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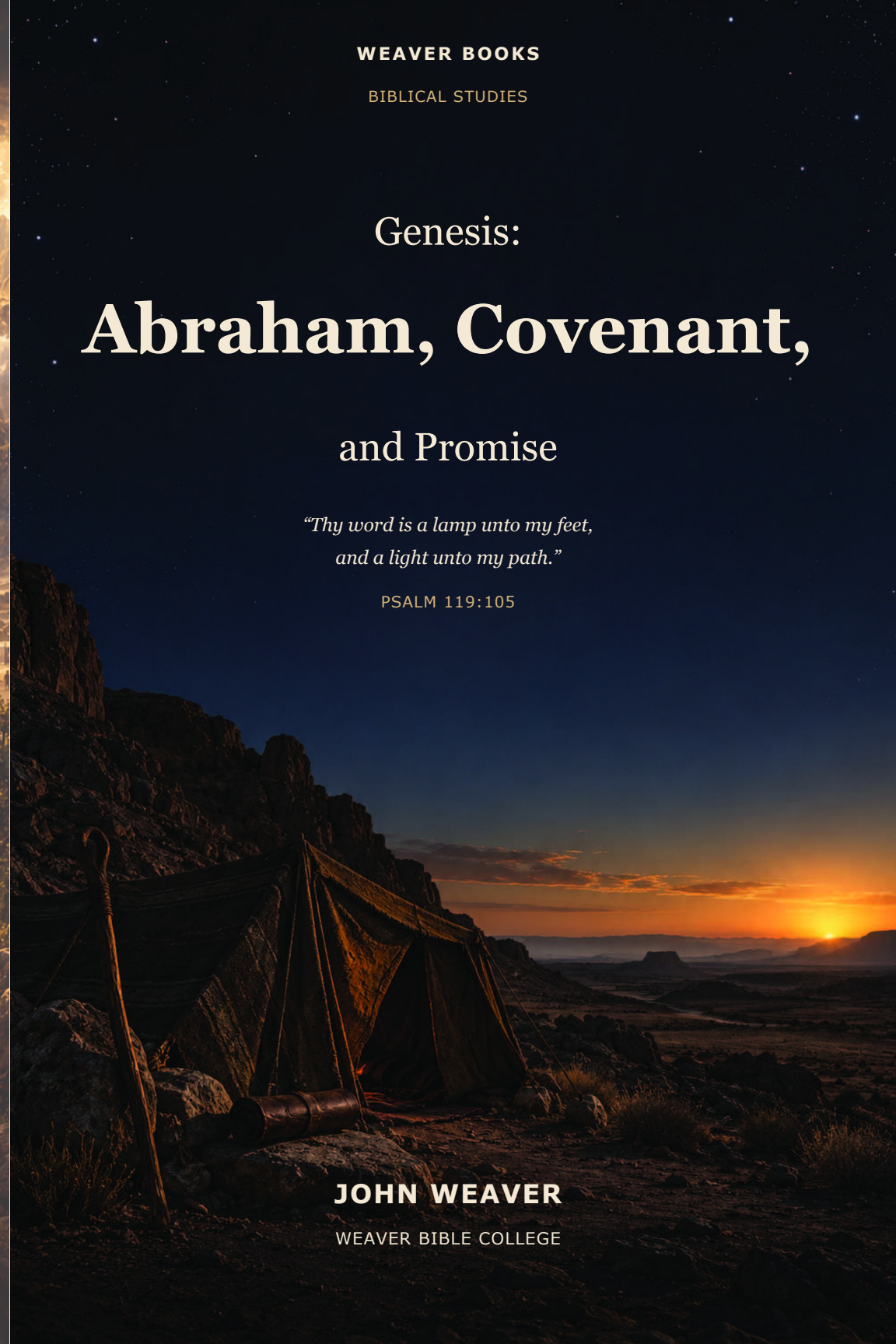
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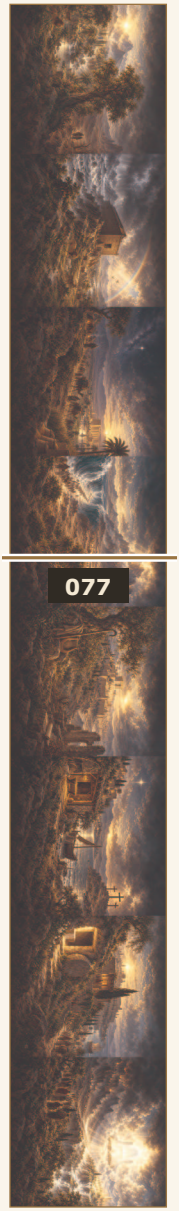
"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

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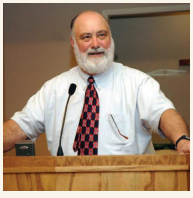
And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

GENESIS 15:6

Promise and responsibility meet in the life of faith. In this collection, John Weaver considers covenant, redemption, godly friendship, judgment, and the fulfillment of biblical promises in Christ. These sermons follow the connections between Abraham's inheritance and the wider testimony of Scripture, with practical attention to trust and obedience.

“It is his sheep that hear his word and they follow him.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

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CHAPTER 1

Concepts of a Just War

The Concept of a Just War

Introduction: The Standard of God's Word

Isaiah 8:20 will begin the message, although I will not be preaching from this text. Many of you know that I have been preaching for some time on the biblical doctrine of war. The first message I brought was “God Is a Warrior.” Messages two through five dealt with the concept of holy war. I went through the Bible and showed on numerous occasions how war is considered holy when it is conducted according to God, His law, and His will. Today I want to deal with what I am going to call the concept of a just war.

Isaiah 8:20 says, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” God says everything is to be spoken according to the law and to the testimony, that is, the Word of God. If anything is contrary to the Word of God, if anything is in contradiction to the law of God, whatever it is, it is wrong, because God’s Word is absolutely right.

The Flawed Assumption: Only Defensive Wars Are Just

I have been preaching on the concept of holy war, and now I am preaching on the concept of a just war. There are many corresponding truths between a holy war and a just war. In fact, you could say that the two are actually synonymous. If a war is holy, very obviously it has to be just. And if a war is just, very obviously it has to be holy. The reason I am dealing with this concept today is that there are many individuals who not only believe but teach that the only just war is a defensive war. They teach that the only just war is a defensive war, and no other kind of war can be just.

They would say that offensive wars, that is, wars of aggression or wars initiated by an aggressor, would be categorically unjust. Therefore, they would say that all offensive wars, all aggressive wars, were unjust. It is true, generally speaking, that defensive wars are just and sinless, but there are exceptions. It is also true, generally speaking, that offensive wars or aggressive wars are unjust and sinful, but there are exceptions. You cannot make a blanket statement and say that all defensive wars are just. Nor can you make a blanket statement and say that all offensive or all aggressive wars are unjust and ungodly. You cannot say that.

Defensive Wars That Are Unjust

Because Scripture says, “to the law and to the testimony, if they agree not, it's because there is no truth in them.” Genesis 34 shows a defensive war in the Bible that was wrong.

Young ladies, you ought not to be mixing with the ungodly.

“And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor, the Hivite prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her and defiled her. And his soul clave unto Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel and spake kindly unto the damsel. And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife. And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. Now his sons were with his cattle in the field, and Jacob held his peace until they were come. And Hamor, the father of

Shechem, went out unto Jacob to commune with him. And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it, and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth or angry, because he had wrought folly in Israel, and lying with Jacob's daughter, which thing ought not to be done."

"And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter. I pray you, give her him to wife, and make you marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. And you shall dwell with us, and the land shall be before you, dwell and trade you therein, and get you possessions therein. And Shechem said unto her father and to her brother, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what you shall say unto me will I give. Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as you shall say unto me, but give me the damsel to wife. And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he defiled Dinah their sister, and they said unto him, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised, for that were a reproach unto us."

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 34:1-31 (KJV)

> "But in this will we consent unto you, if ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised. Then will we give you our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters unto us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. But if you will not hearken unto us to be circumcised, then we will take our daughter, and we will be gone."
>
> "And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem, Hamor's son. And the young man deferred not to do this thing, because he had delighted in Jacob's daughter, and he was more honorable than all the house of his father."
>
> "And it came to pass on the third day when they were sore that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword and came upon the city boldly and slew all the males. And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword and took Dinah out of Shechem's house and went out. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain and spoiled the city because they had defiled their sister. They took their sheep and their oxen and their asses which was in the city

> and which were in the field, and all their wealth and all their little ones and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house."
>
> "And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, You have troubled me to make me stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites, and I, being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me and slay me, and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?"
>
> Is what Shechem did wrong? Yes. Should not Shechem have been punished? Yes. But why should Hamor and all of the city be punished for what someone else had done?
>
> You could say that Simeon and Levi were defending their sister, their honor, and their family. You could say that what Simeon and Levi did was a defensive action. But what they did was more than a defensive action in one sense of the word, because they did not just defend their sister against Shechem.

They literally killed an entire city in their rage and cruelty. Jacob later said, “Let not my soul come into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.” Jacob feared that, because Simeon and Levi were fewer in the land, the other people would hear what they had done, gather together, and wipe them out. Here is a defensive action condemned by Scripture.

Another defensive war condemned in Scripture appears in Judges 20. “Then all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together, as one man from Dan, even to Beersheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the Lord in Mizpah.”

A Levite from Bethlehemjudah had gone down and was offered to turn into a city of one of the heathen, but he refused, saying, “No, I’m going to lodge with my own people.” He and his wife went to a city of Benjamin, where the Sodomites encompassed him. They intended to take him, but instead seized his wife and abused her until morning. When the man arose, his wife was dead. He then did a very unorthodox thing: he cut her into twelve pieces and sent her to each tribe of Israel, saying, “I want you to see what one of our tribes, one of our cities of Benjamin has done to my wife.”

All Israel gathered together. “And all the chief of the people, even all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, 400,000 footmen that drew sword.”

“Now, the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were going up to Mizpah. Then said the children of Israel, Tell us how was this wickedness? And the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered and said, I came into Gibeah that belonged to Benjamin, I and my concubine to lodge. And the men of Gibeah rose against me and beset the house round about upon me by night, and thought to have slain me, and my concubine have they forced that she is dead. I took my concubine and cut her in pieces and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel, for they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel. Behold, you are all children of Israel.”

“Give here your advice and counsel.” And all the people arose as one man, saying, “We will not, any of us, go to his tent. Neither will any of us turn into his house, but now this shall be the thing which we will do to Gibeah. We will go up by lot against it, and we will take ten men of a hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred of a thousand, a thousand of ten thousand to fetch victuals for the people, that they may do when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel.” So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together as one man. And the tribes of Israel sent men throughout all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, “What wickedness is this that is done among you? Now therefore, deliver us the men, the children of Belial, who were in Gibeah, that we may put them to death and put away evil from Israel.” But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren and children of Israel, but the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities of Gibeah to go to battle against the children of Israel.

Now, what in the world were the Gileadites and the Benjamites doing? They were defending themselves—or, let me say it another way, they were defending the Sodomites. It is true that Israel came upon them to attack them. Was this defensive war of Benjamin a just war? The answer is unequivocally no. Very obviously, it was not just, because they were harboring murderers and sodomites.

Consider another example of a defensive war that would be wrong and unjust, from Jeremiah chapter 27, beginning with verse 1: “In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, came this word of Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Thus saith the Lord to me, Make these bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck, and send them to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon, by the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem, unto Zedekiah king of Judah, and command them to say to their masters, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, thus shall you say”

SCRIPTURE READING - Jeremiah 27:1-11 (KJV)

> to your masters, I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemeth meet unto me. And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon my servant, and the beast of the field have I given unto him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him and his son and his son's son until the very time of his land come, and that many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him. And it shall come to pass that the nation and the kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the Lord, with a sword, and with a famine, and with a pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand. Therefore, hearken not to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which shall speak unto you, saying, You shall not serve the king of Babylon.

God sent Jeremiah to tell Edom, Moab, the Ammonites, Zedekiah, king of Judah, and all the nations concerned:

“For they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land, and that I should drive you out, and you should perish. But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the Lord, and they shall till it, and dwell therein. I spake also to

Zedekiah, king of Judah, according to all these words, saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live. Why will you die, thou and thy people, by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the Lord hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? Therefore, hearken not unto the words of the prophets that speak unto you, saying, You shall not serve the king of Babylon, for they prophesy a lie unto you. For I have not sent them, saith the Lord, yet they prophesied a lie in my name, that I might drive you out, and that you might perish, you and the prophets that prophesy unto you."

"Also I spake to the priests and all the people, saying, Thus saith the Lord, hearken not to the words of your prophets that prophesy unto you, saying, Behold, the vessels of the Lord's house shall now shortly be brought again from Babylon, for they prophesy a lie unto you. Hearken not unto them. Serve the king of Babylon, and live. Wherefore should this city be laid waste?"

God had given Nebuchadnezzar all this land because of their sins. He called Nebuchadnezzar His servant and commanded them to bow their necks, serve him, and remain in the land. If they refused, they would be defeated and sent out of the land. But what did Zedekiah and all the men of Judah do? They wanted to defend themselves. Since Nebuchadnezzar had attacked them, they engaged in a defensive war.

Was this defensive war against Nebuchadnezzar a just war? No. Why? Because God had told them to submit. God said, "Don't fight. If you fight, all you're going to do is just simply kill yourself." A defensive war is wicked, unjust, and wrong when it oversteps the bounds of morality, justice, and righteousness, as in Genesis 34.

It is true that Shechem deserved to die and to be punished. But all the other people had done absolutely nothing. They did not deserve to die, nor did they deserve to be punished. A defensive war is wrong, then, when it breaks the bounds of justice, righteousness, and morality and goes beyond them into cruelty and wickedness.

Secondly, a defensive war is wrong and wicked when it defends wickedness in morality and justice, as in the case of the Benjamites

when they were defending the Sodomites and the murderers. Thirdly, a defensive war is wicked and wrong when it is clearly contrary to the will of God.

Just as you cannot say that all defensive wars are just, likewise you cannot say that all offensive wars are wrong. Were not the Israelites in Judges chapter 20 right when they were the aggressors, when they were on the offensive to punish the Benjamites for harboring the Sodomites and the murderers?

Offensive Wars That Are Just

Deuteronomy 1:24 says, “And they turned and went up into the mountains, and came into the valley of Eshcol, and searched it out.” Everybody knows what is happening here. The spies are searching out the land. Who authorized and ordered this reconnaissance? God did. Why were they reconnoitering the area? Because they were going to attack it. In other words, it was an offensive war.

Numbers 31, beginning with verse 1, says: “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites, after which shalt thou be gathered unto thy people. And Moses spake unto the people, saying, Arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the Lord of Midian. Of every tribe a thousand throughout all the tribes of Israel shall you send to the war. So they were delivered out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand of every tribe, twelve thousand, armed for war. Moses sent them to the war, a thousand of every tribe, them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the priest, to the war, with the holy instruments, with the trumpets to blow in his hand. They warred against the Midianites as the Lord commanded Moses, and they slew all the males. And they slew the kings of Midian beside the rest of them that were slain, namely Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian.”

Balaam also, the son of Beor, they slew with a sword. Now, here was an offensive war. Here was an aggressive war. Was it a just war? Yes. In fact, all of the wars of Canaan were basically offensive wars or aggressive wars, and very obviously they were just. Why? Look in Psalm 24 and verse 1: “The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein.”

Now, wait a minute. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. Who has sovereign ownership of the entire earth? God. How many people on this earth belong to God? All of us, in one sense of the word, in the sense that He is the Creator, He is the Lord. How many animals on this earth belong to God? All of them. They don't belong to the state or to the DNR, I can assure you. They belong to God. The cattle on a thousand hills belong to Him, the Bible says. He feeds them, not the state. How much of the minerals belong to everything belongs to God.

Now, the point I'm making is this. When a people dishonor God, when they refuse to glorify God, when they refuse to acknowledge Him and serve Him, God has the sovereign right to dispossess any people. Let me give you an illustration. Let's suppose you own the house, you bought the land, you built the house, you pay the taxes, and now you're renting this house out. But all of a sudden your renter refuses to give you your rent. You try to be gracious to him and say, “Well, I'll give you 30 days to catch up.” And after 30 days, he is not caught up; he still refuses to pay you any rent at all.

Are you unjust for telling him to pack his bag and get out? Well, of course not. Why? You own the property. God is giving you the stewardship over that property. You have the right to dispossess any man who will not give you your proper rent over your property. Well, God owns the world. He has the right to dispossess any people that will not acknowledge Him, recognize Him, and glorify Him.

If you look at Matthew 21, beginning with verse 33, you will see that the Lord himself used this same illustration: "Hear another parable. There was a certain householder who planted a vineyard and hedged it round about and digged a winepress in it and built a tower and let it out to husbandmen and went out into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants and beat one and killed another and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did unto him likewise."

"And last of all, he sent his son saying, They will reverence my son." Of course, you know that this deals with the house of Israel and Christ. "For when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among

themselves, This is the heir, come, let us kill him, let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do to those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their season."

It is proper and right for the husbandman to do so, because he is the owner of the property. So our Lord himself says, "Look, I am the sovereign, and I can dispossess any people that I want." How does God dispossess people? Usually by war or famine, or flood or something, but God dispossesses them, God kicks them out because they fail to glorify him and give him the honor and glory due unto his name.

Abraham's Offensive War: The First Just War

Now we are talking about the concept of a just war. I want you to note the first recorded just war in the Bible. This war was not a defensive war. Let me restate the concept that I am giving: I am trying to demonstrate from Scripture that not all defensive wars are just wars, and not all offensive wars are unjust wars. There are times when defensive wars are wrong. There are times when offensive wars are right. So we are looking in Genesis chapter 14. Here is the first recorded just war in the Bible.

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 14:1-16 (KJV)

> And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel, king of Shinar, Arioch, king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and Tidal, king of Nations, that these made war with Bera, king of Sodom, and with Birsha, king of Gomorrah, Shinab, king of Admah, and Shemeber, king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar. All these were joined together in the Vale of Siddim, which is the Salt Sea. Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. In the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in their Mount Seir, unto El-Paran, which is in the wilderness.

And they returning came to En-Mishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites that dwelt in Hazezon-Tamar. And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, the same as Zoar, and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim, with Chedorlaomer, the king of Elam, and with Tidal, king of nations, and Amraphel, king of Shinar, and Arioch, king of Ellasar, four kings with five. And the vale of Siddim was full of slime pits. And the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell there, and they that remained fled to the mountain. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their victuals and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. And there came one that had escaped and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre, the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner, and these were confederate with Abram.

And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants born in his own house, 318, and pursued them unto Dan. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left side of Damascus. He brought back all the goods and also brought again his brother Lot and his goods, and the people also, and the women also, and the people.

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 14:17-24 (KJV)

And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and of the kings that were with him at the Valley of Shaveh, which is the King's Dale. And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine. He was the priest of the Most High God, and he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. And he blessed the Most High God who had delivered thine enemies into thine hand, and he gave him tithes of all. And the King of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. And Abram said to the King of Sodom, I have lifted up mine hand unto the Lord, the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will

> not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldst say that I have made Abram rich, save only that which the young men had eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre.

"Let them take their portion." Let me set the stage for this war. First of all, an invading army had defeated and looted Sodom and Gomorrah. Abram's nephew Lot, his family, and all of their possessions were taken captive. When Abram heard this, understand that Abram himself was not personally involved in this war. They had not attacked Abraham. I do not know why this war started.

If you look back at verses 1 and 2 of Genesis chapter 14, the Bible says, particularly in verse 4, "Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled." I do not know if there was a covenant, a confederation, or tyranny. I do not know. The Bible does not say. The king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, and these other kings said, "Look, we are just not going to serve you anymore." Maybe Chedorlaomer was a tyrant. I do not know. Maybe the sin was on the part of these other people. I do not know.

But Abraham himself was not personally involved in this war. When he heard that his nephew Lot had been taken, Abraham armed his 318 trained servants. Note that the Bible said, "trained in his own house." That is quite an army—318 men just in your own house.

He had some men who were confederate with him, including Aner, Eshcol, and some of these others. They got together, pursued after the king, and entered into combat with him.

Let me make some statements. First of all, there is absolutely no condemnation in the Bible of Abraham for his possession of weaponry or trained militia members in his own house. In fact, everything in this story is permeated with divine approval. Note that this war Abraham entered into was not initiated by God. When I say that, I mean this: God did not tell Abraham, "Abraham, go get them." He did not say that. God did not initiate this war.

Rather, what happened was this. Abraham, out of a duty to his brother, out of a duty to his family, and with a sense of justice and

morality, armed his trained servants, got his confederates together, and said, “It’s my responsibility to defend my family and to bring back my family.” Moreover, when Abraham came back from this war, he received priestly blessings. Genesis chapter 14, beginning with verse 18, says, “And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine and he was the priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him, that is, Abraham, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be the Most High God who hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand. And he, Abraham, gave him, that is, Melchizedek, tithes of all.” So here comes the priest of the Most High God, and he blesses Abraham for entering into this aggressive, offensive war.

Hebrews chapter 7 speaks of the same man. The first three verses say, “For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham, returning from the slaughter of the kings, blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace, without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually.” Some people say that Melchizedek was a Christophany, that is, a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. Others say he was someone who represented and was likened to Christ. Either way you cut it, all you can say is that God gave His divine approval and blessing upon the actions Abraham engaged in, and what Abraham engaged in was an offensive war.

Now, here is the question: Was that offensive war a just war? The answer is yes. Yes, it was. Wars against a tyrannical enemy are just and right. Look in Deuteronomy chapter 25, beginning with verse 17. In fact, turn to Deuteronomy 25 and then back to Exodus 17 first. Let us read that passage first, beginning with verse 8.

Wars Against Tyranny and Wickedness

"Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim." Amalek was the first people to engage in aggressive war with Israel after Israel came out of Egypt. Joshua discomfited the Amalekites with the edge of the sword. Moses was on the hill with the rod of God in

his hand, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands. God said that He would have war from generation to generation with Amalek. Note that Amalek initiated this war.

Now consider Deuteronomy 25:17: "Remember what Amalek did unto thee, by the way, when you were come forth out of Egypt." Picture Israel coming out of Egypt, struggling and perhaps confused, without everything together yet. Verse 18 says, "How he met thee by the way." Amalek was deliberately the aggressor, pressing an attack: "How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary, and he feared not God." Amalek purposefully met Israel, attacked, and struck the feeble and those in the rear. He was not fighting in the open, so to speak; it was a guerrilla tactic.

Then verse 19 says, "Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven, thou shalt not forget it." God commanded Israel to remember. When He gave them peace and established them, they were to turn and wipe out the Amalekites.

In 1 Samuel 15, Samuel said to Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel." Then came the command: "Now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies. I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox, sheep, camel, and ass." God said, "Go and kill them, and kill them all."

Someone may ask, “How can you say that was an aggressive war? We just read where Amalek attacked Israel first, four hundred years earlier.” Now God was initiating an aggressive, offensive war. He said, “You go and wipe out the wicked and take care of them.” Technically speaking, this had to be an offensive war, because God was the one initiating it. Very obviously, then, an offensive war is not wrong when God initiates it.

Wars to eliminate wickedness, ungodliness, and tyranny are just and right according to the Bible. It is not simply that a defensive war can be just and sinless. I have pointed out that some defensive wars can be unjust and sinful, but in this case we find that offensive wars are sometimes just and sinless as well.

Historical Application: The American Revolution

There is a pastor by the name of David Jones who, in 1775, preached a message from Nehemiah 4:14 entitled “Defensive War in a Just Cause Sinless.” I have that sermon and have read it. In this sermon, Pastor Jones defends the colonists against a charge of rebellion against England during the American Revolution, or the American War for Independence. Moreover, he demonstrates the justice and necessity of resisting tyranny.

George III, by the way, was the aggressor in the Revolutionary War, or the War for Independence. He was the one who sent the troops over here; we did not send troops over there. Thus Pastor Jones preached his sermon, “Defensive War in a Just Cause Sinless.”

There was also a man in Scotland by the name of John Knox, known as the trumpeter of Scotland. John Knox taught that defensive wars were just and sinless. He also demonstrated from Scripture that wars against tyranny and totalitarianism, although offensive or aggressive wars, were just and sinless. Queen Mary said that she feared the prayers of John Knox more than all the armies of Europe. John Knox was certainly a strong man, which is why he was called the trumpeter of Scotland.

In fact, you should read some of John Knox's books. I have one entitled The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women. He was not preaching merely against women, but against wicked Queen Mary and those wicked rulers. I am giving you this information because I want to tell you about another pastor, Jonas Clark. If you do not have The Chaplains and Clergy of the Revolution by J. T. Headley, I strongly suggest that you buy it. You can buy it for ten bucks. It is a very important book, filled with thrilling information. I want to read to you about Pastor Jonas Clark.

Many of you have never realized that, at the Battle of Lexington Green—Lexington and Concord, the shot that was fired around the world—the colonists who fought at Lexington Green had been trained by their pastor. Their pastor was their captain and leader. A regiment of Redcoats drew up and aimed their weapons at this little green, full of colonial Minutemen, demanding that they disperse and throw down their weapons. The Minutemen did not. Then some of the Englishmen began shooting, and some of the colonial Minutemen fell dead. The colonial Minutemen fired back.

Have you ever wondered why Jonas and those men at Lexington Green allowed the British to shoot first? You may say, "That's just the way it happened." No, that is not just the way it happened. They wanted to make sure they were right. What has been said about Jonas Clark is this: He knew his Knox. That means he knew the teaching of John Knox, who taught that a defensive war was just and sinless. Pastor Clark, according to many scholars, was making sure that what America engaged in was a defensive war.

Here is a statement concerning his people: "The people had become so thoroughly indoctrinated in his views and had been so animated by his appeals from the pulpit and in public meetings that they had in them embodied instructions to their delegate to the provincial legislature as the expression of their wishes and determination. Those instructions remain to this day," that is, what these people sent to their legislators. "Those instructions remain to this day and are engrossed on the town records as a standing memorial, not only of his patriotism, but of his ability as a statesman."

"No single individual," says a distinguished man, "probably did so much to educate the people up to the point of intelligence, firmness, and courage as their honored and beloved pastor." John Adams and John Hancock, when proscribed by the royal government, found an asylum in his house. They went to Pastor Jonas Clark's house, and he hid them.

They were there when the first verbal message came from Warren that mischief was afoot. Pastor Clark described the event in a note: "came and expressed in writing, stating that eight or nine officers of the King's troops were seen just before night passing the road toward

Lexington in a musing, contemplative posture. It was suspected that they were out upon some evil design."

"Ten or twelve men on account of Hancock and Adams were detailed to guard my house that night." Pastor Jonas Clark had ten or twelve armed men around his house to protect himself and, of course, John Adams and John Hancock.

He continues: "Those officers passed through the town. Three men were sent to watch them. At ten o'clock said officers stopped on the borders of Lincoln, seized their bridles, put pistols to their hearts, and swore if they stood another step they were dead men. Between the hours of twelve and one o'clock, we received intelligence from Warren that a British detachment was on its way to destroy the stores at Lexington. The three held a hurried consultation and resolved to fight. At two o'clock, peal after peal from the belfry, called the inhabitants, excited inhabitants, together on the church green."

Where did the militia meet? On the church green. There they found their pastor, who had arrived before them. The roll was called, and 150 answered to their names. The men, the hour, and the crisis at hand made the scene on that quiet green a most solemn and impressive one. The church, the pastor, and his congregation, standing together in the dim light while the stars looked tranquilly down from the sky above them, formed the subject for a great historic picture.

As the pastor surveyed the silent ranks, a strange light gleamed in his eye, for he saw clearly beyond that night's business, and his attentive ear caught from afar a faint but distinctly the clock of destiny striking. The great question with Hancock and Adams had been, Would the people fight? Would these humble mechanics and farmers dare resist the drilled troops of England? Clark knew they would. He had trained them for this hour. Were his years of labor to be in vain? No, they would fight, and, if need be, die too under the shadow of the house of God.

Meantime, Swift writers come quoting from George Bancroft: "How often in that building"—the church where the green was—"had they, with renewed professions of their faith, looked up to God as the

stay of their fathers and the protector of their privileges? How often on that village green, hard by the burial place of their forefathers, had they pledged themselves to each other to combat manfully for their birthright inheritance of liberty?"

There they now stood, side by side, under the provincial banner, with arms in hand, silent and fearless. The ground on which they stood was the altar of freedom, and they were to furnish its victims. How often, he might have added, had they been told from the pulpit of that sacred building that resistance to tyranny was obedient to God—not merely, as freemen, to combat for their birthright inheritance of liberty, but, as Christians, to defend the altars of their religion. They stood there in stern and silent array.

In the sharp rattle of musketry that followed the brutal order, "Throw down your arms and disperse," Pastor Clark heard only what he knew would be the result of his own teachings. Still, the crash of the sudden volleys sent a quick, keen pain through his heart for its toll of death.

As the white puffs of smoke lifted up in the morning air, he saw the green covered with reeling and falling forms. Hasting further after the retreat of the British, a sad sight met his gaze, for there under the windows of his church lay seven stalwart men, stretched stark and stiff in death, and many wounded. There lay Jonas Parker, the strongest wrestler in Lexington, pierced with ball and bayonet. In the morning he had sworn never to run from British troops, and he had kept his word, falling on the very spot where he had taken his post at the beat of the drum. There, too, lay old Caleb Monroe, his gray hairs dabbled in blood, and nearby him Caleb Harrington, fallen on the doorsteps of the house of God, into which he had gone for and besides them other well-known forms.

The bright spring morning broke tranquilly over the scene, the dewdrops glistening beside the red stains that sprinkled the startling grass. The birds came out and sang upon the budding trees, and nature gave no token of the bloody murder that had just been committed. Pastor Clark gazed long and earnestly on this tragic spectacle, but no tear of regret mingled with the loss of sympathy which he shed. Those lifeless forms before him were holy martyrs in

his sight, the first precious sacrifices laid upon the altar of his country, which was yet to grow under its load of victims.

"He had no misgivings from that day," said he; "will be dated the liberty of the world." No sound broke the stillness of the scene, but he heard far up in the dome of the universe a bell tolling the death of tyranny.

The Obligation of Self-Defense

I am certainly not going to criticize Jonas Clark or condemn him, nor those men who fell that day at Lexington Green. But understand this: not only defensive wars are just and sinless, generally speaking, when we are defending our rights, liberties, and freedoms; offensive and aggressive wars can also be just and sinless. We have a biblical obligation to defend our lives and our families. Suppose a man stands with a pistol in my face and says, "Pastor Weaver, I'm going to kill you. And then after I kill you, I'm going to kill your wife and your children."

If I stand there and allow a man to kill me, and then my wife and children, what have I done? I have not only assisted him in the act of murder; I have actually violated the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," because I allowed him to murder me.

What must I do scripturally? I must do everything within my power to stop him from murdering me and my family, even if it means taking his life. You say, "Brother Weaver, it would be a defensive act in that sense of the word. You are defending your life and your family." I understand that. But if I saw a man jump out of a car and run toward me with a gun, and even thought his intention was to kill me and my family, guess what I would do? I would shoot first, and then question him. Why? Because I have a responsibility to defend my life.

Self-defense, according to the Bible, is obligatory. We have the right and the obligation to defend our lives—not only our individual lives, but the life of a family, a church, and a country. Let me show you.

Turn in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 22. Let me show you a case example of the sixth commandment. Beginning with verse 23,

God says: “If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her, then shall you bring them both out into the gate of that city, and you shall stone them with stones that they die.”

Deuteronomy says, “The damsel because she cried not being in the city, and the man because he had humbled his neighbor's wife, so shalt thou put evil from among you. But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her and lie with her, then the man only that lay with her shall die. But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing. There is in the damsel no sin worthy of death, for as when a man rise up against his neighbor and slayeth him, even so it is in this manner. For he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her.”

Now watch this. God says if a man finds a damsel in the city and lies with her, both are to be put to death. Why? “Because the damsel being in the city cried not.” Since she did not cry out, she was consenting to the sin, consenting to the crime, and therefore she was to be put to death as well. But in the field, when a man finds a woman and forces her, God says not to put the woman to death, because she cried out and there was none to save her.

What does that mean? If that woman had cried aloud, any man who heard her would have been responsible, duty-bound, and obligated to save her life, even if it meant killing the man who was attacking her. We have the right, the obligation, and the duty before God to preserve our lives, the lives of our family, the lives of our church, and the lives of our countrymen. So a just war is not simply a defensive war. It can also be an aggressive war when it is fought against tyranny, totalitarianism, wickedness, and ungodliness in order to save our lives, our freedom, and our liberty.

As Isaiah 8:20 says, “To the law and to the testimony, if they agree not, it is because there is no light.”

Father, we are so thankful today for the Word of God, and we are so thankful that thy Word has all the answers. We ask, Father, that you would teach us, fill us up in the most holy faith, and help us today. In Christ’s name we pray, amen.

CHAPTER 2

Wine, its Condemnation & Commendation

SCRIPTURE READING - 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 (KJV)

Now, in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not that you come together, not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you, and I heartily believe it. For there must also be sects among you that they who are approved may be made manifest among you when you come together, therefore, into one place.

This is not the Lord's supper. For in eating, everyone taketh before other his own supper, and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? Have you not houses to eat and to drink in, or despise you the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread. And when he had given thanks, he breaketh and said, Take eat.

> This is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood. This do you as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation, or condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.
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> For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, When you come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that you come not together unto condemnation, and the rest will I set in order when I come.

I ask that you look very closely at your lessons. In lesson number seven, Roman numeral seven, you will notice the elements. I deal with bread, azumos, which is literally the unleavened bread, and then with letter B, wine. The second element in the Lord's table is wine. I also laid down certain principles of interpretation. By way of introduction today, let me reemphasize the propositions or principles laid down last week. Philosophy.

Introduction: Principles of Interpretation

Nothing matter or materialistic is evil in and of itself. That is pure paganism. Sin is in the human heart. Sin must be dealt with in the heart. Money, wine, or whatever it is, anything matter or material, is not evil and is not sinful in and of itself. All abuse of anything, even food, comes from our evil and sinful propensities. So, to begin with this morning, I want you to look at wine in its condemnation, or the abuse of it.

Wine in Its Condemnation: The Abuse of Alcohol

Now, drunkenness, vileness, lewdness, and all acts associated with the abuse of alcohol in any form are repeatedly condemned in the Scriptures. If you would turn very quickly in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 6, notice verses 9 through 11, and let me lay down something that is highly important. In 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 9, notice what the apostle says: “Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

Now notice verse 11: “And such were some of you. But you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” Let me say it very plainly: there is no such thing as a Christian drunkard. There is no such thing as a Christian drunkard, nor is there any such thing as a Christian becoming a drunkard. Because these two are opposites, Paul said that if a man is a drunkard, he shall not inherit the kingdom of God. He’s unconverted. You say, “Well, Pastor, I know a man who used to be a Christian, and now he’s nothing but a drunkard.” No, you don’t.

John said in 1 John 2:19, “They went out from us, that it might be made manifest that they were not of us; for had they been of us, no doubt they would have continued with us.” Many Christians may once have been drunkards, but after God saved them, they are no longer drunkards. There is no such thing as a Christian drunkard, and the Apostle Paul makes that clear. Anyone who continues in that sin gives clear evidence that he is unconverted and not a Christian.

Proverbs on the Consequences of Drunkenness

In Proverbs 20:6, the Bible speaks clearly about the abuse of wine and alcoholic beverages: “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” Why does the Bible say that wine is a mocker? Because he who is intoxicated with it readily scoffs at that which is holy. Usually inebriated, intoxicated,

drunken men have absolutely no regard for that which is holy and righteous.

But that is not all. Wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging. The word raging literally means boisterous, because he who is drunk or inebriated with strong drink, in his desolate madness, breaks all the limits of morality and propriety. Anyone deceived by wine or strong drink—brought under a slavish desire and subjection to it—is not wise at all. Thus the Word of God condemns its abuse.

Proverbs 23:21 tells us that the abuser of alcohol and the abuser of rest shall pay dearly: "For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty, and drowsiness shall close the man with rags." Drowsiness, gluttony, and drunkenness are all used to bring one to poverty.

Is it a sin to be drowsy? What is he talking about? Does that mean that when you begin to fall asleep, and in your state of drowsiness, you are sinning? No. He is talking about perpetual drowsiness—a lazy, indolent, slothful person who will not work. Drowsiness, gluttony, which is an abuse of food, and drunkenness, which is an abuse of wine and alcohol, shall bring a man to poverty. The individual who is the slave to alcohol, like the individual who is the slave to food and the slave to rest, shall have absolutely nothing.

Proverbs 26:9 shows that drunkenness not only brings poverty, but pain as well: "As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is the parable in the mouth of fools." As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, he staggers, falls down, and falls among thorns, briars, and sticks, which pierce him many times—bringing not only poverty, according to Proverbs 23, but pain in Proverbs 26:9.

The Classic Passage: Proverbs 23:29-35

Proverbs 23 contains the classic passage dealing with the drunkard and those who abuse wine and alcohol: "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup,

when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

"Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick. They have beaten me, and I felt it not. When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."

This is a perfect picture of the drunkard, the abuser of wine and alcohol. He has woe, wounds, poverty, and pain, and he is enslaved to his own desire.

Notice in verse 30, when he asks the question, "Who has all these things?" The answer is given: "They that tarry long at the wine"—not those who use it properly, but those who abuse it, who tarry long and are enslaved to it. He adds, "And they that go to seek mixed wine." What is mixed wine? In Bible times, many men mixed spices with wine, not only to change its flavor, sometimes possibly improving it, but usually to give it added potency, making it more powerful and intoxicating so they could get drunk more quickly. Thus he speaks of individuals who carry along the wine and seek this mixed wine to make them drunk quicker.

Now notice verse 31: "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright." An interesting point is that, if you study any Bible encyclopedia, you will find that this verse is really a perfect picture of what is known as green wine.

I am not a winemaker, and knew nothing about fermentation until I began to study it. But I found that biblical wines have a first and a secondary fermentation. The first is called green wine: the wine has not completed fermentation. The bubble—literally the gas bubble—or the wine moving itself in the cup refers to individuals who drink wine that has not finished fermenting.

Everyone has heard of winos. A wino is a drunkard, an individual who drinks wine continually. Did you know that winos develop a fungus in their stomach lining because of alcohol abuse? Every one of us probably has had a fungus at one time or another. If you know anything about fungus, one of its main effects is itching. I have a

question: If a fungus grows in your stomach lining and your stomach itches, how do you scratch it? The only way is to drink what is known as green wine. The wino takes this green wine, still unfinished fermenting, and drinks it. It is still bubbling, "quote-unquote," in his stomach, thereby scratching the fungus. The only problem is that green wine is extremely deadly: it will kill. It is extremely deadly; it is not simply intoxicating, but something that will kill.

Wine and Its Commendation

At the last, it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder. Here is the man enslaved to wine, abusing it, who then uses green wine to scratch the stomach lining, and ultimately the green wine will end up killing him.

Drunkenness Associated with Idolatry and Lewdness

Drunkenness in the Bible is usually associated with idolatry, adultery, and uncleanness. In fact, according to Joel chapter 3 and verse 3, some people are so enslaved to wine that they are willing to sell their own daughters into prostitution and slavery just for a drink. The Bible tells us also, in Habakkuk chapter 2 and verse 15, of men with evil desires who offer their wine or alcohol to others so that they may look upon their nakedness.

God therefore pronounces a curse upon individuals who give alcoholic beverages to people in order to make them drunk and induce them to commit some lewd, wicked, or vile act. This is extremely condemned in the Word of God.

Wine in Its Commendation: A Necessity and Blessing

Any way you look at it, the abuse of wine is wrong, sinful, ungodly, and condemned by God. Anyone who abuses that which God has given will receive the unfailing judgment of God. The abuse of wine is condemned in the Word of God. I want to show you wine and its commendation in the Word of God—that is, its proper use. Throughout the Bible, wine is regarded as a necessity of life.

In no way is it counted as a luxury. It was a necessary part of even the simplest meals. In Genesis 14:18, when Melchizedek met

Abraham, the priest of God brought forth bread and wine. In Judges 19:19, the Levite was traveling with his wife, and no one would take him in. Finally, the old man came along and said, “Don't lodge in the street. Why are you out here?” The Levite answered, “No man has invited me in, and yet I have provender for my ass, and I have bread and wine for my wife and I.” Of course, the old man said, “Come on in.”

In 1 Samuel 16:20, Jesse, the father of David, sent bread and wine to King Saul. In Isaiah 55, when God is talking about the gospel feast, He said, “Hold that him who is athirst, yea, let him come and drink freely. Yea, let him come and buy milk and wine and that without price.” According to 2 Chronicles 11:11, wine was an indispensable provision for a fortress. Whenever a fortress was built, it was stocked with wine. According to the Bible in Lamentations 2:12 and Zechariah 9:17, wine was drunk by all classes of people and all ages, including the very young. In Lamentations 2:12, the young are asking their parents, “Where is the bread and where is the wine?”

Wine in the Bible is bracketed with grain as a basic staple in Genesis 27:28. The failure of the wine crop, or its destruction by foreigners or enemies, was always taken as a terrible calamity and as the judgment of God—in Deuteronomy 28:30, 39; Isaiah 62:8; Isaiah 65:21; Micah 6:15; Zephaniah 1:13; and many others. Anytime the wine crop was destroyed, it was taken as the judgment of God.

I want you to see, first of all, that wine is commended in the Bible as a special token of God's blessing. Look in your Bibles to Isaiah, chapter 65, verse 8. God says, “Thus saith the Lord, as the new wine is found in the cluster.” We will be dealing with these terms tonight, and I will show you what the word for new wine is. “As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not.” Now notice: “...for a blessing is in it. So will I do for my servants' sake, that I may not destroy them all.” A blessing is in it.

Look in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 27 and verse 28. Jacob. is blessing Esau, and he says—therefore, or blessing Isaac, who he thought was Esau. And so he's giving Isaac this double inheritance, this double portion, this spiritual blessing. He says, “Therefore, God give thee of the dew of heaven and the fatness of earth and plenty of

corn and wine." Now remember, this is a spiritual blessing. And so the spiritual blessing upon this head is the plenty of corn and wine.

Look in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 7 and verse 13. This speaks of how God will love His people: "And He will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee. He will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kind, the flux of thy sheep, and the land which ye swear unto thy fathers to give thee." So here wine is given along with children as being the blessing of God.

Look, please, to the book of Amos, chapter 9 and verse 14. Let me say this about these passages: I am being very selective; I am giving you a limited number because of time. There are a multitude of verses that I could give, but I think these are sufficient. Amos 9 and verse 14: God says, "And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel."

And they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof, and they shall also make gardens and eat the fruit of them. In every one of these passages, wine is marked out as a blessing of God.

Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the firstfruits of all thine increase. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. The same thing is taught in Joel chapter 2 and verse 19.

I could multiply the Scriptures, but a question comes to my mind because I have read the same literature that you have read, and I have heard the same sayings that you have heard. If the Bible calls wine in so many places the blessing of God, and it is given as a special token of God's blessing, how can we properly refer to it as the devil's juice? It is not the devil's juice; it is God's gift. Men abuse it, but the Bible claims it as the special blessing of God.

Wine as a Token of the Messianic Age

Secondly, it is commended in that an extraordinary abundance of it is a token of the Messianic age. In the Bible, when God promises a superabundance of wine, it is referring to the Messianic age. This is a messianic promise:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed, and the mountain shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. Notice the mountain shall drop sweet wine, an abundance of it. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof, and they shall also make gardens and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.

Joel 3:18 says, "And it shall come to pass in that day that the mountain shall drop down new wine, and the hill shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters; and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim." Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall dwell forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. "For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for the Lord dwelleth in Zion."

Here is another passage that refers to the abundance of wine as being emblematical of and symbolical of the Messianic age. Zechariah 9:16 says, "And the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land. For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty! corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids."

So wine is commended in the Bible in that an extraordinary abundance of it is a token of the Messianic age. Thirdly, in the Bible, wine is commended in that it is given, listen carefully, to cheer the hearts of God and men. I would not have said that if the Bible did not say that.

Wine to Cheer Hearts, as Medicine, and for the Dying

Psalm 104:14-15 says that God "causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil

to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart." This whole passage is talking about God. Notice verse one: "Bless the Lord, O my soul." Then he tells everything that God does. He says that God has given wine to make glad the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread which will strengthen him.

"And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" Notice that the wine cheers God and man. Evidently, then, this has reference to the drink offerings included in the sacrifices, such as in Leviticus 23:13. It is called a cheering of the heart of God.

As you read through Scripture, you find that a moderate, temperate cheering of the heart of man by wine is not condemned, nor is it considered reprehensible. Consider 2 Samuel 13:28; Esther 1:10; Psalm 104:15; Zechariah 9:15; Zechariah 10:7; and chapter 10, verse 19, where this is emphasized again: a feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry. Once again, as you look in the Bible, you find that a moderate and temperate gladdening of the heart by the use of wine is not condemned.

In fact, there are a multitude of godly men and women in the Bible who used wine properly and were not reproved for doing so. There was Melchizedek and Abram in Genesis 14:18; Isaac and Jacob in Genesis 27:25; Jesse and Saul in 1 Samuel 16:20; Abigail and David in 1 Samuel 25:18; and the Israelites who came with Perfect heart to make David king over Israel in 1 Chronicles 12:38–40. There were Solomon and Hiram in 2 Chronicles 2:10, and Hezekiah in 2 Chronicles 32:28.

Nehemiah was cupbearer to Artaxerxes, and as cupbearer he had to taste everything that Artaxerxes drank (Nehemiah 2:1). There was Esther (Esther 5:6; 7:1), Paul and Timothy (1 Timothy 5:23), and Daniel (Daniel 10:2–3; chapter 6, verse 4). Then, of course, there was the Lord Himself in Luke 7:34. Nowhere in the entirety of Scripture is the proper and moderate use of wine or alcoholic beverages looked down upon or condemned.

Wine's Medicinal and Consoling Uses

Fourthly, wine is commended in Scripture for its medicinal properties, both externally and internally.

Luke 10:34 records the familiar story of the Good Samaritan. Anyone who has ever done home doctoring or seen an old war movie knows that alcohol is used to kill germs and cleanse. When the Samaritan found the man who had been beaten and left for dead, "he went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him." Here wine was used externally as a cleanser.

In 1 Timothy 5:23, wine is commended for internal use. The apostle told Timothy, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." Wine, then, is commended because it has medicinal properties both externally and internally.

Fifthly, wine is commended for those who are depressed or dying. Proverbs 31:6–7 says, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy heart. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." Verse 7 is not recommending drunkenness; drunkenness is sin. It recommends what we discussed earlier: making the heart merry—not drunkenness or tipsiness, but simply a gladdening of the heart. Therefore, strong drink is given to those who are ready to perish, those about to die, and wine to those of a heavy heart. It is commended for those who are depressed and those who are dying.

Exceptional Instances of Abstinence

Sixthly, wine is commended by expressing the exceptional instances of abstinence. Wine is commended by expressing in the Bible the exceptional instances of abstinence. There were times when certain people had to abstain. What were some of those times? For instance, look in Proverbs 31, verses 4 and 5. Kings and rulers were to abstain during times of momentous judgment and discernment: "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink, lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted."

When there was a time that called for judgment, or a time that called for discernment, those rulers in authority who had to deal with the law were called upon at that time to abstain. According to the Bible, if it was not during that particular time, rulers and princes could drink moderately.

In Leviticus, chapter 10, you will find that the priests, as long as they were in the tabernacle or in the temple ministering, were commanded to abstain. Leviticus 10:8 says, "And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations."

Some have supposed that the sin of Nadab and Abihu, in verses 1 and 2, when they offered strange fire, occurred because they were drunk. That may be true, but I do not know, and I do not think there is any way that you could prove it. In any case, while they were ministering, the priests were to abstain. However, according to Numbers 18:12 and verses 27 through 29, if they were not ministering, they not only could drink wine, but the Bible says they were to have the best wine. Numbers chapter 6 identifies another group who was to abstain.

Those who had taken upon themselves the Nazarite vow were required to abstain. Numbers chapter 6, verses 1 through 4, says: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the Lord, he shall separate himself from wine and from strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat any moist grapes or dried." He could not even have the grapes, much less the wine that came from them. "All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree from the kernels even to the husk." It is very obvious that the Nazarite, during the time of his vow, had to abstain.

However, look at verse 20. After his vow was over, "the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the Lord. This is holy for the priest with the wave breast and heave shoulder." After that, the

Nazarite may drink wine. In other words, after his vow was over, he could go back to drinking wine again. The Bible therefore commends it by pointing out exceptional instances in which there was to be total abstinence.

Seventhly—and I am not going to deal with this because I already have, but I am pointing it out—wine is commended in Scripture by the condemnation of its abuse. The abuse is always condemned, but not wine in and of itself.

Eighthly, wine is commended in Scripture by its being given for ceremonial and ecclesiastical uses. By that I mean that God commended those priests to include wine in the sacrifices, when they were to use wine for the drink offerings.

Wine in Ceremonial and Ecclesiastical Uses

When our Lord instituted, the Lord suffered. He used the elements from the Passover. Wine was very definitely used in the Passover. Our Lord took the elements, the unleavened bread and the wine, and He began the Lord's Supper. Therefore, the Apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11:21, did not tell those Corinthians to stop using wine; rather, he told them to stop abusing it.

The word drunken, when he rebukes them for being drunken, is methuo in the Greek, and literally means to be soaked or saturated with drink. He told them to stop being soaked and saturated with drink.

Thus, as you read through the Bible, you see wine and alcoholic beverages condemned, and that is always in reference to the abuse. On the other hand, you find wine and alcoholic beverages commended when they are used properly and biblically, within the framework that the Lord has ordained.

Applications

Applications: Enjoy All Things as God's Gifts

What are the applications? There are two mainly. The biblical position regarding wine is to view it as God says it: as His gift and as His blessing. It is to be used as it is commanded and commended.

But at the same time, everyone must detest and despise its abuse by wicked and sinful men. In other words, we must hold a proper total view while at the same time despising its abuse. The same thing is true even in regard to sex. The Bible says that marriage above all is honorable, but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

There are two other passages to consider. In 1 Corinthians chapter 3, Paul makes an extremely biblical statement, one that no one can disprove: “Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours.” And you are Christ, and Christ is God. Notice that he emphasizes twice, “all are yours.” Everything belongs to the Christian. Everything.

In 1 Timothy chapter 6, verse 17, Paul says, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.” In reality, dear friend, only a Christian can use and enjoy all things the way God has ordained them to be. Only a Christian can use and enjoy food without becoming a glutton, use wine without becoming a drunkard, and use rest without becoming a slothful, indolent sluggard. Only a Christian can use pleasure and give God the honor and the glory for it without becoming a pleasure seeker and pleasure oriented. Only a Christian can use and enjoy marriage the way God has ordained it, because God has given us all things. In Him, it is His grace that keeps us, sustains us, orders us, and directs us.

It is not in man, but in God. The Bible says that God has given us richly all things to enjoy. Your position, according to the Bible, must be this: you must always condemn the abuse of anything, but always commend what God commends and use it in the way God commands.

Heavenly Father, we submit our minds to Thy Word. Thy Word is divinely inspired, infallible, and authoritative. From Thy Word, O Lord, we have no recourse. We must either fall upon it or be crushed by it; we must either submit or rebel. Help us to be biblical, to take the total, complete view of Thy Word on every subject, and order our thoughts accordingly.

If there are some here who are drunkards, convict them and convert them. If there are some who would wrest this Scripture and make it a license to rebel and sin, convict them and convert them. Help us always to understand that we are responsible not only to hear but to apply Thy Word, never to misuse it or wrest it out of its context. Give us grace that we may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. In Thy name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

Biblical Money & Inflation

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 23:1-20 (KJV)

Introduction: The Purchase of Machpelah

And Sarah was a hundred and seven and twenty years old. These were the years of the life of Sarah. And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan. And Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her. Abraham stood up from before his dead and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, 'I am a stranger and a sojourner with you. Give me a possession of a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.' And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, 'Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince among us. In the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead. None of us shall withhold from thee a sepulchre, that thou mayest bury thy dead.' And Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. And he communed with them, saying, 'If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field.'

> 'For as much money as it is worth, he shall give it me for possession of a burying place amongst you.' And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth. And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even all that went in at the gate of his city, saying, 'Nay, my lord, hear me. The field I give thee, and the cave that is therein I give it thee. In the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee. Bury thy dead.' And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, 'But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me. I will give thee money for the field. Take it of me, and I will bury my dead there.' And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, 'My lord, hearken unto me. The land is worth four hundred shekels of silver. What is that betwixt me and thee? Bury therefore thy dead.' And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron, and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.

"And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city. And after this Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan. And the field and the cave that is therein were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying place by the sons of Heth."

I want to bring a message entitled "Biblical Money and Inflation." In one sense, I realize that I am preaching to the choir, so to speak. But I was doing some additional reading this week, and once again this was laid upon my heart. I want to share it with you, refresh your mind, and hope to minister to those who hear by way of the tapes as well.

Notice particularly verses 15 and 16. Everyone knows the context: Abraham is buying a place where he may bury Sarah, his wife, and

ultimately his family. He is buying this land from the children of Heth.

It is important that we understand the transaction. In verse 15, Ephron says, "My Lord, hearken unto me. The land is worth 400 shekels of silver. What is that betwixt me and thee? Bury therefore thy dead." Ephron has named a price. Then verse 16 tells us, "And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron, and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, 400 shekels of silver, current money with the merchant." Abraham weighed out 400 shekels of silver. Three important truths emerge from verse 16.

Three Truths from Genesis 23:16

First, only specie—that is, gold and silver—is real money. Second, money is by weight; it is something that can actually be weighed. Third, Abraham gave 400 shekels of silver, current money, or current coins, with the merchant. In order not to defraud or steal, it had to be current money with the merchant.

God's Demand for Honest Weights and Measures

Now, if you look in your Bible, hold Genesis 23, but go to the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 25, because God demands honesty in every area. Notice, if you would please, Deuteronomy, chapter 25, beginning there in verse 13. Deuteronomy 25, verse 13, God says, "Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small." So you're not to have a different weight that is a great and a small. And the only reason anyone would have a different weight would be in order to defraud or to steal. So He says, "Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight. A perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Now watch, "...for all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the Lord thy God." So God says anyone who defrauds through money, through weight, or through measure, God says that individual is an abomination to God.

Biblical Money: Silver and Gold by Weight

Now throughout the Bible, money is always by weight and usually it is always silver and gold. Now there were other valuable metals that were coins as well, but usually by far the vast majority would be silver and gold. If you look in your Bible through the book of Genesis chapter 13 and verse 2, the Bible tells us about the riches of Abraham and it just simply says this: Genesis 13 verse 2, "And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." So he had a lot of silver. He had a lot of gold as well as a lot of cattle. Now the word silver occurs 320 times in the Bible. The word gold occurs 417 times in the Bible.

In the Old Testament, the most common coin was the shekel. Now the shekel meant a weight. It was a standard of weight and a standard of value among the Hebrews. The shekel of the sanctuary, and you don't have to turn there, but it is mentioned in Exodus chapter 30 verse 13 and in Numbers chapter 3 verse 47. But the shekel of the sanctuary was equal to 20 gerahs in Ezekiel 45 verse 12, and a gerah again was a measure of weight as well. There were shekels of gold mentioned in the Bible. There were shekels of silver. There were shekels of brass and there were also shekels of iron. But a shekel was a definite weight.

Let me stroke your imagination with several questions. What in the world has happened in our country, monetarily speaking? Why is it that we no longer have biblical or constitutional money? Why is it that, seemingly, we make more and more than we have ever made in our lives, and yet have less? Everyone talks about inflation. It does not matter where you go: inflation, inflation, and inflation. Surely everyone knows that inflation is higher prices, right? Wrong. Dead wrong.

Historical Lesson: Continental Currency and Hyperinflation

Let me give you a quick history lesson as well as a Bible lesson. During the American War for Independence, from 1776 to 1783, the Continental Congress issued $225 million of paper money to finance the war. These paper dollars were known as Continentals. The Continental paper dollar was not redeemable in gold or silver coins.

They were eventually to be retired in seven years from taxes levied upon the states. That never happened.

As a result, massive inflation overtook our nation. General George Washington wrote in 1779 that a wagon load of money would scarcely purchase a wagon load of provisions.

Stop and think about that. A wagon load of money would scarcely purchase a wagon load of provisions. By the spring of 1781, the paper money was absolutely worthless. Hence, we get the historical expression, “not worth a continental,” because the money was absolutely worthless.

Founding Fathers' Opposition to Paper Money

This hyperinflation was fresh on the minds of the Founding Fathers when they met in Philadelphia at the Constitutional Convention in May of 1787. On August 16, 1787, part of the agenda was to discuss proposals for the monetary affairs of our country. The proposal under consideration was this: “The legislature of the United States shall have power to coin money, to regulate the value of foreign coin, to borrow money and emit bills on the credit of the United States.”

This was recorded by James Madison, known as the father of the Constitution because he was the secretary at the Constitutional Convention and took all the notes. He gives us part of the debate over this proposal: “The legislature of the United States shall have power to coin money, to regulate the value of foreign coin, to borrow money, and to emit bills on the credit of the United States.”

Governor Morris, a delegate from Pennsylvania, moved to strike out the phrase, “and to emit bills on the credit of the United States,” because, he said, if the United States had credit, such bills would be unnecessary; and if it did not have credit, they would be unjust and useless. Pierce Butler of South Carolina seconded the motion.

Later in the discussion, Butler remarked that paper was legal tender in no country in Europe. He was urgent for disarming the government of such a power, saying that the government did not need it. James Mason of Virginia had a mortal hatred of paper money, but was unwilling to tie the hands of the legislature. A few

others agreed with him, but most of the delegates were vehement in their opposition to irredeemable paper money.

Oliver Ellsworth of Connecticut said he thought it was a favorable moment to shut and bar the door against paper money. Paper money, he said, could in no case be necessary. Give the government credit, and other resources will offer. The power may do harm, never good. James Wilson of Pennsylvania said it would have a most salutary influence on the credit of the United States to remove the possibility of paper money.

George Read of Delaware thought the words, if not struck out, could be as alarming as the mark of the beast in Revelation. John Langdon of New Hampshire had rather reject the whole Constitution than retain the three words, "and emit bills." Our founding fathers were deadly opposed to paper money. Do you realize there were two men who were really responsible for getting the hard-money clause in our Constitution?

The first was Roger Sherman. Some of you have his little booklet, "A Caveat Against Injustice," in which he dealt with the paper-money issue, especially the differences in paper money among the several states. The other was John Witherspoon, a Presbyterian pastor and theologian. These two men were really the movers and shakers in getting the hard-money clauses into our Constitution.

Constitutional Provisions for Money

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution says: "The Congress shall have the power to coin money and to regulate the value thereof, and of foreign coin, and to fix the standard of weights and measures." Congress has the power to coin money, regulate its value and the value of foreign coin, and fix the standard of weights and measures.

Article 1, Section 10 says: "No state, that includes Georgia, no state shall coin money, emit bills of credit, make anything but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debt." No state in this union can make anything but gold and silver a legal tender in payment of debts. In other words, no paper money.

I hope you're beginning to ask yourself a very important question. Since the Bible demands silver and gold as lawful money, and since the Constitution—supposedly the supreme law of the land—also demands silver and gold as lawful money, why do we not have lawful money? Why do we have fiat money? Why do we have paper money? Why do people think a Federal Reserve note is money when it is neither Federal, nor Reserve, nor a note? It's simply a piece of paper.

Let me tell you something that will help you comprehend the worthlessness of this. I was preaching in Canada and had several of my books with me. A couple of people wanted some, and I told them the price. Of course, they had to add about 15 percent because of the difference between the currencies. When they paid me, they gave me Canadian paper bills. Canadian paper bills are just a little larger than our Monopoly money and are colored like Monopoly money. The first time some Canadians laid that money in my hand, I thought, "What? Why am I so stupid as to receive Monopoly money?" It was strange. But we become accustomed to these little Federal Reserve notes and tend to think of them as money. They are not.

Dishonest money is usually the product of dishonest politicians. Ludwig von Mises said, "Government is the only agency that can take a valuable commodity like paper, slap a little ink on it, and make it totally worthless."

What is a Dollar?

While I am on the subject, let me ask you a question: What is a dollar? It certainly is not a Federal Reserve note. A dollar is a unit of measurement, like gallons, quarts, bushels, inches, and feet. Most monetary historians associate the dollar with—listen carefully—Count Schlick, who began minting silver coins in 1519 in Joachimsthal, Bohemia. The coins were called Schlickenthalers, or Joachimsthalers. They were later referred to simply as thalers, which came into English as dollars. It was a unit of measurement.

Merrill Jenkins, also a monetary realist, wrote: "What is a dollar of money? In the Coinage Act of 1792 it states that the money account of the United States shall be expressed in dollars." The term dollar is a unit of measurement, like a quart or an inch. In itself, a unit of measurement represents nothing.

In the Coinage Act of 1792, a dollar measure of gold was a certain number of grains of .999 gold, while a dollar measure of silver was a certain number of grains of .999 silver. A silver dollar, as we used to call it, was literally a dollar quantity of silver. A gold dollar was literally a dollar quantity of gold.

You would not go into the supermarket and walk up to one of the young men who work there and simply say, "I'd like a quart." A quart of what? "I'd like a gallon." Would you go back to the butcher market and say, "I'd like six ounces"? Six ounces of what? Would you go into a fabric store and say, "I want two feet"? Two feet of what? A dollar is simply a unit of measurement. When you look at a Federal Reserve note, and it has written on the bottom "one dollar," that is fraud. This is not a unit of measurement. This is nothing but a piece of paper.

When Alexander Hamilton wrote the Coinage Act of 1792, he simply made into law the market definition of a dollar, equating it with the silver content of the Spanish milled dollar. The silver content of the Spanish milled dollar is 371.25 grains of silver. That is the dollar referred to in the Constitution.

The historical definition of the dollar has never been changed, and it cannot be changed any more than the definition of an inch, a foot, a yard, a bushel, or a quart can be changed. It is a grudging misrepresentation to think that paper money, or electronic money, is equal to a dollar. It is not, and it cannot possibly be, because a dollar is a unit of measurement in silver or gold. Why do we not have silver and gold as money? Why do we have legal tender laws and paper money instead of silver and gold? Let me give you a legal answer.

Legal Tender Laws and Dishonesty

Salmon P. Chase, who served as Secretary of the Treasury under President Lincoln's administration, summed up his argument against legal tender laws in twelve words when he was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, dissenting in Knox v. Lee: "The legal tender quality is only valuable for the purposes of dishonesty." The legal tender quality of money is only valuable for the purposes of dishonesty. Thus, the only reason we have legal tender laws is because the money is dishonest and fraudulent. When you read on a

Federal Reserve note, “This note is legal tender for all debts public and private,” Salmon Chase says that the only value of these legal tender laws is for dishonesty.

Stephen T. Byington wrote in September of 1895, in the issue of the American Federationist, “No legal tender laws ever needed to make men take good money. It is only used to make them take bad money. Kick it out.” That is correct. No legal tender laws ever needed to make you take gold or silver.

Before leaving the Coinage Act of 1792, consider Section 19. Our founding fathers, when they put into the Constitution that Congress shall have the power to coin money and regulate the value thereof, had just come through a hyperinflation experience. They knew the dangers of paper money.

The Coinage Act of 1792, Section 19, says: "If any of the gold or silver coins shall be debased, every such officer or person who shall commit any or either of said offenses shall be deemed guilty of felony and shall suffer death." The Coinage Act of 1792 is still law. Anyone who debases the gold or silver coins shall be guilty of a felony and shall suffer death.

Needless to say, if that law were applied to our modern-day bankers and politicians, it would not be long before we saw the emergence of biblical and constitutional money. I have often said that we either have the stupidest politicians that ever lived or the most treasonous. You can be the judge.

Merrill Jenkins, in his book The Greatest Hoax on Earth, wrote: "The writers of the Constitution knew exactly what they were doing when they wrote in Article 1, Section 10, Paragraph 1, 'No state shall make anything but gold and silver coin a legal tender in payment of debts.' People able to barter with gold and silver coin control government and are free. Loss of the right to trade in gold and silver coins enslaves people to the creators of psychological money."

Langley stated that this means that when we do not have biblical or constitutional money, we are enslaved. The reason they produce this fiat money is for the purpose of enslaving us.

Robert H. Hemphill, former credit manager for the Federal Reserve Bank in Atlanta, wrote in the foreword to 100% Money by

Irving Fisher: "If the banks create ample synthetic money, we are prosperous. If not, we starve. We're absolutely without a permanent monetary system. When one gets a complete grasp of the picture, the tragic absurdity of our hopeless position is almost incredible, but there it is."

"It is the most important subject intelligent persons can investigate and reflect upon. It is so important that our present civilization may collapse unless it is widely understood and the defect remedied soon."

Here is a man who is not even claiming to be a Christian as such, but who was a former credit manager for the Federal Reserve Bank in Atlanta. He said that unless this defect were remedied soon, our civilization might collapse. I want to submit this truth to you: I do not believe our civilization may collapse. I believe it will collapse. It is just a matter of time.

One cannot flaunt his rebellion in the face of God and expect to survive. Do you realize that God is just as interested in a godly economic system as He is in a godly family, a godly education, a godly church, and a godly government? Our Heavenly Father is interested in godliness. Anything unbiblical, ungodly, and unjust is condemned by God, even an unjust economic system.

Look in your Bibles at Isaiah 1:22. God is condemning Israel. He says, "Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water." What were they doing with their silver coins? They were debasing them. What were they doing to the wine? They were watering it down. God says, "Thy silver is become dross, thy wine is mixed with water." Then He says, "Thy princes are rebellious and companions of thieves. Everyone loveth gifts and followeth after rewards. They judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come before them."

What are they doing? They are in plain rebellion against God.

Coins can be debased, but the debasement is usually easily and quickly discovered. One of the nicknames for Henry VIII of England was "Old Copper Nose." He took a copper coin and put a thin coat of silver or gold over it, as he chose. The coins bore his image, and when people carried them in their pockets or purses, the thin coat

usually rubbed off around the middle where the nose was, exposing the copper beneath it. Hence, he was called "Old Copper Nose."

Many of you who have some real silver dollars or a quantity of silver have noticed the ridges around the edges. Do you know why those ridges were put there? When coins did not have them, if a coin was supposed to contain one ounce of silver or one ounce of gold, shysters could take a sharp knife and shave around it. They would get a little gold or silver and keep doing this to numerous coins until they had a pile of their own. That one-ounce coin was no longer one ounce; it had been debased. The ridges were placed around these valuable coins to guard against clipping.

If a coin was clipped, you could tell it very quickly and easily. If it was debased, you could also tell very easily and quickly. Can you tell the difference between the coins we have today and those we had before 1964? The answer is yes. Although they bear the same image, they do not look alike. They do not feel alike. Today's coins are not as heavy as the ones from back then. They certainly do not sound alike when dropped on a hard surface. A real silver coin has a certain sound to it, while the stuff we have today has absolutely no sound to it. Why? Because our coins today are basically worthless. It is true that coins can be debased, but they are very easily and quickly spotted when debased.

Inflation Defined and Its Effects

As bad as the debasement of coinage is, the printing of paper money is worse. Why? Because it is difficult to perceive the debasement and progressive worthlessness of paper money. The problem with paper money is that you think you have something when you do not. You think you have ten thousand bucks in the bank, but because of inflation—which I will get to in just a moment—you do not really have ten thousand bucks. You might really have only nine thousand dollars, or the purchasing power of nine thousand dollars, although you have ten thousand in the account.

Inflation is not higher prices; that is a symptom. Inflation is an increase in the money supply. Inflation is an unseen tax, a way that you and I are stolen from through paper money without even knowing it. Do you realize that when the money supply is increased,

the purchasing power of what already exists is decreased? And, while I am at it, listen carefully: the government is the only one that can produce inflation. I do not produce inflation.

You don't produce inflation. It's the government that produces inflation. Let me give you an example. Suppose we have 500 billion FRNs floating around in circulation, and the Treasury produces another 500 billion and dumps them upon us. Our money supply has increased by 100 percent, and in theory so has inflation, but the existing currency has decreased in value by 50 percent. When you increase the money supply, the value of what you already have goes down. So, the greater the increase in the money supply, the greater the decrease in the value of the currency. Inflation is a decrease in the purchasing power of money caused by an increase in the money supply. That is, more and more money is demanded for the same goods and services.

Inflation is when money becomes increasingly worthless. Prices rise because paper currency does not retain its value, and it takes more and more of it to buy the same thing.

You may think I am making this up, but here is a quote from the United States Bureau of Engraving in its booklet, "Government Securities." I really ought to change that to "Government Insecurities," but here is the quotation: "The Bureau prints approximately 16 million notes each day. The Bureau has the power to create money, almost any amount of it. The only limiting factors are the speed of the presses and the public's willingness to accept it."

There it is, straight from the horse's mouth. The Bureau of Engraving creates money. How? Out of thin air. They print it. The only limitations are the speed of the presses and the willingness of people to accept it. The only thing that holds this up is confidence. When confidence goes, this is gone.

Consider these illustrations. What cost $1,000 in 1900 would cost $2,756.01 in 2002. That is a long period, so here is a better comparison: products that cost $48.18 in 1900 would cost $1,000 in 2002.

After 1964, our money—even our coins—was taken off the silver standard; in other words, coinage was totally debased. If you had

$1,000 in 1964, you would need $5,654.32 in 2002 to have the same purchasing power. Thus, what cost $1,000 in 2002 would have cost only $176.86 in 1964.

What am I trying to show you? The value of money goes down. Another comparison is this: $1,000 in 1964 would require $5,974.19 in 2004 to equal its purchasing power. Go to your computer and type "inflation calculator" into a search engine. Four or five calculators will come up; you can enter any amount and any date from 1900 through 2004 and see how our money has lost its value.

Things are not getting better; they are getting worse. You need to consider that money is becoming more and more worthless. In fact, I do not really know the value of this piece of paper.

It's probably about two cents. Now, I want you to consider something with me, something you've probably not thought about: the hyperinflation that was in Germany in the 1920s. You see, we could have the same thing in this country. The German Deutschmark was basically equal to our dollar, so to speak. But you know what people did with their Deutschmarks after a while? They papered their houses with them and used them to start fires.

One of my favorite stories is about a woman in Germany who had a basket full of Deutschmarks. She was going to the market to buy a loaf of bread. It took a whole basket full just to buy one loaf of bread. On the way to the supermarket, there was a fight in the street, and a crowd gathered around. She put her basket down and went over to see who was fighting. When she turned around, someone had emptied all her money into the street and stolen the basket. The basket was worth more than the money.

I'm just trying to tell you, folks, it can get that bad. Let me give you one other illustration. I've used this before, but you remember that in the 1930s, you could buy a brand-new car for $1,000—1920s. You could buy a brand-new car for $1,000. See, I could buy a brand-new car today for $1,000. You say, "You can't do it." Sure I can: $1,000 in gold. $1,000 in gold is worth $20,000 or $30,000 in this little paper money. You see what I'm saying?

So it's not the fact that prices have gone up; it's the fact that the value of our money has gone down. It consistently and continually

goes down. Now, you say, “Well, Brother Weaver, what if I have 20 million of these?” When the bottom falls out, you’ll be like some of those men in 1929. They were multimillionaires, and then, when the stock market went, they were jumping out the windows. Why? Because they were multimillionaires one night, and the next morning they were paupers. They had nothing.

He said, “But I’ve got stock.” Stock is paper. “But I have CDs.” CDs are made of paper. Everything that’s made of paper ultimately will be valueless. He said, “What in the world shall I do?” I would tell you that since silver and gold is biblical money, and since silver and gold is constitutional money, you ought to have some silver and gold.

Practical Advice: Invest in Silver and Gold

I have tried to encourage young people to buy silver and gold every month. I do not care if it is fifty dollars’ worth, one hundred dollars’ worth, or whatever they have. Buy it every month. Be consistent. Be faithful. You do not have to buy forty thousand dollars’ worth at one time. I do not know any young couple, or any older couple, who has forty thousand dollars to spare. But the truth is, most everybody throws away one hundred dollars a month.

Can you imagine a young husband and wife in their early twenties beginning to buy silver and gold consistently every month, as much as they could afford—sometimes one hundred dollars, sometimes two hundred, sometimes three hundred, sometimes fifty? If they did it consistently, what might they have by the time they were fifty years old?

Silver is going up—about fifty percent over the last little time—and gold is going up. As paper money goes down, silver and gold are going to constantly and continually rise. There are three sources where you can get silver and gold, and I would imagine that each of them would work with you on a monthly basis, buying something consistently.

The first, of course, is Henry Klingler. You can get silver and gold from Henry. His phone number is 912-427-2715, Jesup, Georgia.

The second place is Franklin Sanders, the Money Changer. His address is P.O. Box 178, West Point, Tennessee, 38486. West Point

is one word: W-E-S-T-P-O-I-N-T. He has a toll-free number: 888-218-9226.

The third person is Ron Wilson, Atlantic Bullion and Coin, or ABC, Atlantic Bullion and Coin, at 203 Siloam Road, Siloam, South Carolina, 29642. He also has a toll-free number, 800-327-8606.

I certainly know there are other valuable investments besides silver and gold. But these two metals are foundational; they are basic. Having good equipment at home and being able to do things for yourself is an excellent investment as well. But here is the thing about silver and gold: I am certainly not going to ask who in this room has it.

It is none of my business and none of anybody else's business. But I will ask you this, and you do not answer out loud: Once you get it, do you simply spend it at will, spend it at pleasure, give it away, or throw it away? The answer is no. You can say, “I am going to save money.” Let us say you take a thousand of these little Federal Reserve notes and stick them in a book somewhere. “I am saving that money.”

If you want something badly enough, you know what you will do? You will go get that thousand dollars and spend it. But if you have a thousand dollars of silver or gold, you will think long and hard before you get rid of it. I realize there is money to be made trading gold for silver and silver for gold at the right time. But if you buy silver and gold, you should not buy it with the intent of making money on it right away.

You ought to buy silver and gold with the mentality of twenty years down the road, as something to keep, which will be a hedge against inflation. If you can make money trading it, do so; there is no problem with that. But you will get rid of these Federal Reserve notes easily and quickly, whereas you will not get rid of that silver and gold as easily or quickly. You need to understand that real money is biblical money. It is constitutional money. This is not money.

Conclusion and Prayer

It is not a dollar. It is not a unit of measurement of anything. It is a Federal Reserve note, which is neither Federal, nor Reserve, nor a note.

Father, we thank Thee for Jesus Christ and for His grace and mercy. We thank Thee for the truth of Thy Word. Help us, Lord, to be faithful to Thee and considerate of what You teach us in Your Word. Enable us to be as wise as we can be—wise as a serpent, as You said, and harmless as a dove. Give us wisdom to serve Thee acceptably. In Thy name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

It Pays to Have Godly Friends

It Pays to Have Godly Friends and Family

Introduction: The Importance of Godly Friends and Family

The message you are about to hear was produced by Dominion Ministry. If you would like to support this ministry by becoming a sermon partner or obtain additional high-resolution CDs, DVDs, or MP3s featuring the teaching of Pastor John Weaver, please visit the Dominion Ministry website at www.dominion.org or www.dominionministry.com. This ministry is completely supported by donations, and it is through those donations that we are able to provide sermons for sermonaudio.com. Please visit our website to subscribe or make your donation today.

After this message, Lord willing, the next two Sundays will be devoted to a message entitled “When God Hides His Face,” in two parts. After that, there will be a brief series on principles of deliverance.

Today's message is from Genesis chapter 18, verses 16 through 33. It pays to have godly friends and family. Genesis 18, beginning with verse 16: "And the men rose up from thence and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know."

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 18:16-33 (KJV)

"And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that be therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes: Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it."

"And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake. And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there."

> "And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake. And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place."
>
> Friends and family are important. Godly friends and family are essential. They are essential for our well-being, prosperity, and health.

Biblical Principles of Friendship

> There are a multitude of passages in the Bible that deal with friendship. In Proverbs chapter 18 and verse 24, the Bible says this: "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly." You might want to write some of these scriptures down, and especially share them with your children and your grandchildren.

"And there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." So the Bible says that a man that hath friends must shew himself friendly. So many times there are individuals who want to have friends, but they themselves refuse to be friendly. And the fact of the matter is, let's be honest, no one wants to be friends with a grouch and a sourpuss. The Bible says, he that hath friends must shew himself friendly. If we want to have friends, we must develop a friendly attitude. Moreover, if we want to have friends, we have to learn to be a friend ourselves. All of us understand one simple truth: oftentimes special friends, close friends, are more loving, dedicated, and faithful even above our own family members. That's why the Bible says there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

In Proverbs 27:6, there is another truth that God tells us concerning friends: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." When God says, faithful are the wounds of a friend, He is saying that whenever a friend reproaches us, rebukes us, admonishes us, or gets on to us, he is doing it out of love and out of faithfulness. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." In other words, God said you would rather have a friend wound you for your help than have an

enemy kiss you for your hurt. We both know that a wound is far more painful than a kiss. Therefore, God is saying that we should put stock in the wounds of a friend.

This reminds us of Leviticus 19:17: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." Look what God said: "Thou shalt not hate thy neighbour in thine heart." If you hate him, you will not rebuke him. God said, "Thou shalt rebuke him, and not suffer sin upon him."

In other words, rebuking a friend is an act of love. It is not an act of animosity or hatred. The Bible tells us, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Friends may encourage us, educate us, inform us, and rebuke us. At the same time, they can also hone our thinking to a fine edge.

Oftentimes, we will receive things from a friend that we would never receive from a family member. The Bible tells us in Proverbs 27:17, “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.” Just as iron sharpens iron, friends are always welcome, and they will always sharpen us.

Scripture teaches that a certain faithfulness should be extended not only to our friends, but also to the friends of our family. Proverbs 27:10 says, “Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off.” Notice that: “Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not.” In other words, we have an obligation and a duty not only to our friends, but also to those individuals who have been friends of our family for a long period of time.

I am constantly amazed at how quickly and easily many people are willing to dissolve friendships. We owe a particular obligation to our friends, especially to those of our parents who have stood faithfully by us over the years. In over forty years of preaching, I have seen heart-wrenching and heartbreaking dissolutions of long-term friendships, usually over absolutely flippant things. Unhappily, pride is usually at the root of such dissolutions.

Most had rather be proud and arrogant and lose a friend than admit they were wrong, reconcile, and save a friendship. If I had the time today, I could sit here and tell you many wonderful stories, not just about my friends, but about the friends of my father and my mother. And so God says, “Thine own friend and thy father's friend forsake not.”

When God talks about friendship, He also tells us there are some people with whom we are not to develop a friendship. For instance, Proverbs 22:24 says, “Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go.” Now, why in the world should we not make friends with an angry man and with a furious man? The answer is given in verse 25: “Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.” God says you do not develop an intimate, close friendship with a furious and angry man because the result will ultimately be this: You will not elevate him; he will pull you down. You will not deliver him; he will destroy you. God says, do not do that.

In Proverbs 1:10, God says it like this: “My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.” Why? Because when we consent with them, we are in agreement with them. That is, we are joining them basically in their attitude and actions, which are wicked, sinful, and ungodly.

Another one that God forbids us to make friends with is found in James 4:4: “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” God forbids an intimate friendship with the world. By that He does not mean His creation. By that He does not mean nature as you and I talk about it and think about it. He is talking about worldly individuals whose god is their belly, who could care less about biblical truth or scriptural truth. God forbids us to make friends with furious, wicked people and with ungodly people who only have the world in their eyes.

Psalm 1:1 sums this up: “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” That is a very short verse, but look at it. Who is the blessed man? He is the man who walketh not in the

counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

God gives us three steps to destruction in that simple verse. The first step is receiving or following the advice or counsel of the ungodly. The second step is associating with them—that is, standing with them. The third and final step is agreement: we sit in the seat of the scornful. Whenever you begin to take advice from the ungodly and associate with the ungodly, the ultimate result is that you will agree with the ungodly.

The Difference Between Acquaintance and Friend

Why? Because when you first begin to listen to the ungodly, you have already rejected God, His Word, and His truth. Once you do that, there is no other place to go but down.

The message I am sharing today is not just about friends in general, although I have been showing you this by way of introduction; it is about godly friends in particular. There is a difference in the Bible between an acquaintance and a friend. As you read through the Greek New Testament, you find two Greek words translated in our Bible as friend. The first is hetairos. Hetairos refers to an acquaintance, a fellow, someone with whom you might have casual dealings, or someone you might know casually. In the Greek, prostitutes were referred to as the hetairai, the feminine of hetairos. In other words, they were acquaintances; they were casual. The word for the prostitute in the Greek New Testament is the same as the word for someone you might know. The other word for friend is philos, from the Greek word phileo, which means a loved one.

Phileo is the verb "I love," philos is the noun. It is where we get our English word familial from. In other words, it indicates a deep, respectful love.

If you look in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 26, remember how Judas had planned to betray our Lord. He gave His enemies a sign. What was that sign? He said, "He it is that I kiss on the cheek, and then you take him." When Judas got into the presence of Christ, Jesus looked at him and said unto him, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" Then came they and laid hands on Jesus and took him. So

when Jesus saw Judas, the first thing He said to him was, “Friend, wherefore art thou come?”

Which word for friend do you think our Lord used in Matthew 26 and verse 50? Hetairos. Judas, you were never a real friend. You were just an acquaintance. You were someone who knew Me, walked with Me, maybe worked with Me, but you were never a friend. When our Lord looked at His other disciples, He said, “I call you friends,” loved ones, intimate, dear. But He called Judas merely an acquaintance.

I want you to understand that when the Bible talks about friendship, there is a difference between being civil and kind to individuals and having real, intimate friends.

The title of this message is that it pays to have godly friends and family. I want to give you today three illustrations of this truth. My first illustration is found in the passages we read in Genesis chapter 18. These true, intimate, and dear friends may be found in your family, in your church, or in other places.

Illustration 1: Abraham Intercedes for Lot

My wife and I had identical twin girls, and they are still the best of friends today. They told us one time that when the phone rings, each one knows it is the other calling before she ever picks up. They do not know who everybody else might be, but if Laura calls Leah, Leah knows it is Laura, and vice versa.

I was riding with them one day on horses, and we had not said a word for about fifteen minutes. Finally, Laura said, “She’s a nice girl.” Leah immediately responded, “Yes, I really like Cheryl also.” Leah knew who Laura was thinking about, although the name had never even been mentioned.

There is also a closeness that can exist between brethren in Christ. You do not have to be physically related. Notice, if you would, in Genesis chapter 18. We all know the story: the Lord came to Abraham and said, “Abraham, I’m going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.” Then He said, “Shall I tell Abraham that which I’m about to do?” He answered, “Yes, I will tell him because I know him. He is the man who is going to order his family and his household

after me. He is going to be obedient and keep everything that I say to him."

In verses 20 and 21, the Lord reveals to Abraham that He is going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. What does Abraham automatically know? His nephew Lot and his family live in that city. Abraham then begins to intercede. In verse 23, "And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?"

What a question to ask the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth: "Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?" Abraham answers his own question: "That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee." Then he asks, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The Lord says, "Abraham, you're right. I will spare the city if you can find me fifty righteous men."

Abraham begins to intercede even more. "Well, Lord, what if there is a shortage of five?" The Lord says, "I'll spare it for the forty-five's sake." "But Lord, what if there's only forty there?" "I'll spare it for the forty's sake." "What if there's only thirty there?" "I'll spare it for the thirty." "One more time. What if we just find twenty?" "I'll spare it for the twenty's sake, Abraham." Abraham says, "Oh, Lord, I'm but dust now and I'm taking it upon myself to talk to you. Lord, what about ten?" The Lord says, "OK, I'll spare it for the ten's sake."

After he had gotten him down to ten, the Lord went his way. As soon as he left communing with Abraham, Abraham returned unto his place. Since Abraham was on a roll, and the Lord was giving him everything he asked for, why did he stop at ten? Why didn't he get him down to five, four, three, two, or one? Why did he stop at ten?

Look in your Bibles to Genesis 19:8: "Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man." Lot had two virgin daughters at home with him and his wife. Two and two make four. Then Genesis 19:14 says, "And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters." "Sons in law" is plural, so he had a minimum of two. If he had two sons-in-law and two married

daughters, that is four; four and four is eight. If each one had a child, that is ten. If neither had a child, and since "sons in law" is plural, he may have had three.

Three and three is six, and six plus four is ten. Do you know why Abraham stopped at ten? Abraham knew that Lot had a minimum of ten family members in Sodom. He got down to the number at which he knew Lot had a sufficient number to spare the city. I believe Abraham knew with certainty that there were ten in Lot's family. Think about this: if there are ten righteous adults, can you realize that ten tithing families can support a pastor? There would be a congregation.

Here is what the Bible is teaching us: for ten families, or ten godly people, God is willing to spare a city, even if that city is as wicked as Sodom and Gomorrah. As you know, there were not ten righteous people in the city. There should have been ten. Lot should have instructed his daughters and his sons-in-law, but he did not. Verse 14 says, "And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law." His sons-in-law were obviously ungodly, wicked men who were not willing to pay attention to Lot or to the Word of God. They were destroyed in the conflagration.

How many finally escaped the city? It was Lot and his two daughters. You say, "But Pastor, his wife got out." Yes, she got out, but she looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt. So actually, only three got out; the rest were destroyed. Why did God spare Lot and those two daughters?

Look in your Bibles to 2 Peter 2, and notice verse 8. In fact, we will begin reading at verse 7: "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds)." Lot is a real anomaly as far as I am concerned. If you described Lot and his actions to me without telling me whom you were describing, I would automatically say he was a lost man. I mean, look where he lived.

When those stupid Sodomites came and surrounded his house, what was he willing to do? Offer his two daughters. How could any man do that? And yet the Bible calls him a righteous man. This is what I am saying: if the Bible had not specifically said that he was a righteous man, I would never have believed it. But look what the Bible says. Notice, if you would please, in verse eight: "For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds."

And you say, "Well, Brother Weaver, here is why God delivered him." But look in verse 9: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." You say, "Well, Lot was righteous and therefore God spared him." The interesting thing is that Lot was righteous. The Bible does say so. But the Bible does not say that his two daughters were righteous. In fact, they were the ones who made their father drunk. You remember? They committed incest.

You say, "Well, you know, God just delivered Lot because he is a righteous man." I want you to go back in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 19, and I want you to see that there is a little more to it. Think about this: have righteous people perished in other floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, wars, and fires? Yes, plenty of righteous people. Righteous people died just like wicked people. Well, why did God spare Lot? Very obviously, Lot was vexing his righteous soul, the Bible says, with what he saw and what he heard on a daily basis. How he stayed in Sodom, I will never know. But I believe you will find the real answer in Genesis 19 and verse 29. Look what the Bible says: "And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt."

What did God do? God remembered Abraham. God remembered the prayers. God remembered the intercessions. God remembered the arguments. Lot was not spared just because he was a righteous man. Lot was spared because of the prayers of Abraham.

It pays to have godly families. It pays to have godly friends. There have been multitudes of people that have been saved and blessed and healed and delivered due to the prayers of godly family members

and godly friends. Lot and those two daughters were spared just because of the prayers of Abraham.

Illustration 2: Joseph Blesses Potiphar

The second illustration is found in the life of Joseph. It pays to have a godly family and godly friends. Everyone knows how Joseph's brethren hated him and sold him into Egypt. The Bible says, "And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, 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 that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand."

Joseph had been sold into slavery by his brethren, but in the providence of God, God made him a servant in Potiphar's house. Potiphar trusted Joseph so much that he put everything he had at his disposal.

Verse 6 says, "And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured." Can you imagine that? Potiphar was an officer to Pharaoh, which meant that he was a man of extreme wealth. Yet he trusted Joseph so completely that Joseph had absolute control over everything, and Potiphar did not even know what he had except what he ate. Joseph took care of everything. Potiphar learned to trust Joseph. Verse 8 shows how thoroughly Joseph himself understood this.

When Potiphar's wife made a play for Joseph, he refused and said unto his master's wife, “Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand.” His master did not even know what he had—how much money, silver, gold, diamonds, brass, or anything else. Everything was in Joseph's hands.

Why did Potiphar so trust Joseph, and why did he deliver everything into his hands? Potiphar's trust was not misplaced, even in the matter of his wife. Her advances toward Joseph were refused, and Joseph would have nothing to do with her. What did Potiphar learn?

Verse three says, “And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand.” There were two observations: first, the Lord was with Joseph; second, Potiphar learned that everything Joseph did prospered. Verse five says, “And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.” Potiphar was not only an important man; he was also an unsaved, ungodly man, a pagan.

What does the Bible say? The Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake—not only everything in the house, but everything in the field. Potiphar said, “I trust Joseph.” He should have been wiser about his wife's accusations, because he should have reasoned: Joseph has been faithful in all these other things. He has been a godly man, and God has blessed me because of him. Whether Potiphar knew about his wife is another matter, but he should have known about Joseph. One thing he knew for sure was that God's blessing was upon his house, his field, and everything he had because of Joseph's sake.

It pays to have godly friends. It pays to have godly people to work with you, to work for you, to pray for you, and to be around you. I would not mind having a thousand like Joseph around me. The ungodly of this world will never understand and never comprehend, until Judgment Day, the blessings they have received simply because they are associated with a godly family or a godly man. As pointed out in the life of Lot, God often withholds His judgment due to the presence of one godly man, or two or three godly people.

May I point out this for your consideration? As horrible as Katrina was, and as horrible as many tornadoes have been, has it ever dawned upon you that they could have been much worse? Had it not been for the presence of some godly people, they may indeed have

been much worse. God is willing to spare an area if you can find ten righteous people. All I am trying to show you is that it pays to have godly friends. It pays to have godly family members.

Illustration 3: Obed-edom Blesses a Nation

I have known of illustrations of men and women who have lost children, who prayed faithfully every day for their children, and who died with their children unsaved. Yet after their death, after the parents died, God did have mercy, answered the prayer, and saved those children. Just because you do not necessarily live to see it does not mean that it will not happen.

My third illustration is taken from 2 Samuel 6. This is an amazing story concerning David, the ark of God, and the events surrounding its being brought up from the house of Abinadab. The Word of God says, "Again, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims. And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah."

And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart. They brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark. David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, psalteries, timbrels, cornets, and cymbals. When they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen shook it. The anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; God smote him there for his error, and there he died by the ark of God. David was displeased because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzzah, and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah to this day. David was afraid of the LORD that day and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me? So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David.

But David carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. Many will remember that the Philistines had captured the

ark during the time of Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas. God slew Hophni and Phinehas the same day; then Eli, when he heard that the ark of God had been captured, fell over backwards and broke his neck. The Philistines rejoiced that their god had defeated the God of Israel, but soon all their leaders and people were smitten with hemorrhoids. What are hemorrhoids? I do not know. Most scholars say they were hemorrhoids—a bad, bad case of them. Whatever it was, it was so horrible and so bad that they wanted to get rid of that ark.

They put the ark on a cart and took two milk cows that had calves, saying, "If these cows leave their calves and go straight one way, we will know it is God who smote us; and if not, we will know that it was just chance." It is not natural for a cow to leave her calves, but those cows headed straight for Beth-shemesh, lowing as they went, never looking, never turning, just going straight. So the Philistines knew that the hand of God was upon them. When the ark was returned, it first stopped at Beth-shemesh.

SCRIPTURE READING - 1 Samuel 6:18-21; 1 Samuel 7:1 (KJV)

In 1 Samuel 6:18-21, the men of Beth-shemesh made a horrible mistake:

"And the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great stone of Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD: which stone remaineth unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite. And he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter. And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? And to whom shall he go up from us? 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."

“Get it out of here,” they said. Why? God had just killed over 50,000 people. Fifty thousand, threescore—that is 60—and ten makes 70: 50,070 people. It was time to be concerned. Why did

> God smite them? Because they looked into the ark. They were not to look into that ark.
>
> So the men of Kirjath-jearim came and picked up the ark. In 1 Samuel 7:1 we read: "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." The ark was there for 20 years. Now David and his men go down to fetch that ark and bring it back to Jerusalem.

A lot of people have often wondered, why did God kill Uzzah? The oxen stumbled, the ark leaned over to Uzzah, and he just put his hand up to protect the ark, but God killed him. Why? David and his men committed a horrible sin. They used the methods of the heathen. It was the heathen who had put that ark on a cart. God never ordained the ark to be carried on a cart. May I remind you, God gave specific commands concerning that ark? None but the Levites, and the Levites alone, were to carry that ark. They had poles that went into the side, and they carried it by hand, not by an ark cart. When Uzzah reached up and touched that ark, which he was not supposed to do, he was, in essence, saying in one sense of the word, "God is not sovereign enough to protect this ark; I have to help." The main thing was that ark was on that ox cart, and it never should have been there.

The ox cart should not have even been used. So when God smote Uzzah, David said, "Look, let's just stop right here." He turned aside to the house of Obed-edom and said, "We're going to leave the ark right here."

Now, look in your Bibles to 2 Samuel 6. Once again, look in verse 10: "So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David: but David carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite." Now look at verse 11: "And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obed-edom, and all his household. And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness."

"And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings." After Uzzah had been smitten and the ark had been turned aside into the house of Obed-edom, everyone saw the blessings of God upon that house. They were evident to all who looked. Thus, in verse 12, David was told, "The LORD hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God."

Notice carefully that it was not just Obed-edom who was blessed; the Bible says it was "all that pertaineth unto him." How would you like to have your children blessed, your grandchildren or great-grandchildren, your extended family, and your friends? In 1 Chronicles 13:14, we see the same story: "And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had." God blessed him and all that he had.

You may think, "Obed-edom must have been some man. He must have been some great man." But look in 1 Chronicles 15. Obed-edom was not some great man. He was a simple man with what you and I would call a rather mundane job. First Chronicles 15:24 says, "And Shebaniah, and Jehoshaphat, and Nethaneel, and Amasai, and Zechariah, and Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, did blow with the trumpets before the ark of God: and Obed-edom and Jehiah were doorkeepers for the ark."

A doorkeeper! You remember what David said in Psalm 84:10: "I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." What did Obed-edom do? Though his job was mundane, he was faithful to God, and God blessed him for his faithfulness to his duties. He had given loving, tender care to that ark, and God sent His blessings not just upon Obed-edom, but upon all that he had.

Consider the implications of Obed-edom's godliness and faithfulness. What happened? David and all the people saw God's blessings upon him, his family, his house, and everything he had. The people came to David and said, "David, God's not mad at us. God's not angry at us any longer. Look what God is doing to the house and family and friends of Obed-edom." Then David studied the matter.

He found that the ark should not have been carried except by the Levites. So when he went to move it from Obed-edom's house, David said in 1 Chronicles 15, verse 2, "None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever." When David returned for the ark, he took the Levites and carried it as God intended, and God came back to Jerusalem.

Because of one man's faithfulness and godliness, an entire nation was encouraged to follow the Lord biblically and do what was right. It pays to have godly friends and godly families.

Applications: Be the Godly Friend You Seek

Each of us needs and wants such godly friends and family. I want godly people praying for me, and godly and faithful people as dear friends. I have said this innumerable times: I had rather preach to thirty godly people who want the truth than to three thousand who could care less about the truth. I want to be around people who want to do what is right and desire the Word of God, rather than any other kind of people I know.

But it is one thing to want and need such friends; it is quite another to be such a friend to someone else. Are you willing to be that kind of friend? Are you willing to be godly and faithful so that you might have power with God and power with man? Do you remember when old Jacob wrestled with that angel in Genesis 32 and verse 28?

And what did the Lord tell him? "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men."

Would it not be a wonderful blessing to be able to be a blessing to other people? Would it not be wonderful to find that other people prospered, were blessed, and were edified, and the Lord was glorified in their lives because of your influence as a godly friend or family member? We must determine in our hearts that if we want those kinds of friends in our lives, we need to be that kind of friend in the lives of other people.

We reap what we sow. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." If we want godly friends, we need to sow godliness and faithfulness in our lives, that we might be a blessing to others. Then God will always send people to be a blessing and a help to us.

Father, we thank you for Jesus Christ. We thank you for his love and mercy. Lord, we pray that you would make us holy and godly, and make us faithful friends in whom others may put their trust because they see the power, hand, and blessing of God in our lives. Bring our lives into conformity to your word. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 5

Dealing With God's Judgment

How to Act in the Time of Judgment

In the little book of Zephaniah, chapter 2, beginning with verse 1, God says, "Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD's anger come upon you. Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger."

Introduction: Strange and Dangerous Times

All I can begin by saying is what strange and dangerous times we live in. I believe that our nation not only has been under judgment, it is under judgment, and the judgment is simply going to increase with greater and greater severity. I do not know if any of you have been keeping up with our economic situation, but it is interesting that it does not matter whether you are following men who are Christians

or men who are non-Christians; all of them are saying essentially the same thing.

In fact, Gerald Celente is talking about the crash of 2010. Most of them are going with 2011 and 2012, but Celente says it will probably come this year and become a whole lot worse. Alice and I were watching a report the other day about people in Southern California who were still in their homes. The news report said they were camping out in their homes. They had no electricity and no water; they could not afford either. One man had a water bill of $1,700, and they cut his water off.

It is absolutely amazing, astounding, the times that we live in. Our whole society, and even our nation, seem to be disintegrating before our very eyes. Our morals have collapsed, our money is absolutely worthless, our politicians are corrupt, our government is tyrannical and despotic, and there seems to be no help from any direction or institution.

In this country, we basically have churches on every corner, and many of those churches are filled every Sunday, every Lord's Day, yet the preachers are virtually silent concerning the issues at hand. No one deals with justice anymore. No one deals with economics or law anymore. Very few preachers are asking questions, and very few preachers have any answers.

Consequently, as a whole, most professing Christians are left simply out in the dark. In Isaiah 56:10, God says, “His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.” God says His watchmen are like dumb dogs that cannot bark.

I have a very elderly pastor friend who has had a stroke and is alive, thankfully, by the grace of God. Forty years ago, I preached in his church, and in his backyard he had two great big German shepherds. He said, “Brother Weaver, those are my watchdogs.” That week someone stole them. I thought, How can you steal a watchdog? But someone stole both of them. Evidently, they did not bark, could not bark, or would not bark.

Do you realize that God’s preachers are supposed to have answers, not just in normal times, but in dangerous times as well? God asks in

Jeremiah 9:12, “Who is the wise man, that may understand this? and who is he to whom the mouth of the LORD hath spoken, that he may declare it?” In other words, once God has spoken, we are to declare whatever God has said. The Bible says in Malachi 2:7, “For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.”

God’s preachers ought to have the answers. With everything going on in this country and in our state, the most frequently asked question I hear is, What shall we do? In light of the obvious judgment upon this country, people are asking, Which way do we turn, and how do we act? Yet the general population could care less about what is going on. They evidence absolutely no desire for repentance and no desire for change. The psalmist David asked it this way in Psalm 11:3: “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

Interestingly, the little book of Zephaniah gives us a directive and an admonishment. Zephaniah teaches us how to act in the time of judgment. Look at verse 3: “Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness.”

SCRIPTURE READING - Zephaniah 1:2-13 (KJV)

"It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger." Before I begin to expound this verse, I want you to see the context in which it occurs. The context is judgment. Let us go back to Zephaniah chapter one, beginning with verse two.

The Context of Judgment in Zephaniah

God says, "I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the LORD. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD. I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, and the name of the Chemarims with the priests; and them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; and them that worship and that swear by the LORD, and that swear by Malcham; and them that

> are turned back from the LORD; and those that have not sought the LORD, nor enquired for him. Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests. And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel. In the same day also will I punish all those that leap on the threshold, which fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that there shall be the noise of a cry from the fish gate, and an howling from the second, and a great crashing from the hills. Howl, ye inhabitants of Maktesh, for all the merchant people are cut down; all they that bear silver are cut down." Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation: they shall also build houses, but not inhabit them;

“They shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof. The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.”

“And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath.”

“For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive out Ashdod at the noon day, and Ekron shall be rooted up. Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the LORD is against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant.”

“And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening: for the LORD their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity.” “I have heard the reproach of Moab.” “The

LORD will be terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen. Ye Ethiopians also, ye shall be slain by my sword."

You can read chapter 1, chapter 2, and chapter 3. The whole context is the context of judgment. Now let me point out some problems that we have with judgment. One of the biggest problems we have with God's judgment is this: at times people do not perceive the judgment of God. They don't view and understand God's judgment.

Problems with Perceiving God's Judgment

We've had hurricanes, tornadoes, droughts, floods, and famines, and I get exasperated at reporters and weathermen who say, "Mother Nature is playing a trick on us," or simply blame Mother Nature. It's amazing how humanistic even the news and weather people are. It is not Mother Nature; it is Father God. How can you expect people to perceive things as judgment if you always say it is not judgment? You must understand also that there are degrees in judgment. God oftentimes increases the intensity of judgment when we refuse to hear and heed the initial judgment.

Hold Zephaniah chapter 2, but turn back to Amos chapter 4. Note the increased intensity and severity of God's judgments. Beginning in verse 6, God says, "And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD."

God said, What did I do to get your attention? I sent famine. It didn't do a bit of good; you didn't pay any attention. What did God do next? Verse 7: "And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. So two or three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water; but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD." The famine didn't do it, so God sent drought—famine on top of drought. Yet they did not listen: "Yet have ye not returned unto me."

Now watch verse 9: “I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.” They did not listen to the famine or the drought, so God sent blasting and mildew, caterpillars and palmerworms. They devoured what the famine and drought had not, yet they still did not listen to the LORD. Now watch verse 10: “I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt:”

“Your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.” So God sent diseases, plagues, and war. There were piles of young men and piles of horses stacked one on top of the other. And yet, says God, you have not paid any attention.

God said, “I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.” When God sent His supernatural judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah, everyone knew that it was the judgment of God. You could not deny it. God said, “I’ve sent judgments like that. You haven’t paid a bit of attention.”

And look what God said to Israel: “Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.” God said, You would not listen; I will simply go ahead and kill you and take you out of the way.

One of the problems we have with judgment is that many people do not perceive God’s judgment. Even as judgment increases in severity and intensity, people often refuse to understand that it is God’s judgment. Some, like these Israelites, will not repent even under the strictest and most severe judgment. God says that, in such an instance, the only thing left for them is destruction: “I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God.”

The Remnant and the Question: What Shall the Righteous Do?

Now, let me tell you another problem. In light of a society and nation under the judgment of God, while many people go on their merry way as if nothing were happening and nothing were wrong, there exists a small remnant who see and understand the hand of God against society and the nation. That small remnant desires, prays for, and longs for repentance and restoration. They want to return to God's Word and to God's law.

The vast majority are indifferent and unrepentant. In light of this fact, the question has to come up: What shall the righteous do? Zephaniah is going to answer that question. Look at verse 3 again: "Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness. It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger."

You know what he is doing? He is addressing the remnant—the people who want repentance and restoration. It is like what God said to those people in Isaiah chapter 1, verse 5: "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." In other words, God says, "I have sent judgment after judgment, and you did not pay any attention." Destruction is the only thing that awaits you.

But wait a minute. Here is what Zephaniah is saying right in the middle of verse 3: My message is for the remnant, for those who want repentance and restoration, and for those who want to obey the Lord. Do not worry about those who will not repent, who will not concern themselves, or who refuse to hear and heed. Zephaniah says, "I will tell you what you need to do." What good is it to shout to someone who will not listen? God says, "I will tell you what you need to do. I will tell you how you need to pay attention." So I want you to look in verse 3. I have about four points I want you to see.

The Action Commanded: Seek the Lord

The first point is the action commanded. He said in verse 3, "Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth." First and foremost, we are commanded to seek the Lord. This action is addressed to the meek of

the earth, those who have humbled themselves and submitted themselves unto the Lord. The word meek refers to those who have profited under the scourges, afflictions, and judgment of God. They have been chastised; they have repented. So this action that is commanded here is addressed to true believers.

This phrase occurs a number of times in Scripture. In Deuteronomy 4, verse 29, the Bible says, “But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.” We are commanded to seek the Lord.

In 1 Chronicles 16, verses 10 and 11: “Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually.” That is a command. First Chronicles 22 and verse 19 says, “Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD.” Isaiah 55 and verse 6 says, “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.”

It is one thing to know that God commands you to seek Him. It is quite another thing to know how to seek Him. How do you seek the Lord? This message is not necessarily just on this subject, but I do want to give you several important points on seeking the Lord.

First, if you are going to seek the Lord, there must be a genuine desire and an undivided heart. What did He say in Deuteronomy 4 and verse 29? “But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.” Very obviously, God is not going to be found in those who try to seek Him with a divided heart. We are told in Jeremiah chapter 29 and verse 13, “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”

You cannot come to God lackadaisically, half interested, or saying, “Well, it’s all right if I do, and it’s all right if I don’t.” No. There must be an undivided heart and a genuine desire in seeking the Lord. The Bible says in 2 Chronicles 15:12, “And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul.” God is not going to be found by half-hearted and slothful attempts at finding Him.

We are told that King Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, in 2 Chronicles 12:14, “And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.” Did he do evil? Because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD. On the contrary, we have in 2 Chronicles 27:6, “So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD.” If we are going to seek the Lord, it is very obvious that we have to seek Him with an undivided heart. There has to be a genuine desire, a wholehearted desire.

Secondly, if we are going to seek the Lord, we must seek Him with a humble and accurate estimation of ourselves. In Romans 12:3, the Apostle Paul wrote, “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” God says that when it comes to soberly assessing your gifts, you had better not think more highly of yourself than you ought to think.

If I were to tell you that God had given me the gift of song and singing, my wife would smile and laugh. All I have to do is open my mouth and try to sing, and you would know instantaneously that I cannot sing. I have a dear friend, a lady who loved to sing, but she really could not sing. In fact, she was deaf in one ear, but she tried to sing. I was thankful for that. Once, when I said that I could not sing, she replied, “Oh pastor, I’ll be glad to teach you to sing.” I thought to myself, Well, I can already sing better than you, but I still can’t sing.

It is like my trying to say, “My gift is in managing money,” when I am a spendthrift. You have to deal with yourself honestly and soberly.

If this is true in ascertaining our gifts, it is equally true in coming to God. We have to deal accurately and give a true estimate of ourselves before the Lord. Isaiah 51:1–2 says, “Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.”

What does God mean when He says that if you are going to follow after righteousness and seek Him, you must look to the rock from

which you were hewn and the hole of the pit from which you were dug? We may say, “I am in Abraham’s lineage.” But where was Abraham when God called him? He was a pagan and an idolater in Ur of the Chaldees, and so was Sarah. God says, look to the rock from which you are hewn and to the hole of the pit from which you are digged.

In other words, when you come to God, you must come with a proper estimation of yourself. You must understand that we are sinners and deserve nothing but punishment and justice. When God found us, we were nothing. When God saved us, we were nothing. Without Him, we are still nothing. That is a proper estimate. What did our Lord say in John 15? “Without me, ye can do” how much? Nothing.

It is God who saved us and brought us into His kingdom. That is why the Bible says in Colossians 1, “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”

So when we come before Him seeking Him with all of our heart, we have to come before Him in deep humility, recognizing the fact that in and of ourselves, we are absolutely nothing. Pride is just as sinful in a preacher's heart as it is in anyone else's heart. It's just as wicked in a Christian's heart. I saw a cartoon years ago that I have never forgotten. It showed two monks walking side by side in their robes, with their hands up their sleeves. One looked at the other and said, “You know, it kind of makes you proud that we're so humble, doesn't it?”

We can get proud that we have the right doctrine, proud that we attend church faithfully, and proud in a lot of areas. God says that if we're going to seek Him, we have to come with a true estimate of ourselves. The true and accurate estimate of ourselves is this: without Him, we are nothing.

Thirdly, if we're going to seek Him, we must be careful to obey Him in every area of our lives. We must be constantly and continually bringing our lives into conformity to the Word of God. We cannot cease obeying God just because our society and our

nation are under the judgment of God. I have talked to Christians who have come up with this attitude: “The whole world is a thieving, coveting, defrauding mess. I might as well get my part of it while I can.” I have heard Christians say things like that: “Everybody else is doing it. We might as well do it, too. We might as well get our share.”

Stop and think: why are we under the judgment of God to begin with? Because of our sin and because of our rebellion. David said in Psalm 66 and verse 18, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” We cannot expect God to hear us if we're going to forsake Him and refuse to bring our lives into conformity to His Word.

In 2 Chronicles 14:4, we read, “And commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment.” What was part of their seeking the Lord? Obeying Him—doing the law and commandments. It involves obedience. So you can't seek God while you're disobedient. What does the Bible say in James 4 and verse 17?

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." I want you to turn to the book of Mark chapter 4. I love this passage. In fact, I've got about a two hour message just on this one verse, but it is so filled with truth. I want you to look at Mark 4 and verse 24. Notice what the Word of God said.

“And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.”

To the exact same measure that you give to hearing the Word of God, God is going to measure that same amount of truth back to you. You cannot say, “I’m going to study my Bible ten minutes and get two hours’ worth of knowledge.” You are going to get ten minutes’ worth of knowledge. To whatever degree that you measure out in hearing truth, to that same degree God is going to measure truth back to you. Then He makes this statement: “and unto you that hear shall more be given.” In other words, God is not going to give you any more truth until you already obey the truth that He has given you. So if you are going to come to seek the Lord, at the very

minimum, dear friend, you have to obey the truth that you already know and possess.

Because if you do not do it, it is sin. You cannot come to God and expect Him to hear you with iniquity in your heart. For David said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

Seeking the Lord means we cry unto Him for help. We are not instructing Him as to what to do. So many want to tell God what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. No, if you are seeking God, all you are doing is crying for help. You understand that everything is in God's hands.

Arthur W. Pink observed years ago, and I have never forgotten it, "One reason we don't like the pope is because we like to be the pope ourselves." We want to be in charge. We want to tell everyone else what to do. We even want to tell God what to do, but God is sovereign. We cannot dictate to God. We cannot instruct God.

The Word of God says in Second Chronicles chapter 20 verse four, "And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD." What does it mean to seek the Lord? They came together seeking to ask help of the Lord—not to instruct Him, tell Him what to do, or tell Him how or when to do it, but simply to ask His help. So seeking the Lord includes, at a minimum, these four truths.

John Gill said this concerning seeking the Lord: "They are here exhorted to seek the Lord, that is, by prayer and supplication, to know more of His mind and will, and especially their duty under the present circumstances. Implore His grace and mercy, protection and safety, in a day of common danger, and to attend the public ordinances of His house, in order to enjoy His presence and communion with Him. For to seek the Lord is to seek His face and favor, to have the light of His countenance, and the discoveries of His love, and to seek His honor and glory in all things, particularly the Lord Christ may be met who was to come in the flesh, and good men sought before he came, and now he is come, and to him should men seek for righteousness and life, for peace and pardon, for grace and all supplies of it, and for everlasting salvation, and all this before as well as since his coming, and such seek him aright, who seek him

early, in the first place, above all things, who seek Him with their whole heart, sincerely, diligently, and constantly, and where He is to be found, in the ministry of His Word and ordinances." Certainly, the action commanded is to seek the Lord.

The Action Commended and Clarified: Seek Righteousness and Meekness

In Zephaniah 2:3, we have not only the action commanded, but the action commended: "Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment." He commends these people for having worked, or wrought, His judgment.

To do the judgment of God here means to form the life according to the righteousness of His law. The Hebrew word is used frequently and means equity, or the right rule of living. Hence, to do judgment means that we live and bring our lives into conformity to His Word. We live according to His revealed will and do that which is in line with His Word, which is the rule of judgment, not only for faith, but for practice as well.

We perform and obey that which He has laid down for us, performing the works He has commanded from right principles, with right views, and from the fruits of faith and repentance as well.

Here is an explanation of the word judgment. In Genesis chapter 18 and verse 19, concerning Abraham, God said, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." God knew Abraham would command his family and household to do judgment and justice. Therefore, doing judgment is basically obeying the Word of God. That is why Isaiah said, in Isaiah 1 and verse 17, "Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

Very obviously, the action commended here is that these people have been living a holy, godly life, and Zephaniah is saying, Continue to do this. The third point is the action clarified: "Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth," which is the action commanded, "which

have wrought his judgment," the action commended. The action clarified is, "Seek righteousness, seek meekness."

It is impossible to seek righteousness without at the same time seeking meekness or humility. When righteousness is sought, meekness or humility is sought as well. When the Lord says, Seek righteousness, He means the same thing as when He says, Do judgment. Righteousness is right living: doing that which is right in accordance and agreement with the Word and Law of God, bringing the life into conformity to the Word of God. Zephaniah is admonishing us to advance our lives in righteousness, in judgment, and in obedience. Why? Because God is not going to forget our obedience. As the Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians chapter 6 and verse 9, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Continue to seek judgment, righteousness, and meekness, because we are going to reap if we faint not. Hebrews 6:10 says, "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 that.

I want to clarify something about seeking meekness. Do not equate meekness with mousiness. In this day and time, most consider a meek individual weak, anemic, feminine, and unmanly. According to the humanistic and modernistic view, the meek man is the 90-pound weakling who becomes a foot mat for everyone to ridicule, run over, and wipe their feet on. He is the epitome of everything that is to be despised. Biblical meekness is exactly the opposite.

If I were to ask you, not counting our Lord Jesus Christ, who was the meekest man on Earth? I know that you know the answer. Numbers 12:3 says, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." Note what that meek man did. He defended a brother. He slew an Egyptian. He stood up to Pharaoh. He spoke the truth and let the chips fall where they may. He delivered Israel out of Egypt and faced a rebellious group of Israelites over and over. On one occasion, this meek man prayed, "Oh God, I pray that a new thing will happen. I pray that the earth will open up and these rebels will go down alive into the pit."

The earth opened up and swallowed them. He was the meekest man on earth.

That certainly is not in agreement with what the world calls meekness, but it is biblical meekness. Our Lord said in Matthew 11:29, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." In Matthew 21:5, it was prophesied concerning Christ, "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." Our Lord was certainly not a mousy man.

You do not get weak working in a carpenter shop. You do not get weak carrying wood all day long, using axes and saws. Moreover, there is not a man alive, regardless of how strong he is, who could suffer and endure everything our Lord suffered and endured without complaining. Our Lord endured ridicule, mockery, rejection, and slander. He endured an unjust trial; moreover, He was scourged and crucified. And yet we are told that He was meek and lowly.

The Bible says that He endured the cross, despising the shame, for the joy that was set before Him. In Matthew 5:5 our Lord said, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." If you read Rushdoony's Institutes of Biblical Law, you will find that he reported seeing this verse on a bathroom wall. Someone had written beneath it, "if that's all right." That is the world's idea of meekness.

Meekness, dear friend, is an attitude or disposition that not only accepts and receives God's dealings with us without dispute and argument; it is also an attitude and disposition of submission to Him, resting in Him, leaning upon Him, and trusting in Him above all things.

Now let me tell you what real meekness is. You remember Matthew 11:29, where our Lord said, "Take my yoke upon you." He had reference to a real, literal yoke, which in those days was applied to cattle or oxen. They are very big and very strong. I told you about one of my pets, a huge Santa Gertrudis bull named General Beauregard. He weighed up to three thousand pounds, yet he was so meek and gentle that it was unbelievable.

My wife and I went out one day, and I took the tractor to hook up to an eight-foot harrow, which had discs that cut the land and weighed a thousand pounds or more. When I reached it, it had been flipped completely over, with the discs sticking straight up. I had to tie it with a log chain and pull it over before I could hook back up to it. The only tracks were Beauregard's. He came to the front of the harrow, put his head down, scratched his head, and then flipped that thousand-pound harrow completely over.

I have seen that 3,000-pound bull run—jump in the air, twist, kick, and turn all the way around before he ever hit the ground. You talk about strength. You talk about power.

He broke through the fence one time. The horses were chasing the cows down a little lane, and all the cows were running. Beauregard did not want to run, but he was running a little bit. He was agitated, and so, instead of running down the lane, he just went through the fence. He burst that fence like it was pine straw.

I saw it when it happened. I told Alice, “Might as well get the tools together. We’ve got to fix that fence.” I said, “Let me get him in first.” I stood up on the hill and called him. Remember now, the horses have been chasing. He thought he was being chased. I called him. He looked up, saw me, and started running to me as fast as he could. And let me tell you, that old man got swinging left and right like that.

He was my pet, but I thought, “I'm going to step a little closer to my truck, just in case he doesn't stop. At least I can jump in the back of my truck.” I knew he was agitated. That big bull ran straight up to me and stopped in his tracks. I stuck my hand out for him to smell it. After he smelled my hand, I said, “Come on, I'll put you up.” Then I turned around and walked to the gate. He followed me like a little puppy. I opened the gate, and he went right in. I fixed the gate, shut it, and went down and fixed the fence.

How could I harness the strength of that bull? The only way was to put a yoke on him; then he would pull my plow and do whatever I wanted him to do. I have a big horse, a big, big horse, nothing but a pile of muscles, but I have to put a halter and a bridle on him to control him.

An ox or a bull is exceedingly strong. When you put that yoke upon that ox or bull, you now control that strength. What is meekness? Our Lord said, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Meekness is nothing less than disciplined strength under God.

Our Lord acted the way the Father would have Him act. He spoke the way the Father would have Him speak. He moved the way the Father would have Him move. If I control that horse, I have to have that bridle and rein; if I control that bull, I have to have that yoke. Our Lord said, “Take my yoke upon you.” Submit to me, and I'll tell you when to move, what to do, and where to go.

To take His yoke upon us means submitting to our Lord more and more every day, in every way, until the entirety of our life is brought under His control. I tell people I have done far more repenting since I have been saved than when I got saved. I repented of a few sins when God saved me—sins in particular and many in general. But after I got saved and started reading the Scripture, I found there was a whole lot of other things wrong with me that I didn't even know about.

If I am a meek man, I take our Lord's yoke and submit more and more to Him until He has total control of my life. Calvin said that even the best are roused by God's scourges to seek true religion with greater ardor. Though we may intend to serve God and follow His word, calamities and the appearance of God as Judge should stimulate greater care and diligence, for no one fully performs his duty. Adversity is God's summons to remember that He shows by manifest signs when He is displeased. Therefore, however devoted they have been, the pious must seek God, meekness, and that which is just and right.

It does not matter how holy you are now. What Zephaniah is saying, especially in the time of judgment, is that you want to become more holy, more godly, more submissive, more submitted, and more meek. Zephaniah chapter two, verse three, says, "Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth," the action commanded, "Which have wrought his judgment," the action commended. "Seek righteousness, seek meekness." The action is clarified and

consummated: "It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger."

The Action Consummated: The Promise of Being Hidden

Zephaniah encourages obedience and submission by saying, "it may be" that you shall be hidden in the day of our Lord's anger. The Lord may spare you. God's anger will be directed at the disobedient and rebellious, and you certainly do not want to be that. David said in Psalm 27, verse five, "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock." In Psalm 31, verse 20, he said, "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." Peter said in Second Peter two, verse nine, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

In the time of judgment, we seek the Lord, His righteousness, more holiness, more submission, and more meekness.

SCRIPTURE READING - Psalm 91:1-16 (KJV)

> Let me tell you where I want to be. I'm not a prophet, and I'm not a prophet's son, but I'm going to tell you this, folks. If God does not send repentance in this country, I believe in the next few years we are in for a really rough ride. I really believe that. But I want to show you where I want to be. I want to live my life in such a way. I want my mind and my attitude to be in such that I can honestly claim this psalm.
>
> “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.
>
> “Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at

> noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.
>
> "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."
>
> I want it to be only with mine eyes that I behold and see the reward of the wicked. I don't want to be involved in it. I want the Lord to be my fortress and my rock and my protection.

Zephaniah chapter two, verse three says, "Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness." Then comes this promise: "It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger." Old John Trapp said: "Probably, possibly you may. Probably you shall be. Pardon of sin you shall be sure of, mitigation also of sorrow, if not prevention. Saved you shall be, or more gently handled, or so inwardly calmed that you shall be able to call your souls to rest when others are at their wits' end. You shall be safe under the cover of God's wings and in the hollow of His hand, when others that are without God in the world shall be as a naked man in a storm, an unarmed man in the field, or as a ship at sea without anchor, subject to dash and split against the rocks and quicksands." Possibly you may be; probably you will be.

Application: Increase in Holiness and Submission

The application is simple: We should constantly bring our lives into greater conformity to God's Word. In times of judgment and danger, we must pay special attention to being holy, godly, submissive, and

obedient. God, in His grace and mercy, may spare us, or deal with us more gently. No parent chastens a child with severity when that child displays a repentant, compliant, and submissive attitude.

I have six grandchildren. My youngest granddaughter will be seventeen this year, and she quickly tells you her boast: "I'm the only grandchild that Papa has never whipped." I never whipped her because she never needed it; she obeyed. She watched me whip the other grandchildren and decided early that she wanted no part of it.

Her mother was basically the same way. We have identical twins. I nearly had to beat them to death; there were two of them, and they were always into something. But Rebecca, my youngest daughter, could be melted by a hard look: "Daddy, I'm sorry. What did I do?" We as parents never severely chasten a child who demonstrates a repentant, submissive attitude.

Do you know the same is true of our Heavenly Father? The Bible tells us in Lamentations 3:33, "For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men." God is not some old meanie up in heaven just waiting to beat us half to death. He does not afflict us willingly, and does not want to use the rod on us. I have never wanted to whip my children or grandchildren; the only reason I did was because they sinned, were wicked, and were wrong. Those who did what was right, I never chastened. The Lord does not willingly afflict us.

So Zephaniah said that if you continue to demonstrate an obedient, submissive, humble attitude, it may be that the Lord will hide you in the day of His wrath. You may get away with all your possessions, escape with all your family, and be blessed and protected in a way you have never dreamed of. But if you want the Lord's protection, you must be obedient and submissive. The more God sends His judgment, the more you need to pay attention to obedience and submission.

Father, in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee and pray for help tonight. Help us see the danger we face as a nation and society. The corruption is all around us. May we be especially attentive, increasing in holiness, submission, godly

humility, and meekness. May we exercise disciplined strength under God for Thy honor and glory. In Jesus Christ's name we ask, Amen.

CHAPTER 6

The Son Of Abraham

It is a joy to be here today, and I am thankful for the opportunity. I thank the pastor for his kindness in inviting me and putting on this conference, and Samuel and Joy for putting up with us. It is good to be with Brother Floyd again and to meet Brother McDougall again. I had met him years and years ago, but we never stayed in contact. I trust that after this time, we will.

Introduction and Two Key Questions

I want you to open your Bibles to the book of Matthew, chapter 1. We are going to look at verse 1, and then we are going to be turning to an awful lot of Scripture, so keep your fingers kind of limber this morning. I am going to bring a message entitled The Son of Abraham. Actually, this is the first part of a two-part message, but I will not have time to bring the second part.

Notice Matthew chapter 1 and verse 1: The Bible in the New Testament begins with the book of generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.

I want to begin by asking two questions. Number one, who is the true Son of Abraham? And number two, who is the true seed of Abraham?

Many are going to respond that Isaac is the true seed of Abraham because he was the son of Abraham and Sarah, while Ishmael was the son of Abraham and Hagar. I suppose that if one thinks carnally, he might also say that Ishmael is just as much a son of Abraham as Isaac was, since he was produced by Abraham.

Abraham's Many Sons and the Distinction Between Physical and Spiritual Seed

Moreover, when I ask who the true Son of Abraham is, and you begin to think of the sons of Abraham, I would also ask, What about the sons of Abraham and Keturah? And what about the sons of Abraham and his concubines?

You say, What are you talking about? Turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 25. Abraham had a multitude of sons. Genesis chapter 25, beginning with verse 1, says, “Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah.”

Keturah bare Abraham Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Jokshan begat Sheba and Dedan; the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim; and the sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah. Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country. So there were evidently a multitude of sons by Abraham. Abraham had many sons and consequently also had many seeds.

I believe it is imperative at the very beginning that you and I learn to distinguish between the physical seed of Abraham and the spiritual seed of Abraham. Isaac is called the real son of Abraham, not because he was the only son of Abraham, but because he was the son of promise. Moreover, Isaac was a type, a picture, and a representative of Jesus Christ.

Isaac as a Type of Christ and the Covenant with Isaac

Hebrews 11:17-19 says, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called; Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." Isaac, then, is a figure, or picture, or type of Jesus Christ.

Consequently, this covenant was made not just with Abraham, but with Isaac. In Genesis 17:15-21, God tells Abraham, "And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations. Kings of people shall be of her."

Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac.

“And I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.” Now note verse 19: “And I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.”

Believers as Children of Promise

Isaac, then, is going to be the promised son to Abraham, and he is specifically called the son of promise. Emphasize again verse 19, where God says, “But I will establish my covenant with him.” It is going to be an everlasting covenant, and it will be “with his seed after him.” This covenant, then, is not going to be bound just to one person, just to Isaac. It is going to be common to all of Isaac’s true seed by continual succession. It is going to descend to his posterity.

How could that possibly be? The Apostle Paul makes an amazing statement in Galatians chapter 4, verse 28. Remember that Isaac is called the son of promise. Remember that God gave Isaac this covenant, and it is to descend to his seed after him. Concerning believers, the Apostle Paul says, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." Isn't that amazing? We, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. Believers, therefore, are children of promise, just as Isaac. We are the recipients of God's covenantal blessings to Abraham and to Isaac. True believers are the true Israel of God and also the heirs according to the promise.

The problem is that when we hear the phrase "the seed of Abraham," "the son of Abraham," or "the seed of Isaac," we tend to think, first of all, physically. We tend to think of physical seed and physical descendants. I believe that is where we greatly err. There is indeed an Israel after the flesh. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 10 and verse 18, Paul wrote, "Behold Israel after the flesh:

Not All Israel Are Israel

"Are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?" So there is indeed a fleshly Israel, an Israel after the flesh. But the Apostle Paul is teaching us something that is either purposefully denied or purposefully overlooked: Israel after the flesh is not the true Israel of God.

In Romans chapter 9, beginning with verse 6, the Apostle says, "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." So actually, there is an election within an election when you are talking about the doctrine of election. You have to distinguish four different types of election.

There was indeed a national election because Israel was chosen to be God's people as a whole. He did not choose the Assyrians, the Ethiopians, or the Chaldeans; He chose Israel. So that is a national election.

There is also a vocational election. Not every Israelite was a Levite, and not every Israelite could be a high priest. Only those of the house of Aaron could be priests, and only those men of the tribe

of Levi could be Levites. So there is not only a national election, but also a vocational election.

There is also a messianic election. If you read Isaiah 42:1, speaking of Jesus Christ, God says, “Behold my servant, mine elect.” Jesus Christ is the elect Messiah of God. Then there is also a soteriological election, or an election of salvation, according to 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

When the Apostle Paul says, “They are not all Israel, which are of Israel,” he is saying that national election does not equal personal or soteriological election. There were a group of people within national Israel who were indeed the elect of God, but not all of national Israel were God’s people. There was an external covenant, but there is also an internal covenant. Paul explains this more fully in the next verse: “Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.”

If you do not understand the statement, “For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel,” Paul explains it further: “Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham,” that is, the physical descendants of Abraham, “are they all children.” Why? Because “in Isaac shall thy seed be called.” Paul makes it plainer in the next verse: “That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”

I want you to understand what Paul is saying. Paul is saying adamantly that the physical descendants of Abraham are not the children of God. If the physical descendants of Abraham were the children of God, then Ishmael would be just as much a child of God as Isaac, and Esau would be just as much a child of God as Jacob. But the Scripture teaches that thousands of flesh-and-blood Israelites died without faith.

Hebrews 4 says, “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest:

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief."

Here were multitudes who died without faith. In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul expands upon this concerning those who came out of Egypt: "But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness."

I cannot help but smile every time I read that verse. Paul says, "but with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness." Would you care to tell me how many of the original men who came out of Egypt got into Canaan land? Two: Joshua and Caleb. But with many of them God was not well pleased—all of them except two. Look what he says: "but with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness." Why?

"Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer."

Multitudes died without faith. Here were physical descendants of Abraham who were just as lost as a hound dog. It is possible to be the physical seed and descendant of Abraham and yet be a child of the devil.

Physical Seed Can Be Children of the Devil

In John chapter 8, these unbelieving Jewish people were attacking the Lord Jesus Christ. After He had said, "ye shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free," they answered Him, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest

thou, Ye shall be made free?" How could they say, "We be Abraham's seed. We were never in bondage to any man"? Did they not go to Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon? Read the book of Judges. How many times did God deliver them into the hands of their enemies, and they became servants to the Moabites, the Philistines, and all these people? Yet they said, "We be Abraham's seed. We were never in bondage to any man. How sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"

Jesus answered them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

They had said, "We be Abraham's seed," but the Lord said, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father." They answered, "Abraham is our father." Jesus replied, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father."

They said, "We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God." Jesus said, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

Christ said of the devil, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him." In John 8, the people said, "We're Abraham's seed." Christ said, "I know that you're Abraham's seed," but later He said, "You may be the seed of Abraham. But you're not Abraham's children." Rather, He said, "You're the children of the devil." These statements occur in verses 33, 37, 39, and 44. The passage carefully distinguishes being Abraham's seed from being Abraham's children.

How is it possible to be the seed of Abraham and not be the children of Abraham? Let us look at Romans 4 and then at Galatians 3. Romans 4 answers this question in verse 12: "And the father of

circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised." Paul is speaking concerning Abraham and the faith of Abraham.

True Children of Abraham Walk in Faith

So what is Paul teaching? The true children of Abraham are those who walk in the steps of Abraham, who walk in the faith of Abraham. This is the distinction the apostle is making between the physical seed and the true children.

Galatians 3:7 says very plainly, "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." How can you be a seed of Abraham and not be a child of Abraham? Very obviously, you do not have the faith of Abraham; you do not walk in the steps of Abraham. These individuals in John 8 may have been the seed of Abraham, but they certainly were not the children of Abraham.

You have to remember what Paul said in Romans 9:8: "That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." It is only the children of promise that are counted as the seed of Abraham. The children of promise are strictly those in whom the power and the effect of the covenant are found. On this account, the Apostle Paul denies that the physical seed of Abraham were the children of God, although a covenant had been made with them externally.

The way to understand this is very easily. Think of most churches today, especially Southern Baptist churches. They will have a church covenant on the wall, and when you join that church, you say, in essence, "I subscribe to this covenant." Yet there are thousands upon thousands of church people who are covenanted with the people of God in a church but are lost. They are in an external covenant, but there has never been a work in their heart.

Israel likewise had an external side of a covenant. All the men had been circumcised, but the true circumcision was always that of the heart. Thus, you have the external covenant; you have Israelites who

were Israelites only in light of their carnal generation; and you have others who were true Israelites, who walked in the steps of Abraham and had the faith of Abraham. All the promises that God has made in the Bible are to the true Israel of God, to those who are of the faith of Abraham and walk in that step.

There are many who claim to be Israel who are not Israel because they do not have the faith of Abraham, nor do they walk in his steps. Listen to what Matthew Henry said: "Many that descended from the loins of Abraham and Jacob and were of that people who were surnamed by the name of Israel, yet were very far from being Israelites indeed, interested in the saving benefits of the New Covenant. These are not all really Israel that are so in name and profession. It does not follow that because they are the seed of Abraham, therefore they must needs be the children of God. The children of the flesh, as such, by virtue of their relation to Abraham according to the flesh, are not therefore the children of God, for then Ishmael could have put in a good claim." The physical seed of Abraham are not the children of God.

The True Circumcision Is of the Heart

Paul wrote in Romans 2:28–29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Let me first tell you what the word Jew means in these verses. The word is Ioudaios, which literally refers to a Judahite. A Judahite is someone of the tribe of Judah or someone who lives in the region of Judea. We use the word Jew as a slang word in this sense, but actually the word is Judahite. So Paul says, "For he is not a Judahite, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Judahite, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Here is my question: Why did the apostle Paul use the word Judahite instead of Israelite? Why did he not say, "For he is not an

Israelite, which is one outwardly. But he is an Israelite, which is one inwardly"? Why did he use Judahite and not Israelite?

Let me play with your minds for a moment. Do you realize that all true Judahites were Israelites, but not all true Israelites were Judahites? Israel was divided into the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom. The Northern Kingdom had Samaria as its capital. The Southern Kingdom was Judah or Judea and had Jerusalem as its capital.

When we talk about Judahites, however, just because you were in Judea, that did not mean you belonged to Judah. Other people of other tribes lived in Judea and also would be called Judahites. The tribe of Benjamin and the tribe of Simeon were both in Judea. Joshua 19:1 says, "And the second lot came forth to Simeon, even for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families: and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah." Joshua 18:11 says, "And the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families: and the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph."

If you were in Judah, or Judea, there was a tribe of Judah, but there was also the tribe of Benjamin and the tribe of Simeon.

The Apostle Paul could rightly call himself a Benjamite, since he was of the tribe of Benjamin. He could also call himself a Judahite, because he lived in Judea, and he could call himself an Israelite. In Romans 11:1 he said, "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." He calls himself an Israelite and a Benjamite, but he could also call himself a Judahite, since Benjamin had his possession there in Judea as well.

Why did Paul talk about the Judahites instead of the Israelites? Look in Romans chapter 9, verses 3 and 4. The Apostle Paul said, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises."

When we talk about the ceremonies, the giving of the law, and the service of God, where did all this transpire? In the tribe of Judah, in the land of Judea, at Jerusalem, the capital, where the tabernacle and temple were. Judah possessed the tabernacle, the temple, the law, the ordinances, and the ceremonies.

It did not matter whether you were in Dan, the most northern tribe, or in Beersheba, the most southern town. If you wanted to worship God in the Old Testament, you had to come to Jerusalem, where the tabernacle was and later the temple. Thus the Apostle Paul uses the term Judahite in Romans chapter 2, because the service and worship of God were carried out in Judea at Jerusalem.

If you look back to Romans chapter 2 and verse 28, watch carefully. Remember, all the worship of God took place here; that is, all the public worship. He said, "For he is not a Judahite, which is one outwardly," that is, one who has merely been circumcised. "Neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Judahite, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." You have to remember that this was not only the Apostle Paul's teaching. It was in Jerusalem and Judea, where the worship of God was, and he was a Judahite himself.

He was a Benjamite who lived in Judah. Israel had been commanded in the Old Testament to circumcise their hearts. Although there was an outward mark of circumcision in the flesh, that may have been the mark of a national covenant, but it was not sufficient to be in the internal covenant, or the covenant of grace. Deuteronomy chapter 10 and verse 16 gives the command: "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked."

In Jeremiah chapter 4, God is particularly speaking to Judah and Jerusalem: "Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none

He specifically points out that the heart is to be circumcised, and he specifically told that to Judah and Jerusalem. Paul, then, in Romans chapter two, says the true Judahite is not one who is

circumcised outwardly in the flesh, but the true Judahite is one who has been circumcised in the heart. So the promised seed of Abraham, the spiritual seed, consists of those who have been circumcised in their heart, and not just in their flesh.

Let me show you several verses in the New Testament concerning circumcision. I think you are going to understand this a little more fully when we get to our last two verses on circumcision. Notice First Corinthians, chapter seven and verse nineteen. The Apostle Paul says, "Circumcision is nothing," speaking of circumcision in the flesh. "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God." What good is your circumcision in an outward covenant and an external relationship if you do not obey God?

Again, in Galatians chapter five and verse six, the Apostle Paul says, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." It does not do you any good to be circumcised in the flesh if you have no faith and if you do not keep the commandments of God.

In Colossians chapter two and verse eleven, the apostle speaks about true believers: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." The true circumcision is the work of God in the heart. It is when the heart is circumcised and our sins have been put away by the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Then, turning to Philippians chapter three, let us begin reading with verse one. Watch what the Apostle Paul says: "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." And I hope today I am going to give you something to rejoice in. "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs,"

He is not talking about the four-legged kind, but the two-legged kind. He says, “Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision,” or the circumcision. Then he says in verse three, “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” Who are those who are truly and genuinely circumcised? Only true believers—those

who worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. That is why the Apostle Paul said in Romans 2:29 that the true Judahite is the man who is circumcised in the heart, whose praise is not of men, but of God alone. We are the true circumcision of God, the true believers of God, and the true seed of Abraham.

You have to forget nations and physical seed, and count the way God counts. That is why he said in Romans 9:8, “It is the children of promise that are counted for the seed.” The children of promise are counted for the seed—not the physical descendants, but the children of promise.

Our Lord teaches that our relationship with Him transcends physical boundaries. If you could prove to me that you were a lineal descendant from Abraham—giving your father, mother, father, mother, right down the line—what would that mean? Nothing. If you are without Christ, you would simply be a lost physical seed of Abraham. That is what it would mean.

Spiritual Relationship Transcends Physical Lineage

Let me go a step farther. If you could prove that you were a physical descendant of the family of Jesus Christ, perhaps in the lineage of James, the apostle and brother of Christ, what would that mean? Nothing. How can I say that? Look in your Bibles to Matthew, chapter 12, beginning with verse 46. “While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.” Surely you would expect Him to stop teaching and speak to His mother and brothers. “But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?”

"And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." What does he say? Our spiritual relationship transcends physical relationships. In light of that, turn to the book of Galatians, chapter six, if you really want to know who the Israel of God is. Look closely at verse 16.

The Israel of God Walks by the Rule of Faith

The Apostle Paul writes this statement: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." As many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them and mercy upon the Israel of God. First of all, let me tell you what the word rule is. The word rule is the Greek word kanon. It is where we get our English word canon from—not C-A-N-N-O-N, the kind that shoots, but C-A-N-O-N. We talk about the canon of Scripture. We talk about the Old Testament canon, the New Testament canon, or canon law. But do you know what the word canon literally means? It means a measuring stick or a measuring rod. Here is what the Apostle Paul says: "as many as walk according to this rule," this measuring stick, this measuring rod, "peace be upon them and mercy upon the Israel of God."

Who is Israel of God? Who gets the peace? Those who walk according to this rule, those who bring their lives into conformity to the Word of God by the grace and by the power of God. I want you to understand something: We can only be the true seed of Abraham as we are in Jesus Christ. Look in your Bibles to the book of John, chapter 8, and begin with verse 56.

Again, our Lord is confronting these unbelieving Jews. In John 8:56, he tells them, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." Then said the Jews unto him, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" How could Abraham see Christ when Abraham had been dead a multitude of years before Christ ever came? Well, he saw Him in faith. But they said again, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" Verse 58 says, "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." I am.

That is, He is God. He is Jehovah, the one true and living God. “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day.” He rejoiced to see me, his true seed; he rejoiced to see me the Savior, the Lord of glory, the King of kings, the God of gods, the great I AM, the mighty One. He rejoiced to see my name, and he rejoiced to see me. If Christ is the Son of God—and He is—and since Abraham was born before Christ became incarnate, how could Christ then be called the Son of Abraham?

Christ Is the True Seed of Abraham

That is what the Bible said: “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” How then can Christ be the Son of Abraham? Exactly the same way that He is the Son of David, because Abraham, Isaac, and David were types and figures of Jesus Christ, and all the promises that God gave to them were given in reality to Jesus Christ.

In Genesis 17 and Galatians chapter 3, we can see these two passages side by side. Look in Genesis 17 and verse 7. God is entering into a covenant with Abraham: “And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.” He said, “I’m establishing my covenant with you, Abraham, and with your seed after you.” The word seed in Genesis 17:7 is singular.

In Galatians 3:16, the Apostle Paul interprets this promise for us: “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” Who is the true seed of Abraham? Jesus Christ. Who is the true Son of Abraham? Jesus Christ. All of those promises given to Abraham, and all of those promises given to David, were given to the true seed of Abraham and the true seed of David, which is none other than Jesus Christ Himself. It is not the physical seed of Abraham that inherits all things; it is the spiritual seed.

Believers Are Heirs of All Things in Christ

Look in Galatians 3, verse 29: “And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Let that sink in. If you belong to Jesus Christ, then are you Abraham's seed; that is, you are his true spiritual seed. Remember, it was only the seed of the promise that was counted for seed. If you belong to Christ, then are you Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. Everything that God promised Abraham, He actually promised Jesus Christ, and everything that God promised Abraham and Jesus Christ is now ours in Christ. Jesus Christ is the true Son of Abraham. If we are only Abraham's seed physically, it means nothing. But where

Abraham's seed is spiritual, everything that God promised him belongs to us.

Let me make just a couple of applications. There are multitudes of people arguing over a little strip of land in the Middle East called Palestine, and they are all claiming title to it. The truth is, it does not belong to any of them. It really does not. It only belongs to Abraham and his seed—not his physical seed, but his spiritual seed—and only those who are in Jesus Christ are heirs according to the promise, according to Galatians 3:29.

But let me tell you something. In Jesus Christ, it is not just that little strip of land that we get. We get everything. Look in 1 Corinthians 3, beginning there at verse 21. The Corinthian church was arguing over pastors and preachers. Some said, “I like Paul.” Some said, “I like Apollos.” Some said, “I like Peter.” Some tried to be even a little more spiritual: “We just like Jesus,” you know. Paul said, “I quit doing that. Quit arguing.” Look what he said: 1 Corinthians 3, verse 21.

He says, “Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.” We get all the world. We don't get a little strip of land in the Middle East; we get everything. It is all ours in Christ. Romans 8:16–17 says, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;”

“If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” Now, notice what the Bible says in verse 17: “If we're children, then we're heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.” Do you know what a joint heir is? I have four children. What little bit of property I have, I could divide among them, giving each one a portion. But I could say that my children are joint heirs. What does that mean? It means what one gets, all the others get. If we're joint heirs with Jesus Christ, whatever Christ gets, we get. It's all ours.

Have you stopped to think about that? Whatever God has given Jesus, we have. That's why, when our brother preached the other night, he read from Ephesians 1 that in him are all spiritual blessings

in heavenly places. Everything that Christ gets, we get. He is the true Son of Abraham, the true Seed of Abraham.

This should really make you rejoice in Christ Jesus. It should make you thankful, grateful, and appreciative of His so great salvation. How can you not be thankful for His loving kindness, His gracious election, His perfect predestination, His justification, and His effectual call? How can you not be thankful that God, in His infinite grace and mercy, has opened your eyes, that you might be the true seed of Jesus Christ, who is the true Seed and true Son of Abraham, and receive everything that God gave to Abraham and to Jesus Christ?

May I remind you of this? The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 1:20 concerning Jesus Christ, “For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” All the promises—we have them all. They are in Him, and they are yea and amen. They're ours. Can you not be thankful? Can you not be grateful that God has opened your eyes, given you light, and given you life?

Since you are the true seed of Abraham in Jesus Christ, this is really the house of Israel. Beth in Hebrew means house: the house of Israel. God has made us acceptable in Jesus Christ and given us the promises of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David.

Thank you, Father, for your love, your grace, your mercy. Thank you for your great salvation. Thank you, Father, that we're the true sons of Abraham by faith, because we are the sons of the Lord Jesus Christ. Help us, enable us, empower us to walk in the steps of our Father Abraham, who is the Father of all them that believe, Scripture says. May we be holy and pleasing unto Thee. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER 7

The Son of David

Introduction and Review

Matthew 1:1 says, “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” Jesus Christ is the true Son of Abraham, and consequently all the promises that God gave to Abraham are now ours through faith in Jesus Christ. Today, we come to consider Christ as the Son of David. Put these two things together: as the Son of Abraham, Christ is heir of all the promises; as the Son of David, Christ is heir to David’s throne. If you read Matthew chapter 1, you will find that our Lord’s pedigree is given from Abraham through forty-two generations.

The Genealogy and Promises to Abraham

There are three fourteens that are clearly enunciated. Verse 17 says, “So all the generations from Abraham to David are 14 generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are 14 generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are 14 generations,” which would total forty-two generations.

It is important to note that, after Jesus Christ is mentioned in verse 1, David and Abraham are mentioned in the very first verse of the New Testament. The reason they are mentioned is that all hope in salvation and redemption was bound up in these two men because of the promises given to them that, through their lineage, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, would come. Abraham was the first from whose family it was prophesied that the Messiah should spring.

In Genesis 12:3, God said to Abraham, “And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee: and in thee”—that is, in actuality, his seed—“in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Then God said the same thing in Genesis 22:18: “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” Galatians 3:16 tells us that Christ is the promised seed of Abraham. Galatians 3:29 says, “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Thus, in Romans 4:16–17, Abraham is known as the father of all who believe.

The Bible says, “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.” Abraham, then, is known as the father of all those who believe. Of course, Abraham was also referred to as the friend of God.

You remember in the book of James chapter 2 and verse 23, the Bible says, “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.” Abraham is mentioned because he was the first of whom all these promises had been given.

David: The Man After God's Own Heart

Now David, of course, is mentioned secondly, and David is the man after God’s own heart. You remember how Saul was rejected of God and Samuel told Saul in 1 Samuel 13 and verse 14, “But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over

his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee." So Saul is rejected. God is seeking him a man after his own heart. And the Bible tells us in Acts 13 and verse 22, "And when he had removed him," that is Saul, "he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will." God specifically chose David to be king. David was chosen by God not only to be the head of the kingdom, but also the one through whom the lineage of the Messiah's throne would be established and founded.

God chose David alone. Here he is mentioned as the forefather of the Lord's anointed, the Messiah, the true son of David. Christ then came with all the reality of the kingdom and the throne promised to him as David's son.

Christ's Threefold Office: Prophet, Priest, and King

One author said in four paragraphs, "No person ever born could boast in a direct line of more illustrious ancestry than Jesus Christ. Among his progenitors, the regal, sacerdotal, and prophetic offices existed in all their glory and splendor."

David, the most renowned of sovereigns, was king and prophet. Abraham, the most perfect character in all antiquity, whether sacred or profane, was priest and prophet. But the three offices were never united except in the person of Christ. He alone was prophet, priest, and king, and possessed and executed these offices in such a supereminent degree as no human being ever did or ever could do.

As the principal business of the prophet was to make known the will of God to men, according to certain partial communications received from heaven, so Jesus, who lay in the bosom of the Father and was intimately and thoroughly acquainted with all the mysteries of the eternal world, came to declare the divine nature and its counsels to mankind. He said in John 1 and verse 18, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Jesus Christ is the true prophet, for only Jesus Christ can fully declare God, because only Jesus Christ fully knows God, because Jesus Christ is God.

As the business of the priest was to offer sacrifices to God to make atonement for the sins of the people, so Christ was constituted a high priest to make, by the sacrifice of himself, an atonement for the sins of the world. As the office of king was to reign over, protect, and defend the people committed to his care by the divine providence, so Christ is set as king upon Zion, having the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Of the righteousness, peace, and increase of his government, there shall be no end.

This threefold office Christ executes not only in a general sense in the world at large, but in a particular sense in every Christian soul. He is first a prophet to teach the heart of man the will of God, to convict the conscience of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to fully illustrate the way of salvation. He is next a priest to apply that atonement to the guilty conscience, the necessity of which, as a prophet, he has previously made known. And lastly, as a king, he leads captivity captive, binds and casts out the strong man armed, spoils his goods, extends the sway of his scepter of righteousness, subdues and destroys sin, and reigns lord over all the powers and faculties of the human soul, so that as sin reigned unto death, even so doth grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prophetic Telescoping in the Davidic Covenant

Certainly, everything that has been said is true: Jesus Christ is prophet, priest, and king. In Matthew 1:1, as I discussed last week, He is referred to as the Son of Abraham. This week He is called the Son of David. So how in the world is Christ the Son of David? Before answering that, look at a number of passages in the Bible. As we consider those passages, we will examine a concept known as prophetic telescoping.

Do you know what prophetic telescoping is? You know what a telescope is. You can take that telescope and look and see things way far away. You can also see things up close. You understand those things are up close, but with the telescope you can see far away. Prophetic telescoping simply means this: you see what is in front of

you, but you can also look down and see that which is not in front of you.

Before showing these passages, notice very quickly in the New Testament how Jesus Christ is called the Son of David. We will not go over all these passages, but consider several of them. In Matthew 12:23, the Bible says that all the people were amazed and said, “Is not this the son of David?” Thus Christ is referred to as the Son of David.

Look in Matthew 21:9. Again, the Bible says, “And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.” They praised our Lord as the Son of David. Then skip down to verse 15: “And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased.” Again, He is called the Son of David.

If you would turn right over to Romans 1:3, the book likewise speaks of Jesus Christ in connection with David. Romans 1:3.

And notice what the Apostle Paul says concerning Christ. Romans 1 and verse 3. Then we're going into the Old Testament. Romans 1 verse 3. The Apostle Paul says, "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." So he's not only called the son of David, he's also called the seed of David. With that in mind, I want you to see just momentarily what is known as prophetic telescoping. So I want you to go in your Bibles then to 2 Samuel chapter 7. And we're going to read several passages, 2 Samuel chapter 7, because this is the passage where God is entering into a covenant with David. This is known as the Davidic covenant. So look in 2 Samuel chapter 7. And let's begin reading there with verse 11. 2 Samuel chapter 7, verse 11. Now, please understand this. As we read this passage, you're going to see some of these references that are very obviously and clearly referring to Solomon. There are other things said in this passage that obviously and clearly refer to Jesus Christ.

They could not possibly refer to Solomon. So watch carefully. Verse 11. "And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over

my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the Lord telleth thee," speaking to David, "that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee." Notice the word seed is singular again, which Paul emphasized in Galatians 3 and verse 16 concerning Abraham, "which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom." Now, I want you to look at verse 13, "and he shall build a house. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."

Now, let me just stop right there. "And he shall build a house for my name." Let me ask you, to whom is that referring? We're going to say Solomon, right? Solomon did build the temple. But do you realize it also refers to the Lord Jesus Christ as well? If you would read, don't turn there, but if you would read Ephesians 2 verses 21 and 22, Christ has built us up into a holy temple. And then when you read 1 Peter 2 and verse 5, Christ has made us a living house. And when you get to 1 Corinthians chapter 3, he declares that we are the temple of God. So it is true that Solomon built a physical house, but Jesus Christ has built a spiritual living house.

Now look back. He says in verse 13, “and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” Whose throne is that? Is it Solomon’s? No, it is Christ’s.

Then verse 14: “and I will be his father, and he shall be my son.” This refers to Solomon and Christ. But notice the next phrase: “If he commit iniquity,”—who is he talking about? Solomon. “If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men. But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.”

Verse 16 says, “...and thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever.” With whom is he referring there? Obviously, Christ.

When you look at a passage like this, you must use prophetic telescoping: see what is immediately discussed, yet also what lies in the future, someday, sometime. Obviously, some verses refer to Solomon, while others must refer to Jesus Christ. Turn to Psalm 89. Here again, the Davidic covenant is repeated. Notice Psalm 89.

Psalm 89 makes this very clear: “I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations.” Of course, that would have to refer to Christ.

In verse 19, we see the same concept: “Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.” Does that refer not only to David, but also to Christ? I believe it is Psalm 69 where he says, “I've laid help upon one who is mighty,” referring to Christ. Thus, this would be David, and this would be Christ. “I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him.”

“The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.” That would have to be Christ. “But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.” That is Christ.

“He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.” Still, that is Christ. “Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.” Is he talking about David? Of course not; he is talking about Christ. In Colossians 1:15, Christ is called the firstborn of every creature. In Ephesians 1, God has exalted Christ and set him above every king, kingdom, and everything. This is exactly what he is talking about. “My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.”

Then he returns to David’s seed: “His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven.” That is the true seed of David, Christ. “If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my statutes,” this would refer not only to David’s children, but also to Christ’s children: “If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.”

“Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor

alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me." That is Christ. "It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." That is why the Apostle Paul says that Christ came as the seed of David. The seed of David, the true seed of David, just as the true seed of Abraham is Jesus Christ.

Christ as the True Seed of David

Psalm 132, verse 11, says, "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." I hope you are beginning to see why Matthew 1:1 opens with, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Here is the promise of God that David's seed and David's son is going to sit upon the throne. Christ, then, is the true and ultimate seed, not only of Abraham, but also of David.

Now consider the implications of this truth: Jesus Christ is the true seed of David. First, since Christ is the son of David, he is the true King and possessor of the kingdom. Do you realize that seventeen verses in the New Testament describe Jesus Christ as the son of David?

Implications: Christ as King, Conqueror, and Lord

But the question arises: How could Jesus Christ be the son of David if David lived approximately a thousand years before Jesus? The answer is that Jesus Christ, Messiah, was the fulfillment of the prophecy of the seed of David, exactly as he was the fulfillment of the prophecy of being the seed of Abraham.

Paul makes a very important statement in 2 Timothy 2:8: "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel." You and I should remember this as well: Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to Paul's gospel.

Why was Paul encouraging Timothy to remember not only that Jesus Christ was the seed of David, but also that Jesus Christ was

raised from the dead? Let us see the implication of that in Acts chapter 2.

Peter is preaching on the day of Pentecost: “Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.”

If you want to understand Psalm 89 and 2 Samuel 7, here it is: “Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.” That is Psalm 16.

Peter continues: “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”

Then he says, “For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Peter is preaching that Jesus Christ is the true son of David, the true seed of David, and that God has raised Him from the dead and exalted Him at His right hand. David himself understood this; that is why he spoke of the resurrection of Christ in Psalm 16.

What are the implications of this? Why should we remember that Jesus Christ was made of the seed of David and that God raised Him from the dead? Peter is preaching exactly that here, telling how Jesus Christ is the Son of David and how He has been raised from the dead. Now look at verse 37.

When they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Why were they pricked in their hearts? Why were they so concerned that they asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

To understand the answer, consider Luke 23:25. Jesus Christ was about to be crucified, and these people had cried out, "Crucify him,

crucify him." "And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison," Barabbas, "whom they had desired."

"But he delivered Jesus to their will." What did these people do when they had Jesus in their power? They despised Him, mocked Him, ridiculed Him, rejected Him, and crucified Him.

Now God had sovereignly, powerfully, and miraculously raised Him from the dead and set Him on the throne. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord"—Master—"and Christ"—Messiah.

When they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts and said, "Men and brethren, what must we do?" I always like to add the word "now." In other words, we've stepped into it. Look what we did to Christ. We had Him in our hands and did to Him as we willed. Now God has raised Him from the dead and put Him on the throne. Now we are in His hands, and He may do to us as He wills. They realized all of a sudden that Christ is the enthroned Son of David.

Let me make this very clear: Christ in a manger is not to be feared. Who is afraid of a baby? You know why the world goes crazy over Christmas and likes to see the little dolls in the mangers? I have never met a baby that I was afraid of. Nobody fears a baby. No one feared Christ; his enemies particularly did not fear him when he came as a lamb, when he came in a state of humiliation. They not only did not fear him, they did him as they willed. But Christ is no longer in a manger. Christ is no longer in a state of humiliation. Christ is no longer the lamb. Christ is now the lion.

He has now been exalted and raised from the dead, and he is seated at the right hand of God. He now holds everyone and everything in his hands. We are told in Colossians 1 and verse 17, “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” That is, all things have their being. No one can move or do anything apart from Christ. In Luke 1, verses 32 and 33, Mary was told concerning her baby, the Lord Jesus, “He shall be great, and shall be called the

Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Christ is not only the Son of Abraham. He is not only the Son of David. He is the Son of God.

In Matthew 22, our Lord confounded the Pharisees, those who hated him. "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions." He is not simply the son of David or the son of Abraham. He is the Son of God, and he rightly possesses the throne of David.

He is the true King. Secondly, since Christ is the Son of David, He has all authority to rule and reign. Christ is no usurper or impostor. He is the true, legitimate Son of David; therefore, He has all authority to rule and reign. In Matthew 28:18 He said, "All authority in heaven and earth is given unto Me." The word authority there means jurisdiction; it means power. All power, all jurisdiction, and all authority are given unto Me.

Christ is the true descendant of David. In Isaiah 11:1 the Bible says, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse," and Jesse was David's father, "and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." One of the names of the Messiah, one of the names of Jesus Christ in the Bible, is the Branch. Isaiah 11:10 says, "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people."

"To it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious." Romans 15, verse 12, records the apostle quoting Isaiah: "And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust." The Scripture identifies the one who shall reign over the Gentiles as the root of Jesse. There are two passages in Jeremiah that we need to see, first Jeremiah 23, verses 5 and 6, and then Jeremiah 33.

Jeremiah 23, verses 5 and 6, says: “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” So Jesus Christ is the Branch. Jesus Christ is the root and offspring of David. Jesus Christ is the Lord our righteousness.

The second passage is Jeremiah 33, beginning with verse 14: “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness. For thus saith the LORD; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.”

So Jesus Christ is not only King; He is also Prophet. He is also Priest. One last passage, a familiar passage in Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6, shows us how Jesus Christ is the true King.

The Son of David as Conqueror

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.” Note the child was born, but the son was given. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

What did God promise? He promised David a seed. He promised David a son that would sit upon his throne. And it would be an eternal throne. Nothing but justice and righteousness would come

from that throne. Jesus Christ, as the true son of David, has all authority to execute judgment and justice because he is the true son of David.

Thirdly, since Christ is the son of David, he is the conqueror and will exercise absolute dominion. Go back in your Bible to Psalm 2. I want you to see how Jesus Christ is indeed the absolute conqueror. Notice Psalm 2 beginning with verse 1. God asked this question: “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?” A useless, worthless 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.” Here are the kings and rulers of the world uniting in rebellion against Christ. “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.” Yet have I set my king, that is the Lord Jesus, 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.” Look what Christ will do.

"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." What will Christ do? Christ will break them with a rod of iron. He'll dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

In Psalm 110, David said what our Lord quoted from Matthew 22: "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."

By the way, I want you to understand that Christ is ruling. And he's ruling in the midst of his enemies. His enemies may hate him and despise him. They may not recognize him, and it may appear that they're ruling contrary to him, but he's still on the throne. He's ruling in the midst of his enemies. "Thy people shall be willing in the

day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth."

"The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." "The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head."

What is he talking about? He is talking about Christ conquering and exercising absolute dominion. Do you remember that passage in 1 Corinthians 15, verse 25? “For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.” Christ is placing all of His enemies under His feet, slowly, surely, gradually. In His time, He is placing His enemies under His feet. Six times it is spoken of in the Bible, six times that Christ must reign until all of His enemies are made His footstool.

The first one is Psalm 110 in verse 1: “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” Matthew 22:44 says, “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.” Mark 12:36 says, “For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.” Luke 20:43 says, “Till I make thine enemies thy footstool.” Acts 2:35 says, “Until I make thy foes thy footstool.” Hebrews 1:13 asks, “But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?”

Jesus Christ will conquer all of His enemies. He will defeat them and overthrow them because He is the true Son of David, and He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Since Christ is the Son of David, He will defeat and put down all other rivals.

The deliverance of the people from Egypt was typical of this truth. There were ten plagues in Egypt, and those ten plagues were against the ten false gods of Egypt. In the last plague, the firstborn were killed because Pharaoh claimed to be a god. He could not even preserve the life of his own son, and God showed the impotence of Pharaoh. God said clearly in Isaiah 42:8, “I am the LORD: that is my

name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images."

The battles of David were typical and a picture of the battles of Jesus Christ. In Psalm 18:32, David says, "It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect." David is speaking of himself here, but the greater David is here as well: "It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect. He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places. He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms."

Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.

Now watch what David says: "I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed. I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet. For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me. Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me."

"They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the LORD, but he answered them not. Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets."

Can you not see Christ as victorious over all of his enemies? In 1 Corinthians 15:24, the Bible says, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father."

"When he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

All power, all rule, and all authority is to be put down. Christ will defeat every enemy.

Now let me make some applications and tie this together. Matthew 1:1 begins, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Why does the New Testament begin by calling Jesus Christ the son of David and the son of Abraham? Because the very first verse teaches us that God is faithful to His promises and that God will make good every word that He has spoken.

Applications: God's Faithfulness and Our Inheritance

You and I, over time, tend to forget. God never forgets. The promises that He gave to Abraham are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The promises that He gave to David are fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Here is the second application: Christ will conquer every man and every enemy, either in grace and mercy or in wrath and vengeance. Everyone eventually will acknowledge the lordship and kingship of Jesus Christ. You remember that passage in Philippians 2, beginning in verse 8: “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Even those who are lost, even those who are enemies, will one day be forced to bow the knee and acknowledge the lordship, kingship, and deity of Jesus Christ. They will not be saved, but they will acknowledge it because Jesus Christ is Lord.

The last application is this: Christians are the true Israel of God. We are not to look to nations or lineal descent, but to Christ, because the Bible says in Galatians 3:29, “And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” When we say that Christians are the true Israel of God, we must understand that we are the only ones who have the true prophet, priest, and king. We have inherited all the promises of Abraham through Christ, and we have also inherited the throne of David through Christ.

For Israel to be Israel, they need some things. What do they need? They need a sacrifice. They need an altar.

They need a priest. They need a temple. What do we as Christians have? Well, let us see. We have a sacrifice. First Corinthians 5:7 says, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." We have an altar. Hebrews 13:10 says, "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." Jesus Christ is our altar. We have a priest. We do not have merely a priest; we have the great high priest. Hebrews chapter 4 teaches this. We do not have the priest in the ordinary sense. Christ is our temple.

You know what He said? "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Moreover, the Bible says in Revelation 21 and verse 22, speaking of the eternal state, "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." We are the only ones who have the sacrifice, the altar, the priest, and the temple.

The two passages that show what God is doing are Amos 9 and Acts 15. Amos 9, verse 11, gives this promise: "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen."

How is God going to do that? In Acts chapter 15, we have the council of Jerusalem. Paul had been going to the Gentiles, and Peter had been going to the Jews. A council was held because some of the Judaizers wanted to make the Gentiles be circumcised. The Bible says, "Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. And after they had held their peace, James," who is the leader of the church at Jerusalem, "James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon," that is Simon Peter, "hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name."

“And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set

it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."

When all these people began to be converted, the ethnos, the nations, what did James say? "To this agree the prophets." How did God rebuild the tabernacle of David? Through Christ, the true seed of David, the true son of David, who now rules and reigns on the throne of David. Do you realize in Jesus Christ are all the promises? In Jesus Christ is all authority, jurisdiction and power in heaven and earth.

No wonder He is called King of kings and Lord of lords. Because Jesus is not only the true Son of Abraham, He is the true Son of David. Everything that was promised to these men, we as Christians now have in Jesus Christ, the Son of David and the Son of Abraham. He is our all in all.

Father, we bow to Thee this day. We thank You for Your love, Your grace, Jesus Christ, and His so great salvation. We acknowledge that He is the Son of Abraham, the Son of David, and the Son of God. He is the true heir of all the promises and the true heir of the throne. We bow before Him and acknowledge that in Him we live and move and have our being, and by Him all things consist. Make us truly thankful for our Lord Jesus Christ and all that we have in Him. In Christ's name we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 8

Judgment and Redemption

Isaiah 1:21–31: “How is the faithful city become a harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves. Every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come before them. Therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: and I will turn my hand upon thee, purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning. Afterwards thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness. And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed. For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen. For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water. And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker thereof as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.”

When you talk about judgment and redemption, the average Christian does not associate judgment and redemption. We either think of judgment or we think of redemption, but usually we do not think of them together. Usually, when redemption is mentioned, someone merely thinks of an item that has been pawned and then purchased back. When you go to the pawn shop, the item is pawned, money is borrowed, and later the money is brought back plus interest and the item is redeemed.

Introduction: The Uncommon Pairing of Judgment and Redemption

There was no judgment involved, with the exception of the interest, sometimes exorbitant; everything was restored as it had been previously. But when the Bible speaks about judgment and redemption, it speaks in different language. Biblically speaking, judgment and redemption go together. In fact, it is almost impossible to have one without the other. The Bible says in verse 27, and this is the text, “Zion shall be redeemed with judgment.”

The word redeemed in our text is the Hebrew word padah, which literally means to redeem, to ransom, to rescue, and to deliver. It is translated as redeem forty-eight times in our Bibles, as well as being translated as deliver, ransom, and rescue. The word redeemed, or the Hebrew word padah, is used in two senses in Scripture.

The Meaning of Redemption (Padah)

It always carries the idea of deliverance from captivity, danger, punishment, slavery, and sin. Sometimes this word refers to what we would call a delivery or rescue without a ransom being involved. Secondly, it is often used where there is a rescue or deliverance and a ransom price is paid. Let me give you the two illustrations, first where it is used and simply translated as delivered.

In Genesis chapter 14, Abraham rescued his nephew Lot. After the rescue, the Bible says, beginning with verse 18, “And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy

hand. And he gave him tithes of all." In this instance, the Hebrew word padah is translated simply as delivered. Then, in Genesis chapter 37 and verse 21, Joseph has been taken and cast into a pit, and his brothers are considering murdering him.

Reuben wanted to deliver Joseph. Genesis 37:21 says, "And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him." The word delivered is the same Hebrew word, padah. In each instance, it is rightly translated as delivered because no ransom was paid. Abraham destroyed his enemies without a ransom price, and Reuben delivered Joseph without one.

In Hosea, however, the word is used with a ransom price. In Hosea 1:2-3, God instructs Hosea to marry an impure woman. He commands this, first, to show what Israel had done to God and, second, to show the great love that God still had for His people. Hosea 1:2 says, "The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea. And the Lord said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord. So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son." As you read on, you find that Hosea and Gomer had several children. But in Hosea 3, Gomer has left him and committed adultery.

She ends up in the slave market, and Hosea goes and buys her back, or redeems her. Hosea 3:1-2 says, "Then said the Lord unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the Lord toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine. So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley."

"And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee." So you might as well say it very plainly: Gomer was redeemed. She was bought back out of the slave market. Here is a picture of redemption where a price is paid. We normally would not concede a judgment in this instance unless it was upon the one who did the purchasing, because obviously it cost Hosea something.

Many of you know that William Booth was the founder of the Salvation Army. What you probably do not know is that William Booth and his wife also purchased people who were being sold as slaves; they redeemed them in order that they might free them. Incidentally, the same practice is being carried on even today. There are people being sold into slavery in multiple lands, and people are being redeemed out of slavery. If you want to examine this idea, go to the internet and type in “modern-day slavery and redemption.” You will be surprised at how many people are still buying other people back out of slavery. Numerous sites appear on the subject.

In the text before us in Isaiah chapter 1, redemption is being accomplished upon a people who had previously been redeemed. These people are the Judahites, the people of Judea, the southern kingdom. Isaiah 1:1 identifies them: “The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.”

The Context: Judah's Rebellion and Corruption

We are talking about the Judahites, the southern kingdom. These are part of the Israelites who had been delivered out of Egypt, and now they are going to be redeemed again.

Verses 2 through 15 give an overview of the situation. You must understand this overview in order to see the truth enunciated shortly in verse 27. God describes Judah and Jerusalem as rebellious children: “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.” Judah and Jerusalem are called rebellious children.

In fact, their sin had basically made them dumber than an animal. The Bible says, “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.” They did not know which side their bread was buttered upon, or who buttered that bread. They were as ignorant as they could be.

Verse 4 identifies Judah and Jerusalem for what they actually were: “Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord,

they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward." It reminds you of what is going on in America today and how it could aptly describe us as well.

Verse 5 reveals another truth: these people would not receive correction or chastisement. "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." Verse 6 shows how absolutely perverted, depraved, and debauched they were as a nation: "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."

Verses 7 and 8 show the result of that sin, rebellion, and depravity upon a nation, society, and culture: "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers." That is us. "And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city." There is only a little space; everything else is besieged and basically destroyed.

To show the absolute extent of the corruption, Isaiah says, "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." God would have been just to destroy all of us, but He did leave a remnant. Addressing Judah and Jerusalem, He says, "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah." They were totally corrupt, and God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

SCRIPTURE READING - Isaiah 1:11-20 (KJV)

> These people, although they were the enemies of God, sinful and wicked and rebellious, still continued to observe the ceremonies and sacrifices which God would not acknowledge or accept.
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> "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no

> more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood."
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> Did not God appoint those feasts and solemn days and the new moons and the Sabbaths? Of course He did. But these people had turned all of these things into ceremonies and rituals, and their lives were absolutely opposite of what God demanded. And God said, "I'm not going to have that."

God's Call to Reason and the Depths of Depravity

> God now tries to reason with an unreasonable people: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well. Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

He asked the people to reason with him. Looking back at verse 5, he asks, "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." Usually, a people who ignore the rod will not listen to reason, logic, or argument. He says, "I've tried the rod. That didn't work. I'll try reasoning. It won't work either, probably."

"But if you're willing and obedient, you shall eat of the good of the land. If you refuse and rebel, you'll die." It is just that simple.

To show the depths of how far Judah and Jerusalem had fallen, look at verse 21: "How is the faithful city become a harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers."

Jerusalem was once faithful, pure, righteous, and obedient. Now God says it is a harlot. It is full of injustice, murder, fraud, deceit, graft, materialism, unconcern, and lack of compassion.

The poor, the widow, the fatherless, and the homeless did not matter to these people. Their attitude was like that of individuals who say, “I'm looking out for number one. It doesn't really bother me about all these other people. I'm just looking out for myself.” Thus God calls Jerusalem a harlot, saying they are full of injustice, unrighteousness, and murder. That pretty well sums up Chicago and Washington, D.C., as well as many other states.

Undoubtedly, some righteous people remained in Judah and Jerusalem. God always has a remnant. Remember the days of Elijah? When Elijah said, “they've torn down thine altars, and they've destroyed your prophets,” God told him, “I've got 7,000 that have never bowed the knee to Baal.” Those 7,000 were scattered throughout Israel. Even Elijah thought there were none. What are 7,000 compared to an entire nation? Yet there was a remnant, a small group who still believed. Even in Ezekiel's day, according to Ezekiel chapter 9 and verse 4, some still sighed and cried for the abomination of Jerusalem.

Historical Precedents: Judgment Instead of Revival

But here is an observation I want you to follow in light of what Scripture shows us. In Elijah’s time, God did not send a revival; He sent judgment. He sent a drought, a famine, and death. In Ezekiel’s time, God did not send a revival; He sent the Babylonian army, famine, death, and captivity. In each of these instances, God sent judgment.

Judgment as the Means of Redemption and Righteousness

Now look at verse 27: “Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.” Zion shall be redeemed with judgment. Do you realize that we are not going to escape the consequences of our sins? We are not going to escape the consequences of our sins. God may deliver us, but it may be through judgment. Moreover, if you look at verse 27, he says, “Zion shall be

redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." In other words, those who turn to the Lord, or those who are spared, will be made absolutely righteous. That is, they will walk in obedience according to God and His law; they will walk according to His Word.

Notice that he keeps saying, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." In other words, there will be some who are made righteous. This means that some will be made righteous, while others will not. Isaiah explains this in chapter 26. Keep Isaiah 1 in view, but look in Isaiah 26, beginning with verse 8 and continuing through verse 12. Look what Isaiah writes.

"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." Why are they desiring His name and desiring to remember Him? Because of His judgments. "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." Not all of them, but some are going to learn righteousness. Yet verse 10 says, "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." Isaiah 26:9 says, "For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." What inhabitants? He is not talking about the wicked, because verse 10 says, "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."

God's Easing of Himself by Destroying His Enemies

Some will learn righteousness. But what will happen to those who will not learn righteousness, obey, or walk according to the Word of God? Look at Isaiah 1:24: "Therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of

hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies."

Who are His enemies and adversaries? We are not talking about pagan people or the heathen. We are talking about Judah and Jerusalem—His professing people, a people who claimed to be in covenant with Him, though they were not in reality. That is why He rejected all their worship and would receive none of their oblations or sacrifices: they were absolutely wicked and contrary to Him. God says that these adversaries and enemies are people in His own nation, in His own group.

Isaiah 1 shows how pained and grieved God was because of their sins and rebellion. His patience had been put to the utmost trial, and now God says, “I'm going to ease Myself. I'm going to take care of this. I'm going to destroy My enemies.”

In Ezekiel 5:13, God gives a similar expression concerning judgment upon the people: “Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the Lord have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.” How was God comforted by accomplishing His fury upon people who were so wicked and depraved? Moses gave us this same truth in Deuteronomy 28:63: “As the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you,” if you disobey Him.

God calls it an easement when He destroys His enemy, a comfort when He destroys His enemy, and a rejoicing when He destroys His enemies. Those enemies happen to be His own people. Isaiah 63:9-10 says, “In all their affliction he was afflicted. And the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.” We are talking about Israel—the people He brought out of the land, who rebelled against Him. Now He has turned to be their enemy and is fighting against them.

Purification and Restoration Through Judgment

That is why Isaiah 1:24 says, “Therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies,” who happen to be in His own land. How will God do that? He says, “and I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin.”

When He says, “I will turn my hand,” or “I will stretch out my hand,” understand that the turning or outstretching of the hand can be for affliction and punishment, or for deliverance and salvation. I can stretch out my hand and hurt you, or I can stretch out my hand, take your hand, and help deliver you. So which is it?

The answer is, it is both. God is going to turn His hand against His enemies, and at the same time, He is going to save His people. The adversaries here were His own professing people. Have you ever stopped to think about this? It is kind of like America. We, in this day and time, have betrayed our founding fathers and the principles upon which they built this nation. We have also turned our backs upon and betrayed the God who gave us this nation.

And what did Judah and Jerusalem do? They betrayed the founding principles, and they also betrayed the God who gave them that nation.

God says, “I’m going to straighten things out.” When He says in verse 25, “And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross,” the verse refers to the process of smelting, or purifying metals in the fire. It means that God would remove all the dross—all the sin and filth that had accumulated. Look back in verse 22: “Thy silver is become dross.”

In other words, there is no purity. It is adulterated, watered down, weakened, and not what it was supposed to be. Smelting is commonly done by fire. The idea God presents in verse 25 is that He would render His own people pure by those judgments that would destroy His enemies intermingled with His people.

He said in verse 25, “and I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin.” John Trapp,

the old Puritan, rightly said that the tin compares to their hypocrisy: “Thine hypocrisy, for tin hath a show of silver,” that is, it looks like it; it is the same color, “but it is not so. Nay, it is a deadly enemy to gold and silver, saith one, making them hard and brittle.”

"It is also a tyrant over them, and will hardly be separated from them. Hereby I figure your most noted, rooted, and inveterate sins." Thus God says that the heat and fire of His judgments will purify and purge us from this dross. When God restores, rejuvenates, and revives us, removing the impurities that would destroy us, at the same time He destroys His enemies and gives us what we need.

Look in verse 26. He says, "And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city." Why do we need new judges and counsellors?

Look back at verse 23: "Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards." That almost sounds like Congress, doesn't it? "They judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them." They are not interested in justice, but in perpetuating themselves, their own party, and their own plans. You need new counsellors and new judges; that is for sure.

I do not think the average Christian has ever truly perceived, understood, and comprehended the influence of wicked, ungodly, reprobate rulers. By the same token, most Christians have never truly comprehended the influence of godly, righteous rulers. We have not had one in so long that we would probably have difficulty recognizing one when we saw one.

When you read through the Bible, take note of this fact: every major idolatry in the Bible was begun by a wicked civil ruler—Jeroboam, Manasseh, even Solomon. You say Solomon was a good man. He was, until you reach 1 Kings chapter 11; then he introduced Baal worship, Moloch worship, and all this into the children of Israel.

Built altars for Asherah for all of his strange gods and his strange wives. Every major revival in the Bible took place under a godly ruler—Josiah, Hezekiah, or Uzziah. The point is that we have not

really comprehended how wicked rulers influence the people and how godly rulers influence the people. This is why God says, “I’m going to restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning.”

The Necessity of Destroying the Wicked for the Righteous to Flourish

The destruction of the wicked is needed and necessary for the establishment of the righteous. Look in verse 27 through verse 31. He says, “Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.” What is going to happen when Zion is redeemed with judgments and her converts with righteousness? “And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together.” In other words, it is going to happen at the same time. “And they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed. And they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired,” which is idolatry, “and ye shall be confounded for the gardens,” also idolatry, “that ye have chosen.”

“For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth,” dead, “and as a garden that hath no water,” dead. “And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.” What is God saying? When He redeems Zion with judgments and converts with righteousness, He is going to destroy the wicked. The destruction of the transgressors and sinners is not postponed to some unrelated time; it is together with the redemption of Zion and the righteousness of her converts.

The question has to be asked: Is this just something that Isaiah came up with, or is this clearly taught in the Bible? The answer is that it is taught over and over and over in the Bible, because idolatry, sin, wickedness, and rebellion must be dealt with. They must be rooted out and destroyed. In Jeremiah chapter 1, God calls Jeremiah to be a prophet and says, “See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.” He has to do three times as much destroying as he does building and planting. You can’t build and plant

A bad foundation or bad soil has to be torn down. With that in mind, consider what Scripture says concerning the wicked. It does not matter whether we are speaking of the heathen, the pagan, the religious wicked, or the hypocritical wicked. Psalm 34:21 says, “Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.” Evil shall slay the wicked, and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

Psalm 37:10-11 says, “For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” The meek, especially as the word is used in the New Testament, do not mean a wimp. The word meek does not refer to someone who lets others use him as a foot mat and wipe their feet all over him. The meek are not a ninety-pound weakling. The word meek refers to those who are broken to yoke, those who have been submitted and are in submission to God, obeying Him and following His law. The wicked are going to be destroyed, but the meek—that is, those who have been broken to yoke—will inherit the earth.

Psalm 37:17 says, “the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the righteous.” Your arms speak of your power and your ability. God says, “I am going to break their power; I am going to break their arms,” but the Lord will uphold the righteous. Verse 20 says, “but the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.”

Verse 28 says, “For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.” Verse 38 says, “But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.” I could multiply Scriptures, but the idea is clear. Psalm 92:7 says, “When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish;”

“It is that they shall be destroyed for ever.” God says they spring up, they flourish, just to be cut down. When you look at Isaiah chapter 1, and God says in verse 27, “Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.”

You are going to hear people say something like this: “I don't like to hear about judgment. I don't like that idea. I don't like to talk about that,” even Christian people. It is like that is a big no-no. Some try to be very pious and say, “I just want the Lord to come back, and that'll take care of it.” Really? That is true. But look at what will happen when our Lord returns. I want you to turn in your Bibles to 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, and let me show you what is going to happen when our Lord does return. When you say, “I'm just waiting for the Lord,” or, “I want the Lord to come back,” He is going to take care of this. That is true. He shall, but look what is going to happen. Paul writes, “unto you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”

What is our Lord going to do when He returns? He is going to come back in judgment. He is going to destroy the wicked. You cannot have judgment without redemption or redemption without judgment. When He destroys the wicked, it is the redemption of His people. Judgment and redemption go together. You cannot have one without the other.

The Cross: The Ultimate Proof of Redemption Through Judgment

Stop and think about this. When God delivered Noah and his family, He judged and destroyed the old world. When God delivered the Israelites from bondage, He judged and destroyed Egypt. When God delivered the land of Canaan into the hands of the Israelites, He judged and destroyed the Canaanites.

The greatest proof of this truth is found in the Lord Jesus Christ. When God the Father delivered us from our sins, when He redeemed us, it was because His judgment fell upon His Son, who is our surety, our substitute, and our sacrifice. Let me show you. Look in your

Bibles, if you would, first of all, to 1 Peter chapter 1. Let us begin reading there with verse 18. Look what he says.

Peter says, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.” Note that we were redeemed not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Romans 3:24-26 says, “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, 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.” The word propitiation literally means to appease, to placate, to satisfy. Jesus Christ, as our sacrifice, appeased, placated, and satisfied the holiness, righteousness, and justice of God, because God's wrath fell upon Him instead of falling upon us.

When we were redeemed, it was through judgment. You cannot have redemption without judgment. Second Corinthians 5:21 says, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” We were made righteous because He was judged in our stead. We were redeemed through judgment.

I believe that when God graciously turns Himself to us and turns us to Himself, it will be through judgment. He says, “Zion shall be redeemed through judgment.”

Applications: Judgment as Friend, Holiness, and Righteous Prayer

Now, let me make some applications, and I want you to listen to this first one very closely: Judgment is not our enemy. It is our friend. It is by means of judgment that the wicked are purged, and it is by

means of judgment that we are refined. You know what David said in Psalm 119, verse 67. Listen.

He said, “Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.” Before I was afflicted, I went astray. In other words, Lord, you whipped me and I learned something. We can identify with this, especially the older ones, because when we were children and did wrong, our dad wore us out. We learned that when he spoke, we obeyed, and when he told us not to do something, we had better not do it. David said, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted” (Psalm 119:71), “that I might learn thy statutes.” He said, You whipped me really good, and I learned your statutes. I learned to walk.

You can tell someone something, and they can sit there, shake their head, and say, “Yes, I understand. I grasp it.” Then they go away and forget it. But when you let them learn the hard way through experience, and it costs them in some measure or in some way, they never forget it.

Judgment is not our enemy. Judgment is our friend. Secondly, if you understand that God uses judgment in reviving and restoring His people, it should make us live more holily and righteously. If I know that God uses judgment, I do not want to be judged. I do not want to do anything that will bring His wrath or anger upon me. I do not want His rod across my back. In other words, we said it like this when we were children: We do not want another whipping.

When you study Hebrews chapter 12, the Bible tells us that “he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” If you endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. God's judgments, chastisements, and whippings always work. We do not want any of them; we simply need to learn to do what is right, obey, and please our heavenly Father.

If we understand this principle, it should make us more holy and more godly. It is a righteous and holy prayer to pray for the destruction of God's enemies and the elevation of God's people. Here is a Scripture I usually pray every day, Psalm 7:9: “Oh let the

wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins." Stop and think about it: "Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end." God, stop it. Judge it. Destroy it. Let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish thou the righteous. Jesus Christ is called the Righteous One.

I certainly want to see His throne established. I want to see His kingdom established. I want to see His people established. So it's a righteous thing to pray: Let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish thou the just. And usually God will do so through judgment, because redemption and judgment go together. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment. When God's judgments are in the earth, the righteous will learn and pay attention and become more righteous and more obedient.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Your Word, truth, and righteousness, Lord, and the fact that You judge us and others. And we pray that You would help us to be more holy and godly. We pray, as You have taught us in Your Word, O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish thou the just. For the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins. We ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER 9

God's Law As The Standard and Teacher of God's Social Order

The Law as Restitution

SCRIPTURE READING - Exodus 22:1-17 (KJV)

Introduction: The Necessity of God's Law

"If a man shall steal an ox or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep."

"If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him, for he should make full restitution. If he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox or ass or sheep, he shall restore double. If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field, of the best of his own field and of the best of his own vineyard shall he make restitution. If

> fire break out and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn or the standing corn of the field be consumed therewith, he that kindle the fire shall surely make restitution. If a man shall deliver unto his neighbor money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house, if the thief be found, let him pay double."
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> "If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges, to see whether he have put his hand into his neighbor's goods. For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges, and whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbor. If a man deliver unto his neighbor an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast to keep, and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it, then shall an oath of the Lord be between them both, that he had not put his hand into his neighbor's goods,"

"And the owner of it shall accept thereof, he shall not make it good. And if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. If it be torn in pieces, then let him bring it for a witness, and he shall not make good that which was torn. And if a man borrow it out of his neighbor, and it be hurt or die, the owner thereof being not with it, he shall surely make it good. But if the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good, for if it be a hired thing, it came for its hire. If a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. If her father utterly refused to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins."

John Wycliffe wrote in his English Bible, "This Bible is for the government of the people, by the people, and for the people." God is one and His law is one, and it is important to note that, according to the Bible, law is revelation. In fact, the Hebrew word for law is Torah, and Torah means instruction or authoritative direction. The law is nothing less than the revelation of God and His righteousness. There is absolutely no ground in Scripture for despising God's law. So many people try to relegate law to the Old Testament and grace to the New Testament.

But Genesis chapter 6 tells us that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. When you get to Ephesians chapter 6, it says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor thy father and thy mother, for this is the first commandment with promise." Thus, you find grace in the Old Testament and law in the New Testament as well. When you stop and think about God's law, the only alternative to God's law is man's law.

The issue comes down to this: it is either theonomy or autonomy. In Genesis chapter 3, that was the actual temptation: "You shall become as God's knowing or determining good and evil," or you do not need God. You can make up your own law as you go. Whenever you deny God's law, inevitably you will install your law, or at least someone's law. The Bible says in Judges chapter 17 and verse 6, as well as in Judges 21 and verse 25, "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

Years ago, I was in a motel somewhere with the television on. I despise those stupid talk shows, especially the ones that are merely trying to raise people's attention. I was flipping through, trying to find some news, when I saw a man interviewing a young woman who was already a movie star. She was living with a married man.

I stopped when I heard that. The host asked her, "Do you not think that is wrong?" Her answer was classic. She said, and I quote in verbatim, "It may be wrong for other people, but it's all right for me." What did she just say? "I'm a law to myself. I make up my own rules. I make up my own law." Anytime you deny the validity of God's law, it is merely so that you may establish your law, or at least someone's law, and it will be an alien law system.

The Religious Nature of All Law

You must have law. Every individual has to have law. Every family has to have law. Every society and every nation has to have law. It is impossible to exist without law, because without law all you have is anarchy, confusion, chaos, and destruction. The question is not whether you will have a law system. The question is, whose law system will you have? And with whose law system will you be in submission?

Law, of course, is very obviously and inescapably religious. Every law that is passed is a religious law, including laws passed by Washington, D.C., Montgomery, Alabama, or Atlanta, Georgia. You say, "But they say they're not." I understand that. But behind every law is a determination of right and wrong, good and evil. Your determination of right and wrong, good and evil, rests upon your theology or your religion.

You cannot have a law that is not religious. It may not necessarily be a Christian law, but it is still a religious law. The source of your law is basically your own God. If you think your reason is always right, your reason becomes your God. If you think the Supreme Court is always right, the Supreme Court is your God. Modern humanism always locates religion in the state, because it makes the state God.

I want you to listen to these quotes. The last one may shock you; the first three or four will not. Hegel said, “The state incarnates the divine idea upon earth.” Wow! The state incarnates the divine idea upon earth. In other words, the state is God walking on earth. That is what he is saying. Nietzsche said, “The state is the supreme power, ultimate, and beyond repeal, absolutely independent.” So what he is saying is that the state is God. Benito Mussolini said, “Everything for the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state.” How about this one, Hitler? “The state dominates the nation because it alone represents the nation.” Each one of these quotes demonstrates the fact that the state is claimed to be God. Now we should listen to this one.

Here is another quote: “The state embraces everything and nothing has value outside the state. The state creates right.” Franklin Delano Roosevelt said that. Do you want to know why abortion is legal, or at least it was and still is in a number of states? Because they said the state said it is right. Why is Sodom and Gomorrah protected? Because the state says it is right. Why is transgenderism being pushed? Because the state says it is right. Why is theft protected and pushed? Because the state says taxation is legal, whether you like it or not and whether you agree with it or not. In other words, the state basically creates right; that is what it amounts to.

What I want you to see is this: anytime you deny the validity of God's law, you are always going to substitute man's law in some shape, form, or fashion. I will give you four ideas concerning law. I will tell you up front, I cannot give you any Scripture for the first three, except Scriptures against them, because the first three are unbiblical. They are totally humanistic. Only the last one is biblical: law as reformation, law as regulation, law as redistribution, and law as restitution.

Unbiblical Views of Law: Reformation, Regulation, Redistribution

Think with me about law as reformation. That is basically humanistic. When you talk about law as reformation, that is where man attempts to do that which God Himself does not do and would not allow. The idea of law as reformation simply means this: salvation by law.

That is where we get our rehabilitation centers from. That is also where we get our reformatories from. So, law then is viewed then as something that rehabilitates and reforms. I get so tickled often times when I travel. I see these buses beside the road and it has Department of Corrections, Indiana Department of Corrections, Alabama Department of Corrections. And when I'm able to stop, I'll ask one of the officers there who's guarding. I'd say, "I need to ask you a question. What is it?"

"How many of these men are you really correcting?" And the truth of the matter is, absolutely none. You see, salvation is not by law. Even God's law was not intended to save. It is true that God's law will indeed restrain, direct, and convict and condemn, but it could not give life. The Bible says in the book of Galatians chapter 3 and verse 21, "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid! For if there had been a law which could have given life, then verily righteousness should have been by the law."

Where in the world did we get all these reformatories? Where did we get all these rehabilitation centers? Where did we get our penitentiaries from? Our prison system? Would you believe that William Penn, who lived from 1644 to 1718, the English Quaker, and the founder of Pennsylvania, William Penn and his Quaker friends

began what are known as our penitentiaries today, basically our prison system and our reformatories. Why?

Because the Quakers believed that every man had a little spark of divinity. Every man had an inner light. Every man had something good on the inside of him. And basically, all he needed was to have that little light and that little flame stirred up, and then it would just blaze up into roaring goodness and kindness. The word penitentiary actually comes from the word penitence, which means the state of being penitent, regret for wrongdoing, sinning. It means contrition and repentance. Now, when you think of a penitentiary, here's what I want you to think about: a monastery. You say, "What does a penitentiary and a monastery have in common?" Well, you remember monks live in a monastery. Every monk has his own little room, which is referred to as what? His cell. And then you had a number of those little rooms in a row, and now you have a cell block. And what did those runes do when those monks were there?

They were there meditating, doing penance, thinking about their sins, how to reform themselves, and how to become better monks. The idea was that if criminals could be taken, placed by themselves in little cells, and left to meditate, reforms would be made in their lives; they would be rehabilitated. The only problem is that it simply does not work.

Ask any warden, correctional officer, or even a criminal, and you will find that criminals thrown into prison actually come out better prisoners and better criminals than when they went in, because they have learned from the other inmates. Thus, law as reformation is totally and completely humanistic and ineffectual.

Secondly, there is law as regulation, which is also humanistic. Law by regulation tries to make it impossible for men to sin by controlling them and their activities, literally regulating them to death. Regulation seeks to ensure that businessmen do not cheat, swindle, steal, or lie.

How do they do that? By regulation, that is how. All these regulatory agencies, such as OSHA, HEW, the IRS, and all these people, check on you and make sure that businesses are regulated and running according to the way the government says they should

be running. A Latin saying has been around for years: caveat emptor. Let the buyer beware.

In other words, what we have today is not basically what you and I would call free trade. What we have is not just supply and demand, but people who are so regulated that they can stay in business as long as they follow the regulations, whether crooks or not. But if the government were not involved, and if Brother MacDonald were a businessman and everybody in this church went to Brother MacDonald and did business with him, and he began to cheat everyone, let me ask you a question: Once you found out that you were being cheated, would you go back to see Brother McDonald in his store? Of course not. He would go out of business. But as long as he follows the regulations, does what he is told, and is a good little boy, the government will subsidize him and keep him in business—with taxpayer money, of course.

That is simply law as regulation. Regulations are highly unworkable. For instance, in the 1930s, you could walk down the street with a fifth of liquor sticking out of your hip pocket, flipping a gold coin, and a cop would stop you and arrest you. Why? It was illegal to have that alcohol in your back pocket. In the 1970s, you could walk down the street with that fifth of whiskey in your hip pocket, flipping that golden coin, and a cop would stop you and arrest you. Why? It was unlawful to have gold. You could have alcohol, but you could not have gold at that particular time.

This is regulation: they simply try to regulate people to death. We have the old saying, “Ignorance is no excuse of the law.” That used to be true because the Bible was our law book. Everyone had a Bible, knew how to read it, and knew the law of God; therefore, ignorance was no excuse of the law.

Originally, when judges walked into the courtroom, they carried an open Bible, and men stood out of respect for the Bible. When they kicked the Bible out, judges wanted people to stand out of respect for them instead of the Word of God. It was no excuse of the law when we had biblical law because everybody understood the law. But today it is an excuse.

How many of you read the Federal Register every day or every week? Do you realize that it contains over 60 volumes of laws and regulations? Sixty volumes! Each of us violates the law every single day because we do not know those laws. I am simply pointing out the fact that ignorance is an excuse, because today we have humanistic law.

I am probably not pronouncing his name correctly, but he was the Russian. His last name was Beria. He was the most ruthless and long-serving secret police chief under Joseph Stalin in Russia. He bragged that he could prove criminal conduct on anyone, even the innocent. His saying was, "Show me the man and I'll show you the crime." And that is basically true today, because we violate so many laws we do not even know about.

Have any of you ever crossed the gore? You do not even know what that is, do you? One of my men years ago got a ticket from a cop because he crossed the gore. The gore was the yellow lines—the little yellow lines before you actually get to the place where you are to turn. He ran on the yellow; that is the gore. Law is regulation. Totally, completely unbiblical. Here is a third one, and that is law as redistribution.

It is humanistic at its core. Most of you, or at least those of you who are older, have read about the Russian Revolution back in 1917. You remember how the Bolsheviks were going to take everything away from the Tsar and the elites and distribute all that land and money to the peasants. How much land did the peasants get? None. How much money did they get? None.

It is just like the radical Republicans promising the blacks after the war 40 acres and a mule. How many got 40 acres and a mule? None. There was redistribution in Russia, but it was not to the peasants. There was redistribution during Reconstruction times, but it was not to the blacks and it was not to the poor whites. It was to the carpetbaggers and scalawags.

Now, stop and think of the plunder that goes on in America today under the law as redistribution. Do you remember all that COVID relief money? Where did it go? Who got all that money? There were billions. Did you realize there are trillions of dollars missing today?

Trillions. Why do all the banks get bailed out when little T-90 business people do not get bailed out? And how is it that there are some companies that are too big to fail? So they always get more money than they particularly need. How does that go?

Now, you know the distinction, I hope you do, between legal plunder and illegal plunder. Everybody understands illegal plunder. So, if I went back to Brother Tim, and I pulled out my pistol and I stuck it between his eyes and I said, "Give me all your money or else," I'd get his money. Or, I'd get shot if he had a gun and could whip me, beat me. If I did get away and he recognized me, knew me, I'd finally pretty well end up in prison. Hmm. Wow. That's illegal plunder. But what is legal plunder? That is when I come to Tim and I pass the law or I've gotten it passed or I've got the authority and I say, "You give me this money or else you're going to jail." Now there's a book in the back.

If you've never read it, I would encourage you to read it. It is titled The Law by Frédéric Bastiat, a Frenchman. I want to read to you his definition of legal plunder and what he says. Listen very carefully. Here's how to identify legal plunder. "But how is this legal plunder to be identified? Quite simply, see if the law takes from some persons what belongs to them and gives it to other persons to whom it does not belong." Wow. "See if the law benefits one citizen at the expense of another by doing what the citizen himself cannot do without committing a crime." He went on to say, "Now legal plunder can be committed in an infinite number of ways." Think about this.

"Thus we have an infinite number of plans for organizing it: tariffs, protection, benefits, subsidies, encouragements, progressive taxation, public schools, guaranteed jobs, guaranteed profits, minimum wages." This is written in France. "Minimum wages, a right to relief, a right to the tools of labor, free credit, and so on and so on. All these plans as a whole, with their common aim of legal plunder, constitute socialism."

Government education is socialism. Why? Should I pay for someone else's education when I do not even know them, and when they are educating them in a way that I totally disagree with? That is legal plunder. If you do not submit to legal plunder, they come and steal your property.

"This question of legal plunder must be settled once and for all, and there are only three ways to settle it. Number one, the few plunder the many. Number two, everybody plunders everybody. Or number three, nobody plunders anybody." He says, "We must make our choice among the limited plunder, universal plunder, or no plunder. The law can only follow only one of these three. No legal plunder."

"This is the principle of justice, peace, order, stability, harmony, and logic. Until the day of my death, I shall proclaim this principle with all the force of my lungs, which, alas, is all too inadequate."

Think for a moment of all of the unbiblical and unnecessary taxes placed upon you and I that the government really does not need. The reason they are placed upon us is basically to drain off the excess Federal Reserve notes that keep the system from imploding.

It is simply redistribution. When you think about the income tax, the inheritance tax, the property tax, and a host of other taxes, they are all designed to take from some and give to someone else. It is legal plunder. In Exodus chapter 30, verses 11 through 16, when it came to supporting justice, God said it was a half shekel: “The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less.” Why? Because everyone has an equal interest in justice. But when you believe the law is redistribution, you are willing to take from everybody and give to those who do not deserve it. Inflation is another tax. It is a secret tax. You do not see it, but it is there.

I really enjoy telling people about my wife and me when we first got married. Lord willing, if we live until January, we will have been married sixty years. I remember giving her ten dollars a week to buy groceries for us, and I would fuss at her a little if she did not bring two or three dollars back. She would buy milk, bread, meat, vegetables, fruit—everything for the two of us to live on for a week—for six or seven dollars. Unbelievable. The first house we bought had a double lot, real hardwood floors, and real pine paneling in the den. It was a two-bedroom house in a beautiful section of town.

It cost me $10,000. My house payment, along with my insurance, was $73 a month. I’ll guarantee you that the house I paid $10,000

for in the 1960s could not be bought today, even though it is much older, for less than $100,000 to $150,000, since it is in a nice section of town. I'm just saying that's inflation.

One of my favorite stories concerns Henry VIII's nickname, "Old Copper Nose." He would take a copper coin, put silver plating on it, and try to pass it off as a silver coin. People would keep it in their pockets, handling it as they pulled it out. His etching was on the coin, and their thumbs would always hit where his nose was. The copper would show through, and thus he was called Old Copper Nose. That's inflation. I'm trying to show you laws of redistribution.

Here is the greatest illustration that I can think of. Years ago, my father was talking with a black man who had worked for him briefly. The man said, "Mr. Weaver, I think they ought to take all the money in the world and divide it equally among everybody. Then everyone would have an equal amount of money."

My father replied, "That wouldn't work."

"Why not?"

"Because some men work harder than others, some are smarter than others, and some are more wicked and vile than others. Before the week was over, there would be inequality, because some would have more than others."

The man paused and said, "Oh, I meant they ought to do it every Saturday night." That might work if you did it every Saturday night, but otherwise it is not going to work.

Benjamin Franklin said, "When the people find that they can vote themselves money, that will herald the end of our republic." Joseph Sobran put it this way: "If you want government to intervene domestically, you're a liberal. If you want government to intervene overseas, you're a conservative. If you want government to intervene everywhere, you're a moderate. If you don't want government to intervene anywhere, you're an extremist." That is true.

The Law's Restitution

Biblical Law: Restitution in Exodus 22

All of those are ungodly, unbiblical, and humanistic. I want to deal with the law's restitution. That is why I read Exodus chapter 22. When you study the Bible concerning punishments for crimes and sins, you will be amazed to discover that there was no such thing as a prison system under biblical law.

There were wards and temporary holding places until a person was tried. After he was tried, he could either be disinherited, whipped, or required to make restitution; otherwise, there was the death penalty. That was basically it.

So, in Deuteronomy chapter 25, God said: "If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault by a certain number. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed. Lest if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee."

Usually restitution was the answer, whipping sometimes; and if the death penalty was demanded, John Gill says that there were four kinds of death criminals were put to by the Hebrews.

There was stoning, strangling, burning, and slaying with a sword. Crimes that did not demand the severe penalty of death were punished by beating, for those who deserve to be beaten. Otherwise, there was either disinheritance for ungodly, rebellious children or restitution.

In Exodus chapter 22, there is a two-fold restitution, a four-fold restitution, and a five-fold restitution. In Proverbs chapter 6, there is a seven-fold restitution. The circumstances under which there is indeed a sevenfold restitution are these: "Can a man take fire into his bosom and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals and his feet not be burned? So he that goeth into his neighbor's wife, whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent."

“Men do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his soul when he is hungry. But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold. He shall give all the substance of his house. But whoso committed adultery with a woman, lacketh understanding. He that doeth it, destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonor shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away. For jealousy is the rage of a man, therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom, neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.”

There is indeed a sevenfold restitution. The ratio of restitution is determined and based upon the value and usefulness of that which was stolen. For instance, Exodus 22:1 says, “If a man steal an ox or a sheep and kill it or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep.” Why is it five for an ox and four for a sheep? Consider the value and the training involved. A sheep can be used for meat and wool for clothing, and perhaps for pets. But an ox can be used for meat; its hide can be used for leather, clothing, and tents, and it has further usefulness. An ox not only can be used for meat; its hide can be used for leather, clothing, and tents, and its usefulness includes the training involved.

But that ox can also be trained to pull plows, pull wagons, and do whatever is necessary. So the ox was far more valuable and useful than a sheep. Let me give you an illustration. Suppose that you were a plumber, an electrician, or perhaps a carpenter, and you had a work truck full of all your tools and materials. You drove that truck every day and worked out of it every day, except Sunday. You also had a nice car, but you drove it only on Sunday, to church. Here is a good question: If someone were going to steal one of your vehicles, which would you rather he steal—the car that you drive once a week, or the truck that you need every day with all your tools in it? You see, the truck is far more valuable than the car, even though the car may be more expensive.

This is exactly what God is saying. The ratio is based upon the value and usefulness of that which is stolen. But thirdly, note that there is a problem of defense in relationship to threat and theft. In verse 2, he said, "If a thief be found breaking up and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him." Then in verse 3 he says, "If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him, for

he should make full restitution. If thou have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft."

Here, then, is the problem with theft. In verse 2, he said, "If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him." We are talking about night, because the next verse says, "If the sun be risen upon him." According to God's law, if someone is breaking into your house at night, it is lawful for you to take his life. Why? Number one, you do not know who he is. Number two, you have no idea whether he is armed. You have no idea whether you and your family are in danger. Further, you could never identify him because you cannot really see him. So God says, if he is breaking in, then he is to be killed.

Years ago, a man came to me who was a professing Christian, and he asked me a question. He asked me, "Brother Weaver," he said, "what would you do if you woke up during the night and some man was climbing in your bedroom window?"

I looked at him and said, “Well, the answer is very simple. If I get my hands on a gun, I’d shoot him. If I couldn’t get my hands on a gun, I’d get a baseball bat and beat him in the head.” He said, “Well, I don’t think you ought to do that.” I said, “What do you think I should do?” He said, “I think you ought to go in another room and pray about it.” I said, “Sir, do you mean to tell me I should be in another room praying while the man is raping my wife or murdering my children? I would pray. I really genuinely would pray. I’d pull that baseball bat back and say, ‘Dear God, don’t let me miss him this time.’ That’s how I would pray, because that’s exactly what God says.”

Now look at verse three: “If the sun be risen upon him, there shall no blood be shed for him, for he should make full restitution. If he have nothing, then he shall be sold for theft.” I’ll come back to that, but note that in the daytime you can see that he is unarmed. You can identify him. You can see that he is no threat.

So God says, don’t kill him. You can identify him, and he can be caught later. That is like some of these deputies and cops who get in trouble when they shoot men running away from them and shoot them in the back. My life is not in danger if you are running away

from me. My life is not in danger if I can see you, identify you, and you are not threatening me in any way whatsoever. My life is not in danger.

If you stole something of mine, fine. I know who you are. I'll call the sheriff and let the sheriff take care of it. It is just that simple. So God says that if it is during the daytime, you do not shoot him.

Now look at verse four. We are still there: "If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox or ass or sheep, he shall restore double." Why, in verse one, is it five for an ox and four for a sheep, while verse four says that if it is an ox, an ass, or a sheep, he is to restore double? Note what the Scripture says: "if it be found in his hand alive." In other words, if he is caught before he can abuse your goods or animals, or before he can dispose of them, he is only to pay double. Why? You have been inconvenienced. You have not been deprived. You are getting your property back. That is God's law.

Responsibility for Accidental Damage and Custody

Fourthly, there are certain acts which, whether deliberate or accidental, require restitution. Look in verses five and six: "If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field of the best of his own field, and the best of his own vineyard shall he make restitution. If fire break out and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn or the standing corn of the field be consumed therewith, he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution."

What is God telling me? First of all, I am responsible for my animals. If my cow gets out, breaks through my fence, and goes through your garden and eats everything in it, I am responsible to make restitution for what my cow ate—especially if I was negligent in failing to fix my fence, which allowed the cow to escape.

Many of you who have traveled through the West have seen signs that say, "Open range." That means cattle are grazing and walking across the roads because there are no fences. If you hit one of those cows, it is your fault, because it is an open range. In other words, you are responsible to watch out for that cow. But if I have a fence,

neglect it, and my cow or horse gets out and eats some of your crop, then I am responsible to make restitution.

And then he says, “If fire break out and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn or the standing corn of the field be consumed therewith, he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.” Do you understand that God's law is teaching responsibility and accountability? If I am going to burn off my pasture or woods, I had better have a firebreak around it and sufficient people there to control the fire. If it jumps my property line, gets onto someone else's property, and burns down their trees, I am responsible.

You say, “But it was an accident.” That is immaterial. Parents, I learned this the hard way when I was a boy. I had a bunch of cherry bombs, and I was outside lighting them and letting them burst. My grandmother lived with us. My mother came outside and said, “Son, your grandmother has a headache.”

Responsibility for Goods Held in Custody

“If you're going to pop those firecrackers, please go somewhere else.” I looked way down the field at some young pine trees, where there was good shade. I walked across our fields, climbed over the fence separating our property from our neighbor's, and went to his planted pines. It was cool there, and I was throwing those cherry bombs, just bursting them left and right. I had one left. One.

I turned around and started toward the house. I lit that cherry bomb, threw it behind me, and started walking home. I probably got from here to the door when I smelled smoke. I turned around, and the pine straw was on fire. It was already burning an area this big around. I was a kid, and I ran to one of those pine trees. It had a low limb, so I broke it off, went back, and beat the fire. I fought it for 45 minutes before I got it put out. It scared me to absolute death.

It did not dawn on me until I was mature that if I had burned that man's standing pine down, my father would have been responsible because I was a child. God says there are certain things that you and I have to take responsibility for, whether deliberate or accidental. That is immaterial. You are responsible. God's law teaches responsibility. Here's the fifth thing.

Once you hear this, you may not want to keep anything for your neighbor. God says in verses 7–13 that responsibility is to be determined for goods held in custody. Look, beginning with verse 7: “If a man shall deliver unto his neighbor money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house, if the thief be found, let him pay double.” Why double? Because the man who owned it was not using it anyhow.

He has merely been inconvenienced. But verse 8 says, “But if the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges to see whether he put his hand into his neighbor's goods.” In other words, you must give an accounting for whatever you say, “I want to keep this for him.” The word keep means to watch; it means to protect.

Verse 9 continues: “For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox or for ass, for sheep or for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judge, and whom the judge shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbor.” If you are found negligent, you owe your neighbor twice whatever the value was that you were keeping for him. Isn't that interesting?

Verse 10 says, “If a man deliver his neighbor an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or a beast, or keep it, and die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it, then an oath of the Lord shall be between them both, and that he hath not put his”

“Hand into his neighbor’s goods, and the owner thereof shall accept it thereof, and make it good.” Watch verse 12: “And if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution on the owner thereof.” If I tell you I will keep your sheep or cow while you are on vacation, and that animal is stolen, I am responsible to make restitution, because I told you I would protect it and keep it.

Then verse 13 says, “If it be torn in pieces, let him bring it for a witness, and he shall not make good that which is torn.” If a panther or a bear comes around and kills that cow or sheep, all I have to do is say, “Here it is. I did not do this.” This is the providence of God; therefore, I do not have to make it good. Here is what we would call

restitution concerning goods we are keeping and watching for other people.

Principles for Rentals, Loans, and Seduction

There are special principles involved in rental or loan arrangements. Verse 14 says, “If a man borrow aught of his neighbor, and it be hurt or die, the owner thereof not being with it, he shall surely make it good. But if the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good.” “If it be a hired thing, then it came for its hire.” If I borrow something from you, and you are not with it when it breaks, I am responsible to restore it.

If I borrowed Brother Nelson’s riding lawnmower and, while using it, the motor blew up, I could not push it back under his garage at night and hope he would not notice. I would be responsible to fix it. Years ago, while building a house, I borrowed a skill saw from one of the men in our church, and it was stolen. I knew who stole it but could never prove it. It was brand new; I had probably not used it a week. When it was stolen, I bought two brand-new skill saws, one for me and one for David, and took David a new one. I learned.

Years ago, I borrowed my father's chainsaw. I had a special gas can containing the oil-and-gas mixture used for chainsaws. I put gas in the saw, started it, and it ran for two or three minutes before quitting. The motor had locked up. I checked the can and discovered that someone had poured out my mixture and replaced it with regular gas without oil. It was my father. The repair cost me $150. I had the motor rebuilt and returned the chainsaw to him working.

That taught me a lesson: buy your own chainsaw. This is what God is talking about. If we borrow something, we need to return it the way it came.

If I borrow a riding lawnmower while its owner is with me, watching, and sees that I have done nothing wrong—that it simply happened—then it is his responsibility, and he can pay for it. But if I say, “Brother Jim, tell you what I’m going to do. I’ll give you 50 bucks to rent this thing from you,” and he agrees, then I pay him the $50, rent it, and the motor blows up, requiring $500 to repair, that

is his responsibility. It is his baby because he rented it, and it came for its hire.

There is a vast difference between renting and borrowing. God is saying that we need to learn this law. Now look closely at verses 17 and 18. You may not think this is involved in restitution, but it is. Look at verse 16: "If a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife."

"And if her father utterly refused to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins." Are you talking about the social order that we have today? When you start applying God's law, if a man seduces a young woman who is not betrothed and lies with her, God says he must endow her to be his wife, and he can never put her away. The only way he can escape marrying her is found in verse 17: if her father utterly refused to give her unto him. The father still has to say so. If the father utterly refuses, then he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.

You know what a dowry was? A dowry was usually a minimum of two years' wages. It was usually given to the father to keep for his daughter in case that man died. That way, the daughter would have something to live on until she could find someone else to marry. That's what a dowry was. By the way, I don't know if you know this or not, but most of your life insurance companies were started by preachers because they believed in a dowry, and many of them did not have money to give one. So they came up with life insurance. If they died, then the wife would be taken care of. You need to go back and look at some of the original names of these life insurance companies, because some of them were called widows and orphans protection agencies.

God is protecting the woman here. If a man seduces her and the father says, "No, you're not going to be my son-in-law; you cannot marry," then he has to give two years' worth of wages. Everybody wants to marry a pure woman. Every man does. But here is a woman who has now been made impure, yet she can come into the marriage with two years' worth of wages, which would tend to make the man a little more forgiving. This was protecting the woman.

We are still talking about theft and restitution. In Deuteronomy 22:28-29, he said, “If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found, then the man that lay with her shall be given to the damsel’s father fifty shekels of silver. And she shall be his wife, because he hath humbled her, and he may not put her away all his days.” Fifty shekels of silver.

In 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, the Bible says, “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel,” that is, his body, “in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God.” This is a violation of the seventh commandment.

But notice what he says in verse 6: “That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter,” or in the matter of theft, “because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we have also forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.” Therefore, he that despises does not despise man, but God, who has also given us his Holy Spirit. “That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in the matter.” Seduction is not simply a violation of “Thou shalt not commit adultery”; it is also a violation of “Thou shalt not steal,” as well as a violation of others. Notice also, back in Deuteronomy chapter 22, the eighth commandment is involved in this matter. The passage joins bodily sanctification and honor to the warning against going beyond and defrauding a brother. The Lord is the avenger of all such, and these things had been forewarned and testified.

There was another way that a man had to make restitution, found in Leviticus chapter 6, verses 1 through 7. We are not going to read it, but it gives this instruction: if a man stole something or lied about something so he could keep it, got away with it, and a month went by, his conscience might begin to convict him. He might say, “I should not have done that. I should not have taken that. I should not have lied about that.”

According to Leviticus chapter one, chapter six, verses one through seven, he was to bring a trespass offering to the Lord because he had sinned against God as well as against his neighbor.

Then he was to restore what he had stolen or about which he had lied, plus twenty percent—a fifth. If it had been a hundred dollars, he had to restore a hundred and twenty; if it had been a thousand, twelve hundred. He had to restore, basically, twenty percent. Ginsburg, on Leviticus, says, "It will be seen that the trespass against God is, strictly speaking, a violation of the rights of a neighbor's property."

"As fraud and plunder are most subversive of social life, a crime of this sort is described as an insult to and a sin against God, who is the founder and sovereign ruler of His people." So the trespass offering had to be made to God because when you stole or lied concerning this, it was a sin against God.

God demands restitution. The law demands restitution. In Genesis chapter 20, Abimelech took Sarah, Abram's wife. Abram said she was his sister, and she said he was her brother. She must have been an exquisitely beautiful woman, even at ninety. God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said, "If you touch her, you're a dead man. I'm going to kill you. She's the wife of a prophet. You had better give her back."

When Abimelech awoke the next morning, he could not give Sarah back fast enough. In that dream he told the Lord, "Lord, You know in the innocence of my heart and the integrity of my hands, I've done this thing. Did she not say, 'He's my brother'? Did he not?" In those days, you could not do anything unless the brother or the father gave permission. Genesis 20:14 says, "And Abimelech took sheep and oxen and menservants and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife." He made restitution when he gave her back.

May I remind you also of the Egyptians who used the Hebrews for four hundred years as their personal slaves? In Exodus 11:2, God says that the Israelites were to borrow gold, silver, and precious stones from the Egyptians. The word translated "borrow" is translated "ask" ninety-four times in the Bible: "Ask of these Egyptians." They loaded the Israelites down with silver and gold, not merely enough to live on, but enough for the tabernacle and everything needed to build it. God was making the Egyptians pay

restitution because they had enslaved His people for four hundred years.

You remember that David condemned himself in 2 Samuel chapter 12. Nathan had come to him and told him this story about a poor man with one little lamb. The rich man had many flocks, but he spared those and took the poor man's one little lamb to give it to his traveler friend. David was so incensed that he said, "The man that hath done this thing shall surely die, and he shall restore fourfold." Nathan said, "You are the man."

They did understand this fourfold restitution. The Babylonian captivity was also about restitution. For seventy years, Judah and Jerusalem were in captivity in Babylon because they had violated God's Sabbaths and the land sabbaths. In 2 Chronicles 36:21, the Bible says, "...to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths. For as long as she lay desolate, she kept sabbath to fulfill threescore and ten years." When they violated the land sabbaths, God said they would make restitution.

And that's exactly what they did. God requires restitution, and restitution is the only just and equitable way to handle this. Look at our modern-day society and our modern-day judicial system.

Let's say Jacob works really, really hard, makes a good bit of money, and wants a fine, fancy car. He just wants it, and God has given him the money to get it. So he goes out and buys one of these nice, beautiful suburban SUVs. He is so excited about this thing. He comes home, leaves the key in it, and leaves it running because he is going to get his wife and those kids. He is going to take them for a ride, let them smell the leather, and see that new thing.

While he is running in and getting them all together, saying, "Hurry up, hurry up, I got something out here I want to show you, hurry up," an old homeless man happens to ramble by and sees the running car with nobody in it. He jumps in it and takes off, peeling leather and peeling rubber. I mean, he just goes. Jacob sees it and calls the law. They put out an all-points bulletin: be on the lookout for this brand-new, blue Suburban. Just about that time, a deputy calls, "I've got him right in front of me; I'm going to pull him over."

As the deputy puts on the lights and siren, the old homeless man, drunk as well, floors the accelerator and takes off. The policeman gives chase. They get going seventy, eighty, ninety, and one hundred miles an hour. As he goes around a curve, he cannot handle it and wraps that brand-new SUV around a tree, totaling it. He gets out laughing and says, "So you got me, so what?"

In this modern-day scenario, number one, Jacob has been ripped off because his car has been stolen.

Number two, he has been ripped off because his car is totaled. Number three, he has been ripped off because, even though he may have had insurance and insurance pays for it, they are going to raise his premium. Number four, he has been ripped off again because this is a homeless man who has been drinking, has to have an attorney, and cannot afford one. So tax money gives him an attorney. Then he gets ripped off again because, when the man is found guilty and sentenced to ten years in prison, his tax money gets to support him, feed him, clothe him, and provide his health care for ten years. Look how many times he has been ripped off.

What would happen if we were living under biblical law? If he stole that car and was caught before he wrecked it, and if the car cost $50,000, that homeless man would owe Jacob $100,000. He would have to pay double. If that car was really imported, and he really wrecked it and totaled it, he would owe him at least a fourfold restitution.

“I have heard all my life, crime does not pay.” That is true only when you follow biblical law. When you follow humanistic law, crime does pay. That is why we have so many criminals. “This homeless man, if he has to make a fourfold restitution, how is he going to do that? He does not have any money.” That is no problem at all.

Exodus chapter 22 says: “If you have no money, he shall be sold for his theft.” Now he becomes a slave.

Deuteronomy chapter 17, beginning with verse 8, says: “If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates, then thou shalt arise and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose. And thou

shalt come unto the priests, the Levites, and unto the judges that shall be in those days, and inquire, and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment. And thou shalt do according to the sentence which they of that place which the Lord shall choose shall show thee, and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee. According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgments which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do, thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall show thee to the right hand or to the left."

"And the man that will do presumptuously and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or to the judge, even that man shall die, and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel." Here is the way it works in God's law: if he steals that truck, he has to make restitution. If he has nothing, he shall be sold for a step; that is, he becomes your slave or somebody's slave until he works out what he owes you.

You say, "What's going to stop him from running off?" God said he will die if he runs off. I don't know about you, but I think I'd rather work than be killed, rather work than be put to death.

Crime does not pay under biblical law, but certainly it does pay under humanistic law. Recently, down in Georgia—I don't know where it is in all the other states—some prisoners guilty of what you and I would call minor crimes are no longer sent to prison. They are sent to restitution centers, where they at least have to work out and pay off court costs and pay back the victim at least what they stole. It is not fourfold or fivefold restitution, but it is there.

"Brother Weaver, you don't understand. I don't like this thing about restitution." If you don't like restitution, then you don't like God's salvation. The salvation that we have is only by restitution. We are sinners and guilty under God's law; we violated God's law and cannot save ourselves.

Restitution and the Gospel

The Lord Jesus Christ came as our substitute, our sacrifice, and our propitiation. He offered a sacrifice in our place and satisfied and propitiated the justice, holiness, righteousness, and wrath of God.

He made restitution for us. If you don't like restitution, you simply do not like God's salvation.

You can read all about that in Romans chapter 3, verses 25 through 26. God demands restitution; He demands that we make restitution. I was visiting one of my men in his office and waiting for him because he was with someone else. His secretary was a personal friend of mine because her husband was a pastor and we were all friends, and she had a bowl of candy on her desk. She said, "Brother Weaver, would you have some candy?"

I said, “Yes, thank you. I believe I will.” I picked up the jar of candy, but it slipped out of my hands. It hit the floor, the glass broke, and candy went everywhere. Embarrassed, I apologized and began picking up the candy while she got a broom to sweep up the glass. “I’ll get you another one,” I told her.

“No, Brother Weaver, you don’t have to do that.”

“Yes, I do.”

I went to the drugstore next door, bought one of the finest glasses full of candy that I could find, brought it back, and gave it to her. She said, “You really didn’t have to do that.” I replied, “Yes, I did. Not just for you, but in obedience to God and to teach me that the next time I pick up a glass full of candy, I will hold on to it.”

We do not play this game: “Well, let’s just forgive and forget.” No, we forgive, make restitution, and then forget. We obey God. One of the greatest evidences that we are genuinely converted is our willingness to make restitution.

You remember Zacchaeus? Zacchaeus, of course, was a republican. He undoubtedly cheated many people. When he heard the Lord was coming, he climbed up that tree, and our Lord said, “Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must abide at thy house.” When he came down, he said, “Lord, behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything wrongly from anyone, I restore fourfold.” He was willing to do it.

There are things in which we need to make restitution. We have lied, gossiped, and slandered. We need to understand: here is God’s law. If you want society changed, change society by obeying God in

your life. If you will not obey God, do not expect everybody else to obey God. God demands personal obedience and personal responsibility.

Conclusion: Personal Obedience and Final Restitution

In Acts chapter 3 and verse 21, the Bible speaks about the restitution of all things. There will be a final, total restitution when our Lord returns, and everything will be made back the way it should be. But until then, if the government will not do right—and it will not—and if society will not do right—and it will not—you must do what is right.

In your family, in your church, and in your community, follow God's law of restitution, and you will learn to behave correctly, responsibly, and safely.

Restitution is God's law.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Your Word and restitution. We are thankful that Jesus Christ made restitution for each of us. Lord, we pray that You would make us personally obedient, that we would understand Thy law and apply it by Your grace and Your mercy. In Jesus Christ's name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 10

You Have to be a Sheep to Hear the Shepherd's Voice

You Must Be a Sheep to Hear the Shepherd's Voice

SCRIPTURE READING - John 10:1-12 (KJV)

Introduction and Reading of John 10:1-12

Our Lord says:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."

This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said

> Jesus unto them again, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”
>
> “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.”
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> So you must be a sheep to hear the shepherd's voice. The truth of the matter is this, very few Americans know anything about sheep or about shepherding. It's true that there are some in America that raise sheep, but not nearly the way they are in Europe.

Most western states, and most cowboys, actually despise sheep. Years ago, I taught a young man in college from Colorado who was a rancher. He referred to sheep as “ranch maggots” because they are white and have a little black nose. Once, I was out west with our grandchildren when they were much smaller. I pointed out some sheep and told them the story, saying, “Look, there’s some ranch maggots just going on.” The next day, while we were traveling, Lacey, the youngest granddaughter, saw some sheep and said, “Oh, look, farm ticks.” I said, “No, they’re not farm ticks. It’s ranch maggots.”

The reason cattlemen hate sheep is that when a sheep grazes, it pulls grass up by the root, basically destroying it. According to the Food and Agricultural Organization, the top five countries in sheep raising from 1993 to 2013 were China, with 146.5 million head; Australia, 101 million; India, 62 million; Iran, 51 million; and the former Sudan, 46 million. Since then, China has taken over, with basically 195 million head of sheep, followed by Australia with 72 million, India with 63 million, Iran with 45 million, Nigeria with 41 million, and Sudan with 40 million. Sudan and Somalia are the two

main countries that export sheep—or, more precisely, the meat, which we call mutton.

The Relationship Between Shepherd and Sheep

The interesting thing about John chapter 10 is that it contains so many truths applicable to us today. In this passage, our Lord likens His people to sheep, and He Himself is the shepherd. As you read through the Bible, you will find three titles concerning Jesus Christ. First, He is called the Good Shepherd because He gives His life for the sheep. Second, He is called the Great Shepherd because He provides for His sheep. Third, He is called the Chief Shepherd because He promotes His own to glory and honors them as well. The relationship between the shepherd and the sheep is very intimate. The shepherd knows his sheep, and the sheep know the shepherd. A key word in John chapter 10 is identification: the shepherd identifies with the sheep, and the sheep identifies with the shepherd.

The shepherd of the sheep is always willing to lay down His life for the sheep. Our Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, did indeed lay down His life for His sheep. There is no way in the world our Lord could not know His sheep. He knows really and truly who belong to Him and who does not belong to Him. That is why the Bible says in 2 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 19, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

One of the key words in this passage should be identification. Hold John chapter 10, and turn to the book of Romans chapter 6, where this concept from John 10 is clearly stated. In Romans chapter 6, beginning with verse 3, the Word of God says, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be

destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." In this passage, we are reading about identification once again, because we have been identified with Jesus Christ in His death, in His burial, and in His resurrection; and I might also add, in His ascension and being seated at the Father's right hand as well. This intimate relationship, clearly stated in Romans chapter 6, is also given to us in illustrative form in John chapter 10 and verse 4.

The Sheep Follow Because They Know His Voice

"And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice." The word "follow" is important. The Greek word is akoloutheō, meaning to follow one who proceeds, to join him as his attendant, to accompany him, or to join him as a disciple and become a disciple. It is a present active indicative: it is a true statement, something happening now and continuing to happen. You follow him initially, and then you continue to follow him. We do not cease following him. Our fellowship is continual and constant.

Since he is talking about sheep, there is a problem with sheep: they like to wander and go astray. This is true of every individual. They love their own way and their own thoughts. Isaiah 53:6 says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Whenever we prefer our way and our will above the way and will of the shepherd, that is when we get in trouble.

That is where we find the wolves waiting to devour us. Our Lord, who is a good shepherd, knows exactly where the green pastures are, and His rod and His staff are those to comfort us. When we wander out of His way, we lose his provision and his protection. I have read two aspects of this illustration, and I am going to give them to you.

The first illustration has no verification except from eyewitnesses. What I mean is simply this: what I am about to tell you is not found in Scripture. That does not mean it is untrue merely because Scripture does not tell it.

Here is a lamb, a sheep, that wanders out of the way, perhaps once, and the shepherd finds his sheep and brings it back. But if the

sheep continues to wander, the shepherd will find it, pick up a leg, take his rod, and break the leg. Once he breaks the leg, he splints it and fixes it where it will heal. Then he takes the sheep in his arms and carries it around. The shepherd does not break the sheep's leg because he hates the sheep or because he is angry with it. He does it to save the sheep and keep it from wandering off. The shepherd then tends the sheep until the leg is well.

After the leg is healed, he lets the little sheep down. The sheep is more attached than ever because it has been in the shepherd's arms; he has carried it and taken care of it. So the sheep follows the shepherd. That is one aspect of stopping a sheep from wandering.

There is a second aspect, and I will have to spell the word. The first illustration is where the shepherd will break the leg and then bind it up. The second is where the shepherd brakes the leg. The first is B-R-E-A-K, to break. This one is B-R-A-K-E, like the brakes on your car. When your car is going a certain direction or speed and you want to slow it down, you put the brakes on it.

Braking a sheep's leg is not breaking it and splinting it, but adding a weight that weighs the leg down. The lamb cannot run rapidly or escape predators; therefore, it has to stay close to the shepherd. It is like hobbling a horse. You put hobbles on its front legs, and the horse can move and eat, but it cannot run or walk fast, so you can catch it very easily.

It is the same thing with a lamb with a brake leg: there is a heavy weight, and the lamb cannot get away. Regardless of which of these illustrations would be used by shepherds, I do not want our Lord applying either one of them to me. I do not want to be chastised by Him. All you have to do is read Hebrews chapter 12, and you can find out what chastisement really is.

I think it is very interesting that David said in Psalm 23, “thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” Stop and think about that. That rod is usually used for switching, I would suspect. The staff I can understand; you could pull a sheep out of danger with that staff since it has the curve in it. But he is simply saying, “thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” The Bible tells you in Psalm 94 and verse 12,

"Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law."

When God does chasten us, when God either breaks or brakes our legs, it is so that He might teach us and bring us closer to Himself.

Let me give you another warning in light of this. I have heard people say for years, "I know a fellow who used to be a Christian, but he is no longer a Christian," or, "I know someone who used to believe, but he no longer believes." Let me tell you very pointedly: a sheep is a sheep, and a sheep does not become a goat.

True Sheep Do Not Become Goats

If someone made a profession of faith, was baptized, joined the church, and then left the faith, that someone was never genuinely converted to begin with. They were never sheep. How can I say that? First John chapter 2, verse 19: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." Anyone who really leaves the faith is evidencing and manifesting the fact that they were never in the faith to begin with.

Stop and think about that. There has never been a day since I've been saved that I wanted to be unsaved. I have no desire to live as an unsaved man. So, when someone says, "Well, I know somebody who used to go to church and used to do this," and then goes out, that person simply was never converted to begin with. It is true what our Lord just said.

The sheep follow the shepherd, but there is a specific reason why they follow him. The Bible says, "To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." The sheep know the voice of the shepherd, and they follow him.

The Sheep Know the Shepherd's Voice

Let me show you a beautiful illustration in John chapter 20. Our Lord has already been crucified and buried, and He is now risen from the grave. There is an interesting illustration concerning Mary. The Scripture says, “But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.”

“When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.”

Do you realize all our Lord did was call her name? She instantly knew who He was. Previously, she did not know Him, but when He called her name, she knew exactly who He was. Our Lord said, “My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me.” Why do sheep not follow strangers?

And the answer is, according to our Lord, “they know not the voice of strangers.” I watched recently an interesting little video, only four or five minutes long, of a shepherd with his sheep in a fenced-in area. Three individuals stood at the fence, and he challenged them to call the sheep. Each one called to them. The sheep were grazing in the field and never lifted their heads or looked at them; they simply kept grazing. Each did his best to get their attention. When they failed, the shepherd simply spoke. Each sheep lifted his head, looked at the shepherd, and came running straight to him. A whole vehicle of them.

Here is an interesting thing. You could take three shepherds with a thousand sheep, all mixed in together. When it came time for each shepherd to separate his sheep, he would not go in and say, “This is

mine, that was mine." He would do nothing except call them. Then his sheep would leave the mass of the other sheep and follow the one shepherd.

Arthur W. Pink wrote concerning this: "In Palestine, which in the pastoral sections was infested with wild beasts, there was in each village a large sheepfold which was the common property of the native farmers. This sheepfold was protected by a wall some 10 or 12 feet high. When night fell, a number of different shepherds would lead their flocks up to the door of the fold through which they passed, leaving them in the care of the porter while they went home and sought lodging. At the door, the porter lay on guard through the night, ready to protect the sheep against thieves and robbers, or against wild animals which might attempt to scale the walls. In the morning, the different shepherds returned. The porter would allow each one to enter through the door, calling by name the sheep which belonged to his flock. The sheep would respond to his voice, and he would lead them out to pasture."

In the lesson before us, this is what our Lord used as a figure or proverb. It did not matter if there were thousands of sheep from different shepherds, because each sheep knew the voice of his own shepherd.

Has our Lord called you by name? Do you follow Him? Do you know His voice? Do you know His leading? How do you know the voice of God? How do you know the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ?

How God Speaks Today

In the Garden of Eden, the Bible tells us in Genesis 3:8 concerning Adam and Eve, "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." Notice what the Bible says: "and they heard the voice of God." In Genesis 3:10, Adam said to God, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." Evidently, at that particular time, there was an audible voice that Adam and Eve heard, because he said, "I heard thy voice."

However, Abraham also heard the voice of God, but we are not necessarily told how he heard it. Most of the time, we assume it has to be an audible voice. Genesis 12:1 says, “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee.” Notice, “and the LORD God had said.” How did God speak to him? We are not told particularly there.

But in Genesis 15:1, “After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” Abraham did indeed hear the voice of God. Genesis 26:5 says concerning Abraham, “Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.” Now it is not just the vision. God spoke in several ways to Abraham. Do not begin to think that each time you read about God speaking, there was an audible voice.

SCRIPTURE READING - Exodus 5:1-2; Deuteronomy 4:5-15 (KJV)

Let me show you why that is not true. Exodus 5:2: "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."

Now note what he said: "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice?"

Did God speak to Pharaoh audibly? The answer is no. How did God speak? Look in verse 1: "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." So the voice of God to Pharaoh came through Moses and Aaron.

When Israel came out of Egypt, they did hear the voice of God, and they were terribly frightened. Deuteronomy 4:5: "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments," Moses is speaking now, "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it."

"Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all

> these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? 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 thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children."

"And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake to you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire."

When God spoke, the people trembled. The fire and tempest were there, and even if an ass touched that mount, it was to be thrust through with a spear and killed. The people begged, saying, "Let not God speak to us, we've heard his voice." God did speak, and they heard an audible voice, but how did God give them his laws? The answer is, through his word.

Exodus 15:26 says, "And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, 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 that he said, “if you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord.” Where was the voice of the Lord? Was it an audible voice? No! It was a statute. It was the commandments which He gave. It was His Word.

Exodus 19:5 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.” Where was his voice? It was in his covenant. It was in his law. It was in his word.

If you'll look in Deuteronomy chapter 27. Deuteronomy 27. And look, if you would, at verse 10. Deuteronomy 27 and verse 10. In this passage, look what he said specifically. Deuteronomy 27, verse 10. "Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day." So once again, where's the voice of the Lord? It's in his word.

Now, let me mention something. I'm going to show you another passage. In the Old Testament and in the New Testament at the beginning, God did speak in different ways. He didn't speak through visions. He didn't speak through dreams. He even spoke through trances. That's what happened in Acts chapter 10 when Peter went up to the housetop while he was waiting for dinner. And he went into a trance. But I want you to look in your Bibles to the book of Hebrews chapter 1 at verses 1 and 2. Hebrews chapter 1 at verses 1 and 2. Look at what Scripture says. Hebrews 1 verses 1 and 2. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets." And that's how he did. He spoke through visions, dreams, trances, prophets. He spoke many different ways.

But watch verse 2: “Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.” So the various and sundry ways that God spoke in times past have ceased. Sometimes I get frustrated, and sometimes I get amused at people wanting to tell me their dreams, as though God is showing them something important and significant, something over and above and beyond the Word of God. No. Listen to me. Jesus Christ is the full and final revelation of God. There is nothing above Jesus Christ. There is nothing beyond Jesus Christ. If you are trying to tell me today that God is giving someone new information that

was never known before and is not revealed in the Bible, then Jesus Christ is not the full and final revelation of God. It is just that simple. God, in times past, spoke in different ways, but now, in these last days, He has spoken to us through His Son.

Now, go back in your Bibles to John chapter 5. Here is exactly why that is true. Beginning with verse 22, look at what it says: “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.” Why did the Father commit all judgment to the Son? Here is why: “That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.”

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” Note this: God said, “I have committed all judgment unto my Son, that all men should honour him, even as they honour the Father.” If you do not honor Jesus Christ, you do not honor the Father. It is just that simple. Jesus Christ is the living Word of God, and the Bible is the written word of God. In John chapter 6, Jesus Christ declares Himself to be the bread of life. He said Moses did not give you that bread of God, but the bread of God is He who cometh down from heaven and giveth His life for the world.

After our Lord proclaimed Himself as the Bread of Life and said, "If you don't eat me, you have no life in you. If you don't drink my blood, you have no life in you," many disciples were offended. That was not literal; it was spiritual. He was saying, in effect, that you must live in and off and through and by Him.

"Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" They could not put up with it, grasp it, or believe it. They thought it was insane. They said, "We can't handle this. We can't believe that Jesus Christ is the bread of God who came down from heaven and give his life into the world." "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." They could not handle the claim that Jesus Christ was the Bread of God who came down from heaven and gave His life into the world.

Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Simon Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

The Lord also said, "He that rejecteth me," the living Word, "and receiveth not my words," the written Word, "hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." This is another good verse to memorize. Jesus Christ is telling us that we cannot separate Him from His Word. He is the living Word, and the Bible is the written Word. If you reject the living Word, you reject the written Word; if you reject the written Word, you reject the living Word. God's voice is heard in and through His Word.

Rejecting the Word is Rejecting Christ

Here is a very difficult question: Why is it that some people do not want to hear the Word of God? They do not wish to be taught, preached to, or witnessed to. They want nothing to do with Jesus Christ. I have run into a number of people like that. Some men, as I was coming in the front door, ran out the back door of their house because they did not want to be witnessed to. That happened to me with two men. And you know what God did? God ended up saving both of them. Then they started running to me instead of away from me.

Finally, one of them came at midnight. I told him, “Gary, get up and go home. I got to go to bed. That’s all there is to it.” He was hungry, hungry, hungry for truth. Yet I have had people tell me pointedly, “I don’t want to hear it. Don’t talk to me like this.” Why? Our Lord answers that question in John 10:24: “Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”

“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which

gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." Did you see what He said in verse 26? "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." If you refuse to hear the Word of God, if you refuse to hear the voice of God, it is evident that you are not one of His sheep.

John 8:47 says, "He that is of God heareth God's words."

"He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." Let me make some applications to these truths. Here's the first one, and I'm going to show it to you from Scripture. If you refuse to hear, heed, and obey the Word of God, then you should be trembling. Why? Because it is His sheep that hear His word, and they follow Him. So if you are not hearing and you are not following, it means you are not a sheep. It means you are lost. It means judgment.

Warning and Application

This truth applies not only to an individual. It can apply to a society, a state, or a nation. Look at 2 Chronicles chapter 36, beginning at verse 15, and consider it in light of this lesson. The Bible says that "the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers," that is, His prophets and preachers, "rising up betimes, and sending." Why? "because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place." When God has compassion on the people, He sends them a preacher who will declare His Word.

Now watch what happened in verse 16: "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age." "He gave them all into his hand."

Go back to verse 16. It says they mocked the messengers, plural, of God, and despised His words, singular—God's words—and misused His prophets, plural. All the prophets, preachers, and messengers

were doing was preaching God's Word. In despising the message, they were despising the God who sent that truth and sent that Word.

The same truth appears in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 20. Hearing the voice of God is hearing His Word. The Apostle Paul says, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us.

In other words, we are here. God is beseeching you through us; that is what he is saying: “We pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled unto God.” The word “stead” is a very interesting word. It is the Greek word hyper, which means “in the place of.” When we say that Jesus Christ died in our stead, what does it mean? He died in our place. We should have been the ones who were crucified.

So he said, “We pray you in Christ’s stead.” Where is Christ right now? He is seated at the right hand of God the Father. He is not here on earth. But his prophets and preachers are those who declare his word. We are here in his stead. That means we are here in his place, preaching and teaching his word. Now let us see how that word is used.

Look in your Bibles at the little book of Philemon, right before Hebrews. There is only one chapter, but verse 13 is the verse we want. Onesimus was a runaway slave. He had run away, stolen from Philemon, and gone to Rome, where he was thrown into the dungeon with the Apostle Paul. He was converted, and Paul sent him back to Philemon. Paul introduced the passage by saying, “Whom I have sent again,” and then continued, “Thou therefore receive him.” He said, “Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels: whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: but without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.” Paul said, “I really wanted to keep Onesimus here, that he might minister me in thy stead, in your place.” If Philemon had been there, he would have been ministering to Paul; but he was not there, so Paul wanted to keep Onesimus in his stead. Likewise, when we are here in Christ’s stead, we are here in his place, preaching and teaching his word.

Now follow me as I tie this together. Go to Matthew chapter 10. We will see this several times in the New Testament. Look first at verse 40, where our Lord speaks concerning his disciples, his ambassadors, and his preachers: “He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.”

So, if I come to you preaching the word of Jesus Christ, and you receive me and his word, you receive Christ. If you receive Christ, you receive the Father who sent him. That is what he is saying.

In Luke 10:16, he gives the opposite: “He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.” If you hear the ones he has sent with his word, you are hearing him. If you despise those he has sent, you are despising him. If you despise him, you despise his Father who sent him.

In John 13:20, our Lord says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.” Once again, He is talking about hearing His voice—the voice of the preaching and teaching of the Word of God.

Hebrews 12:25 gives an admonition that is so plain and powerful: “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.” When Moses spoke on earth, if you despised his words, you were stoned with two or three witnesses. If they did not escape on earth, we will not escape when He speaks from heaven. “Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.” He ends by saying, “our God is a consuming fire.”

Our Lord said, “my sheep hear my voice and they follow me.” The voice of God is heard in His Word. You do not need to hear an audible voice from heaven speaking. God has already done that once. To demonstrate that we are sheep, we must be consistently and constantly reading, studying, and applying the Word, so that we follow our Lord obediently.

Father, help us tonight. May we see the absolute necessity of hearing Thy Word and following Thee. Teach us, we pray. Build us up in the most holy faith and make us obedient and holy. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

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Chapter 3: Biblical Money & Inflation
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Chapter 4: It Pays to Have Godly Friends
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