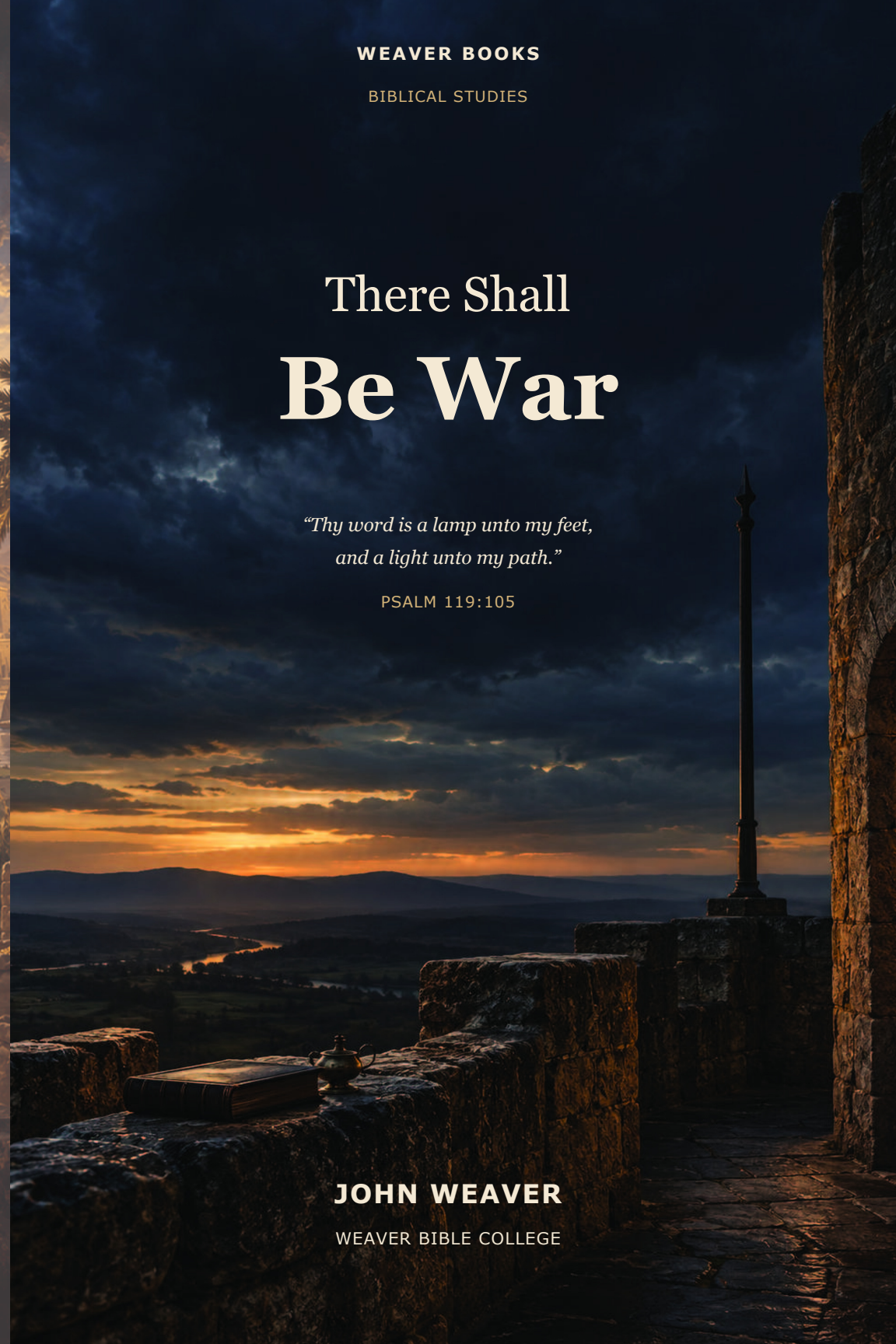
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There Shall Be War

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

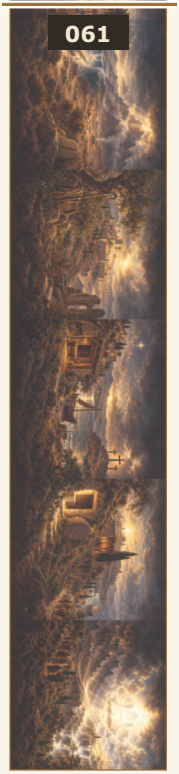
PSALM 119:105



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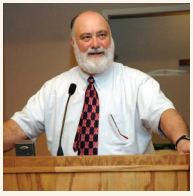
A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

ECCLESIASTES 3:8

The reality of conflict requires sober judgment rather than easy assurances. John Weaver considers war, responsibility, and the biblical standards by which conflict should be examined. These messages invite reflection on the limits of human confidence and the obligations that remain in unsettled times.

"We cannot and we will not worship the sovereign God aright until we are obedient unto Him."

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

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

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CHAPTER 1

There Shall Be War

Part One

Introduction: The Reality of War

In Exodus chapter 5, verses 1 and 2, we read:

"And afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."

When we hear the word war, we have to understand that it is such a simple word, and so easily pronounced, and yet it conveys all of the horror, destruction, and death that can be imagined. Whenever we hear the word war, we immediately imagine bombed-out buildings, families that are either killed or divided, economies destroyed, as well as the worst possible scenario in every sphere of life. But have you ever stopped to ask yourself or to consider why there are wars? Have you ever stopped and asked why men seek to fight and to kill and destroy each other?

The answer is very simple. There are wars, and men seek to fight and to kill and destroy each other simply because they are unwilling to submit to and be in subjection to the sovereign God of heaven and earth. They just simply refuse to be ruled by Him. They refuse to submit to His law, and they refuse to worship Him alone. They deny His sovereignty in order that they may establish their own sovereignty. And they refuse His law that they may try to establish their own laws.

God's Kingdom Brings Peace

When our Lord is fully and completely, or has fully and completely, established His kingdom, there will be no more war. There will be no more fighting. Revelation chapter 11, verse 15, says:

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

This speaks of our Lord's rule and reign: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." In Isaiah chapter 2 and verse 4, speaking of our Lord's rule and reign, the Bible says: "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people:

"And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." So when our Lord's kingdom is fully and finally established, there will be no more fighting and no more war.

Micah 4:3 gives a similar passage: "And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." When our Lord fully and finally establishes His kingdom, there will be no more war. However, until He fully manifests His kingdom, there shall be war.

The Nature of the War

Truthfully, there shall be all manner of wars: spiritual wars, cultural wars, political wars, and physical wars. The reason is that fallen man is in rebellion against God and His law.

First of all, fallen man fights against God. Secondly, God fights against fallen men. Concerning fallen men, Revelation 17:14 says, "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Men fight against God, but God also fights against fallen men. Exodus 17:16 says, "For he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." Now you say, "Wait a minute, if God's going to have war with Amalek from generation to generation, does not God ever win this war?"

God Fights Against Fallen Man

Of course He does. Amalek basically has been destroyed out from under heaven—that is, physical Amalek. But you have to remember something about Amalek. Amalek was the grandson of Esau, and like Esau, he despised spiritual things. Amalek is a type of the flesh. Esau minded the things of the flesh and not the things of God; he despised his birthright. The flesh despises the things of God.

If you will turn in your Bible, hold in Exodus chapter 5, to Galatians chapter 5 and look at verse 17, you will understand how the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. Galatians chapter 5 and verse 17 says, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." The flesh lusteth, or wars, against the Spirit, and the Spirit wars against the flesh. The Spirit and the flesh are contrary the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would.

There is a war going on in our lives even now. Our flesh desires one thing, and our spirit desires something else. If you are a genuine child of God, would you not like, right now in this life, to be able to live without sinning against Christ anymore? Sure you would want

that. But your flesh does not want that. Your flesh wants whatever is going to please and satisfy it.

Moreover, the truth of the matter is that God also fights against all false gods. Do you remember Isaiah 42 and verse 8, where He said, “I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images”? Have you ever stopped to think that it was by war that God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt?

Hold Exodus chapter 5, but turn in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 4 and look at verse 34. Notice the word “war” in this verse: “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?” It was by an act of war that God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. The truth of the matter is this: when God was fighting against Pharaoh and the Egyptians,

It was not just Pharaoh and the Egyptians that God was fighting against. Exodus 12:12 says, "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord." When God warred against Pharaoh and the Egyptians, He was also fighting against the gods of Egypt. You have to remember that God is immutable. God does not change.

The Root of Rebellion: Denial of God's Sovereignty

He fought against all those who were against Him in times past, and He still fights against those who are against Him today. The Pharaohs and false gods of our time are no different from the Pharaoh and false gods of Egypt. They are one and the same. The truth of the matter is, the Pharaohs and false gods of our day will be consumed and destroyed just like those in Egypt.

The world will eventually learn who is indeed the only true Potentate, the Lord of lords, God of gods, and King of kings. That is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. First Corinthians 15:25 says, "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his

feet." Jesus Christ is ruling and reigning right now. Whether you recognize or acknowledge this or not, it is true. He is now subduing all His enemies.

And I know what you are going to say: He has an awful long way to go because there are a lot of enemies. But just hang on. He must reign until He has subdued all His enemies, and they shall be brought in subjection under His feet.

Now go back to Exodus chapter 5 and pay close attention to these two verses, because they will be our text basically for the next two weeks as well. Verse 1 says, "And afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." If you are paying close attention, you are going to find that verse 2

This is the foundation, the basis, and the cause of all wars. Whether they are spiritual or physical, it does not matter. In verse 1, God issues a demand and a command: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." That is a demand and a command. What was Pharaoh's response? "Who is the Lord, that I should let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."

All rebellion in individuals and rulers stems from a refusal to acknowledge and bow to God's absolute sovereignty and authority. God said, "Let my people go, that they may worship me." Pharaoh's attitude was clear: "I don't know the Lord. I don't recognize Him, and I'm not about to obey Him." Would you obey someone that you did not believe in?

The answer is no. Why should you obey the law of a God that you do not even believe exists, or who, if He exists, is, according to your mind, impotent and can do absolutely nothing? Pharaoh expressed a principle that we need to lay hold upon: Where there is no recognition of God's sovereignty, there will be no obedience to His commands.

What we are discussing are the basic questions of life: Who is sovereign? Who has the right, the authority, and the jurisdiction to

command? To whom must we submit? Who has the absolute right to dictate the terms of our life and command us as to how we should live? When you understand that the answer to those questions is the sovereign God of heaven and earth, only then will there be peace in your life.

Do you remember Romans 5 and verse 1? The Bible says: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." How can we have peace with God? We have ceased our fighting and rebellion, thrown down our weapons of warfare, bowed to Him, and submitted to Him through the Lord Jesus Christ. However, until we answer those questions biblically and obey, there will be war: personally and individually; culturally, spiritually, economically, and even in the physical realm.

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 3:1-7 (KJV)

But all wars, no matter what they are, stem from a failure to submit to and bow to God's absolute sovereignty. Let me show you how this worked out in the original sin. Go back in your Bibles to the book of Genesis, chapter 3, and let's read there the first seven verses.

The Principle Illustrated in Eden

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

Each of us is familiar with this passage. The serpent began by questioning God's word: "Yea, hath God said?" Anytime you begin to question the word of God, you're headed for problems and trouble. I've heard people say, "Well, the Bible is not the word of God," or "the Bible is full of contradiction," or "the Bible is full of error." No, no. We're the ones that have a lack of understanding, intelligence, and spiritual discernment. Whenever you begin to question the scriptures, you're headed for trouble. Mark it down.

But I want you to know the serpent not only questioned the word of God; he also questioned God's sovereign authority and God's right to command. Notice, if you would, the serpent said in verse 4 to the woman, "Ye shall not surely die." Now, I know God said you were going to die, but that's not true. God has no authority to tell you that you're going to die.

This is what he's saying. Watch verse 5: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." He's not only questioned God's Word; he's basically denying God's sovereignty. Here's what he's saying: God has no right to tell you that you're going to die. God knows that if you eat this fruit, then you will be as gods.

That is, you will be equal to Him, and you will not need Him. You will not need His law, authority, or word, for you will be your own gods and can determine for yourself right and wrong. By the way, in verse 5, the word "knowing" has the force of the word "determining." You shall be as gods, determining good and evil. In other words, you don't need God to tell you what's right and wrong, or what's good and evil. You can make that decision and determination for yourself.

So what the serpent is doing is casting dispersion and contempt upon God by indicating that God really knew better than to issue this command, that He really had no right to issue it, because all God was trying to do was hold Adam and Eve back and keep them from developing their full potential. In other words, God is just an old meanie. He did not want any competition. So the serpent says, then, you can become your own gods.

You can determine for yourself good and evil. You do not need God's authority to dictate to you; you can dictate for yourself. You

can be sovereign. You can be a god. Do you realize the temptation back then is the same as it is today? The temptation today is to be your own god, to make your own law, and to do as you please. Rebellion is nothing less than a declaration of independence from God and His law. Man denies God's sovereignty in order that he may establish his own.

There has to be a sovereign, an ultimate, an absolute. If God is not that sovereign, that ultimate, and that absolute, then who is left? Man. Man denies God's sovereignty that he may establish his own sovereignty, and denies God's law that he may endeavor to establish his own law.

But the creature can never become the Creator, nor can that which is created become equal with the Creator. The serpent's attack was upon God's sovereign authority, upon God's right to rule His universe and His creatures as He saw fit. If God is not sovereign, the ultimate, and the absolute, the question must be asked: Why should we obey Him? Why should anyone obey Him?

That is exactly what the serpent was saying to Eve. Where there is no recognition of God's sovereign authority, there will be no obedience to His commands. What did Pharaoh say? "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." The serpent had to deny God's sovereignty in order to seduce Adam and Eve into rebellion.

Had Adam and Eve continued to recognize God's sovereign authority, they would never have rebelled or sinned. Obedience stems from the recognition of God's sovereign authority; disobedience stems from its denial. So when Moses went to Pharaoh and said, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go," Pharaoh's response was normal and natural for an unconverted man: "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Pharaoh claimed to be God; he was exercising his godhood. His attitude was, "I'm not going to recognize anyone over myself." Where there is no recognition of God's sovereign authority, there is no obedience.

I am working on two messages right now, and in one of them I am going to demonstrate how civil rulers are particularly inclined to idolatry. We must understand that many endeavor to play God, or at least pretend to be God. Since they have a little power and authority,

they endeavor to increase that power and authority at the price of rebellion and tyranny.

Psalm 2: The Heathen's Vain Rebellion

Psalm 2 clearly evidences this principle. “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”

Verse 8 says to Christ, “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” Notice in verse 1, “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?” Then he says, “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.”

Albert Barnes, speaking of Psalm 2, says: “In the first, that is Psalm 2:1-3, the conduct and purpose of the raging nations are described. They are in the deepest agitation, forming plans against Yahweh and his anointed one, and uniting their councils to break their bands asunder and to cast off their authority. That is, to prevent the establishment of the anointed one as king on the holy hill of Zion. The opening of this psalm is bold and abrupt. The psalmist looks out suddenly on the nations and sees them in violent commotion.”

He sees them in violent commotion, but understand that the violence is directed primarily against God and His Christ. Note the word “heathen” in verse 1: “Why do the heathen rage?”

The phrase is, “and the people imagine a vain thing.” Do you realize that the word “heathen” in verse 1 and the word “people” in verse 1 are one and the same? It is the same Hebrew word. So the

heathen, or the people, would include all unconverted individuals, even those in Israel. Anyone who imagines a vain thing against the Lord is considered a heathen.

Now notice what these heathen do. They imagine. The word "imagine" here literally means that they meditate and plan a vain thing. What are they meditating upon? What are they planning? They are planning on overthrowing God and His sovereignty, subverting the establishment of Jesus Christ as King of kings, and subverting the establishment of His kingdom.

Please understand this: it is absolutely impossible to overthrow God. It is absolutely impossible to prevent the establishment of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. But this is what they are imagining.

What do you think Stalin imagined? Mao Zedong? Pol Pot? All of these heathen rulers—Idi Amin. What do you think they imagined? Do you think they imagined that killing ten million people would somehow stop God and stop Christ, and then establish their own kingdom? These men are dead. Christ is alive. Do you have any idea? Do you even contemplate that somehow the Bilderbergers and the Rockefellers and the Obamas and the Clintons, and all these people, are somehow going to overthrow God and the kingdom of Christ? They are imagining a vain thing. It will not happen. It cannot happen.

There will be a one-world order, but it will not be theirs. It will belong to Jesus Christ.

Now, what is all the raging? What is all the imagining? What is this vain thing that they are doing? Verse 2 says, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." How do they attempt to perform this vain thing that they have imagined? They attempt to do it by breaking their bands asunder and casting away their cords from us. Let me explain that.

All it means is this: They do not like God's boundaries, limitations, or restrictions He has placed upon them. They are saying, "We will not consider them. We will ignore them. We will do our own thing. I don't care that God says, 'Thou shalt not.' I'll do it if

I want to do it. I don't care that God says, 'He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.' I will not rule in the fear of God, and I'll do what I want to do." Thus, they are saying the way to overthrow God and make the kingdom of Christ stop is by disobeying and rebelling.

Matthew Henry explains the opposition of the heathen to God and His Christ in four precise ways. First, "It is the most spiteful and malicious opposition. They rage and fret, they gnash their teeth for vexation at the setting up of Christ's kingdom. It creates in them the utmost uneasiness and fills them with indignation so that they have no enjoyment of themselves. Idolaters raged at the discovery of their folly. The chief priests and Pharisees at the eclipsing of their glory and the shaking of their usurped dominion. Those that did evil raged at the light."

Secondly, "It is a deliberate and political opposition. They imagine or meditate, that is, they contrive means to suppress the rising interest of Christ's kingdom and are very confident of the success of their contrivances. They promise themselves that they shall run down religion and carry the day."

Thirdly, "It is a resolute and obstinate opposition. They set themselves, set their faces as flint and their hearts as an adamant, in defiance of reason and conscience and all the terrors of the Lord, they are proud and daring like the Babel builders and will persist in their resolution come what will."

Fourthly, "It is a combined and confederate opposition. They take counsel together to assist and animate one another in this unanimously, and they will push on the unholy war against the Messiah with the utmost vigor. And thereupon councils are called, cabals are formed, and all their wits are at work to find out ways and means for preventing the establishment of Christ's kingdom." These four points are right here in Psalm 2.

SCRIPTURE READING - Psalm 83:1-5 (KJV)

It is indeed a most spiteful and malicious opposition. It is a deliberate and political opposition. It is a resolute and obstinate opposition. It is a combined and confederate opposition. If you would look in Psalm 83 and verse 5. Look, if you would, at what

the Word of God says. Psalm 83 and verse 5. In fact, let us begin reading with verse 1. I want you to see it in the context. Psalm 83, verse 1:

"Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee."

It is that same thing as Psalm 2 and verse 1: “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together.” It is a confederation of evil. We have that today in many areas and spheres of life: a confederation of evil against Christ, against Christians, and against the word of God. Not only Herod and Pilate, but even the Jews attempted to overthrow the kingdom of Christ.

After the disciples had been threatened and beaten, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, “Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.” That is a confession and acknowledgement of God’s sovereignty. Quoting now from Psalm 2, they continued: “Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.”

“For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.” Psalm 2 is specifically used in Acts 4 to refer to the rebellion against Jesus Christ and the establishment of His kingdom. Men fight against God.

Why would men fight against God? Why would men hate Christ? Why would men seek to stop the establishment of the kingdom of Jesus Christ? Let me answer those questions by asking another: Why would we invade Afghanistan? They have something we want. I just

read an article. There are trillions of Federal Reserve notes of all kind of precious metals in Afghanistan, as well as oil and opium. There is something there that we want. Why would we invade Syria or Jordan? There is something there that we want. Why would we invade Iraq and Iran? There is something there that we want. It could be oil, power, or empire, but the reason we do that is that there is something there that we want, and if they do not want to give it to us, we are going to take it.

Why Men Fight Against Christ

That's why there are wars. If you don't recognize God's sovereign authority, if you don't bow to His sovereign word, then there are going to be wars of all kinds. Why are they going to fight against the kingdom of Christ? Luke 20, verse 9, tells us:

"Then began he to speak to the people this parable: A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty. And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out. Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours."

“Let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.” Why do men hate Christ, and why do men fight against the establishment of His kingdom? The answer is that they want His kingdom. They want His power. They want His sovereignty. They want His kingship. They not only wish to rule this world; they wish to rule the people in this world. Because if you're sovereign, you have jurisdiction over everything and everyone.

If you don't learn anything else today, learn this: If you deny God's sovereign authority, you will be disobedient and rebellious. Obedience stems only from recognition of and subjection to God's sovereign authority.

Let me make some applications. The first one is this: God is sovereign; He must be obeyed. We must consider what I just said: disobedience to God and His law is, in essence, a denial of His sovereignty. Men may fight against Him, deny Him, and denigrate Him, but they cannot change the fact that He is God. They cannot change the reality that He is sovereign. No amount of resistance will overthrow God and His Christ.

Applications and Conclusion

John Calvin said it like this: "When we see Christ well nigh overwhelmed with the number and strength of His enemies, let us remember that they are making war against God, over whom they shall not prevail, and therefore their attempts, whatever they may be, and however increasing, will come to naught and be utterly ineffectual." And that is true. That is why they imagine a vain thing. The word "vain" means that which is useless and worthless. Can you imagine all the planning, scheming, money, and energy exerted to stop Christ and His kingdom—all for naught? He cannot be stopped, for He is God. Secondly, His kingdom is the kingdom of God. Everyone and everything must ultimately bow.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Men will acknowledge His sovereignty and His Lordship, either in salvation or damnation. But they will acknowledge it, for He is God. Until they acknowledge it, there shall be war. The war has ceased in our lives; we are not fighting against God. But the wicked are. War is inevitable in one way or the other.

Nahum Tate, who died in 1715, and Nicholas Brady, who died in 1736, wrote a new version of the Psalms in 1696. These two men put Psalm 2 into a poem. There are twelve verses in Psalm 2, and they wrote it verse by verse in poetry.

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" Here it is: "With restless and ungoverned rage, why do the heathen storm? Why in such rash attempts engage, as they can ne'er perform? The great in counsel and in might their various forces bring; against the Lord they all unite, on his anointed King. Must we submit to their commands? Presumptuously they say, No, let us break their slavish bands, and cast their chains away. But God who sits enthroned on high, and sees how they combine, does their conspiring stratify, and mocks their vain design. Thick clouds of wrath divine shall break on his rebellious foes, and thus he will in thunder speak to all that dare oppose. Though madly you may dispute my will, the king that I ordain, whose throne is fixed on Zion's hill, shall there securely reign. Attend on earth while I declare God's uncontrolled decree. Thou art my Son, this day my heir have I begotten thee. Ask and receive thy full demands, thine shall the heathen be, the utmost limits of the land shall be possessed by thee. Thy threatening scepter thou shalt shake, and crush them everywhere, as massive bars of iron break the potter's brittle ware. Learn then ye princes, and give ear, you judges of the earth; worship the Lord with holy fear, rejoice with awful mirth. Appease the Son with due respect, your timely homage pay, lest He revenge the bold neglect, incensed by your delay. If but in part his anger rise, who can endure the flame? Then blessed are they whose hope relies on His most holy name."

Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Wherever there is no recognition of God's sovereign authority, there will be no obedience. Where there is no recognition of God's sovereignty, where there is no obedience to God's commands, there shall be war.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to you this day. We thank you for your word, your truth, and the fact that thou art indeed the sovereign God of heaven and earth. We bow before thee, humble ourselves, and prostrate ourselves before thee,

acknowledging thy greatness, thy majesty, thy authority, and thy jurisdiction. We rejoice with our Lord when He said in Matthew 28 and verse 18, "All authority in heaven and earth is given unto me." We acknowledge that, bow to Him, and confess that He has the absolute right to command us and to dictate every area of our lives. Give us grace, Lord, that we may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. In Thy name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 2

There Shall Be War

Part Two

Introduction and Review

Exodus chapter 5, beginning with verse 1:

"And afterwards, Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, 'Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.' And Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.' And they said, 'The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.' And the king of Egypt said unto them, 'Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens.' And Pharaoh said, 'Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens.' And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, 'Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves.'

‘And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God.’

War of every kind stems from, and is a result of, a failure to acknowledge and submit to the sovereignty of God. Pharaoh did not recognize God, would not admit to His sovereignty and jurisdiction, and therefore said, ‘Who is the Lord that I should obey him? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.’

By refusing to acknowledge God’s sovereign authority, Pharaoh was confessing and acknowledging his own godhood, claiming to be independent from God and not under God’s jurisdiction. Consequently, he believed it was not necessary for him to obey God. The main point is this: all rebellion in individuals and rulers stems from a refusal to acknowledge and bow to God’s absolute sovereignty.

Sovereignty, Obedience, and Worship

All rebellion in individuals and rulers stems from this one thing: they fail to acknowledge and submit to God's absolute and total authority. We examined Genesis chapter 3, verses 1 through 5, last week, and saw that this was, in essence, the rebellion of Adam and Eve. They denied God's sovereign authority so that they might become their own gods, do their own thing, make their own laws, and determine right and wrong for themselves.

We also looked at Psalm 2 and saw the same truth regarding civil rulers. Those in authority are prone to idolatry, since they always devise ways to further their power and authority and determine good and evil for themselves. Therefore, they are always pushing tyranny, despotism, and totalitarianism. If you do not understand this, look at our modern-day politicians and you will get a glimpse of it.

We need to understand this principle: Where there is no recognition of God's sovereignty, there will be no obedience to His commands. What did Pharaoh say? "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."

The opposite is also true. Obedience—true obedience—stems from recognition of God's sovereign authority. Have you ever stopped to

think that the reason we as Christians obey God is because we believe that He is sovereign? He has all authority, all power, and all jurisdiction. Therefore, we believe that He has an absolute right to dictate how we are to live and act in every area of our lives. Faith and belief in His absolute sovereignty compel us to obedience.

The Link Between Sovereignty, Obedience, and Worship

Now, here is the second point I want to develop today. Where there is no recognition of God's absolute sovereignty, not only will there be no obedience to His command, there will not be any real worship of God. Look in verse three: "And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword."

"And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them. Ye shall not diminish ought thereof. Watch, for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God."

Notice that worship and obedience are intimately tied together. I have often been asked, How is it that the heathen cannot worship God? The answer is revealed in Pharaoh's response to Moses: if one does not recognize God's sovereignty, he does not believe that he owes God obedience. Obedience is tied to worship. Where there is no true obedience, there will be no true worship.

It is not only the heathen who do not worship God aright. Many professing Christians do not worship Him aright either. Our puny ceremonial and ritualistic attempts at worship are vain and worthless. Pharaoh was right in this respect: if you do not believe in

God's absolute sovereignty, there will not be obedience; and if there is no obedience, there will be no true worship.

Pharaoh's Accusation of Idleness

Therefore, you might as well keep on working, because your attempt at worship will be useless and worthless. Why did Pharaoh demand that Israel keep working? Why did he accuse Moses and Aaron of allowing the people to go free from their work? Why did he say that the people were idle, that they did not have enough to do? The answer comes roaring back: Pharaoh said these things because, first, he did not acknowledge God's sovereignty and jurisdiction; second, he did not believe that God therefore had to be obeyed; and third, since there was no sovereignty and no obedience, there could be no worship. God did not need to be worshiped. If God is not sovereign, if He does not have all power and authority, if He is not the controller of everything, and if He does not have sovereign jurisdiction over everyone and everything, why would you waste time worshiping Him?

God is either sovereign and demands our worship, or He is not sovereign and does not deserve to be worshipped. These simple facts help us discern the state of our churches and the disposition and thinking of the average Christian. We are living in a day and time where, generally speaking, God's sovereignty is absolutely despised. Since His sovereignty is despised, obedience to Him is nullified and His worship is vilified.

This truth explains why most church buildings sit empty and why the few who attend them really and truly do not worship God. It also explains why so many people are satisfied with pure ritualism and ceremonialism, and therefore refuse to give God the worship that He demands. They refuse to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Most professing Christians erroneously think that simply because they attend a building on Sunday morning, listen to a message, perhaps sing, and perhaps give, they have therefore worshipped God. That is the farthest thing from the truth. You may do all those things and never worship God.

Old Testament Evidence: God Rejects Ritual Without Obedience

Unhappily, most Baptist churches have become just as ritualistic and ceremonialistic as Catholic, Lutheran, and Episcopal churches. We have reduced everything down to an absolute ceremony. We have fallen into the same trap that Israel fell into, thinking that if we go through this little ritual and this little ceremony, it does not matter how we live or whether we obey God. Isaiah chapter 1 shows exactly where we are today. We have come full circle into the same error and the same trap into which Israel fell. God says to Israel, "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah." He is talking to Israel, and He is calling them Sodom and Gomorrah.

Now look at the questions that He asks: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?"

"Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless. And plead for the widow."

Why did God despise the ordinances, sacrifices, and ceremonies that He demanded and originated? These things did not come from the mind of Moses. God said, Here are My Sabbaths, here are the new moons, and here are the sacrifices. Yet He came to the point where He said, "I hate, I despise, I will not have it. I cannot stand it. I'm weary with all of this."

Why? He says, "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." What is God saying? If you want to worship Me, it must be through obedience. You do what I command you. You do what I tell you. What you have done is ceased obeying Me and gone to rituals and ceremonies. God said, "I hate it. I despise it. I will not have it."

Understand again that obedience is tied to worship. Where there is no obedience, there is no worship.

In Amos chapter 5, beginning with verse 21, God says basically the same thing to Israel: "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts."

"Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is The God of hosts."

God said in verse 21, "I hate, I despise your feast days, I will not smell your solemn assemblies." In verse 22, "Though ye offer me burnt offerings, I'm not going to accept them." Then, in verse 23, "Take away from me the noise of thy songs." It does not matter if you are singing songs which are divinely inspired. If you are singing them in disobedience and rebellion to God, it is just noise. God says, no, I'm not going to have that. What did he say in verse 24?

"But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." If you're going to worship me, you must obey me. You must be righteous as I am righteous. You must be just as I am just. God was admonishing Israel to repent and let judgment come down as waters, as a mighty stream. Even in the wilderness, he said, for these 40 years, you really didn't worship me. You carried the

image of your Moloch and Chiun and your images, the star of your god.

These people whom God was leading through the wilderness saw His miracles firsthand. They saw His mighty power and providential provision. They saw how He sustained them and took care of them. Yet they still refused to give Him the worship that He demanded. Stephen brings this fact out very clearly in Acts chapter 7, beginning with verse 40:

"Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon."

God said you were worshiping your idols when you were pretending to worship me. Do you understand it is impossible to fool God? I've known people in prayer who dance around saying what the real sin and the real problem are. You might as well be honest with God, for He already knows. He's the omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal, immutable, infinite God of heaven and earth. Obedience is entwined in worship. Where there is no obedience, there is no worship.

SCRIPTURE READING - 1 Kings 9:1-7 (KJV)

Psalm 66:18 says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." How can God hear us if we are in sin and rebellion? Obviously, he will not. In 1 Kings 9, God makes it exceedingly clear that where there is no obedience, there is no worship.

"And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do, that the Lord

> appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon. And the Lord said unto him.
>
> "I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication." When God said, "I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication," he was referring to the prayer that Solomon prayed in 1 Kings 8 when he was dedicating the temple to the Lord. You can read that prayer this afternoon. "And the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually."
>
> "And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people."

Verses 4, 6, and 7 in this passage are the keys to understanding worship. Solomon had just finished dedicating the temple to the Lord in 1 Kings chapter 8. However, notice what God told Solomon in verse 4: “And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments.” Then God says, Yes, I am going to honor your prayer. I am going to do everything that you have asked me to do.

However, in verses 6 and 7 He says: “But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have

hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people."

What is God doing? He is stating explicitly that obedience is tied to worship. If you obey me, if you worship me, I am going to honor you and keep everything going just the way it should be going. But if you disobey me, dishonor me, and fail to worship me, I am going to cast you out of my sight and judge you. It is vain to pretend to worship God while disobeying God. That truth is explicitly stated in the New Testament as well.

New Testament Confirmation

You need to understand what our Lord told the Pharisees. They were known as the fundamentalists in our Lord's day. At least they claimed to believe the law of God. They claimed to believe in angels and the resurrection, where the Sadducees did not. But our Lord said this in Matthew chapter 15, verses 7 through 9: "Ye hypocrites. Well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." They honored Him with their mouths and lips, but their hearts were far away. Their lives were absolutely contrary to what He had commanded, and they were following the commandments of men, not the commandments of God.

There are a lot of churches that establish their own laws, their own rules of do's and don'ts, which are over and above and beyond the word of God. So many people think that just because we follow man's rules and man's laws, therefore, we must be right with God, which is totally, completely untrue. Our Lord said it like this in John 14:21: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."

Do you love the Lord? If you love the Lord, you obey and keep His commandments. He made it even plainer in John 14:24: "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings." Our Lord said, if you love me, you'll keep my sayings. If you don't love me, you will disobey me.

Do you remember what our Lord said in Luke 6:46? "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Remember the word "Lord." The Greek word is kurios, and it literally means boss, owner, sovereign, master. Why are you calling me sovereign, boss, or master if you don't do those things which I tell you?

The Danger of Lukewarmness

You have to understand that our Lord will not tolerate and cannot stand a double-hearted individual or a half-hearted individual. James 1:8 says, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." Every time I think of that verse, I think of all the little squirrels that get killed on the highway. I'm serious, and I kill my share of them. They'll run across the road right in front of you, then turn and turn, unable to make up their minds, and inevitably get squished. If they had just kept going, they'd probably have made it. Or if they had turned and kept going, they'd probably have made it. But they just keep going back and forth.

You look at all the squirrels that are mashed on the highway. When you see those squirrels, you think of this verse: “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.” He cannot make up his mind, and he always gets in trouble.

Look at Revelation chapter 3, where our Lord is talking to the church at Laodicea. Beginning with verse 14: “And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.”

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

What did he say? “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. You are lukewarm. I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”

According to this passage, I believe our Lord is saying this: I would rather have you out and out against me than to be lukewarm. You can either be cold against me or hot for me, but do not be lukewarm. If you are going to oppose God's sovereignty, oppose it. At least he will say you are cold, you are an enemy; but do not come here with lukewarmness. If you are going to be for him, then you obey him, honor him, and worship him.

We all say and believe that God is immutable—that God is unchangeable. If God's attitude toward Israel's worship when they were disobedient was, "I hate, I despise, I cannot stand your worship, I will not have it," what do you think his attitude is toward the modern church today? I'll tell you what: if you will turn to Jeremiah, chapter 13, I'll show you what God thinks.

In Jeremiah 13, God told Jeremiah to bury a girdle by the river Euphrates and then to dig it out again. After he dug it out, the girdle was rotted and worthless. So, in Jeremiah 13, verse 10—indeed, beginning with verse 9—God says this concerning Israel: "Thus saith the Lord, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem."

Look what He talks about now. Look what He calls them: "This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing."

So what does God say? God says the people who do not obey Him, who walk in the imagination of their hearts, and whose worship is offered in disobedience, are good for nothing. He hates it. He despises it. He will not have it. It is the same in the New Testament as it is in the Old Testament.

Now look in the little book of Zephaniah, chapter 1, beginning at verse 2. I want you to see what God is going to consume and what God is going to destroy. God says, "I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the Lord. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea." Oh, look at this.

"And the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the Lord. I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, and the name of the Chemarims with the priests; and them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; and them that worship and that swear by the Lord, and that swear by Malcham; and them that are turned back from the Lord; and those that have not sought the Lord, nor enquired for him."

Who's God going to destroy? All of these—the compromisers, the double-hearted, those who have not sought Him, those who say there is and really are not. God said, I'm just going to wipe them out. Why? Because they're not worshiping God. Obedience is tied to worship. We cannot and we will not worship the sovereign God aright until we are obedient unto Him.

The Meaning of True Worship

Psalm 95:6 says, "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker." As you read through the Bible, you will find men worshiping prostrate before the Lord. Many times they fall on their faces before the Lord. Oftentimes they are on their knees before the Lord with their hands lifted toward heaven. They are bowing down their bodies as an indication that their soul is bowed down as well.

Interestingly, in the New Testament, one of the main words for worship is proskuneo. The Greek word proskuneo is actually made up of two Greek words. The first word, pros, is a preposition which means "to" or "toward." The second word, kuneo, is the verb form of kuon, which is the noun. The Greek word kuon means a dog. The word worship means "to or toward a dog." Literally, what it means is this: to lay at one's feet as a dog, or to kiss or to lick the hand as a dog. You say that's worship? That's a good illustration of worship. I have a dog, Jeb, the Bullmastiff, and he lays at my feet.

Alice can tell you all the time: if I'm in my office working on my computer, usually he's under my desk with his head on my foot. If I sit down, he comes and either gets beside me or at my feet. If I simply hold my hand out, he'll obligingly lick it. You know what that

dog is doing? That dog is telling me, "You're my master. I'm your dog. I'm subservient to you, I'm submissive to you. I'm willing to listen to you and obey you." That's what the dog is saying. What is worship? It is to lie at our Lord's feet in submission and obedience.

We're there waiting for His commands. We kiss His hand, so to speak. We acknowledge that we love Him, that we obey, that we honor Him, that we rejoice only in Him, and that we're there to fulfill His demands and obey His commands. Real worship is being "to or toward a dog" in that sense of the word, because we acknowledge that He's our Lord and Master.

In John chapter 4, verses 23 and 24, our Lord told the Samaritan woman: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." What is God teaching us? He's teaching us that real worship is bounded by spirit and truth. On the one hand, we must worship God in the power and in the person of the Holy Spirit, because no one can come to the Father except through the Son and in the Spirit, Ephesians 1, verse 18. But secondly, we must worship Him in our spirit as well.

Just because we fall on our face does not mean that we've fallen down before Him in our hearts. We may fall on our face before God, but our hearts must be bowed as well. God is not interested in some dry, dead, ritualistic, or ceremonial worship. He wants that which is living to be given to Him. It must be in the Spirit. What do I mean by in the Spirit? Let me show you.

Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 103 and look at verses 1 through 5. Here is an example of worshiping God with our spirit. David said it like this: "Bless the Lord, O my soul."

“And all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.”

So how are you blessing the Lord? You bless Him by forgetting not all of His benefits. You understand His forgiveness, His blessed mercies to you and healing you, how He's redeemed you, how He's crowned you with lovingkindness and tender mercies. He satisfies you. You think of all that God has done for you in your spirit, in your mind, and you're giving God praise.

It's not some dead, dry, worthless, useless worship. No. You're active, and you're giving God the worship that He deserves, because everything within you is acknowledging that He is God, and that everything you have comes from Him. Our worship is bounded on the one side with spirit, and it's bounded on the other side with truth. In our spirit, we bless the Lord with all that is within us. We are alive and active in our worship. On the other hand, our worship is bounded by truth. Our worship never exceeds or goes beyond the Word of God. God's Word is truth.

“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” We are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Application and Conclusion

So here's the principle that we must learn today: Where there is no obedience, there is no true worship. Our obedience is tied to God's sovereignty. Our worship is tied to God's sovereignty. Pharaoh said, “You think I'm going to let you go? You think I'm going to let you go out in the wilderness for three days so that you can sacrifice and worship the Lord? You're idle. You're idle.”

"You need to get back to work." Why did he think that? Because he did not acknowledge God, His sovereignty, His jurisdiction. Since he did not acknowledge God, he did not believe that God had to be obeyed or worshiped. Your attitude towards worship reveals whether or not you understand the sovereignty of God. Those who disobey him and refuse to give him worship in spirit and in truth have no idea who God really is and his position and his jurisdiction. If we deny God's sovereignty, we cannot worship Him aright. If we believe in and acknowledge God's sovereignty, we know that He must be obeyed and He must be worshipped.

Where there is no obedience, there shall be war. Because God made war not only upon the Egyptians, but upon the gods of Egypt. Where there is no true worship, there shall be war. What did God say in Isaiah 42 and verse 8? "My glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." When people refuse to give God that which he demands, there shall be war.

I want to read six paragraphs from the Philadelphia Baptist Confession of Faith. You'll find that probably if you look at the Westminster Confession, it's probably word for word exact. This is the Philadelphia Baptist Confession on worship: "The light of nature shows there is a God with lordship and sovereignty over all, is just, good, and doeth good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served with all the heart and all the soul and with all the might."

"But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan under any visible representations, or in any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures. Religious worship is given to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and to Him alone; not to angels, saints, or other creatures; and since the fall, not without a mediator, nor in the mediation of any other but Christ alone. Prayer and thankfulness, being one special part of natural worship, is by God required of all men. But that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of the Holy Spirit, according to his will, with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and when with others, in a known tongue. Prayer is to be made for things lawful, or for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter; but not for the dead, not for those whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death."

The reading of the Scriptures, preaching, hearing the Word of God, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord, and the administration of baptism and the Lord’s Supper are all parts of religious worship. They are to be performed in obedience to God, with understanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear. Solemn

humiliation, fastings, and thanksgiving upon special occasions ought also to be used in a holy and religious manner.

Neither prayer nor any other part of religious worship is, under the gospel, tied unto or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed or towards which it is directed. God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth: in private families daily, in secret by each one alone, and more solemnly in public assemblies, which are not carelessly or willfully to be neglected or forsaken when God by His providence calleth thereto.

These truths could be preached for six months because they tell us that God is sovereign. We do not need to go to the Old Testament temple or to a special building to pray to God, because God is omnipresent; He is everywhere. Yet there are public and solemn assemblies where we are to give God public worship. Until then, we are to give Him private worship.

Where there is a denial of God's sovereignty, there is no obedience; and where there is no obedience, there is no worship. The reason we are such a disobedient and unworshipful people is that we have never truly comprehended the absolute sovereignty of God. Where that is not apprehended, there shall be war, for God will fight to maintain His honor and glory.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We acknowledge Thy love, grace, mercy, goodness, and kindness. Help us to love Thee with all our hearts and to worship Thee in spirit and in truth. Enable us to bless the Lord with all our souls, might, and being, our minds conscious of Thy blessings and graces. Help us to praise and love Thee. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 3

There Shall Be War

Part Three

SCRIPTURE READING - Exodus 5:9-23 (KJV)

Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein, and let them not regard vain words. And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. Go ye, get your straw where you can find it, yet not ought of your work shall be diminished. So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. And the taskmasters hasted them, saying, Fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw. And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and today, as heretofore? Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick:

> and, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people.
>
> But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the LORD. Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks. And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily task.
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> And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us. And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

Review of Principles 1 and 2

The first principle is simply this: where the sovereignty of God is not acknowledged and recognized, there will not be any obedience. In Exodus 5:2, “And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.” Obedience stems from a recognition and understanding of God's sovereignty. Disobedience stems from a lack of recognition and submission to God's sovereignty. Pharaoh refused to let Israel go because he did not recognize, confess, or submit to the fact that God and God alone is sovereign.

The second principle is exceedingly clear and emphatic as well. Where the sovereignty of God is not recognized and acknowledged, not only will there not be any obedience, there will not be any worship of God. Pharaoh said, “Ye are idle, ye are idle.” Verse 3 states, “The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.”

“And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens.” Therefore, he says, “Ye are idle, ye are idle.” Worship is tied not only to obedience but also to the sovereignty of God. Where God is not recognized as sovereign, there will be neither obedience nor worship. Why would you worship someone who does not have absolute and total sovereignty, power, and jurisdiction?

Hypocritical, ceremonial, and ritualistic worship apart from the heart is not only condemned in Scripture; it is rejected by God himself. Our worship must be from the heart, in the spirit, and in truth. We recognize that God alone is sovereign, so God alone must be worshipped. Revelation 4:11 states this clearly: “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power.”

Principle 3: God's Word Mocked and Held in Contempt

"For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." These principles are clear: where there is no recognition of God's sovereignty, there is no obedience. Where there is no recognition of God's sovereignty, there is not only no obedience, but no worship of God. Today we come to principles three and four, equally clear and plainly delineated in Exodus chapter 5. What I want you to see is the absolute connection between these four principles.

These four things stand or fall together. Where there is no recognition of God's sovereignty, there is no obedience and no worship. The third point is this: where there is no recognition of God's sovereignty, not only will He not be obeyed and worshipped, His word shall be mocked and ridiculed, and He shall be held in contempt.

In Exodus 5:9, Pharaoh said, "Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words." When Pharaoh speaks of vain words, he is referring to what God said in verse 1: "Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness."

When we hear the word vain, we normally think of the English meanings useless and worthless—words that amount to absolutely nothing. However, the Hebrew word here means more than useless and worthless. It refers to false, lying, deceitful words based upon a fraud. Thus, when Pharaoh said, "let not the people regard vain words," he was calling God a liar, a fraud, and a deceit.

We would gasp at such a statement and ask, How could anyone be so blasphemous as to say such a thing? Yet if you do not believe that God is sovereign—if you do not believe that He is God, possessing all power and jurisdiction—not only will you not obey Him, you will not worship Him. Why, then, would you not hold Him in absolute contempt?

It is not just Pharaoh; men in general refer to God and call God a liar and a fraud. Many people do so regularly, and not necessarily with their words. Many times they do it by their actions.

Calling God a Liar by Actions and Words

I've told you in times past there's a difference between a theoretical atheist and a practical atheist. The theoretical atheist is the man who sits here and says, "I do not believe that there is a God because," and he lists all of these reasons. That's his theory. A practical atheist is someone who may admit there is a God, but he lives as if that God had not spoken.

He totally ignores His Word. There are individuals who may say that, yes, God is God; He has all sovereignty, all power, and all jurisdiction. And yet, in their actions, they deny God and say that His words are vain, and that God is a fraud and a deceit, and that God is a liar.

Psalm 4:2 asks, "O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing?" The word leasing there is the word lying. So He says, "O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after lying?" They are using lying words against God and believing lying words against God. They are not only turning His glory into shame; they are seeking after lying words.

Psalm 5:6 says, "Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man." Those who lie against the Lord shall be destroyed.

One of my favorite verses is found in Psalm 116:11: "I said in my haste, All men are liars." I never will forget one of my favorite Bible teachers, Dr. Fred Affman, teaching on this passage. He read, "David said, 'I said in my haste, All men are liars.'" He paused and then said, "Now he could slow down and say it and it'd still be true."

All men are liars. Do you realize that when one doubts the hand of God, the judgments of God, and the words of God, he is in essence calling God a liar? Jeremiah 5:11-12 says, “For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith the LORD. They have belied the LORD, and said, It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine.”

The word belied literally means to lie against. They have lied against the Lord, saying, “It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine.” In other words, God is not really judging us, and God is not going to judge us. When a judgment falls, they say it is not God. God accuses them of lying against Him. Since God is sovereign and deserves all worship and praise, will He not judge those who despise Him and lie against Him? Obviously, He will do so. All you have to do is look at what God did to Pharaoh and to Egypt.

Thus, when one doubts God's righteous judgment, doubts God's Word, and casts dispersion upon God by calling Him a liar, God will destroy them in His holy wrath. Do you understand that multitudes have ruined their own lives by believing their own lies and the lies of others? Most people refuse to believe that God will be as strict as His Word declares. They somehow think that God says one thing but acts differently. You must understand that vain hopes of impunity are the deceitful support of all impiety. When people think they can sin and escape God's righteous judgment, they are simply deceiving themselves. When we belie God's judgments, lie against God's Word, and say, “God's not going to deal with us the way He says so in His Word,” we are actually calling God a liar.

The Apostle Paul said it this way in Romans 3:4: “God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.” God is going to be just. God must be found true, and every man a liar.

If you will turn in your Bibles to Proverbs chapter 30, let me show you several ways from the Bible that you can actually call God a liar. Some may say, “Well, I would never do that.” Oh, you may do so by your actions without ever using your tongue. Here is one way some do so. Look at Proverbs 30 and verse 6. Notice what God says: “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.” Now look in verse 5: “Every word of God is pure.”

Adding to God's Word Makes One a Liar

“He is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.” So a good question to ask would be this: Why would anyone want to add to God's words? The answer would have to be because they disbelieve Him. They want to say what they believe is the truth and then promote their interpretation of what they determine to be true. By adding to God's Word, God says you are making Him a liar. In reality, those who add to God's Word are really the liars. God's Word is complete. It is infallible. It is inerrant. And Jesus Christ is the full revelation of God. Thus, to deny the Word of God and to deny the Lord Jesus Christ is to call God a liar. Now, I want you to turn to Jeremiah chapter 23.

Jeremiah 23:16 says, "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD."

"They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you. For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it? Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. The

anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart. In the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly."

What God is saying is this: When individuals prophesy peace to men and women who are in rebellion against God, who hate God, who despise God's word, God says those individuals are liars and I'm going to judge them. I'm going to destroy them.

You can call God a liar by adding to his word. But look in Jeremiah 23. God says, "Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD. I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal. The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"

In Jeremiah 23, God says, “Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.”

Here you have individuals substituting their dreams for the Word of God. They are adding to the Word of God, taking from the Word of God, and changing the Word of God. God said, “I am against them.” There shall be war. What you have is God's Word versus man's word.

That should be very clear in Exodus chapter 5. God came to Pharaoh and said, “Let my people go that they may serve me.” Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD, that I should let Israel go? I know

not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.” So you have God's Word versus man's word. God said, mark it down, there shall be war.

The Bible says in Isaiah 40 and verse 8, “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.” The grass withereth and the flower fadeth, but the Word of the Lord shall stand forever. God said again in Isaiah, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” When people begin to add to the Word of God, take from the Word of God, or substitute for the Word of God, they are calling God a liar. God has revealed His truth. Not to believe that truth is, in action, to say that God is a liar, even if those words are not used.

Turn to First John. There are more ways than one that you can call God a liar. In 1 John 1:8, the Bible says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

Denying Sin Calls God a Liar

When you look at the word sin in verse 8, it refers not only to sinful acts, but also to our corrupt and vicious inclination, which prompts us to commit those acts. So, 1 John 1:8 is a denial of our sin nature. It is saying that we are not depraved individuals, that we do not have personal guilt, and that we do not stand as transgressors before God. If you do not have a sin nature, then obviously you would not commit sinful acts. If you commit a sinful act, it is evident that you have a sinful nature.

I think I told you this in times past, but it fits so well that I will tell you here. Years ago, when I first started preaching, I carried a suit to the cleaners. I knew that the man who owned the laundry was a professing Christian. When I walked in carrying my suit, I said, "Isn't it wonderful to be forgiven of your sins?" The man, with a straight face, looked at me and said, "I don't know. I haven't sinned in the last 10 years."

When I picked my lip up off the floor and gained my composure, I said, "What you just did." He said, "What?" I said, "You just sinned. Because 1 John 1 says, 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.'" I told him that he had just lied. He had sinned and was a sinner.

Now, go further with me. Look at verse 10: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." In verse 8, if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. That means we are liars. But verse 10 says that if we say we have not sinned—that is, if we have not committed actual acts of sin—we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. How can we make Him a liar by saying that we have not sinned? Remember Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." We would be saying, "God, You're a liar. I haven't sinned. I haven't transgressed Your law. I haven't committed sinful acts." The truth is that we commit sinful acts all the time.

You do not have to be an adulterer or a murderer to be sinful. How many of you have prayed as you should have prayed, studied as you should have studied, or been absolutely honest in every area in which you should have been absolutely honest? Not one. Not one.

That means we are sinners. There are positive sins as well as negative sins, and sins of omission as well as sins of commission. God said that if we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and the truth is not in us. When we deny our sinful nature or our sinful acts, we are calling God a liar. Look, if you would, in 1 John 2:4: “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” Here is an individual who says he knows God, yet constantly and continually violates God's law. What does God say? That man is a liar. The truth is not in him.

If you are God's, you obey Him. Man says, “I'm yours, but I don't obey you.” God says it does not work like that either. You are a liar. Do you remember what happened in Genesis chapter 3 when Adam and Eve sinned? They ran and hid themselves from God. They violated God's law, and they were hiding. Men who are sinners always run from God and seek to hide from God. Listen to this verse, 1 Peter 3:18: “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.”

Here is a picture drawn for us in the garden. Adam sins, Eve sins, and they run and hide. That is what sinners have been doing ever since the fall. We run from God and hide from God. But Christ has come and died, the just for the unjust. Why? That He might bring us to God. When Christ saves us, we come back, bow the knee to God

the Father, and say, “You're right, I'm wrong, and now I want to obey you.”

That doesn't mean that we have an absolutely perfect obedience, but it does mean that, generally speaking, our lives are obedient lives, and they are not lives of constant and continual rebellion and sin against God. God says that if we say that we know Him and obey Him not, we are a liar, and the truth is not in us. So either man is a liar or God is a liar. Obviously, it is not God.

1 John 2:22 says, “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.” Look at that question: “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?” God has decreed that all individuals who say that Jesus Christ is not the Messiah, that Jesus Christ is not the Anointed One, that Jesus Christ is not the Redeemer and Savior, that that man is a liar. So who is going to be deemed, discovered, and found out to be the liar? Is it going to be man, or is it going to be God?

Either Jesus Christ is the Messiah, either He is the Anointed One of God, or He is not. There is no in-between. If Jesus Christ is not the Messiah, if He is not the Savior, if He is not the Anointed One, then God is a liar, because God has decreed and declared Him to be. But it is not God who is lying. God said it is man who says that Jesus Christ is not God. That man is the liar.

Peter is preaching in Acts chapter 2, and in verse 36 he makes this statement: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” “Let all the house of Israel know assuredly” means most certainly and definitely. “That God,” that is God the Father, “hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

In other words, He is the sovereign; He is the Anointed One; He is Messiah. God the Father has decreed and declared that Jesus Christ is Lord. He has declared that Jesus Christ is the Anointed One. God the Father made Him so.

And man cannot unmake it. God the Father declared Jesus Christ to be God, and man cannot undeclare it. Thus, when someone tries to say that Jesus Christ is not God, he is warring against God the

Father. I told you there shall be war. Those who fight against God shall find themselves being fought against by God Himself. The war is over His Word and His Son. Whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ is not only calling God a liar, but identifying himself with Pharaoh.

That is bad company to be identified with. Read in Romans 9 what God did to Pharaoh; read in Exodus what God did to Pharaoh. Men can call God a liar, either with their tongues and words or by their actions. Look in 1 John 5, beginning with verse 9: "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." Now, let us stop right there.

Rejecting Christ Calls God a Liar

Henry comes up and tells me, "Well, Janet and I have been married 40 years." I know it is longer than that, however long it is. "Janet and I have been married 42 years." Guess what? I believe him. He has given me the witness that they have been married 42 years, and Janet says, "Yes, that's true." Why should I not believe him? I have received the witness of man.

Henry could tell me, "The sun rotates around the earth," or, "The earth rotates around the sun." It depends on whether you want a heliocentric view or are making the earth a sinner. If I believe him, I have received his witness. We receive the witness of men all the time. In fact, when you tell me something, I assume that you are telling me the truth. Unless you are a politician, you usually do not go around lying all the time. Occasionally folks lie, but usually we are tellers of the truth. So I receive the witness of men.

Now look what he said: "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." God is sovereign, and God is sinless. Therefore, the witness of God is greater, "for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son." Note that carefully: God has testified of His Son, Jesus Christ.

"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that

hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

The Natural and Inevitable Consequences

Here is the witness of God: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." But "he that believeth not God hath made him," that is, God, "a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." What is the record? The record is that God has given to us eternal life, and this eternal life is in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is the premise: "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." And in verse 13: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

Do I understand this correctly? My assurance in salvation is based upon God's sovereign testimony concerning Jesus Christ. When the Bible says, "this is the record," the word record means the witness, the testimony, the record, and the report. This is the testimony, the record, and the report of God the Father Himself. God says, "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar." Whoever refuses to believe that Jesus is the Christ, that He alone is salvation, that eternal life is in Jesus Christ alone, and that we are saved only by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, makes God a liar. Our assurance in salvation is based upon God's sovereign authority and God's sovereign righteous testimony. What did Pharaoh say? "You've been listening to vain words"—fraudulent words, deceitful words, lying words. He was referring to the words of God. Men make God a liar by refusing to bow to His word and believe His word. Our assurance is based on God's absolute sovereignty.

Principle 4: Depression, Discouragement, and Defeat

In Exodus chapter 5, verses 10 through 23, we see the fourth principle: the natural and inevitable consequences of a failure to believe God's sovereignty, to obey and worship Him, and to trust in His word. The natural consequences are depression,

discouragement, and defeat. It is true that God's war was against Pharaoh. It is equally true that God's war was against the Egyptians.

Interestingly enough, in verses 10 through 23, it is the people of God who were depressed, discouraged, and seemingly defeated, at least temporarily. The question has to be asked: Why was that so? You have to understand something. At this point, Pharaoh and his minions were riding high. Pharaoh had the upper hand. Pharaoh and his minions were in control and exercising dominion over Israel. They had already enslaved Israel. Pharaoh did not believe in God or in His sovereignty. He certainly was not going to obey Him and worship Him. Thus, in order to demonstrate his contempt of God and His demands, he persecuted the Israelites even more.

If God's people wanted to go and sacrifice to God and worship Him, it must be because they were idle. That is, they did not have enough to do. They had time on their hands, and they wanted to go three days' journey to sacrifice and worship God. Therefore, since they were idle and had time on their hands, they had to be forced to work harder and longer.

No straw would be given to them. They had to get their own straw, yet they had to make the same number of bricks. If they did not make them, they would be whipped and beaten. If they complained about being beaten, about working harder and longer, or about receiving no straw, it was for their good, because they were idle. They just wanted to go worship God. That had to be the point.

Why were the Israelites depressed, discouraged, and defeated at this point? Here is the answer why each one of us becomes discouraged, depressed, and defeated: they were looking at their situation and circumstances. They were concerned only with their lives and burdens for the moment. They were not concerned with God's sovereignty, obedience to God, worship of God, or His truth. They were looking at themselves and their surroundings and saying, "We work from dawn to dark. We're beaten. When we complain, we're beaten more." They would say, "You don't understand. Times are hard. Living is difficult. Work is impossible. We're just getting by by the skin of our teeth. And if we can make it through the day without being beaten, we're thankful."

Along came Moses and Aaron, preaching deliverance and freedom. It sounded too wonderful to be true. When the Israelites placed their hope in the words and preaching of Moses and Aaron and began to think, "Yes, we are going to be delivered from slavery," things got worse—much worse.

"Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people. But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the LORD. Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks." The officers saw that they were in an evil case, for Pharaoh had said, "Ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily task."

They met Moses and Aaron and said, "The LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us." Here it is stated very plainly: "Moses, Aaron, your preaching and teaching have not delivered us. In fact, we are worse off now than we were when you started preaching and teaching. We now have a death sentence upon us, and you are to blame. The Lord judge between you and us."

Obviously, the Israelites had taken their eyes away from the truth of God's sovereignty, obedience, worship, and truth. They were looking only at themselves and their circumstances. They were walking by sight and not by faith.

Even Moses and Aaron became discouraged, depressed, and defeated. "And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all."

Exodus 6:9 shows the state of the people: "And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage."

They were in a bad way. Do you think the fact that most Americans now must have both husband and wife working simply to exist or get by is an accident? In the 1950s, the husband alone could work and provide for his family, with enough left for savings. There was ample time for family, rest, recreation, and worship.

Does the average American today, working from sixty to eighty hours per week, have any time to think about worship, obedience, or honoring God? Pharaoh and his taskmasters were deliberately driving the Israelites into the ground to keep their minds away from God and His worship. Are not the American taskmasters doing the same thing? Exactly.

What will it take to deliver us? It will take exactly the same thing that it took to deliver Israel out of Egypt. The elders had gone to Pharaoh and said, “Why are you beating us? The fault’s in your own people; you’re not giving us straw, and we’re suffering because your people are not functioning.” Pharaoh answered, “No, no, you’re idle, you’re idle; and you will make the same number of bricks, and if you don’t, you’re going to be beaten.”

When they left and saw Moses and Aaron, they said, “The LORD look between us and you and judge, because you’ve made our savour to be evil in the sight of Pharaoh, to put a sword in his hands and in the hands of his servants to slay us. You’ve given a death sentence. The LORD look upon you and judge.” Then Moses and Aaron said, “Lord, why did you even send us? Why are we here? You haven’t delivered this people. All that’s happened is it’s gotten worse.”

God's Deliverance When Human Strength Fails

In chapter 6, verse 1, the LORD said unto Moses, “Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.” God said, “Now you’re going to see what I can do. Once you realize you can’t, you’re going to find out exactly what I can do.”

Had God allowed relief for the elders, they would have thought, “We’re wise. We did it.” Had He allowed it by the hands of Moses and Aaron, they would have said, “We’re wise. We did it.” But God brought all of them to the end of their ropes. When we get to the end

of our ropes, when our backs are finally up against the wall, and we find out that no humanistic ways or human power will affect deliverance in our lives, then we will understand that it is time once again to rely and lean upon the sovereign, majestic, omnipotent, infinite, eternal God of heaven and earth.

He alone is salvation, and deliverance is from Him. He delivered His people in times past, and He can deliver His people today. These principles stand and fall together. If you do not believe in God's sovereignty, you will not obey Him or worship Him. If you do not obey and worship Him while believing in His sovereignty, you will think His words are vain, false, lying, deceitful, fraudulent words.

The ultimate result is that you will be depressed, discouraged, and defeated. These things stand or fall together; you cannot have one without the other. If we do not want to be discouraged, depressed, and defeated, we must hold to God's Word, worship God, obey Him, and recognize His total and complete sovereignty.

Applications: Trust, Focus, and Remember

Here are my applications. First, do not call God a liar. Bow to His Word, bow to Him, obey Him, and believe and receive His testimony as truth. His witness is faithful. His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is our Mediator. He is the Anointed One, the Messiah, our salvation, and Him alone.

Second, if you do not wish to be depressed, discouraged, and defeated, cease looking at yourself, your surroundings, and your circumstances. Believe that God is sovereign and in control and that, according to Romans 8:28, He works everything for our good and His glory. Take the attitude of David in Psalm 121: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth." God is sovereign; He made heaven and earth, and He is our help.

Thirdly, remember God's sovereignty. Obedience, worship, and truth stand or fall together. Inherent in these things is either our victory or defeat. If we believe them and hold to them, there will be ultimate victory. If we do not believe them and do not hold to them, there will be defeat. Our lives are immediately touched by these

truths, either in war or in peace. When God says there shall be war, He will fight against all who fight against Him. God is sovereign. Obey Him, worship Him, believe Him, and trust Him.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day. We thank You for Your Word, Your truth, and that Thou art indeed God, the Sovereign God of heaven and earth. Besides Thee, there is none other. Give us grace to worship Thee and praise Thee for Thy Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

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