing this. I hope you remember this, because I have taught you in time past that your heart is your mind, but your conscience is also your mind. The word conscience in English is con-science. Con is a preposition meaning with, and science means to know. So conscience means that which you know with. The Greek word for conscience is suneidēsis. Sun is a preposition meaning with, and eidēsis means to know. Your conscience is that which you know with. When you do things that are wrong, initially your conscience smites you, convicts you, and tells you it is wrong and wicked.

But the more you sin, the more you press down and suppress that knowledge, warning, and light. As long as you continue in your sin and rebellion, it gets easier and easier. Pretty soon, your conscience does not bother you anymore. The Bible talks about a seared conscience. When people can sin and never be convicted, their conscience in that particular area is seared. So mark this down.

Whenever you refuse to honor God, hearken to God, and humble yourself before God, the result will inevitably be a hardened heart. You remember what the Bible says about the Israelites in the book of Isaiah? He said, "The show of their countenance doth witness against them." It is in their faces. They were happy with their rebellion and proud of their sins. The show of their countenance doth witness against them. It is just like you can look at a dope user and tell he is that because of the show of his countenance. The same thing is true with a drunkard and a harlot.

I am simply pointing out the fact that the more we sin, the easier it is to sin, and our conscience does not bother us. All Pharaohs end up with a hardened heart. Our hearts are no longer tender or sympathetic; we are hardened. I think the Book of Job says that even the ostrich is hardened against her own. You can be hardened against your own children, your own husband, or your own wife.

Let me make a couple of applications. Think about this, because I have been talking about a Pharaoh—not just the Pharaoh of the Exodus, but modern-day Pharaohs as well. Scripture teaches concerning Jesus Christ that He is the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd, and the Chief Shepherd. You say, “Yes, I understand that, but what in the world has that got to do with the lesson you are

teaching on Pharaohs?" Let me show you. Turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 43.

Application: Pharaohs Hate the Shepherd

You will remember that Joseph was second in command in Egypt. Although he wore the attire of an Egyptian and had shaved himself clean like an Egyptian, he was entertaining his brethren. The Egyptians were not eating with Joseph, and Joseph was not eating with his brethren, for a particular reason. Notice Genesis 43:32: "And they set on for him by himself," that is, Joseph, "and for them," that is, the Egyptians by themselves, or his brethren, "and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him by themselves, because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination of the Egyptians."

The Egyptians set bread before Joseph by himself because he was actually Hebrew, and they knew that, although he did not look like one at that time. They set it before his brothers, who were Hebrews, and then before themselves, all separately, because they would not commune with the Hebrews. They would not commune with anybody who looked like someone who believed in God or was involved in a covenant with God.

Now turn over to Genesis chapter 46 and look at verse 34. Joseph now has his brethren and his father there, and he wants them to go to the land of Goshen, which is the best part. Look at what he tells them in verse 34. Let us read verse 33.

"And it shall come to pass when Pharaoh shall call you and say, What is your occupation? That you shall say, Thy servant's trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we and also our fathers, that you may dwell in the land of Goshen for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." Every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians. All Egyptians, and especially the Pharaohs, hated shepherds.

If you are a Pharaoh, your attitude is expressed by those people in Luke chapter 19 and verse 14: "and his citizens sent word after him, We will not have this man to reign over us." That is the attitude of a Pharaoh. He is not going to have Jesus Christ to reign over him. A

Pharaoh believes that he is God and hates the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd, and the Chief Shepherd.

Therefore, he refuses to bow to Him and obey Him. Moreover, Pharaohs hate anyone and everyone who worships and obeys Him, because the obedience of those who obey the Lord Jesus Christ exposes the disobedience of those who hate Him. So they separate themselves: "We're not going to be around you. We don't want to be around you."

Pharaohs always make hard speeches against God. You need to read some of the things in Exodus that Pharaoh thought and said. Jude 1, verses 14 and 15, says, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, The Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." There are indeed ungodly speeches made against the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you do not wish to end up like a Pharaoh, suffer like a Pharaoh, be judged like a Pharaoh, or be destroyed like a Pharaoh, do not live and act like a Pharaoh, because all Pharaohs end up in death and judgment. Therefore, you must honor the Lord Jesus Christ, hearken to Him, and humble yourself before Him. Your heart will then be tender and malleable, and you can be molded according to the Word of God. You will be pliable like clay in the hands of the potter. But if you live and act like a Pharaoh, you will die like a Pharaoh.

Conclusion: Do Not Live Like a Pharaoh

If every shepherd is an abomination to a Pharaoh, every Pharaoh is an abomination to the Great Shepherd, because the Pharaoh refuses to honor Him, hearken to Him, and humble himself before Him. It does not pay to be a Pharaoh, unless you count temporary riches, temporary pleasures, and temporary power greater than eternal life.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Your Word and Your truth. Lord, help us immensely, in such a way that we will not be Pharaohs and will have no desire to be a Pharaoh, but would rather be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. As

Moses said, esteeming the reproaches of Christ greater riches than all of Egypt. Give us, Lord, Your grace and Your mercy. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 20

This Will Solve Most Problems

July 20, 2025

Introduction: The Problem of Rebellion

Please open your Bibles to 1 Peter chapter 5 and verse 5. I am not going to preach on this verse, but I am going to illustrate it, and it is certainly a verse that we need to apply. Stop and think about this: I could say, “This one thing would solve most problems.” Every one of us has problems—physical, financial, emotional, mental, spiritual, and family problems. Everybody has problems. But look at what the Word of God says in 1 Peter 5:5: “Likewise, you younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility. For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”

There are two men in the Bible of whom we read absolutely nothing negative: Joseph and Daniel. Yes, they were sinners, and yes, they knew they were sinners. Yet they are unique in that nothing negative is really said about them. The one thing that stands out about both men is that they were absolutely submissive to God and

to His providential dealings in their lives. There were no complaints, whinings, groanings, or grumblings from them—simply submission.

Biblical Commands to Submit

Here is the basic truth: because of our sinful nature, we hate submission. Yet it is a lack of submission that causes most problems. Twice in the New Testament, our Lord commands that if we are in the wrong, the wise thing is to submit and work things out before the matter reaches a court of law. These passages do not convey an attitude of compromise. Rather, they convey an attitude of submission to an adversary when we are wrong, when we have been held over a barrel. Our Lord tells us to submit, work things out, and not destroy ourselves. In Matthew 5:25, He says, “Agree with thine adversary quickly while thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.”

What he is saying is, do not wait around; do not be so rebellious and defiant that you end up destroying yourself. You will find the same truth in Luke 12:58: “When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou may be delivered from him, lest he hail thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.” Here is the problem, and here is the absolute truth.

Most people have an attitude of rebellion, resistance, and defiance to such an extent that they would much rather destroy themselves and others than submit to God or anyone else. When we think of submission, the very first passage that comes to mind is the passage that demands wives be in submission to their husbands. Ephesians 5:22–24 says, “Submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he's the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let their wives be to their own husbands, in everything.”

Most men will take those verses and say, “All right, woman, listen to me. You're to be in submission to me. That's what the Word of God says.” Yes, that is what the Word of God says. However, God also commands husbands. Ephesians 5:25 says, “Husbands, love

your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it."

Just as God requires wives to be in submission to their husbands, He requires husbands to be in submission to the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, Ephesians 5:21 says, "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." There is a place for submission for each of us to everyone.

I told someone the other day that I would have no problem listening to a woman teach on herbs, as long as she is not preaching in church. If she knows more about herbs, fine; I would listen to her. If I want to know how to deliver a baby, I am going to listen to Dr. Bowen. He has done it far more times than I have, so I can submit to him in that. In other words, we can submit in many, many different areas.

Submission to Authorities

I want you to stop and think about this: all of the heartache, sorrow, and hurt that could have been avoided if children had simply submitted themselves, honored, and obeyed their parents as God requires; if wives had submitted to their husbands as God requires; and if husbands had submitted themselves to Jesus Christ as God requires.

The truth of the matter is this: no one escapes submission. Even congregations are commanded to submit to their pastors—that is, the under-shepherds who are under the chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. Hebrews 13:17 says, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you."

Who would that be? Look at the context. The Bible says that you are to submit to me, or to any under-shepherd who is teaching the

Word of God. You are not to submit to me if I am telling you that I think you ought to part your hair on the other side of your head. That is not what we are talking about. We are talking about teaching and preaching the Word of God.

He says, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account.” This means that I will give an account to each one of you to the Lord Jesus Christ. I can say to Christ, “Tom, listen to me, and Angie, listen to me,” because she is submissive to him and he is submissive to Jesus Christ. Or I may have to say, “Lord, that man was so defiant, that man was so rebellious; he would not listen at all.” That will be unprofitable for him, not for me. I will give an account to everyone who sits under this ministry.

The Bible says in James 4:7, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he'll flee from you.” First Peter 5:5 says, “Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another and be clothed with humility. Why? For God resisteth the proud, but he giveth grace to the humble.”

Here is another truth: we are commanded to obey and submit to magistrates. The Bible says in Titus 3:5 that God expects us to be in subjection to magistrates. However, He also commands the magistrates to be in subjection to Him.

That is why the Bible says in Romans 13, verses 1 and 2, “...let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God, and the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and shall receive to themselves damnation or condemnation.” In other words, God is absolutely the highest power. There is no one higher than Him.

All are commanded to be in subjection to Him. There are no exceptions. It is true that God has ordained magistrates and rulers, but the One who ordained them is higher in authority than they are; therefore, they are accountable and responsible to Him. No one escapes submission. No one.

Daniel's Example of Submission

What does all of this have to do with Daniel and Joseph? I am not going to dwell on the life of Daniel today, because the life of Joseph is going to take up most of my time. But I do want to give you one instance from Daniel, and I want to ask you a question.

We are talking about submission. I said this one thing would solve most problems. Look at Daniel chapter 6, beginning with verse 16:

"Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God, whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords, that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting. Neither were instruments of music brought before him, and his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel. And the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the mouth of the lions?"

Then Daniel said unto the king, "O king, live forever."

Now, be absolutely honest at this point, because I am going to ask you a question. If you had been wrongly and wickedly accused, wrongly and wickedly condemned, and thrown into a den of lions because wicked men whom the king had appointed got together, lied to the king, and forced him to sign a law that was absolutely stupid and foolish, would your attitude have been like Daniel's when the king came the next morning: "O king, live forever"?

What would you have done? I know what you would have done, and I know what I would have done. We would have given that king a tongue-lashing that he truly deserved because he was so foolish and stupid to be deceived by the men he had appointed. But Daniel was very submissive. He just said, "O king, live forever."

Joseph's Submission in Suffering

As I read through the life of Joseph again this past week, I was struck by the fact that nowhere in Scripture is it recorded that he fought back, struck back, or complained. Everything that Joseph went through he merely submitted to. In this sense, he was a type of Christ, who submitted to all the indignities, sufferings, and reproaches and was finally elevated to the highest position. It is said of Jesus Christ in Isaiah 53:7, “and he was oppressed, and he was afflicted, and yet he opened not his mouth. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as sheep before shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.”

I believe that Joseph’s faith in the absolute sovereignty of God, as well as the promises of God, kept him in submission through all that he endured. He believed that God’s providence would work out that which was best in his life and that which would bring God honor and glory.

I want to run you through this. I know that you know the story, but you have to see the point I am making. First, look in Genesis chapter 37. Joseph was hated and despised by his brothers because of his dreams. God gave him dreams about the sheaves arising and bowing down. It is difficult for me to imagine that one could be so hated and despised because of dreams, even if those dreams indicated a position of superiority or rulership.

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 37:1-11 (KJV)

> I mean, let’s face it, a dream is a dream. In one sense, it would be sufficient simply to dismiss Joseph’s dreams as the dreams of a boy. What boy has not dreamed of being a warrior, a racer, a cowboy, a rodeo rider, a president, or a king? I remember when I was a little boy—and this is so stupid. My sister was two years older than I was, but I never will forget that she told me one day that if I never stepped on an ant, I would be a king someday. I carefully avoided stepping on ants until I realized that was mighty stupid. That was foolish.
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> It did not take me long. But stop and think about that: boys have dreams; girls have dreams. I am simply saying that these

dreams were taken as a personal slam by the brothers. The older brothers despised him for his dreams.

So, look in Genesis chapter 37, beginning there with verse 1. The Bible says:

"Now Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words."

If he just kept his mouth shut. In other words, he could have the dreams if he just didn't tell them. And he dreamed yet another dream, and he told it his brethren, and said, "Behold, I have dreamed a dream more, and behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me." And he told it his father and to his brethren, and his father rebuked him and said unto him, "What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I, thy mother and thy brethren, indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee and unto the earth?" And his brethren envied him, but his father observed the saying.

This coat of many colors was not just simply a pretty coat. The coat of many colors indicated that Joseph was now going to be considered the firstborn. He was the firstborn of Rachel, but Reuben was his firstborn, and Reuben defiled his father's couch. So Reuben

was cast out from the position of firstborn. This coat of many colors then indicates that Joseph is now going to be the executor of the estate. Joseph, of course, was only 17 years of age. I think the dreams were secondary to their hatred for Joseph.

Because, if you'll notice in verse 2, "These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being 17 years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren, and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought unto his father their evil report." Now, Joseph was not a tattletale, but these boys were going to do something that was really wicked and wrong. Maybe they were going to steal the sheep. I don't know what they were going to do. But Joseph came and said, "That's not right, dad. This is what's happening. You need to correct this." And when Jacob saw that Joseph was honorable and doing things right, he said, "You're going to be the one that takes over."

The interesting thing is that the dreams, I believe, were secondary to their hatred of him. So skip down to verse 18. Genesis 37, verse 18.

His father had sent him to his brethren. "And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit. And we will say some evil beast hath devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams."

Reuben heard it and delivered Joseph out of their hands. He said, “Let us not kill him,” and, “Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him,” intending to rid Joseph out of their hands and deliver him again to his father.

When Joseph came to his brethren, they stripped him out of his coat, his coat of many colors that was on him, and cast him into the pit. The pit was empty; there was no water. What was the first thing they did? They destroyed his coat. They stripped him of that coat. That is why I do believe the dreams were secondary. They were jealous that Joseph had been chosen over them and had more honor than they had.

Instead of murdering Joseph, they decided to sell him. Judah said to his brethren, “What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal

his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh." His brethren were content. Then Midianites, merchantmen, passed by, and they drew Joseph up out of the pit, sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver, and brought him into Egypt.

I have pointed this out before, but I will say it again: Who did they sell him to—the Ishmaelites or the Midianites? The answer is both, because they were one and the same. The Ishmaelites lived in Midian, so they were Midianites because of where they lived, but they were Ishmaelites because they were descendants of Ishmael.

Joseph did not fight, although he did protest against the treatment. He besought them not to do what they were doing, which anyone would have done. When his brethren later stood before him, not recognizing him, they remembered: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear. Therefore is this distress come upon us." Reuben answered, "Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear? Therefore, behold, his blood is required."

The words anguish and distress are the same Hebrew word, sarah, and it refers to trouble, anguish, distress, affliction, adversity, and tribulation. Here is what they were saying: "We are now in the same adversity. We are now in the same tribulation. We are now in the same anguish and distress that Joseph was in when he besought us." The word besought happens to be the Hebrew word chanan, meaning to show favor, to be gracious, and to pity. All Joseph was saying was, "Just be faithful and have pity upon me."

He asked them not to do what they were doing. I would have done the same thing. Would you not have done that? Here he was hated and sold into slavery by his brothers. That is the second thing: he was not only hated, but he was sold into slavery by his brothers. Joseph was sold as a slave into slavery.

We tend to think they took him out, put him on a camel, and sent him down to Egypt with the Ishmaelites. That is not quite the way it was. Psalm 105:17–18 says, "He sent a man before them, even

Joseph, who was sold for a servant. Whose feet they hurt with fetters, he was laid in iron."

They chained him and fettered him just as they did any slave. He was sold for a slave, and they put heavy chains on him as well.

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 39:1-14 (KJV)

And Joseph was brought to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him at the hands of the Ishmaelites, which had brought him down thither. And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man, and he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hands. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him, And he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time that he made him overseer of the house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptians' house for Joseph's sake. And the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house and in the field.

And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand. He knew not all he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person and well favored.

And it came to pass after these things that this master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph and said, Lie with me. But he refused and he said to his master's wife, Behold, My master knoweth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath into my hand. There is none greater in this house than I, neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her to lie by her, or to be with her. And it came to pass about this time that Joseph went into the house to do his business, And there was none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by the garment and said, Lie with me. And he left his garment in her hand and fled and got him out. And it came to pass when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled forth. Then she called to the men of her house and spake

unto them, saying, See, he has brought in a Hebrew unto us to mock us. And he came unto me to lie with me.

And I cried with a loud voice. And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice, he cried. He left his garment with me and fled and got him out. And she laid up his garment by her until his lord came home. And she spake unto him according to all these words, saying, "The Hebrew servant that thou brought unto us came in to mock me." And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me and fled out. And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, "Look now, after this manner did thy servant unto me," then his wrath was kindled.

And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound, and he was there in the prison. I cannot think of anything more distasteful, more wicked, more vile, and hateful than to falsely accuse someone in this area. I have known men and pastors who have lost their wives, families, and ministries because of false accusations. I have a book in my library concerning one man. Some of these women who made false accusations repented and came back and said, "I lied."

But it was too late. The wife had already left him. The family deserted him. His ministry was over—all because of a lie. The astounding thing to me is that you never read in Scripture right here where Joseph protested or argued. You never read where Joseph says, "Your wife is lying." You never read where Joseph said, "Wait a minute, let's sit down and think about this thing rationally."

No, nothing like that ever happened. Joseph was being tried, and he was being tried by the Word of God. How difficult do you think this might have been for Joseph? If I had been in Joseph's place, I know what my fleshly, carnal response would have been. I can assure you. But if I were Joseph and had Joseph's faith and attitude of submission, I would probably have done exactly as Joseph did. The truth is that the Lord was with Joseph in all these trials. Joseph never tried to defend himself.

Joseph Forgotten and Exalted

Here is the third thing. Not only was he hated by his brothers, and not only was he sold into slavery, but he helped others and then was forgotten by them. Now that hurts. When you help somebody—when you really help them—and then they totally forget, that hurts. Not only unthankful, not only ungrateful, but totally forgetful.

The Bible says, “But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy.” It also says, “and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph’s hand all the prisoners that were in the prison. And whatever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand because the Lord was with him. And that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.”

That is astounding. Joseph is in prison. He has been put there wrongly and wickedly. You know the story of the baker and the butler. Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers and against the chief of the bakers. He put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. The captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them, and they continued a season in ward.

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 40:5-13, 16-21 (KJV)

> And they dreamed a dream, both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream. The butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, they were bound in the prison. And Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked upon them, and behold, they were sad. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of the Lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly today? And they said to him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said to them, Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me them, I pray you.
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> And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and he said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me, and the vine had three branches. And it was as though it budded and blossomed and shot forth, and the clusters thereof brought

> forth ripe grapes. Then Pharaoh's cup was in mine hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and gave the cup unto Pharaoh's hand. And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it, the three branches are three days. Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee into thy place, and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler. But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house. For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into this dungeon.
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> When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and behold, I had three white baskets on my head. And in the uppermost basket there was all manner of baked meats for Pharaoh, and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head. And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof: the three baskets are three days. Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree, and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee. And it shall come to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all of his servants; and he lift up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants, and he restored the chief butler into his butlership again, and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

But he hanged the chief baker as Joseph had interpreted them, yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him. Joseph had asked only one thing: “But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house. For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews. And here also have I done nothing that they should put me in this dungeon.” Joseph was innocent. All he asked was that the butler remember him before Pharaoh.

Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him. Here is another truth that reveals our faults. We are ungrateful,

unthankful, and unappreciative of the kindnesses others have shown unto us. Had I been that butler, knowing what happened to the baker, I think that when I got out, I would have been extremely thankful and grateful that this one man gave me a good interpretation. I do not know how I could ever have forgotten Joseph. But he did. You know, we do that.

People help us, minister to us, and are gracious and kind to us, not just once or twice, but sometimes for weeks, months, and even years, and we forget them. How long did the chief butler forget Joseph? We know he forgot him, because chapter 40, verse 23, says, "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him."

Now, in chapter 41, verse 1: "And it came to pass at the end of two full years that Pharaoh dreamed, and behold, he stood by the river." No one could interpret Pharaoh's dreams. Verse 9 says, "Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day. Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward, in the Captain of the Guard's house, both me and the Chief Baker, and we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he. We dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream."

The butler said, "And there was with us a young man, a Hebrew, servant of the Captain of the Guard, and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams, to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; he restored him to his office, and him he hanged." Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon. He shaved himself, changed his raiment, and came into Pharaoh.

It took Pharaoh two full years to think about Joseph. The thing that grabbed my heart and attention as I read through Joseph's life again is astounding: Joseph held no grudges, never sought revenge, and never complained. He readily and willingly forgave all those who caused him so much suffering and pain.

Joseph was elevated to second in Egypt. Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Only in the throne will I be greater than thou. No man will put his foot down without you." Joseph was in a position to teach Bonhoeffer a lesson, but he did not. He could have said, "Mr. Butler,

you forgot me for two years. Now that I am in command, I am going to forget you for two years. Get out of my sight." He never did anything like that. He had the authority and power to oppress, yet he did not; he was not so inclined.

Why did Joseph not seek revenge? Why did he not bellyache, gripe, complain, mumble, and groan? Why did he do only that which is right, good, and godly? He recognized not only the sovereignty of God, but the providence of God. He realized that everything that happened to him had been ordained by God for his good and for God's glory.

The Key to Joseph's Attitude

He was abased, then he might be exalted; humbled, then he might be lifted up; and suffered, then he might reign.

Proverbs 15:33 verifies this: "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom: and before honour is humility." Before honor is humility. Proverbs 18:12 likewise says, "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility."

I want to show you from the Bible how Joseph dealt with those who hated him, despised him, and misused him. I want you to see his graciousness, his kindness, and his forgiveness, because he realized that God was in absolute control of his life.

Turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 45. Joseph is revealing himself now to his brothers. Genesis 45, verse 1: "Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all of them that stood by him. And he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians at the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph. Does my father yet live?"

"His brethren could not answer him for they were troubled at his presence." You remember that he had held Simeon in prison until they came back, saying, If you don't bring Benjamin. You remember how they found all their money in the sack's mouth, and how the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Now he said, "I am Joseph," and all of

a sudden everything was coming back to them that they had done to Joseph.

Look at verse 4: “And Joseph said to his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near, and he said, I am Joseph your brother whom you sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved or angry with yourselves that you sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land, and yet there are five years in which there shall be neither earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God. And he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and Lord of all in his house, and ruler of all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith Joseph thy son, God hath made me the Lord of all Egypt. Come down unto me and tarry not.”

Look at the words of Joseph: “God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth and to save your lives.” What did he say? God sent me to save you. You hated me, but that's fine. God just used your hatred to work out his will to get me down here.

Jacob is now dead and has been buried. He lived 147 years. Genesis 50:14 says, “And Joseph returned into Egypt, he and his brethren, all that went up with him to bury his father after he had buried his father. And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us and will certainly requite us all the evils which we did unto him.” Wow!

Their conscience is still bothering them. They think Joseph dealt well with them because their father was alive, but now he is dead. Joseph will probably hate them and pay them back for what they did to him. Verse 16 says, “And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying,” Whether he did or not, I don't know. “So shall ye say to Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespasses of thy brethren and their sin, for they did unto thee evil, and now we pray thee, forgive the trespasses of thy servants of the God of thy father.” And Joseph wept when they spoke unto him.

His brethren also fell down before his face and said, “Behold, we be thy servants.” Joseph said, “Fear not, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive.”

“Now therefore fear ye not, I will nourish you and your little ones,” and he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them. Here were the men who had started all the pain, agony, and suffering he endured from the pit to the prison to the palace. Yet he said, “You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. You do not have to worry. I will nourish you, sustain you, and take care of you—not just you, but your little ones. I will see that you are taken care of.” Submission would solve most problems.

Application: Submission Solves Problems

If we could grasp that fact, it would change our lives. Think of the problems that exist today between husbands and wives. We are depraved and naturally rebellious. The truth is that wives need to submit to their husbands, but husbands need to submit to Jesus Christ. If husbands and wives submitted, that would solve most of their problems. If children submitted to their parents, that would solve most of the problems. If we submitted to legitimate, lawful, biblical authority, that would solve a lot of problems. And if those authorities submitted to God, as God commands them, that would solve many problems as well.

All through Joseph’s life, and likewise through Daniel’s life, there was submission over and over. If each of us submitted as God commands, consider how peace would reign in our lives, our homes, our churches, and our nation. I have no problem being in submission to a man who is in submission to the Word of God and to God Himself.

God will never use you to rebuke others if you are unwilling to be rebuked yourself. He will never use you to help others unless you are willing to be helped yourself, to instruct others unless you are willing to be instructed yourself, or to minister to others unless you are willing to be ministered to yourself. God will never use you to rule unless you are willing to be ruled over.

I've been preaching for sixty years. Alice will remember the pastor we had in Thomasville, Georgia. In his office, he had this gold-colored vinyl couch. I've never forgotten that couch—ugly as the day is long; it really was. I was young then, full of zeal, without all the knowledge I should have had. But the Lord had saved me, and I wanted to preach, serve Him, and do this and that. Every now and then, the pastor would call me into his office. I would sit down, we would talk for a few minutes, and then he would look at me and say, "Now John." When he said, "Now John," I knew I had done something wrong. I did not know what, but I knew I had done something wrong. Then he would tell me what I should or should not have said, and what I should or should not have done. I have no idea how many times I was on my knees with my face in that old, ugly, gold couch, tears streaming down my face, repenting because I had so much zeal and not enough knowledge.

God was using him to rebuke me, help me, minister to me, and correct me. Had I not been willing to receive it, God would never have used me to give it out. Submission would solve most of our problems—in our homes, our lives, and our churches. The path to life, the path to love, and the path to freedom lies in submission to God and His Word. Joseph never complained; he submitted.

He said to his brothers, "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good." He knew that God was sovereign, and that God's providence was working everything out for his good and God's glory.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for Your grace, mercy, goodness, and kindness. Lord, teach us the importance of submission. Help us to see how it would indeed resolve most of the problems in our lives if we submitted to Thee and to Thy Word. O God, help us. Give us, Lord, the attitude of Daniel and the attitude of Joseph. May we submit, learn from everything You send our way, and grow from everything You send our way. Whether we like it or not, we know it is bound to be for our good because You ordained it. Whatever our God ordains is right. Give us Your grace and mercy. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 21

Warrior Priests

April 8, 2013

Introduction: The Priesthood of Believers

I am going to preach a message today that I preached here probably ten or fifteen years ago. Some of you may remember part of it, though I am sure you would not remember all of it. When I was out in California, I was specifically asked to bring this message. Since I had been asked, I reworked it, added much to it, and reworded some things.

The title of the message upset the Southern Poverty Law Center. I figured that if I had gotten them upset once, I might do so again. Perhaps they would hear the whole message and understand a little bit of it. The title is "Warrior Priests."

In 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 5, the Bible says, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Then verse 9 says, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

We are talking about warrior priests. A priest is a duly authorized minister in sacred things. To be a priest, one must be chosen by God. Hebrews chapter 5 and verse 4 says, “And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.” A priest, then, is not someone appointed by himself, elected by the people, or established through political influence or intervention.

The priesthood was a divinely instituted institution. Therefore, the priests were divinely appointed and divinely called. Not only were the priests divinely called and appointed; even their duties were divinely appointed. A priest did not choose or decide his own duties. He could not perform any function he desired. He had to perform what God appointed for him.

The Divine Institution of the Priesthood

For instance, a regular priest could not enter the Holy of Holies. Only the high priest could do that, and he could do it only once a year. Moreover, the Levitical priest did many things around the tabernacle, which I will show you later, but the offerings and sacrifices were reserved to the family and house of Aaron.

Scripture tells us very clearly in 1 Peter 2:5 that we are living stones, built up into a holy house, or a spiritual house, and a holy priesthood, that we should offer up spiritual sacrifices to God by Jesus Christ. In verse 9, he tells us again that we are a chosen generation and a royal priesthood.

New Testament Confirmation of Believers as Priests

The Apostle John also speaks of our priesthood. In Revelation 1:6, John writes, "...and hath made us kings and priests unto our God and His Father. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." He has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father. In Revelation 5:10, again he says, "...and has made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on earth." Finally, in Revelation 20:6, John said, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

We could multiply verses, but the fact remains that Christians have been divinely called and divinely ordained priests unto our God through the Lord Jesus Christ. The priesthood of the believer is not simply a New Testament fact. Old Israel was indeed to be a nation of priests as well. In Exodus 19:5-6, God says, "Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all the people, for all the earth is mine. Now watch, and you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."

The priesthood that truly belonged to old Israel in the Old Testament, in types and shadows and emblems, has now been given to the new Israel in the New Testament, in truth and reality. As New Testament priests, we have many duties and responsibilities. From the text just read, one of those duties is to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto God through Jesus Christ.

Priestly Duties: Sacrifice, Praise, and Living Sacrifice

We must also show the praises of Him that has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. But when you get to Hebrews 13 and verse 15, the Bible teaches us that we're to offer up the sacrifice of praise continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks unto His name. So once again, here as New Testament priests, we have a duty to praise and worship Him. Moreover, you remember the passage in Romans 12 verse 1, where the apostle Paul said, "I beseech you, therefore, dearly beloved, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." So we have the duty and the responsibility of presenting our bodies unto him as a living sacrifice.

So we have the duties and the responsibilities of prayer and intercession and sacrificial living, sacrificial giving of praising God and worshiping our Heavenly Father through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Overlooked Duty: Guarding and Protecting

Now what I want to do today is this, I want to point out a distinct function of priests. It is not a carnal function, it is not a fleshly function, it is indeed a living, vibrant, spiritual function. What we

have failed to understand is that in the Old Testament, the priests were warrior priests and the same is true in the New Testament as well. I'm going to show you that in the Old Testament, the priests had a duty of guarding and protecting as well as working as well. And it was a normal priestly duty. Now before I show you any of this in the New Testament, what I want to do is go through the Old Testament and show you the historical context.

And I want to begin at the very beginning, I want to begin in the Garden of Eden, where God placed Adam and gave him there certain responsibilities. You must remember that Eden was originally organized as a special sanctuary, as a temple where God met His creatures that He had created in His image. And when God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden, He gave him two very particular responsibilities. I want you to turn to Genesis chapter 2 and look at verse 15. Genesis 2 and verse 15.

Watch this and I'm going to explain these terms to you. And we're going to see these terms used over and over in the Bible. So watch carefully. Genesis 2 and the Bible says in verse 15, "And the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." So here are two responsibilities. He had to dress the garden and he had to keep the garden. First, Adam had to dress the garden. The Hebrew word for dress is the word Abad, which literally means to work, to serve, to labor.

It also has reference to Levitical service. Adam was a priest unto God, and he had to work, dress, and keep the garden for God's honor and glory. He had to dress it and work it. But secondly, Adam had to keep the garden. The Hebrew word for keep is shamar. This word is translated and used to mean to keep, to have charge of, to guard, to ward, to protect, and to act as a watchman.

Adam therefore had two responsibilities. He had to dress the garden and work in it, but he also had to guard, protect, and act as a watchman. We know that Adam did indeed till and dress the garden temporarily, but he failed in guarding and protecting the Garden of Eden. He allowed the serpent in, and you know what happened. Note what happened when Adam failed in his responsibility to guard and protect the garden.

Adam's Failure and the Cherubim Guard

He was defrocked and kicked out of the garden. Look in Genesis chapter 3, verses 23 and 24. Not only was Adam defrocked and kicked out of the garden, but the guardianship and protectorship of the garden were given to other individuals or beings. Genesis 3:23-24 says, "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life."

God not only kicked Adam out of the garden; Adam lost his guardianship and protectorship. He was no longer the protector of the garden. God placed cherubims there with flaming swords to keep the way of the tree of life. You can see how this works in the life of Adam.

Secondly, I want you to see how this works in the Levites and understand, not only from Adam but in the Levites, the principle of guardianship. As we go through the Levites, you will see that these two principles go hand in hand: working and guarding. This is one of the major themes developed in the Bible, especially in relationship to the duties of the priest. The Levitical priest not only had a responsibility to work but also a responsibility to guard.

Let us turn to Numbers chapter 1, beginning with verse 53. The Levites were given to the house of Aaron to be his helpers and, as we shall see, his protectors as well. Notice what the Bible says: “But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel. And the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony.”

The Levites as Warrior Priests

The Levites were to keep the charge of the tabernacle of the testimony. The Hebrew word for “keep” is Shemar, the very same word given to Adam when he was to keep the garden. He was to protect it; he was to guard it. That same word is used here in relationship to the Levites. They were to keep the charge of the

tabernacle—to guard and protect it. As sentries guard things, they were to keep and protect it.

The interesting thing is that the word "charge" is Mishmaroth in Hebrew, which literally means a sentry post, a watch, or an act of custody. God says that these Levites were to keep the charge of the tabernacle, and later the temple. They were to guard and protect it. It was a military concept, because God had given them a sentry post and a sentry duty.

Numbers 3:5–10 shows carefully how God gave the Levites this charge: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle, And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel to do the service of the tabernacle. And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons. They are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel. And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office. And the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death."

Notice the expressions in these verses. In verse 7, "and they shall keep his charge." Again, the word is Shamar. They are to guard and protect Aaron—his charge, their duty post, their sentry post. Verse 7 also says, "and they shall keep the charge of the whole congregation." Verse 8 says, "And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel to do the service of the tabernacle." Verse 10 repeats, "And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office, and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death."

In light of this passage and what you understand about keeping the charge—guarding, protecting, and maintaining a sentry post—consider these questions: Whose duty was it to see that Aaron and the instruments of the tabernacle remained safe? The Levites. Since God had given the Levites charge of the sentry post, whose duty and responsibility was it to put to death the stranger who came near? The Levites. This meant, of course, that those Levites were

armed. They had the power and authority to execute anyone who came close to Aaron, the tabernacle, or the temple who was not supposed to be there.

Numbers 3:32 says, “And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest shall be chief over the chief of the Levites, and have the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary.” Note that there were chiefs over the Levites, but there was a chief over the chiefs, and that was Eleazar, the son of Aaron. Notice also that he was chief over those who kept the charge of the sanctuary.

It is the same word, shamar and mishmareth. They had the duty and responsibility of guarding and protecting. Verse 38 says, “But those that encamp before the tabernacle toward the east, even before the tabernacle of the congregation eastward, shall be Moses and Aaron and his sons, keeping the charge of the sanctuary. For the charge of the children of Israel and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.”

Since Moses and Aaron were there, Aaron was the high priest, and his sons had the duty and responsibility of the sacrifices, who do you think was around these individuals protecting them? It was the Levites, because that had been their charge.

Now, some of you will have marginal references in your Bible. Some of you will not, but I will tell you this. If you look in Numbers 4 and verse 3 very quickly, Numbers 4 verse 3, watch it. "From 30 years old and upward, even into 50 years old, all that entered into the host to do the work of the tabernacle, of the congregation." Skip down to verse 23. I'll tell you this when we get through looking. Verse 23, "from 30 years old and upward unto 50 years old shalt thou number them all that enter in to perform the service to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation." You're going to find the same thing in verse 30. And then you're going to find the same exact truth in Numbers chapter 8 in verse 24. If you have a marginal reading in your Bible, that is little words right in the margin, you will see the marginal reading says this, "to war the warfare of the tabernacle," to war the warfare, not just to do the work, but to war the warfare.

So obviously, God is saying here that these Levites were warrior priests. They had to war the warfare of the tabernacle. Why? Because God had given them the duty and responsibility of protecting Aaron and of course protecting the instruments and protecting the tabernacle itself.

Now I want you to skip to Numbers chapter 18. And I want you to see how this keeps being repeated throughout the book of Numbers. Numbers chapter 18. And notice, if you would please, verses 2 through 7. Numbers chapter 18, verses 2 through 7. He says, "And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thee with thee, that they may be joined unto thee and minister unto thee. But thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. Now watch.

We are talking about the Levites: they shall keep the charge of the tabernacle; that is, they shall guard and protect their sentry posts. They shall not come near the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, lest they, or the priests also, die. In other words, they can do only certain things. They cannot do whatever they want to do.

The Levites shall be joined unto the priests and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation for all its service. A stranger shall not come near. The priests and Levites shall keep the charge of the sanctuary and the altar, that there be no wrath anymore upon the children of Israel. God had taken the Levites from among the children of Israel and given them as a gift to do the service of the tabernacle. Therefore Aaron and his sons were to keep their priest's office for everything of the altar and serve within the veil. God gave the priest's office as a service of gift, and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

Isn't that amazing? Over and over God says that these Levites are to keep the charge. They are to guard their sentry posts. Any stranger who tried to hurt Aaron or any of his sons, steal any of the instruments, or simply waltz into the tabernacle was to be put to death, God said, and the Levites were the ones who would put him to death. The Levites therefore had the responsibility of guarding and protecting. They had a sentry post; it was given to them. They must guard it, protect Aaron, and protect the tabernacle.

In Numbers chapter 31, there was a war with the Midianites. The Israelites won and captured an awful lot of booty. This is repeated over and over. God divided the booty and commanded that from Israel's half, one portion of fifty of the persons, cattle, asses, flocks, and all manner of beasts be given to the Levites, which keep—Shammar, which

In Numbers 31:30 and 47, Moses took one portion of fifty from the children of Israel's half, both of man and beast, and gave it to the Levites, "which kept," or guarded and protected, "the sentry post of the tabernacle of the Lord, as the Lord commanded Moses." Verse 47 says exactly the same thing: "Even the children of Israel's half, Moses took one portion of fifty, both of man and of beast, and gave them to the Levites, which kept, which guarded and protected the sentry post of the tabernacle of the Lord, as the Lord commanded Moses." All I am trying to show you is this: those Old Testament priests, those Levites, had a duty beyond what you and I would call simply offering praise and sacrifices. They had a duty of guarding and protecting.

Armed Guards in the Temple and the Captain of the Temple

In 1 Samuel chapter 7, you remember that the ark had been taken by the Philistines and then returned. Notice what happened: "And the men of Kirjath-jearim came and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep, guard, and protect the ark of the LORD." That ark had just been returned.

Do you understand what they were doing? They said, "Eleazar, until things can be worked out, this is your responsibility. You guard. You protect this ark. You do not let anyone come near it. You do not let anyone steal it. This is your sentry post. You hang on to this."

In 2 Kings chapter 12, verse 9, Jehoiada the priest, who was the high priest, took a chest, bored a hole in its lid, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one comes into the house of the Lord. "And the priests that kept the door put therein all the money that was brought into the house of the Lord." Guess what the word "kept" is

there? It is the word Shemar: the priest who guarded and protected the door.

Do you realize there were guards, Levitical guards, in the tabernacle and in the temple? You could not simply waltz in. There were armed guards at the doors. In 2 Chronicles chapter 34, verse 9, it says, "And when they came to Hilkiah the high priest"—Hilkiah was a high priest in this instance—"when they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered"

The money was brought into the house of God by the Levites who kept the doors and had gathered it from Manasseh, Ephraim, all the remnant of Israel, Judah, and Benjamin, and returned it to Jerusalem. Note the phrase, "the Levites, which kept the doors." In each of these passages, the same word, Shemar, is used of Adam and of all these Levites. They were guarding and protecting the doors.

You could not simply waltz into the tabernacle or the temple. Remember Psalm 84:10, where David said, "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." What was the doorkeeper? He was the man who stood by the door armed, guarding and making sure that no one came in except those who were supposed to be there. David said, "I'd rather be an armed sentry standing at the door than to dwell in the house of wickedness." The Hebrew word for doorkeeper there is Shophet, which literally means to guard, to guard the threshold, or to guard the doors. He was a guard.

In 1 Chronicles 23, David lists the duties of these priests. First, he lists what we think of as normal priestly duties. Then he adds something else, which is also normal, but which we do not usually think of. "For by the last words of David, the Levites were numbered from twenty years old and above, because their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the Lord, in the courts, and in the chambers, and in purifying all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God. So here what the Levites did now, both for the showbread, and for the fine flour for the meat offering, and for the unleavened cakes, and for that which is baked in the pan, and for that which is fried, and for all manner of measure and size, and to stand every morning to thank—"

The Levites were to praise the Lord and offer all burnt sacrifices unto the Lord in the sabbaths, the new moons, and the set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the Lord. They were also to keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, the charge of the holy place, and the charge of the sons of Aaron, their brethren, in the service of the house of the Lord.

The Levites had many responsibilities. Besides singing praise and giving praise to God, and dealing with the measures of the meal offerings, they had to keep the charge of the tabernacle, the charge of Aaron, and the charge of the holy place. They had the duty and responsibility of guarding and protecting.

In 2 Chronicles 23, King Joash was being protected. His grandmother Athaliah had murdered all of her grandchildren except Joash, and he was taken and hidden in the temple. The high priest said, “But let none come into the house of the Lord, save the priests, and they that minister the Levites. They shall go in, for they are holy. But all the people shall keep the watch of the Lord, that is on the outside watch. And the Levites shall compass the king round about every man with his weapons in his hand. And whosoever else cometh in the house, he shall be put to death. But be ye with the king when he cometh in and when he goeth out.”

Here was Joash in the temple, surrounded by Levites. If anybody else came into the temple, the high priest commanded that he be put to death.

Who had the responsibility of guarding and protecting? It was the Levites.

Now, since we're in 2 Chronicles chapter 23, let me show you something that a lot of people have not thought of. I don't know if you're aware of this or not, but there is a court case now in the state of Georgia about having weapons in church. In fact, it's being appealed to the Supreme Court. But would it surprise you to find out that in the Bible, they always kept weapons in church or in the temple? Look in your Bibles. Here it is, 2 Chronicles 23, verse 9.

"Moreover, Jehoiada the priest delivered to the captains of hundreds spears and bucklers and shields that had been King

David's, which were in the house of God. And he sent all the people, every man having his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and the temple and by the king roundabout." Where were all these weapons kept? In the temple, in the house of God.

Now, I think if you've been listening and if you've been following me, there have been a sufficient number of scriptures to prove to you that the Levites had a duty of guarding and protecting and that they were armed and that they used those arms as well. Now, I'm telling you that so that you can understand something in the New Testament. If you don't understand this principle, you're not going to understand some verses in the New Testament.

For instance, look at Acts 4:1: "And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them." Now, we know who the priests were, and we know who the Sadducees were, but who's the captain of the temple? Acts 5:24 says, "Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priest heard these things, they doubted them whereunto this would grow." We know the high priest, but who's the captain of the temple? Verse 26 says, "Then went the captain with the officers." Here was the captain with some officers, and they brought them without violence.

Why? For they feared the people lest they should be stoned. The only reason they did not use violence is that they were outnumbered and afraid. But notice: here is the captain with the officers.

Turn back to Luke chapter 22 and look at verse 4. Judas has gone his way; he is about to betray Christ. “And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and the captains,” plural, “how he might betray him unto them.” Skip down to verse 52 in the same chapter: “Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple,” plural, “and the elders which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves.”

So the question is this: We know who the Sadducees were, who the Pharisees were, who the Herodians were, who the chief priests were, and who the high priest is; but who in the world are all these

captains of the temple, and where did they come from, along with all these officers under them?

To understand that, turn to Acts chapter 16. Notice verse 20: "And brought them unto the magistrates." Look at verse 22: "And the multitude rose up together against them, and the magistrates rent off their clothes." Verse 35 says, "And when it was day, the magistrates," and verse 36, "The magistrates have sent to let you go." Watch verse 38: "And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates." Here the word magistrates is used five times.

We are still trying to discover who these captains of the temple were. The Greek word for magistrates is strategos. Strategos is a military term and is where we derive our English word strategy. The word strategos is from strata, which means arming. If you look up strategos in a Greek lexicon, you will find that it means a general, a governor, a commandant, a military officer, or a captain of the temple—the commander of the Levites who kept and guarded the temple.

Do you know who the captains of the temple were? They were Levites brought over from the Old Testament. They were still guarding the temple in the New Testament.

Their office had become corrupted. That is true. But they were still there. Remember that. I told you I was going to call your attention to it again. Numbers 3 and verse 32 says, "And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest shall be chief over the chief of the Levites who have the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary." That is why, when these captains went out, usually the high priest or some priest who was over them went out with them, because these were the Levites. They were the captains of the temple in the New Testament.

The Sons of Korah: Singers and Warriors

Now turn in your Bibles to Psalm 42. Instead of reading the Psalm, we are going to look at its heading. You will understand why momentarily. If you have headings in your Bible, here is what it says: "To the chief musician, Maschil, for the sons of Korah." You see it? It is before verse 1; it is just the heading. Psalm 42 was written for the

sons of Korah to sing. The Korahites, or Korhites as they are sometimes called, were Levitical singers.

Now let me ask you a question: Does anyone know who Korah was? Do you remember? In Numbers 16, three men—Korah, Dathan, and Abiram—raised up in rebellion against Moses. Moses was so agitated at what they were doing that he prayed, "Lord God let a new thing happen. Let the earth open up and swallow them and let them go down alive into the pit."

Then he warned everybody, "Separate yourselves from Korah and his company and Dathan and Abiram. Separate yourselves." You remember the 250 princes who followed them. God sent fire and consumed those men. Then the earth opened up and swallowed Korah, Dathan, and Abiram and their families, and they went down alive into the pit.

But listen carefully to Numbers 26, verses 10 and 11: "And the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured the two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign. Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not." When Moses said, "Separate yourselves," the children of Korah left their father. They got away from him in his rebellion, and they did not die with him. They were still Levites, for Korah was a Levite as well. Now this Psalm is dedicated to them, and they were to sing it.

It may surprise you to find what these sons of Korah could do. They were singers, that is for sure. But 1 Chronicles 9:19 says, "And Shallum, the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brethren of the house of his father, the Korahites, were over the work of the service, keepers of the gates of the tabernacle and their fathers being over the host of the Lord were keepers of the entry."

What does that tell us? That tells us these Korahites were doorkeepers, threshold keepers, and guards in the tabernacle and the temple. Notice that the Bible says their fathers were being over the host of the Lord. The word host refers to an army. So these men were warriors, fighters, and soldiers, and yet they were priests. These Levites were warrior priests; they fought and protected.

Everyone knows how mighty a warrior David was, and you remember that David had his mighty men. A number of them are listed for us in 1 Chronicles 12. Verses 1 and 2 say, “Now these are they that came to David to Ziklag while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish. And they were among the mighty men helpers of the war. And they were armed with bows and could use both the right hand and the left hand in hurling stones and shooting arrows. Out of a bow even Saul's brethren of Benjamin.”

Here were men so expert at warfare that they could shoot up with a bow right-handed or left-handed. It did not matter. They could hurl stones right-handed or left-handed. These men were expert in war. They were able to use either hand in warfare, whether shooting arrows from a bow or hurling stones.

Who were some of them? Verse 6 names Elkanah, Jesiah, Azarel, Joezer, Jashobeam, and the Korhites, which were the sons of Korah. Here these Levites, who helped David fight, were some of his mighty men. These were sons of Korah serving among David’s mighty men. Wow!

Consequences of Priestly Failure and the Transfer of Priesthood

You understand what happened to Adam when he abdicated his priesthood and failed to protect the garden. Look in 2 Chronicles chapter 15, and let me show you what happens when priests fail to guard and protect and do their duty and their responsibility.

The passage begins: “Now for a long time Israel had been without the true God and without a teaching priest and without law. But when they in their trouble did turn to the Lord God of Israel and sought Him, He was found to them.” “In those times” refers back to verse 3, when Israel was without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law. How could they be without the true God? Because they were without His law. How could they be without His law? There was no teaching priest. In those times, when they were without God's law, “there was no peace to him that went out, nor him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the country and nation, was destroyed of nation and city of city for God did vex them with all adversity.”

Do you realize that when Adam failed to protect the garden, it brought death? When the Levites failed to guard, protect, teach, and preach, it brought death. I hope you're putting two and two together and trying to figure out what is happening in our country today. All through the Bible, the priests not only praised, worshipped, and glorified God, but they guarded and protected.

In a Christian context, when Adam apostatized from his duties and responsibilities, God defrocked him of his priesthood. When old Israel apostatized and rejected the Son of God, God defrocked them and removed the priesthood from them. They have no priesthood today.

Look in Matthew 21, beginning with verse 42. Our Lord had been teaching and preaching, and He laid it on the line to the Jews. He said, “Jesus said unto them, Did you never read in scriptures the stone which the builders rejected?” That's old Israel.

"The same has become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing. It is marvelous in our eyes. Therefore saying to you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation, bringing forth the fruits thereof." Watch verse 45: "And when the chief priests and the Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them." They got that right. What did our Lord say? You lost it. You apostatized. You rejected my son. My son is the headstone of the corner.

I'm taking everything from you and giving it to a nation that will bring forth the fruits thereof. So the priesthood has been given to the people of the New Covenant, the New Testament, who are the true Israel of God. As sons of God through Jesus Christ, as I've read earlier, we've now been made priests and kings under our God. Therefore, it is our responsibility to lead the world in righteousness, obedience, and faith; to protect ourselves and others by holy, righteous, and godly living in obedience to our King, Jesus Christ; and to declare His sovereignty and majesty. In fact, we've been given a commission to do this.

In Matthew 28:19–20, our Lord said, “Go you therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I

have taught you. And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Do you realize that we have been given guardianship and protectorship of the truth?

In 1 Timothy 3:15, the Apostle Paul writes, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of truth." What is the church of the living God? It is the pillar and the ground of truth. Do you realize that we, the people of God, have the infallible, inerrant, inspired, and inexhaustible Word of God?

The Church as Warrior Priests Today

We therefore must be faithful in proclaiming it, making disciples, and teaching them all things whatsoever He has commanded us to observe. The way to protect and guard the truth is to establish it squarely in every area of life. We may not hide it; rather, we must declare it, abide by it, adhere to it, insist upon it, and fight for it, because it is God's truth. Now you can ask the question: How do we fight?

If you were to go to Ephesians 6:10–18, he lists all the armor that we need: the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Some preachers, when they reach Ephesians 6, try to describe that armament as the armament of a Roman soldier. That is not true. If you read Exodus 28, Isaiah 59:17–21, and Isaiah 61:10, you will find that when the Apostle Paul wrote Ephesians 6, the armor he had in mind was the armor of God's holy warrior, the armor of the great high priest. This may surprise you, but I have heard preachers in my lifetime try to describe it as the armament of a Roman soldier. We are not going to take time to do it today, but those passages identify the armor Paul had in mind.

The Bible tells us further about this armor. In 1 Thessalonians 5:8, God says, "But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for our helmet the hope of salvation." In Romans 13:12, the apostle writes, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." So God's armor is called the armor of light.

The Bible uses vivid images depicting the Lord Jesus Christ leading an army of warrior priests. Read Psalm 110, or, more simply, Revelation 17:14, where the Bible says concerning His enemies, “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.” Jesus Christ is leading an army of warrior priests.

Remember Matthew 16:18. Our Lord asked His disciples, “Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?” They responded, “Some say that thou art Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” Then He asked, “Whom say ye that I am?” Peter said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Our Lord said, “And I say unto thee, Thou art Peter.” The word Peter means a rock. “Thou art Peter. And upon this rock,” that is, his confession, “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Upon this confession—that I am the Christ, the Messiah, and the Son of God—He would build His church, and the gates of hell would not prevail against it.

If the church is at the gates of hell, who is attacking whom? It is the church attacking hell. Gates in the Bible speak of authority and power. Upon the confession that Jesus Christ is God, the Messiah, and the sovereign God of heaven and earth, the church attacks hell itself. You want to know what has happened in our country?

Like Adam and the old Levitical priest, we have abdicated our responsibilities and duties, wanting to sit idly by and do nothing. The attitude of the average Christian is this: If the government will leave me alone, I'll leave them alone. Do you realize we're to be exposing wickedness wherever it is found? You do not have to look far in any government to find wickedness or corruption. You don't have to look far to find it even from yourself and in most churches. Do you realize that, as God's warrior priests, we are to attack and expose wickedness wherever we find it?

Do you understand that according to God's Word, there is no enemy that can stand before God's warrior priests when that warrior priest stands in faith, in obedience, and in submission to God? Listen to James 4, verse 7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you." Not even Satan himself can stand before a warrior priest who stands in submission to God.

When warrior priests abdicate their duties and responsibilities, it causes the downfall of society and the death of their kindred. In failing to do our duties, the earth is crushed under the judgment of God. Adam failed to protect his wife, and the earth was cursed. Aaron, the high priest, failed to protect while Moses was on the mountain receiving the commandments of God, and Aaron built a golden calf. Three thousand died because of that. Just read the book of Judges and see how many are killed over and over and over. Why? Because no one guards and no one protects.

Society is collapsing. Our nation is being destroyed because we've lost a fighting warrior spirit. Whenever the Levites and the priests fail in their role as guardians, society always collapses and falls into sin and rebellion. We have so compromised the truth of God's Word today as professing Christians. Look at the churches that profess to be Christian and yet advocate premarital sex, extramarital affairs, therapeutic divorce, compassionate abortion, sodomy, benevolent socialism, governmental tyranny, along with legalized fraud and theft. If professing Christians advocate that, what would the world advocate? What would the wicked advocate?

The question that God asked in Psalm 94 and verse 16 is this: “Who will stand for me against the workers of iniquity? And who will rise up for me against evil doers?” It should be God’s warrior priests.

And you know what we need in this country? We need a fresh reviving and a fresh understanding of our responsibilities. We need God to raise up men and women who know how to fight. They can fight spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and, if need be, physically; but we need the warrior spirit that God gave from the foundation of creation to Adam, to the Levites, and now to us. The question is, are we warrior priests? Are we willing to stand and fight for truth and righteousness and the principles of the Word of God? May God give us warrior priests.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to thee. We ask you for your grace, mercy, kindness, and goodness. Stir our hearts and spirits; raise us up. As the wicked fight for wickedness and sin, help us fight, Father, for righteousness, holiness, and obedience. Help us uphold the banner and standard of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, whom we confess and acknowledge as God of gods, King of

kings, and Lord of lords, to whom belongs all glory and praise. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 22

The Doctrine Of Interposition Or The Lesser Magistrate

August 17, 2015

Introduction: The Current Tyrannical State and the Role of Ignorance

Romans chapter 13, the first seven verses:

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. And whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye

tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."

There is absolutely no one in America who is ignorant of what has happened in the last week or so. We are, in essence, in a tyrannical state under the rule of tyrants. There are no two ways about that. Tyranny can prevail only through ignorance, apathy, and a refusal to exercise diligence and self-responsibility. I want to emphasize the part of ignorance when it comes to tyranny.

There is a theological concept that will either promote tyranny or deter it, depending on one's understanding: sovereignty. We must understand that God alone is absolutely sovereign. He is the only absolute and the only ultimate. If you understand God's sovereignty, tyranny will be deterred, because this truth is made plain and simple to the individual who understands God's sovereignty: only God is sovereign, and man is therefore limited. He is limited in every institution—in self-government, family government, civil government, and church government. Thus, a proper understanding of God's sovereignty will always dispel, deter, and deny tyranny.

However, when one is willfully ignorant of God's sovereignty, in rebellion, or conveniently forgets it, man must have an absolute, an ultimate, a sovereign. He will therefore place sovereignty either in himself or in some institution of man.

And usually the institution in which He places sovereignty is the government of men.

We are living in a day when people are absolutely ignorant of what the Bible and history teach concerning civil government. Such ignorance could not have prevailed during the first hundred years of the founding of America. Why? Colonial preachers always preached election sermons and artillery sermons, not only to the people but also to the rulers. It was impossible for any man to assume an office of responsibility in colonial America without hearing an election sermon. In that sermon, the pastor declared the duties and responsibilities of rulers, both to the people and to the rulers themselves. They understood what government was to be, what

government could do, and the limitations placed upon it. Ignorance could not prevail in such a setting.

However, today ignorance reigns supremely. We adhere to the old adage that ignorance is bliss. And if ignorance is bliss, we should be the happiest people on the face of the earth, because we are absolutely ignorant of the plain teaching of the Word of God concerning civil government. Most people are ignorant not only of the simplest concepts but also of the more complex ones. Consequently, we are easy prey for tyrants and are quickly consumed by despotic rulers.

The Nature of Tyranny and American Servitude

Tyranny can take many forms. Most of us are familiar with what you and I would call coercion, or hard-handed tactics, or pressure, or force. But C.S. Lewis said something about tyranny that is worth repeating. Listen carefully. He says, "Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under the robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep; his cupidity may at some point be satiated. But those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end, for they do so with the approval of their own consciences."

And that's true. That's exactly true. Huxley, in his book, *Brave New World*, said it like this: "A really efficient totalitarian state would be one in which the all-powerful executive or political bosses and their army of managers control a population of slaves who do not have to be coerced because they love their servitude." And when you stop and think, that is exactly where we are in America today. Americans love their servitude. They love their economic slavery. That's why they are in debt up to their eyeballs. We love our governmental slavery because look at all the rules and regulations and administrative procedures, as well as licenses, permits, and certifications that we must follow and we must possess.

And we have been led to believe that all these things are for our safety and protection. Yet our forefathers had none of them, and they were protected and had none of these problems. Obviously, we are in slavery—not only governmentally and economically, but

spiritually. Everyone loves their sins and fleshly passions. We have turned our backs on the Lord Jesus Christ and consequently embraced pornography, abortion, sodomy, fornication, adultery, theft, socialism, Marxism, communism, and progressivism—anything and everything contrary to the Word of God.

We live in a day when everybody wants a free lunch, so to speak. Everyone wants the government to give, give, give. Everybody understands that for the government to give, it must take from someone, and most people could care less so long as it is not taken from them. They want it taken from everyone else and given to them. We must understand the difference between legal plunder and illegal plunder. In one sense of the word, they are synonymous.

Legal Plunder and the Loss of Liberty

Because the result is the same in both cases: we end up plundered and robbed. Illegal plunder is when I point a pistol at your face and say, "Give me all of your money." Everybody understands that is illegal. If you are an illegal plunderer or thief, you are in danger, because the individual you are plundering may be armed or may fight. You may be killed, injured, or captured, and in that sense of the word, you are going to prison. That is illegal plunder.

Legal plunder, however, is when we are stolen from and robbed through regulations, statutes, and laws. In this instance, the legal thief is never in danger. Unless you give according to their rule, regulation, or law, you are the one who faces prison.

The truth of the matter is that we have lost a lot of ground in this country. Have you ever wondered how we have lost our liberties and freedoms? Have you ever wondered why this country continues to disintegrate and descend into what you and I would describe as absolute chaos? One answer is simply this: we have not grown weary of all the tyranny, abuses, usurpations, and despotism with which we are constantly assaulted. Have you ever stopped to think what it took for the American Revolution?

The Doctrine of Interposition

People finally had to say, “No more. We’re just not going to take it anymore. That’s it.” But we have not reached that point in this country. We have not grown weary of incremental tyranny and abuse, nor understood what it takes to thwart them. When we become thoroughly exasperated with our system of incremental tyranny, perhaps many will learn the doctrine of interposition, find a lesser magistrate willing to fight the beast, stand behind him, support him, and turn this country around.

This is the doctrine of interposition, sometimes called the doctrine of the lesser magistrate. I want to present this truth in three ways: historically, legally, and theologically. I wish I could make each one clear-cut, but I cannot. They will be intermingled, because Scripture or theology, as well as history, will probably enter into each of them. Let me present this truth first of all historically.

Historical Foundations of Interposition

The doctrine of interposition goes back many centuries. This point will become clearer when we consider interposition theologically. It was said that the Roman Emperor Trajan, when appointing a subordinate authority, handed him a sword and instructed him: “Use this sword against my enemies if I give righteous commands, but if I give unrighteous commands, use it against me.”

In that statement we see the biblical and historical doctrine of interposition, together with the authority and power of what we call a lesser magistrate. The Emperor was the higher magistrate; the subordinate was a lesser magistrate. All magistrates have their power from God. Romans 13:1–2 says: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers”—or jurisdictions, or authorities—“for there is no power”—or jurisdiction, or authority—“but of God. The powers”—or jurisdictions, or authorities—“are ordained of God.”

“Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.” So God is telling us that every magistrate, every power, every authority is delegated from Him.

Interestingly, one of the main words used for magistrate in the Bible is found in Judges, chapter 18, verse 7. In this passage the Bible says, “Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man.”

The children of Dan were looking for an opportunity to expand their territory. They came to Laish, and these five men scouting out the land saw that there was no magistrate in the land that might put them to shame.

The word translated “magistrate” here is *esser*, meaning “a possessor of restraint”: someone with power or authority to restrain. Since there was no authority there, no one had legitimate power to hold back the Danites. They returned to their tribe and said, “It’s going to be easy pickings, boys. Let’s just go get it, because they have no one there to fight against us, and there’s no one there to condemn us.” So they simply went and got it.

Thus, “magistrate” first means someone with the power of restraint, someone able to hold back. The second time the word is used is in Ezra 7:25. There the king told Ezra, “And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, that they may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God, and teach ye them that know them not.” Here the Hebrew word is *Shaphat*.

In this passage, the word refers to someone able to litigate, pass sentence, and punish. Yet it appears in the context of Ezra’s command concerning “all who know the laws of thy God.” Ezra was therefore to appoint only magistrates who knew the law of God. If he appointed anyone who did not know God’s law, he had the responsibility to teach him that law.

A magistrate is not merely someone who possesses power or authority; he also knows the law of God and rules under God. Obviously, then, all magistrates have the duty and responsibility to

restrain evil and wickedness. On the other hand, they also have the duty and responsibility to apply the law of God.

In Romans chapter 13, the Bible gives two—and only two—reasons why God instituted civil government. God gave two purposes for civil government: number one, the punishment of the wicked; and number two, the protection of the righteous. These are the two purposes God has given for civil government. What, then, does interposition have to do with this? Interposition is the doctrine that causes a lesser or lower magistrate to step in when a higher or superior magistrate begins to exercise tyranny or usurpation, or begins to issue bad and wicked laws.

The Duty of Lesser Magistrates to Resist Tyranny

Lesser magistrates are not to unquestioningly obey their superiors. When they do so, they deny their own personal responsibility and duty, and their obedience becomes positively evil. Remember when Ahab wanted the garden of Naboth? Naboth would not sell it, because God had forbidden him to sell it. Ahab turned his face to the wall and started crying like a baby.

Jezebel asked, “What is it?” He told her, and she said, “Art thou not the king of Israel? I’ll take care of this for you.” She wrote an order to the elders of Jezreel, put his seal upon it, and said, “Proclaim a fast, set Naboth up on high, get false witnesses against him, and take him out and stone him to death.” That is exactly what they did. They not only stoned Naboth to death, but also his sons. They murdered the family.

Then she gave the garden to Ahab and said, “It’s yours. Naboth is not alive. He’s dead. Go down and possess it.” Interestingly, God charged Ahab with that murder. Jezebel did everything, but God charged Ahab; his name was on it. God also held the elders of Jezreel accountable. Had they not obeyed Jezebel, Naboth and his sons would have lived.

They had a duty and responsibility to stand against the wickedness of their superiors, but they did not. If you have a civil ruler in the highest office, with the most authority, that does not give him the right to tyrannize the people or issue unlawful, unjust, or

immoral laws. And if a lesser magistrate is in the lowest office, that does not give him the right to say, “I’m just following orders. I’ve got to do what I’m told.” No. He has a duty and responsibility to resist unjust and immoral laws as well. He cannot take the “I’m just following orders” mentality. It is completely unbiblical—a denial of personal responsibility and duty.

When a lesser magistrate obeys a superior magistrate who is doing that which is wicked, wrong, and illegal, he becomes complicit in those sins, just as the elders of Jezreel did. Every lesser magistrate is required by God to judge every law and every action in light of the supreme law, which is the Word of God. If he does not do so, he will not escape the righteous judgment of God. God will judge him.

There has been a lot of perversion going on in this country for some time now, and this perversion is made legal. But the truth is, it is not over until it is over. In America, every unconstitutional law is null and void, *ab initio*, that is, from the beginning.

Legal Basis: Unconstitutional Laws are Void

American Jurisprudence, 2nd edition, says, "The general rule is that an unconstitutional statute, though having the form and the name of law, is in reality no law, but is wholly void and ineffective for the purpose, for any purpose, since unconstitutionality dates from the time of its enactment, and not merely from the date of the decision so branding it. No one is bound to obey an unconstitutional law, and no courts are bound to enforce it."

The Supreme Court ruling in *Norton v. Shelby County* states, "Any unconstitutional act is not law. It confers no rights. It imposes no duties, affords no protection. It creates no office. It is in legal contemplation as though it had never been passed." Thus, the Supreme Court said that an unconstitutional law could safely be disregarded. History is replete with those who interposed themselves to resist tyranny and wicked and unjust laws. In 1215, the barons and nobles held King John accountable at Runnymede. Their intervention, their interposition, led to the Magna Carta, and our Constitution has direct ties to the Magna Carta.

Martin Luther, the reformer, was rescued by a lesser magistrate. Charles V, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, had given Luther safe-conduct passage to and from the Diet of Worms, the parliament at which they were meeting. Luther refused to recant his views and writings. Charles V then violated the safe conduct he had given Martin Luther, demanded Luther's arrest, and ordered that this notorious heretic be brought to his court and punished.

The punishment would have been death. Luther was saved by Prince Frederick the Wise, the Elector of Saxony. Prince Frederick was under Charles V, the Emperor. Frederick totally ignored the Emperor's ungodly, wicked order. He had Luther abducted and taken to a safe place. He did not turn Luther over; he protected him. That is interposition.

The Germans had a great word for tyrants and tyranny: *Beowulf*. Beowulf, of course, was a monster in German folklore. If you can imagine a bear and a wolf together, that would be a pretty good monster. Luther used the bear-wolf in his writings as a symbol of tyranny. There was a soldier's song about the bear-wolf:

"Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, just as we read, but how much more so for the Lord God. As long as he does the Lord's will and lives in peace, Caesar's office we must honor. Should he transgress, he is no more emperor or lord, but an outlaw and a bear-wolf against which we must guard."

That was 1548. When the emperor violates God's law, he is no longer emperor or lord, but an outlaw and a bear-wolf against which we must guard.

In 1550, a number of Lutheran pastors wrote the Magdeburg Confession, which clearly and succinctly sets forth the doctrine of interposition and describes the duties and responsibilities of lesser magistrates.

Usurpation, Tyranny, and Biblical Condemnation

Usurpation is taking power or authority that has never been given or granted. Usurpation is theft, plain and simple. The United States Constitution limits the federal government and expressly states its limited powers. Therefore, a great deal of theft and usurpation has

taken place in this country. Consider all the bureaucracies and agencies that have been usurped. Show me in the Constitution where the United States government has control, power, or authority over education, welfare, and many other things. It is not there. They have simply usurped it; they have stolen it. Usurpation is the taking of power that has not been given or granted. Tyranny is the abuse of power.

One may have obtained office or authority legally and justly in the beginning, but whenever he becomes abusive, destructive, and detrimental to the citizenry, it is tyranny. Let me spell this out: tyranny is not and has never been a God-ordained form of government. Nowhere in the Bible does God commend tyranny. In fact, the Bible condemns tyranny. If there were only one passage that I could rely upon—and I could quote multitudes if I had time—it would be Psalm 94, verses 20 and 21. Let me read it: "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law? They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood."

A throne refers to civil government. Thus, it is a throne of iniquity, a wicked civil government. "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by law?" Mischief is another word in the Bible for sin. Shall a wicked civil government have fellowship with God when it makes sin legal? The answer is no. Obviously not. It has no fellowship with God; it is contrary to God.

When a civil government says sodomy is legal, it is not in fellowship with God; it is contrary to God. When it says theft is legal, it is not in fellowship with God; it is contrary to God. When it says abortion is legal, it is not legal in the sight of God; it is in disagreement with God and contrary to God. That is why the next verse says, "They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous and condemn the innocent blood." That is what aborticide is: condemnation of the innocent blood.

John Calvin wrote, "For earthly princes lay aside their power when they rise up against God, and are unworthy to be reckoned upon the number of mankind. We ought rather to spit upon their heads than to obey them." In other words, they lose their power and

are unworthy to be reckoned among the number of mankind. We ought rather to spit upon their heads than to obey them.

I would not consider spitting upon their head. Their face would be a better target, I would think, to show my absolute contempt for them. Frédéric Bastiat, in *The Law* in 1847, said, “When the law and morality contradict each other, the citizen has the cruel alternative of either losing his moral sense or losing respect for the law.” So we are now in a predicament in this country. We either have to respect the law or lose our morality. You cannot respect the law without losing your morality. If you keep your morality, then you disrespect the law because you understand that it is wicked and a violation of the law of God.

American Legal and Historical Precedents

Historically, the doctrine of interposition has been used down through the ages. Legally, the fourth edition of *Black’s Law Dictionary* defines interposition this way: “It is the doctrine that a state in the exercise of its sovereignty may reject a mandate of the federal government deemed to be unconstitutional or to exceed the powers delegated to the federal government. The doctrine denies constitutional obligations of states to respect Supreme Court decisions with which they do not agree.” Thus, the state is not obligated to respect or obey an unconstitutional order or mandate handed down by the federal government. If that government exceeds its enumerated powers, the state is not obligated to obey. A state does not possess a constitutional obligation to obey everything that the federal government says or sends down the pike.

Interposition may be done peaceably, by resolution, remonstrance, or legislation, or it may proceed ultimately to nullification with forcible resistance. The concept of interposition regarding the states emanated from a court case known as *Chisholm v. Georgia*, which took place in 1792. In South Carolina, Alexander Chisholm, executor of Robert Farquhar’s estate, attempted to sue the state of Georgia in the Supreme Court of the United States over payment for goods Farquhar had sent to Georgia during the Revolutionary War. Farquhar had Attorney General Edmund Randolph pleading his case. Georgia refused to appear

before the Supreme Court, arguing that a sovereign state could not be sued without its consent. The Supreme Court demanded that Georgia appear. Georgia said, “No, we’re not going to appear. We’re the master. You’re the servant.”

The Supreme Court said, “Fine, stay there. We will enter our verdict without you. We don't need you up here.” The state of Georgia responded with great determination: “Fine, make all the verdicts that you desire. But you better know this: the very first agent that you send into the sovereign state of Georgia to enforce your edict will be hanged immediately without the benefit of clergy.”

Because of Chisholm v. Georgia, the Eleventh Amendment was ratified in 1795. All pending court actions from Chisholm were dismissed, and the federal jurisdiction no longer had power over cases like this. Here, the state of Georgia was saying, “No, we're not going to put up with this.” And they certainly did not.

Since the lesser magistrate, or the lower-ranking civil governmental official, is God's minister as well, he therefore has a duty and responsibility to protect those under him from evil policies, statutes, laws, and decrees promulgated by higher authorities. So, let me go over this again. I want you to think. The doctrine of interposition holds that even if the highest-ranking authority in this country issued a ruling or law that is unconstitutional, immoral, or unjust, the lowest-ranking official—even the lowest—has the duty and obligation to step in between, interpose himself and his office, and say, basically,

"No, excuse my English, you ain't going to do this to my people in this county, in my state." That is it. If he fails to do that, then he is complicit in the crime and in the wickedness. The lower magistrate cannot escape the judgment of God either, because it is his duty, obligation, and responsibility to protect the people.

The framers of the Constitution of the United States understood the doctrine of interposition. In fact, that is exactly what they did in reference to George III, King of England, and Parliament, in declaring and winning their independence from the king and from England. They also presupposed this doctrine in the very first constitution, the Articles of Confederation. They presupposed it

again when they left the Articles of Confederation and wrote the Constitution of the United States. In fact, James Madison, who was Secretary of the Constitutional Convention, argued in Federalist Papers No. 43 that the principles of the Law of Compacts and the principles of the very laws of nature and of nature's God are included in the doctrine of interposition.

Now, I want to give you something that may surprise you. If you have never read the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, I would encourage you to do so. Thomas Jefferson had a hand in this, in reference to the Alien and Sedition Acts. Listen to what Jefferson and a number of other men said in the late 1700s—not the 1900s or the 2000s. The first Kentucky Resolution resolved that the several states composing the United States of America "are not united on the principle of unlimited submission to their general government." They were not going to follow and have unlimited submission to the general government. Rather, by a compact under the style and title of a constitution for the United States, and of the amendments thereto, they constituted a general government for special purposes, delegated to that government certain definite powers, reserving each state to itself the residuary mass of right to their own self-government, and that whensoever the

The general government assumes undelegated powers; its acts are unauthoritative, void, and of no force. To this compact, each state is seated as a state and as an integral party, its co-states forming, as to itself, the other party. The government created by this compact was not made the exclusive or final judge of the extent of the powers delegated to itself, since that would have made its discretion, and not the Constitution, the measure of its powers. As in all other cases of compact among powers having no common judge, each party, or each state, has an equal right to judge for itself both of infractions and of the mode and measure of redress.

The states are not in agreement that we owe unlimited submission to the federal government. The federal government is not the determiner of the extent of its own power. If you give me power and then allow me to determine the extent of my power, I have all power. That is exactly what has been happening in this country: we have

allowed the federal government to determine the extent of its power instead of the Constitution.

The Constitution says, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press," thereby guarding, in the same sentence and under the same words, the freedom of religion, speech, and the press. Whatever violates either one throws down the sanctuary which covers the others. Libels, falsehoods, and defamation, equally with heresy and false religion, are withheld from the cognizance of federal tribunals. Therefore, the act of Congress passed on July 14, 1798, entitled "An Act for the Punishment of Certain Crimes Against the United States," which abridges the freedom of the press, is not law but is altogether void and of no force. They were saying, "We're not going to do this, and you're not going to do this to us."

The basic philosophy behind the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions is that the American government is a government of specifically enumerated powers. When the federal government attempts to exercise any power beyond that specifically enumerated in the Constitution, it is acting illegally, immorally, unjustly, and unconstitutionally. When the federal government exceeds its power and goes contrary to the Constitution, even the lower magistrates have the responsibility of ensuring that no federal agent is able to carry out his illegal acts within the jurisdiction of that local lower magistrate.

They are to step in and say, “No, you are just not going to do this.” In other words, a lower government or a county government. Who is the highest authority in the county government? The sheriff. The sheriff has the power to keep out the IRS. He has the power to keep out OSHA. He has the power to keep out FEMA. He has the power to keep out anybody he wants to keep out.

In several states out West, they have already done that. All I am trying to say is this: this is what interposition is all about. In 1824, a Maryland commentator described the usage of interposition: “The right of state legislatures to express their approbation or their approval or their disapproval of the proceedings and policy of the

federal government has been claimed, exercised, and conceded from the establishment of the federal government to the present day."

In other words, everybody knows it. The Tenth Amendment of the United States Constitution says, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people thereof." So you have to ask yourself: What powers does the federal government actually have? The truth is, every power that the federal government possesses is enumerated in the Constitution. I am going to be very generous. Depending on how you read the Constitution, the most they could have would be twenty-five to thirty. Usually, most scholars would say twenty-one specific powers, and most of those are enumerated in Article I, Section 8. There are a few others scattered throughout. Then, of course, the Constitution gives the federal government the power to form and operate the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. But that is it. Period. That is it.

So you have to ask yourself this question: If the federal government was given, let us be gracious and generous, thirty enumerated powers, thirty specific powers, where did they get all the other power? They stole it. They usurped it. They use what are known as implied powers: "Well, we do not have it, but it is implied." Really? Not according to the Constitution, because the Constitution says they are enumerated. They are spelled out.

It was that ironclad Southerner, John C. Calhoun, who taught nullification. Nullification simply meant that the states had the right, the duty, and the responsibility to nullify bad laws as well as unconstitutional laws passed by Washington, D.C. Interposition is to intervene or come between. Politically, interposition occurs when a magistrate ends a rebellion by some of the people or by magistrates. Now listen carefully. Suppose there is a riot going on out on the street—forty people out there rioting.

The sheriff comes up and disperses the rioters. Everyone understands that. Suppose it is not the sheriff but a police officer, an officer of the court, or a bailiff. Everybody understands that as well. But what we tend to forget is this: it is usually not the people who are in rebellion. It is the civil rulers themselves who are in rebellion.

Therefore, a lower magistrate would have the power not only to quell a riot or rebellion among the people, but equally to quell a riot or rebellion among superior magistrates by stepping in and saying, "You are not going to do this. You're just not going to do it."

Interposition has far wider and greater implications. Not only are nullification and protection part and parcel of this teaching, but interposition also teaches that when a ruler is tyrannical and wicked and seeking to overthrow the people, a lesser magistrate may step in, take his place, and fulfill his responsibility.

This was exactly the scenario that occurred during the American War of Independence. George III kept sending royal governors and other officers who represented him to enforce his edicts, decrees, and the decrees of Parliament. These officers were legally appointed by the king. But the colonists said, "We didn't appoint them. They're not ours. They belong to the king." So the colonists appointed their own officers and governors and followed them in fighting the tyranny of George III and of England in Parliament.

There are indeed many implications. Consider this not only historically and legally, but thirdly, theologically. We understand the intervention of magistrates, especially in light of the corruption, perversion, and abusive authority of wicked rulers, and we deem it right and just. If you read Jeremiah 26:8–19, you will find how lesser magistrates interposed themselves and saved Jeremiah from death. Obviously, we understand that.

Spiritual Magistrates

SCRIPTURE READING - Numbers 25:1-8 (KJV)

Theological Basis: Spiritual Magistrates and Biblical Examples

> But let me tell you something that we have forgotten. We have forgotten that pastors are spiritual magistrates. Do you realize a magistrate is a magistrate, whether he's in the civil realm or the spiritual realm? If you want to get a good understanding of this, I would encourage you to study the American War for Independence and see how the pastors preached, prayed, thought, and led in that war. There were preachers who led

their entire congregations. There were preachers who were commissioned as officers. The same was true during the War of Northern Aggression. There are many instances in the Bible where a spiritual magistrate stepped in and performed the duty of a civil magistrate when the civil magistrate failed to do his duty.

Let me show you. I want you to look in your Bibles to Numbers chapter 25. I wish I had time just to read this entire chapter, but I do not. There's still a lot to cover. But look in Numbers chapter 25, and let's read at least the first seven verses:

"And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods, and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said to the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one of his men that were joined unto Baal-peor. And behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand. And he went in after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel."

This is where Israel commits not only fornication and whoredom, but idolatry as well. God tells Moses that everyone who has joined himself unto Baal-peor in the worship of this idol is to be put to death. God Himself pronounced the death penalty: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel."

Why did God say this to Moses? Moses is the lawgiver, known in the Bible as prophet, priest, and king. The Bible says plainly that he was king in Jeshurun. Thus, he was the highest civil magistrate. He was also, at this point, probably the highest spiritual magistrate, because Aaron was basically under him even at the beginning, and probably still was.

God told Moses what was to be done, and Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Slay ye every one of his men that were joined unto Baal-peor." God told Moses, "They're all to die," and Moses told the judges, "They're all to die." Meanwhile, Moses was before the door of the tabernacle, weeping and praying over what was happening. Then one of the children of Israel brought a Midianitish woman before his brethren in the sight of Moses and all the congregation of Israel, who were weeping before the tabernacle. Not all the children of Israel could get before the door of the tabernacle.

There were two million Israelites. Anytime you see the phrase "the congregation of the children of Israel," it refers to the leaders: the princes of the twelve tribes, the rulers, and the priests. They were all there, weeping and praying over what was happening.

Prayer is needed, necessary, and commanded. However, there is a time when you have to stop praying and simply obey God. In this instance, God had sent a plague upon the children of Israel, and they were falling like flies. None of the praying and weeping did any good until justice was given out by Phinehas. Zimri, who was a prince, had brought Cozbi into the camp in front of them all—boldly and brazenly, in defiance of God, Moses, and everyone else. Moses and the others were in front of the tabernacle, praying, crying, and weeping. Phinehas had enough. He jumped up, took a javelin, ran in, and killed both of them. Phinehas was not a civil ruler.

He was not a high priest. He was certainly in the priestly order, since he was the grandson of Aaron, so he would be considered a lesser magistrate. When the judges refused to do their duty, and even while Moses was standing around, Phinehas took care of the situation. Phinehas was not a private person. He was a magistrate, although a lesser magistrate. A spiritual magistrate is still a magistrate. He may not be a civil magistrate, but he is still a magistrate.

Remember, in Judges 18:7, the word *esser* means someone who restrains, or a possessor of restraint—someone who holds back. In Ezra 7:25, the word *shaphat* refers to someone who knows God's law and applies God's law. Even in the New Testament, the word magistrate is very significant. It occurs repeatedly in Acts 16. Magistrate is the Greek word *strategos*, from which we get our English word strategy. The Greek word *strategia* simply means army. If you look up *strategos* in a Greek lexicon, it means a general, a military officer, a commandant, a governor, and the chief of the Levites. In Numbers 3:32, you find who was appointed chief over the Levites. The Levites were armed and were charged with protecting Aaron and the tabernacle, and later the temple.

When you begin reading in the New Testament, you read about the captains of the temple. We know who the Sadducees, Pharisees, and Herodians were, but who were these captains of the temple? They were the ones who came out and captured Christ. These captains were none other than armed Levites who had the power of restraint and carried arms. To understand this more fully, read the section on the pastor's magistrate in my book, The Christian Civil Government. There you will see how these armed Levites are taken from the Old Testament all the way through to the New Testament.

It is not difficult to justify Phinehas in what he did. First of all, Phinehas was an heir apparent to the high priesthood. He was also a magistrate, although a spiritual one. But the actions of Phinehas do not give any private individual the right simply to go out and start killing. A private individual does not have that power or authority. Only magistrates do. In the New Testament, it is the civil magistrate who has been given the power of the sword. We read it in Romans chapter 13: "He beareth not the sword in vain." If you do evil, be afraid, because he beareth not the sword in vain.

However, in this instance Moses, the highest civil leader, and the rest of the judges were before the door of the tabernacle, weeping and praying. They were doing nothing. Phinehas, a lesser magistrate, rose up and took care of the problem. A magistrate is a magistrate; the only difference is in degrees. You may be superior, higher, lower, or the lowest, but you are still a magistrate.

There are illustrations in the Bible where spiritual magistrates took over and fulfilled the functions of civil magistrates when civil magistrates refused to do what they were supposed to do. Take the time to read 1 Samuel chapter 15. God commanded King Saul to slay all the Amalekites: "Kill them all: man, woman, boy, girl, ox, suckling, ass, everything." The Bible says that Saul and the people spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites, and the best of the sheep and oxen, and would not utterly slay them. So God sent Samuel to Saul. When Saul saw him, he hypocritically said, "Blessed be thou of the Lord, I performed all the commandment of God."

About that time, something went "baa." Samuel said, "If you've obeyed God, what meaneth the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the cattle in mine ears? If you'd obeyed God, everything would be dead." Saul blamed the people, but he had spared Agag. So Samuel said, "Bring me hither Agag." I cannot read the next verse without smiling, because the Bible says that Agag came forth delicately.

I can just see him prancing, saying, "Surely the bitterness of death is over. No, I'm not going to die." But the Bible says that Samuel, the little preacher, took a sword and hewed Agag into pieces before the Lord. The word "before" literally means "as unto the Lord." In other words, Samuel did exactly to Agag what God wanted done to him. Here was Samuel doing what Saul should have done. Saul had refused to do his duty, and Samuel stepped in and did it.

In 1 Kings chapter 18, we have the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. God sent fire from heaven, which consumed Elijah's sacrifice and licked up the water from the trench. The people fell on their faces and said, "The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God." Elijah then said, "Bring me hither the prophets of Baal," and took a sword and cut off the heads of 400 prophets of Baal. King Ahab, the highest civil ruler in the land, was standing right there. He should have done it, but he did not. How could Elijah cut off the heads of all these false prophets? Because he was a magistrate as well. He was a spiritual magistrate, but he was a magistrate.

In 2 Kings chapter 11, you will remember Athaliah, who murdered all her grandchildren except one. The only reason she did not murder him was the king's sister, Athaliah's

Her daughter took him and hid him in the temple. When Joash was seven years of age, Jehoiada the high priest had him crowned king. When Athaliah heard all the noise and the trumpets blasting and blaring, she came to the temple, and there was everybody bowing down and saying, “God save the king! God save the king!” Athaliah cried, “Treason! Treason!” Really? She was the one who committed treason and murdered all of her grandchildren. Jehoiada said, “Have her without the temple and slay her and all who follow her.” Now that was the high priest. What was he doing?

He was interposing himself between the people and a wicked, vile ruler, and he had her executed. When you get to the book of Exodus chapter 23 and verse 22—it is in verse 28—there is the Hebrew word nasi, and the word nasi simply means one lifted up, elevated, or exalted by the local congregation. You will find the same word applied to princes in Numbers chapter 1, but it is also applied to any ruler of God’s people throughout the book of Exodus and Joshua as well.

Now, since we are in Numbers 25, we know that Phinehas took a javelin and went in and killed Zimri and Cozbi. So the question has to be asked: How do we know that God approved of this? First, if you look in Numbers 25:8: “And he went in after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.” “And those that died in the plague were 24,000.” How do we know that God approved of this? Because God instantly stopped the plague. The weeping and praying and humiliation before the door of the tabernacle did nothing to stop the plague until this was taken care of.

If magistrates do not punish sin, then God will. But magisterial justice is the best way to prevent the judgment of God. Witness Joshua chapter 7, when they took care of Achan and his sin. When magistrates fail to punish sin and punish wickedness, it does not mean that the wicked will get away with their sin and wickedness. Please listen to me. God will eventually judge himself. So it does not matter how Obama has turned the White House into the gay rainbow. It does not matter what the Supreme Court has said. God is

still on the throne, and God is still the chief magistrate. God will judge when they refuse to do so.

Secondly, God did place an honor upon Phinehas. Although he did no more than his duty as a magistrate, he did it with extraordinary zeal against sin and for God's honor and glory, and he did it when other judges refused, probably out of respect for Zimri's position. Zimri was a prince, so he could have been higher than they were or equal to them, and they were hesitant to execute a prince. But Phinehas said, "I'm not hesitant," and took care of it. In Psalm 106:31, the Bible says of Phinehas, "And it was accounted to him for righteousness." In other words, Phinehas did the right and holy thing. He did what God wanted done.

Thirdly, Phinehas, though a young man, is pronounced his country's patriot and best friend. The Lord said unto Moses, "Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy." Is that not amazing? God said he was a patriot: he turned His wrath away. Twenty-four thousand had already died. How many more would have died if he had not done this? God said he was the patriot. Certainly, we should do our part in our prayers, our obedience, and our endeavors in bringing the wickedness and the wicked to an end.

Fourthly, the priesthood is entailed upon him by covenant, and upon his family. It had been designed for him before, but now it was confirmed to him, which added much comfort and honor to it: "Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him"—this is God speaking—"my covenant of peace, and he shall have it and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God and made atonement for the children of Israel." This priesthood was given to him and is called everlasting because it should continue throughout the Old Testament period, finding its perfection, perpetuity, and unchangeableness in the priesthood of Christ, who is consecrated forevermore. The doctrine of interposition is therefore very important, but it is a neglected doctrine.

Christ as the Ultimate Interposition and Call to Action

If we do not address this doctrine, what is going to happen in this country—and I am afraid it is already happening—is that we will descend into absolute chaos, confusion, and anarchy. Most people follow what happened in Judges 17 and 21, when Scripture says, "There was no king in Israel in those days; everyone did that which was right in their own eyes."

So what does this mean? With all the wickedness going on in our country, all the unconstitutionality, and all the bad, immoral, and unjust laws, we should find a lesser magistrate who is willing to stand and fight, and get behind him and support him.

You say, "I cannot find one." Well, bless God, we can elect one or appoint one, because it is someone who has an office and power. Does interposition have a theological basis? What is the answer? Absolutely. Yes. Let me show you one other passage.

Romans 3:24 says, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Verse 25 continues: "Whom God hath set forth"—or put forward—"to be a propitiation, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." God set forth His Son to be a propitiation, one who appeases and placates the holiness and wrath of God.

Here we are as sinners. We may be elect sinners, but we are still sinners. God is righteously angry with the wicked every day, and His wrath is righteously directed against us. Jesus Christ comes and interposes Himself, standing between His people and the wrath of God. The wrath of God falls upon Jesus Christ instead of us. If you do not like the doctrine of interposition, you do not like salvation, because the only salvation there is comes by the doctrine of interposition. Jesus Christ is the greatest example of interposition that has ever been.

Jesus Christ does not intervene for us only soteriologically, that is, in salvation. He also intervenes for us politically. Psalm 2 speaks of the wicked rebellion of the kings in verses 1 through 5. But verse 6 says, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare

the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." God says, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

What about the wicked rulers? "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Jesus Christ has not only intervened and interposed Himself for our salvation soteriologically; He interposes and saves us even politically. The wicked do not have and do not own their own realms. I do not care what Obama says, what the Congress says, or what kings and princes say. Jesus Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and God of Gods, and those who will not submit to Him will be broken with a rod of iron.

It is like what He said to the Israelites: He brought them out—that is, out of Egypt—that He might bring them in—that is, into Canaan. God did not bring the children of Israel out to drop them in the desert and let them die. Our Lord did not save us and bring us out of our sins to leave us enslaved to tyrants who hate God and hate Christ. No. He is going to totally, absolutely deliver us. Do you remember our Lord said in John 17:24, "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am"? Yes, He brought us out that He might bring us in.

Now let me make a couple of applications. I want you to see how important this is. Interposition can be done even by the people through remonstrance. The wicked are flooding the streets right now and demanding their rights. What about us, the people who want righteousness and holiness and justice? Do we not have the right to do that? Why have we not done that, and why are we not doing that?

A good illustration is found in 1 Samuel 14. There was a battle going on, and King Saul made a very unwise decree: "Cursed be the

man that eateth any food or tasteth any food until I be avenged of mine enemies." Jonathan did not hear him. Jonathan was his son, and he was chasing the enemies; in fact, he was the one God used to defeat them. He saw a honeycomb on the ground, took his rod, dipped it in the honeycomb, and put it in his mouth.

The Bible said that Jonathan's eyes were enlightened. Someone told him, "Oh, Jonathan, your father gave a curse on anybody who eats until his enemies are whipped." Jonathan said, "My father's done foolishly. See how mine eyes have been enlightened? If all the people had eaten, obviously the slaughter of our enemies would be far greater." When the battle was over, the people flew upon the spoils of the heathen and sinned against God by eating sheep and oxen with the blood, which was totally forbidden. Thus Jonathan was supposed to die.

First Samuel 14, verses 43 through 45, says: "Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die. And Saul answered, God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan. And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid! As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not."

Saul was going to kill him, but the people said, "No, you're not. You're not going to kill him." Some of you probably saw it recently: a cop was going to arrest a little fourteen-year-old girl standing on a street corner with some others who had done nothing. The people surrounded her and said, "You're not going to do this. You leave her alone." The cops left because they were outnumbered. That's interposition.

A good illustration of interposition is what we would call jury nullification. Do you realize that, as a juror, you have the absolute right to try not only the facts but the law itself? If Steve has violated a law and I am a juror in his trial, I listen to the facts, but I also look at the law. If the law is immoral, unjust, wicked, or unconstitutional, it does not matter what the facts are. He is not guilty, because the law is null and void.

We must understand the doctrine of interposition. We must understand that we have a responsibility to intervene and interpose ourselves.

By the way, you say, "I don't like this doctrine of interposition." Well, let me ask you a question. Suppose you're standing on a street corner and three thugs come to beat you up. One hits you upside the head and knocks you down; the other two stomp and mash you into the pavement. Along come Brother Francis and myself. My question is this: Do you want us to interpose ourselves and save you, or do you want us to keep walking down the street? In other words, you tend to like interposition. It is a biblical doctrine, a historical doctrine, and a legal doctrine.

And we need to resurrect it and use it. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to you this day. We thank you for your love, for your grace, for your mercy, and your goodness. Lord, teach us. Build us up, we pray, in the most holy faith. And may thy will be done in our lives. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 23

The Doctrine of Interposition

December 18, 2016

SCRIPTURE READING - Romans 13:1-7 (KJV)

Bibles to Romans chapter 13, and I'm going to ask you as we read Romans chapter 13 today that you listen intently because I have a lot of material to cover and I normally would ask you to turn to a lot of scriptures, but I will probably be quoting most scriptures today just to save time. So Romans chapter 13, the title of the message is "The Doctrine, or the Biblical Doctrine of Interposition, or the Lesser Magistrate." So look in Romans chapter 13, beginning there with verse 1: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God."

"And they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore

ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing."

The Doctrine of Interposition or the Lesser Magistrate

Introduction: Tyranny and Ignorance of God's Sovereignty

"Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."

Do you understand that we are experiencing tyranny in this country? Tyranny can prevail only through ignorance, apathy, and refusal to exercise diligence and self-responsibility. There is a theological concept that either deters or promotes tyranny: the concept of sovereignty.

When you understand that God alone is absolutely sovereign, tyranny is deterred. The truth is made plain to the individual who understands God's sovereignty: man is limited in all his institutions. Man cannot be sovereign in any sense of the word. He is limited in self-government, civil government, family government, and church government. Man cannot possibly be the ultimate, the absolute, or the sovereign, for there is only one Sovereign, and that is God Himself.

A proper understanding of God's sovereignty will always dispel, deter, and deny tyranny. However, when man, in rebellion or ignorance, ignores, denies, or conveniently forgets God's sovereignty, he has not eliminated sovereignty. By nature, man needs an ultimate, an absolute, a sovereign. When he denies God's sovereignty, he will inevitably place sovereignty in man, either in himself or in some institution that man has established.

And in this instance, most likely it is government. Such ignorance could not take place during the first 100 years of the founding of America. Colonial pastors preached not only election sermons but also artillery sermons, not only to the people but also to their rulers.

Absolutely not one ruler could hold office or take an office without having an election sermon preached to him. In those election sermons, colonial pastors taught the people not only the duties and responsibilities of civil rulers, but also taught the civil rulers their duties and responsibilities. Thus, the government's biblical view was taught clearly, openly, and practically. Ignorance could not prevail during the first 100 years of colonial America.

Unhappily, those days are long past. Ignorance reigns supremely in our age. Today we adhere to the old adage that ignorance is bliss. If ignorance is bliss, we should be the happiest people on the face of the earth. When it comes to the subject of the biblical understanding of civil government, we are of all people most ignorant. We do not even understand the simplest, much less the more complex points concerning civil government.

Consequently, we're easy prey for tyrants, and we quickly fall and are consumed by despotic rulers. Tyranny may take different forms. When you and I think of tyranny, we normally think of coercion. We think of force. We think of heavy-handed pressure. But not all tyranny is that of coercion and heavy-handed pressure. C.S. Lewis pointed this out, listen carefully, and I'm quoting, he said, "Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under the robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated. But those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end, for they do so with the approval of their own consciences."

And that certainly is true. I don't know if you remember Huxley, in his book Brave New World, said it like this: "A really efficient totalitarian state would be one in which the all-powerful executive or political bosses and their army of managers control a population of slaves who do not have to be coerced because they love their servitude." And stop and think about it. That is exactly where we are today. Most Americans are in servitude and they love it.

We are in economic slavery because we are in debt up to our eyeballs. We are in governmental slavery because of the rules, regulations, administrative procedures, licenses, permits, and

certifications that we must follow and possess. We have been led to believe that all these things are for our safety and protection. Yet our forefathers never had any of them, and they were protected. We are enslaved to sin, our flesh, and our passions, for we have turned our backs upon the Lord Jesus Christ and embraced pornography, abortion, sodomy, fornication, adultery, theft, socialism, Marxism, communism, and progressivism.

The problem is that everybody wants a free lunch, so to speak. Everyone wants the government to give, give, give. We want it to take from others and give to us; we only get upset when it takes from us. We have failed to understand that legal plunder and illegal plunder are synonymous, and the end result is exactly the same in both cases: plunder is plunder, and we are robbed.

There is a difference between illegal plunder and legal plunder. Illegal plunder is when one takes a gun, points it at you, and robs you. Everyone understands that this is illegal plunder. It is dangerous not only for the individual being robbed, but also for the robber, because the individual may have a weapon, may not want to be robbed, and may defend himself. Consequently, the robber can be injured, killed, or captured and therefore go to prison. Legal plunder takes place when a rule, regulation, statute, or law requires you to give that which you possess.

The Doctrine of Interposition

Legal plunder has no danger to the plunderer because if you do not give, then you are the one that faces prison. Legal thieves are still thieves. Legal plunderers are still robbers.

You have to ask yourself this question: Why has our country deteriorated, and why are we continually losing our properties, our lives, and our liberties? Why are we descending into absolute chaos? Who can stop it? Why has it not been stopped?

One answer is that we have not grown weary with the usurpations, despotism, and tyranny with which we are constantly assaulted. When we get weary enough, when our backs are against the wall like they should be, we're going to come up and say, "We're not going to take it anymore. Things are going to change." But the problem in this

country is that people have just not gotten weary enough with their tyranny and despotism.

But when we are thoroughly exasperated with our system of incremental tyranny, maybe a number of people will begin to follow a lesser magistrate as that lesser magistrate fights the beast.

The doctrine of interposition is sometimes referred to as the doctrine of the lesser magistrate. I want to show you this doctrine historically, legally, and theologically. These three points are intermixed; Scripture will appear in every one, not just the theological. The doctrine of interposition goes back a long way.

Historical Foundations of Interposition

This doctrine has been around for many centuries, and it will be clarified even more when we get to the theological truth. It is said that the Roman emperor Trajan, when appointing a subordinate authority, handed him a sword and instructed him: "Use this sword against mine enemies if I give righteous commands, but if I give unrighteous commands, use it against me." In that statement, we see not only the doctrine of interposition, but also the power and authority of the lesser magistrate to resist the evil and wickedness of a higher magistrate. You must understand that all magistrates derive their power from God alone.

That is why we begin in Romans 13:1–2: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation," or condemnation. God delegates power, authority, and jurisdiction. All authority, power, and jurisdiction comes from God.

We often talk about the civil ruler or civil magistrate. Interestingly, one of the main Hebrew words for magistrate is found in Judges 18:7:

"Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in

the land, that might put them to shame in any thing; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man."

Five men from the tribe of Dan were scouting an area so they could enlarge their territory. When they found that there was no magistrate in the land who might put them to shame in anything, they returned and told their brethren, "Come on, let's take the land; it'll be easy pickings." The Hebrew word for magistrate is "esser," and it literally means a possessor of restraint, or someone who has the power, authority, and right to restrain.

And since there was no magistrate, since there was no one in that land that had that power and that authority, the Danites said, "We can take this land very easily."

So you have to understand first and foremost that a magistrate is a man of authority. He is someone who has lawful power and lawful authority, with the right to restrain and hold back and punish evil.

The second main word is found in Ezra 7, verse 25. "And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not."

Here you have the word magistrate, but it is a different word. The first word was "esser." Here is the word "shafat." The word "shafat" literally means to litigate, or to pass sentence, or to vindicate, or punish. The king told Ezra to set magistrates, people with authority to restrain and to punish.

More than that, it has to be men who know the law of God. If you set up any magistrate who does not know the law of God, you must teach him the law of God. So a magistrate is not simply someone who has power and authority. A magistrate not only has that power and authority, but knows the law of God and rules in light of that law. He has power to restrain, but he also has the responsibility, duty, and obligation to rule according to God and His law.

All magistrates have the responsibility and duty to restrain and hold back wickedness. Likewise, all magistrates also have the duty and responsibility to enforce the law of God.

Though we are not looking at Romans 13 in detail today, when you look at it in detail, you will find that God ordained civil government for two purposes only. Civil government was ordained by God, number one, to protect the righteous, and number two, to punish the evil. When we talk about interposition, interposition is the doctrine that causes a lesser magistrate to step into the gap and protect the people from a higher or superior magistrate who is abusive or tyrannical.

Lesser magistrates are not simply to obey their superiors unquestioningly. When they do so, they deny their duty and responsibility and become positively evil. Consider the elders of Jezreel. Jezebel took Ahab's seal and ordered them to proclaim a fast, set Naboth on high, bring false witnesses against him, and then take him out and stone him to death. The elders and rulers of Jezreel did exactly as Jezebel commanded; they murdered Naboth and his sons. God held not only Ahab and Jezebel responsible, but also the elders and rulers of Jezreel, for the deaths of Naboth and his sons.

Rulers do not have the authority or the right to make up laws as they please, nor do they have the authority or the right to violate God's law. Was Jezebel wrong? Yes. Was Ahab wrong? Yes. Were the elders of Jezreel wrong? Yes. The fact that a ruler or civil official is of high office, even the highest office, does not justify using that office to commit evil. Neither can a lower magistrate justify cooperating with a higher authority to commit evil. Whether one is a higher or lower magistrate, each has the responsibility to obey God and restrain evil and wickedness. The "I am just following orders" mentality, which contradicts the Word of God, is completely unbiblical. Moreover, it is a denial of personal responsibility. When a lesser magistrate obeys unjust and immoral laws, he becomes complicit in the sins, crimes, and rebellion of the higher authority. A lesser magistrate is required to judge every law by the supreme law of the land, which is the Word of God.

If he does not do so, he will not escape the righteous judgment of God. Simply because a law is a law does not mean that it must be obeyed. The Supreme Court cannot make law. It may render a decision, but that decision is not binding; it is not law. Only

Congress can make laws. In America, unconstitutional laws are null and void and should not be obeyed.

This is spelled out in 16 Am. Jur. 2d: “The general rule is that an unconstitutional statute, though having the form and name of law, is in reality no law, but is wholly void and ineffective for any purpose, since unconstitutionality dates from the time of its enactment and not merely from the date of the decision so branding it. No one is bound to obey an unconstitutional law and no courts are bound to enforce it.”

The Supreme Court itself, in Norton v. Shelby County, ruled: “An unconstitutional act is not law; it confers no rights; it imposes no duties; it affords no protection; it creates no office; it is, in legal contemplation, as though it had never been passed.” Who determines whether something is unconstitutional? It is not the law, and it is not the Supreme Court. It is the people. We, the people, ordained the Constitution.

We are the ones who should know what is constitutional and what is not constitutional. History is replete with examples of those who rejected and resisted unjust and immoral laws. Remember that it was the barons and nobles who interposed themselves and resisted the tyranny of King John in England. Their resistance to their superior and their interposition led to what we know as the Magna Carta in 1215. Our Constitution has direct ties to the Magna Carta.

Martin Luther, the reformer, was rescued by a lesser magistrate. Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, had given Luther a safe-conduct pass to and from the Diet of Worms, or the parliament there. However, when Luther failed to renounce his views and submit to Roman Catholic dogmas, Charles V ordered Luther's arrest and demanded that this notorious heretic be brought to his court and punished, which would have been a death sentence. Luther was saved by Prince Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony. Instead of obeying Charles, Frederick had Luther abducted and taken to a safe haven where Charles V and his minions could not reach him. As a lesser magistrate and a prince under Charles V's authority, Frederick interposed himself and refused to obey the unjust and immoral edict of a tyrant. Thus, Frederick saved Luther's life.

The Germans had an interesting word for tyrants and tyranny: they called a tyrant a “bear wolf,” a unique creature—a bear and a wolf combined. Luther also used this as a symbol of tyranny. A soldier's song from that era said: “Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, just as we read, but how much more so for the Lord God. As long as he does the Lord's will, and lives in peace, Caesar's office we must honor. Should he transgress, he is no more emperor or lord, but an outlaw and a bear wolf against which we must guard.” When the ruler turns against God, he is no longer emperor or lord, but an outlaw and a bear wolf.

In 1550, a number of Lutheran pastors wrote the Magdeburg Confession, which sets forth clearly and succinctly the doctrine of interposition and the duties and responsibilities of the lesser magistrates.

Usurpation is taking power and authority that has not been given or granted to you. Usurpation, then, is theft, plain and simple. When you consider that the United States Constitution limits the federal government and expressly states its powers, it should be obvious that a great deal of theft and usurpation has taken place in this country. Our government has gone many times over and above its limited powers.

Tyranny is the abuse of power. Power may have been obtained legally and justly in the beginning, but when it becomes abusive, destructive, and detrimental to the citizens, it is tyranny. Tyranny is never a God-ordained form of government. It has never been, and it never will be, because it is contrary to God and in violation of God's word.

Psalm 94:20–21 says, "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law? They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood." The throne of iniquity is a civil power, but it is a wicked civil power. It frames mischief by law. Mischief is another word for sin in the Bible; in other words, this wicked civil government makes sin legal. It made sodomy legal, quote unquote. It makes theft legal. It makes murder legal in abortion. Shall this wicked civil government have fellowship with God when it frames mischief, or sin, by law?

The answer is no. These civil rulers gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous and condemn the innocent blood. Just as the Germans said, when the emperor or ruler does that, he becomes an outlaw, a bear wolf. John Calvin wrote, "For earthly princes lay aside their power when they rise up against God, and are unworthy to be reckoned among the number of mankind. We ought rather to spit upon their heads than to obey them."

Frederick Bastiat, in his book The Law, in 1847, wrote, "When law and morality contradict each other, the citizen has the cruel alternative of either losing his moral sense or losing respect for the law."

Do you know what has just happened in this country? You can either lose your moral sense and say that wickedness is right and acceptable, or you can despise the law. Unhappily, that is exactly where we are. Historically, the doctrine of interposition, or the doctrine of the lesser magistrate, has always been used to defend against tyranny.

Legal Basis: The Lesser Magistrate's Duty

Legally, the fourth edition of Black's Law Dictionary defines interposition as “the doctrine that a state, in its exercise of its sovereignty, may reject a mandate of the federal government deemed to be unconstitutional or to exceed the powers delegated to the federal government. The doctrine denies the constitutional obligations of states to respect Supreme Court decisions which they do not agree.” Black's Law Dictionary was quoting a court ruling: the states have the right not to obey an unconstitutional edict or law, or one that exceeds the authority of the federal government.

The interposition doctrine therefore refers to a doctrine whereby a state, in the exercise of its own sovereign power, may reject an order or authority of the federal government that appears to be unconstitutional or exceeds the powers delegated to it. According to this doctrine, a state does not possess a constitutional obligation to obey the Supreme Court or even Congress. Implementation may be peaceable; it may be by resolution, remonstrance, or legislation; or it may proceed ultimately to nullification with forcible resistance.

The concept is based upon the Tenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, reserving to the states powers not delegated to the federal government. Historically and legally, this doctrine emanated from Chisholm v. Georgia, one of my favorite cases, in 1792 in South Carolina. Alexander Chisholm, executor of the estate of Robert Farquhar, attempted to sue the state of Georgia in the Supreme Court over payments due to him for goods Farquhar had supplied to Georgia during the American Revolutionary War. United States Attorney General Edmund Randolph argued for the plaintiff. Georgia refused to appear, claiming that as a sovereign state it could not be sued without consenting to be sued. The Supreme Court then told Georgia, “Fine, you don't have to come up here. We will issue our verdict without you.” Georgia responded, “Fine. Render all the verdicts that you wish to render, but know this: the very first agent that you send into the sovereign state of Georgia to enforce your verdict will be immediately hanged without the benefit of clergy.”

Mostly because of Chisholm v. Georgia, the Eleventh Amendment was ratified in 1795, and all pending court actions against Chisholm were dismissed. This removed federal jurisdiction in cases where citizens of one state or foreign countries attempted to sue another state.

Since the lesser civil magistrates, or lower-ranking civil government officials, are God's ministers as well, they have a duty and responsibility as God's servants to protect those under their authority from evil policies, evil laws, and decisions enacted, decreed, or promulgated by higher, superior governmental officials. The doctrine of interposition holds that lower-ranking civil government officials must place themselves between their people and the higher authority that is endeavoring to abuse or enslave them. It is the duty of the lesser magistrate, just as it is the duty of a higher magistrate, to obey God and protect the people.

The doctrine of interposition does not necessarily have to involve a state, although it could; it could be one magistrate in that state. The lower-ranking civil government official has an inescapable duty to use his authority to protect the citizens and to nullify wicked and bad laws. Here is how things should work: Obama should be

protecting us and doing that which is right, holy, and godly. If he would not do it, then Joe Biden, as vice president, is supposed to. If Biden will not do it, then the Speaker of the House, Boehner, must do it. If he would not do it, then the next person should do it, continuing down until reaching the lesser magistrate in the federal government. If none will do it, the governor of the state ought to do it; if the governor would not, then the lieutenant governor; if the lieutenant governor would not, then the Speaker of the House; and then any of the magistrates. It continues down to the county and then to the city. In other words, there ought to be one magistrate somewhere who will step up and say, "No more. This will not happen in our state, and this will not happen to our people."

The framers and ratifiers of our Constitution certainly believed in the doctrine of interposition. They used it in resisting George III and Parliament and in declaring their independence from England. They used it in forming our first Constitution, the Articles of Confederation, and again in forming and ratifying the Constitution. In Federalist No. 43, James Madison argued that such action was based on “principles prior to all forms of civil government, the principles of the law of compacts, principles of the very laws of nature and of nature’s God.” Early on, the states went through this very clearly.

For instance, consider the Kentucky and Virginia resolutions. Thomas Jefferson had a part in this, as did Madison and some of the others. The first resolution stated: “Resolved, that the several states composing the United States of America are not united on the principle of unlimited submission to the general government, but that by a compact under the style and title of the Constitution for the United States and of the amendments thereto, they constituted a general government for special purposes, delegated that government certain definite powers, reserving each state to itself the residuary mass of right to their own self-government, and that, whensoever the general government assumes undelegated powers, its acts are unauthoritative, void, and of no force; that to this compact each state is seated as a state and is an integral party, its co-states forming as to itself the other party; that the government created by this compact was not made the exclusive or final judge of the extent of its powers delegated to itself, since that would have made its discretion and not

the Constitution the measure of its powers, but that in all other cases of compact among powers having no common judge, each"

Each party has an equal right to judge for itself as well as infractions as a mode of measure of redress. Each state can say, "No, we will not do this." The concluding part of the third resolve is this: "And that in addition to this general principle and express declaration, another more special provision has been made by one of the amendments to the Constitution, which expressly declares that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, thereby guarding in the same sentence and under the same words the freedom of religion, of speech, and of the press, insomuch that whatever violated either throws down the sanctuary which covers the others, and that libels, falsehoods, and defamations equally with heresy and false religion are withheld from the cognizance of federal tribunals. That, therefore, the act of Congress of the United States passed on the 14th of July, 1798, entitled 'An Act for the Punishment of Certain Crimes against the United States,' which does abridge the freedom of the press, is not law, but is altogether void and of no force."

The basic philosophy of the Kentucky and Virginia resolutions is that the American government is a government of specifically enumerated powers. When the federal government goes over and above those powers and seeks to usurp authority, it is totally illegal and not binding. When the federal government acts unconstitutionally, local officials in the state, if none in the federal government will do so, must interpose themselves and protect the people from tyranny and wickedness. It does not matter whether it is the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, or whoever; the duty goes right on down.

The Tenth Amendment declares: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." When the Constitution's enumerated powers are counted, there are no more than twenty-five or thirty specific powers delegated to the federal government, most of them in Article I, Section 8, with a few scattered throughout. The Constitution also gives the federal

government power to form and operate the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, but that is all. Being generous, let us say there are thirty. Has the United States government gone beyond thirty enumerated powers?

Look at all the bureaucracies. The Constitution never gave the government anything to do with education or welfare or anything like that. No, they have stolen and usurped that authority. It was never given. It was that ironclad southerner John C. Calhoun who taught nullification. Nullification simply meant that the states have the right, duty, and responsibility to nullify bad laws as well as unconstitutional laws passed by Washington, D.C.

You have to remember that interposition means to come between. Political interposition occurs when a magistrate steps in and ends a rebellion, either by the people or by other magistrates. What we forget is this: It is not just the people who can rebel; rulers can rebel as well. Interposition, in the sense of quelling a rebellion among the people, is readily understood. Everybody would say—and I could give you an illustration of this in the Book of Acts—that a magistrate has the right to step in and stop a riot or stop a rebellion among the people. But people become nauseated when they think that lower magistrates also have the right and power to stop a rebellion among higher magistrates. Interposition has far wider and greater implications. Not only are nullification and protection part and parcel of the teaching, but interposition also teaches that when a ruler is tyrannical, wicked, and seeking to overthrow the people, a lesser magistrate may step in, take his place, and fulfill his responsibility.

It was exactly this scenario that happened during the American Revolution. Do you know what King George III did? He sent his royal governors over here. He sent his rule over here to enforce his decrees. What did the colonials do? They rejected and refused the king's governors and elected people of their own. Instead of following the royal governors and royal rulers, they followed their own elected officials. America is the product of interposition.

Theological Basis: Spiritual Magistrates and Biblical Examples

Theologically, we understand the intervention of magistrates, especially in light of the corruption, perversion, and abusive authority of wicked rulers. We deem it right and just. We have covered it historically and legally; now we cover it theologically. Numbers 25 provides the theological case we will consider. Jeremiah was delivered from death by lesser magistrates in Jeremiah 26:8–19. That is a good illustration.

We have forgotten that pastors are spiritual magistrates. A magistrate is a magistrate either in the civil or the spiritual realm. Study the American War for Independence and see how pastors preached, prayed, fought, and led in that war. Study also the War of Northern Aggression and find that pastors still prayed, fought, and led in that war. The Bible gives instances where a spiritual magistrate stepped in and performed the duty of a civil magistrate when the civil magistrate failed in his duty.

We have an excellent illustration in chapter 25 of the book of Numbers. Verse 1 says, “And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor.”

God clearly delineated the judgment against all who joined themselves unto Baal-peor. The judgment was death. They were to be slain and hung up before the Lord to turn away His righteous wrath from the people.

Verse 5 repeats, “And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor.” Moses was the chief judge himself, and he gave the order to the judges to slay every one of them. But something happened. Verse 6 says, “And, behold,

one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; and he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel."

The Bible says in verse 6: "And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." There were several million Israelites. Could several million Israelites get before the door of the tabernacle? No. "The congregation of the children of Israel" refers to the leaders and rulers, those individuals who had been given authority. It would have been the princes of all the tribes, as well as the household of Aaron and Moses.

So here they are praying. The Bible says in verse 4: "And the LORD said unto Moses," giving him His order. Moses said to the judges, "Slay them." Verse 5 says: "And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, in the sight of all the congregation of Israel, who were weeping" or praying "before the door of the tabernacle." What was Moses doing? He was crying and praying. What were the other rulers doing? They were crying and praying.

Prayer is needed, necessary, and commanded. However, there comes a time when you have to stop praying and simply obey God. Prayer and humiliation did absolutely nothing as long as sin was allowed in the camp. As long as Zimri and Cosby were in that camp, there was sin; it was rebellion against God.

Phinehas took a javelin and went in and killed both of them. Phinehas was not a civil ruler. Neither was he the high priest. He was of the priestly order because he was a grandson of Aaron, yet he would still be considered a lesser magistrate. When the judges, who had already received the order in verse 5, refused to do their

duty—probably because Zimri was a prince—Phinehas arose and executed both of them. Zimri had brought Cosby into the camp openly, boldly, and brazenly, in defiance of God and His law.

Phinehas was not a private person. He was a magistrate. He may have been a lesser one, but he was still a magistrate. A spiritual magistrate is just as much a magistrate as a civil magistrate. In Judges 18:7, the Hebrew word for magistrate is "esser," meaning to hold back—someone who has power to restrain. In Ezra 7:25, it is "shafat," meaning someone who restrains according to God's law and knows God's law.

Even in the New Testament, the main word for magistrate is "strategos." It refers to a general, military officer, governor, commandant, and also the chief of the Levites. "Strategos" is where we get our English word strategy, while "stratia" is the Greek word for army. Have you ever wondered, as you read through the New Testament, who the captains of the temple were?

You know who the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians were, but who were the captains of the temple? They were armed Levites who protected the temple and the high priest. To understand this more fully, read my book, The Christian Civil Government, especially the seventh chapter, on the pastor as magistrate, where I show and demonstrate that these men were armed Levites.

It is not difficult to justify Phinehas in what he did. He was heir apparent to the high priesthood, but he was also a magistrate. He may have been a lesser and spiritual one, but he was still a magistrate. His actions give no countenance to private persons who, under the pretense of zeal against sin, go out to kill and murder individuals. According to Scripture, the civil magistrate is the avenger, the one given the sword to execute the wrath of God according to Romans 13. You cannot look at Phinehas and say, "I can just go out and start murdering people." No, you cannot do that, because he was a magistrate. The difference between magistrates is one of degree, and that only. You can be lesser or higher, but a magistrate is still a magistrate.

I want to point this out to you. You can do the research yourself; you can read it yourself. Do you realize there are times in the Bible

when spiritual magistrates stepped in and did what needed to be done when the civil magistrate failed to do it? Read 1 Samuel chapter 15. You will find out where God commanded King Saul to go and kill all the Amalekites—man, woman, boy, girl.

But what does the Bible say? “But Saul spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites, and the best of the oxen, the best,” and so forth. Samuel goes to Saul. When Saul sees him, he says, “Blessed be thou of the LORD, I have performed all the commandments of God.” About that time, something went, “Baa, Moo.” Samuel said, “If you've obeyed God, what meaneth the bleating of the sheep, and the lowing of the cattle in mine ear? If you'd obeyed God, everything would be dead.” Now read 1 Samuel chapter 15. When Samuel asked for Agag to come, the Bible said Agag came delicately. I can see him just pressing up to Samuel.

Samuel took the sword and hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD, or as unto the LORD. In other words, Samuel, the little preacher, did to Agag exactly that which God wanted done. He pleased God in doing it. How could Samuel kill Agag? The answer is because he was a spiritual magistrate. He had the power, the authority, and the law of God. King Saul had refused to obey God, and little preacher Samuel took care of the problem.

In 1 Kings 18, Elijah had all the prophets of Baal come to Mount Carmel. When fire came from heaven and consumed Elijah's altar and sacrifice and licked up the water all around about, Elijah said, "Bring ye hither to me the prophets of Baal." In the presence of Ahab, he took a sword and cut off the heads of 400 prophets of Baal. Ahab stood there; he should have done it, but he did not. Elijah did. How could Elijah do that? He was a spiritual magistrate. He had power and authority. He may have been a different magistrate, not a civil one, but he was still a magistrate.

In 2 Kings 11, Jehoiada the high priest had Athaliah the queen put to death. Athaliah was a murderer who had murdered her own grandchildren. When one of the king's sons, Joash I believe it was, was spared and raised in the temple and reached seven years of age, they made him king. When Athaliah came, Jehoiada said, "Have her without the temple and kill her and kill all that follow her." Jehoiada did what needed to be done. In each instance, a spiritual magistrate

performed the duties of a civil magistrate. Two did so in the presence of the civil magistrate. Jehoiada did it to eliminate a murderous and treacherous civil magistrate.

Interposition is a biblical doctrine. The word "ruler" in Exodus 22:28 is the Hebrew word "nasi," meaning literally one lifted up, elevated, or exalted in or by the local assembly. The word "nasi" is used in Numbers 1 and applies to any ruler of God's people or leader of the congregation.

How do we know that God approves of the doctrine of interposition? Since we are in Numbers chapter 25, consider this: God approved of interposition because He put an immediate stop to the plague when Phinehas killed Zimri and Cozbi. Verse 8 says, “And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.”

God's Approval of Interposition in Numbers 25

Their weeping and praying before the door of the congregation, or the door of the tabernacle, did absolutely nothing until this piece of justice was done. If magistrates do not take care to punish sin, God will. Magisterial justice is the best prevention of God's judgment, as in the case of Achan in Joshua chapter 7. When magistrates fail to punish sin, that does not mean wickedness will go unpunished. It means that God will take care of it in His own way and in His own time. Do you think that God approves of sodomy? You are mistaken. You just wait. We know that God approves of interposition, for the plague was stayed.

Secondly, God placed an honor upon Phinehas. Though he did no more than his duty, he did it with extraordinary zeal for God's honor and glory, while the other judges probably respected Zimri's position as a prince. The Bible tells us that it was counted to Phinehas as righteousness. Psalm 106:31 says, “God counted it to him for righteousness.”

Thirdly, Phinehas, though a young man, was pronounced his country's best patriot and friend. Verse 11 says, “Wherefore say, Behold, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest,

hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy." He is deemed the country's patriot and best friend because he turned away the wrath of God. This is the best service any magistrate can perform, and the best service we can render through our prayers, obedience, and endeavors to bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end.

Fourthly, God approves of divine interposition because the priesthood is entailed by covenant upon Phinehas's family. It was designed for him before, but now God gave it to him by covenant. In verse 12, God says, "Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel." Thus, he is given the priesthood. It is an unchangeable priesthood that ends in the perfection of Jesus Christ, who is consecrated forevermore.

The doctrine of interposition is indeed a neglected doctrine, but it is important. We have to understand it so that we will not descend into anarchy. We cannot do as those people in Judges 17 and Judges 21, when the Bible says, "there was no king in Israel in those days: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." No, we cannot do what is right in our own eyes. We have to do what is right in God's eyes. We can always find a lesser magistrate who will stand up to the higher magistrates, rebuke and rebuff them, and protect the people. If we cannot find one, then let us appoint or elect one who will.

Christ as the Supreme Interposer and Application

Does interposition have a theological basis? The answer is yes. If you do not like this doctrine, then you do not like salvation. Turn to Romans 3:24-25: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him

which believeth in Jesus." What did Jesus Christ do? The wrath of God was against us. We may have been God's elect, but we were yet in our sins. Jesus Christ interposed Himself. He came between His people and the wrath of God. He suffered the wrath of God in our stead, in our place. Jesus Christ is the greatest example of interposition. He stood between the consuming wrath of God and His people, and He suffered everything for His people. Not only in soteriology, in the doctrine of salvation, does our Lord interpose Himself; He also interposes Himself between His people and rebellious rulers.

Psalm 2 says, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth." "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron. Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

This passage is preceded by the good news that the kingdoms belong to Jesus Christ. Those rulers who will not submit to Him will be broken like a potter's vessel with a rod of iron. These rulers do not own their own realms. They are not the kings. They are not the presidents they think they are. They think this is their country, their realm, their rule, their kingdom. No! It belongs to Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus Christ interposed Himself on behalf of His people to save us from the wrath and justice of God, He will also interpose Himself to save us from tyrants.

That does not mean that we will not suffer some for our sins and our complicity in it. But it does mean that we will not go under. When God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, He brought them out that He might bring them in. He did not bring them out of Egypt to drop them in the desert. He brought them out to bring them into Canaan land. Jesus Christ did not bring us out of our sins to drop us into the hands of tyrants who hate us and despise us.

Our Lord prayed in John 17, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” His prayer will be answered.

By way of application, think about this: interposition has many illustrations, and it could be done by way of remonstrance. Remonstrance is where the people intervene and dispose themselves in order to right a wrong.

One good illustration is found in 1 Samuel 14. The Israelites were chasing their enemies, and King Saul stupidly adjured the people, saying, “Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies.” So none of the people tasted any food. Jonathan did not hear that. While chasing the enemies, he came upon a beehive, dipped the end of his spear into the dripping honey, and ate it; his eyes were enlightened. The people told him that his father had cursed anyone who ate that day. Jonathan answered, “My father is foolish. He said, look how mine eyes have been enlightened. If all the people had been able to eat some, how much more could we have slaughtered our enemies?”

When the battle was won, the people flew upon the sheep and the spoil and ate with the blood, which was totally unbiblical. When God began to judge, Saul said, “Let’s have it between my family and the children of Israel.” His family was taken, and then Jonathan was taken. Saul told his son, “Jonathan, you’re going to die. I said whoever ate would die; you’re going to die. I’m going to kill you, or I’ll have you killed.”

But in verses 43 and 45, Saul asked what Jonathan had done. Jonathan answered that he had tasted a little honey and must die. Saul said, “God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.” And the people said unto Saul, “Shall Jonathan die?”

"Who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day." So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not. They refused to allow it, and Jonathan was spared.

A good practical illustration of this today would be jury nullification. Do you realize that a jury has the absolute right to determine the law and the facts? A man may be guilty of violating a law, but that law could be bad, unjust, immoral, or unconstitutional. When we judge the law as well as the facts, we can determine that

the individual is innocent—not merely based upon the facts, but upon whether the law itself is right or wrong.

We can also understand this: If our enemies, those who hate Christ, hate the Bible, and hate the South, can demonstrate in the streets, so can we. I have news for you. When we reach the point of saying, "I am sick to death of this tyranny and abusive wickedness, and I am not going to take it anymore," then we might do something. But we must reach that place. God can quickly drive us to it.

We need to understand interposition and the lesser magistrate. If he is fighting against wickedness, we need to get behind him and stand with him. Whether we like him or agree with him on other things is immaterial. If he is fighting against wickedness and tyranny, he needs our help and support. If we understand this doctrine, we understand an answer to what we are facing. We need to understand the doctrine of interposition.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to thee this day. We thank you for your word and truth. We pray that you would indeed teach us, build us up in the most holy faith, and make us understanding people. God, give us an understanding heart. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 24

I Thought The King Of Assyria Was Dead

December 18, 2016

SCRIPTURE READING - Isaiah 36:1-13 (KJV)

"Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib the king of Assyria came up against all the defensed cities of Judah and took them. And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto King Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field. Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, which was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder. And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? I say, sayest thou, but they are but vain words. I have counsel and strength for war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him. But if thou say to me, We trust in the

> Lord our God: is it not he whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar? Now therefore give pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? And am I now come up without the Lord against this land to destroy it? The Lord said unto me, Go up against this land and destroy it. Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall. But Rabshakeh said, Hath my master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men that sit upon the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you? Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria."

"Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, The Lord will surely deliver us: this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me: and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern; until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards. Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The Lord will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who are they among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?"

"But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not. Then came

Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, that was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh."

Let me begin by making this simple statement: Government is not God. However, that does not stop governmental rulers from claiming to be God or playing at being God.

Introduction: Government Is Not God

An interesting truth that you will observe throughout Scripture is this: The more that a nation departs from the one true and the living God—especially the one true and the living God who's revealed Himself in Jesus Christ—the more the people will come to worship government as God. It was true in Assyria, it was true in Judah, it was true in Israel, and it's true in America as well.

You have to remember that when we reject the truth, and when we reject the only true path, the only thing left for us is error and lies. For instance, in 2 Thessalonians 2 verses 9 through 11, God says this.

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

So when a person refuses and rejects the truth, the only thing left is error. I have pointed out on numerous occasions that only God is sovereign. Only God has absolute power and absolute control. In fact, there can only be one sovereign, one absolute, and one ultimate.

The Two Steps to Playing God

In order for a government or a governmental ruler to play God and claim to be God, he must do two things. The very first thing he must do is deny the one true and the living God. That is being done on the right hand and on the left hand in all the nations of the earth, just

about. The second thing that he must do is try to replace the one true and the living God by exercising totalitarian power.

Since the one true and the living God is sovereign and has control over everything, the governmental ruler or the government that is going to play God is going to try to be absolutely sovereign and have control over everything. In other words, they are going to have, from the cradle to the grave, control.

So we can put it like this: the womb-to-the-tomb mentality is a characteristic of governmental insanity. It not only is characteristic of government insanity; it also reveals their God-mentality, in the sense that they simply want to control everything.

Let me make this exceedingly clear: The Lord Jesus Christ, the God of glory, the sovereign, omnipotent ruler of heaven and earth, has absolutely nothing to do with such an apostate and illegal government. Such a government that plays God is not the ordinance of God. In fact, it is an idolatrous government. It is not only idolatrous; it is in rebellion to the one true and the living God, and it is a rival unto Him.

Biblical Condemnation of Wicked Government

"Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?"

"Shall the throne of iniquity"—a throne speaks of government. But notice that it is a throne of iniquity, a wicked civil government. Shall a wicked civil government have fellowship with God when that wicked civil government frames or makes mischief a law? Mischief in the Bible is another word for sin. So you could ask the question this way: Shall a wicked civil government have fellowship with Thee—that is, with the one true and the living God—when that wicked civil government makes sin legal?

Now look at verses 21 and 22: "They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood." Then he says, "But the Lord is my defense; and my God is the rock of my refuge." In other words, David said, I do not trust in a government like that. I trust only in the one true and the living God.

Remember what God said in Isaiah 42, verse 8: “I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.” God is not going to recognize, approve, or condone an apostate government that is acting like God and claiming sovereign power. God will not recognize a government or government ruler like that any more than He would recognize an individual like that. A man can say, “There is no God,” or, “I am God,” and pretend to have power. God will not condone him. Certainly, God will not condone a wicked civil government doing the same thing.

That is why, in Psalm 2, verses 10 through 12, the psalmist said this to the civil rulers: “Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

David admonishes civil rulers to kiss the Son—that is, they had better submit to Him, because when He is angry just a little, they will perish. When we talk about tyranny, most of the time we think about someone with a whip or a chain, or someone with force. We fail to remember that benevolent tyranny is still tyranny. A tyrant does not come out immediately with whips and rods.

The carrot always precedes the stick, and the velvet glove is shown before the iron glove is felt. Many times, an unsuspecting and ignorant people are seduced into tyranny and totalitarianism. Let me make this statement very clear: many times, an unsuspecting and ignorant people ask for tyranny and totalitarianism. They want it.

Israel's Demand for a Tyrant

Hold Isaiah 36, but look in your Bibles very quickly at 1 Samuel chapter 8. I have preached from this passage a number of times, but I am not going to preach from it now. I am just going to show you how an ignorant people will ask for tyranny. They have no idea what they are asking for.

In 1 Samuel chapter 8, beginning with verse 4, Samuel is now old, and his sons are not following in his path. “Then all the elders of

Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways."

"Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee."

Note how God counted this as a personal rejection. In 1 Samuel chapter 12, it is shown very plainly that they rejected God as king and wanted a man as king.

In verse 5, they said, "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." Originally, they said, we just want to be like everybody else. We do not want to be different. We want to have a man as a king.

God told Samuel to explain to them the difference between Him ruling over them and a man ruling over them. In verses 9 through 18, Samuel explains that. If you read that passage carefully, there is one word repeated over and over about the man: "He will take. He will take. He will take. He will take." Everything in these verses, their king takes. That is tyranny. That is totalitarianism. When God ruled over them, all God did was give, give, give. Now man is going to rule, and all he is going to do is take, take, take.

Look in verse 19. Here is what he said: "And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day." God said, you wanted the man to rule over you. You wanted a little tyranny, totalitarianism. I am going to let you have it.

You can have it until you are so sick. When you start crying, I am not going to listen to you. After all of the explanation, "Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us." That we also may be like all the

nations; “and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.”

It is no longer merely wanting to be like the other nations. They want someone who will go out before them and fight their battles. Here is the crux of the whole issue: these were people who did not wish to be responsible for themselves. They wanted government to take care of them.

Probably we could say that we are exactly like Israel of old today, because we do not want to plan, prepare, or protect ourselves. What we want is a king, or a civil ruler, to do that for us. The mentality of the modern-day Christian, and especially the modern-day American, is that the government will take care of us. We do not really need God, because the government is going to take care of us. We have made government our God. Government is going to feed us, nourish us, take care of our health, education, welfare, retirement, and every aspect of our lives.

Modern Idolatry of Government

We do not need God; we just need government. Most people have made government their God. Look at the average American, the average professing Christian. When he is in need, he does not cry to God in prayer; he applies to the government for benefits. When he is in danger, he seeks governmental protection. When they are disturbed, they seek governmental consolation.

If you truly want to know who your God is, take notice of whom you cry to when you are in need and danger. Many people have come to trust government as God. Representative Elijah Cummings said, “People come to government to feed their souls.” He continued, “People do not seem to understand that so many people come to government knowing that they’re not going to make the kind of money that they would make in the private sector.”

Representative Cummings said, “They come to government to feed their souls.” According to him, it is now government that feeds the souls of those employed by it. If government can feed their souls, it can presumably feed the souls of others as well. He also said, “People do not seem to understand that so many people come to

government knowing that they're not going to make the kind of money that they would make in the private sector." Why, then, are there so many millionaires and multimillionaires in Congress? How can a man enter government service practically broke and come out extremely wealthy?

The truth is that government cannot feed anyone's soul. It may feed one's bank account, ego, desire for power and control, or opportunity to exercise dictatorial power, but it cannot save anyone, make anyone holy or godly, or make anyone spiritual.

If government can feed the soul and make people holy, godly, moral, and right, then we should have the most godly nation on earth, because we have the biggest bloated government on the face of the earth. Instead, it is the most corrupt, unbiblical, unconstitutional, unwise, and perverted government on earth. We no longer have statesmen; we have politicians. We no longer have men of principle; we have men of paper, capable of being bent and shaped into any form that the situation and money demand.

I titled this message "I Thought the King of Assyria Was Dead" because of what he claimed and said while seeking to enslave, control, and dominate the people of God. The same thing is being done today. You are going to see that the king of Assyria is not dead. Go back in your Bibles to Isaiah 36, because we are going to examine this passage and put two and two together.

Sennacherib's Psychological Warfare

Sennacherib wanted Jerusalem to fall into his hand like a ripe plum. He had succeeded in capturing some of Judah's other defensed cities, but Jerusalem was the capital and therefore the prize. Notice verse 1: "Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defensed cities of Judah, and took them." Sennacherib was attempting to conquer other individuals and cities, so he sent Rabshakeh with a rather large army to intimidate Jerusalem's inhabitants and persuade them to surrender without a fight.

In doing so, Rabshakeh applies psychological warfare. If you understand psychological warfare, you will understand what is

happening in America today, because we are being warred upon through psychological warfare—psyops, as they call it. Rabshakeh is trying to seduce King Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem into surrendering to Sennacherib without a fight. What does he do first?

He seeks to destroy their confidence in themselves, in others, and in the one true and living God. Look in verse 2: “And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto King Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field. Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, which was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder. And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?”

In other words, what are you trusting? How can you think that you are going to be delivered from the king of Assyria, or that there is any possibility of succeeding in a fight against Sennacherib? He says, “What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?” Then: “I say, sayest thou, but they are but vain words”—that is, if you are saying it. “I have counsel and strength for war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?”

You do not have any strength or counsel. You are weak, anemic, and helpless. Do not tell me that you are capable of fighting me. You are not. Thus he destroys their confidence in themselves. Now notice verse 6: “Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him.”

He is saying, Do not have confidence in anybody else. The king of Egypt is not going to help you; in fact, if you lean upon him, he will hurt you—even more. There is no help from the king of Egypt. Then, in verse 7: “But if thou say to me, We trust in the Lord our God: is it not he whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar?”

Here is what Rabshakeh is doing. First, he is saying to Hezekiah, “You cannot win.” Secondly, he is saying, “Nobody is going to help you.” Now he says, “You cannot even claim to trust in God, because

look at all the altars that you have taken away. No one is going to help you—not even God."

It is true that Hezekiah had taken away all of those altars. However, every altar Hezekiah took away was in violation of God's law. These were idolatrous altars placed on the hilltops and mountains. God never commanded altars to be put there. Hezekiah destroyed those idolatrous altars and told the people that they could worship only at the one altar in Jerusalem, because that was the altar God ordained.

It is important to note that while the wicked may have a general concept of God, they do not have specific knowledge of God, His law, and His covenant. Thus Rabshakeh mistakenly believed that Hezekiah's obedience to God was disobedience, and that God would be displeased with him for destroying those idolatrous altars. In fact, God was pleased with Hezekiah for destroying them. Rabshakeh's first message was that Hezekiah could not win or fight because he had no strength, could not depend on anyone else, and even had God against him. He might as well give it up immediately.

Secondly, remember that this is psychological warfare. In verses 8 through 9, Rabshakeh seeks to belittle and decry the people's martial ability. Verse 8 says: "Now therefore give pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?" When he says, "give pledges," the word means hostages. The verb properly means to mix or mingle, then to exchange commodities by barter or traffic, and then to become surety for anyone—to exchange with them, stand in their place, pledge one's life, or give security of any kind. He is saying, "Give us some hostages. We will deliver you two thousand horses if you are able to put riders on them."

Here is what Rabshakeh was actually saying: "You think you can fight? I will wager with you that if I were to give you 2,000 horses, you could not mount men on them. Or, if you could mount men on them, they would not have the knowledge and horsemanship to fight against us. They could not turn away one captain of the least of my master's servants." He did not think much of their fighting ability.

He was decrying, mocking, and making fun of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. He was saying, “You are so feeble and weak. If we furnish the horses, you could do nothing.” According to Deuteronomy 17, one of the things the kings of Israel were forbidden to do was multiply horses. In one sense, God had forbidden them to have a large standing army, especially an offensive one. Why? Because their trust was to be in the Lord of hosts, the Lord of the armies. Their trust was to be in Him, and not in armaments or anything like that. Rabshakeh was saying, “You cannot fight. Even if we give you something, you cannot fight.”

Do you understand that the American people have been fed the same line and have swallowed it hook, line, and sinker? You have heard the old adage, “You cannot fight city hall.” You cannot stop big government. They have all the big guns; they are too big, too powerful, and too numerous. That is what we are led to believe.

Simply stated, the current mentality is this: It does no good to try to fight against them or to hold them within the bounds of the Constitution or the Bible. Why? Because to too many people, government has become God. It has become omnipotent, all-powerful, all-sovereign, and therefore unaccountable. Such is absolutely nonsense. God is the only God. Government is not God; it never has been God and never will be God. When government says, “You cannot fight against us. You cannot win. Give up. Let us control you,” that is psychological warfare.

Thirdly, Rabshakeh and Sennacherib erroneously claim divine authority for their actions and their attack on Jerusalem. Rabshakeh says, “And am I now come up without the Lord against this land to destroy it? The Lord said unto me, Go up against this land and destroy it.” While it is undoubtedly true that God sent Assyria against Israel—as Isaiah 10 records—it is not true that He sent them against Jerusalem. God did send them against Israel, but not against Jerusalem. The evidence is that He intervened on Jerusalem’s behalf, defended it, and destroyed the Assyrian army.

Simply because someone claims authority, or even divine authority, does not mean that he has it. I have a good friend who years ago had some T-shirts made with two words written very large on the front: “Question Authority.” Stop and think about that. Just

because someone claims to have authority does not mean that he has it, and just because someone has a little authority does not mean that he has authority to demand that you do certain things in areas beyond that limited authority. Obviously, there is no such thing as the divine right of kings. When someone says that he is ruling by divine right, and that God has put him on the throne to rule over and subjugate everyone—no.

There is no king, ruler, or government that can do as it pleases and escape righteous judgment and accountability to God. Only God is King, only God is sovereign, and only God is absolute. In Psalm 82, verses 6 and 7, God speaks to the rulers: “I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.” You think you are God? Our God says, “I’ll prove that you’re not God,” because you will die like men. Sennacherib was applying psychological warfare and claiming divine authority, saying that God had sent him to destroy Jerusalem when He had not.

Fourthly, he seeks to intimidate, mortify, and horrify the populace through crude and vulgar expressions of what his government intended to do to God’s people. In Isaiah 36:11-12, Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to Rabshakeh, “Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and speak not to us in the Jews’ language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall.” But Rabshakeh answered, “Hath my master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men that sit upon the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?” Then Rabshakeh cried with a loud voice in the Jews’ language: “Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, The Lord will surely deliver us.”

"This city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria." Now, note what he did. He said, "You know what's going to happen? If you don't submit, if you do not come out and surrender, you're going to be eating your own dung. You're going to be drinking your own urine. We're going to surround you. We will starve you out." If you fight against us, we're going to make it as hard upon you

as we possibly can. If you will not take the easy way out, we're going to make it hard. You are talking about a bad experience.

I have known individuals who have tried to fight an unjust charge in our judicial system. Inevitably, the prosecutor will say something like this: "Well, if you don't cop a plea, we're going to throw the book at you." It doesn't matter whether you're innocent or not. We just want to get this over. You plead to something. If you make us work, we're going to throw the book at you.

Think of all the horror stories that you have heard and read recently: if you and I and the American people do not give up our liberties for security, how we're going to suffer. In other words, if we do not allow Homeland Security, the TSA, the BATF, and a host of other governmental alphabet agencies to do as they please, and if we do not bend to their will and their way, then the terrorists are going to win and we're going to be slaughtered. That's what they're telling us. That is psychological warfare, and all it is is a means of dominion and control.

So he comes up and says, "If you make us fight, it's going to be bad for you. The wise thing to do is just surrender and submit, and let's get this thing over with." Fifth—and here's the point that I really wanted to get to today—Sennacherib seeks to demonstrate his godhood with his promises and his protection.

Sennacherib's Blasphemous Promise of Messiah-like Blessing

Essentially, like all governmental rulers, he states, “You need me if you wish to live, love, prosper, and be happy.” That is what he told these people. Not in those exact words, but look at verses 16 and 17: “Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me”—that is, surrender, submit, and bring me a present. Then he says: “and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern; until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards.” Sennacherib says to the people of Judah and Jerusalem, “Surrender, come out.” Then he says, “And then you can

eat every one of his own vine and every one of his own fig tree." In 2 Kings 18:31, Sennacherib says exactly the same thing.

If you know Scripture, you should immediately understand how blasphemous this statement is coming from Sennacherib. The first time the Bible speaks of eating from your own vine and sitting under your own fig tree is in 1 Kings 4. It expresses the peace and prosperity during Solomon's reign. Hold Isaiah 36, and go back in your Bibles to 1 Kings 4, beginning with verse 24. We are reading about Solomon, who in the Bible is a type of Christ. "For he"—that is, King Solomon—"had dominion over all the region on this side of the river, from Tiphsah even to Azzah, over all the kings on this side of the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him." Now watch: "And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon."

This phrase, sitting under your own vine and under your own fig tree, denotes a happy, safe, quiet, full, and peaceable enjoyment of all outward blessings. It was not necessary to dwell in fortified cities for fear of enemies. During Solomon's reign, which pictured the reign of Jesus Christ, there was peace, prosperity, safety, and comfort; everyone was free to enjoy the fruit of his own labor and live wherever he wanted to live.

Out in the country it did not matter. They were not fearful of the enemy's coming. Their security, protection, profit, and provision were from the Lord of hosts. He was blessing them and protecting them. Solomon's reign here pictures the reign of Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

Micah 4, beginning with verse 1, says: "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks. Nation

shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."

What Sennacherib said was very important. It was also very blasphemous. Sennacherib was saying to the people, "If you will surrender to me, if you will come out to me, if you make me your Lord and your God, I will take you into a land like yours and you'll be able to sit every man under his own vine and every one under his own fig tree and eat." Sennacherib's claim was a claim to be the Messiah, the Anointed One.

In making such a claim, he was usurping the position and power of Jesus Christ. Only Jesus Christ can provide for His people. Only Jesus Christ can protect His people. Only Jesus Christ can promote His people. When government claims to be God, it is not only idolatrous, it is blasphemous. All who make such promises are idolaters and blasphemers. Sennacherib said, "Just come out. Treat me like God and I'll treat you like you're God's people. Just surrender to me,

Now go back to Isaiah, because I want you to see with your own eyes the attitude that God had toward what Sennacherib said. The messengers came back to Hezekiah and told him the words of Rabshakeh. Hezekiah went to the Lord in prayer, and he also sent word to Isaiah to pray. Look at Isaiah 37:4: “It may be the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left.”

Hezekiah understood that Sennacherib was reproaching God when he said, “You surrender to me and you can sit every man under his own vine and under his own fig tree.” Look also at verse 6: “And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.”

God's Response: Judgment on the Blasphemer

God counts it as blasphemy when government tries to be God and act like God. Skip down to verses 23 and 24. God says to Sennacherib: “Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel. By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said, By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the height of his border, and the forest of his Carmel.”

Notice what he said: You have reproached me, blasphemed me, and said that by your own strength and chariots you have come up and will conquer my people. Skip down to verse 28: “But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.” Every passage says that this is a reproach, blasphemy, rage, and tumult against God. Since Sennacherib was trying to act like God, play God, and claim to be God, God said, “I’m going to put my hook in your nose.”

SCRIPTURE READING - Isaiah 37:29, 33-35 (KJV)

> I'm going to put my bridle in your lips, and I'm going to bring you back exactly the way that you came. You're not going to pitch a mount up against Jerusalem. Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord. For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

“Then the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in

the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead." God had said, "I'm going to put a hook in your nose. I'm going to put a bridle in your lips. I'm going to take you back and I'm going to show you that you are not God." His own sons murdered him because he was playing God.

Applications: The King of Assyria Lives and God Alone Is Savior

The first application is that, when we look at the nations today, the king of Assyria is not dead. He is alive in most civil rulers who wish to deny God and play God themselves. The Lord Jesus Christ will not share His glory with another, especially with a false god. The Sennacheribs of this world will soon learn that they are not God. God will judge them, and, like Sennacherib, they will end up ridiculed and scoffed. Their vain attempt to play God will end very badly. As God said in Psalm 82, "Ye shall die like men." You think you are God? God said, "I'll show you that you're not God." Consider the civil rulers and politicians attempting to play God, and watch their final end: God will destroy them and demonstrate clearly that they are not God.

The second application is that we must not render to man the praise and honor belonging to God alone. He must receive all praise, honor, worship, and glory. We are forever dependent upon Him, and we prove that dependence as we trust and obey Him. He is our salvation—spiritually, physically, emotionally, mentally, financially, and in every other way. Salvation is in God alone. When you look to man or government, you look to the wrong source. God is God; man is not God, and government is not God. We do not look to government for our provision or protection. We look to God.

I thought the king of Assyria was dead. But he just moved to Washington, D.C. Let's pray.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we thank You for Your love and Your grace and Your mercy and Your Word and Your truth. And we know, Father—we know by Your grace and Your mercy—that government is not God. Thou and Thou alone art God. Beside Thee,

there is none other. We bow our knees to the Lord Jesus Christ and we worship Thee. And Lord, when we get to eat under our own vine and under our own fig tree, it's because of Your blessings and Your protection. Help us, Father, to live for Thee. In Thy name we ask and pray. Amen.

I thought the king of Assyria was dead. But he just moved to Washington, D.C. Let's pray.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we thank you for your love, grace, mercy, Word, and truth. We know, by your grace and mercy, that government is not God. Thou alone art God; beside thee, there is none other. We bow our knees to the Lord Jesus Christ and worship thee. When we eat under our own vine and fig tree, it is because of your blessings and protection. Help us to live for thee. In thy name we ask and pray. Amen. Amen.

CHAPTER 25

Are You A Traitor?

August 15, 2022

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."

Introduction: The Question of Treason

Are you a traitor? The question is one of great importance. I have not asked this question in order to be insulting, belittling, or to instigate an argument or a fight. I have asked it in order to provoke your thinking and to point you to a biblical answer.

When we think of traitors, we normally think of individuals like Judas and Benedict Arnold, the Rosenbergs, or at least those individuals who have admitted to treason or have been convicted of treason. I hope you remember that last year I brought a message entitled "The Bible and Treason." In that message, I pointed out how most people normally think of treason: they think of treason against civil government. In fact, I gave quotes demonstrating where even

the Constitution says that treason is aiding and abetting and giving comfort to the enemy of the United States.

But I also pointed out the fact that treason is first and foremost a sin against God, because God is the creator of all. He is the sovereign of all. It was God who instituted the three institutions: the family as a ministry of education, the church as a ministry of grace, and civil government as a ministry of justice. God then gave delegated authority to each of those institutions, and they are answerable, accountable, and responsible to Him. Thus, to violate His law and to violate the authority that was delegated to them is indeed counted treason against God.

If treason against a state or a civil government is considered so great and deserving of the death penalty, how much worse, then, is treason against God, who instituted everything and delegated all authority? We must comprehend the importance of treason and of being traitors.

This message is going to take a little different turn because it is not just treason, and it is not just being a traitor against God. I want to show you that, obviously and clearly, we are proven traitors in our personal life and in our daily life. The truth is, we actually commit treason on a daily basis.

Treason Against the Soul

Peter said in 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 11, “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.” We commit treason against our own souls and are traitors to ourselves. If treason consists then of aiding and abetting the enemy and giving the enemy comfort, we are guilty as charged.

There are basically three enemies that the Christian has: the world, the flesh, and the devil. Let us take these one at a time, beginning with the world. The world is classified as our enemy, and, of course, there is a remedy, there is an answer, in facing the world. The Bible tells us that remedy and that answer is faith. In 1 John 5, verse 4, the Bible says, “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even

our faith." So whosoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

The Three Enemies and Their Remedies

When the world draws, when it seduces, or when it attacks, we must exercise faith. That faith, of course, is based upon the Word of God and the promises of God.

Then, secondly, we have the enemy, the devil. The remedy, according to Scripture, is to fight. For instance, James 4:7 says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Note the word "resist." First Peter 5:8–9 says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." Whether you look at James 4:7 or 1 Peter 5:8–9, the word "resist" is the same. It literally means to resist, to set oneself against, to fight against, to oppose, and to fight.

So we are to overcome him by fighting. In Romans 16:20, Paul wrote to the Roman Christians, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." So he said, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet." You are walking on him; you are stomping on him. That is, you are fighting and resisting. You are not yielding to him or allowing him to overcome you; you are resisting him in the strength God provides.

Revelation 12:10-11 says, "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.

When it comes to the enemy of our souls, when it comes to the devil, we fight. The world is faith, and the devil is fighting. Then, of course, there is the third enemy, and I actually believe this one is the

greatest, and that is our flesh. The remedy for our flesh is basically twofold. One is flight, and the other is denial, which I will get into a little bit later.

When I say flight, the Apostle Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:22, "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." So he says, "Flee youthful lusts." There is no greater illustration of flight than that which you find in Genesis 39:11-12. When Potiphar's wife sought to seduce Joseph, she laid hold of his coat and said, "Come lie with me." He left the coat and fled, the Bible says, and got himself out of the house. He did not remain there to argue with temptation or to see how near he could come to it; he fled.

In other words, there is indeed a time to flee. When we flee from temptation, that is not being a coward; that is being obedient, because flight is a necessary means to get ourselves out of the sphere and out of the area of temptation. We not only have to flee, but, according to 2 Timothy 2:22, we have to follow. We have to follow righteousness, peace, and faith.

The Flesh as the Greatest Enemy

Of these three, I do believe that our greatest enemy is our flesh. It is true that the world is seductive, and it is true that the devil is devious; yet he does not need to attack most Christians because most of us are too easily captivated by the flesh. The devil usually gets more credit than he deserves. Years ago, a comedian, a black comedian by the name of Flip Wilson, made popular the phrase, "The devil made me do it." But the devil does not make you do anything.

The problem is that what we do, we do willingly. If the devil made us do it, then we would not be accountable or responsible. But when we willingly engage in sin, it means that we are responsible.

Look in your Bibles to the book of Galatians, chapter 5. Here is my explanation as to why I am telling you that the devil gets more than his due. Beginning with verse 19, the Word of God gives us the works of the flesh: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these." Now look at them.

Works of the Flesh and Its Weakness

"Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

When you look at this list, it is easy to understand that adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness are all works of the flesh. But when he puts idolatry, witchcraft, and heresies as works of the flesh, that is very surprising to us. We do not grasp those things. The truth is that our flesh desires to be pampered, adored, glorified, and fulfilled. It not only longs for fulfillment and satisfaction; it will fight for that fulfillment and satisfaction.

Very few, if any, will ever escape the lust of the flesh. Our Lord said in Matthew 26, verse 41, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." If you do not believe the flesh is weak, try staying on a diet for three months. Try doing without sugar for three weeks.

Years ago, my father was a little overweight and needed to lose some weight, so he decided to go on a diet. My mother, in order to encourage him, decided she would go on a diet with him. You would have to know my mother. She was not any bigger than Alice. My mother was going on the diet with Dad, and one day, while he was uptown doing something, she had to buy groceries. As she passed a little corner country store, she saw his truck parked there. She stopped, pulled over, and went in to say something to him. He had a diet drink in one hand and one of those twelve-inch Baby Ruths in the other. Mother said, "That's it. No more suffering with you."

The flesh is indeed weak. I can assure you of that. If you do not believe it, try giving up your favorite sport or recreation for six months. People who love golf will not give it up for six months, nor will those who love football. No, no, no, no. The flesh is weak.

The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 10:3, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh." In context, Paul is saying that physical warfare will not work in spiritual warfare. We may not war according to the flesh, but according to Scripture, we certainly need to war against the flesh.

Pre-Conversion vs. Post-Conversion Warfare

I want to show you something. The war with our flesh truly began after our conversion. Before we were converted to Jesus Christ, we sided with our flesh and wanted what our flesh wanted. Look in Ephesians chapter 2 and read the first three verses, so you can see that this was indeed true before our conversion. In verse 1, the apostle says, “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Before our conversion we were walking in the lust of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. That brings me back to 1 Peter chapter 2 and verse 11: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, that ye abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul."

When you understand what we were before our conversion and what we are to be after our conversion, after our conversion, when we side with the flesh, we're being treacherous and we're being traitors. Peter makes that exceedingly clear in verse 11. He begins with two words, "Dearly beloved." He is addressing saints, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and refers to them in this kind, loving, gracious manner.

Exhortation as Strangers and Pilgrims

The Greek word is agapetos, meaning well-beloved, those highly esteemed, those who are dear and beloved. The Apostle Paul uses the same word in 1 Corinthians 10 and verse 14: "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry." There is no controversy that Peter is addressing believers. Secondly, notice Peter's desire to help: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you." "Beseech" is the Greek word parakaleo. We've gone over that word before.

Para is the preposition, and kaleo means “I call.” Para, the preposition, means “alongside of.” Thus, if parakaleo literally means,

“I call alongside to help,” you must remember that, in the New Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit both are called the Paraclete. The word Paraclete comes from parakaleo or parakletos, “I call alongside to help.” The word Paraclete is another name for the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, and our Lord is our Advocate. He is our Paraclete as well. The Apostle Peter uses this word to mean that he exhorts, admonishes, entreats, begs, and instructs.

So he says, “Dearly beloved, I exhort you, I admonish you, I instruct you.” Notice that he is admonishing and instructing them when he says in verse 11, “as strangers and pilgrims.”

Before explaining those two words, consider Philippians chapter 3, verse 20: “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Usually, when we read the word “conversation,” we can change it to “conduct,” because conversation means more than just how we speak and what we talk about. It actually refers to our entire conduct and the course of our life. “Conduct” might be appropriate here, but it is not the same Greek word. The word here is politeuma, which actually refers to the administration of civil affairs of a commonwealth. It also refers to the constitution of a commonwealth, a form of government, and the laws by which it is administered. It refers, then, to a commonwealth and a commonwealth of citizens.

Heavenly Commonwealth and Alien Status

When Paul says, “For our conversation is in heaven,” he is saying more than that heaven is simply our heavenly country. He is saying that we have a heavenly commonwealth, and that heavenly commonwealth has a constitution, and that constitution is our Bible. He is also saying that our commonwealth has a form of government, and that government is indeed the law of God. In reality, we are strangers and pilgrims because our country has a different constitution and a different set of laws than does the world.

Hebrews 11:13-16 says, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such

things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

Before I get any further, I want you to understand that Peter's exhortation in 1 Peter 2:11 is an exhortation for us to recognize our heavenly country, our heavenly kingdom, and that our citizenship is in heaven. Therefore, we are to live here as strangers and pilgrims. Hold Hebrews 11, if you would, and look back to 1 Peter 2:11. We're coming right back to Hebrews 11. Peter says, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims." He uses the Greek word paroikos, which refers to a stranger, a sojourner, one that lives in a place without the right of citizenship. Such an individual would be considered a foreigner by any stretch of the imagination.

Now I am pointing this out because if you look back to Hebrews 11:13, it says, "These all died in faith, and not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers." Here the Greek word is xenos, which refers not only to a stranger, but also to one that is strange, one that is an alien.

Think about all the people invading this country, bringing with them customs, forms, and habits that we are not used to by any stretch of the imagination, as well as languages to which we are not accustomed. Obviously, when you see one, you automatically assume that he is an alien. He is a stranger. He is a foreigner.

The Strangeness of Obedient Christians

To the ungodly, the Bible-believing Christian—the Christian who is obedient to the Word of God—is counted a stranger, an alien, someone who is extremely, extremely strange. In 1 Peter 4:3, Peter says, “For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.” That is what we did before we were converted. We were lost. We went with them. We did those things.

Then verse 4 says, “Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.” The word “strange” in 1 Peter 4:4 is the same root word as the word found in Hebrews 11:13. We really are aliens and strangers in that we do not live like or act like the ungodly. When we do not participate with them, when we do not think the way they think, talk the way they talk, or act the way they act, they think that we are indeed strange. A godly, obedient, Bible-believing life is something totally strange and alien to the unsaved. Consequently, according to verse 4, we are spoken evil of—that is, we are mocked, ridiculed, and persecuted—simply because we do not live like them or act like them.

In 1 Peter 2:11, he says, “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims.” The word “pilgrims” is parepidemos, meaning one who comes from a foreign country or into a city or land to reside there by the side of the natives; hence, a stranger, a pilgrim, a foreigner, someone who is just passing through, or someone who stays for only a short period of time. The truth of the matter is that this world is one in which we really stay for a short or brief period of time. Even if you live to be 150 years old, or make it to 930 like Adam, or 969 years like Methuselah, it is still a brief and short period of time, especially compared with eternity. The word “pilgrim” simply means someone who is passing through.

If you are genuinely and sincerely a stranger and a pilgrim, if you genuinely and sincerely believe that your citizenship is in heaven, why would you be a traitor to yourself? Why would you act treacherously to yourself?

Justin Martyr described a Christian in the first century in these words: “They inhabit their own countries, but as strangers; they partake of all as citizens, yet suffer all as foreigners. Every strange land is a country to them, and every country a strange land.” How could he say that? Think about this. Peter says, “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims.” He is enforcing upon us our status as Christians, as converted people. He says, “You need to recognize this.”

We have a commonwealth in heaven. We have a different law, a different Lord, a different governor, and a different constitution.

Everything about us is different. “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.”

Abstaining from Fleshly Lusts

The word “abstain” is apechomai, and it literally means to abstain, to refrain from, and to hold oneself away from. What is it that we are to hold ourselves away from? What are we to abstain from and refrain from? Peter says, “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts.”

What in the world are fleshly lusts? Sarkikos is the Greek word from sarx, which means flesh. It is translated in our Bibles as carnal and fleshly. The word refers to those things that have the nature of the flesh, those things that have their seed in the animal nature or are aroused by the animal nature, those things under the control of an animal appetite, and those governed by mere human appetite and not the Spirit of God. Fleshly desires, or fleshly lusts, are those things that stem from our depraved nature and are contrary to the Spirit of God.

Now I want you to think about this. I want you to listen very carefully because I'm going to very quickly tell you how these fleshly lusts are labeled in the scripture. In Mark 4 and verse 19, they're called the lusts for other things. In Romans 1 and verse 24, they're called the lusts of our own hearts. In Ephesians 2 and verse 3, they're called the lust of the flesh. In Ephesians 4 and verse 22, they're called deceitful lusts. In 1 Timothy 6 and verse 9, they're called hurtful lusts. In 2 Timothy 2 and verse 22, they're called youthful lusts. In Titus 2 and verse 12, they're called worldly lusts. In 2 Timothy 4 and verse 3, they're called their own lust. In 1 Peter 2 and verse 11, they're called fleshly lust. In 1 Peter 4 and verse 2, they're called the lust of men. In 2 Peter 2 and verse 18, they're called the lust of the flesh. And in Jude verse 18, they are called ungodly lust. Now, it should be easily understood why Peter said, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lust."

Making No Provision for the Flesh

Now, I'm going to finish that verse, but before I do, I want you to see how the Apostle Paul teaches the same thing, but he uses a little different terminology. So I want you to hold 1 Peter 2 and look back in your Bibles to the book of Romans, chapter 13, and look at verse 14. Romans 13 and verse 14. Watch this carefully. Romans 13 and verse 14: the Apostle Paul says, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Now when we think about provisions we think about grocery shopping or we're thinking about going and buying clothes. Well, the word "provision" needs to be understood. It is actually from the Greek word pronoia, which is translated in our Bibles as providence and provision. It is actually from the verb pronoeo. Pro is a preposition which means before, and noeo means I think. So it literally means, I think before. In other words, the word provision means to perceive before, to foresee, to think beforehand, to take thought for something, to take care for something.

“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh.” In other words, do not forethink what your flesh wants or needs. Do not perceive it, plan it, or premeditate it. Stop thinking about your flesh. Make no provision for the flesh; do not plan to fulfill it.

Literally, Paul is commanding us—it is an imperative—not even to think about fulfilling the lusts and desires of the flesh. Rather, we are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to be clothed with the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are clothed with the Lord Jesus Christ, we will not be making provision for the flesh. If we are making provision for the flesh, we will not be putting on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us go back to 1 Peter and see where our treachery comes in, where we become traitors. Having understood everything so far, notice 1 Peter 2:11: “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts.” Refrain from them; distance yourself from them. Why? “Which war against the soul.” These fleshly lusts actually war against the soul.

The War Against the Soul and Application

Strateuomai is the Greek word. Stratia is the Greek word for army; that is where we get our English word strategy. But this word literally means war, going to war, or soldier. When Peter says, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul," the word "war" means to make a military expedition against, to lead soldiers to war in battle, to do military duty, to do active service, to be a soldier, and to fight. Literally, he is saying: Abstain from these fleshly lusts which make war against us, which try to subjugate us, overcome us, and bring us into captivity.

When you consider that our flesh is our enemy, and we make provision for it, plan for it, think about it, and want it fulfilled, we are not only being traitors and treacherous to the Lord Jesus Christ—to our commonwealth, our constitution, our law, and our governor, the Lord—we are also being treacherous and traitorous to our own souls, because fleshly lusts "war against the soul." Our flesh is our enemy.

John Gill, the great Baptist commentator, said, "Fleshly lusts are enemies to the spiritual peace, comfort, and welfare of the soul, and being of man's household, and in his heart, are the worst enemies he has, and are to be treated as such, to be shunned and avoided, watched and guarded against, for though they cannot destroy the souls of true believers, they may bring much leanness upon them, and greatly distress them, and spoil them of their inward joy and spiritual pleasure." Since these fleshly lusts war against our souls, we should be warring against them.

Galatians 5:16–17 gives us a passage we must comprehend: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; So that ye cannot do the things that ye would." The flesh fights against the spirit, and the spirit fights against the flesh. They are contrary to one another. There is no neutral ground, no compromise, and no possibility of our flesh and the spirit getting along. It is a war.

When you do what you would normally and naturally do as an unsaved man, you are siding with your flesh. You are a traitor and

treacherous, being treacherous to your own soul as well as to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Albert Barnes says that indulgence in these things makes war against the nobler faculties of the soul—against the conscience, understanding, memory, judgment, and the exercise of pure imagination. There is not a faculty of the mind, however brilliant in itself, that will not ultimately be ruined by indulgence in the carnal propensities of our nature. The effect of intemperance on the noble faculties of the soul is well known.

Alas, there are too many instances in which the light of genius and those endowed with splendid gifts at the bar, in the pulpit, and in the Senate is extinguished by it. To need a particular description, there is one vice preeminently, which prevails all over the heathen world and extensively in Christian lands, which more than all others blunts the moral sense, pollutes the memory, defiles the imagination, hardens the heart, and sends a withering influence through all the faculties of the soul. That is fleshly lust. Fleshly lust will destroy anyone and everyone. I have known preachers who have left the ministry because of fleshly lust.

All you have to do is look around at politicians and congressmen. I had a farmer friend who was quite successful. He was in his late forties or early fifties when he met this pretty little thing and started messing around with her. Next thing you know, he had lost his wife, his family, his farm, and the money he had. Then the pretty little thing left him because he no longer had any money.

What Barnes is saying is that these fleshly lusts will destroy anything and everything. According to Scripture, fleshly lusts marshal as an army against our souls. They fight against us, seek to subdue us and captivate us, and seek to bring us into submission to them, making us kneel before them. We are at war, and most of us do not even realize it. We are not simply traitors to our commonwealth and to our Lord; we are traitors to our own souls.

We never think of the depth of the treachery of our sins. So Peter says, “I beseech you, dearly beloved, as strangers and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.” Let me make some applications. If we are strangers and pilgrims, we do not

belong to this corruptible world. We are of an incorruptible race, and therefore we must live as strangers and pilgrims. We often speak of the world, the flesh, and the devil, but notice how frequently the world and the flesh are combined. In 1 John 2:15, the Bible says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."

"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Notice how he mentions the world, and then the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

We have not realized that the great mischief of sin, no matter how pleasing, titillating, or exciting it appears, is that it makes war against us and seeks to destroy us. This is why Peter says we should avoid and abstain from fleshly lusts. There are many sorts of sin, but when you read Galatians 5:19–21, most of the sins mentioned are sins of the flesh.

These sins are not only probably more odious to God; they are more destructive of our own lives and souls. That is why, in 1 Corinthians 6:18, the apostle said, "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body," not just his own soul, but his own body as well. Sin makes war against us.

How, then, do we avoid fleshly lust? How do we cease making provision for our fleshly, carnal nature? The short answer is given by the apostle Paul: by putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, clothing ourselves with Him, and walking in the Spirit rather than in the flesh. The Bible says that we are to walk in the Spirit, and we shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. When we walk in the flesh, we cannot walk in the Spirit. When we make provision for the flesh, we cannot put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

We must understand that when we sin, we become traitors to ourselves as well as to our Lord.

When we put on the Lord Jesus Christ, we will not make provision for the flesh. We must understand we become traitors, not only to

our God, but our own souls when we engage in fleshly lust. Therefore, we're to walk as strangers and pilgrims.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Your Word. We thank You for the exhortation of Peter, the admonishment. And we pray, Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Thou wouldst help us, Lord, to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. Lord, may we be free men in Thee, and not slaves to our sin, to our desires, to our lusts. Give us Your grace, give us Your mercy, and help us, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we ask it. Amen.

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