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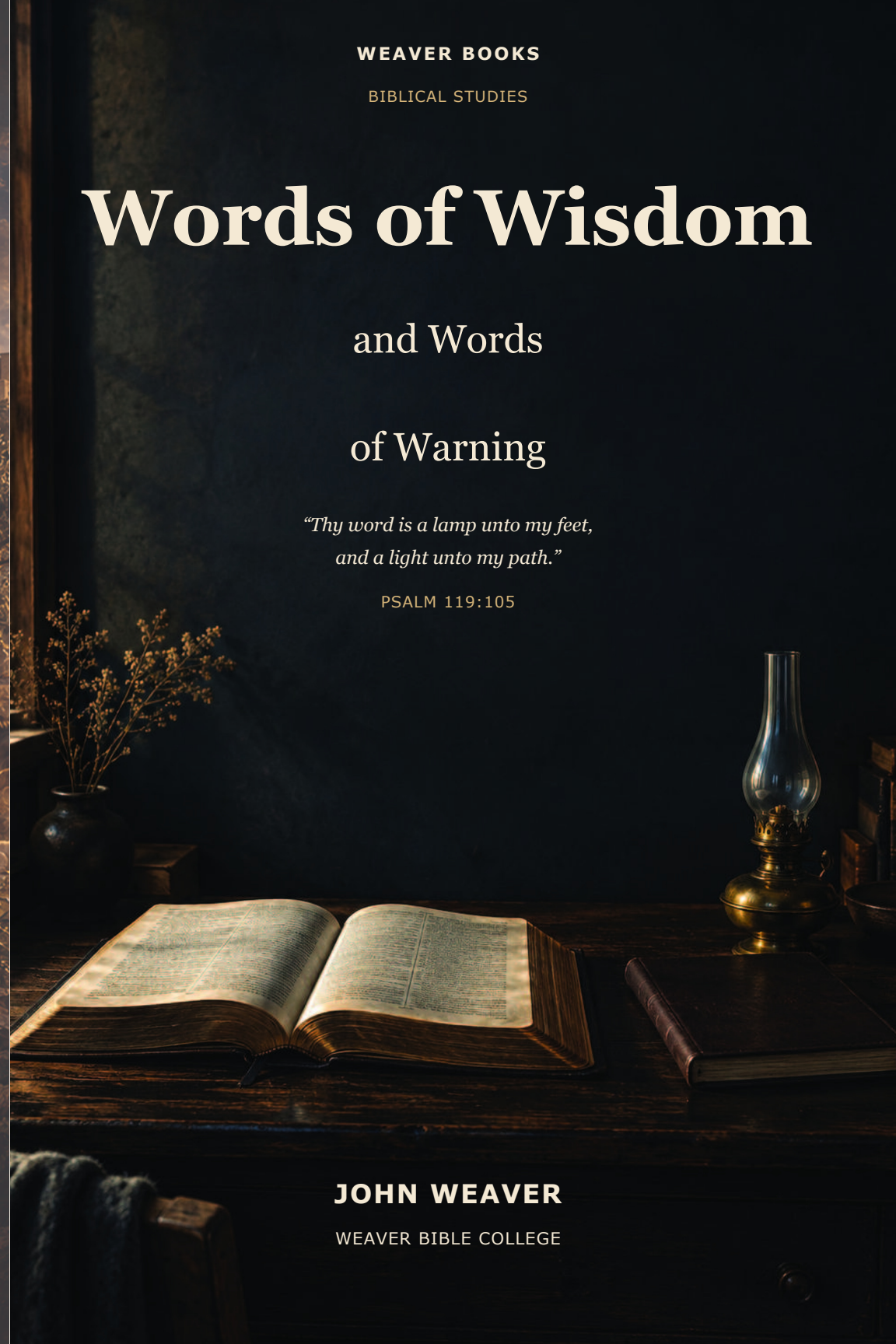
BIBLICAL STUDIES

Words of Wisdom

and Words of Warning

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

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

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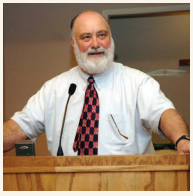
Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

PROVERBS 4:23

Scripture supplies both wise counsel and solemn warning for everyday life. Beginning with David's counsel to Solomon, John Weaver considers the call to know God, serve Him willingly, and guard the heart. These messages invite readers to apply biblical instruction to their choices and to take seriously the consequences of turning away from it.

"When we serve Him, we must serve Him with a complete and total heart, ready to obey, and with a willing mind."

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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CHAPTER 1

Words Of Wisdom And Words Of Warning

Part One

Introduction to Wisdom Literature and the Text

In 1 Chronicles 28:9, David gives counsel to Solomon, his son: “And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.”

There are five books in the Bible known as wisdom literature: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. They are called wisdom literature because they deal precisely with our human struggles and real-life experiences. They contain the poetry of the Hebrew nation, but they also provide the reader with important stories and wisdom. They tell us how to live and how not to live, how to solve problems and how not to solve problems. In other words,

these books are full of what you and I would call practical, everyday counsel and advice.

Although these five books are specifically known as wisdom literature, that does not mean there is no wisdom in the rest of the books of the Bible. Obviously, every book of the Bible is full of divine wisdom, but these are particularly called wisdom literature.

The Distinction Between Divine and Worldly Wisdom

There is also a vast distinction between divine wisdom and worldly wisdom. They are not only contrasted; they are in contradistinction, one from the other. Hold 1 Chronicles 28, but turn first to 1 Corinthians 1, and then we are going to James 3. Let me show you the difference, the distinction, between divine wisdom and worldly wisdom. In 1 Corinthians 1, beginning with verse 18, note what the Bible says: “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” It continues: “For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

God has made foolish the wisdom of this world, and the Bible tells us it is by the wisdom of the world that they reject and refuse God.

James 3:13 asks, “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.” Again, divine, or heavenly, wisdom is contrasted with worldly wisdom or hellish wisdom. The question concerns the person who possesses wisdom and knowledge and shows it through his conduct, his works, and the meekness that belongs to wisdom.

“But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.” Scripture tells us that God is the God of truth. The Father is truth, Jesus Christ is truth incarnate, the Word of God is called the word of truth, and the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of truth. Therefore, when we have bitter envying and strife

in our hearts, we are lying against God and against His Word. James continues: “This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.” Here is the distinction. The wisdom associated with envying and strife does not come down from above; it is earthly, sensual, and devilish, and it produces confusion and every evil work.

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.” There is clearly a distinction between divine wisdom and worldly wisdom. Those who have read Pilgrim’s Progress will remember Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who tried to throw Christian off the track by his worldly wisdom. Reading these passages in 1 Corinthians 1 and James 3, we can see that worldly wisdom is in contrast and opposition to divine wisdom. The wisdom from above is first pure, and then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

The First Admonition: Know God Personally

In 1 Chronicles 28:9, David gives counsel and advice to his son Solomon. Another remarkable thing about this text is that David is giving his son counsel concerning the divine wisdom he possesses. Very few fathers endeavor to pass on to their children, especially their sons, the divine wisdom they possess. David begins by saying to Solomon, “know thou the God of thy father.” In other words, he is passing on what is known as divine wisdom. Very few fathers actually try to pass on divine wisdom to their children; indeed, very few fathers even try to pass on any wisdom to their children.

They just leave them to learn the hard way. I do not remember my father sitting me down and instructing me according to the Word of God. My father was a Christian, a deacon, and a Sunday school teacher, but I do not remember him ever doing that. It could be that I simply did not listen, or that my memory is failing me, but I certainly do not remember him doing so.

However, I learned from my father not only by example, but also by the use of the rod. For the Bible says in Micah 6 and verse 9,

"Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." Recently, just this past week, I was visiting with my sister and observed the distinction between us. I said to her, "I am more like my father and you are more like our mother."

You say, "Well, that is obvious." It is not necessarily obvious. It probably should be and could be. I have known plenty of daughters who learned from their father and had good sense about themselves. But even today, I can see habits, traits, and thinking patterns in my life that were in my father. Although I do not recall him teaching me verbally, I believe that I learned by example and observation.

I think it would be wise if fathers did exactly what David did in 1 Chronicles 28 and verse 9: have a sit-down talk with his son and tell him how the cow eats the cabbage, so to speak. That is exactly what David is doing. As David gives counsel to Solomon, I am going to divide this message into two parts: words of wisdom and words of warning. Today I am only going to cover the first part, words of wisdom.

I originally planned to teach this message in one sitting. During the week, as I thought about it, I realized there would be more questions on the second part than on the first, and I needed to explain and answer those questions. So I went back and restudied it and divided it into two parts. Today we are going to look only at words of wisdom.

In 1 Chronicles 28:9, David said, “And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind.” The very first words of David to Solomon should be the very first words that we speak to our children: “know thou the God of thy father.” Notice that he did not say, “know thou about the God of thy father.” He said, “know thou the God of thy father.”

There is a vast difference between knowing about and knowing personally, between knowing facts and knowing someone individually. I am greatly afraid today that many professing Christians, as well as our children, only know about God and about the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not really know Him personally, genuinely, truly, and savingly. They may have an intellectual or

historical knowledge and possess all the facts, but they really do not know Him.

The Hebrew word for know is yada, which literally means to know, to understand, to perceive, to have knowledge of, and to learn by experience. Many individuals have heard sermons, testimonies, and Bible studies, yet they never really heard. It was like Augustine, the early church father, who said, “I heard the gospel all of my life and then one day I heard it.” Many Christians know all the facts and know about the Lord, but many of them really do not know Him in a saving fashion, and they certainly have not had an experiential relationship with Him.

Consider Laban speaking to Jacob. Jacob was sojourning with him and worked with Laban for fourteen years for his two wives and for the flocks he came to possess. When Jacob was thinking of leaving, Laban said, “I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake.” Notice his words: “I’ve learned by experience.”

It was not something that he had heard. It was something that he knew firsthand. The same thing is true with Potiphar in reference to Joseph. The Bible says this in Genesis 39, verses 5 and 6: "And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured."

So very few people have really personally, experientially tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious, according to 1 Peter 2 and verse 3. Those who have heard me preach for many years probably knew I would get to this passage in John 17 and verse 3. Our Lord said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

Eternal life is in a personal, intimate relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ. Knowing God is knowing Him as He is revealed in His Word and in the salvation in Jesus Christ. It is

knowing Him experientially in your life by personal love, trust, worship, and obedience; having an open line of communication with Him; leaning upon Him, learning from Him, and understanding, to a degree, His nature through the attributes of God revealed in His Word. Knowing God is learning to conform your life to His Word and His will.

The Second Admonition: Serve with a Perfect Heart

David, in 1 Chronicles 28 and verse 9, said, "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father." He was certainly not referring to intellectual or historical knowledge, but to a real, genuine saving knowledge. Psalm 36 and verse 10 says, "O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart." Those who actually know God not only perceive but experience His lovingkindness. Look back in verse 9: "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart."

Now, this is the second admonition. The first one is to know the God of thy father. The second one now is to serve him with a perfect heart. I hope you can see the progression in David's counsel. If Solomon really knows God in a personal, intimate, saving relationship, there will be a practical demonstration of that truth in service. To know God is to serve Him. To know God is to obey Him. And to know God is to make application of His truth in our lives.

I want to point this out. He said, "And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart."

Now, the word serve is from the Hebrew word avad, and it literally means, listen carefully, to serve, to till, to work, to dress, to labor, and to make oneself a servant. This word is translated different ways in our Bibles. We talk about serving the Lord and many times we have no idea what we've been talking about. I want to show you what the word serve actually means. First of all, we're going to look at creation and the fall and then some other passages. Keep 1 Chronicles 28, but go to the book of Genesis, chapter 2, and look at verse 5. Genesis 2 and verse 5. Watch it carefully. You're going to find the same Hebrew word, avad.

"...and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground." The word till is the word avad. It means to serve; it means to work. There was not a man to serve the ground or to work the ground. In Genesis chapter 3 and verse 23, after the fall, when Adam is driven from the garden, God says, "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken." It is the same word avad.

Before the fall, work was pleasant and enjoyable. After the fall, it became onerous because of the sweat, the flies, the exasperation, and the weeds. Have you ever noticed that you do not have to plant weeds? You do not have to till them or do anything; they simply come up. If you do not understand the work involved in tilling, then you were never raised on a farm.

Today there are huge, air-conditioned tractors, but it was not like that when I was a boy. You had to plow with a tractor, but there was no cover. If it rained, you were in the rain. I am old enough, believe it or not, to have plowed mules. There is a building still standing in town where, when I entered with my father at seven years old, horses and mules were sold on the left-hand side, while tractors and cars were on the right, all in the same building. If you have never plowed a mule, you do not understand what work is, because a mule is not like a tractor.

A mule will jump the trace, run away, and do all kinds of exasperating things. This is what he is saying: You are going to till the ground; you are going to work; you are going to serve; you are going to be tied to the ground. In both Genesis 2 and Genesis 3, it is the same Hebrew word.

Now look in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 15. I am trying to impress upon you that the word serve actually means to work. Beginning in verse 13, God speaks to Abram: "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years."

Now we are talking about slavery: "...and they shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years." Verse 14 says, "And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance."

I believe that hard labor qualifies as work, especially when you are made to work and have no choice in the matter. Clearly, therefore, the word serve has reference to hard work.

In Exodus 10, Moses and Aaron are talking to Pharaoh and demanding that he let Israel go. Verse 3 says, "And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may serve me." The word serve is avad, meaning to work, to till.

Put yourself in the place of a servant. Listen carefully: the Israelites were being delivered from the bondage of slavery under the Egyptians into the bondage of service to the One True and Living God. Yet His deliverance unto Himself was really liberty and freedom. There is a vast difference between the service of the world and the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Deuteronomy 28 lays out the real difference between His service and the service of the ungodly. The chapter deals with blessings and curses, and this passage concerns the curses for disobedience. Verse 45 says, "Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever."

"Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee." God said, "You're going to see the difference between My service and the service of the wicked. You're going to see the difference between the liberty and the freedom that you have in

serving Me and the tyranny and the enslavement you have in serving sin and serving the wicked." Isn't that amazing?

This is not doublespeak. The truth of the matter is very simple: real freedom, real liberty, is found in serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

When you read the New Testament, the apostle Paul especially, but other apostles as well, refer to themselves as servants of Jesus Christ. In Romans 1 and verse 1, the Bible says, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God." He said it again in Titus 1 and verse 1: "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness."

But Paul's not the only one who said that. James, in James 1 and verse 1, said, "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting." In 2 Peter 1 and verse 1, the Bible says, "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Jude 1 and verse 1 says, "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called."

Every time the word servant is used in these passages, the Greek word is doulos, which means a slave, a bond slave, someone who yields his will to someone else. So every time you read Paul a servant, James a servant, or Jude a servant, they're calling themselves the bondslave of Jesus Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 7:22, the Bible says, "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant." Isn't that amazing? If you are called being a slave and you are saved, you may still be in slavery, but you are a free man in Jesus Christ. If you are not a slave, but a free man, and you are converted and saved by Jesus Christ, you are now a slave to Jesus Christ.

That's not double speak. It is simply saying that this is the real freedom, the real liberty, in Jesus Christ. We have been purchased with a price. Do you remember 1 Corinthians 6:19-20? "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you,

which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." He purchased us. He bought us. We belong to Him.

If you are a slave, you are free; if you are free, you are a slave. Here is the answer: "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." If a man is a slave and God saves him, he is in liberty, even though he is a slave. If a man is free and God saves him, he becomes a slave to Jesus Christ, but he is still free. He is free from the bondage of sin and from self. He is now free to serve the Lord. True liberty and true freedom are found in serving Jesus Christ. This is why David said to his son Solomon, "Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart."

The word serve means to work. It means to till. It means to labor. We have to understand that serving Him is work. It may be divine work, but it is still work. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 3:1, speaking of a pastor, an elder, or a bishop, "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." The ministry is a work. I still laugh about it, but I remember when I was a boy, I wanted to be a preacher.

As a boy, I thought it must be nice to work only on Sunday and a little bit on Wednesday and have the rest of the week off, because I thought ministers worked only on those days. I found out that was not true. It certainly did not work like that at all. But true ministry is serving Christ, which means it is work.

Here is something that I am deathly afraid of, and I know it is the absolute truth: in Christianity and in the world, we have lost what is known as a biblical work ethic. Everybody wants a paycheck, but hardly anyone wants to work, and hardly anyone wants to work right. Everyone wants to take the easy way and deceive and defraud and do whatever they can just to get a paycheck and do the least they can. No one takes pride in their work anymore.

I had a friend who used to repair television sets many years ago, but he went out of business. He said everything was made so cheaply that it was cheaper to buy a new one than to fix an old one. One thing I remember my father teaching me was this: whatever you do, do it right the first time. You can save yourself a lot of heartache and time,

because if you do not do it right the first time, you will have to repeat it. You will waste more time doing it a second or third time. So the things you hate and dislike, the things that have to be done, do them first, get them over with, and do them right. That way, you do not have to redo them.

I never will forget that when I was in the university, there were certain courses I hated and despised. I made sure that I made an A in those courses because I wanted to make dead sure I did not have to repeat them. I am simply saying that we have lost the work ethic. We have lost it in Christianity, and we have lost it in the world. Very few people are really interested in work.

Unhappily, this is the way it is. In Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament, chapter 1, God registers a complaint against the priests, who were particularly supposed to be His servants. He says in verse 6, "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?" He tells them how: "Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible." God says, You are giving Me that which is lame and blemished. You are not doing your best or providing your best, and now you are saying the work of God is contemptible.

In verse 8 He says, "And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts." Whether you agree with Governor DeSantis or like Governor DeSantis is beside the point. If the governor came to your house hungry, would you set a piece of wormy,

Who would put pus-filled meat in front of him and expect him to eat it? You would not do that to anyone. Even if you did not like DeSantis, at least you might respect the office. God said, If a governor would not accept what you are giving, what makes you think I would accept it? Because I am a great king.

He says in verse 9, “And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard

your persons? saith the Lord of hosts." God is not going to regard your persons, especially when you are giving Him that which is wicked and wrong.

"Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts."

I find it interesting that just about every position in the church is a paid position. You pay people to play an organ, play the piano, clean the building, and cut the grass. I am just saying, where in the world is this service?

Years ago, I was preaching in Illinois. The pastor was a young man, and he told me about another pastor in the area who had built a very beautiful building. He wanted me to see the church building and meet the pastor, so he took me over there. When I got out of the car, it was indeed an extremely beautiful building. When I walked inside, the carpet was beautiful, and the stained glass windows.

They had padded pews, before most churches ever had padded pews. The building was exquisitely beautiful. When I met the pastor, I complimented him on it. He looked at me and said, "It's the worst thing that ever happened to us."

I assumed he meant they were in debt for the building. I asked, "Do you mean that you're in debt up to your eyeballs for this building?" "No, no, no," he said. "We paid cash for this building, and we have millions in the bank."

He explained that, before they had this building, when the church came together, they all pitched in to cut the yard. If repair work was needed on the old building, they got together and did it. If they needed to raise money for something, they did it. Then a widow in the church died and left them about $19 million.

"That's how we got this new building," he said. "That's why we have millions in the bank. It's the worst thing that ever happened to

us. Now, if something needs to be done, it's already done. We have the money. We have the building. We have the money, but we lost the church. We've lost our service. We've lost our heart."

This is exactly what God is talking about in Malachi chapter one. We must understand that service is work. When we serve the Lord, we are tilling for Him, plowing for Him, and working for Him. It may be divine work, but it is work.

Now, look at this. David said to Solomon, "My son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart." Do you have a perfect heart? How do you know whether or not you have a perfect heart if you do not even know what a perfect heart is?

Now, it is true the Hebrew word actually is the word shalem, which means to be perfect, whole, complete, full, and peaceful, serving with a perfect heart. You remember that passage in James 1 in verse 8, where he said, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." Dipsuchos is the Greek word, a double-souled man, a man that has two minds, a man that is pulled in two different directions, a man that is wavering, a man that can't make up his mind, he has a divided interest, he can't serve because he doesn't know really and truly what he wants to do. So God said that we should serve Him with a perfect heart the way Solomon is being admonished by his father to serve God. One way that you understand some of these terms is by comparing Scripture with Scripture. So let me show you what the Bible talks about when it talks about a perfect heart.

The Third Admonition: Serve with a Willing Mind

It does not mean that you have to be sinless. Look in your Bibles, if you would, to 1 Kings 8. 1 Kings 8, and then we're going to 1 Chronicles 29. So 1 Kings 8, and note, if you would please, verse 61. This is still given to Solomon. Note, if you would. "Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day." Wow. "Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God." What is the perfect heart? One that walks in His statutes and keeps His commandments. Then, if you will turn right over to 1 Chronicles 29, and look, if you would please, at verse 19. 1 Chronicles 29 and verse 19. Notice, if you would, the Scripture says this, 1 Chronicles 29 and

verse 19. David says, "And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart." What is that perfect heart? "To keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision."

A perfect heart, then, is a heart that is whole, complete, and totally obedient to God and His Word. Do you realize the perfection, or the wholeness and completeness, of your heart can be measured, manifested, and revealed by your obedience? That is what he just got through saying. You can flip the coin over. Your double-mindedness, your imperfection in your heart, can also be revealed and manifested by your disobediences. To serve Him with a perfect heart is to serve Him with complete obedience to His Word. We must serve God with a perfect heart; we must have a singleness of heart, not being double-minded, not being unstable. It might be something that you and I have to fight for, to maintain in our lives a heart that is set on obedience to God.

Samuel gave some good counsel to the people in 1 Samuel 12:24: "Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you." How do we maintain a perfect heart? First, we maintain a perfect heart by serving Him in truth. We are not hypocrites, half-hearted, or double-hearted. We make sure that what we do is biblical and scriptural. Second, we consider how great things He has done for us. We consider what we owe Him, how He has redeemed and reconciled us, and how He has blessed and kept us. That should encourage us to want to serve Him more.

In 1 Chronicles 28:9, David gives a third admonition: "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind."

So here is my question: Do you have a willing mind? In order to answer that, you must know what a willing mind consists of. You must know the essence of a willing mind. The Hebrew word is khafetz, which literally means to desire, to have pleasure, favor, or delight. It refers to a mind that is full of joy, delight, and pleasure in doing something. This word is translated differently in two passages. It is translated as willing for us in verse 9, but it is translated in other ways as well.

The same Hebrew word is translated as willing. Psalm 5:4 says, “For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.” The word could be understood as, “Thou art not a God that hath a willingness in wickedness.” God has no joy, delight, or pleasure in wickedness; He does not will it. “Neither shall evil dwell with thee.”

Psalm 111:2-3 says, “The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.” “Sought out of all them that have pleasure therein” means sought out by those who have willing delight, willing joy, and willing pleasure in them. A willing mind is a mind that has joy, delight, and pleasure in God, in His works, and in His will. Thus David says, “Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind.” When you think about a willing mind, it was David who wanted to build the temple.

In 2 Chronicles 6, as you also find in the book of Kings, David had wanted to build the temple, and Nathan originally told David to do all that was in his heart. That night, God came to Nathan and told him to go and tell David that he would not build the temple. His son Solomon would build it, because David had been a man of war and had shed much blood. But what did God say concerning David’s willingness? Solomon says, “Now it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel. But the Lord said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart.”

“Notwithstanding thou shalt not build the house; but thy son which shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name.” It was in David’s heart to build the house. Did you know that God gave David the pattern for the temple? Did you know that David made preparations for all the materials, the silver, the gold, and the precious things for the temple? David wanted to build the house, but God did not permit him because he had been a man of war and had shed much blood; his son Solomon would build it. Yet God commended what was in David’s heart.

He left it for Solomon. And God said that he did well and that it was in his heart. David had a willing heart. Solomon built the temple, but he could not have done so without his father's provision and without the direction and pattern God had given his father. So who built the temple? Solomon actually did it, but David had the willing heart.

Do you understand that oftentimes God, in His graciousness, accepts the will for the deed? There have been times when you and I genuinely wanted to do something, willed to do something for God, but we were hindered and unable to do it. In that case, God accepts the will for the deed.

Look in your Bibles at 2 Corinthians 8. In chapters 8 and 9, the Apostle Paul is discussing a collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem. He was gathering money from all these people to give to the saints in Jerusalem. He makes this statement in 2 Corinthians 8:12: “For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.” Note it: “For if there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”

Suppose Steve said to me, “Pastor, I would really like to give this ministry a million bucks. I really would love to do that.” I said, “Thank you, my brother. I believe I could use a million bucks in the ministry.” Then he says, “But all I have is twenty bucks. But I want you to have it.” You know what God does? I get the twenty, and God marks down a million because it was in his heart.

Do you remember that poor widow woman who threw in the two mites? What did our Lord say? "This woman hath cast in more than they all." Why? Because she gave of her penury, out of her heart, and willingly. Oftentimes God does accept the willingness for the deed. I may want to be a missionary and have a real desire to be one, but if I am providentially hindered and God does not open the door, there is no way I could be a missionary. But if that burning desire is in my soul, God would accept the will for the deed.

Think about the number of saints who would love to be sitting where you are sitting today. They cannot because they are at home or in a hospital, incapacitated. But they love the worship of God, the

Word of God, and the preaching of God. They would really want to be here and desire to be here, but they cannot. God would accept the will for the deed.

"If there first be a willing mind." Go back to 1 Chronicles chapter 28, verse 9, because David explains to his son Solomon exactly why these admonitions were given to him: "Thou Solomon my son know thou the God of thy father and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind." Why? "For the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts."

The Lord searches all hearts. He knows whether or not we have a willing heart and whether or not we have an obedient heart. We cannot fool Him. He understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. God said in Isaiah 66 and verse 18, "For I know their works and their thoughts." You cannot hide anything from God. He is omniscient. Jeremiah 4 and verse 14 says, "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?" God must know their thoughts to know that the thoughts of the heart were vain and useless thoughts. Ezekiel 38 and verse 10 says, "Thus saith the Lord God; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought." God knows our thoughts before they ever enter into our minds. David said, "Solomon, listen to me. Know the God of thy father. Serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind."

The Reason: God Searches All Hearts

Because, son, there is no way you can deceive Him, fool Him, or play the hypocrite. There is no way you can get by with less, because God knows everything. He is omniscient. Therefore, the words of wisdom David gives Solomon are to know Him and serve Him with a perfect heart and a willing mind.

Applications: Salvation Leads to Service

Salvation for the child of God is only the beginning. Christianity is a life of service and work. We are saved to serve. God delivered Israel from Egypt to serve Him, and we have been saved from our sins to serve Him and glorify Him. One of the great problems in Christianity

today is that God's people have lost a servant's heart. When you understand that to serve means to work, you see that we have lost that biblical work ethic.

I remember when I was a boy, if a neighbor's barn burned down, all the farmers got together and helped him rebuild. If he became sick, the neighbors came together and cared for his crops and animals until he recovered. They were not paid to do it. Alice can tell you that years ago we had a neighbor who had a stroke. My girls, myself, and his wife planted and harvested all the crops until he recovered and could do it himself.

That is what service is all about. When we serve Him, we must serve Him with a complete and total heart, ready to obey, and with a willing mind. It cannot be begrudged. Even our giving must be willing. The Bible says that God loveth a cheerful giver. God does not love a begrudging giver; He loves a cheerful giver. I have heard the expression, "Give until it hurts," but that is not biblical. The word cheerful is hilarion, from which we get our English word hilarious. You do not give until it hurts; you give until you are laughing hilariously. God would rather have two cents from a willing heart than two million from a begrudging heart.

He deserves all honor, glory, and praise. Whatever we do, we are to do it willingly, with an obedient heart, for His honor and glory. Words of wisdom: know the God of thy father, serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Your word. We thank You for Your truth.

Help us, Lord, to be what we should be. Understand that we have been bought with a price, that we belong to Thee, that we are to be Thy servants, and that we are to serve Thee, honor Thee, and glorify Thee. Help us, Father, to bring every area of our lives into conformity to Your Word. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Words Of Wisdom And Words Of Warning

Part Two

Introduction and Review

In 1 Chronicles 28:9, David gives Solomon, his son, counsel: “Thou Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imagination of the thoughts. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.”

I titled this message, “Words of Wisdom and Words of Warning,” because this is the counsel David gave to Solomon, passing wisdom on to his son. I think the very first words of David to Solomon should be the very first words that we give to our children: “And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father.”

Last week, I pointed out that the word “know” meant to know personally, intimately, and experientially. It is not simply historical

or intellectual knowledge; it is indeed a personal and saving knowledge. The second admonition is connected with that: “Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart.” The word “serve” actually means to work.

It is translated as “till” in the book of Genesis. It has the same implication when God told Abram that his children would serve a strange nation. They were forced to work; they were compelled to work because they were slaves. Thus, “serve” basically means to work. God delivered Israel from the land of Egypt that they might serve Him, and that service was indeed work.

He said, “Serve him with a perfect heart.” The word “perfect” meant a heart that was right, in the sense that it was obedient. Other Scriptures speak of those who, with a perfect heart, kept His commandments, statutes, and judgments. These are words of wisdom: “Serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind.” The word “willing” refers to that which is pleasurable, delightful, and causes joy.

And so, we are to serve Him not only with a heart of obedience, but with something that causes us pleasure as well. We have, then, the words of wisdom. Secondly, we come to the words of warning in 1 Chronicles 28:9: “If thou seek Him, He will be found of thee. But if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever.” Of course, both of these, in one sense of the word, are indeed words of warning, which I will explain just momentarily.

The Bible, of course, is replete with warnings. It does not matter whether you read the Old Testament or the New Testament; it is full of warnings. In fact, if we did nothing but take two words and consider them in context, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, we would have ample warnings. Those two words are simply, “take heed.” I want to give you two verses out of the Old Testament, and then quote four from the New Testament.

The Words of Warning Introduced

In Deuteronomy 4:9, the Scripture says, “Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy

life. But teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." So it says, "Take heed to thyself."

Then, in verse 15, there is another warning: "Take you therefore good heed unto yourselves, for you saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire." Here is a warning against idolatry and making images, but it says, "take good heed." Over and over in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, we encounter the words "take heed" or "take good heed."

In Mark 4:24, the Bible says, "And he," that is, our Lord, "said unto them, Take heed what you hear. For what measure you mete, it shall be measured back to you." In other words, make sure that you are hearing the Word of God. Take heed what you hear. Then, in Luke 8:18, He says, "Take heed how you hear for whosoever hath to him shall be given and he that hath not from him shall be taken that which he seemeth to have." It is interesting that He said, "Take heed what you hear," and then, "Take heed how you hear."

In 1 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 16, he said, "Take heed to thyself and thy doctrine. Notice, if you would, take heed to thyself and thy doctrine, continue in them: for in doing so thou shalt save thyself and those that hear thee." So he says, "Take heed"; those are words of warning. One more passage, Hebrews chapter 3 and verse 12, where the Word of God says, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief and departing from the living God." Thus, you have these words, "take heed," which are warnings all through the Bible. When you look back at 1 Chronicles chapter 28 and verse 9, you do not see the words "take heed." However, these are very clear and obvious warnings.

The Positive Warning: Seek the Lord

The latter half of verse 9 says, "If thou seek him, he will be found of thee. But if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever." These are indeed words of warning. However, it is in two parts. There is a positive and there is a negative. The positive is very clearly, "If thou seek him, he will be found of thee." The obvious warning, which is also there, is that if you do not seek Him, He will not be found of you. You have to understand that this is one warning, but it is in two parts

as well. The first truth, the first part of this warning, the positive, is very easily understood.

In fact, we can quote many scriptures that deal with seeking the Lord. For instance, in Psalm 27 and verse 8, David said to God, “When thou saidest, Seek ye my face, my heart said, Thy face will I seek.” And then in Psalm 105 and verse 3, “Glory ye in his holy name. Let the heart of them that seek him rejoice.” So there are people who seek Him. Everyone is familiar with that passage in Isaiah 55, where he said, “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found.”

“Call ye upon him while he's near. Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the evil man his thoughts, and let him turn to the Lord, and he will abundantly have mercy upon him.” There are many Scriptures that tell us to seek the Lord. In Jeremiah chapter 29 and verse 13, God says, “And you shall seek me, and you shall find me, when you seek me with your whole heart.” Not half-heartedly, but with your whole heart. In Joel chapter 2 and verse 12, we read, “Therefore also now, saith the Lord God, turn you even to me with all of your heart.” Throughout the Bible we find invitation after invitation to seek the Lord and search for Him with all our heart. There are so many such verses that it is almost unimaginable that no one could find or know at least one of them.

The part of this verse that confounds many people is not the invitation to seek the Lord, but its negative aspect: “If thou seek him, he'll be found of thee, but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever.” How do we explain that last part? “If we forsake him, he will cast us off forever.”

The Negative Warning: Forsaking and Being Cast Off

In this warning there are two encouragements. First, there is an encouragement to seek the Lord; secondly, there is an encouragement to steadfastness. Once you seek Him and find Him, you remain steadfast and do not forsake Him. Still, this does not answer the question: How do we explain that if we forsake Him, He will cast us off forever? You must be ready to consider a number of passages, because to understand any verse you must understand it in its context—not only its immediate context, but also its remote context. That context may be several chapters away, the whole book,

or even other books. This same statement is explained in many passages, especially in reference to the subject we are dealing with. This message is titled Words of Wisdom and Words of Warning.

This counsel was given by David to his son Solomon in light of the Davidic Covenant, especially in light of David's kingdom and his physical descendants—those who were in control of the kingdom. We are going to look at a number of passages that specifically and immediately refer to David's physical descendants. The first passage is 2 Samuel chapter 7, where God speaks to David: "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom."

The Conditional Aspect of the Davidic Covenant

God says, "He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. And I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the stripes of the children of men." He continues: "But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before him. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee, the throne shall be established forever."

As we examine this passage, understand that there are two men in view in these passages. The first one is Solomon, David's son, and the second one is the greater Solomon, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true Son of David. God says to David that He will set up his seed and establish his kingdom. The reference begins with David's physical descendant, the one who would proceed from his own bowels, and with the kingdom that would be established through him. Solomon built a house for God's name, exactly as the passage says. But the Lord Jesus Christ is building a house as well.

When God says, "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the stripes of the children of men," that refers to the physical Solomon, David's son. That statement concerns the immediate physical descendant and the chastening of that man. But when God says, "His throne shall be established forever," that refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. Solomon's house and kingdom

provide the immediate setting, but the everlasting throne points to the greater Solomon, the true Son of David.

SCRIPTURE READING - 2 Chronicles 6:12-17 (KJV)

> "And he," that is Solomon, "stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel and spread forth his hands. For Solomon had made a brazen scaffold of five cubits long, five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court. And upon it he stood and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven, and said, O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee in heaven nor in earth, which keepeth covenant and showeth mercy unto thy servants, that walk before thee with all their hearts.
>
> "...thou which hast kept with thy servant David my father, that which thou hast promised him, and spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day. Now therefore, O Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father, that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight, to sit upon the throne of Israel, yet so that the children take heed to their way. ...take heed to their way, to walk in my law, as thou hast walked before me. Now then, O Lord God of Israel, let thy word be verified, which thou hast spoken to thy servant David."

In verse 16 Solomon says, “Now therefore, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit upon the throne of Israel.” The Hebrew word for “man” is ish, meaning a man, a male. It does not refer to a woman; it refers to a man. You will remember that when God created Eve and brought her to Adam, he said, using the Hebrew words, “She shall be called Isha, for she was taken out of Ish.” She shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.

Thus God says, “If you take heed of thyself and keep my commandments, there shall not fail thee a man to sit upon the throne of Israel.” In one sense of the word, in relationship to David’s physical descendants, this covenant is basically what you and I would call conditional.

This is seen again in 2 Chronicles chapter 7, where God says to Solomon, “And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments, then will I establish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man to be a ruler in Israel.”

“But if you turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods and worship them,” then God says, “Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of the land which I have given them, and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations.” The house would become an astonishment to everyone passing by, who would ask, “Why hath the Lord done thus unto the land and unto this house?” The answer would be, “Because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them. Therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them.”

Now, if you'll go back to verse 17, he said it like this. "And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me as David thy father, if you will keep my commandments and my statutes," verse 18, "then will I establish the throne of thy kingdom." End of the words, and then you come down to verse 19, "but if you turn away." So, this covenant concerning David's physical descendants was conditioned upon obedience. Since we're in 2 Chronicles, if you will turn right over to 2 Chronicles 15, you will see the same truth was given to King Asa. Watch if you would.

We'll read verses 1 and 2. "And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded, and he went out to meet Asa. And he said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The Lord is with you while you be with Him. And if you seek Him, He will be found of you. But if you forsake Him, He will forsake you."

Now, here is my question. Did David's physical descendants forsake God, the covenant, and His law? And the answer is yes. You don't even have to look any further than Solomon. It was Solomon

who introduced idolatry into Israel. Read 1 Kings chapter 11, where he built all of these altars for his strange wives, even to Baal and to Moloch and all these other altars. So did Solomon fail? Yes. And as someone pointed out, out of all the wives that Solomon had, he only had one son, that was Rehoboam, and he was a fool.

Historical Fulfillment: Israel and Judah Forsook God

And he was, because he lost the kingdom. It was divided under him because of his insanity and stupidity is what it amounted to. His wickedness, his rebellion. And then from there it basically went downhill. You had some good kings, you had some bad kings, but obviously, yes. Did the kings fail? Yes. Did the people fail and disobey? And the answer is yes. So if you will turn back in your Bibles to 2 Kings chapter 17. 2 Kings chapter 17. All these are together concerning the kings of Israel. 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles. So notice if you would, 2 Kings chapter 17, let's answer the question: Did the kings, did the people forsake God? I could read the whole chapter, but let's begin with verse 13. The Bible says, "Yet the Lord testified against Israel and against Judah." Remember Israel's the Northern kingdom, Judah's the Southern kingdom. "He testified against Israel and against Judah by all the prophets and by all the seers saying, Turn you from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers and which I sent unto you by my servants the prophets."

Israel would not hear, but hardened their necks like the necks of their fathers that did not believe in the Lord their God. They rejected his statutes, his covenant, and his testimonies. They followed vanity, became vain, and went after the heathen around them, although the Lord had charged them not to do likewise. They left all the commandments of the Lord their God, made molten images—even two calves—and made a grove, worshipped all the hosts of heaven, and served Baal.

They caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, used divinations and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight. There

was none left but the tribe of Judah only. Judah also kept not the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. The Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of the spoilers until he had cast them out of his sight. For he rent Israel from the house of David, and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. Jeroboam drove Israel from following the Lord, and made them sin a great sin. They did indeed forsake God and forsake the covenant.

Ezra gives us this same truth. He said, "For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way, because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him, but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him."

When you read the Scripture, you cannot help but see and understand that both the kings, as well as Israel and Judah, did indeed forsake God. They transgressed his law and violated the covenant. When they did so, God righteously and justly forsook them. In fact, he is going to say that momentarily. Here is the same kind of scenario.

The Spiritual Aspect: The Greater Son of David

Marriage is a covenant, just like civil government is a covenant. Men, if your wife ran off and left you, ran off with another man, divorced you, and married that other man, would you consider yourself still responsible to provide for her and protect her? Of course not. She violated the covenant. She is not yours anymore, and you have no duty or obligation to protect her or provide for her in any way.

It is the same thing here. God had entered into the covenant with David, and He said, “If your descendants keep My law, if they do this, I will bless them. If they do not do this, then,” He said, “I will curse them.” Remember now, He said, “If you forsake Me, I will forsake you.”

In 2 Kings chapter 21, verse 12, look what God says: “Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of

Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies.

"And they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies, because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day. Moreover Manasseh," who was a king, "shed innocent blood very much, till it filled Jerusalem from one end to the other, beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin and doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord."

When David tells Solomon, "If you forsake him, he will forsake you," he is pointing out the physical aspect of the covenant, because Solomon was a physical descendant of David. But there is another aspect of the covenant, which I will simply refer to as the spiritual aspect. David not only had a physical seed; he also had a spiritual seed.

As I pointed out earlier, when you read these passages, you have to understand that they contain what we call prophetic telescoping. If I had a telescope and were looking at David, I might see him there, and beyond him see Carol standing. I am looking at David, but I see her. In many of these passages, they are looking at Solomon, but beyond Solomon you see the greater than Solomon—the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. So I am going to show you a passage where these aspects are tied together.

Look in your Bibles to Psalm 89. Here is a passage where you can see very clearly and distinctly that there is indeed a spiritual side to this covenant. In Psalm 89, beginning with verse 19, God is basically speaking to David. Notice what God says. You have to distinguish between David's physical descendants and his true seed, the Lord Jesus Christ. Watch carefully: Psalm 89, verse 19.

"Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one and said, I have laid help upon one that is mighty. I've exalted my chosen out of the people. I found David my servant. With my holy oil have I anointed him, with whom my hand shall be established, mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him, nor the son of

wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea and his right hand in the rivers."

David never occupied all of the land. The kingdom reached its zenith under Solomon, but now we are talking about someone who is going to occupy it. Verse 26 says, "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation." What did our Lord Jesus cry? "My Father, my Father, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Verse 27 says, "Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth." We are not talking about Solomon. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is called the firstborn, and He is certainly called the King of kings and Lord of lords. He is higher than all the kings of the earth.

God says, "My mercy will I keep for Him forevermore, and My covenant shall stand fast with Him. His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven." This is the seed of the Lord Jesus Christ. "If his children forsake my law," that would be us, "and walk not in my judgments," God will visit their transgressions with a rod and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, His lovingkindness will not utterly be taken from Him, nor will His faithfulness fail. God will not break His covenant or alter the things that have gone out of His lips.

He has sworn by His holiness that He will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Him. It shall be established forever as the moon and as a faithful witness in heaven. So now we are talking about the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now there's a verse I can quote, but I want you to see it. I want you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Matthew chapter 1 and verse 1. This is the very first verse in the Bible. And the very first verse in the Bible should be extremely informative. That is in the New Testament, very first verse in the New Testament. And I want you to see what it says. Look at it. "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." So Jesus Christ was

not just simply in the lineage of David, he was, but Solomon just prefigured the true Solomon, the Lord Jesus Christ. So Jesus Christ is not only called the son of David, he's also called the son of Abraham. Now, since you're in Matthew, look in Matthew chapter 12 and verse 42. Matthew 12 and verse 42. And here's what our Lord said. "The Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it. Why?"

"For she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon and behold a greater than Solomon is here." Now the word "greater" in the Greek is the word "pleion." And it literally means that which is superior, that which is more excellent. So there was the physical Solomon, and now here's the spiritual Solomon. Here's the greater, the superior one, the one who is more excellent. Now, I told you earlier, it is true that David's kingdom reached its zenith under Solomon. And when you read in the Bible all the land that Solomon possessed, and when you read all the riches that Solomon had, and when you read about all the wisdom that God gave Solomon, and yet the truth of the matter is, everything that was given to Solomon belongs to God. And Jesus Christ is God. He's the greater than Solomon.

And the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. And then the Bible tells us that He is our wisdom. He is wisdom personified. So Jesus Christ, then, is our all and in all.

The Security of Christ's Spiritual Seed

Now, since David had a physical seed, David also, through his greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ, also has a spiritual seed. Now it is true that that physical seed could be cast off and could be cast off forever in the sense that just because you were the physical descendant of David did not make you saved. Salvation is not by blood. Physical descendants of Abraham are not necessarily saved just because they happen to be a physical descendant of Abraham. Salvation is not by race. Salvation is by grace. Salvation is not by blood. Salvation is by grace.

There are plenty of kings that were wicked and vile and died in their sins, as well as plenty of the people. So, will our Lord Jesus

Christ's seed be cast off forever? The answer is no, of course not. Isaiah 53 is a chapter dealing with the suffering Messiah. The first several verses clearly refer to our Lord Jesus Christ, and they are quoted in the New Testament concerning him. Isaiah writes, "Who has believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he," that is the Lord Jesus, "shall grow up before him as a tender plant."

"That's the root out of dry ground. He hath no form nor comeliness. And when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid as it were our faces from him. He was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." So we're talking about Jesus Christ.

Now, concerning Christ, the Scripture says, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him. He hath put him to grief when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin," which he did. The Bible says concerning Christ and his suffering, "He shall see his seed. He shall prolong his days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see his seed." Verse 11 says, "He shall see the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities." It is not that he might see, or that he hopes to see, or that he maybe will see. No, he shall see.

So not one for whom our Lord died is going to be eternally cast off and forsaken. He shall see the travail of his soul. In John chapter 10, verse 27, our Lord said, "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me."

Jesus said, “And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.” What did He say? “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.” Never.

Turn to Philippians chapter 1, and then to Hebrews chapter 12. Philippians 1:6 says, “Being confident of this very thing, that he who

hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." If God has started a work in you, He will finish that work. He is not going to start something and then quit. He is not going to begin a work and then walk away from it. "Being confident in this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ."

Now look at Hebrews 12:2. In light of this same truth, the Bible says, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Note the words, "looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith."

I could put it to you like this: I have authored three books. I have written three books. If I asked Steve to finish my first book, The Christian and Civil Government, he could not finish it, because he is not the author of it. He did not begin it. Jesus is the author and the finisher. He began our faith, and He finishes our faith. He began our salvation, and He finishes our salvation.

Here, then, is an aspect of this covenant: Jesus Christ, the true Solomon and the true seed of David, is indeed King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We are preserved in Jesus Christ. That is what Jude 1 in verse 1 says: we are preserved in Jesus Christ. While preservation is a blessing, it also includes what you and I would call perseverance. I am going to explain that for a moment.

Temporary Forsaking vs. Eternal Casting Off

Just because a believer cannot be cast off forever does not mean that he cannot be cast off temporarily. Isaiah 54:8 says, "In a little wrath, I hid my face from thee for a moment. But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." Note the words, "In a little wrath, I hid my face from thee for a moment." The way that we are forsaken, as I will explain more fully, is that we lose our joy, our peace, and our blessings because of our sins and disobedience to the Word of God.

When we sin as Christians, we receive chastisement. That is why Micah 6:9 says, "Hear ye the rod and him who hath appointed it."

There is no earthly parent who wishes to bless a disobedient, hard-headed, stubborn, rebellious child. Suppose you told your son to do something and he refused. When you confronted him, he puffed up, cursed you, called you every name under the sun, and spit in your face. Would you look at that child and say, "Son, just wait right here. I want to run to town and buy you a present"? You would not say that. You would say, "Son, stand still because you can't run away from this one. You've got it coming. I'm going to give it to you." You would chastise him severely. We are not going to put up with disobedience or insolence in our children. Do you think God is going to put up with that in His children, while we escape chastisement?

Every Christian understands that there have been times when you were disobedient, violating God's principles and law, and it seemed as if the heavens were brass. You tried to pray, but your prayer never got out of the ceiling of the room. It looked as if God were nowhere around. You were all alone; God was not hearing or answering your prayer. Let me tell you something: there was no problem with God. God is immutable. God does not change. The problem was not with God; the problem was with us.

We were the ones that changed. We were the ones that sinned. And oftentimes our change is not for the better; it is for the worse. When that happens, we lose our joy, our peace, and our blessings.

Consider the words of our Lord in John 14:21: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, “Lord, how is it thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” Jesus answered and said unto him, “If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

Note what He said: “He that hath my commandments and keepeth them is he that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him.” What we lose by our sins is the manifest presence of God. This is a temporary forsaking when we have insulted Him, sinned against Him, and transgressed against Him.

It is not that we are being cast off forever; we are losing His manifest presence. You remember in the Old Testament how Israel sinned and provoked God. God told Moses, “Take that people and get them to land, but I'm not going with you.” You remember what Moses said? “If you're not going with me, don't send me. I'm not going without you. I want your presence.”

When we sin against God, that is why our hearts grow cold, our joy decreases, our peace flees away, and the blessing seemingly stops flowing. That is why our prayers never get up past the ceiling: we have sinned against God. The way back, of course, is always through repentance, faith, submission, and obedience.

I have had people tell me, “Well, Brother Weaver, you don't understand. I know of someone who used to be a Christian. He was baptized, went to church, did this and did that, and now he has left the faith, left God, and done everything wicked under the sun—and is still doing everything wicked under the sun. But he used to be a Christian.” The answer is, no, he did not. First John 2:19 says, “They went out from us, that it might be made manifest that they were not of us.”

Applications: Perseverance and Seeking God

"For had they been of us, no doubt they would have continued with us." The proof of genuine salvation is continuing in salvation and faith; genuine repentance is proved by continuing in repentance.

The Bible says in Psalm 94:14, “For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.” He is not going to cast us off. Everyone probably can quote this verse, or at least part of it. I have quoted Hebrews 13:5 to Alice a number of times when she would tell me, “Well, I need some new dresses.” I would say, “Now, sweetheart, we want to be biblical about this thing. We want to do what the Lord wants us to do, right?” She would answer, “Yeah, right.” Then I would give her the verse: “Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have.” That is not the context, but it is what the first part of the verse says. Here is why: “Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have, for he has said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

In other words, we can be content because we have His manifest presence. We have Him, and if we have Him, we have everything we need.

Let me make a couple of applications. First, the warning David gave to Solomon is also the same warning that we have in Jesus Christ: we must persevere in the faith. The Bible tells us in Jude 1, verse 1, that we are preserved in Christ Jesus. But those who are preserved in Christ Jesus manifest that preservation by perseverance. We persevere in repentance, faith, submission, and obedience.

Our perseverance is not something we do in our own strength or possess the ability to do in and of ourselves. Perseverance is a work, that is for sure, but it is also grace. You remember what our Lord said in John 15:5? “Without me, you can do what?” Nothing. Without Him, we cannot persevere. He must give us the grace and mercy to enable us to walk pleasing in His sight.

The second application is this: the reason for both encouragements in the warning is so that we may understand that we may seek Him whenever we need grace and whenever we need mercy.

He is going to be found. When we seek Him with all our hearts, whether we need patience, mercy, help, or a particular blessing, He said, "You shall find me when you seek for me with all your heart." Those that seek the Lord, He shall be found of them. There is absolutely no need for any child of God to suffer and to fail when we have the omnipotent God, with infinite resources, as our Father. The reason we fail and the reason we do without is because we refuse to seek Him as we should. There is no reason for unanswered prayer, because He loves us and delights to answer our prayers. There is no reason for you and me to live without peace and blessing, because He told us that if we seek Him, He will be found of us. We must learn the truth that we have to walk in faith, obedience, and submission.

I want to show you two verses in Psalm 71 that I use quite frequently in my life and tend to rely on over and over as the years go by. The problem with getting old is that you cannot do what you used to do. You do not have the strength or the ability. David understood

that. He said, "Cast me not off in the time of old age. Forsake me not when my strength faileth."

That is a pretty good prayer, is it not? Our strength does fail, I can assure you. But the one I really like is found in verse 18: "Now also when I'm old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not until I've showed thy strength unto this generation and thy power to everyone that is to come." I changed that a little bit and read it like this: "Now when I am old and bald-headed, O God, forsake me not until I've showed thy strength unto this generation and thy power to everyone that is to come." I tell people I still marvel at younger men who have all their strength and power. I have several younger men around me who help me, for which I am extremely thankful.

Recently, one of them said to me about being young and strong. I said, "Let me tell you something. There are things that a young man can do that an old man cannot do. But there are things that an old man knows that a young man does not know." Then I said, "Don't push your luck."

David said, "Forsake me not, but I'm old and gray headed, until I've showed thy strength to this generation." When you read, I think it's Psalm 91, it's in the Psalm 90s, talking about old folks, what does he say? He is saying that when you get old, you'll be fat and flourishing in the house of God. Old men do not necessarily need to say, "I'm going to sit by and do nothing." No, he said, "Lord, let me show this generation your strength and your power."

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to thee. We thank you for your word and your truth. Help us, Lord, to make application to our lives and to live for thee. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

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