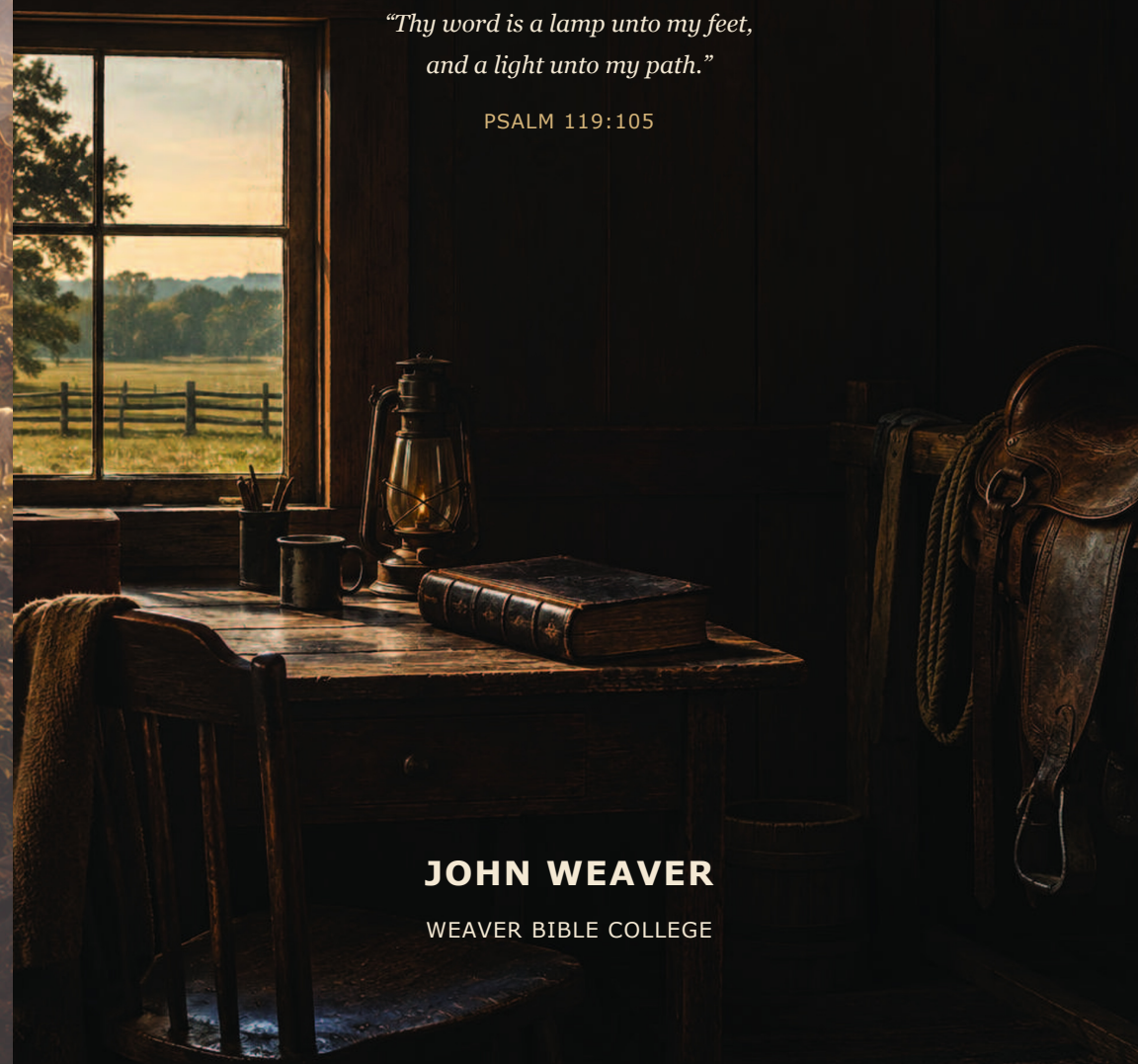
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The World And Times Of Jesse James

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

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

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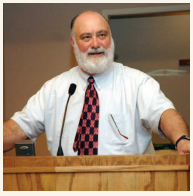
He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.

PROVERBS 18:17

Historical events require more than familiar legends. John Weaver discusses Jesse James and the world in which he lived, considering the moral and political questions raised by the period. This collection invites readers to examine the account as a historical discussion and to distinguish explanation from moral approval.

"I honestly, genuinely believe that the world and times of Jesse and Frank James impacted them and others very greatly."

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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Family Government

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CHAPTER 1

The World And Times Of Jesse James

Part One of Three

Introduction and Scripture Reading

This is the first message on the world and times of Jesse James. Isaiah 59, beginning with verse 12, says: “For our transgressions are multiplied before Thee, and our sins testify against us. For our transgressions are with us, and as for our iniquities, we know them. In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood, and judgment is turned away backwards and justice standeth afar off. For truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth. And he that departed from evil maketh himself a prey. And the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice or judgment.”

Note especially verse 14: “And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off, for truth is fallen in the street and equity cannot enter.” God demands justice. One of the failures of

modern man, as well as ancient man, is the failure to provide justice. Without justice, society withers and dies, and evil men increase and prosper. The Bible says in Proverbs 28:12 that when the wicked rise, then a man is hidden. In other words, during a time of inequity and injustice, it is the wicked who prosper and the righteous who hide themselves.

Everyone understands that government was ordained of God to be a minister of justice. The civil ruler was not to bear the sword in vain. Justice is determined by God; justice is what God says it is, and not what man says it is. However, as Solomon aptly stated, there is nothing new under the sun. So all through history, we see a lack of injustice.

Especially in light of some of the most recent Supreme Court rulings and numerous things happening in our country today, think about the direction our country is headed as I tell you about the world and times of Jesse James. You may ask, “Brother Weaver, why in the world are you preaching this?” Let me answer that for you.

Why Study History Theologically

We must remember that history, all history, is God's history. I remember a time in my life when I did not like history. I thought, why in the world should I remember dates and places and times of men who died 200 years ago? Until I realized that history is nothing less than the eternal decree of God coming to pass in time. History, then, is God's history, and it must be studied not just from a historical perspective, but also from a theological perspective.

If we are blind to the injustices of the past, in all probability we will be blind to the injustices of the present as well as the future. We must understand that justice is based upon the precepts of the Word of God. William A. Settle has written a book on the life of Jesse James, and the title of the book is simply "Jesse James Was His Name."

The Legend of Jesse James

The opening paragraph from that book is a report by Mark Twain. "Greatness," said Mark Twain, "may be classed as the ability to win

recognition. Some time ago I," that is Mark Twain, "was making a purchase in a small town store in Missouri. A man walked in and seeing me came over and outstretched his hand and said, 'You're Mark Twain, ain't you?' I nodded.

"'Guess you and I are about the greatest in our line,' he remarked. To this I couldn't nod, but I began to wonder as to what throne of greatness he held. 'What is your name?' I inquired. 'Jesse James,' he replied, gathering up his packages."

Greatest in his line was not alone. Jesse was not alone in this estimate of himself. Carl Sandburg has said, "Jesse James is the only American bandit who is classical, who is to this country what Robin Hood or Dick Turpin is to England, whose exploits are so close to the mythical and the apocryphal."

Jesse James and Frank James are indeed legends even in our time. It is absolutely impossible to find someone who has not heard of Jesse James. Now the name Jesse James either invokes wonder, admiration, courage, or ire, hatred, and extreme animosity. The character of Jesse James will not allow anyone to stand in neutral territory, if there was such a thing. The truth is, you either love him or you hate him. You either admire him or you despise him.

You either believe that he was a freedom fighter and a helper of the defenseless or that he was nothing else than a thief and a murderer. The truth is this: most people have made up their minds about Jesse James based upon hearsay or some movie picture that they have seen. Very few individuals have really delved into the world and times of Jesse James. It is absolutely impossible to judge a man who lived 160 years ago by today's standards without knowing the times in which he lived. Do you realize we make the same mistake with a multitude of other individuals?

I've heard innumerable preachers criticize Martin Luther, the reformer. I can assure you there are subjects upon which I would disagree with Martin Luther. But when Martin Luther came on the scene, he was coming out of a thousand years of darkness, facing abysmal ignorance, and fighting the religious and political powers in order to preserve his life. It is easy to look back after a thousand years of light and say, "Well, if I had been Martin Luther, I wouldn't

have said that or I wouldn't have done that or I would have studied this." No.

You can only study, number one, what God in His providence places upon you and what the times demand that you study. In other words, our time basically is not our own. Especially if you are fighting just to preserve your life, you must understand that some men certainly would not have time to study out everything. And yet God used Martin Luther to start what you and I would know as the Reformation.

In order to understand men, we must understand their world and their times. Alexander Franklin James was born January the 10th, 1843, and died of old age February 18, 1915. So Frank James was alive until 1915. Jesse Woodson James was born September 5, 1847, and was murdered by Bob Ford on April 3, 1882.

The James Family Background

They were the sons of Reverend Robert and Zerelda, or Z., James. Frank and Jesse's father was a Baptist preacher and pastor. Robert James was a man of great intellectual interest. That intellectual interest is indicated by the fact that when his will was probated, an inventory of his assets was filed in Clay County in the probate court in 1851. It listed 51 books in his library dealing with mathematics, chemistry, philosophy, theology, astronomy,

Robert James was a Baptist pastor, a man of great intellect and ability, and a teacher of grammar, history, literature, Greek, Latin, and public speaking. He helped found William Jewell College in Missouri, which is still in existence as a Baptist college, and was one of its original trustees. He took over the pastorate of New Hope Baptist Church in Clay County, Missouri, reorganized the church, and saw its membership continue to grow. He also helped begin the North Liberty Baptist Association in 1844, Providence Baptist Church, and other churches.

By 1850, Robert James held unencumbered title to 275 acres of land that he farmed, on which he had built a modest home. How many people here can say, “I own 275 acres absolutely unencumbered”? There was no mortgage, and he owed nobody

anything. On the farm were thirty sheep, six head of cattle, three horses, a yoke of oxen, and seven slaves.

Besides Frank and Jesse, two other children were born into the family: Robert, on July the 19th, 1845, and Susan Levina, on November the 25th, 1849. However, Robert died in infancy.

Robert James left home in 1850 for the gold fields of California. His brother, Drury James, had already gone out there, and he was going out to act, I suppose, maybe as a missionary to the miners, probably trying to pan some gold for himself as well. Shortly after arriving in California, however, he died, many say of food poisoning. Robert James was dead at the age of thirty-two.

He is buried there in an unmarked grave, and no one knows exactly where he is buried. Zerelda, or Z. James, his wife, remarried a man by the name of Benjamin Sims. The marriage did not last long, because a few months after the marriage, Mr. Sims died. In September 1855, she married Dr. Reuben Samuel, who was a physician. Many books on the Jameses call him Dr. Samuels, plural with an S, but it was really Dr. Samuel. Dr. Samuel and Zerelda then had four additional children: Archie, John, Sally, and Fanny.

Jesse and Frank are the two best-known members of the James family. However, another brother, the half-brother Archie, became well known because of an incident that will be mentioned later as we consider the world and times of Jesse James. Frank and Jesse were pretty well educated. Their parents were college graduates.

Frank loved Shakespeare and often quoted Shakespeare, while Jesse loved the Bible. He memorized and quoted the Bible. J. A. Dacus, a contemporary of the Jameses, said that Jesse's Bible was so heavily underlined from constant and frequent reading that hardly anyone else was able to read it. Jesse loved the Bible and quoted the Bible.

He was a member of the Baptist Church and sang in the choir. His favorite hymn was "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." Jesse did not drink, did not use vulgar language, and always treated women in a gentlemanly manner.

Peterson, whom I will be quoting quite frequently, wrote a book on Quantrill and his guerrillas. It is one of the greatest books I have

ever read, and I may try to get some of these books for you to purchase. Jesse and Frank fought with Quantrill, so there is considerable information in that book about Jesse and Frank James. Peterson wrote concerning Jesse James: "He was a devout believer and was never known to swear or to use foul language."

That is an interesting quote. Jesse also acquired the nickname Dingus. The way he acquired it was that his pistol, which he held in his right hand, accidentally went off.

He shot the tip of one of the fingers off his left hand. When he did so, all he said was, “dingus.” He did not curse or use foul language, and people began calling him Dingus as a nickname.

Peterson gives these words concerning Frank and Jesse: “Neither he nor his brother Jesse was ever known to drink.” He quotes Frank as saying, “A man’s a fool to drink. It takes away his money and his brains and does him no good anyway.” Later in his life, Jesse admitted in a letter that he drank some beer. Jesse and Frank also played cards and raced horses. Racing horses was the thing of the day, and Jesse was certainly a good judge of horse flesh.

While Jesse lived in St. Joseph, a neighbor lady who frequently visited their home said concerning the James children, “No children could be brought up better than they were. Mrs. Howard,” an alias for Mrs. James, “used to take them to Sunday school regularly. She would read to them from their Sunday school papers and teach them to pray. And I know that they were good children. I fairly adored them.” She also said that, while they were in St. Joseph, Mrs. James was a frequent attender at the Presbyterian Church.

Jesse later wrote a letter to the Nashville Banner condemning the Pinkertons, who were a governmental detective agency.

Here is what he wrote concerning Alan Pinkerton. In the paper, he said, "Justice is slow, but sure. And there is a just God that will bring all to justice. Pinkerton, I hope and pray that our heavenly Father may deliver you into my hands. And I believe He will, for His merciful and protecting arm has ever been with me and shielded me."

"And during all my persecution, He has watched over me and protected me from workers of blood money who are trying to seek

my life. And I have hope and faith in Him and believe He will ever protect me as long as I serve Him." Jesse's wife Zerelda, who also was known as Z, was a devout Methodist.

Was Jesse James a Christian?

The question is, was Jesse James a Christian? If the answer is no, then we understand his life and conduct. If the answer is yes, another question automatically comes to mind: How could he turn to a life of crime, especially what you and I would know as robbing and killing? Scripture is exceedingly plain when it says, "thou shalt not steal" and "thou shalt not kill."

Before you say that it is not possible for a man to be a real believer and actually steal and kill, remember that in the Bible there was a man after God's own heart who did both: David. He stole Uriah's wife, and then had Uriah murdered by the sword of the children of Ammon. David was a man after God's own heart. Moreover, we know that David killed tens of thousands. When they were singing, they said, "Saul had slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." David was a man of war and spilled a lot of blood, and yet he was called a man after God's own heart.

There is another enigma in Scripture. I can understand David a whole lot easier than I can understand Abraham's nephew Lot. Based upon the testimony I originally read of Lot in the Old Testament, I would probably have said that Lot was lost. How a man could live in Sodom and Gomorrah with all the wickedness going on there and be a real, genuine Christian, I do not know. What gets me, though, is when those Sodomites surrounded his building and demanded the angels, how a believer could offer to turn over his daughters to them boggles my mind. I would have said emphatically that Lot was not a genuine Christian. Yet the Bible tells us in the New Testament that Lot vexed his righteous soul with their unlawful deeds. Lot was indeed a believer. Without the testimony of Scripture, I would certainly have judged him to be a lost man.

I really do not know whether Jesse James was truly a Christian. I do know that he made a profession of faith, was baptized, and tried to live right and do right on many occasions but was not allowed to do so. I will explain that later. I do know that circumstances—the

world and the times in which he lived—helped to mold his life. I do know that the premeditated violence inflicted upon the Missourians by the Jayhawkers cried for justice and vengeance. It is impossible to accurately judge a man's life so many years after his death when there are so many conflicting stories. Many have sought to explain the deeds of the James-Younger gang based upon their world and times. I honestly, genuinely believe that the world and times of Jesse and Frank James impacted them and others very greatly. Therefore, if we are going to understand these men, we must also understand their times.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act and Bleeding Kansas

Jesse James was from Missouri. Missouri was a slave state, but slaves made up only 9% of its population. However, about three-fourths of Missouri's people had slave-state backgrounds. You cannot understand what happened in Missouri without understanding the Kansas-Nebraska Act. New territory was going to be opened. Most Missourians favored opening the Kansas territory without restriction upon slavery, but even the pro-slavery men were satisfied with the arrangements made in 1854, presuming that Kansas would be a slave state and Nebraska a free state.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act was a bill that became law on May 30th, 1854. It was on that date that Congress established the Kansas and Nebraska territories. These territories had long needed to be organized, and their organization was certainly overdue. An isolated issue of territorial organization was practically no problem. However, the territorial issue was irrevocably bound to the bitter sectional controversy over the extension of slavery into the territories, and it was further complicated by what was known as the projected Transcontinental Railroad. Under no circumstances did pro-slavery congressmen want Kansas to be a free state, and under no circumstances did the Radical Republicans want Kansas to be a slave state. There was already a political fight and political intrigue over Kansas and Nebraska.

In 1854, when Congress opened these lands to white settlement, it instituted what was known as popular sovereignty. By that term, it meant that the people who settled in those states or territories would

decide for themselves whether they would be slave states or free states.

Thus, the abolitionists, who were the anti-slavery people, were satisfied, and the pro-slavery people were also satisfied because most of them thought Kansas would turn out to be a slave state and Nebraska would turn out to be a free state, which would keep and maintain the balance. Had Kansas become a slave state and Nebraska a free state, the balance of power would have remained the same. However, organizations in the North were determined to ensure that Kansas did not become a slave state. The people of Missouri understood that if Kansas became a free state on the border of Missouri, then everything in Missouri would be in peril and danger at the same time.

What I am saying is vitally important. You cannot understand the warfare that existed between Kansas and Missouri without understanding this bitter sectional rivalry. Literally, all hell broke loose on both sides. The people of Missouri realized that they and their property were in danger if Kansas became a free state, so the Missourians wanted to take action. At Liberty, Missouri, only fifteen miles from the Samuel Farm, the Democratic platform, which was a newspaper, printed this: “Let every man that owns a Negro go to Kansas and settle, and our northern brethren will be compelled to hunt further north for a location. Kansas must be a slave state if half the citizens of Missouri had to immigrate there with musket in hand, prepared to die for the cause. Shall we allow such cutthroats and murderers to settle in the territory joining our own state? No!”

“If popular opinion will not keep them back, we should see what virtue there is in the favor of our arms.” What were they saying? If we cannot stop those Radical Republicans and abolitionists from settling peacefully in this land next to us, they said, we will resort to arms. Missourians did indeed cross over the border into Kansas, some to reside there, some to influence the elections, and some to intimidate immigrants from the North. Jackson, Clay, Lafayette, and nearby counties were the marshalling points for these activities. Prominent citizens of the region, including some of Missouri’s most important political leaders, led forays into Kansas to make sure that

Kansas was adopted as a slave state. Soon the nation was hearing of "bleeding Kansas."

The Radical Republicans and the abolitionists took the few incidents that did happen and propagandized them for their own advantage. It was not simply this sectional controversy that caused the problems. There were those sectional controversies. You remember John Brown, who murdered men and cut them down with a sword, chopped them to pieces, and mutilated them because they were Southerners. John Brown certainly was there. The men on the Missouri side were known as the Border Ruffians; those on the Kansas side were known as the Jayhawkers or the Red Legs.

Jayhawker Atrocities Against Missourians

The debate over slavery was not the only cause of ill feelings. Competition for land and conflict over claims probably caused just as much trouble, if not more, than the slavery question. Moreover, political intrigue and rivalry for patronage in the new territory created problems. Congressmen, judges, and everybody else were involved. The first wave of settlers in Kansas were mainly Southerners, used to sweat, hard work, and honest toil. They claimed farmland and began to build the area. The second wave were mostly Northerners. They were not necessarily looking for work; they were looking for an easy life and a quick fortune. Why?

The abolitionists in the East organized in the North and assisted by sending people to settle in Kansas, in order to make Kansas an anti-slavery state. The arrival and settlement of these Northerners aroused the opposition of the pro-slavery Missourians. They reasoned once again that if Kansas became a free state, slave property in Missouri would not be safe.

If they had only known that it was not simply slave property that would be in danger, but their own homes, livelihoods, and lives that would be demanded to satisfy the lust and wickedness of the radical abolitionists, I can assure you they would have done a double turnover. The Missouri border, during and after the war, was the scene of the greatest savagery in American history. I am going to illustrate it later.

One author said this, and I concur wholeheartedly: the war lasted four years in most states; in Missouri, it lasted twenty years. The abolitionists, radical Republicans, Jayhawkers, and Red Legs were all names describing the same group. You can also call them Free Soilers. They not only hated slavery; they hated Southerners and anything Southern. Major A.V.E. Johnson of the 39th Missouri Militia, a federal force, swore, quote, “to devastate the country and leave the habitations of southern men not one stone upon another.”

“Extermination, in fact, was what they all need.” In other words, he said, “I am going to destroy everything and kill every one of them.” Senator James Henry Lane, known as Jim Lane, was one of the most notorious Jayhawker and Red Legs leaders. In one of his speeches to the Kansas settlements, he said, quote, “Missourians are wolves, snakes, devils, and damn their souls. I want to see them cast into a burning hell. We believe in a war of extermination.”

“There is no such thing as union men in the border of Missouri. I want to see every foot of ground in Jackson, Cass and Bates counties in Missouri burned over and everything laid waste.” How are those words for a United States Senator? Lane unfolded his plans, shaped evidently by the recent experiences of his brigade, to General McClellan. He proposed to extirpate disloyalty in Missouri and Arkansas. If conciliatory measures were not successful, he said he would employ the most violent means: “Sir, if I can't do better, I will kill the white rebels and give their lands to loyal blacks.”

Gangs of Jayhawkers, abolitionists, free soilers, freebooters, and Red Legs—all names for the same group—would come into Missouri, raid, kill, plunder, and steal, then return to Lawrence. They took their booty and auctioned it publicly in the streets, and no one dared to interfere. An eyewitness wrote: “They did not hesitate to shoot inquisitive and troublesome people. At Lawrence, the livery stables were full of their stolen horses. One day I saw three or four Red Legs attack a Missourian who was in town searching for lost property. They gathered about him with drawn revolvers and drove him off very unceremoniously. I once saw Hoyt, the leader, without a word of explanation or warning, open fire upon a stranger quietly riding down Massachusetts Street. He was a Missourian whom Hoyt had recently robbed.”

"The gang contained men of the most desperate and hardened character, and a full recital of their deeds would sound like the biography of devils. Either the people of Lawrence could not drive out the freebooters, or they thought it mattered little what happened to Missouri disloyalists. Governor Robinson made a determined but unsuccessful effort to break up the organization. The Red Legs repaid the interference by plots of his assassination, which barely miscarried."

So when any Missourian came into Kansas looking for his property, they would simply kill him. Before the war broke out in 1861, Jayhawkers had been leading raids into Missouri as early as 1854. The war did not begin until 1861, but Missouri was being raided in 1854. Why? Because radical Republicans and abolitionists were being sent into Kansas, and they believed that any southerner was open prey. Especially if a southerner happened to have slaves, he was considered lawful and legitimate prey.

Nothing would ever be done to them. The term jayhawker simply means someone who loots, steals, and kills. Some birds are called camp robbers. If you have ever camped out west, you may have seen these large birds come in and steal everything you have as far as food is concerned. Jayhawkers means the same thing: they are thieves, people who steal.

They got the name Red Legs because they stole several wagonloads of calfskins. The calfskins were red, so they wrapped them around their legs and used them to keep off moisture and briars. Thus they got the name Red Legs. In the movie "Outlaw Josey Wales," those Kansas Jayhawkers have red legs, with their pants dyed red or something wrapped around their legs, because they were known as Red Legs. As early as 1854, they had been raiding into Missouri.

Many of the people sent into Kansas were sent by the New England Immigrant Society. They sent crooks, rascals, and ruffians, many already trained in thievery and trying to live down their past. Some did not believe in property rights; therefore, they looked upon slave owners as legitimate prey. Later, they believed that anyone who believed in secession was legitimate prey. Still later, they looted,

robbed, raped, and killed even loyal Union men with equal enthusiasm. It simply did not matter to them.

In 1857 and 1859, droughts caused the brooks, streams, and many rivers to dry up. Fortunes were lost, crops failed, and families had nothing to live on. In 1860, a plague of grasshoppers ruined the crops. Those who were able to return east did so.

Others remained to fend for themselves, where theft, robbing, looting, burning, and murdering became a way of life. The problem was that the Jayhawkers who came into Missouri and looted, robbed, raped, and murdered were not, and would not be, prosecuted as criminals because they were abolitionists. Their deeds were done in the name of abolitionism. Therefore, they were protected by the government of Kansas, which was run by the radical Republicans, or abolitionists. The Kansas government turned a blind eye to their criminal acts, and the federal government condoned their raids. The Radical Republicans were in charge in Washington, D.C.

The Sacking of Osceola and Government Complicity

One such raid was against Osceola, Missouri, a prosperous town in southwest Missouri. There were no Confederate soldiers stationed there, and the town had absolutely no military value. Yet Jim Lane, James Montgomery, led their Jayhawkers into Osceola. They took the men who lived there, court-martialed them, shot them, and hanged them. The banks and stores were looted, the homes were ransacked and robbed, and the town was burned to the ground. Of 800 buildings, only three were left standing. Three thousand people were left homeless, without food or the necessary means to purchase anything, because everything had been stolen from them. In 1861, Osceola had over 3,000 residents; in 1865, only 183 remained.

The brigade chaplain of the Jayhawkers, the Reverend Hugh Fisher, helped loot the churches before applying the torch to them. That is how he furnished his church building—with stolen property from Missouri churches.

The very government that was supposed to protect the southern people took everything from them that they held sacred, including

their lives and property. The federal government, the state government of Kansas, and the usurped government of Missouri did everything they could to subjugate and eradicate the Southern people. Federal General Nathaniel Lyon captured Jefferson City, the capital of Missouri, and, under federal bayonets, dismissed the lawfully elected government and instituted what was known as a rump government of loyal men.

Those who did not go along with him were arrested and tried for treason. Thus the federal and state governments were arrayed against anything and everything that was Southern. It was not just the federal government, but also the Kansas and Missouri governments. Outrages were so constant and continuous that J.T.K. Howard, a pro-union general agent, wrote to John W. Brooks, who forwarded his letter to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton:

“When there is added to this the irregularities of the soldiery, such as taking of poultry, pigs, milk, butter, preserves, potatoes, horses, and in fact everything they want, entering in and searching houses, and stealing in many cases, committing rapes upon the Negroes and such like things. The effect has been to make a great many Union men inveterate enemies and if these things continue much longer, our cause is ruined.

“These things are not exaggerated by me and though they do not characterize all the troops, several regiments have conducted in this way and have also repeatedly fired on peaceable citizens sometimes from trains as they passed and no punishment or none of any account has been meted out to them. If the thing goes on this way much longer, we're ruined. I fear we cannot run the road or live in the country except under military protection. It's enough to drive a people to madness and it is doing so fast.”

The effect of the federal troops was making a great many Union men inveterate enemies. In other words, he recognized the problem. Union General Henry W. Halleck, whose nickname was “Brains,” telegraphed George B. McClellan: “The conduct of these forces under Lane and Jennison has done more for the enemy in this state than could have been accomplished by 20,000 of his own army. I receive almost daily complaints of outrages committed by these men in the name of the United States.”

Union Generals Condemn Jayhawker Outrages

The evidence is so conclusive as to leave no doubt of their correctness. It is rumored that Lane has been made a Brigadier General. I cannot conceive of a more injudicious appointment. It will take 20,000 men to counteract its effect in this state and, moreover, is offering a premium for rascality and robbing generals.

Here is a Union general saying that what Lane and Jennison have done is accomplishing more for the enemy—the Confederacy—than 20,000 of their own soldiers could accomplish. Federal General George Caleb Bingham wrote to Missouri Congressman Rawlings, stating, "Jennison should be executed, for if he were hanged, Confederate General Sterling Price would lose thereby the best recruiting officer he ever had."

When these people came into Missouri, and committed these outrages against loyal Union men, they drove even loyal Union men into the Confederate Army. The Southerners were willing to fight more effectively because of the outrages against them. Union General Richard C. Vaughan wrote to U.S. Attorney General Edward Bates: "It is a fact well known to me that hundreds of people in Jackson and Cass counties are true and loyal men. They have already been robbed of their property, insulted and in many cases murdered by these troops from Kansas. The policy has caused many good men to leave their homes and to fly to the bushes for protection while others have actually joined the guerrillas as a measure of safety believing they would be less liable to danger there than in their homes."

Here is a third Union general saying exactly the same thing. After a while, these Jayhawkers did not differentiate between Southerners and Union men. They robbed, raped, murdered, and plundered, all without discrimination. Their fiercest wrath was reserved for Southerners, but Union men were also targets of opportunity.

Southern men were scalped by the Jayhawkers; their ears, fingers, and noses were cut off. Many times Southerners were not just killed; they were mutilated simply because they were Southerners.

Jesse James's Personal Experience of Injustice

Jesse James and Frank James were born and lived in a world and a time known for cruelty and atrocities. John Samuel, Jesse's half-brother, gave this account of Jesse's original run-in with the governmental forces: Jesse was out plowing in the field when some northern soldiers came to the place to look for Frank. Jesse was only 16 at the time.

He says, actually, he was fifteen; he was not quite sixteen. But he says Jesse was only sixteen at the time. They beat him up, then went to the house and asked where Frank was. Mother and father did not know, or pretended not to know, but the soldiers would not believe them. They took father out and hanged him by the neck to a tree. After a while, they took him down and gave him another chance to tell. Of course, he could not. So they hanged him up again.

They did that three times. In other words, just before he strangled or choked, they would let him down. Then they took him back to the house and told mother they were going to shoot him. She begged them not to do it, but they took him off into the woods north of the house and fired their guns without shooting him. They took him to another town and put him in jail. My mother did not know until the next day that he had not been shot, because the soldiers ordered her to remain in the house if she did not want to be shot too.

Jesse, then a mere boy plowing in the field, was also led forth with a rope around his neck, abused quite severely, and struck several times with the sabers of the men—that is, with the flat side. He was savagely threatened with death if either he or his stepfather were ever heard of again giving aid or encouragement to southern soldiers. That was not all. The same week, his mother and sister were arrested, carried to St. Joseph, and thrown into a most filthy prison. It should be pointed out that Mrs. Samuel was pregnant at the time of her arrest.

The hardships they endured were simply terrible: often without adequate food, insulted by their captors, and cut off from all communication with the world. His sister was brought near to death's door by a fever that followed her imprisonment. The mother and she were released a little later, the mother greatly emaciated,

which caused her to age a great deal. The week after his stepfather was hanged, after he was dragged to watch his stepfather being hanged and beaten with sabers, and after his mother and sister were arrested and thrown into prison, Jesse, not sixteen years old, mounted the best horse on the place and rode with all speed to the camp.

of William Clark Quantrill where he joined up with Quantrill's guerrillas. I want to quote from this fellow several more times in the next two weeks. I want to read an article written by John Newman Edwards. John Newman Edwards was a Confederate soldier and a major. He was General Joe Shelby's adjutant and chronicler, and he also went with Joe Shelby to Mexico after the war. He wrote a number of articles, including "Shelby's Expeditions to Mexico" and "Noted Guerrillas." John Newman Edwards was a great writer and a great defender of the James boys. I am going to read this article and make some applications where he describes the Kansas Jayhawker.

John Newman Edwards's Description of the Jayhawker

"The original Jayhawker was a growth indigenous to the soil of Kansas. There belonged to him as things of course a preemption, a chronic case of chills and fevers, one starved cow, and seven dogs, a longing for his neighbor's goods and chattels, a Sharps rifle when he could get it, and something of a Bible for hypocrisy's sake, something that savored of the real presence of the book to give backbone to his canting and snuffling. In some respects a mountebank, in others a scoundrel, in all a thief, he was a character eminently adapted for civil war which produces more adventurers than heroes."

His hands were large and hairy and red, proof of inherited laziness, and a slouching gait added to the broad handling of the Confederate irregulars in Missouri during the war. A slouching gait also added to the ungainliness of his figure when he walked. The type was all of a kind. The mouth generally wore a calculating smile, the only distinguishable gift remaining of a Puritan ancestry; but when he felt he was looked at, the calculating smile became sanctimonious. Slavery concerned him only as the slaveholder was supposed to be rich.

Just so long as Beecher presided over immigration aid societies, preached highway robbery, defended political murder, and sent something to the Jayhawkers in the way of real fruits and funds, there surely was a God in Israel, and Beecher was the great high priest. Otherwise, they all might go to the devil together. The Jayhawker was not brave. He would fight when he had to fight, but he would not stand in the last ditch and shoot away his last cartridge.

Born to nothing and eternally out at the elbows, what else could he do but laugh and be glad when chance kicked a country into war and gave purple and fine linen to a whole lot of bummers and beggars? In the saddle he rode like a sacked sandbag or a sack of meal. The eternal agar cake made a trotting horse his abomination, and he had no use for a thoroughbred save to steal him.

When he abandoned John Brown and rallied to the standard of Jim Lane, when he gave up the fanatic enclave unto the thief, he simply changed his leader without changing his principles. So John Edward Newman certainly had no use for the Jayhawker.

Applications from Isaiah 59

Let us take some applications today. Isaiah 59:14 says, “And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off, for truth is fallen in the street.” When truth is fallen, equity, justice, or that which is right cannot enter. Verse 13 says, “In transgressing and lying against the Lord and departing away from our God, speaking what? Oppression, revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.” Isaiah 59:12 through 15 teaches us that when truth is fallen into the streets, the ultimate result is chaos, confusion, and injustice.

We see this truth exemplified in federal and Missouri politics before, during, and after the War of Northern Aggression, and especially in the life of Jesse James. By extension, this is in all probability where we are headed as a country today.

The Hebrew word for justice is the same Hebrew word translated righteousness in our Bibles. Justice and righteousness are identical; they relate to the same truth. Without righteousness, there can be no justice, and without justice, there can be no righteousness. These

concepts stand or fall together. What is happening in our judicial system? We do not have biblical justice, God's justice. Consequently, we have no righteousness in this country and no righteousness in our government.

A third application is this: There are no excuses for sin, rebellion, and disobedience to the Word of God. However, we must understand that anarchy is often the outcome of tyranny. When civil leaders fail to execute justice and promote righteousness, there will always be some who seek to see that justice is done in some measure.

We cannot understand the lives of Jesse and Frank James until we understand their world and times. When we see what else happened to them in the next lesson, what surprises me is that there were not a thousand Jesse and Frank James. Where there is no justice, a civilized society withers and dies.

Many of you heard that a little Shasta County girl was found, but they cannot find her brother. The man who was with her was a third degree child molester, a pedophile, and he was just let out on $15,000 bond. There is no telling what he has done to that little girl. The little boy is probably dead. I heard last night on the news about this Couey fellow, who raped and murdered a little girl. They forgot to read him his rights. He asked for a lawyer, and they did not give him one. Now his confession is going to be thrown out, they will have to start all over, and they can use nothing against him.

What is going to happen? They will keep letting murderers, rapists, and kidnappers out until either society dies or society turns into vigilantes and kills them. You cannot have a civilized society with injustice in the government. It cries out from the ground.

Do you remember what our Lord said to Cain? “Where is your brother Abel? His blood cries out to me from the ground.” The blood of innocent men and women cry for justice. Without it, we will perish as a society.

Father, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ that You would help us see the absolute importance of justice and righteousness. Teach us, Lord, where we have been and where we're headed when we despise and refuse Your Word and Your Truth. Give us grace and mercy to

bow to Thee and apply Thy Word to our lives. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 2

The World And Times Of Jesse James

Part Two of Three

SCRIPTURE READING - Isaiah 59:12-15 (KJV)

Introduction and Scripture Reading

> "For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us. For our transgressions are with us, and as far as our iniquities, we know them. In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood, and judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off, for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself of prey. And the Lord saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no judgment."

Last week I began by showing how God demands justice, and how, without justice, a society basically withers and dies. Not only that, but evil men increase worse and worse.

Review of Historical Background

> May I point out the fact, once again, that as you and I think of history, we must understand that history is nothing less than God's eternal decree coming to pass in time. We began to understand the background of the times of Jesse James, especially with the Kansas and Nebraska Act of 1854, where those pro-slavery states assumed and believed that Kansas would come in as a slave state and Nebraska would come in as a free state. Therefore, the balance between the slave states and the non-slaveholding states would be maintained.
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> But, of course, that was not to be the case. The Immigrant Aid Society in the North began sending radical Republicans and abolitionists into Kansas to try to claim it as a free state. Border wars erupted. Those people from Missouri were known as the Border Ruffians. Those from Kansas were known as Jayhawkers or Free Soilers, or Red Legs, or Abolitionists, or Radical Republicans—just all kinds of names. The Jayhawkers basically began raiding into Missouri even as early as 1854.
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> So there was a tremendous animosity that existed back then. I gave you a number of quotes, which I'm not going to do today, showing how union generals and union leaders understood that the Jayhawkers were raping, murdering, pillaging, burning, and looting from people in Missouri. Not only were they doing that to people who were slave owners, they were doing it to Southerners in general, and later on, they did not even distinguish between loyal Union men.

They simply raped, robbed, and killed any and every one that they came across. Now may I remind you, since this is in reference to Jesse James, how that when he was 15 years old, he was out plowing in the field and the soldiers came out and got him. They put a rope around him and drug him. They beat him, not only with a rope, but they also beat him with the flat edge of their sabers.

Atrocities Against the James Family

They took his stepfather and hanged him by the neck three to four times, letting him down each time. Although they did not kill him,

the lack of oxygen to his brain certainly diminished his capacity for the rest of his life. He was basically destroyed mentally, so to speak. He certainly had some of his mentality left, but it certainly was diminished from that incessant hanging. At the same time, they physically abused his mother, who was pregnant, arrested her, threw her in jail, and mishandled and abused her so much that it caused her to miscarry.

Certainly, the injustice of any or all of these things would be sufficient to drive an individual to seek vengeance, especially when the very government that is supposed to protect is the instigator of the atrocities. Let me deal with a word by way of introduction today, a word that you have known and heard probably all of your life, but have never taken the time to look up the legal definition. That is the word vigilante.

Vigilantism is usually misunderstood and misused. Whenever you hear the word vigilante or vigilantism, you automatically think of individuals who are “taking the law into their own hands.” In other words, here individuals just mere anarchist; they are not waiting for a trial, but simply take the law in their own hands and do what they are going to do. If you look up the word vigilante or vigilantism, you will be amazed. Vigilantism refers to the creation and enforcement of law by organized extralegal groups in the supposed absence of adequate law enforcement.

Definition and Origin of Vigilantism

In other words, vigilante or vigilantism could have a good or a bad connotation. However, originally it had a good connotation because it was the creation and enforcement of the law by an organized, not disorderly or anarchistic, extra-legal group. They were not necessarily the sheriff, the marshals, or the government, but this organized extra-legal group came to enforce the law in the absence of adequate law enforcement.

Vigilantism, as you and I know it, actually began in the United States in 1767 in South Carolina, where backcountry people suffered from widespread criminal acts. Where there was no law enforcement, there was no justice. So what did the people do? They

organized themselves, undertook to defend themselves, and effected justice as they were able to do so.

The word vigilante, or vigilanteism, comes from vigilant or vigilance. Listen to Black's Law Dictionary's definition of vigilance: "Watchfulness, precaution, a proper degree of promptness in pursuing one's rights or guarding them from infraction, or in making or discovering opportunities for the enforcement of one's lawful claims and demands." Technically and legally speaking, all vigilantes are doing is protecting and guarding themselves and their rights, and enforcing their lawful claims in the absence of a power that will not do it for them. It is interesting how the word has come to be misused.

Missourians had the right to life, liberty, and property exactly as people in other states did. When the government—by which I mean not only the federal government, but also the state government—abused its power, usurped its authority, and refused to protect the people, the people did what any other people would do: They defended and protected themselves.

Times were exceedingly bad during the war, and in Missouri they were probably worse even after the war was over. Someone has aptly said that the war lasted four years in most states, but in Missouri it lasted twenty years, accounting for the pre-war acts and vendettas beginning in 1854, as well as Reconstruction after the war. Certainly, it was a long time in Missouri. The war created great animosity, especially along the border of Missouri and Kansas.

Southern men were not just killed; they were tortured, mutilated, and murdered. Many of the men who were killed were not Confederate soldiers, partisan rangers, or guerrillas. They were simply farm men who happened to be working to acquire a decent living, and they were in the wrong place at the wrong time.

High George was one of the men who followed Quantrill. Here is the reason he gave for joining Quantrill and fighting for the Southern Cause: "They burned and took everything I had, killed my father, hung my brother." Many Southerners were scalped or had their ears or fingers cut off so the Jayhawkers could wear them as souvenirs. Young male members of the family were equally dealt a fatal blow.

I want to prepare you for what I am about to tell you. I have been doing additional studying, and in a few weeks I am going to bring a message entitled The War Against Women and Children. You will be flabbergasted at what was done to women and children by the federal soldiers. Listen carefully. Here is a sampling.

In Jackson County, Missouri, 13-year-old John Fox, who had a brother with Quantrill, was shot and killed by federal soldiers while his sister and mother held him, begging for his life and asking the soldiers to spare him. They gunned him down regardless. He was charged with feeding his brother. Federal soldiers also killed 14-year-old James Nicholson because he had two brothers serving under General Sterling Price. Thirty-five-year-old Henry Morris was serving with Colonel Upton Hayes when Federals rode up and gunned down his 11-year-old son. Why? Because their father fought with the Confederacy.

Southern women were raped, tortured, and imprisoned simply because they had a husband, brother, or son who fought for the Confederacy. The Berry brothers—Dick, James, and Isaac—left their father and four sisters at home. Federal soldiers from the neighboring town of Danville raped 20-year-old Catherine, 18-year-old Nancy, 14-year-old Elizabeth, and 11-year-old Sally Ann.

Frank Dalton, a cousin to Frank and Jesse, wrote this: “Jenison’s Jayhawkers, visiting the home of the James brothers and taking the women, Aunt Zerelda, the mother of Frank and Jesse, their sister, and my mother and sisters, and after stripping them to the waist, they tied them to trees and taking”

A black snake whip that they found in the stable, they whipped them until they got tired and then rode away, leaving the women and girls to be cut down and carried into the house by our Negro slaves, who washed and bandaged their bleeding backs and bodies and put them to bed. Would it tend to upset you if your mothers and sisters were treated like that? A number of the young women—and this is what I am going to teach on a little bit later—were rounded up, arrested, and thrown into a dilapidated tenement used as a prison for the crime of pro-Confederate cheering. That is, they cheered for the South.

General Thomas Ewing, a Union general, took over the District of the Border on June 16, 1863. He was the adopted brother as well as brother-in-law of General William Tecumseh Sherman. Sherman had already expressed his attitude and treatment toward civilians, and I want you to understand that Ewing had the same attitude. Sherman said:

"Next year their lands will be taken, for in war we can take them, and rightfully too, and another year they may beg in vain for their lives. A people who will persevere in a way beyond a certain limit ought to know the consequences. Many, many people with less pertinacity than the South have been wiped out of national existence. To those who submit to the rightful law and authority, all gentleness and forbearance. But to the petulant and persistent secessionists, why death is mercy and the quicker he or she is disposed of is the better."

He was not talking just about soldiers; he was talking about civilians. General Ewing embraced the same philosophy. The Union Army could not break the resistance in Missouri, so on January 20, 1863, Ewing issued the infamous General Order Number 10 from the headquarters of the Department of Missouri:

Wartime and Post-War Injustice in Missouri

"All persons"—note the word persons—"who shall knowingly harbor, conceal, aid, or abet by furnishing food, clothing, information, protection, or any assistance whatever to any emissary, confederate officer, or soldier, partisan ranger, bushwhacker, robber, or thief shall be promptly executed."

Thus, any person who provided food, information, or medical treatment for any Confederate soldier was to be promptly executed. Of course, that meant that no husband, son, or brother could expect any help or charity from his own family, not even if he happened to be dying.

Who in his right mind would obey such a military order and allow his son, brother, father, or husband to starve, suffer want, or go without medical attention? General Order Number 10 was designed to legally execute anyone who offered Christian charity, whether to

his own family or to a stranger. It did not matter whether that person was a man, woman, boy, or girl.

Now listen carefully. General Orders Number 11 followed Number 10. Issued on August 25, 1863, General Orders Number 11 gave the general populace until September 9, 1863, either to locate to a Union outpost or leave the state. What was happening under General Orders Number 11? Here is what was happening.

Southern people were being driven from their homes simply because they were Southerners. In other words, here was Ewing's plan: "I can't whip the Confederate guerrillas, but what I can do is destroy their base of operation and their base of supply and cut off anyone who would try to sympathize with them or try to help them."

In Cass County, Missouri, before General Ewing's order, 9,794 people lived there. After his order and after his soldiers forced the people from the land, fewer than 600 were allowed to remain. That was just in Cass County. General Orders Number 11 was designed to decimate the support of the guerrillas fighting against the Union by destroying their base of support.

It was one of the harshest military measures used against civilians in American history. Not all Union generals agreed with General Ewing. General George Caleb Bingham, whose name you will hear later, opposed Ewing's infamous order. He was a Union general, and he viewed the order for what it really was. Here are General Bingham's words: "It was an act of purely arbitrary power directed against a disarmed and defenseless population in violation of every principle of justice."

He continued: "Scarcely was the ink dry upon the paper, when like a pack of infuriated and starved bloodhounds, they," that is, the soldiers, "were unleashed and turned loose upon the horror-stricken communities. Never was a robbery so stupendous, more cunningly devised, or successfully accomplished with less personal risk to the robbers." Those soldiers went into Missouri, killed, raped, robbed, and stole, and there was no one to stop them. The order was carried out with such zeal and enthusiasm that soon the border region of Missouri was given a nickname: the Burnt Region.

The red leg seized upon the opportunity to burn, loot, and steal. William Gregg, who also rode with Quantrill, said, “All the wealth left by these people was either burned, appropriated by the federal government or the Kansans, for which these people never received a single cent from any source.” In other words, either the Kansas state government or the federal government simply confiscated all their property, belongings, and money.

Elvira Scott described the Red Legs as “the lowest, most desperate looking specimens of humanity it has ever been my lot to witness.” The Red Legs broke into the home of an elderly man and hanged him from a tree in his yard to make him tell where his money was hidden. His wife had just died, and her casket was sitting on chairs in the parlor when the Jayhawkers broke open the lid and cut off her finger to steal her wedding ring. They then set the house on fire, and the two daughters were forced to drag the coffin into the yard while the house burned down around them. Thankfully, they were able to cut their father down and nurse him back to health.

One Red Leg officer boasted that a squad of his men was responsible for burning more than 110 houses, some of them worth, he said, as much as $20,000. That was 20,000 gold dollars. One squad of men burned down 110 homes worth thousands of dollars. If one squad burned down 110 homes, what did all the rest of the squads do?

One Red Leg crowed, “The border counties of Missouri have almost as desolate an appearance as before the soil was trod by the white man. Not a man, woman, or child is to be seen in the country to which Order Number 11 applies. Chimneys mark the spot where once stood costly farmhomes. Cattle and hogs are fast destroying large fields of corn. Prairie fires are burning up miles of good fencing every day or two. And turn whichever way you will, everything denotes a state of utter desolation and ruin.”

He said Missouri looked as if no man had ever trod the land. It was absolutely devastating. The war was devastating, not just to Missouri, but to Missourians. People suffered in that war in many states, and some suffered on both sides. However, from my study, I believe the bitterest, most violent, and hateful acts were committed

against the people of Missouri, which would create more ill will once the war was over.

The same radicals who had pushed the country into war were not about to allow their defeated foe any rest, release, or voice in the government after the war was over.

General Lee had surrendered at Appomattox, and the fighting had basically stopped everywhere. Jesse James and some of his men decided that the best thing would be to surrender themselves and make an agreement so they could peacefully return to their homes. Jesse and a number of Confederate soldiers met with Major J. B. Rogers, the Provost Marshal. They were told they would have to surrender their horses and arms. Jesse and the other men replied that they could not do so because they feared too many Union men would try to take vengeance upon them; they needed their horses and arms to defend themselves.

Major Rogers was understanding. He said, “Look, I will allow you to keep your horses and your arms. Since you are willing to surrender, if you will come back tomorrow, I will have the official papers drawn up for you to sign. As far as you are concerned, the war will be over.”

Failed Surrender and Forced Outlawry

Jesse and the men left Major Rogers. As they rode out, they were met by eight federal soldiers who happened to be the advance guard of sixty federal soldiers. When the eight Union soldiers saw Jesse James and his men, they immediately drew their pistols and opened fire at point-blank range. Jesse and his men drew their revolvers and shot back, killing four and wounding two. By the time that skirmish was over, the other sixty soldiers were upon them, and they had to fight sixty additional men.

During the skirmish, Jesse was wounded in the right lung. Some men struck out in a different direction, and the Federals chased those who appeared to be getting away. Jesse and his horse both fell, and thankfully the horse fell on top of him. Soldiers riding past Jesse, after he had already been shot, continued firing their revolvers

at him as they chased the other Confederates. Although they missed Jesse, they killed his horse.

Jesse was not dead. He disentangled himself, crawled toward the woods to escape, and reached a little tree. Remember, he was wounded in the right lung. He grasped a branch to steady himself and killed the first federal trooper.

He shot the second one from the saddle, wounding him. The man hit the ground and began to run the other way. Then he shot the third man from his saddle, and the other two decided they did not want to chase him anymore and turned around and left. Jesse crawled to a creek, where he bathed his wound, and lay there for two days with a burning fever. Finally, he was able to get up a little strength and crawled to a nearby field where a man was plowing. The man found him, took him to the doctor, and saved his life. It would take Jesse nearly three years to recover from that wound.

Here was a man who had tried to turn himself in and surrender. What did he get? He got shot, and his men got shot. Frank, Jesse's brother, came back into Missouri. All he wanted was to return to the farm, just like Jesse. When Frank came back into Missouri, he was challenged by four federal soldiers. They provoked and pushed the attack, so Frank drew his revolver, killed two of them instantly, wounded a third, and was himself wounded in the hip by the fourth, who then turned and fled. A doctor saved Frank's life, although his hip bothered him for the rest of his life.

Think about this: here were men, after the war was over, returning and wanting to settle down, farm, and live peacefully. Both were attacked by federal soldiers. In December 1866—remember, the war was over in April 1865—the federal authorities passed a law demanding that every able-bodied man over eighteen either register for or join the state militia, which they knew the Confederates would not do.

Those who refused were to be arrested, jailed, and fined twenty-five dollars each. They knew those Confederates would never join the militia. Most Confederate soldiers who lived in Missouri and returned there simply wanted to return to a normal life. Jesse and Frank did return to the farm and tried farming. However, prices at

that time were basically at starvation level, and it was almost impossible to eke out a living on the farm. Moreover, these regulators—federal troops and state militia—were roaming the country, trying to ferret out every Confederate they could find and settle old scores.

They promised to give any returning rebel a swift bullet or a short rope. In 1866, one year after the surrender of Appomattox, 4,000 secessionists, quote-unquote, or 4,000 Southern people, were murdered in southwest Missouri. That was not the whole state of Missouri, but one region. What was happening? Federal soldiers and the state militia were hunting the Confederates down and killing them one by one.

On February 18, 1867, nearly two years after the war was over, five state militiamen rode out to the James farm in Kearney, Missouri, looking for the James boys. Assistant Adjutant General William Clark had ordered that all guerrilla leaders were to be brought in dead or alive. The militiamen banged on the door with the butts of their pistols, demanding entry.

Jesse was still at home, recuperating from the gunshot in his lung. His stepfather, Dr. Samuel, rushed in and asked him what he should do. Jesse said, “Help me to the window.” As Dr. Samuel helped him there, Jesse looked out and saw five horses with cavalry saddles upon them. Jesse said, “Now help me to the door.” He knew it was either them or him.

When Dr. Samuel helped him to the door, Jesse cocked his pistol and shot through the crack, killing the militiaman who was demanding entrance. He then flung the door open and killed two more instantly, wounded another, and the fifth escaped in the darkness. Thus Jesse and Frank, who had come home and tried to surrender peacefully, were forced to take to the bush and live as outlaws because of government troops and governmental regulations.

Peaceful pursuits were denied the former Confederates. Harrison Trow, a man who also rode with Quantrill, said, “The law which should have protected them was overwritten. Indeed there was no law. The courts were the instruments of plunder. The civil officers

were cutthroats. Instead of a legal process there was a vigilance committee. Men were hung because of a very natural desire to keep hold of their own property."

"To the cruel vigor of actual war, there had succeeded the irresponsible despotism of greedy highwaymen, blustering upon assassination. The border counties were overrun with bands of predatory plunderers." Some Confederate soldiers dared not return home, and many guerrillas fled the country.

He described the times in these words: "Indeed, there was no law. The courts were instruments of plunder. The civil officers were cutthroats." That is almost prophetic, isn't it? James Cummings of Clay County, who attended the same Baptist church as the James boys, said, "When the war was over and I wanted to settle down, they, the Federals, would not let me, but they pursued me with malignant hatred."

Federal vengeance was so fierce that many men were compelled to become outlaws in order to protect and provide for themselves and their families. This was so notable in Missouri that the state obtained the nickname "the outlaw state."

Most of our infamous and notorious outlaws known from history were made so by the government. That may surprise you. Many do not even know that the Dalton boys, the famous Dalton gang, were, most of them, former deputy U.S. Marshals. There is a reason for that. The Youngers were peaceable men. In fact, Cole Younger was once studying for the ministry. I want to take the time to read a page and a half of Paul Peterson's book on Quantrill of Missouri.

The Ironclad Oath and Political Disenfranchisement

This is so mind-boggling. If you want to understand what motivated men like Jesse and Frank and the Dalton boys and the Younger boys, consider the ironclad oath: "The radicals began to take over Missouri politics with the ironclad oath. Now listen, the oath excluded all but those who had been loyal citizens from participating in politics and even in some civilian professions. As an indication of the severity of the oath, it excluded anyone who might have given a cup of water to a Confederate soldier or even forage to his horse. Even those who

had handed a letter to a soldier in arms against the government were at fault. Uttering any statement of dissatisfaction against the government was enough to mark a man as disloyal. And anyone found to be disloyal during the war was not allowed to be an officer of a public or private company or allowed to teach in the public schools or hold a leadership position in a church. In Jackson County, the oath required all voting citizens to travel to the county seat at Independence and swear to 80 conditions and to account for what they did or did not do during the war."

"Neighbor turned against neighbor and challenged each other's oaths and accounts of their wartime activities. In Boone County, the heart of Little Dixie, out of 4,290 qualified white voters, only 410 were allowed to vote. Less than 10 percent."

"Any persons attempting to practice law, vote, teach, or preach without taking the loyalty oath were to be fined not less than $500 or be incarcerated for six months or both. If accused of perjury when taking the oath, violators were to stand trial. The only marks of citizenship these rejected men had under the Drake Constitution were to pay taxes, work the roads, and hold their peace. The president and officers of the State University were required to take the oath or vacate their office. Presidents and managers of the railroads were put under heavy bond to employ no one but those who profess their wartime loyalty to the Union."

Drake was Missouri State Senator Charles D. Drake, head of the Constitutional Committee to reform the state constitution. He was the man who was drafting it. Drake's constitution had as its goal to disenfranchise anyone of questionable loyalty to the Union and to add whatever constitutional amendments might be necessary to further the radicals' establishment of political power in Missouri.

“The ironic aspect of the ironclad oath was that the radical unionist who had called for the secessionist to return to the Union all during the war were now trying to keep them from coming back in. Thomas S. Barclay observed, ‘During the war, the radicals used to say, let the rebels lay down their arms and submit to the Constitution and law. That is all we ask of them. They have laid down their arms and asked to be permitted to have the Constitution and laws. But now the radicals reply, you shall not have the Constitution. And as

for laws, we don't intend to let you have any sort of law except the tax law.'

"And you shall have no voice in making that. Fearful that their work might be undone by sympathetic judges, radical members of the state convention pressed a law through the legislature called the Ousting Ordinance while the state Supreme Court was in recess. The measure vacated all positions of judges, county clerks, circuit attorneys, sheriffs, and recorders by May 1st, 1865, and stipulated that the governor would appoint men to complete any unfinished terms.

"In effect, the act purged all of Missouri's legally elected officials who had served from the beginning of the war. The ordinance removed more than 800 officials throughout the state. When the Missouri Supreme Court ruled the ousting ordinance as unconstitutional, the radicals arrested the justices. Militia officers also seized court records. In one instance, the governor called out a company of black militiamen to quash efforts by some officials to retain their positions. In this way, radicals willfully and corruptly defrauded the citizens of their freedom to vote.

"Because the ironclad oath covered ministers of the gospel, church doors remained closed to Southern sympathizers. One radical said this: 'no class of people between heaven and earth or outside of heaven or hell deserve the curse of God more than disloyal ministers and no class deserves sympathy less than this class.' If a preacher did not go along with the federal government, they were literally cursing him to hell. They went on to say, 'if they, that is the preachers, cannot take the oath, they ought to go and seek a home elsewhere.'"

That is, get out of Missouri. One uncompromising pastor, Pastor M.M. Modisette, wrote, "I confess that I am placed in a very unpleasant situation, not because of the fear of perjury or doing violence to my feelings, or for any act of my life, by taking said oath, but on account of the seeming unreasonableness of the thing, and as I now view it, as being infringement upon religious liberty, as well as a species of tyranny to which I dislike to submit." There was an outcry from the churches about infringement upon religious liberty,

to which Governor Thomas Fletcher responded, quote, "religious liberty is a political right."

Therefore, hundreds of priests and preachers were arrested, indicted, and tried in the civil courts for preaching the gospel. As rebels began filtering back into Missouri, they were met with animosity on every side. Many Unionists believed that all rebel property should be seized and all rebels should be hanged.

The ironclad oath meant that no one could work for the railroad or hold any position, public or private, that had any authority or any means of acquiring anything without taking that oath. These radical Republicans also passed an ousting ordinance, which meant they were in absolute and total control of the judicial, legislative, and executive offices in the land. They were basically tyrants.

Grant was president by this time, and the corruption in his administration, the theft of lands by the railroads, and the government subsidizing of the railroads added fuel to the fire. Thousands upon thousands of acres of land were stolen, not just from Southern people, but from Indians as well—by the politicians, the banks, the railroads, and the government. During the time of Jesse and Frank James, hardly anyone trusted the politicians, the railroads, or the government.

In defense of the James Younger gang, consider the attitude expressed when the Muncie robbery occurred. The James Younger gang probably did indeed commit the robbery, but the Lexington Caucasian, a newspaper, wrote on December 12, 1874, in defense of the gang robbing the bank: “The funds seized by the bandits were just as honestly earned as the riches of many a highly distinguished political leader and the railroad job manipulator.” What were they saying? They were saying that the money robbed by the James gang was probably more honestly earned than the money earned by the railroad and political leaders.

There were twenty-five robberies attributed to the James Younger gang and twenty-five murders. However, it was absolutely impossible for Jesse and Frank to have committed all those murders and robberies. They were not present at many of the robberies or murders; in many instances they were in other states, with

eyewitnesses to vouch for their whereabouts. Nevertheless, any murder or robbery was automatically charged to the James gang by the powers that be.

Now let me make some applications today, because, Lord willing, the message next week will tie everything together. Did the James boys kill some people? Sure they did. But some of the so-called murders were actually executions of wicked men who had previously harmed and tried to kill not only Jesse and Frank, but their families. I will discuss this next week. Several men involved in the bombing of the family home were dealt with very harshly and violently by the James boys. I certainly am not excusing murder or personal executions.

At the same time, remember that there was no justice in those days. The radicals controlled the courts, the sheriffs, and the state. Therefore, if justice was to be meted out, it had to be done by those who were not affiliated with a radical abolitionist government.

Here is a second application. Everyone knows about, what do we call it, couch coaching, and we talk about 2020 hindsight. It is easy for us to sit back and say, "I would never have done such things. I would have left vengeance to the state. Sooner or later, the wicked are going to get their due." That is easy to say when we are not living under those circumstances. But had you been alive then, with everything you had ever possessed legally stolen from you, your wife and sisters raped, your family insulted and murdered, forced into outlawry and unable to find work or make a living, while men were constantly trying to kill you,

It probably began to wear on you after a while. You might come to this conclusion: if I do not protect myself, I am not going to be protected. If I do not fight against those who are trying to take everything I have and murder my family, no one else is going to fight for me.

Applications: Government Lawlessness Creates Outlaws

Lawlessness in government produces lawlessness in the citizenry. It is a fact that a lawless government produces, creates, and makes

outlaws. Do you know what an outlaw is? Let me ask that another way. Do you know what the legal definition of an outlaw is? It may surprise you. If you look in Webster's 1828 Dictionary, Black's Law Dictionary, or Bouvier's Law Dictionary, you will find the definition of an outlaw: “A person excluded from the benefit of the law or deprived of its protection.”

Then I looked up the word outlawry. Here it is, from Black's Law Dictionary and Bouvier's Law Dictionary: “The putting a man out of the protection of the law or the process by which a man is deprived of that protection.” Essentially, all those who are denied the benefit and protection of the law have been made outlaws. Most of us are outlaws, and we do not even know it, because we have been denied the benefit and protection of the law.

When the law is corrupt and justice is denied, those who are outlaws endeavor to write things in their own way. If you believe that it is wrong for a man to take the law into his own hands, then, to be honest and fair, you must equally believe that it is wrong for a government to deny law and justice and thus force men to take the law into their own hands.

The sin of the one party begets the sin of the other party. If government fulfilled its functional role of punishing the wicked and protecting the righteous, it would not be necessary for anyone to take the law into his own hands. It is government—bad, unbiblical government—that makes men outlaws.

Fourthly, God does demand justice. When He said in Isaiah, “truth faileth, and truth is fallen into the streets,” what is the next statement? “And equity cannot enter.” That is, justice and judgment cannot enter. The refusal of government to give true, accurate, and biblical justice is just as criminal and just as wicked as it is for individuals to act contrary to the law of God.

What have we forgotten? We have forgotten that government can sin against God equally as individuals sin against God. The difference is this: an individual may harm another, but when governments sin, they affect and harm and reach more people than does a single individual.

God does demand justice. It does matter whether or not we have justice in a society. If we do not have justice in a society, society is inevitably going to wither and die. Jesse and Frank James were outlaws, but they were made that way by the government. If it is wrong for a man to take the law into his own hands, it is wrong for government to refuse justice and judgment and force a man to take the law into his own hands. The sin is greater, I believe, on the part of the government because government can do more harm than an individual.

Let us pray.

Father, we are thankful for Jesus Christ and for His grace and mercy. As we think of the world in times of Jesse James, we cannot help but see things happening in our land today: how criminals and wicked and vile men are promoted and are in control and are in authority, while the righteous who try to stand for principle and truth and justice suffer. But help us to know, Lord, that we are always to obey Your word and Your law.

As we do so, we will never be an outlaw to You. It is easier, Lord, to be classed an outlaw by man than by the sovereign God of heaven and earth. Give us grace, Lord, to stand for that which is right.

CHAPTER 3

The World And Times Of Jesse James

Part Three of Three

Introduction and Scripture Reading

Let us open our Bibles to Isaiah 59 again today. I am bringing the third and final message on the world and times of Jesse James. For those who have missed the two previous messages, I encourage you to listen to them. There is no way to give a thorough review of them, so I will give only a short review before we get started. Isaiah 59, beginning with verses 12 through 13:

"For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us. For our transgressions are with us, and as for our iniquities, we know them; in transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey:

and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment."

Notice once again that when he says truth is fallen in the street, equity cannot enter. When the Lord sees that there is no judgment or justice, it displeases him.

We begin this study by talking about the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. It was this act that stimulated what you and I would call the border wars between Kansas and Missouri. Everyone assumed that Kansas would be a slave state and Nebraska would be a free state, maintaining the balance of power, so to speak. But then along came the abolitionists. They tried to settle Kansas and created more and more problems for the Missourians. In fact, they were raiding into Missouri as early as 1854, and they viewed any slaveholder or anyone sympathetic with slavery as simply a good target.

Background of the James-Younger Gang's Actions

Of course, they were burning, raping, looting, stealing, and killing, over and over. It is unbelievable what happened. When Jesse James was fifteen years of age, he was caught in the field by the federal soldiers. He was dragged with a rope and beaten with the flat edge of their sabers. His stepfather, Dr. Samuel, was hanged three or four times—not unto death, but just enough to help him pass out.

Before he died, they would put him down and then rehang him. From that condition, he had a diminished capacity for the rest of his life. Jesse's mother was so mishandled and abused by the federal soldiers. She was pregnant at the time, but miscarried and lost the baby. She and their sister were thrown into prison under the most abject circumstances. When you begin to think of any or all of these things happening to a young man, they would certainly be enough to drive him to seek vengeance, especially when the very government that was supposed to protect him was the instigator of the atrocities.

When Jesse and Frank came back after the war and tried to surrender, settle down, and live peaceably, they were not allowed to do so. Jesse tried to surrender, but he and his men were attacked by federal soldiers, and he was wounded in the right lung. It took him basically three years to recover. While he was at home recovering,

five more soldiers came out to kill him. Thankfully, he got four of them, and the fifth one ran away. This was while he was wounded and sick. When Frank came in to surrender, four soldiers once again provoked the attack. He killed two, wounded another, and the fourth one shot him in the hip.

These were men who were trying to settle down and live a peaceful life. In 1866, a year after the war was over, there were 4,000 murders just in southwest Missouri of Confederate people, of Southern people. That was just in southwest Missouri: 4,000. After the war was over, the radical Republicans who were now in charge were trying to settle old scores.

Jesse and Frank were not allowed to work honestly. Then they issued what was known as the ironclad oath. You had to take an oath; without it, you could not work in any public job or any professional job. You could not even preach. Multitudes of preachers were arrested simply for preaching the gospel without taking that loyalty oath to the Union.

Then they passed the ousting ordinance, where all of those lawfully—many of them elected—individuals were kicked out of office and replaced by people who were good-hearted abolitionists and sympathetic to the cause of the Radical Republicans. There were all kinds of individuals and circumstances that made it almost unbearable during that particular time. Those who were in charge of politics in Missouri, many of them, had gained their wealth by looting, stealing, and pillaging from hard-working Southerners.

When the James boys began to rob the banks of these Northerners and the trains of the railroad magnates, their attitude was simply this: Most Southern people's attitude was that the James boys were simply taking back what had been stolen from them and from many other Southerners as well. The James gang did indeed help other southern refugees with their stolen loot. However, they probably would not refer to their loot as stolen. They would probably refer to it simply as reclaimed.

Jesse James Helps a Widow

I suppose one of the most humorous stories that I read concerning Jesse is when he helped a widow woman. He came upon a widow woman who was weeping almost uncontrollably and asked her what the matter was. She said, "My husband is dead. I have no family. My property, my home, is going to be foreclosed upon by the day by the banks."

"And I'll have absolutely no place to live, and I'll be kicked out of my home." Jesse simply asked her, "Well, how much do you owe on your home? What is it going to take to pay it off?" She told him some amount, $500 or $600. She did not remember what it was. He said, "Don't worry about it. Here's the money," and counted up the money.

He said, "Now let me give you some very serious instructions. You listen carefully. When the banker comes out to foreclose on your property, you tell him you have the money to pay off the loan. There's no need to foreclose. You make sure that you get a written receipt that it is paid in full." She said, "Yes."

Jesse gave her the money. The banker came out that afternoon to foreclose. Jesse had already left. She told him that she had the money to pay the loan. The banker gladly took the money, wrote her a receipt, paid in full, canceled the debt, and rode off. Just a couple miles away from the farm, Jesse James was waiting in the woods. He stepped out, held up the banker, and got his money back. Jesse got his money back, the woman's farm was saved, and the banker was thankful to escape with his life.

Public Sympathy for the Outlaws

Rather humorous, but they did indeed help a lot of southern people. Bankers, railroaders, and politicians were particularly despised by the general populace, and they were counted as notorious thieves. One radical newspaper in Kansas attacked Missouri, calling it the Outlaw State. You remember that was the nickname of Missouri. In response, the Missouri newspaper said, “Robbers in Democratic Missouri are outlaws with prices on their heads, while robbers in radical Kansas are elected to the highest offices in the state.

Democrats may not be good at catching fugitive thieves, but they can be counted on not to elevate such cattle to the highest offices in the state." At least, they said, our outlaws are common people with a price on their heads; your outlaws are in control of politics.

Another illustration of the cruelty, viciousness, and unconcern for life on the part of the powers that be occurred on January 26, 1875. The Pinkerton detective agency, an arm of the railroad and the federal government, attacked the James home about midnight.

The Pinkerton Raid on the James Home

The Pinkertons came to notoriety when Alan Pinkerton uncovered a plot to assassinate Abraham Lincoln. Alan Pinkerton founded the Secret Service and served as its head for a while. He and his detective agency then planned a raid on the James farm. Dr. and Mrs. Samuel were awakened about midnight to find their house on fire. They discovered a large ball saturated with flammable liquid burning in their kitchen, and they took a poker and tried to get the ball into the fireplace.

Everyone was up and screaming. The problem was that it was not simply a ball of fire; it was a bomb, and it exploded with horrible results. Before telling you the results, let me give you a letter written by Alan Pinkerton. For a long time, the government and the Pinkerton agency denied involvement in the raid on the James' home. But a letter was discovered that Pinkerton himself had written to Patrick Henry Woodward, Chief Special Agent of the United States Post Office Department. This letter is on display in the James' home in Kearney, Missouri, today.

I have a picture of it, and copies of the letter are also available. Here is what Alan Pinkerton wrote with his own hand: "On Monday night everything was ready. We were well supplied with Greek fire, balls of cotton well saturated with combustible material. About half past 12, that is midnight, we commenced firing the building. Our men battered in the window, then flung in the fireballs into the house. Wild cries of dismay were heard from the inside, and soon the residents ran from the house, which was lit up bright as the day."

"Mrs. Samuel was bitter and used anything but polite language. I had given the order that no harm was to be done to the woman and Dr. Samuel. The men we were in search of must have left." When they tried to rake the ball of fire into the fireplace, the bomb exploded. It killed nine-year-old Archie Samuel, blew a hole into his side, and mangled Mrs. Samuel's right hand so badly that it had to be amputated. It also wounded a Negro servant.

How polite did Alan Pinkerton think Mrs. Samuel should be with her baby child murdered, her arm blown off, her house set on fire, and in danger of losing everything? All of this was done under the color of law. Legalities are often used to cover a multitude of crimes. Alan Pinkerton had stated that it was his intention to burn the house down. In a letter to Samuel Hardwick of Clay County, an operative, he wrote: "Above everything, destroy the house to the fringe of the earth. Let the men take no risk. Burn the house down."

The bomb materials came from the federal government's Rock Island arsenal. The federal government was also complicit in the act. Evidently, Pinkerton was not seeking justice; he was seeking revenge. Since Jesse and Frank were not at home, the Samuel family could not be guilty of harboring criminals. Therefore, everything the detectives did was outside the law and made them nothing more than arsonists and murderers.

People were outraged at the railroads, the Pinkertons, and the government. Their attitude was that, regardless of whether the James boys were guilty of the crimes with which they were charged, there could be absolutely no excuse for killing an innocent child and maiming a mother. The Kansas City Times wrote, "There is no crime, however dastardly, which merits a retribution as savage and fiendish as the one which these men, acting under the semblance of law, have perpetrated." Here were men under the color of law burning a home, murdering a child, and maiming a mother.

"Pretending to hunt the Jameses brought renown to the detectives. Instead of trusting local officers, the higher authorities had employed common thief catchers who outrage farmhouses, carry off peaceable citizens, kill 12-year-old boys, blow off the arms of old women, and so on." Actually, Archie was only nine years old when he was killed. He was born on July the 6th, 1866, and

murdered January the 26th, 1875. He would have been 10 on his next birthday. The bomb blew a large hole in his side; he died within the hour.

Peterson, in his book on Quantrill and those who rode with him, cites on page 426 that the crimes of the James-Younger gang were considered by the general populace a fair blow at the northern carpetbaggers enriching themselves in the economic turmoil after the war. Basically, no one despised what the gang was doing. The same sympathizers who had helped the Jameses, the Youngers, and the guerrillas during the war were still helping them, viewing the war as continuing against their northern enemies.

The Northfield Raid and Its Motivation

The gang's end basically came in Northfield, Minnesota, in 1876, when they targeted a bank. This is where the Younger brothers were captured. During the raid, two members of the gang escaped. Most people claim it was Jesse and Frank, but no one knows; they have never been stated to have been there. Still, two members did escape.

Why in the world would they rob a bank in Northfield, Minnesota? The reason was that the bank had a great deal of money belonging to Union General Benjamin F. Butler. According to Cole Younger's own words in his autobiography, the bank was specifically selected for that reason. Butler's son-in-law, J. T. Ames, had been the carpetbagger governor of Mississippi during the war, and he also had a great deal of money in that bank.

Benjamin Butler had two nicknames. First, he was called The Beast—Benjamin the Beast Butler—because of his own stupidity, wickedness, and lack of integrity during the war. Everyone despised Benjamin the Beast Butler. He had another nickname: Spoons, because he habitually stole silverware. He was a thief. He was not only called Beast; he was also called Spoons. An excellent book exposing Benjamin Butler is When the Devil Came Down to Dixie, written by Chester Hearn. Certainly, he was a devil and a wicked, wicked man.

That is why the bank was selected. To illustrate the support the James gang enjoyed, a conversation was overheard and recorded

between two ladies in St. Paul, Minnesota, who were talking about Missouri and the James gang. One asked the other, “Do all the people there sympathize with them?” The other answered, “No, only about two-thirds of them.”

Amnesty Efforts and the Betrayal of Jesse James

That was really the general consensus. Most people sympathized with the James-Younger gang. In March of 1875, after the house had been bombed by the government, an amnesty bill was proposed by Representative Jefferson Jones, seeking amnesty for the outlaws. The bill failed, but it demonstrated the support the James-Younger gang possessed. This was a bill for amnesty, and actually pardon, for Jesse and Frank James, the Youngers, and those who rode with them. The proposed bill began: “Whereas, under the outlawry pronounced against Jesse W.

James, Frank James, Coleman Younger, James Younger, and others, who gallantly periled their lives and their all in defense of their principles, were made desperate, driven from their fields of honest industry, their friends, their families, their homes, and their country. They could know no law but the law of self-preservation, nor have respect for or feel allegiance to a government that forced them into the very acts it professed to deprecate, then offered a bounty for their apprehension and armed foreign mercenaries with power to capture and kill them.

The bill further declared that these men were too brave to be mean, too generous to be revengeful, and too gallant and honorable to betray a friend or break a promise. It asserted that most, if not all, of the offenses charged against them had been committed by others, perhaps by those pretending to hurt them or by their confederates, who used their names to divert suspicion from and thereby relieve the actual perpetrators. Their return home, the bill stated, would greatly lessen crime in the state by turning public attention to the real criminals. Common justice, sound policy, and true statesmanship alike demanded that amnesty be extended to all alike, of both parties, for all acts done or charged during the war.

Therefore, the House of Representatives, with the Senate concurring, requested the Governor of the State to issue his

proclamation notifying Jesse W. James, Frank James, Cole Younger, James Younger, and others that full and complete amnesty and pardon would be granted for all acts charged or committed by them during the late Civil War. It invited them peacefully to return to their respective homes in the state and quietly remain there, submitting themselves to such proceedings as might be instituted against them by the courts for offenses charged to have been committed since the war, while promising and guaranteeing each of them full protection and a fair trial. Full protection was also promised from the time of their entrance into the state and notice of the proclamation.

Do you realize that that bill introduced was basically a defense of the James-Younger gang?

The bill failed, but efforts still continued, not only on behalf of the Jameses but also on behalf of the Youngers. Later, Frank James was allowed to surrender quietly and peaceably. He did have his trials, and he was found innocent on all counts at every trial.

It looked as if the James gang could not be stopped or caught. They had been on the outlaw trail for what you and I would say was sixteen years. There had been many predictions concerning their capture, but they turned out to be merely predictions because the gang was not captured.

To demonstrate how many felt about Jesse James, let me give you some titles of books and articles that were written. I have one book still available today, titled The Crimes Against Jesse James, which demonstrates how the governments harried, persecuted, and assassinated Jesse. John Newman Edwards, a contemporary who knew Jesse and Frank very closely and personally, wrote an article entitled The Murder of Jesse James, which I will quote from in just a moment. Then Frank Triplett wrote a book titled The Life, Times, and Treacherous Death of Jesse James. Do you realize that many people were absolutely horrified at the method and way Jesse met his death?

Jesse and his wife, Zerelda, better known as Z, had moved to St. Joseph, Missouri. They resided at 1318 Lafayette Street, in a house sitting on a hill that gave them an excellent view.

Jesse had a number of assumed names. One he used frequently was J.D. Howard, or John Davis, or Dave Howard. However, while in St. Joe, he rented the house under the name Thomas Howard. Two brothers, Charlie and Bob Ford, had joined Jesse. They had visited the James home place just a few weeks before Jesse's death. Mrs. Samuel, Jesse's mother, told him she did not like the looks of the Fords and warned him to be careful.

She had judged rightly. Jesse did not particularly care for Bob, but he continued to put up with him for Charlie's sake. As Jesse left home, he offhandedly said to his mother while kissing her goodbye, "Ma, if we don't meet again, we'll meet in heaven." Charlie had earlier said that he needed food and shelter, so Jesse took both Charlie and Bob Ford into his home. He fed them, provided a place for them to stay, and gave them money. Little did Jesse know that Bob Ford had previously been involved in the murder of his cousin, Wood Hite.

Bob Ford had murdered Wood Hite, who was a cousin to Jesse. Unknown to Jesse, the Fords had conspired with the authorities to slay him. Bob Ford had secretly met with Governor Crittenden and Clay County Sheriff Henry Timberlake. He met with Governor Crittenden on January 13, 1882, at the St. James Hotel. The governor asked Ford to assist him, and Ford agreed. The governor promised Bob Ford $10,000 each for the deaths of Jesse and Frank James—specifically, and more particularly, Jesse. He said he would give him the money dead or alive. Moreover, he promised a pardon for them.

Later, when a coroner's inquest made all of this public, Governor Crittenden said that he had only promised a $10,000 reward for their capture. Bob said no; it was stated, dead or alive. Bob was to stay in touch with Sheriff Timberlake and Police Commissioner Henry H. Craig of Kansas City. Plans were then made by the Fords to betray Jesse and Frank, especially Jesse. Bob Ford met again with Governor Crittenden on February 22, 1882, in Kansas City, where the governor endorsed his plan.

Neither Charlie nor Bob Ford were officers of the law, and neither had ever been deputized. Here were two men meeting with a sheriff,

a police commissioner, and the governor of the state, while the governor offered them $10,000 to assassinate a man.

For the Fords, the last week in March was a time of unrelenting stress. Dick Liddil, who had also been with Jesse, had been captured, and Jesse was afraid Dick would turn on him. Bob Ford had helped Dick Liddil murder Jesse's cousin, Wood Hite. They knew they had to act fast, because if Jesse discovered the connection, they too would be in danger.

The Assassination of Jesse James

Listen to the Fords' own words concerning Jesse James. Charlie said, "My brother and I made it up to kill him. I knew he was quicker than I and that I would not try it when he had his arms on. He was so watchful no man could get the drop on him." Bob agreed: "We waited a long time to catch Jesse without his revolvers," he noted, "knowing that unless he put them off we could not fetch it."

Thus, according to their own words, the Fords had agreed to shoot down an unsuspecting, unarmed man, at the instigation of the governor, I might add. On April 3, 1882, Jesse, Bob, and Charlie had gone out and groomed and fed their horses. They came back into the house, and Jesse complained of being warm. He pulled off his coat and threw it on the bed. Since his house was on the hill, he did not want anyone walking by to see how well armed he was, so he decided to pull off his pistol belt as well, and threw it across the bed.

Then he pulled up a chair to dust a sampler hanging on the wall. The sampler said, "God bless our home." As he turned his back to dust it, Charlie and Bob pulled their revolvers. Bob was a little quicker. He fired one shot through the back of Jesse's head, and Jesse fell instantly to the floor. When Z, his wife, came out, Charlie said that a pistol had accidentally gone off. Z replied, "Yes, I know. It went off on purpose."

The Ford brothers went quickly to the telegraph office, where they telegraphed Governor Crittenden, Sheriff Timberlake, and Commissioner Craig that they had gotten their man. After the autopsy and the coroner's inquest, Jesse's body was sent to the same Baptist church where he had been baptized in 1866. On the day of

the funeral, schools were closed, business ceased, and trains stopped so people could attend and witness it. The service began with Jesse's favorite hymn, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." Pastor J.P. Martin, pastor of the church, and R.H. Jones of Lathrop, Missouri, delivered the funeral messages. Pastor Martin's text was Matthew 24:44: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." About two hours later, the service closed with another hymn, and the body was conveyed to the family home for burial.

Funeral and Public Reaction

Now, according to T.J. Stiles, in his book, Jesse James: The Last Rebel of the Civil War, on page 377, he says that there were over 2,000 people that attended the funeral of Jesse James. Jesse was originally buried beneath a coffee bean tree in the side yard. There's a tombstone, and I'm going to show it to you in just a moment. There's a tombstone which reads, thusly: "Devoted husband and father Jesse Woodson James September the 5th 1847 murdered April the 3rd 1882 by a traitor and a coward whose name is not worthy to appear here." Now I want you to listen very carefully because I'm going to bring this to a close in just a moment. I'm going to read some from John Newman Edwards, "The Killing" or "The Murder of Jesse James." I want you to listen what John Newman Edwards wrote. It is prophetic.

It also is full of scripture whether he knew it or not. John Newman Edwards, you remember, was the adjutant. He was a major for General Sterling Price. He was a newspaper editor. And I want you to listen to what he said. He begins, of course, with a quote. "Let not Caesar's servile minions mock the lion thus laid low. 'Twas no foeman's hand that slew him. 'Twas his own that struck the blow." And then he begins thusly. Listen carefully.

No one among all the hired cowards hard on the hunt for blood money dared face this wonderful outlaw, one even against 20, until he had disarmed himself and turned his back to his assassins—the first and only time in a career that passed from the realms of an almost fabulous romance into history.

He was an outlaw, and so he was, but fate made him so. When the war came, he had just turned 15. The border was aflame with steel, fire, ambushes, and slaughter. He flung himself into a band with a black flag for a banner and devils for riders. What he did was fearful, but it was war: Missouri against Kansas.

It was Jim Lane and Jennison against Quantrill, Anderson, and Todd. When the war closed, Jesse James had no home. Proscribed, hunted, shot, driven away from among his people, and with a price put upon his head, what else could such a man do except what he did? He had to live. It was his country; the graves of his kindred were there. He refused to be banished from his birthright. Hunted, he turned savagely about and hunted his hunters.

Would to God he were alive today to make a righteous butchery of a few more of them. There never was a more cowardly and unnecessary murder committed in all America than the murder of Jesse James. It was done for money, that a few might get all the money. He had been living in St. Joseph for months. The Fords were with him.

He was in the toils, for they meant to betray him. He was in the heart of a large city. One word would have summoned 500 armed men for his capture or extermination. Not a single member of the attacking party need have been hurt. If, when his house was surrounded, he had refused to surrender, he could have been killed inside it or at long range. His chances of escape were one to 10,000, and not even that.

But it was never intended that he should be captured. It was his blood the bloody wretches sought, blood that would bring money in Missouri's official market. This great commonwealth, leagued with self-confessed robbers, highwaymen, and prostitutes, had one of its citizens assassinated before it was positively known that he had ever committed a single crime worthy of death. Of course, everything that can be said about the dead man to justify the manner of his slaying will be said.

But who is saying it? Those with the blood of Jesse James on their guilty souls? Those who conspired to murder him, wanted the reward, and would invent any lie or concoct any diabolical story to

get it have succeeded. Yet such a cry of horror and indignation at the infernal deed is even now thundering over the land that if a single one of the miserable assassins had manhood, conscience, or courage, he would go as another Judas and hang himself. But so sure as God reigns, there never was a dollar of blood money obtained which did not bring with it perdition.

Sooner or later comes a day of vengeance. Some among the murderers are mere beasts of prey. These can suffer only through cold, hunger, or thirst. But whatever they dread most, that thing will happen. Others are sanctimonious devils who plead the honor of the state, the value of law and order, and the splendid courage required to shoot an unarmed man in the back of the head.

These will be stripped of their pretensions and made to shiver and freeze, splotched, spotted, and piebald with blood in the pitiless storm of public contempt and condemnation. To the leaders this will be worse than death. Nor is the end yet. If Jesse James had been hunted down as any other criminal and killed while trying to escape or resisting arrest, not a word would have been said to the contrary. He had sinned and suffered; in his death, the majesty of the law would have been vindicated.

But here the law itself becomes a murderer. It leagues with murderers, hires murderers, aids and abets murderers, borrows money to pay and reward murderers, and promises them immunity and protection. It is itself a murderer—the most abject, infamous, and cowardly ever known to history. Therefore this so-called law is an outlaw, and these so-called executors of the law are outlaws. Therefore let Jesse James's comrades—and he has a few remaining, worth all the Fords and Littles that could be packed together between St. Louis and Joe—do unto them as they did unto him.

Yes, the end is not yet, nor should it be. The man had no trial. What right had any officer of this state to put a price upon his head and hire a band of cutthroats and highwaymen to murder him for money? On April the 17th, 1882, Charlie and Bob Ford were indicted for first-degree murder. They were found guilty and sentenced to death.

Fates of the Ford Brothers

They would be taken to some convenient place and hanged by the neck until they were dead. Within a short period of time—Governor Crittenden issued an unconditional pardon for both men. Bob Ford was later arrested for the murder of Wood Hite, but after another trial he was acquitted.

Did the Ford brothers escape the consequences of their actions? After their release, the public branded the Ford brothers as traitors, cowards, and treacherous individuals. It was too much for Charlie, who, in 1884, two years later, unable to bear the stigma, killed himself with his own pistol. He committed suicide in Richmond, Virginia.

Bob, the one who shot Jesse, lived only ten years more. He was found in town of Creede, Colorado, in 1890. Bob Ford never received the full $10,000 promised to him, but he was still doing pretty well. He was running a saloon and a gambling hall, and he was also kind of hitting up a greater part of the crime in that town. The outlaw Soapy Smith described Bob as somewhat of a character, more pompous than dangerous, who banked heavily upon his reputation as the killer of the notorious Jesse James. Bob Ford was tall and slim, weighing about 140 pounds.

He had unhealthy pale skin and drank too much. Soapy Smith said Bob always sat facing the door of his saloon, with a drawn revolver on the table. He may have been a dangerous man, but, Soapy Smith said, he died a thousand deaths.

On June 6, 1892, a strange cowboy appeared in Creede, Colorado, and stopped at Ford's saloon. He inquired, "Where's the boss?" "Not in," was the answer. "What do you want?" "Oh, just tell him Ed O'Kelley is in town. I'll catch him later."

When Bob was told that Ed O'Kelley was in town, he did not know him and could not figure out who he was. That night was, in all probability, sleepless: Who in the world is Ed O'Kelley?

The next morning, Bob and his wife opened the saloon later than usual. As he went through the saloon doors, a man riding a horse down the street picked up the gait, rode to the saloon, stopped his

horse, unstrapped his shotgun, stuck it through the saloon doors, and said, "You've been waiting for this, ain't you, Bob?" As Bob turned around and tried to draw his pistol, the shotgun blew his face off. The man meekly surrendered to the sheriff.

He refused to divulge any information concerning his background or motive. All he said was this: "I don't rob and I don't insult women, but I kill rats like Bob Ford." It was his only comment. Consequently, he was sentenced to a jail term. During the research of the case, thousands of letters were received asking clemency for Ed O'Kelley. They were all postmarked from Missouri.

Interview with Mrs. Samuel and Applications

J.A. Dacus interviewed Mrs. Samuel, Jesse's mother. He asked, "To whom do you ascribe the killing? Who incited it?"

"Oh, to Crittenden and Sheriff Timberlake. Timberlake and Commissioner Craig of Kansas City have been working together in pursuit of my boy for over a year. That traitor Ford was only a tool in their cunning hands. He is a boy and they molded his nature until he was ready to undertake an assassination none of the others dared attempt."

Dacus asked, "Do you believe that Jesse ever suspected him?"

Mrs. Samuel replied, "Well, he didn't have too much confidence in Bob, but he trusted him for Charlie's sake. Jesse sheltered and fed and clothed both of them. He gave them money and was more than a brother in kindness to them. Oh, the miserable traitors. It was only three weeks ago today that Charlie Ford was here. I cooked for him with this one hand. I did all I could for him. And when he went away, I went out the gate with him and said, 'Charlie, something tells my heart there's danger lurking around Jesse. You will always be true to him, won't you?' He would not look me in the eyes, but raised his hand to heaven and said, 'I call on God to witness that I will protect him with the last drop of my blood.'"

"And then he rode off, and the next thing I heard from him was that he had murdered my poor, sainted boy."

Dacus asked, "Was there, in your opinion, any motive of revenge in the killing of Jesse?"

Mrs. Samuel answered, "What makes you call it killing? Why don't you say murder as it is? No, I don't think there was any such motive. Money was all they wanted. Blood money it is."

“And it will stain their hands as this crime has stained their treacherous souls. May God Almighty judge them and my poor boy. I’d rather be in his place than in theirs.”

Dacus asked, “Has Jesse ever been accused of crimes he did not commit?”

Mrs. Samuel replied, “Accused of them? Oh my God. He has never been guilty of one third of the charges laid at his door. Every time a bank was robbed or a train was stopped, they said, ‘Oh, that’s Jesse James,’ when often he was hundreds of miles away and knew nothing about it until afterward. Jesse was driven to do what he did. They forced it on him by hunting him down like a dog and refusing him mercy. He would have been a good man if they had left him alone.”

“What do you believe of Jesse’s hereafter?”

“Jesse’s heart was all right. The last time he was here, a little over three weeks ago, he kissed me as he went away and said, ‘Goodbye, mother. If I don’t see you again on earth, I will meet you in heaven.’ And I believe that we will see each other there.”

“Had you ever looked for such an end as this for your son?”

“Naturally, I had expected that someday he would die from a bullet. But I thought it would be fighting like a brave man.”

“So he would if it hadn’t been for this vile treachery which shot him from behind when he was unarmed. They did not even dare fire at his back when he had his revolvers by his side. They were cowards as well as traitors. No three men that ever lived could have captured my Jesse face to face. He was too quick for them. He never missed a shot since he was a boy.”

“Will Frank seek to avenge Jesse’s death?”

“That’s not for me to say. I would not take away the vengeance of God. But Frank is a man who knows no fear and who loved his brother. What he will do, I do not know. But I do know I would not

choose to be in the places of the men who instigated this foul assassination."

After these words, Mrs. Samuel turned and walked away.

Vengeance belongs to God, and God will execute it in His time. There is no perfect justice in time and history. Perfect justice only comes at the end of the world, when God, the judge of all the earth, renders to every man according to his deeds. His judgment will be absolutely perfect, and all wrongs will be righted by God.

I challenge you to study the lives of some of these notorious outlaws. As you study their lives, you will find that most were made outlaws by bad government—a lack of justice in the times in which they lived. Remember the Dalton gang? Many did not know the Dalton boys were formerly deputy U.S. marshals.

There is a reason they took the outlaw trail. Jesse and Frank James, as well as the Younger brothers, were made outlaws because, as you study their lives, you find that the government murdered their families, stole their property, drove them from their homes, tried to hunt them down and murder them, and forced them to seek justice on their own terms. Bad government always produces bad citizens.

Here is a third application. If you have been observant, attentive, and considerate during these three messages, you should already have compared the world and times of Jesse James with our day. Lawlessness in government appears to be becoming more rampant each day. There are outlaws, traitors, and notorious thieves in our land today, but they protect themselves through legalities and politics. We could not have the drug problem in America without the involvement of our government in drugs. We could not have the foreign wars in our land today without the involvement of our own government. We could not have socialism, the destruction of private property, unconstitutional money, and a tax upon biblical Christianity without bad government and its political correctness.

The Ballad of Jesse James and Closing

God was displeased when there was no justice. When there is no justice, society disintegrates. You cannot have a society or

civilization without justice. Either the criminal dies and society lives, or society dies and the criminal lives.

Let me close with the ballad of Jesse James. Numerous versions and additional verses were added afterward, but this was the original. Immediately after Jesse's death, a ballad was written and sung concerning his death: “Jesse James was a lad that killed many a man.

He robbed the Danville train. But that dirty little coward that shot Mr. Howard has laid poor Jesse in the grave. Poor Jesse had a wife to mourn for his life, three children. They were brave. It was Robert Ford, that dirty little coward. I wonder how he did feel. For he ate of Jesse's bread and he slept in Jesse's bed. Then he laid poor Jesse in the grave.

Jesse was a man, a friend to the poor. He never would see a man suffer pain. With his brother, Frank, he robbed the Chicago bank and stopped the Glendale train. It was his brother, Frank, that robbed the Gallatin bank and carried the money from the town. It was in this very place that they had a little race, for they shot Captain Sheets to the ground. They went to the crossing not very far from there, and there they did the same. With the agent on his knees, he delivered the keys to the outlaws, Frank and Jesse James.

It was Wednesday night. The moon was shining bright. They robbed the Glendale train. The people they did say were many miles away. It was robbed by Frank and Jesse James. It was Saturday night. Jesse was at home talking with his family brave. Robert Ford came along like a thief in the night and laid poor Jesse in the grave. The people held their breath when they heard of Jesse's death and wondered how he came to die. It was one of the gang called Little Robert Ford. He shot poor Jesse on the sly. Jesse went to his rest with his hand on his breast.

The devil will be upon his knee. He was born one day in the county of Clay and came from a solitary race. This song was made by Billy Gashade as soon as the news did arrive. He said there was no man with the law in his hand who could take Jesse James while he was alive. The Ballad of Jesse James.

Dacus, in his book, tells of 21 men who came to arrest Frank James at one particular time. Frank stepped out on the porch, and they said, "Frank, we don't want any problems, but we have come to arrest you." Frank said, "I'm not going to be arrested." They said, "Frank, there's 21 of us and only one of you. And you only have two pistols." Frank said, "Yes, that is correct. But the question is, which 12 of you are going to die before the others take me in?" The men thought about it, backed up, got on their horses, and left.

Jesse robbed the trains. The railroad was partly responsible for the bombing of their home. After the house was bombed, Pinkerton and his men were brought near Kearney, Missouri, by a special train. After the raid, they were picked up by the same train and taken back. After the bombing, one of the railroads gave Mrs. Samuel a lifetime pass for herself, her family, and her friends. She used it, getting everyone she could to ride the train and burn their money. When she and her daughter were returning from visiting relatives, Mrs. Samuel died on the train. Thus the trains carried Mrs. Samuel to her final resting place.

You cannot begin to see what is going on in this country if you do not know our history. I do not believe in cyclical history. I do not believe that history repeats itself—that it goes around in circles—but I do believe this: if we do not profit from our mistakes, learn the past, and know what happened in the past, we are doomed to repeat it because of our own stupidity.

I have two pictures. Here is the tombstone behind Jesse's house. Jesse is not buried there now; he was moved to the cemetery in Kearney, there with Dr. and Mrs. Samuel, his wife Z, and little Archie. The stones are marked there, but this says once again, "Devoted husband and father Jesse Woodson James, September 3, 1847, murdered April 3, 1882 by a traitor and coward whose name is not worthy to appear here." Here is the back part of the house. The log-cabin part has been left as it was. That is the window through which they threw the bombs that killed little Archie and blew off Mrs. Samuel's hand.

You are welcome to look at these. I have many pictures on the computer if you are interested.

Let us pray. Father, thank You for Your love. Thank You for Your grace. Thank You for Your mercy. Help us to live for Thee. Give us wisdom and understanding and discernment. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

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