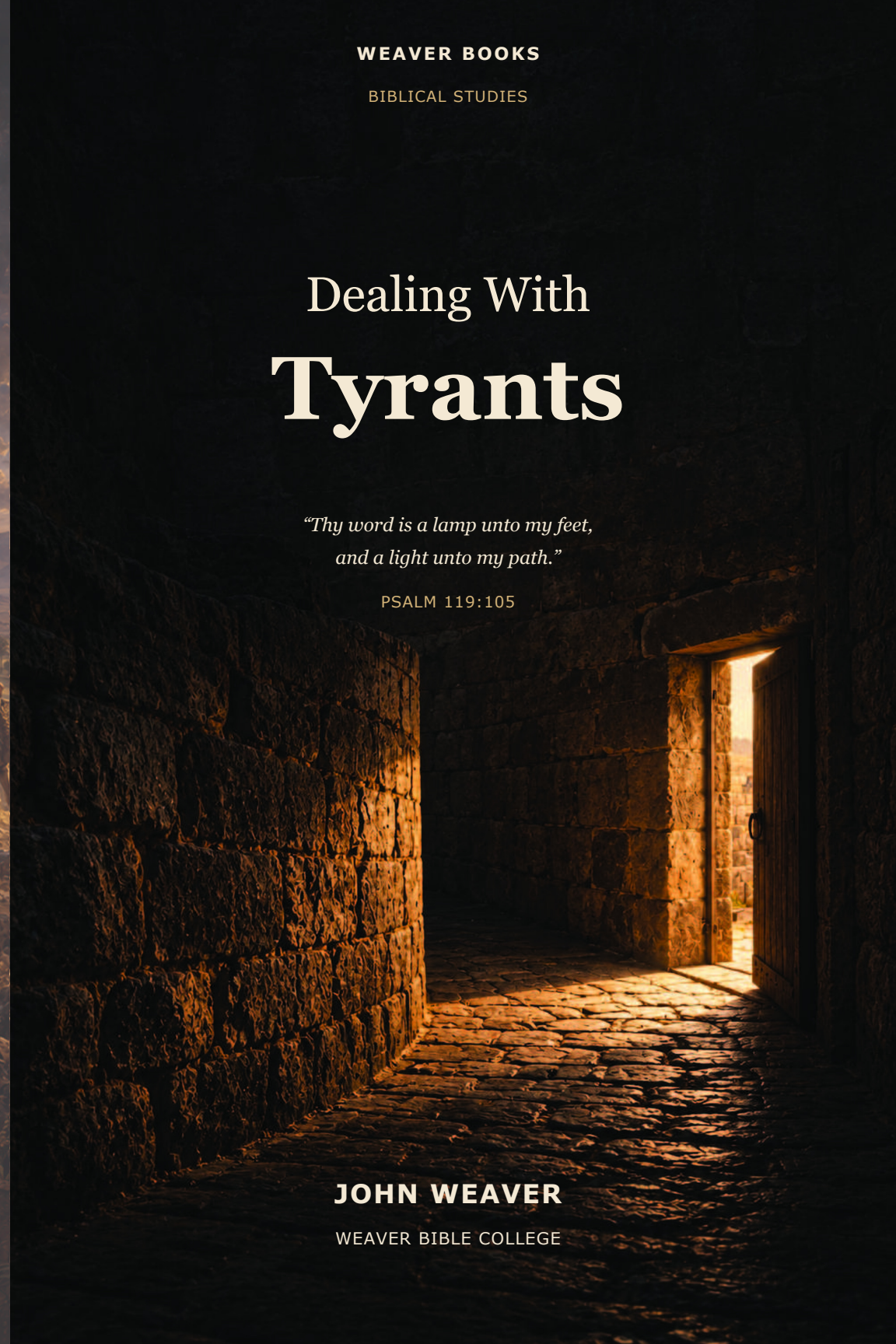
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BIBLICAL STUDIES

Dealing With Tyrants

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

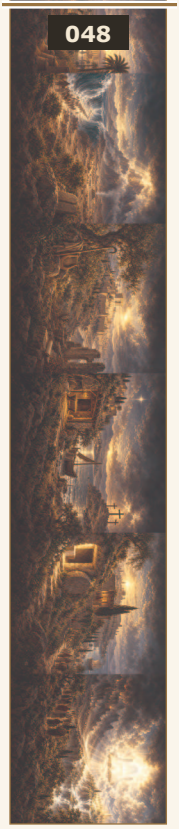
PSALM 119:105



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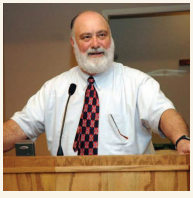
We ought to obey God rather than men.

ACTS 5:29, EXCERPT

John Weaver examines tyranny through biblical accounts of danger, deliverance, avoidance, and resistance. These messages consider the responsibilities of preserving life and liberty while discerning the limits of human authority. The volume presents arguments about prudence and lawful action for readers to examine carefully against the Scriptures on which they are based.

"You do not owe the truth to one who is going to abuse the truth."

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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Contents

Chapter 1: Dealing With Tyrants - 1 5

Introduction: The Question of Dealing with Tyrants 6

Deception as the Basic Biblical Method 6

Tyranny Is Not Divinely Appointed 7

Deception and the Lex Talionis 7

Caution: Deception Is Not for Everyday Use 9

God Uses Deception 10

Biblical Examples of Deception Against Tyrants 15

Application: The Principle of Not Owing Truth to Abusers 26

Chapter 2: Dealing With Tyrants - 2 29

Introduction and Review 29

Defining Avoidance 30

Why Avoid Tyrants? 30

Isaac's Example of Avoidance 31

Jacob's Use of Avoidance 34

Elijah and the Prophets Avoid Ahab 39

David Avoids Saul 41

New Testament Examples: Paul and Jesus 43

God Commands Avoidance: Joseph and Mary 45

Heroes of Faith Practiced Avoidance 45

Practical Applications 46

Chapter 3: Dealing With Tyrants - 3 49

Introduction and Review of Previous Methods 49

Defining Resistance vs. Rebellion 50

The Example of Athaliah and Jehoiada 51

The Declaration of Independence as a Model 52

Old Testament Precedents for Armed Resistance 54

New Testament Endorsement in Hebrews 11 66

Why Force Against Tyranny is Just 67
Caution and Conclusion 68
Chapter 4: Dealing With Tyrants - 4 71
Introduction and Review of Previous Methods 71
The New Testament Endorses Old Testament Examples 72
Why the Disciples Did Not Overthrow Rome 73
Consideration 1: Strength and Resources for Long-Term War 74
Consideration 2: Reasonable Hope of Winning 77
Attitude When There Is No Hope of Winning 81
Consideration 3: Are the People Tired of Sin and Tyranny? 82
Consideration 4: Is God Directing the Effort? 86
Application: Why the Disciples Did Not Fight Rome 88
Closing Prayer 90
Topical Index 93
Scripture Index 95
Study Guide Link 99

CHAPTER 1

Dealing With Tyrants - 1

Job 12. We'll read verses 12 through 16, and I think you'll see before I finish the message why I'm reading them. In fact, I really like verse 2. This has nothing to do with the sermon, but I'm going to read it because I quote this verse so often.

Job answered these fellows who had spoken to him repeatedly. Everything they said, although it may have been right, did not apply to Job. They took the superior attitude, and Job says in verse 2, "No doubt but you are the people and wisdom shall die with you." I've always thought that was an excellent comeback to a smart aleck: "No doubt but you are the people and wisdom shall die with you."

Skip down to verse 12, and here's our text: "With the ancient is wisdom, and in length of days understanding. With him is wisdom and strength, and he hath counsel and understanding." We're talking about God in this passage. "Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again. He shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening. Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up. Also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth. With him is strength and wisdom. The deceived and the deceiver are his."

For the last three months we've been dealing with the biblical doctrine of war, covering a vast variety of subjects. In the last four lessons we have dealt, first of all, with Deuteronomy chapter 20 on military regulations. Last week I dealt with the fact that the professional army we see today, our standing army, is not only contrary to Scripture, but is also inimical to tyranny and totalitarianism.

Introduction: The Question of Dealing with Tyrants

I shared from the Word of God how, in the Bible, there was a small army, while the rest of the defense of the country rested with the militia, because Israel was basically a militia. I showed you the dangers of having a large-standing professional army: it has always been the instrument of totalitarianism, along with a number of other things. But today I want to deal with a question that undoubtedly has been in your mind, as well as the minds of many other people: How in the world do we deal with tyrannical powers once those powers are deeply entrenched? Do we simply ignore them and hope they'll go away?

Do we submit to tyrants in every detail? Do we begin an unwinnable war against them simply to say that we are fighting against evil? What examples are given to us in Scripture? What are the admonitions and exhortations of the Word of God? What did our forefathers do, and how did they deal with tyrants? Are patience and faith involved? What in the world are we going to do?

I am going to cover several points, but only one of them today. In the Bible, one of the most important and fundamental ways of dealing with tyranny, totalitarianism, and oppressive government, when that power is already deeply entrenched, is an age-old method known as deception.

Deception as the Basic Biblical Method

That is why I read Job 12:16: "...the deceived and the deceiver are his." Listen very carefully. Although I am laying the foundation in these opening statements, I am going to show you Scripture after Scripture that will verify what I am telling you. The basic means for

dealing with tyrants is through deception. Remember that all tyrants are wicked, evil, and satanic, even those called benevolent dictators.

Tyranny Is Not Divinely Appointed

Underline this in your minds and write it down in your hearts: tyranny is never a divinely appointed means of government. God has ordained government, but He has never ordained tyranny. The Bible tells us that the government God has ordained is for the protection of the good and the punishment of the evil. Tyranny is a misuse and perversion of that system. It oppresses the good, the righteous, and the holy, while punishing them; on the other hand, it will often elevate the wicked, who remain unpunished. Very obviously, then, tyranny is never a divinely appointed means of government.

Deception and the Lex Talionis

Deception against wickedness and tyranny is part of the lex talionis of Scripture, a Latin term meaning the law of retribution. God says, “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, stripe for stripe, wound for wound, and life for life.” The lex talionis is where God uses justice and gives back that which is justly deserved.

How did the first sin come to be committed? The answer comes through deception. Genesis 3:1 says, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden. And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die. And the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die, for God doth know that in the day that you eat thereof your eyes shall be opened and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Genesis 3:6 continues, "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat."

Here very obviously is the first case of deception. It is true that Adam and Eve sinned, but the Bible says very plainly that Eve was deceived. This is made clear in Genesis 3 and also stated pointedly in 1 Timothy 2: Adam was not deceived; Eve was. The man was not deceived. The devil is known as a deceiver. Revelation 12:9 identifies him in this way.

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world. He was cast out into the earth and his angels were cast out with him." Note that he deceiveth the whole world. Revelation chapter 13 and verse 14 says, "and deceive them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had the power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast, and that the beast that had the wound by the sword and did live."

Very obviously, Satan is a deceiver, and he deceived Adam and Eve. Why do you think our Lord, in Matthew 10 and verse 16, tells us that we are to be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves? If you read the context, you will find out why. He says, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in wolf country. I send you forth as sheep among wolves."

Stop and think about that for a moment. A sheep is probably one of the most defenseless of all animals. It really cannot bite, kick, or run very fast. The truth is, unless a sheep uses wisdom, it will soon be devoured by the wolves. And so God tells us that we are to be as wise as a serpent and harmless as doves.

Deception is the basic means that God is ordaining to use in dealing with tyrants, those already entrenched in their power. Although that is true, and although deception is part of the lex talionis of Scripture, since Satan began by deceiving and those in cohort with him are deceivers, it is therefore lawful to deceive the deceiver.

But deception is to be used against tyranny, wickedness, evil, and ungodliness. It is not to be used against those to whom we owe the truth. We cannot use what I am teaching to violate the ninth

commandment, when God says that we are not to bear false witness against our neighbor.

Caution: Deception Is Not for Everyday Use

The truth is that being without guile and without deception is one of the most important things for the child of God to be. The Bible says in Psalm 24, beginning with verse 3: “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul into vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.” Very obviously, then, God is saying that we are to be, generally speaking, people without guile and people without a deceitful heart.

Now look in Psalm 10, verse 7. Here is the wicked. Note what God says about the wicked: “His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity.” For the wicked man, his mouth is full of cursing and deceit. Look in Psalm 36, verse 3. Once again, talking about the wicked, God says, “The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit.” “He has left off to be wise and to do good.”

Look in Psalm 50, verse 19. In this passage, God says, “…thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.” One last passage: Psalm 55, verse 11. Still in reference to the wicked: “…wickedness is in the midst thereof, deceit and guile depart not from her streets.” Now, God has classified the wicked as always being deceitful people. How is it, then, that there are times when righteous, godly, un-deceitful people may lawfully use deceit?

Deceit is a method of warfare. Deception is the art of misleading the enemy into doing something or not doing something, into thinking something or not thinking something, so that his position will be weakened and undermined, with the result that he will not be able to accomplish his purpose.

Deception is used in every war. When our troops go to war, we do not put on fluorescent orange and stand out there saying, “Here we are.” They put on camouflage clothing. Camouflage clothing is a form of deception. I have a book in my library entitled Deception in

World War II. I glanced through that book and was absolutely astounded at some of the things that we did during World War II.

There were bunkers with huge guns in them, camouflaged as ice cream shacks. We had inflatable tanks and bombers to make the enemy think that we had more than we actually had. One of the most amazing things to me was a picture of an airstrip that had thirty-eight airplanes on it before it was camouflaged. After it was camouflaged, there were still thirty-eight airplanes in the picture, and I could not find a one of them—not a one. Some of our men, when they were fighting Rommel, would take limbs and tie them to the backs of their tanks to throw up more dust and make him think that we had more tanks than we actually did.

Camouflage is simply a type of deception, and deception is used in war. Deception is plainly, obviously, a form of lying. It is a form of stretching the truth or perverting the truth. You say, "Now wait a minute, Brother Weaver. Here you are saying that deception is lawful." I have news for you: I just do not believe that deception is lawful.

Before you get super pious on me, I want you to know that God Himself used deception in the Bible. I will go further: God still uses deception, and I can show it to you in black and white. You say, "Brother Weaver, you just have to prove to me that God ever used deception." Look in your Bibles. First of all, 1 Samuel 16. Let us begin reading there with verse 1.

God Uses Deception

In 1 Samuel 16, verse 1, the Lord said unto Samuel, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil, and go, and I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided me a king among his sons."

Now watch verse 2. Samuel said unto the Lord, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." God told Samuel to take a heifer and say, "I am come to sacrifice to the Lord. And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show thee what thou shalt do. Thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee."

Was that true? Yes, it was. Was it the whole truth? No, because Samuel was going to do more than sacrifice; he was going to anoint David to be king. Not only did God use deception in this instance, but God was the one who told Samuel to do it. It was an act of deception on God's part.

Look at 1 Samuel 15, verses 26-29, and see why. God had rejected Saul: “And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee, for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected thee from being king over Israel. And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath ripped the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine that is better than thou. And also the strength of Israel will not lie nor repent, for he is not a man that he should repent.”

Saul knew that the kingdom had been taken from him, and he knew that if Samuel went to anoint somebody else, he would not allow it because he wanted to remain king. So God said, “All right, just tell Saul you're going to do a sacrifice.” God himself came up with this ruse.

In 1 Kings chapter 22, beginning with verse 1, the Bible says, “And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel. And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and that we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria. And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramothgilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses.” Jehoshaphat spoke just a little too quickly, but look at verse 5: “And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Inquire, I pray thee, of the word of the Lord to day.” In other words, I have already told you I am going with you, but we had better find out whether God is in this war.

Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, “Shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear?” And they said, “Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.” The four hundred prophets

were Baal worshipers, not prophets of God. “And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might enquire of him?” Jehoshaphat realized that Ahab’s prophets were not God’s prophets and wanted to inquire of a prophet of God.

“And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah.” How did the king of Israel know exactly where Micaiah was? You are going to find out. “Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither, Micaiah the son of Imlah. And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria.”

All the prophets prophesied before them. And Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, made him horns of iron. He said, Thus saith the Lord, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou hast consumed them. All the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the king's hand. And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold, now the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good. And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak.

So he came to the king, and the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered, Go, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king. Now watch what happens.

And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee, that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord? Would you think that Micaiah was just a little sarcastic to Ahab? Ahab knew exactly that Micaiah was mocking him and mocking his false prophets. Now look what happens. Verse 17: And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have

not a shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master. Let them return every man to his house in peace.

And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil? And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? The Lord said, Who is going to persuade Ahab to go to Ramoth-gilead so that I can kill him?

And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee. Guess what happened? Ahab listened to the lying spirit. Ahab went up to battle in Ramoth-gilead, and guess what?

He was killed just like Micaiah said he was. The king of Israel said, “Take Micaiah and carry him back to Ammon, the governor of the city, and to Joash the king’s son, and say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in prison.” That was where he had been to begin with. That was how Ahab knew exactly where he was. He could not take him back and feed him with the bread of affliction and the water of affliction.

The point is this: God used a lying spirit. God used a deceiving spirit to deceive Ahab and his prophets, that God might get Ahab to the place where he was going to die. In Ezekiel chapter 14, beginning with verse 7, God said, “For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, who separated himself from me, and set up his idols in his heart, and put the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to inquire of him concerning me, I, the Lord, will answer him by myself.”

Here was a man who professed to be God's, but was an idolater, coming to a prophet to inquire of God. God said, "I will set my face against that man and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people, and you shall know that I am the Lord. And if the prophet be deceived when he has spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet. And I will stretch out my hand upon him and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel."

How much plainer could you have it? God said, if there is a prophet that is deceived, I have deceived him.

Saul and Ahab were tyrants. As they had deceived others, so God then allowed them to be deceived. So God then allowed them to be deceived. It is the lex talionis of Scripture—an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a deceit for deceit. Does God still use deception? Oh, yes. In 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 10, the Bible says, "With all deceivableness of unrighteousness, in them that perish."

Now we are talking about wicked men, ungodly men, perishing men. He says in verse 10, "...with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved," and, "...for this cause God shall send them a strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." The Bible says that God Himself shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie. The word for delusion is the Greek word planē. It literally means a fraud, a deceit, a delusion, or an error. God said, "I will send them a deceit. I will send them a delusion that they may believe a lie that they might be damned." Why? Because they received not the truth. God said, "If they want a deceit, that's exactly what I shall give them."

Do not try to be super pious and say, "I don't believe in deceiving folks." It is a lawful method to use when you deal with tyrants. I want to show you from the Bible how our fathers dealt with deceit toward tyranny. One of the first illustrations in the Bible is in Genesis chapter 12, beginning with verse 10.

Biblical Examples of Deception Against Tyrants

“And there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was grievous in the land. It came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarah his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair or beautiful woman to look upon. Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they will say, This is his wife, and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, that thou art my sister, that it may be well with me for thy sake, and that my soul shall live because of thee.” And it came to pass that when Abram was coming to Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 12:15–13:4 (KJV)

> The princes also of Pharaoh saw her and commended her before Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. He entreated Abram well for her sake, and he had sheep and oxen and he asses and men servants and maid servants and she asses and camels. And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarah, Abram's wife. And Pharaoh called Abram and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me she was thy wife? Why sayest thou she is my sister, so I might have taken her to wife? Now therefore, behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way. And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him, and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had. And Abram went up out of Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him into the south. Abram was very rich in cattle and silver and gold, and he went on his journey from the south even to Bethel, the place where his tent had been at the beginning between Bethel and Ai, unto the place of the altar which he had made there at the first, and there Abram called on

A famine had forced Abram to go down into Egypt. Abraham knew the Egyptians’ wickedness and Pharaoh’s tyranny. He looked at Sarah, his wife, and said, “I want you to tell everybody that you’re my sister,” because she was extremely beautiful, and they might kill him to get to her. You say, “Brother Weaver, that was a very unmanly thing for Abraham to do.” No, it was not unmanly.

In Bible times and Bible lands, a custom known as fratriarchy prevailed. If a woman's parents were dead, anyone wanting to marry her had to negotiate with her brother. When Abraham said, "You say that I'm your brother," he knew he could still protect his wife by preventing any marriage. Anyone who wanted Sarah had to deal with him. Pharaoh was wicked, and he took Sarah against custom and the laws of hospitality; therefore God plagued his house. Understand how Pharaoh tries to be a satanic accuser.

Verses 18 and 19 say: "And Pharaoh called Abram and said, What is this thou hast done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou she is my sister, so I might have taken her to me to wife? Now therefore, behold, thy wife take her and go thy way." In other words, Pharaoh says, "I'm the righteous one here; you're the unrighteous one." No. If Pharaoh was so righteous, why did he not simply reach out and take Sarah without negotiating with Abram? Pharaoh was not righteous; he was unrighteous. Abram used deceit to deal with a tyrant and save his life and his wife's life. Genesis chapter 20 gives another instance. Genesis chapter 13, verses 1 through 4, shows there was absolutely no condemnation of Abram for using deceit in dealing with Pharaoh.

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 20:1-18 (KJV)

Look in Genesis chapter 20, beginning there with verse 1, you'll see Abraham using deceit again. "And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister. And Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah." Once again, here's a king that violates the law and the custom of the land. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said unto him, "Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken, for she is a man's wife."

"But Abimelech had not come near her. For he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? Said he not unto me, She is my sister, and she even she herself said, He is my brother. In the integrity of my heart and in the innocency of my hands have I done this. And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thine heart. For I also withheld

> thee from sinning against me, therefore I suffered thee not to touch her. Therefore, restore the man his wife, for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live. And if thou restore her not, know that thou shalt surely die, thou and all that are thine."
>
> "Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears, and the men were sore afraid. Then Abimelech called Abraham and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? And what an affinity thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom of great sin, that thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou that thou hast done all this thing? And Abraham said, Because I thought surely the fear of God is not in this place, and they will slay me for my wife's sake."

"And yet indeed she is my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. It came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said, This is the kindness which thou shalt show unto me at every place whither we shall come: Say of me, He is my brother." Abimelech took sheep and oxen, men's servants and women's servants, gave them unto Abraham, restored Sarah, and said, "My land is before thee; dwell where it pleaseth thee." To Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver. Behold, he is to thee a covering of thine eyes, and all that are with thee, and with all other." Thus she was reproved. Abraham prayed unto God; God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his maidservants, and they bare children, for the Lord had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

Abraham lies, or deceives, yet receives no condemnation. God's blessing made the deceit successful: Abraham said, "She's my sister," and Sarah, "He's my brother." The king may have taken her in the integrity of his heart, yet he took her contrary to custom. God came to him at night and warned, "If you touch her, you are dead; I will kill you." Without God's blessing, Abraham's deceit would not have succeeded. Once again, God used it to deal with this tyrant, and increased and blessed Abraham because of it.

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 26:1-11 (KJV)

Isaac picked up this same method of dealing with tyranny from his father.

"And there was a famine in the land besides the first famine, which was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech, king of the Philistines, and to Gerar. And the Lord appeared unto him and said, Go not down into Egypt, dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee. For unto thee and unto thy seed will I give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham my father. And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

"And Isaac dwelt in Gerar, and the men of the place asked him of his wife, and he said, She is my sister. Why? For he feared to say, She is my wife, lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah, because she was very fair to look upon. It came to pass when he had been there a long time that Abimelech, king of the Philistines, looked out a window and saw, and behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife. And Abimelech called Isaac and said, Behold of a surety, she is thy wife. And how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, lest I die for her. And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? One of the people might lightly have lain with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us. And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

"Then Isaac sowed in the land, and received in the same year a hundredfold, and the Lord blessed him." What did Isaac do? He used deceit, again saying, "Rebekah is my sister." The king happened to look out the window and realized that Isaac was not treating her as a sister, but that there was a deeper relationship. Isaac knew exactly what he was doing. Although the king discovered his ruse

and deception, there is still no condemnation from God. The Bible says that Isaac reaped a hundredfold, and the Lord blessed him.

Joseph was another man who used deception, one you would not expect to use it. Outside of Christ, there are only two men in the Bible against whom you can hardly find anything: Joseph and Daniel. Yet even Joseph understood the wickedness and tyranny of Pharaoh.

Joseph was bringing his father and brethren into the land. In Genesis 46, beginning with verse 31, he said unto them, “I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren in my father's house, who were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me. And the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle. And they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have. And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation? What do you do? Then you shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle, from our youth even until now, both we and also our fathers, that you may dwell in the land of Goshen. Why? For every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians.”

Joseph was telling them to lie to Pharaoh: say that their trade had been about cattle, not that they were shepherds. Then, in Genesis 47:1, “Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh and said, My father and my brethren and their flocks and their herds and all that they have are come out of the land of Canaan. Behold, they are in the land of Goshen. And he took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds.”

“Both we and also our fathers.” Something seems wrong here. Joseph told them not to say that. Did they not obey Joseph? The truth is, they did obey Joseph.

In verse 4 they said moreover unto Pharaoh, “For to sojourn in the land are we come, for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks. For the famine is sore in the land of Canaan. Now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.” Pharaoh said unto Joseph, “Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee.

The land of Egypt is before thee, and the best of the land. Make thy father and thy brethren to dwell in the land of Goshen." If Joseph knew men of activity among them, Pharaoh said, "make them rulers over my cattle."

Why did they say they were shepherds? The word shepherd here is very ambiguous. It refers particularly to cattle, and then to any other thing in general. When Joseph said, "You tell them that your trade has been about cattle," that was exactly what they conveyed to Pharaoh and exactly the way he understood it. Therefore he said, "You take those men that you know to be good with cattle and make them rulers over my cattle." Once again, here was a ruse.

In Exodus 1, verse 15, "the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives," whose names were Shiphrah and Puah. He commanded them, "When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools. If it be a son, then ye shall kill him. But if it be a daughter, then she shall live."

"And the midwives feared God, and did not, as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive." When Pharaoh asked why, they answered, "Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women, for they are lively and are delivered, ere the midwives come in unto them." Therefore God dealt well with the midwives; the people multiplied and waxed very great, and "because the midwives feared God," He "made them houses." Pharaoh had commanded that every man-child be killed and every girl-child saved alive.

What did Shiphrah and Puah do? They disobeyed the king. When Pharaoh called them and said, "You're not killing the boy babies," they answered, "You don't understand. These Israelitish women are not like the Egyptian women. They delivered their children before we ever got there." Out of all the millions of Israelitish women in Egypt, not one ever needed help delivering a child? Shiphrah and Puah lied. They used deceit.

They knew Pharaoh was a tyrant and wicked, and the Bible says God dealt well with them because of that. Why did they do so? Because they feared God and not man. Therefore God blessed them,

and God built them houses. Here they were using deceit against tyranny and wickedness.

Exodus chapter 1, verse 22, says: “Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive.” It was no longer only the midwives’ responsibility to kill the boys; it was the responsibility of all the Hebrew parents and of any Egyptian who happened to see a Hebrew child.

Exodus chapter 2, verse 1, says: “And there went a man out of the house of Levi, and took a wife, a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son. And when she saw that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. When she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes and daubed it with pitch and put the child there, and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar to witness what would be done.”

You know the story about Moses. Amram and Jochebed used deceit. They kept the pregnancy hidden probably as long as possible. When the child was born, they concealed that fact and hid him in their house for three months. They deliberately and deceitfully went contrary to Pharaoh and the law of the land. Hebrews 11:23 says it was by faith that Amram and Jochebed disobeyed the king.

They were doing so in obedience to God, but they were using deception. In Joshua 2 we find Rahab the harlot. Two spies came into her house, and she hid them. When the king and his men came, she said, “There came in unto me, and I wist not whence they were. And it came to pass about the time of the shutting gate, when it was dark, that the men went out. Whether the men went, I know not. Pursue you after them, for you shall overtake them.” But she had brought them up to the roof of the house and hidden them with the stalks of flax laid in order there. The men pursued them toward Jordan and the fords; as soon as they had gone out, they shut the gate. Before the spies were laid down, Rahab came up to them and said, “I know that the Lord has given you the land.” Of course, she then let them go.

When the king said, “Send me the men now that came into you,” Rahab answered that she did not know where they were: men had

come in and left, and the king's men should run that way, because that was the way they went. Yet she had hidden them on the roof of her house.

There is no way around it: that was an out-and-out lie, a bold-faced lie. What was she doing? She was deceiving a tyrant, an oppressor, a wicked, ungodly ruler. If you think God did not approve of Rahab's lie, remember that He not only saved Rahab physically, but saved her family physically, saved her spiritually, and placed her in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

Judges 4 gives another woman who used deceit to deal with a tyrant. Look at verse 16.

SCRIPTURE READING - Judges 4:16-22; Judges 5:24 (KJV)

> Barak pursued after the chariots and after the host unto Harosheth of the Gentiles. And all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword, and there was not a man left. Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. And Jael went out to meet Sisera and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me.
>
> And when he had turned in unto her unto the tent, she covered him with a mantle. And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him. Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? Thou shalt say no.
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> Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a nail of the tent, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground. For he was fast asleep and weary, so he died. And behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him and said unto him, Come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he was come into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples.
>
> So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel, and the hand of the children of Israel

> prospered and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, till they destroyed Jabin king of Canaan. In Judges 5, God records concerning Jael, Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent.

"He asked water and she gave him milk. She brought forth butter in a lordly dish. She put her right hand to the nail and her right hand to the workman's hammer, and with the hammer she smote Sisera. She smote off his head when she had pierced and stricken through his temples. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down." At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down. And then took the life of the enemy. She fed him royally and then killed him like he deserved to be killed. He died as a dog with a nail through his temple. Evidently, after she got through doing that, she cut his head off as well and made sure that he was dead. Now turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel chapter 19. Let me show you a few more examples. Women are not the only ones who deceive men and tyrants. Women do deceive men, but men deceive men as well. We have already looked at Abraham and Isaac, but primarily the others have been women. Some men, other than Abraham and Isaac, used deceit. Michal, his wife, used deceit. Look in 1 Samuel 19, beginning with verse 8.

"And there was war again, and David went out and fought with the Philistines and slew them with a great slaughter, and they fled from him. And the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, and he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand, and David played with his hand. And Saul sought to smite David to the wall with the javelin, but he slipped away out of Saul's presence and he smote the javelin into the wall, and David fled and escaped that night. Saul also sent messengers unto David's house to watch him and to slay him in the morning. And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain. So Michal let David down through a window, and he went and fled and escaped. And

Michal took an image and laid it in the bed and put a pillow of goat's hair for his bolster and covered it with a cloth. When Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He is sick."

"And Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him. When the messengers were come in, behold, there was an image in the bed with a pillow of goat's hair for his bolster. And Saul said unto Michal, Why dost thou deceive me so, and send away mine enemy, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go, why should I kill thee?"

What has Michal just done? She told David, "You better get out. If you stay here tonight, you're going to die." Michal assisted David in escaping. Then she put the image in the bed, lied to the messengers, and, when Saul asked why she had deceived him, said, "David threatened to kill me." What was she doing? She was using deceit. David knew, of course, that she would use deceit. She may even have told him the plan.

In 1 Samuel 21, beginning with verse 10, David had escaped from Saul, but he fled to Achish, king of Gath: "And David rose and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish, king of Gath. And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David, the king of the land? Did they not sing one to another of him, and dance, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands? And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish, the king of Gath. Watch it: and he changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard. Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, you see the man is mad? Wherefore then have you brought him unto me? Have I need of madmen, that you have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?"

What did David do? David used deceit. He pretended to be insane, to escape at that particular time. In 1 Samuel 27, David once again uses deceit against Achish. The whole time David is with Achish, he is spying against the enemies of his people. Verse 9 says, "And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the ox, and the asses, and the camels, and the

apparel, and returned, and came to Achish. And Achish said, Whither have you made a road today? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites. And David saved alive neither man nor woman, to bring tidings to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so will be his manner the whole while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines."

What in the world is David doing? David is killing Philistines! Then he comes back to the king of Gath, who was with the Philistines. The king said, "David, where have you been today?"

I've been fighting against Judah and killing Judahites. What's David doing? He is staying with the enemy, killing the enemy, deceiving the enemy, and lying to the enemy, saying, "I am killing your enemies," when he was killing his own people. David is using deceit.

The account in 1 Samuel 20 tells us that David is once again about to escape from Saul, and Jonathan comes to see him. David says, "As I live, there is but a step between me and death." Jonathan asks, "Why?" David answers, "Because your father is going to kill me." Jonathan says, "My father will not do anything unless he tells me about it first."

David says, "I am telling you, he is going to kill me. I will tell you what to do: tell your father, when I am not there, that you have given me permission to go to a family feast at Bethlehem. Is it all right that I come back?"

But if he gets angry, then surely he is intending to slay me. Jonathan, you had better let me know. Jonathan said, "I'll let you know." They devised a method to let David know whether the response was good or bad. Thus Jonathan joined David in deceiving his father because his father was a wicked tyrant. It was revealed not only that Saul intended to kill David, but that he even threw a javelin at Jonathan, his own son, and tried to kill him. Jonathan returned to David and said, "You had better flee and get out of here, because my dad is going to kill you." So David began his flight.

Application: The Principle of Not Owing Truth to Abusers

I want to make a couple of applications. I told you that deception is the most basic and fundamental way of dealing with tyrants. Deception is a lawful means to combat evil, wickedness, and tyranny. It is a nonviolent way of protecting our lives, our families, and our property. It is right to protect your life, your family, or your property by the use of deception. You say, "Now, Brother Weaver, I don't know about that."

Well, let me give you the principle. I have enunciated it all through this message, though I have not stated it directly: You do not owe the truth to one who is going to abuse the truth.

If you give the truth to someone who is going to abuse it, then you become a partaker and an accomplice in that individual's sin. Let me give you an illustration. A man comes up to me as I am walking down the street, throws a pistol in my face, and says, "Give me all your money." I reach into my pocket, pull out two one-dollar bills, or two Federal Reserve notes of the equivalent of one dollar, and hand them to him. He looks at me and says, "Is this all you've got?" Do you think I am going to stand there and say, "I cannot tell a lie. There's a one-hundred-dollar bill hidden in my shoe"?

If I tell him that, I am assisting him in his thievery and violating the law of God. If someone is trying to steal my property, I am not going to tell him about oil held under a trust or oil in another state under another name. I am not going to assist a thief in stealing what I have. I may lawfully use deception to prevent him from taking that over which God has given me stewardship.

Now, let me go further. Every one of us believes this principle. Some people try to act super pious and say, "Brother Weaver, I just believe in telling the truth and let the chips fall where they may." That is not true, and I can prove it to you.

Here is a man who has threatened to kill you. He is your enemy, angry and upset. You do everything within your power to make peace with him and smooth things out, but he wants no part of it. Finally, one day you meet him on the street and speak cordially to him, and he says, "I told you I hate you. I'm going to kill you." That

night, while you are eating supper, you hear tires squealing outside and a car door slam. You look out the window, and here comes that man running toward your door with a sawed-off double-barrel shotgun. You think, “Oh no, he’s really going to kill me this time.”

Thanks to Mr. Clinton, you do not have a gun in the house, so you run and hide under the bed. The man is beating on the door. Your wife, shaking and trembling, opens it just before he blows it down. He says, “Where’s your husband? I’m going to blow his head off!” Do you want her to say, “I cannot tell a lie; he’s hiding under the bed”? Or do you want her to say, “You’re too late; he left this afternoon for Hallelujah, Hawaii, or something like that”? You want her to lie like a dog.

If she told the truth, guess what? She would be partaker of your murder. The principle is that you do not owe the truth to someone who is going to abuse the truth. That is why deception may be lawfully used in dealing with tyrants, wickedness, and oppressive governments.

Now let me give you one other quick caution. Young people, listen to me. We are not to be liars or deceivers, generally speaking. We cannot use what I have just preached today to lie to and deceive those individuals to whom we owe the truth. You owe the truth to your parents and to those who have lawful authority over you and are exercising that authority in obedience to God. If you have a teacher exercising lawful authority in obedience to God, you owe that teacher the truth. If you have a pastor exercising lawful authority, you owe that pastor the truth. You cannot use what I have preached to become a liar, a deceiver, an untruthful, and dishonest individual.

What I have preached and taught this morning is to be used in dealing with tyranny and wickedness and oppression. Generally speaking, we are to be those who tell the truth and we are to be marked for and known for our truthfulness, our honesty, our integrity and our lack of guile. But God says, in dealing with tyrants it is lawful because it's a type of the lex talionis, it's giving a deception for a deception, and that is just before God. Shall we pray?

Father, speak to our hearts today. We ask you to bless us, to teach us, to build us up in the most holy faith. Enable us, Lord, to understand thy word and to obey it and to bring our lives in conformity unto it. In Christ's name we pray, amen. This program was produced by Dominion Ministry. For more information about Pastor Weaver's sermons, you may contact Dominion Ministry by mail at 7400 Abercorn, that's A-B-E-R-C-O-R-N Street, Suite 705, PMD 175, Savannah, Georgia, 31406.

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CHAPTER 2

Dealing With Tyrants - 2

Introduction and Review

He verse fifteen. Chapter one, verse fifteen. I will not be preaching on this text particularly, but I will be discussing the subject generally. I think that you will understand in just a few moments. I am reading this text from the book of Proverbs, chapter one. God is here talking about the wicked and giving advice to the godly. He says, “My son, walk not thou in the way with them. Refrain thy foot from their path.” In other words, do not walk with them. Stay out of their way.

I have been dealing with the biblical doctrine of war: Is it right to fight? We have covered a lot of subjects. Last week I began this section on dealing with tyrants, or how to deal with tyranny. I dealt particularly with the most fundamental and basic way of dealing with tyrants found in the Bible: deception, how godly people in the Old Testament and in the New Testament used deception. I told you it was part of the Lex Talionis, that is, the law of retribution, because the first sin was brought in by deception.

And so God deceives the deceivers. I showed you interesting places where God often uses deception himself. In fact, God told Samuel to use deception. And there in 2 Thessalonians, we see how God deceives those who will not receive the truth.

Today I am going to deal with another aspect of how to deal with tyrants. Deception is not the only means of dealing with tyrants. However, it is, as I pointed out, one of the most basic and fundamental means. It is absolutely necessary for each of us to learn to think in biblical and scriptural terms. One of our problems is that we have been so absolutely brainwashed and so taken up with human tradition that when we hear the truth of God, it sounds strange to our ears, and it is almost impossible to conceive of it in our minds or implement it in our lives. We have to cast off all preconceived ideas and all humanistic ideas and simply submit our minds to the Word of God on every subject in it.

Defining Avoidance

The very first method of dealing with tyrants was deception. The second method is what I am going to call avoidance. You will see that avoidance and deception many times go hand in hand. Sometimes in the Bible those two things happen at the same time, or at least together. But sometimes they also happen separately. Let us begin dealing with the subject of avoidance. Avoidance is a tactic for dealing with tyranny. Simply put, avoidance is staying out of the way.

If you want to use this expression, it is keeping a low profile. Or you could say it means literally making sure that your paths do not cross. Why in the world would anyone want to associate with tyrants anyhow, unless you yourself are part and partial to that type of lifestyle?

Why Avoid Tyrants?

Let me tell you what St. Augustine said. St. Augustine was one of the early church fathers. He lived from 354 to 430 A.D., and here is what he said: “Godless civil rulers are no more than bands of robbers.” That is certainly an accurate statement, not back in 400 A.D., but in

the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries as well. So why would anyone want to associate with a band of robbers?

In Psalm 50, God is talking about the ungodly. Beginning with verse 16, He says, “But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction and castest my words behind thee? When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother’s son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.”

God does not think too highly of the wicked, especially when the wicked cast His words behind their back. God asks what the wicked have to do with His statutes, judgments, and covenants, seeing they hate Him and will not obey Him. Very obviously, anyone who is godly and holy would want to avoid such people.

Turn in your Bibles to Genesis 26 as we begin discussing from Scripture the subject of avoidance. I am not through with the subject I am dealing with; this is just one part of it. We read the first part last week in dealing with deception. In Genesis 26, Isaac deceived the king by saying that Rebekah was his sister. The king looked out the window and saw Isaac sporting with his wife and said, “Now, this is not the man's sister. This is the man's wife.”

Isaac's Example of Avoidance

Of course, he called Isaac and said, “What in the world have you done?” Look down to verse 12: “Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him.” The Lord was blessing Isaac even when Isaac was using deception to deal with this wicked, ungodly ruler.

Now let me show you the tactic of avoidance. Please remember that Isaac had a small company and a small family. The Bible says, “And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he

became very great: For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants:" Then notice: "and the Philistines envied him." He may have had many servants, but he was still not a man of war, nor did he have men of war, per se. "For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth. And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we." Not militarily speaking. Now watch verse 17.

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 26:18-25 (KJV)

"And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water." Now watch: "And the herdmen of Gerar," that is, the Philistines, "did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek," which literally means contention, "because they strove with him."

What did Isaac do? He said, "All right, you want the well, you have it, I'll leave it." "And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah," which is hatred. "And he removed from thence, and digged another well;" In other words, he said, "I'll just get out of your way."

"And for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth;" which means room, "and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land. And he went up from thence to Beer-sheba. And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake. And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well."

Now what was Isaac doing? He was doing what you and I would simply call avoiding the enemy or avoiding the tyrant and just

simply getting out of the way. He said, "I've dug the well. Yes, I've got money involved in it. Yes, I've got labor and time involved in it, but I'm not going to fight over it. I'm not in the position to fight at this time. You can have it. I'll just get out of the way. I'll simply avoid you." And here's the result.

I want you to know that Isaac did not do something feverish or foolish. In verse 26, "Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army. And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? And they said, We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee; That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of the LORD."

"And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. And they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water. And he called it Shebah: therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba unto this day."

So what was the result? God blessed Isaac in such a way that the enemy recognized that God was with him and it would be absolutely foolish for them to try to harm him. Moreover, now they were concerned that he might harm them. And so they came to him and said, "We're going to make a covenant."

Now, here's the point I want you to understand. Isaac did what he could do. He did not do what he could not do. The natural tendency of every man is this: If you wrong me, if you steal from me, if you take from me, I'm going to get you back. I'm going to defend what's mine. Now, I'm going to be dealing with that probably next week, that aspect of it. But I want you to understand it's not always wise to defend what you have.

There are some things that are not worth dying for. Someone asked me, "Well, Brother Weaver, would you let somebody, would you let the enemy take your weapons?" Sure. I'm not going to die for two or three rifles. That doesn't mean they're going to take all of mine. You understand what I'm saying? But I've got one or two they may have. Got some they may not have. But the point I'm trying to make is this: if I'm surrounded in my house by tanks or by 50 men and I can't get out and nobody can get in and all they want are two little rifles worth not more than a hundred bucks each, they may have them.

This was Isaac's understanding. Isaac said, "I'm going to do what I can do, but I can't fight off all of the Philistines. And so I'll just let them have it. I'll just get out of the way." So he was literally avoiding the trouble.

The root word for tyrant literally means one who rules without God. So basically, we have a tyrannical government in our country because our government is ruling without God. Our forefathers understood this. When our country was first founded, everyone who was in office had to take an oath that they not only believed the Bible to be the Word of God, they believed Jesus Christ was the Son of God. If you did not confess Jesus Christ, and if you did not confess the Bible was the Word of God, you could not be a civil ruler in this country.

Jacob's Use of Avoidance

In Genesis 27, deceit is used upon Isaac by his wife, Rebekah, and by his son, Jacob. Isaac is getting old. "And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, here am I. And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death."

"Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat;" Watch carefully, "that my soul may bless thee before I die." Here is the problem: Isaac is saying, "Esau, you go get me the venison, and when you come back, I am going to bless you."

What was wrong with that? Two things. First, Jacob had the birthright because God had given it to him. Moreover, Esau had sold that birthright for a mess of pottage. Isaac already knew the will of God in this matter. God had told Rebekah, "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." Isaac knew this truth as well. God had said the elder shall serve the younger. That means the younger would have the birthright and the blessing. Yet Isaac was going to take the blessing and give it to Esau, full well knowing that God had said the blessing went to Jacob.

Since Isaac was acting like a tyrant, disregarding the plain word and truth of God, Rebekah and Jacob dealt with him as with a tyrant. "And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison. But Rebekah loved Jacob."

Jacob sod pottage, and Esau came from the field faint. "And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint:" Therefore was his name called Edom. "And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright."

First of all, Esau was not starving. He had just been out in the field, and he was hungry. It was not as if he were on his last leg and could not have made it home. When he said, “Feed me with that same red,” the Hebrew is literally, “Feed me with that same red, that same red.” It does not say pottage. Esau may have thought it was blood pudding because it was red, but it was lentils. I do not know. Jacob said, “I want your birthright, and I will trade you this pottage for your birthright.” And Esau despised the birthright.

If you do not know what the birthright is, let me tell you. First, it included being the patriarch of the clan or family, the head of the family. Secondly, it included receiving a double portion of the inheritance, which meant that you would also take care of your

mother and father in their old age. That is why the eldest son received a double portion: he had the responsibility of taking care of his parents. Thirdly, it included the lineage of Christ. Esau said, “None of these things mean anything to me, and so I am going to sell them to you.”

Look down in chapter 27 at verse 41. You know how Jacob and Rebekah dressed Jacob and made him hairy like Esau, put goat skin on him, and put Esau’s clothing on him. She took a goat and made savory venison, as Isaac loved. She must have been a great cook to make goat taste like venison, but she did it. Jacob went in and said that he was Esau, and he got the blessing. Let me show you how angry Esau was. Genesis 27:41 says, “And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.” In other words, “I am going to murder him. I am going to get him.”

What did Jacob do? Did Jacob say, “You dirty, ungodly, reprobate”—although he was—“You think you are going to kill me? You sold me that birthright. It was perfectly lawful and legal for me to have it. God gave it to me. The blessing went with the birthright. You think you are going to kill me? No, no. I am going to kill you instead”? Did he do that? No. What did Jacob do? He fled.

He tried to avoid trouble. He fled to Laban. Jacob finally got to Rachel, Laban's daughter, who later became his wife. “And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.” Watch now: “And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.” Sometimes I do that. No, I'm teasing. He kissed his girlfriend and raised up his voice and wept.

Very obviously, he was weeping for joy because he was finding his family, his mother's family, there. You know the story: he fell in love with Rachel and wanted her. He said, “Look, I'm going to serve you seven years for Rachel.” When he had served the time, he got married, but on his honeymoon he found out that he had not married Rachel; he had married Leah.

He said, “What have you done to me?” Laban said, “We've got a custom in our country. It's not right to let the younger marry before the older. But you've served me seven more years now, and you can have this one too.” He had served fourteen years for his two wives, but he served another six years. Let me point this out: six years is the term in the Bible for the service of a slave. Laban treated Jacob as a slave.

Jacob said to Laban, “Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times.” The six-year period is the period of slave service. Laban was treating his son-in-law as a slave. When Jacob left, Laban was not even going to allow him to take his wives and children with him. You see, that's according to biblical law.

The Bible says if a man comes to you and becomes your servant or your slave, and you give him a wife and they have children, when he leaves, the wife and the children are still yours. But Jacob did not come as a slave; Laban was treating him as a slave, and he was not even going to let him take his wife and children with him. Look once again at what Jacob says to Laban in verse 42.

Genesis 31, verse 42: "Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight." Jacob understood that had not God intervened, he not only would not have his wives and children, he would not have any of his flocks or anything. God saw the suffering of Jacob.

What was God's counsel to Jacob? In Genesis 31, beginning with verse 11, Jacob said, "And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I. And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grisled: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me. Now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred."

Rachel and Leah answered, "Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money. For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's: now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do."

What did God tell Jacob to do? He said, "Get out of the land. Move away. Avoid Laban." Jacob obeyed God and simply left the country. Laban was acting like a tyrant, acting like an ungodly man, and Jacob was going to avoid him and get out of the way.

When Jacob came back into the land, he was told, "Behold, your brother Esau comes with four hundred armed men." Jacob was distressed. Genesis 32:6 says, "And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands." Note that Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed.

Jacob prayed, “Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.” God delivered Jacob from Esau once again.

Now look at Genesis 33, beginning with verse 12, and see deception and avoidance once again at play in Jacob’s life. God had made Esau reconcilable to Jacob. Esau said, “Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee.” Esau wanted Jacob to bring his family home with him. But Jacob answered, “My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die.”

Then Jacob said, “Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir.” In other words, Esau, you go on home, and I will come gradually and slowly to where you are. Esau offered to leave

some of his people with Jacob, but Jacob replied, “What needeth it? let me find grace in the sight of my lord.”

“So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir. And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle.” He then came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, in the land of Canaan, pitched his tent before the city, and bought a parcel of a field from the children of Hamor, Shechem’s father.

Wait a minute. Didn’t Jacob just say, “Esau, you’re going back home. I’m coming to see you, and I’ll move in with you”? But what did he do? He lied. He deceived Esau and went somewhere else. Why? He used this only on Esau because Esau was an ungodly, tyrannical reprobate who despised the things of God. Esau went back home, and Jacob said, “I’m just not going to have anything to do with you.” He avoided him.

Elijah and the Prophets Avoid Ahab

Now, I could show you a multitude of passages, but I want to quickly take you through the Bible. I want to show you, in the Old Testament and the New Testament, where this tactic is used over and over. So many people think that just because you avoid trouble, or just because you use this tactic, it makes you a coward, afraid to fight. That is not so, and we’ll prove that to you from the Word of God. You see, we have the old saying, “Discretion is the better part of valor.” You pick your fights. It’s not that you’re afraid to fight; you just want to fight on your terms, when the situation is winnable for you. In First Kings, chapter 17, beginning with verse 1.

“And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab,” the wicked, tyrannical king. Elijah was the prophet of God. Here is what Elijah told Ahab: “As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.” Then “the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.” So Elijah went and did according to the word of the LORD; he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, before Jordan. “And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and

bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook." After a while, the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. God told Elijah, "You go hide yourself by the brook Cherith."

Now, was Elijah afraid of Ahab? No. Was God afraid of Ahab? No. Could God not protect Elijah in the palace? Yes. Could God not overthrow Ahab at any moment? Yes. But God said, in effect, "That's not what I'm going to do right now. What I want you to do, Elijah, is avoid him. Get out of his way. Don't even let him know where you are."

Then "the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there." That was out of the land. God sent him out of the land: "Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." So Elijah arose and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the city, the widow woman was there gathering sticks, and he called to her, saying, "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." So God said, "Now Elijah, I want you to go over to Zarephath."

The truth of the matter is that Ahab was looking for Elijah and wanted to take his life. In chapter 18, after Elijah came back and said, "I'm going to show myself to Ahab," this is what is recorded: "And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth."

Obadiah told Elijah, "As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not." What was Ahab wanting Elijah for? So he could kill him. He was upset because Elijah was the one God used to pronounce the drought on the land. And what did God tell Elijah to do? He told him to avoid Ahab, to get out of the way. For three years and six months, Ahab could not find Elijah, because God told Elijah to avoid him.

That's exactly what he did. Elijah used the tactic of avoidance. Another illustration is found in 1 Samuel chapter 23, beginning with verse 19. If I took the time, I could spend most of the day showing

how David avoided Saul, but this one illustration is sufficient. "Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon?" The Ziphites were saying, "Look, David is hiding from you."

David Avoids Saul

"Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand." Saul answered, "Blessed be ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me." He told them to prepare, discover David's place and all the lurking places where he hid, and return with certainty; then he would search him throughout all the thousands of Judah. They arose and went to Ziph before Saul. What was David doing hiding? Was he a coward or afraid? He was a man of war, so why was he avoiding Saul?

“But David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon. Saul also and his men went to seek him. And they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon.”

Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other. David made haste to get away for fear of Saul, for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them. But a messenger came to Saul, saying, “Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land.” Therefore Saul returned from pursuing David and went against the Philistines. “Therefore they called that place Sela-hammahlekoth. And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at En-gedi.”

Would anyone suggest for a moment that David was a coward? I hope you would not. Look back in your Bibles to 1 Samuel chapter 18, verses 6 and 7: “And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick. And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.”

I would not want to look David in the face and say, “You yellow-bellied coward, what are you going to do?” David killed more men than I could probably ever dream of killing. I have never killed anybody. David was not afraid, quote-unquote, to fight. Why did he run from Saul? Why did he avoid Saul? For the simple reason that he did not want to be the one to kill Saul.

Look in your Bibles to 1 Samuel chapter 26, beginning with verse 7: “So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him. Then said Abishai to David,” Abishai was one of David’s captains, “God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time.”

Abishai said, “David, you don't have to kill him. I will. And David, if you will let me just take one swipe at him, I'll guarantee you I'll do a good job. I won't have to stab him the second time. One will be sufficient.”

But David said to Abishai, “Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless? David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go.”

You see, the problem was this: David just didn't want to kill Saul. David avoided it. David was trying to avoid the fight.

It is lawful to avoid a tyrant, and many times expediency demands it. Oftentimes, as I shall show you next week, certain circumstances demand that tyrants be avoided. If you've got ten men and a tyrant is coming against you with ten thousand, is it not wisdom to turn and leave the area? That's not being a coward. You're willing to fight, but you're just not willing to fight on the enemy's terms. So God is saying avoidance is a lawful means of dealing with a tyrant.

Look back in your Bibles at First Kings chapter 18. Once again, this is where God told Elijah to show himself to Ahab, but let's go a

little bit further. “And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth. And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria. And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly: For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)”

Let me ask you a question. What were these hundred preachers doing? They were hiding. Why were they hiding? They were avoiding Ahab and Jezebel. What are a hundred men against a whole army? Nothing. Were these preachers cowards? No. They were simply following this tactic of avoidance. They were staying out of the tyrant's way. They did not want to be killed. They did not want to lose their homes. They did not want to lose their families. And so they stayed out of the way, avoiding Ahab.

New Testament Examples: Paul and Jesus

The same tactic is employed in the New Testament. In Acts chapter 9, verse 22, we read: “But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. And when Saul was come to Jerusalem,” so Saul escaped. How did he escape? He was let down over the wall in a basket at night. Saul of Tarsus had been converted, but the Jews took counsel to kill him.

You say, “Well, Brother Weaver, he was just running from the Jews.” Oh, no, no, no. The Jews had allies. Look at what the Apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 11:32: “In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.” Paul was not merely avoiding the Jews; he was avoiding the civil authorities. This passage throws a little more light upon Acts chapter 9.

Now, lest you think that the Apostle Paul was a coward, look at his argument in 2 Corinthians chapter 11, beginning with verse 22. Look at his argument.

He says, "Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak?" It would be terrible to prove courage by enduring what Paul endured. He was decapitated in prison for Christ and his kingdom.

That is, his head was chopped off. The apostle Paul was not a coward. Yet the few believers who were there could not stand and fight and deliver him or themselves in any other way. So they avoided the tyrant; they got out of his way. Thus Paul the apostle escaped.

If anyone tends to think that avoidance is associated with cowardice and fear, remember that our Lord Himself used this same tactic. Jesus Christ is the omniscient, omnipotent God of the universe. He has all knowledge and all power. In John 7:1 we read, "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." When they tried to kill Him, He stayed out of their way. He avoided them.

If you think Christ was afraid to die, consider His words in John 12:27: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." Jesus Christ was not afraid to die. He came to die, and He knew He was going to die. But He still used the tactic of avoidance, because avoidance is a non-violent way to prevent violence by wicked men.

God Commands Avoidance: Joseph and Mary

Consider another New Testament illustration of avoidance in Matthew 2. Jesus Christ was a young child: "And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt."

Who ordered this tactic of avoidance? God Himself did. God said, "Joseph, you take Mary and Jesus, get out of the country, stay out of the land." Was God afraid of Herod? Of course not. Was God capable of dealing with Herod? Oh, yes—a hundred times, yes. But God said, "You flee, you avoid, you get out of his way."

That is exactly what Mary and Joseph did. Avoidance is a lawful tactic in dealing with tyranny. Herod was a tyrant. That is why he went and killed all the male children from two years and under, trying to make sure that he got the young child, Jesus.

SCRIPTURE READING - Hebrews 11:32-39 (KJV)

Turn to one last passage, Hebrews 11. I want to show you how a multitude of Christians used this tactic of avoidance.

Heroes of Faith Practiced Avoidance

Remember the context in which I am reading. I am starting early in verse 32. Hebrews 11 lists the heroes of faith. These are not fearful men. These are not cowards. These are heroes of faith.

“And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel

> mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise."
>
> What were these Christians doing, wandering about in dens and caves, clothed only in sheepskins and goatskins? What were they doing?
>
> They were avoiding the tyrant. They were avoiding persecution. They were getting out of the way. And God put them in the heroes of faith, and God said the world was not even worthy of these people. These all died in the faith, he said. You see, a man is to use wisdom. God has given us not only the method of deception; He has also given us the method of avoidance.

Practical Applications

Please understand and underline it in your heart: it is not an act of cowardice to avoid a conflict with tyranny. Why? Because avoidance is a non-violent way to prevent violence by wicked men. We may lawfully practice deception and avoidance where morally necessary in order to protect our capital, our homes, our lives, and our families.

If I know for sure—if I know absolutely—that around the next block are two armed robbers, I am not going there. I am going to avoid them if I can. If I know some tyrant is going to try to steal everything I have, I am going to stay out of his way. I am not going to give him the opportunity to steal from me. Avoidance is a lawful tactic to protect what you have as well as your life. Avoidance is absolutely necessary when there is neither strength nor the resources to overthrow the tyranny.

You say, "What in the world can I do until the tyrant is overthrown?" You can deceive him and you can avoid him until God gives the strength and the resources to overthrow him. Avoidance is

a tactic that has been used all down through history to deal with tyrants who are already entrenched in power. What about fighting him? These other tactics are lawful as well.

Not everybody can fight, and not everybody can fight all the time. Therefore, God says, here are two other methods of dealing with tyrants.

Shall we pray? Father, I pray that you will teach us your word. Teach us, Lord, that we may lawfully deceive the deceiver and avoid the tyrant to protect our homes, our properties, and our money, who are obedient unto thee and whom thou hast placed over us and who are exercising proper power and authority under thee. But, Lord, tyranny is never a divinely appointed form of government, and so, therefore, tyrants may be deceived and may be avoided lawfully and obedient to thee. We give thee thanks for your word for teaching us. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, amen.

CHAPTER 3

Dealing With Tyrants - 3

2 Kings 11, verse 13: “And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people into the temple of the Lord. And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king. And all the people of the land rejoiced and blew with trumpets, and Athaliah rent her clothes and cried, Treason, treason!”

“But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds and the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges, and him that followeth her, kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the Lord. And they laid hands on her. And she went by the way by which the horses came into the king's house, and there she was slain.”

Introduction and Review of Previous Methods

For the last two weeks, I have been dealing with methods of dealing with tyrants. First, I showed you that the most fundamental and basic method was deception. Over and over in the Bible, when tyrants were entrenched and already in power, it was proper and lawful to deceive them in order to protect your family, your life, and

your property. Last week I showed you the second tactic, avoidance, where you literally stayed out of their way.

Today I am going to give you the third method, but let me give you a caution. I am going to give you this caution at the beginning and also at the end of this message: Do not take the message that I am preaching today independently from the one that is going to follow it. I cannot preach both at one time, but make sure that whatever you hear today, you weigh in the context of what I am going to say next week. Next week I am going to give some considerations that I think will bear very heavily and very weightily upon what I say today.

Very obviously, deception is the first form we may use against tyranny, and avoidance is the second. The third, and the most recognized form of resistance to tyranny, is violent self-defense. In other words, it is open war against tyranny and against tyrants.

Defining Resistance vs. Rebellion

Many people erroneously term resistance rebellion. Some speak of the American War for Independence as the American Rebellion, but that is an improper term. Why? Because it is impossible to rebel against tyranny. Rebellion is only against lawful government. It cannot be, quote unquote, toward tyranny, because tyranny is not now, nor has it ever been, a lawful form of government. God never ordained tyranny as a form of government. You may resist tyranny, but you are not in rebellion against tyranny, because you can only be in rebellion against lawful authority.

For instance, if I were to look at Allison and say, “Allison, go get me a glass of tea,” she could answer, “Pastor, if you ask me, I’ll be glad to get you a glass of tea, but don’t go commanding me.” If I looked at the rest of you and said, “The trouble with her is that she’s just rebellious,” she would not be rebellious to me. Why? Because I have no lawful authority over her. I am not her husband. She can only be rebellious, quote unquote, to a lawful authority.

Rebellion, then, is impossible against tyranny, because tyranny is never a lawful form of government. Tyranny is the perversion, abuse, and misuse of government, which God has ordained.

Another term could be used if you understand it: revolution. By revolution, I am not talking about a revolt against a lawful government, but against an unlawful government. In that sense, you are trying to revolutionize the government to make it biblical, godly, and lawful. You could refer to the American War for Independence as the American Revolution, if you understand the term.

The Example of Athaliah and Jehoiada

In 2 Kings chapter 11, Athaliah, the reigning queen, came to the temple after hearing the people shouting. Her grandson, Joash, was being ordained king by Jehoiada, the high priest, and the people. When she saw the king being ordained and anointed, she cried, “Treason, treason.” What did Jehoiada do? He said, “Have her forth without the temple and kill her.” She said it was treason.

But God says her death was justice. Why? First, God never appointed Athaliah, nor did He ordain her government. Moreover, chapter 11, verse 1, shows that Athaliah was a murderess. The Bible says that when Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal. She murdered her grandchildren. But Jehoshaphat, the daughter of King Joram and sister of Ahaziah, took Joash, the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons, which were slain. She hid him, even him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain.

Here was Athaliah, murdering her own grandchildren in order that she might be queen and reign over the land. So very obviously, God never ordained Athaliah, and He never ordained her government. She said it was treason, but God declares that it was justice.

The Declaration of Independence was written to show why the American colonists were resisting George III and his tyranny. In other words, it establishes beyond any shadow of a doubt that George III and his government were tyrannical. The document says:

The Declaration of Independence as a Model

"The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this, let the facts be submitted to a candid world."

It then states: "He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained. And when so suspended, he is utterly neglected to attend to them. He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only."

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures. He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people. He has refused for a long time after such dissolutions to cause others to be elected, whereby the legislative powers incapable of annihilation have returned to the people at large for their exercise, the state remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without and convulsions within. He has endeavored to prevent the population of these states for that purpose, obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners, refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands. He has obstructed the administration of justice by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made judges dependent on his will alone for the tenure of their offices and the amount and payment of their salaries. He has erected a multitude of new offices and sent here their swarms of officers to harass our people and to eat out our substance. He has kept among us in times of peace, standing armies without the consent of our legislatures.

He is affected to render the military independent of and superior to the civil power. He is combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution and unacknowledged by our laws giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation, for quartering large bodies of armed troops among us, for protecting them by a mock trial from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states, for cutting off our trade with all parts of the world, for imposing taxes on us without our consent, for depriving us in many cases of the benefits of trial by jury, for transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offenses, for abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these colonies, for taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments, for suspending our own legislatures and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

The Declaration of Independence states that the king had advocated government over the colonies by declaring them out of his protection and waging war against them: "He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people. He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages and totally unworthy of the head of a civilized nation."

"He has constrained our fellow citizens, taken captive on the high seas, to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands. He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions."

This document was written to prove the tyranny of George III. What form of resistance did our forefathers use? They used armed

resistance because they could no longer use deception or avoidance. Our history is replete with examples of armed resistance to tyranny.

But what saith the scripture? Does God ever use force to overthrow tyrants? God used force to overthrow Pharaoh when He brought Israel out of Egypt. The Bible says in Deuteronomy 4:34, "Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes."

Old Testament Precedents for Armed Resistance

Why did God use force to overthrow Pharaoh and the Egyptian army? The Israelites were unarmed, outnumbered, and helpless. God sovereignly and powerfully delivered Israel out of Egypt by His own hand. But when God had delivered them from the land and put them in Canaan, He ordered the militia formed in Numbers chapter 1. Every able-bodied male from twenty years upward was to present himself for military service.

God delivered Israel by force out of Egypt by His own hand when they were helpless and unarmed. But once they were in the land, no longer helpless, and armed, God expected them to wage war by their own hand. God instituted this militia. The book of Judges is replete with illustrations of the overthrow of tyranny by force.

These are not the only illustrations in the Bible; there are a multitude of others. But understand this: the reason a tyrant was over the people in the first place was because of the people's sin and rebellion against God. Had the people been obedient to God, had they honored and worshiped the one true and living God, their enemies would never have prevailed over them to begin with.

Before looking in the book of Judges, look in Deuteronomy 28, beginning with verse 15. Note this curse. The Bible says, "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee."

Now consider some of these curses, beginning in verse 25: "The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies. Thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them, and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. And thy carcass shall be meat unto all the fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away. The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart. And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways."

Deuteronomy says, “And thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.” God said, if you disobey me, you can look out. Tyranny is on the way.

The Bible says in Proverbs 16 and verse seven, “When a man’s ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.” The opposite is also true. When a man’s ways displease the Lord, his enemies are not at peace with him.

Now, let me show you from Scripture armed resistance to tyranny. The book of Judges is called Judges because God raised up a judge, or a deliverer, or a savior, for his people, to deliver them out of the hand of the tyrants. The first judge mentioned is Othniel. “And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites. And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served other gods.” They married outside of God’s will and worshiped false gods: “And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves.” Asherah. “And therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel.”

God sold them into the hands of Cushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, and the children of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years. When the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, “the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war. And the Lord delivered Cushan-rishathaim, king of

Mesopotamia, into his hand, and his hand prevailed against Cushan-rishathaim. And the land had rest forty years, and Othniel, the son of Kenaz, died." God raised up Othniel, and the Bible says that he waged war against the king.

So here was armed resistance. Note, it was not rebellion, for Cushan-rishathaim was not a lawful king, nor did he have a lawful government over Israel. And so he used armed resistance.

The period of peace that followed Othniel lasted 40 years. What marred, disturbed, or broke that 40 years' peace? Verse 12 says, "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord strengthened Eglon, the king of Moab, against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord."

What do you see God doing? Raising up another tyrant. God says, "You're disobeying me. You're sinning against me. You're not worshipping me." And so he raised up Eglon.

Verse 13 says, "And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of the palm trees." Who can tell me what that was—the city of the palm trees? Los Angeles? No. I would say Jericho, but I would not say Los Angeles.

When the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised them up and delivered Ehud the son of Gerah, a Benjamite, a man left-handed. By him the children of Israel sent a present to Eglon, the king of Moab. But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges of a cubit length, and he girded it under his raiment upon his right thigh. He brought the present to Eglon, king of Moab, and Eglon was a very fat man. When he had made an end of offering the present, he sent away the people that bore the present.

But Ehud himself turned again from the quarries. The word quarries there literally means graven images. He came to these graven images by Gilgal and said, "I have a secret errand unto thee, O king." He went back to the king, and all that stood by him went out from him. Ehud came unto him as he was sitting in a summer parlor, which he had for himself alone, and said, "I have a message from God unto thee." And he arose out of his seat. Ehud put forth his left hand, took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his

belly. The haft also went in after the blade, and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly, and the dirt came out. Then Ehud went forth through the porch, shut the doors of the parlor upon him, and locked them. When he was gone out, his servants came; and when they saw that the doors of the parlor were locked, they said, “Surely he covereth his feet in a summer chamber.”

And they tarried till they were ashamed, and behold, he opened not the doors of the parlor. Therefore they took a key and opened them, and behold, their Lord was fallen down dead on the earth. And he had escaped while they tarried and passed beyond the quarries of the graven images and escaped in Seirath. It came to pass when he was come in the mountain of Ephraim. And the children of Israel went down with him from the mountain, he before them. And he said unto them, Follow after me, for the Lord hath delivered your enemies, the Moabites, into your hand. And they went down after him and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab and suffered not a man to pass over. Verse 29 says they slew that day about 10,000 Moabites.

Now, Ehud used not only armed resistance; he also used deception and assassination. Most men are right-handed, and when a man would be going in to check the king, they would invariably check his left side, because that is where usually a right-handed man would keep his dagger, where he could get to it very quickly. But Ehud was left-handed. So he girded the dagger on the left side, and they did not think to check there or did not notice.

When he went back and said to Eglon—and I want you to note this—Eglon was a wicked, ungodly reprobate. But as wicked, ungodly, and tyrannical as Eglon was, he had more respect for God than our modern-day politicians. When Ehud said, "I have a message from God for thee," at least Eglon arose out of his seat to receive it. He wanted to hear what God had to say. When he arose out of his seat, Ehud drew out that dagger and stuck it in.

Most of you have seen hunting knives with the little thing sticking out where your hand will not slide down on the blade. That is called the haft. Ehud plunged the knife in so deeply that the fat closed up around the haft, and he could not even pull it out. The Bible said the

dirt came out, or the fundament, or the contents of his bowels spilled out. He literally ripped him open. Then he simply locked the door and left. Very obviously, his servants came when they saw the door locked. They said, "Surely he covereth his feet in the summer parlor."

I have a friend who really messed up that phrase. He was showing through the Bible where Saul went into a cave and covered his feet, talking about how Saul had cold feet. I went up to him afterward and said, “Brother, it is very obvious that you have never been raised on a farm.” He asked what I meant. I said, “Saul did not go into the cave and cover his feet because his feet were cold. He went in there to use the bathroom.” That is what happens when you drop your pants, and that is what he was doing.

That is what they thought Eglon was doing, so they said, “We are going to stay out of there.” And guess what happened? He stayed and stayed and stayed, and they did not have Reader’s Digest in those days. They knew something was up, and they found him dead. Ehud was a left-handed man, and God used this left-handed man who was a Benjamite. Do you remember, by the way, what the word Benjamin means? It means “son of my right hand.” But Ehud was left-handed. Thus God used assassination, and God used armed resistance.

The Bible says, “Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel, and the land had rest fourscore, or eighty, years.” Once again, after an eighty-year period, sin came in. Then it says, “And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel.” After the Moabites, after eighty years, God allowed the Philistines to come in. Here was Shamgar with an ox goad, and the Bible says he killed six hundred men. First, note that Shamgar was using armed resistance. Second, note that the weapon he used was a highly inferior weapon. It was an ox goad, nothing more than a stick about that large in diameter. It was probably six or eight feet long and came to a sharp point. That was all it was, yet God allowed Shamgar to use this ox goad to kill six hundred men.

Now note this: This highly inferior weapon was quite superior to anything the Philistines had when it possessed the blessing and power of God. Do you understand what I am trying to say? It does

not matter how many machine guns, bombs, planes, or tanks the enemy has. When the enemy is wicked and wrong, and when God's blessing and power are upon His people, even the weakest and most inferior instruments of war become superior to whatever the enemy has. So God used Shamgar.

Here in Judges 4 are Deborah and Barak, and chapter 5 is the song of victory. Look carefully at Judges 4:1: "And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, when Ehud was dead." Isn't that interesting?

Whenever God raised up a man who ruled with godly authority, when that man died, the people usually went back into sin and rebellion. Have you noticed that in our country? When our country had godly leaders, we had a godly people. When the godly leaders died, the people went back into sin. Now we have ungodly leaders and ungodly people.

"And the Lord sold them in the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor, the captain of whose host was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel."

You know the story. Deborah told Barak that God had said, "You go with him. I'm going to get him into your hands." Barak answered, "I'll go, but I'm not going to go unless you go with me." Deborah agreed to go, but told him that because he was not man enough to do it alone as he was supposed to, God would give the honor to a woman.

That is when Jael took a nail and drove it through Sisera's temples and cut off his head. What was God using? God was using armed resistance and assassination. Jael assassinated Sisera, the captain of the host of Jabin, king of Hazor, while he was asleep. God used armed resistance, and God used assassination.

Look at the praise God heaps upon Jael in Judges 5:24: "Blessed above women shall Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite be. Blessed shall she be above women in the tent."

"He asked water, and she gave him milk. She brought forth butter in a lordly dish. She put her right hand to the nail and her right hand

to the workman's hammer. And with the hammer she smote Sisera. She smote off his head when she had pierced and stricken through his temple. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down. At her feet he bowed, he fell, where he bowed, there he fell down dead."

So once again, God is using assassination and armed resistance. In verse 31, the song goes on: "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord. But let them that love thee be as the sun when it goeth forth in his might." And the land had rest for 40 years. But in chapter six, beginning with verse one, we hear those all too familiar phrases: "and the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them in the hand of Midian for seven years." Isn't that interesting?

Do you see the picture? Whenever the people serve God, obey Him, and worship Him, they are free. Whenever they disobey Him and fail to honor Him, they are in bondage. They are oppressed; they are under tyranny. Is that giving you a clue as to why we are so oppressed today as a nation and as a people? Very obviously, it should be plain.

Well, what does God do? I want to read this. To me, this is so funny, because God raises up—and I hope every one of you is familiar with the life of Gideon. Let us begin with verse 2: "Now the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel, and because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made them the dens which were in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds."

What tactics are they using? Avoidance, and probably some deception too. You are fixing to see both of them used. Why were they using avoidance and deception? Because they were not able to overthrow them with armed resistance at that particular time. Verse 3: "And so it was when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites and the children of the east; and they came up against them, and they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou comest to Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass."

Every time they planted a harvest, when harvest time came, the Midianites came in and ate everything up, making everybody starve. Now watch verse 5: "For they came up with their cattle and their

tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude. For both they and their camels were without number, and they entered into the land to destroy him. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord. And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites, that the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, who said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage. And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all them that oppressed you, and draved them out from before you, and gave you their land. And I said unto you, I am the Lord your God."

The Lord said, "Fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell, but you have not obeyed my voice. And there came an angel of the Lord and sat under the oak, which is in Ophrah, that pertained to Joash, the Abiezrite, and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites." Here is not only avoidance, but deception, pretending that there is nothing to hide. What was Gideon doing? He was threshing wheat, but he was hiding.

"And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." Thou mighty man of valor? What was this most courageous man doing? Hiding. Gideon said to him, "Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all his miracles? Which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? And now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

"And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have not I sent thee?"

Everybody knows how Gideon had this vast army. But note what God said in Judges 7: "The people that are with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into your hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, My own hand hath saved me. Therefore, go to proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead." Twenty-two thousand returned, and ten thousand

remained. Two-thirds went home. “And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many.”

“Bring them down into the water, and I will try them for thee there. And it shall be that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, and the same shall go with thee. And of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, and the same shall not go with thee.” He made them lap water, and finally cut Gideon's force down to three hundred men. Gideon and those three hundred men thoroughly and totally defeated the thousands of Midianites. He slew their princes, Oreb and Zeeb.

Shamgar had an inferior weapon. Gideon had an inferior force. We always think, if God would just let the American people band together, because we think in terms of majorities. But God has never used majorities. He has always used minorities. The majority is not always right; usually the majority is wrong. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were in the minority. Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth were in the minority. Daniel was a minority. We are not in the majority.

When George Washington was fighting for our independence, the most he ever had at one time—the Battle of Brandywine—was 8,000 men. Usually, he had 3,000 or less. We think we have to have a lot, but God said, “No, Gideon, I can take 300 men and, with my blessing, overthrow the tyrants.” God used Gideon and armed resistance to destroy the Midianites.

Judges 8:28 says, “Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so they lifted up their heads no more, and the country was in quietness 40 years in the days of Gideon.”

In Judges chapter 9, Abimelech arises and becomes a tyrant. He murders all his brethren, the sons of Gideon, so that he can become king. “And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal, who was Gideon, went to Shechem and to his mother's brethren, and communed with them, with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, whether it is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal or Gideon, which are of three score and ten persons, that is, seventy persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you. Remember also that I am your bone and

of your flesh. And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem, all these and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, He is our brother. And they gave him three score and ten pieces of silver out of the house of Baal-berith, wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons who followed him. And he went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren, the sons of Jerubbaal, being threescore and ten persons upon one stone. Notwithstanding it, Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left, for he hid himself."

Abimelech murdered all his brothers and became a tyrant, destroying people left and right. But notice how he died. Judges 9:50 says, "Then went Abimelech to Thebez and encamped against Thebez and took it. But there was a strong tower within the city and thither fled all the men and women and all the other city and shut it to them and gat them up into the top of the tower. And Abimelech came into the tower and fought against it and went hard into the door of the tower to burn it with fire. And a certain woman, don't know who she was, but a certain woman cast a piece of millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to break his skull."

"Then he called hastily unto his young man, his armor-bearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword and slay me, that men say not of me. A woman slew him, and his young man thrust him through, and he died." When the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man into his place, and God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father, and slain his seventy brethren, etc., etc. A woman simply dropped a millstone on his head, and for all practical purposes, she killed him. He was dying, and he told his armor-bearer, "You just stick me through. I don't want men to say that a woman killed me." So God has a way of rewarding tyrants.

In Judges 10, Tola and Jair are mentioned in verses one through five, but we are not told much about them. Beginning with verse six, we read: "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served him not. And the anger of the Lord was hot against

Israel, and he sold them in the hands of the Philistines, and in the hands of the children of Ammon. And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel eighteen years, all the children of Israel that were on the other side of Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is Gilead. Moreover, the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight also against Judah and against Benjamin and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was sore distressed."

The children of Israel cried to the Lord, saying, "We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God and also served Baalim." The Lord reminded them, "Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, and from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines, the Zidonians, the Amalekites, the Maonites, did oppress you? And you cried unto me, and I delivered you out of their hand." Yet they had forsaken Him and served other gods. Therefore He said, "I will deliver you no more."

What is God saying? God says, I get tired. You will not listen. Why should I deliver you again? All you have to do is turn around and sin against me and forsake me. He says, "Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen, and let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation." Israel answered, "We have sinned. Do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee, deliver us only, we pray thee this day." They put away the strange gods from them, served the Lord, and "his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel."

God, being merciful, raised up Jephthah the Gileadite. Judges 11:1 says, "Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he was a son of an harlot, and Gilead begat Jephthah." His brothers rejected him, saying, "You're not the son of our mother. You're the son of a harlot. We don't want you around," and they ran him off.

But he was a warrior and a fighter. In their time of need, they came to Jephthah and asked, "Will you lead us against the enemy? Will you fight for us?" He answered, "If you make me your captain, I'm going to do that." They made him captain, and God delivered Israel through Jephthah. Once again, it was armed resistance.

There were other minor judges, but Judges 13 records one more: Samson. "The children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the

Lord; and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years."

SCRIPTURE READING - Judges 13:2-5 (KJV)

> "There was a certain man of Zorah, the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah, and his wife was barren and bare not. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman and said unto her, Behold, thou art barren and bearest not, but thou shalt conceive and bear a child. Now therefore, beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine or strong drink, eat no unclean thing, For lo, thou shalt conceive and bear a son, and no razor shall come on his head. For the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb, and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."

This is where Samson came into being. What method did Samson use to overthrow the Philistines? He used deception on some occasions, but usually he used assassination or armed resistance.

When they finally came to get Samson, he was up on top of the rock. The Bible says in Judges 15:14, "And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him, and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax, that were burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith. And Samson said, With a jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with a jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men."

Samson was an average, ordinary man. Every time we think of Samson, we think of someone with muscles bulging everywhere. Samson was not a powerfully built man. No doubt he had some muscles, and no doubt he may have been strong, but he was not a Mr. Atlas walking around, a bodybuilder showing off his muscles. What made Samson strong was the power of God. An ordinary, average man with the power of God picked up the jawbone of an ass and beat to death a thousand Philistines who had swords, spears, and probably bows and arrows as well. Here you have an inferior force and an inferior weapon, blessed by God, defeating superior weaponry and a superior force.

Evidently, the peace he brought upon the land was a twenty-year peace, for Judges 16:31 says, "...then his brethren in all the house of his father came down and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, in the burying place of Manoah his father, and he judged Israel for twenty years." Let me summarize everything I have given you so far in the book of Judges.

The methods used in violent self-defense were armed resistance, assassination, sabotage, and guerrilla warfare. I did not take the time to develop all of those, but they are plainly taught in the book of Judges. There are many others in the Bible who used armed resistance to overthrow tyrants.

Samuel, in 1 Samuel 15:32–33, used a sword to hew Agag in pieces. Agag was the king of the Amalekites. Saul, in 1 Samuel 11, used armed resistance to destroy Nahash the Ammonite when the Ammonites came against Israel. Jonathan, in 1 Samuel 14, used armed resistance against the Philistines. David, in 1 Samuel 17, used the slingshot and the sword against Goliath. Elijah, in 1 Kings 18, used a sword and cut off the heads of the 400 prophets of Baal. Remember, they were the prophets of Ahab and Jezebel, the prophets of the tyrants.

Jehu, in 2 Kings 9, used force against Ahab and his house. He killed every one of them. Joash and Jehoiada, the high priest, used force against Athaliah and all who followed her.

Inevitably, someone is going to say, "But Brother Weaver, everything that you just told me happened in the Old Testament." Isn't it amazing that everybody wants to divide the Word of God? They want to say, "If we don't see it in the New Testament, then it can't be real." Let me tell you something. First of all, God is not only sovereign; He is immutable—that is, unchangeable.

New Testament Endorsement in Hebrews 11

In the book of Malachi, He says, "I, the Lord, change not." The God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament. We have only one God and one Bible, not two Bibles. But I will show you a New Testament passage that endorses everything I have just told you happened in the Old Testament. You cannot understand the New

Testament without knowing the Old Testament, because the New Testament is a further explication and explanation of the truth of the Old Testament. Turn in your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 11. Hebrews 11 deals with the heroes of faith, and I want you to note how God places these warriors—individuals who used armed resistance against tyranny—as heroes of faith. Note, if you would, Hebrews 11, verse 32.

"And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah, of David also, and of Samuel, and of the prophets. Watch who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of the lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

So God, in Hebrews 11, endorses and places his approval upon everything these men did, listing them among the heroes of faith.

Why Force Against Tyranny is Just

Why is it lawful to use force against tyranny? How can such force be considered just? First, because it is part of the Lex Talionis of Scripture. Lex Talionis is Latin for the law of retribution: God says, “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” Tyrants use force of various kinds and degrees to usurp and abuse power. Therefore, force may lawfully be used against them as part of the law of retribution.

Secondly, tyranny is never a divinely ordained form of government. Since God did not ordain it, it may lawfully and justly be resisted.

Thirdly, most tyrants are murderers and are therefore under the death penalty from God himself. They may justly be put to death.

Dr. Robert A. Morey, in his book What Is It Right to Fight?, page 32, writes: “It should be also noted that the use of assassination to remove tyrants is viewed in scripture as thoroughly just and commendatory. Ehud's assassination of Eglon or the other assassinations committed by freedom fighters to overthrow tyrants throughout biblical history are always praised in Scripture as a

legitimate and a just means of force. If one takes the biblical record seriously, assassination to remove a tyrant is not murder."

We must praise Dietrich Bonhoeffer's involvement in an assassination plot against Hitler. If the plot had succeeded, World War II would have been concluded early, and many thousands of lives would have been saved. One modern example of a tyrannical power is the Soviet dictatorship. The Russian people never chose these tyrants to be in power, and they would overthrow them if they had the opportunity. Alexander Solzhenitsyn has clearly demonstrated that the Russian people are the oppressed victims of an illegitimate tyrannical power. The same is true for all the oppressed peoples in all captive nations.

The tyranny that is oppressing them is not ordained of God, and it is to be overthrown whenever possible. One cannot but wonder what wonderful blessings would have been bestowed upon humanity if such tyrants as Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Hitler, and Mussolini had been assassinated, or if modern-day tyrants were removed by assassination. Certainly, the oppressed people whom they are victimizing would rejoice at the fall of these evil men.

If one takes the biblical record seriously, assassination to remove a tyrant is not murder. When George Bush was president and fighting against Saddam Hussein, someone suggested, "Why don't you just kill him?" The answer was, "We don't assassinate people." Yet the CIA does so on a regular basis. I would rather have one dictator killed than lose a thousand American boys in a war just because you want to assassinate somebody. To be honest, what we really need to do if we want to have a real war is put our president and Congress on an island somewhere with the other country's president and Congress and let them fight it out. That would stop it. Robert Morey is saying that assassination to remove a tyrant is not murder.

Caution and Conclusion

Now, let me give you a caution. I cannot complete this message today. This message will be considered next Lord's Day with vital considerations. The only point I was trying to prove today is this: armed resistance against tyranny is a just, righteous, lawful, and

biblical form of resistance. That does not mean that we automatically pick up weapons and start shooting. Although the Bible sanctions using force, and it is just to use force under certain circumstances, one is foolish, unwise, and suicidal to attempt to use force without comprehending the full biblical considerations attached to its use.

So God gives us some warnings. That is why, for periods of time, the people submitted to tyranny. That doesn't mean they did so with a full heart. They used deception. They used avoidance. They stayed out of the way. They did whatever they could, but they bided their time until force was available and they could overthrow the tyrant.

Make sure that you understand that this message today is not to be taken as a whole, in and of itself. It must be attached to the message that I'm going to be bringing next week, so that you can see the proper, weighty considerations to the just use of force in the Bible.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for your blessing and your help. Lord, we pray that you would teach us, that you'd build us up in the most holy faith. We pray that you would prepare us, Lord. Let us know that it is indeed lawful to use deception. It is indeed lawful to use avoidance. It is indeed lawful to use resistance by armed force when and wherever necessary. And Lord, just prepare our hearts, that we may think scripturally and biblically in every area of our life. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

Dealing With Tyrants - 4

Ecclesiastes 3, verse 1: “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew. A time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.”

Introduction and Review of Previous Methods

We have been discussing the biblical doctrine of war. For the last three weeks, including this week, I have been dealing with biblical methods of dealing with tyrants. We have discussed three things so far. From the Bible, we have shown that the most fundamental and basic method of dealing with tyrants is deception. Abraham used it, Isaac used it, and so many of the patriarchs used deception. Another method is avoidance: simply staying out of the way of the tyrant.

This is clearly taught in the Word of God. The third way is what we know as violent self-defense. We went through the Bible, particularly the book of Judges, and saw how physical force, or physical self-defense, was used to overthrow and defeat tyranny.

I want to call your attention to the fact that Hebrews 11, verses 32 through 34, by including these freedom fighters in the heroes of faith, demonstrates the fact that these men, although they fought physically and used violence, God still counted them as the heroes of faith. So they fought physically and yet at the same time they fought in faith. The New Testament then specifically places its endorsement upon those Old Testament freedom fighters.

Many individuals want to carp at the fact that the New Testament endorses the Old Testament freedom fighters, and inevitably someone will say, "But Brother Weaver, don't you know that in the New Testament, the New Testament disciples did not attempt to overthrow Rome with physical force?" That is true. Therefore, they say, "We have no New Testament examples, and so we are not to use physical force today." That reasoning certainly is illogical and certainly unbiblical as well.

The New Testament Endorses Old Testament Examples

Let me tell you why. Number one, all of the Bible is the Word of God, not just the New Testament. The New Testament does not cancel out the Old Testament, so you have then the entirety of the Word of God. In fact, when Paul wrote 2 Timothy 3:16, when he said, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable," he had reference primarily to the Old Testament because the New Testament was not completed at that particular time.

Secondly, I want you to note that the New Testament specifically tells us that the Old Testament was written for our admonition, for our learning, and example. If you would turn in your Bibles very quickly to the book of Romans, chapter 15, and look at verse 4. Romans 15 and verse 4. Note what is said. The Apostle Paul writes, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." So everything in the Old Testament was written

for our learning. Why? That we might have patience and that we might have hope. In other words, the same God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament. What God did for His people in the Old, He will also do for His people in the New. Look in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 10.

In 1 Corinthians 10, the Apostle Paul takes what happened to Old Testament Israel and applies it to the Corinthian church in the New Testament age. He says, in verse 6, "Now these things were our examples to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted." Then, in verse 11: "Now all these things happened unto them for examples. And they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Let us do a little reasoning. If everything that happened to Israel in the Old Testament that was bad is our example, showing what we should not do, then everything they did which was good is also our example, showing what we should do. You follow that? Very obviously, the New Testament is saying that everything in the Old Testament is our example. It is there for our admonition and for our learning.

Why the Disciples Did Not Overthrow Rome

It should be very obvious why the New Testament disciples did not attempt to overthrow Rome by force. There were reasons why there was no violent uprising or physical self-defense against tyranny on the part of the disciples. The truth is, they used deception and avoidance, and developed a distinctly Christian subculture that was absolutely contrary to Rome and all of its teachings and laws. Thus, the New Testament disciples did what they could to defend themselves and to overthrow wickedness and tyranny wherever possible.

Violent self-defense is a lawful and biblical method to use in dealing with tyranny. However, there are solemn and serious considerations that must be faced and dealt with before that method is employed. Remember the caution: Do not use the message preached last week apart from and separate from the message brought this week. Although the Bible clearly teaches the use of physical force, it also clearly teaches that solemn and serious

considerations must be taken into account before this method is used. What are these considerations?

Consideration 1: Strength and Resources for Long-Term War

The first consideration is this: Do we have the strength, resources, and ability to carry on a full-scale war on a long-term basis?

Do we have the resources, the strength, and the ability to carry on a long-term war on a full scale? There is a vast difference between temporary operations and a full-scale war.

I have used this illustration before, but not in this context. This is where Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, was raped. Simeon and Levi deceived Shechem and Hamor, saying, “Unless you're circumcised, you can't marry with us and we certainly will not marry with you.” When the men agreed to be circumcised, on the third day, when all the men were sore, Simeon and Levi took their swords and went in and killed every man in the city and brought back the women, the cattle, and everything that they had.

“And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister.

“They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, and all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house.”

And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, his sons—the father and patriarch—“Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites. And I, being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.”

First of all, Jacob did not know what Simeon and Levi were going to do. They simply took that upon themselves and went and did it. The consequences were these. Jacob said, "You boys don't understand what you've done. You've acted hastily and you've acted in anger. And yes, you have the ability and the strength and the resource to carry on a temporary operation. But now what is going to happen is this: all the Canaanites will surround us, and the entire family will be destroyed because of your temporary action." These boys had the resources and the strength for a temporary operation, but they were in no position to carry on a full-scale war on a long-term basis. Jacob said, "What is going to happen is all of us are going to be slain because of what you did." The Canaanites would not care, nor would they be concerned about, nor would they even consider that Simeon and Levi had acted independently. They would simply come upon them and kill them all.

The only thing that preserved them at that particular time was simply the sovereignty of God. God sovereignly protected Jacob and his family.

Romans 14:7 says, "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." This is one very important verse. Underline it, not only in your Bible, but also in your mind. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." What does that mean? It means that your attitudes and your actions always affect other people. That is why Jacob was so upset with Simeon and Levi. They had carried out a temporary operation, but they had brought danger upon the entire family, upon the entire clan, because they never took consideration or counsel; they simply acted hastily and in anger.

Therefore, it is foolish, unwise, unbiblical, and even suicidal to act without consideration and without counsel. One operation is not a war. One act does not end it all. What you have to consider is that a war is normally a full-scale operation, and usually it is a long-term war as well.

Do you realize that when our forefathers began to fight for our independence in 1776, the war did not end until 1783 with the Treaty of Paris? That means our forefathers fought for seven years. Do you remember that in 1861 Abraham Lincoln called for 75,000

volunteers for three months? He was going to take 75,000 volunteers and, in three months, defeat the South.

At First Manassas, or First Bull Run—it was Manassas Junction, but Bull Run Creek—when the Federals and the Southerners engaged in combat, did you realize there were congressmen, women, and children there with picnic lunches to watch the battle? It was going to be over very quickly. The Federals were going to whip the Southerners, and that was it.

At the rout, carriages, children, and guns—all the Yankees were running as fast as they could back to Washington, leaving everything. Lincoln's little three-month exercise lasted for four years. The point I am trying to make is this: war in the Bible is a reality. But you have to consider that there is a vast difference between a temporary operation and a real, full-scale war.

Now, to quote something from the Declaration of the Causes and Necessities of Taking Up Arms, written in July of 1775, our forefathers listed these declarations. They wrote, "We are faced with the alternative of choosing an unconditional submission to the tyranny of irritated ministers or resistance by force."

"The latter is our course. We have counted the cost of this contest, and nothing is so dreadful as voluntary slavery. Honor, justice, and humanity forbid us tamely to surrender that freedom which was purchased from our gallant ancestors, and which our inheritance, our families, have a right to receive from us. We cannot receive the infamy and guilt of resigning succeeding generations to hereditary bondage."

They continued: "We gratefully acknowledge, as signal instances of divine favor upon us, that His providence would not allow us to be called into this severe controversy until we were grown up to our present strength and had previously exercised warlike operations and possessed the means of defending our lives."

"With hearts fortified with these animated reflections, we most solemnly before God and the world declare that, exercising the utmost energy of those powers which our beneficent Creator has graciously bestowed upon us, the arms which we have been compelled by our enemies to assume, we will, in defiance to every

hazard, with unabating firmness and perseverance, employ them for the preservation of our liberties, being with one mind and resolve."

Our forefathers also gratefully acknowledged as a signal instance of divine favor that God's providence would not allow them to be called into this severe controversy until they had grown up to their present strength, had previously been exercised in warlike operations, and possessed the means of defending themselves. They recognized that before engaging in war, one must consider whether he has the resources, strength, and ability to wage it on a long-term basis.

Our Lord gives wisdom in this area in Luke 14:28-32: "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace."

Consideration 2: Reasonable Hope of Winning

Our Lord is saying that we must count the cost. He uses the illustration of one king making war with another. One king has inferior forces and considers whether he is able to defeat the king coming with a greater force. If he is not able, he sends and desires peace. Whenever war is to be engaged in, somebody must faithfully count the cost. The first consideration is this: Do we have the strength, resources, and abilities to carry on a full-scale war on a long-term basis? The second consideration is, do we have a reasonable hope of winning?

Now you say, “But Brother Weaver, I have heard you during this series preach on faith, and everywhere you have demonstrated from Scripture how God has used inferior weaponry and smallness of number to defeat overpowering odds and superior weaponry.” That is true. I preached that, and I taught that. And right beside that, I’m teaching that the Bible does speak about a reasonable hope of

winning. You say, “Brother Weaver, that appears to be a conflict. That appears to be contradictory.” Well, it just appears to be because it certainly is not. The Bible does teach that we must also consider the fact—we must ask ourselves this question: Do we have a reasonable hope of winning?

Now, when there was no reasonable hope of winning in the Bible, the saints used deception. They used avoidance and submitted only whenever they had to. They were simply biding their time until Providence changed the circumstances. You say, “Now, Brother Weaver, you’ve got to explain this a little further. What do you mean when there is a reasonable hope of winning?” Let me just say it point blank, and I’m going to show it to you from Scripture: There is no reasonable hope of winning when God is not on your side. Now, what do I mean by that statement?

You see, what most of us have forgotten is this: tyranny and oppression are punishments sent by God because of our sin and because of our rebellion. Now, let me show you that in the Bible. Turn in your Bibles, if you would please, to the book of Leviticus, chapter 26. Leviticus 26 to begin with, and we’ll read verses 14, 15 and then 17 through 25. Look what God says. God says, “But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; and if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant,” then God proceeds to list the curses. If the people will not obey, skip down to verse 17:

“And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass: and your strength shall be spent in vain: and your”

“land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins. I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you

few in number; and your highways shall be desolate. And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins. And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy."

This passage speaks of tyranny and oppression because of sin and rebellion. In Deuteronomy 28, God begins to show the curses for disobedience: "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee." If you do not obey, all of these curses will come upon you and overtake you. What are they? "The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies."

"Thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. And thy carcass shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away. The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart: and thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee."

Now I will show you an illustration of this truth. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

The opposite is equally true. When a man's ways displease the Lord, He raises up enemies against him. Solomon was counted as one of the wisest men upon the earth. In fact, God sent by Nathan and said to call Solomon's name Jedidiah, which meant "beloved of the Lord." Solomon did indeed love the Lord and serve Him, but when he was old, he departed from the Lord and began to introduce idolatry into the land.

"And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice."

Since God was angry with Solomon, what did God do? "And the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite." He was of the king's seed in Edom. God said, "I'll raise up an adversary. I'll raise up an enemy."

That was not all. "And God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah: and he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, when David slew them of Zobah: and they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus. And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad did: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria."

So God simply raised up adversaries and enemies. When a man's ways please the Lord, He may get even his enemies to be at peace with him. But when a man's ways displease the Lord, God raises up enemies to oppress for judgment's sake.

When God sovereignly raises up an enemy against us, only God can call him off. It is absolutely useless to fight against an enemy who has been raised up for our punishment. We will not win. God took Judah and sent her into captivity into Babylon; Nebuchadnezzar was the one He used to whip Judah.

SCRIPTURE READING - Jeremiah 27:1-8 (KJV)

> "In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word unto Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Thus saith the Lord to me; Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck, and send them to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon, by the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto

Zedekiah king of Judah." So it was to Zedekiah as well. "And command them to say unto their masters, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say unto your masters.

"I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him. And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the Lord, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand."

Did the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the Ammonites, the king of Tyre, the king of Sidon, and the king of Judah prosper when they fought against Nebuchadnezzar? No, they all lost. Why? Because God had raised up Nebuchadnezzar to punish the land because of their sins. It was useless for Israel to fight against the Assyrians. Why? God had ordained the Assyrians for the punishment.

There are two considerations that you have to keep in mind. The first is this: Do we have the strength? Do we have the ability? Do we have the resources to carry on a full-scale war on a long-term basis? The second is, do we have a reasonable hope of winning? You say, "Brother Weaver, if we don't have a reasonable hope of winning, what is to be our attitude?" Let me show you.

Attitude When There Is No Hope of Winning

Turn in your Bibles to Micah, chapter 7. Micah is one of the minor prophets. You will find Amos, Obadiah, and Jonah, and then Micah. In Micah 7, I want you to watch this closely: What is to be our

attitude? What is to be our disposition when there is no reasonable hope of winning?

When God has sovereignly raised up an enemy against us because of our sins and rebellion, Micah 7 gives us the answer. Micah says, "Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation." He continues: "I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness."

What did Micah say? "I'll just bear the indignation of the Lord. I'm going to wait for Him because God's judgment is not going to last forever upon His people." That is why He told Jeremiah to tell the kings that everybody would serve Nebuchadnezzar, his son, and his son's son until the end came. When the end of His judgment had come, He would release the people. That is what Micah was saying: We must use deception, use avoidance, and simply bear the indignation until God is favorable toward us.

But we must seriously consider whether we have a reasonable hope of winning. That is a legitimate, lawful, and biblical question. There is a third consideration: Are the people tired not only of tyranny, but also of sin? Another way of asking the same question is this: Are the hearts of the people set upon liberty and freedom? It does not take one hundred percent of the people at all times to cry for liberty and freedom, but generally we must ask that question. Why? Let me show you.

Consideration 3: Are the People Tired of Sin and Tyranny?

Turn in your Bibles to Judges, chapter 3. We read these verses last week, but I want to emphasize this one point. Note Judges 3:9: "And when"—note now—"the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer." Who was crying? The children as a whole. Their hearts were set for liberty and freedom.

That does not necessarily mean that every Israelite individually cried, but at least there was an awakening, a movement, and a desire among most of the people. In Judges 3:15 we read, “But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised them up a deliverer.” Notice the children of Israel who are crying. Judges 4:3 says, “And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.” Judges 6:6–7 says, “And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord. And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites.” The people were tired of the tyranny and oppression. They were also tired of sin.

In Judges 10:10 they say, “And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim.” It was not just the tyranny they were tired of; they were also tired of their sin, disobeying God, and reaping His judgments. Do you think God would be pleased to deliver a people from tyranny just so they could continue their rebellion against Him? Of course not. There has to be a segment of the people weary of tyranny and oppression, tired of their sin, tired of disobeying God, and tired of reaping the judgments of God.

There are three problems in this area. The first is that many people wickedly wish to be free from tyranny and oppression simply so they can do their own thing—that is, rebel and live like the devil. They want to be free from the punishment of their sins so they can live in the pleasure of their sins. True liberty is in serving God. Many today who would overthrow the present reigns of tyranny and oppression, if they could, would overthrow the very throne of God Himself because they are rebellious and anarchist, and do not like anyone telling them what to do, not even God. They are not only not Christians; they are not patriots either. Turn in your Bibles to Deuteronomy, chapter 28.

As God's people, we have a choice. We will either serve God, or we will serve our enemies, but we're going to serve one or the other. Look at Deuteronomy 28, beginning with verse 45. Remember, this is still part of the curses. God 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"—watch now, verse 47—"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." You're either going to serve God or your enemies, but you're going to serve if you're His people.

Freedom from oppression and freedom from tyranny is so that we may serve God more efficiently and effectively. It's not so we can simply rebel and do our own thing. There is a second problem: most people have grown so accustomed to tyranny. Our freedoms have evaporated so slowly and gradually that we really don't even realize what we've lost. Even in my lifetime, there have been tremendous usurpations of power and a tremendous loss of rights, yet most people do not have the faintest clue as to what's going on.

It's like the state of Georgia calling for a thumbprint on the driver's license. Only a minority of the people have lifted up a voice and protested, saying, "You're not going to get our fingerprints. It's none of your business. You don't deserve it. You don't need it." We have the right to privacy. Most people don't even say anything; they'll just go in and press the thumbprint down.

Many of you have probably heard of, if you've not read, George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four. You remember that they had doublespeak and doublethink? In George Orwell's 1984, in doublespeak, freedom meant slavery and slavery meant freedom. In other words, the slave thought he was free. Do you realize the average American today thinks he is free? I will grant you, we have more freedom in this country now, what little bit is left, than most other countries have. But if our forefathers were here, they would be absolutely horrified at the slavery we have meekly submitted to.

The truth of the matter is this: a vast majority of Americans have no idea what is going on. There is a third problem, and that is the root problem: the people do not know who God is. Our God is the sovereign, omnipotent ruler of the universe.

Everybody is going to recognize a sovereign. That does not mean they are going to recognize the sovereign God of the universe, but they are going to recognize a sovereign, because power and authority must come from somewhere.

If you do not know that God is the only absolutely sovereign, independent God of heaven and earth, then the only other alternative is government. That is why people say, "You can't fight City Hall. They can do whatever they want to do." They are saying that government is God. What most people have done is make government God. Since they do not know who God is, and do not know that God is the only sovereign, they cannot recognize tyranny or oppression.

If you know that God is sovereign, that He has instituted government, that He has set the bounds and limits of government, and that He has said to government, "Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further," then you are capable of recognizing tyranny. But if you do not know that, you do not know where the boundaries or limits end. One of the root problems is that we do not know who God is.

We are not going to find out without the Word of God and without awakening. Sam Adams said that the reason the American Revolution was so successful was that the revolution was already in the hearts and minds of the people. It is the truth of God that will make us hunger not only for righteousness, but also for liberty and freedom. Paul said in Galatians chapter 5 and verse 1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." Freedom is in Christ.

If we wish to see a reviving, an awakening, or a turning back to the old ways, we must disseminate the Word of God. If we want to see the people stirred, only the Word of God will stir them. Regeneration and conversion alone will make the soul long not only for righteousness, but for liberty and freedom.

In Second Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 17, the Bible says, "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Civil liberty is based upon spiritual liberty. What difference does it make to a man who is a slave to his own sins and his own lusts

whether or not he is free in other areas? He is already a slave. He does not think like a free man; he thinks like a slave. Only people who have been liberated by the Spirit of God and by the Lord Jesus Christ long after freedom, because they want to serve Him, honor Him, and do what He commands.

The truth of the matter is this: We have got to understand that civil liberty is based upon spiritual liberty. If we want people to hunger and cry after liberty and freedom, we must give them the Word of God, of which there has been precious little in this country.

There is a fourth consideration, and then let me try to tie things together for you. The fourth one is really the most important: Is God directing the effort? Are His presence, blessings, and power upon it?

Consideration 4: Is God Directing the Effort?

I have just finished reading a little book written around 1830 on the life of George Washington. It was a delightful little book. If everyone could read that book, you would see the providences of God and how God blessed the American armies, the soldiers, and the leaders, and gave insight. It is a tremendous book. There is no way in the world that you can read that little book and not understand that the blessings, presence, and power of God were upon George Washington and those men fighting the war for independence.

Let me show you what our attitude should be. Look in your Bibles to Exodus, chapter 33. We have to consider whether or not God is in the effort. In Exodus 33, God is going to deliver the people; He is going to take Moses and leave the people. Notice what Moses says. Verse 14: “And he said,” that is, God said to Moses, “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” God said, “Now Moses, don’t worry about it. I’m going to go with you.” Look at what Moses responded in verse 15: “And he said unto him,” that is, unto God, “If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.” God, if You’re not in it, I don’t want to be in it. If Your power and blessings are not upon it, I don’t have anything to do with it.

Do you remember what the Bible says in Zechariah, chapter 4, verse 6? God says, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” The Lord of Hosts means the Lord of the

Armies. Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of the Armies. If God is in it, success is absolutely assured. If God is not in it, failure is assured.

Look in your Bibles to Acts chapter 5. Let me show you the counsel Gamaliel gave concerning the disciples. It is still excellent counsel. The council wanted to fight against the disciples. "Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space."

Hear what he said: "And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought." He died, and those who followed him scattered. "After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed." He lost it. "And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought."

"But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." If it is of God, you will not overthrow it; it will be successful. Therefore, we must know whether God is in an effort and whether His blessing, presence, and power are upon it. It was God who raised up the judges, the prophets, Moses, and Joshua. It was God who empowered and enabled them. If God is in it, the tyrants had better tremble. If God is not in it, the people had better repent.

Second Chronicles 7:14 says, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." Note the words, "If my people." The problem is not really with the wicked; the problem is with us. We must discern whether God is in an effort. If He is, it shall be successful. If He is not, it will be overthrown.

Application: Why the Disciples Did Not Fight Rome

We must heed these considerations before anyone—any group, any state, or any nation—attempts to physically overthrow tyranny. These things are an irreducible minimum.

I began this message by posing an objection: "But Brother Weaver, there is no New Testament illustration of physically fighting against tyranny. The New Testament disciples did not; therefore, we are not obligated to fight against tyranny. We are to sit back and let tyrants rage." That is certainly an unbiblical attitude. The New Testament disciples did not attempt to overthrow Roman tyranny by force precisely because of what I have just preached.

First, they did not have the resources, ability, or strength to carry on a full-scale war on a long-term basis. But suppose they had possessed the resources, the abilities, and the strength to carry on such a war. They still would not have done it. Why? They knew that the judgment of God was upon the land, and that God had decreed to punish the land and nation for its sin, disobedience, and rejection of Christ Messiah.

Every passage I am about to mention concerns the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred in 70 A.D. Christ lived to be thirty-three, so within forty years after His crucifixion, the land was destroyed. In Matthew 24:15, He says, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judaea" flee. He was not telling them to fight; He was telling them to get out.

I cannot prove what I am about to tell you, but Josephus, the historian, records that no Christian died during this particular time. Millions of Jews did. He said the Christians took heed to their Lord's warning and left. Christ continued: "Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day."

SCRIPTURE READING - Mark 13:14-18; Luke 21:20-24; Luke 23:26 (KJV)

He goes on to talk about the great tribulation that they are going to be facing. Mark 13, verse 14: "But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains."

"And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house: and let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter." What is He saying? Get out of there. Do not stand and fight. There is no reason to. And we will explain.

Luke 21, verse 20: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies"—we are talking about the destruction of Jerusalem—"when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto."

"For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

What did our Lord say? There is no reason to fight. I have ordained judgment and destruction. When Jesus Christ was on His way to be crucified, Luke 23, verse 26 says: "And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus."

"And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep

for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

What did our Lord say? Do not weep for Me; you had better weep for yourselves. There were some Jews who tried to resist Titus. They were mutilated. I read an account several months ago on the destruction of Jerusalem. You have never read anything more horrifying in your entire life.

What do you think the people did at Masada? They tried to resist the Roman troops. Were they successful? No. Why? Because God had decreed punishment and judgment because of the sin, disobedience, and rejection of Christ. No wonder there was no uprising. If the disciples had had strength, power, and resources, they still would not have fought, for Christ told them to flee. He told them not to fight. Get out of the land, because there is going to be destruction.

Although there is a lawful, legitimate use of physical force to overthrow tyrants, considerations must be taken before that method is employed. These four that I have given you this morning are a very minimum—probably there are many more—but at least these four must be considered.

Closing Prayer

Let us pray. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask You to help us. Teach us. Build us up in the most holy faith. Lord, enable us to see that not only are there great truths in the Word of God, but there are many considerations to be taken into account in implementing these truths. Enable us, Father, to be faithful in our lives. Teach us, Lord. Grant us Thy Word. Grant us Thy truth. Stir the people of this land, that we may turn from our sins and turn back to Thee, the one true and living God. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Source Notes

Chapter 1: Dealing With Tyrants - 1
JW01161 | SermonAudio

Chapter 2: Dealing With Tyrants - 2
JW01160 | SermonAudio

Chapter 3: Dealing With Tyrants - 3
JW01159 | SermonAudio

Chapter 4: Dealing With Tyrants - 4
JW00679 | SermonAudio

Topical Index

Chapter titles and section headings are listed with the pages on which they begin.

A

Application: The Principle of Not Owing Truth to Abusers p. 26

Application: Why the Disciples Did Not Fight Rome p. 88

Attitude When There Is No Hope of Winning p. 81

B

Biblical Examples of Deception Against Tyrants p. 15

C

Caution and Conclusion p. 68

Caution: Deception Is Not for Everyday Use p. 9

Closing Prayer p. 90

Consideration 1: Strength and Resources for Long-Term War p. 74

Consideration 2: Reasonable Hope of Winning p. 77

Consideration 3: Are the People Tired of Sin and Tyranny? p. 82

Consideration 4: Is God Directing the Effort? p. 86

D

David Avoids Saul p. 41

Dealing With Tyrants - 1 p. 5

Dealing With Tyrants - 2 p. 29

Dealing With Tyrants - 3 p. 49

Dealing With Tyrants - 4 p. 71

Deception and the Lex Talionis p. 7

Deception as the Basic Biblical Method p. 6

Defining Avoidance p. 30

Defining Resistance vs. Rebellion p. 50

E

Elijah and the Prophets Avoid Ahab p. 39

G

God Commands Avoidance: Joseph and Mary p. 45

God Uses Deception p. 10

H

Heroes of Faith Practiced Avoidance p. 45

I

Introduction and Review p. 29

Introduction and Review of Previous Methods p. 49, p. 71

Introduction: The Question of Dealing with Tyrants p. 6

Isaac's Example of Avoidance p. 31

J

Jacob's Use of Avoidance p. 34

N

New Testament Endorsement in Hebrews 11 p. 66

New Testament Examples: Paul and Jesus p. 43

O

Old Testament Precedents for Armed Resistance p. 54

P

Practical Applications p. 46

T

The Declaration of Independence as a Model p. 52

The Example of Athaliah and Jehoiada p. 51

The New Testament Endorses Old Testament Examples p. 72

Tyranny Is Not Divinely Appointed p. 7

W

Why Avoid Tyrants? p. 30

Why Force Against Tyranny is Just p. 67

Why the Disciples Did Not Overthrow Rome p. 73

Scripture Index

Scripture references identified in chapter readings, headings, and manuscript text are listed with their page locations.

Genesis

Genesis 3 p. 8

Genesis 3:1 p. 7

Genesis 3:6 p. 7

Genesis 12:15-13 p. 15

Genesis 20:1-18 p. 16

Genesis 26 p. 31

Genesis 26:1-11 p. 18

Genesis 26:18-25 p. 32

Genesis 27 p. 34

Genesis 27:41 p. 36

Genesis 31 p. 37

Genesis 32:6 p. 38

Genesis 33 p. 38

Genesis 46 p. 19

Genesis 47:1 p. 19

Exodus

Exodus 1 p. 20

Exodus 33 p. 86

Leviticus

Leviticus 26 p. 78

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 4:34 p. 54

Deuteronomy 28 p. 54, p. 79, p. 83, p. 84

Joshua

Joshua 2 p. 21

Judges

Judges 3:15 p. 83

Judges 3:9 p. 82
Judges 4 p. 22, p. 59
Judges 4:1 p. 59
Judges 4:16-22 p. 22
Judges 4:3 p. 83
Judges 5 p. 22, p. 23
Judges 5:24 p. 22, p. 59
Judges 6:6-7 p. 83
Judges 7 p. 61, p. 62
Judges 8:28 p. 62
Judges 9:50 p. 63
Judges 10 p. 63, p. 64
Judges 10:10 p. 83
Judges 11:1 p. 64
Judges 13 p. 64, p. 65
Judges 13:2-5 p. 65
Judges 15:14 p. 65
Judges 16:31 p. 66

1 Samuel

1 Samuel 11 p. 66
1 Samuel 14 p. 66
1 Samuel 15 p. 11
1 Samuel 15:32-33 p. 66
1 Samuel 16 p. 10
1 Samuel 17 p. 66
1 Samuel 19 p. 23
1 Samuel 20 p. 25
1 Samuel 21 p. 24
1 Samuel 27 p. 24, p. 25

1 Kings

1 Kings 18 p. 66

2 Kings

2 Kings 9 p. 66

2 Kings 11 p. 49

2 Chronicles

2 Chronicles 7:14 p. 87

Job

Job 12 p. 5

Job 12:16 p. 6, p. 7

Psalm

Psalm 10 p. 9

Psalm 24 p. 9

Psalm 36 p. 9

Psalm 50 p. 9, p. 31

Psalm 55 p. 9

Proverbs

Proverbs 16 p. 55

Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes 3 p. 71

Jeremiah

Jeremiah 27:1-8 p. 80

Micah

Micah 7 p. 81, p. 82

Matthew

Matthew 2 p. 45

Matthew 10 p. 8

Matthew 24:15 p. 88

Mark

Mark 13 p. 89

Mark 13:14-18 p. 89

Luke

Luke 14:28-32 p. 77

Luke 21 p. 89

Luke 21:20-24 p. 89
Luke 23 p. 89
Luke 23:26 p. 89

John

John 7:1 p. 44
John 12:27 p. 44

Romans

Romans 14:7 p. 75
Romans 15 p. 72, p. 73

1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 10 p. 72, p. 73

2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 11:32 p. 43

1 Timothy

1 Timothy 2 p. 8

2 Timothy

2 Timothy 3:16 p. 72

Hebrews

Hebrews 11 p. 45, p. 66, p. 67, p. 72
Hebrews 11:23 p. 21
Hebrews 11:32-39 p. 45

Revelation

Revelation 12:9 p. 8

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