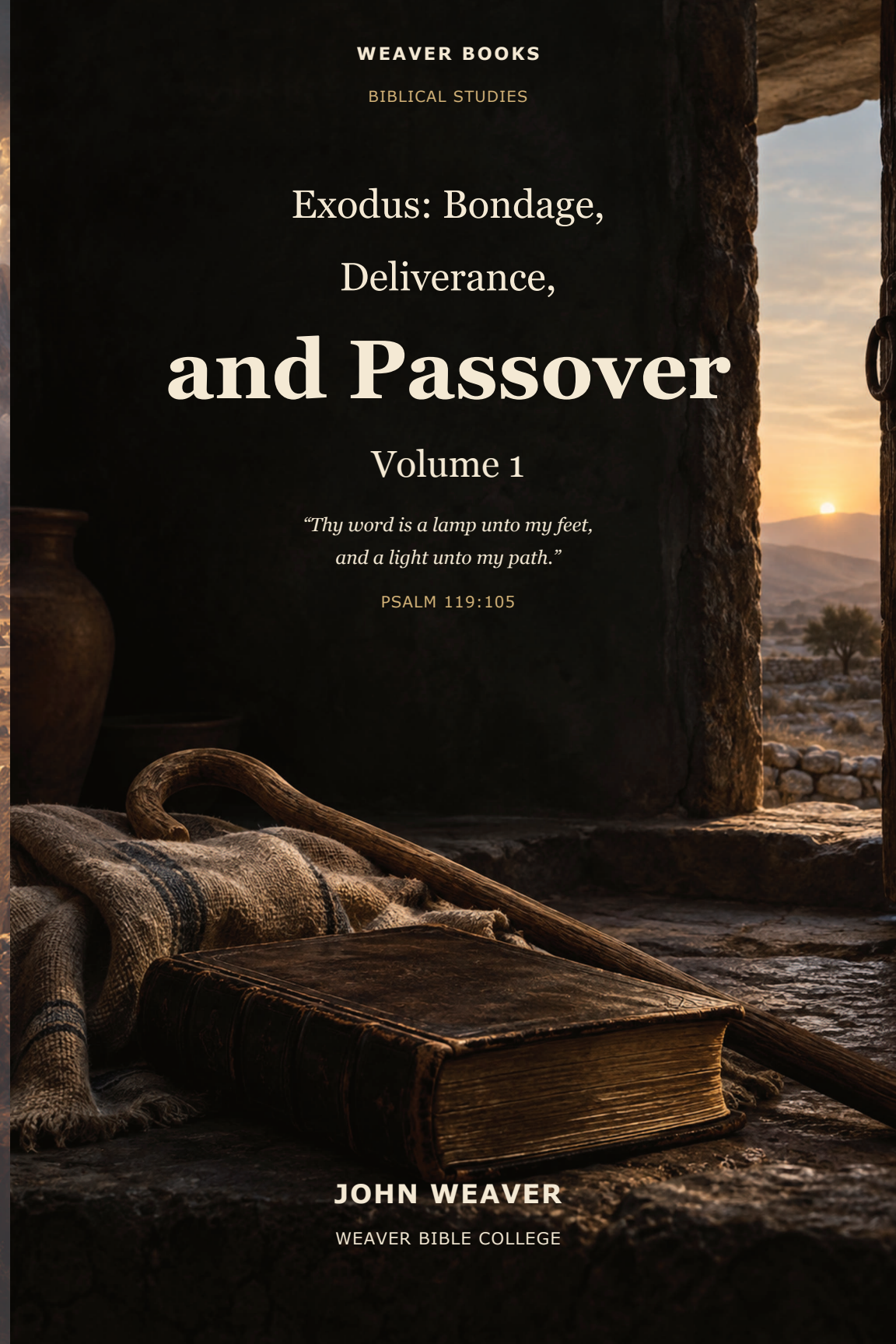

WEAVER BOOKS
BIBLICAL STUDIES
Exodus: Bondage,
Deliverance,
and Passover
Volume 1
“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.”
PSALM 119:105
JOHN WEAVER
WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE

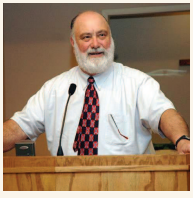
The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

EXODUS 14:14

Drawing on Exodus and related passages, John Weaver considers bondage and deliverance, God's judgment, and the responsibilities of obedience. These sermons bring biblical narratives into conversation with historical examples and the life of the church. Volume 1 is one of two volumes; the complete chapter sequence is preserved across the set. This volume contains corrected chapters 1-21.

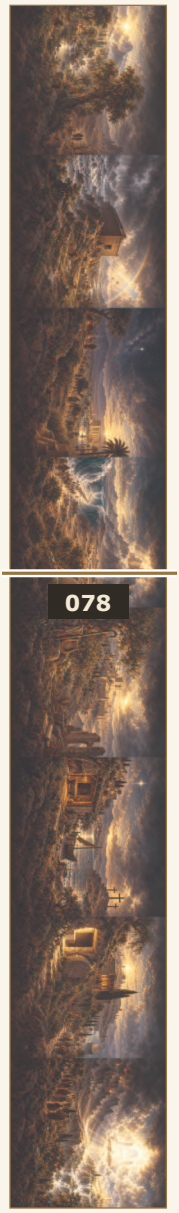
“The truth of the matter is this: compromise is only for those individuals who do not want the perfect and blessed will of God in their lives.”

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.



BOOK 078

WEAVER BOOKS

Exodus: Bondage, Deliverance, and Passover

Volume 1

Corrected chapters 1-21

John Weaver

Weaver Bible College

LIBRARY BOOK 078

Exodus: Bondage, Deliverance, and Passover

Volume 1

John Weaver

Weaver Books
Weaver Bible College

Edited from the sermon corpus of John Weaver.

Corrected review edition - October 4, 2026. Repeated full sermons have been consolidated; chapter numbers, contents, indexes, and study-guide reading ranges follow this corrected edition. Original transcript variants remain preserved in the editorial archive. Final editorial and publisher approval is still required. This is Volume 1 of two, covering corrected chapters 1-21. Both volumes use one matching study guide.

Contents

Chapter 1: Necessity for a Biblical Philosophy 11

Introduction: The Necessity of a Biblical Philosophy 11

The Therefore of Paul's Determination (Acts 17:15-17) 14

The Then of Paul's Opposition (Acts 17:18-21) 17

The Then of Paul's Declaration (Acts 17:22-31) 25

Responses to the Truth (Acts 17:32-34) 29

Applications: Developing a Theocentric Worldview 29

Chapter 2: God is a Warrior 31

Introduction: The Need to Know God's Word on War 31

Humanism and the Rejection of Biblical Truth 32

God as Warrior: The Biblical Theme 33

The Lord of Hosts: God's Warrior Name 37

The Book of Numbers: A Manual for War 38

God's Acts of War in History 40

God Teaches and Preserves Warriors 46

The Lord is a Man of War 48

Christ as Captain of the Lord's Host 49

Applications: Just Violence and Rejecting Pacifism 51

Chapter 3: The Truth About the Confederate Battle Flag 55

Introduction: The Biblical Importance of Flags and Standards 55

Overview of Confederate Flags 59

The Confederate Battle Flag Is Not a Racist Flag 60

Historical Testimony from Black Confederates 62

Racism Under the Stars and Stripes 63

The Confederate Flag Is Not a Flag of Slavery 65

The War Was Not Fought Over Slavery 65

The Emancipation Proclamation as a War Measure 68

The Confederate Flag Is a Christian Flag 69

The Flag Represents Freedom from Tyranny 72
Why the Flag Must Be Attacked 74
Conclusion: Return to the Old Paths 75
Chapter 4: A Professional Army vs. A Militia 77
Introduction: Israel's Request for a King 77
Israel's Organization as a Militia 79
Implications of the Militia System 80
The Sin of David's Census and Standing Army 86
The Continuation of the Standing Army under Uzziah 91
Applications for Today 92
Chapter 5: 5 Sanctification & Sexual Purity 95
Review of Previous Verses (1 Thessalonians 4:1-3) 96
Clarification of the Truth in Verses 4-5 97
The Meaning of 'Vessel' in Verse 4 98
Possessing the Vessel in Sanctification and Honor 103
The Negative Clarification: Not in Lust of Concupiscence 105
Elaboration: Defrauding a Brother (Verse 6a) 108
Chapter 6: Are You Special? 111
Introduction: The Desire for Special Treatment 112
God Does Not Treat Everyone Alike 113
Biblical Evidence of Distinction Between Righteous and Wicked 114
Clarifying 'No Respecter of Persons' 115
Exposition of Psalm 4:1-2: David's Prayer, Praise, and Protest 118
Psalm 4:3: God Sets Apart the Godly 121
Old and New Testament Teaching on God's Peculiar People 123
Defining Godliness: Not Perfection but Conformity to God's Will 124
Practical Godliness in Marriage and Daily Life 127
The Call to Please God and the Promise of Being Heard 129
Application: The Need for Godly Men in Society 130
Conclusion and Prayer 131

Chapter 7: Are You Special? 133
Introduction: The Desire to Be Special 134
God Does Not Treat Everyone Alike 135
God Is No Respecter of Persons Explained 136
David's Prayer and Praise (Psalm 4:1) 139
David's Protest (Psalm 4:2) 142
David's Pronouncement: The Godly Are Set Apart (Psalm 4:3) 142
What It Means to Be Godly 145
Practical Godliness and Its Blessings 149
Chapter 8: Nathan Bedford Forrest 155
Introduction and Psalm 144 155
Forrest's Reputation and Early Influences 156
Forrest on Fighting 158
Forrest on Fighting 159
Forrest on Fighting and Forthrightness 163
Forrest on Forthrightness 164
Forrest on Forthrightness and Fidelity 167
Forrest on Fidelity 168
Forrest on Forgiveness 171
Forrest's Conversion and Legacy 175
Chapter 9: Life in the Midst of Death 177
Introduction: America Under Judgment 177
God's Sovereignty Over Weather and Judgment 178
The Context: Jeremiah and the Fall of Jerusalem 180
God's Determination to Destroy Judah 181
Three Survivors in the Midst of Judgment 186
Survivor 1: Baruch – Life Amidst Death 187
Survivor 2: The Rechabites – Obedience Rewarded 188
Survivor 3: Ebed-Melech – Trust and Deliverance 191
Applications: Hope and Obedience in Judgment 193

Chapter 10: When God Has Had Enough 197
When God Has Had Enough . . . 198
Introduction: Human Breaking Points and God's Character . . . 198
God's Goodness, Forbearance, and Longsuffering (Romans 2:1-5) . . . 199
Biblical Instances When God Said 'Enough' . . . 202
The Iniquity of the Amorites and National Judgment . . . 203
God's Response to Jeremiah's Intercession (Jeremiah 14-15) . . . 205
The Limits of Intercession (Ezekiel 14:12-20) . . . 208
The Futility of Prayer Without Repentance . . . 209
The Judgment on Judah Because of Manasseh . . . 211
God's Weariness and the Finality of Judgment (Jeremiah 15:5-6) . . . 214
Application: Personal Holiness in Light of Coming Judgment . . . 215
Chapter 11: The Truth about Andersonville Prison 217
Introduction and Scriptural Foundation . . . 217
The Propaganda Against Andersonville . . . 218
Confederate vs. Union Prison Policies . . . 218
Comparative Death Statistics . . . 219
Overview of Northern Prisons . . . 220
Eyewitness Testimonies on Rations and Conditions . . . 222
Violence Among Prisoners and Wirz's Cooperation . . . 223
The Union Refusal to Exchange Prisoners . . . 227
Prisoner Petitions and Despair . . . 228
The Scapegoating and Execution of Major Wirz . . . 230
Conclusion: The Sin of False Witness . . . 234
Chapter 12: When God Has Had Enough 237
When God Has Had Enough . . . 238
Introduction: Human vs. Divine 'Enough' . . . 238
God's Patience and Its Misinterpretation . . . 239
Historical Examples of God's 'Enough' . . . 241
God's Answer to Jeremiah's Prayer . . . 244

The Futility of Prayer for a Doomed Nation 245
The Sins of Manasseh and National Judgment 250
America's Parallel and the Call to Righteousness 253
Chapter 13: A Token of Perdition 257
Introduction to Philippians 1:28 and the concept of tokens 257
Biblical survey of tokens 258
Christians have adversaries 261
The nature of our adversaries 264
Adversaries seek to terrify us 265
The double token: perdition and salvation 269
Applications: judgment and reward 272
Chapter 14: The Pattern For Christian Obedience 275
The Pattern of Christian Obedience 275
Introduction: The Need for a Pattern 275
Biblical Usage of 'Pattern' and 'Example' 277
Christ as the Supreme Example (1 Peter 2:21) 278
Christ's Sending and Our Sending (John 8:29; 20:21) 279
The Servant's Ear and Perfect Obedience (Psalm 40; Exodus 21; Deuteronomy 15) 282
Christ Magnified the Law (Isaiah 42:21; Galatians 4:4-5) 286
Love Fulfills the Law (Matthew 7:12; Romans 13:10) 287
Sanctification and the Law (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8) 288
The Consequence of Forgetting God's Law (Hosea 4:6) 289
Conclusion: Pleading for Grace to Obey 290
Chapter 15: When You Know You Are Going to Die 293
When You Know You're Going to Die 293
Introduction and Scripture Reading 293
The Reality of Knowing You Will Die 295
General Promises for Long Life 296
Quality of Life and Obedience 297

The Means of Shortened Life 298
Israel's Provocation and Judgment 301
The Fulfillment of God's Decree 305
Application: Preparedness for Death 308
Chapter 16: Reality, Faith and Obedience 311
Introduction: The Nature of Reality 311
The Reality of Redemption (Psalm 81:10) 314
The Reality of Rebellion (Psalm 81:11-12) 319
The Reality of Revival 322
The Reality of Potential Revival (Psalm 81:13-16) 323
The Need for God to Turn Us 324
Applications: Thankfulness, Repentance, and Seeking Greater Obedience . . 326
Chapter 17: Expressions of a Slave Mentality 329
Introduction: The Prevalence of a Slave Mentality 329
Biblical Foundation: Freedom in Christ vs. Bondage to Sin 330
Cowardice 332
First Expression: Cowardice 332
Expressions of a Slave Mentality 334
Second Expression: Compromise 335
Complacency 339
Third Expression: Complacency 339
Fourth Expression: Convenience 341
Application: Rejecting the Slave Mentality Today 343
Chapter 18: How Easily We Forget 345
Introduction: The Commonness of Forgetting 345
The Progression of Forgetting: Works, Covenant, God 346
Israel's Witness of God's Mighty Works 349
The Red Sea Deliverance and Passover Memorial 354
How Quickly Israel Forgot 356
Application: Our Own Forgetfulness 360

The Church at Ephesus: Leaving First Love 361
Jeremiah's Haunting Question and Final Plea 362
Chapter 19: Impossible Situations 363
Introduction: Impossible Situations Defined 363
Biblical Examples of Impossible Situations 363
Why So Many Illustrations? 368
Current Events: Government Overreach and Media Control 369
Psalm 76:5 and the Assyrian Threat 372
God's Methods of Dealing with Enemies 379
The Meaning of 'None of the Men of Might Have Found Their Hands' 382
Conclusion: Trust in God Alone 384
Chapter 20: How Easily We Forget 387
Introduction: The Problem of Forgetting 387
The Progression of Forgetting 388
Idolatry in Modern Life 389
The Significance of Baptism 389
Israel's Witness of God's Power 391
How Quickly Israel Forgot 396
Forgetting in the Christian Life 401
Call to Remember and Repent 401
Chapter 21: The Excommunication of Jesus Christ 405
The Excommunication of Christ 405
Introduction: The Strange Word 'Excommunication' 405
Biblical Examples of Church Discipline 406
Christ Excommunicated by His Own 407
Rejecting Sound Doctrine Rejects Christ 408
Where Is Christ? Theologically and Morally 409
Old Testament Parallels: Empty Religion Rejected 410
The Tabernacle Outside the Camp 412
Why Christ Suffered Outside the Gate 413

Christ Withdrawn from the Establishment 414
The Plea: Go Forth to Him 416
Bearing His Reproach 418
Applications and Conclusion 422
Topical Index 427
Scripture Index 435
Study Guide Link 451

CHAPTER 1

Necessity for a Biblical Philosophy

April 1, 2001

SCRIPTURE READING - Acts 17:15-27 (KJV)

Introduction: The Necessity of a Biblical Philosophy

The point of this message is twofold: first, to reinforce in your mind the absolute necessity for a biblical philosophy; and second, to demonstrate that we cannot understand Scripture until we understand things in their context. When you analyze Scripture and see things in context, you will see the whole point to which the Lord has directed your attention. Let us look at Acts chapter 17, beginning with verse 15.

"And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens, and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus, for to come to him with all speed they departed. Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him."

> "Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics encountered him, and some said, What will this babbler say? Others, some, he seemed to be a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine whereof thou speakest is. For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears, we would know therefore what these things mean. For all the Athenians and strangers who were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing. Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill and said, You men of Athens, I perceive in all things that you are too superstitious."
>
> "For as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, to the unknown God, whom therefore you ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Neither is worship with men's hands, as though he needeth anything, seeing he giveth it all life and breath and all things. And have made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us."

"For in him we live, and move, and have our being, as certain also of your own prophets have said. For we also are his offspring. Forasmuch as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is likened to gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commanded all men everywhere to repent, because he is appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, where he hath given assurance unto all men, and that he had raised him from the dead. And when they had heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter."

So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him and believed, among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

Paul writes in Colossians 2:8, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Scripture demonstrates the absolute necessity of having a biblical philosophy or a biblical worldview. Acts chapter 17 contrasts a humanistic or pagan worldview with a biblical worldview. This passage shows that your worldview also determines how you live. Every one of us has a philosophy and a worldview. It may be partial instead of complete, and it may be humanistic instead of biblical, but everybody has a worldview.

Stop and think about this. In reality, there is no such thing as a nervous breakdown. Your nerves do not break down; they continue to function. What, then, is broken down? It is your philosophy, your worldview. In other words, the way you see things and handle things no longer works, you do not know what to do, and you go to pieces. In reality, it is not your nerves that have broken down; it is your philosophy, your worldview.

I want you to understand that there is a biblical philosophy of life. The word philosophy is actually made up of two words: phileo, which means “I love,” and sophia, wisdom. Philosophy basically means a love of wisdom; a philosopher is someone who loves wisdom. By the way, God is the chief philosopher, for He is omniscient, and Jesus Christ is wisdom incarnate.

A worldview is man's scientific total view of all created reality. When we say it is man's view, we mean that it is qualified and limited by our human capabilities and inabilities. Our views are never going to be perfect. They may be biblical in the areas that we study and apply the Word of God, but they are not total or complete, because we are not perfect in and of ourselves yet. So it is man's view.

When I speak of a scientific view, I am not necessarily speaking of science in the laboratory. I mean that it is a scientific view as opposed to a naive view. We have tried to study and ascertain what is

right and wrong based upon an honest investigation of the facts and reality. When I say total view, I mean that we recognize everything is interrelated and everything answers to God. Created reality means that it deals with the entirety of God's creation: law, economics, government, family, and everything included. Basically, a worldview is your own scientific total view of all created reality.

God is not forbidding philosophy. What God is forbidding in Colossians chapter 2 is a humanistic, unbiblical philosophy. He says in verse 8, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy,” and then, “and vain deceit after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ.” What is condemned in this verse? It is a philosophy after the rudiments of the world, a philosophy after the traditions of man and not after Christ. There is a Christian philosophy and there is a humanistic philosophy. Therefore, if the philosophy is biblical, if it is after Christ, it is not forbidden. The only philosophy that is forbidden is that which is against Christ and against the Word of God.

Every one of us has a worldview. The problem with our worldview is usually that it is not biblically based; it is not theocentric, it is not God-centered. What we have to do is come back and center our philosophy around the Word of God.

In Acts chapter 17, you have a Christian philosopher—the Apostle Paul in this instance—opposing humanistic or pagan philosophers. In order to understand the sermon that Paul preaches, you have to understand the history and the context. The passage gives us three points. First, in verse 17, we have the therefore of Paul’s determination: “Therefore disputed he in the synagogue.” Then you have the then of Paul’s opposition in verse 18: “Then certain philosophers of Epicureans and of the Stoicks encountered him.” And then you have the then of Paul’s declaration in verse 22: “Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill.”

The Therefore of Paul's Determination (Acts 17:15-17)

This passage divides itself into three parts. Let us begin with the therefore of Paul’s determination, seen in verses 15 through 17: “And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all

speed they departed. And while Paul waited for them in Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him." First of all, note that it was a human determination.

I am using that word in reference to the fact that you and I are not mechanical; we are not machines. Paul saw the city wholly given to idolatry, and he willingly and voluntarily determined to enter into a witnessing or preaching experience with these individuals. He actually determined.

Note secondly, it was a heavenly determination, for verse 16 says, "And while Paul waited for them at Athens," and then, "his spirit was stirred in him." What made Paul act, humanly speaking? The answer comes back: it was because there was a heavenly determination. God stirred his spirit.

Please understand that when the word stirred is used here, it is a passive in the Greek, which means Paul was not active; he was acted upon. In other words, God was moving upon the Apostle Paul. Do you remember what the Bible says? "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." Philippians 2:12. Then he explains it in verse 13: "For it is God who worketh in you, both the willing to do His good pleasure." You work it out only because God has already worked it in.

Here is a clear illustration of how God was working in the Apostle Paul. God stirred him, and therefore he went out and preached. The same truth is found in Isaiah 26:12: "Behold, thou hast ordained peace for us. Why? For thou hast wrought all our works in us." The only reason you and I do anything that is right, holy, and godly is because God stirs us and gives us grace. God must first act in us, and on us, and through us before we act in obedience.

So it was a human determination. It was a heavenly determination. And thirdly, in verse 16, it was also a holy determination. "Now, when Paul waited for them in Athens, his spirit was stirred when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." How can you say that was a holy determination? Because Paul's heart beat for God's honor and God's glory.

It was not pity that moved the Apostle Paul. Pity will not move us, or at least not for long. It was not simply the fact that these people were lost that moved him. They were lost. What moved Paul was that he saw the glory belonging to the one true and living God being given to idols. What does God say in Isaiah 42:8?

SCRIPTURE READING - Isaiah 42:8; Psalm 96:1-8 (KJV)

Isaiah 42:8 says, "Behold, I am God, and beside me there is none other, and my glory will I not share with idols." God will not share His glory with idols.

Psalm 96:1: "Oh, sing unto the Lord a new song. Sing unto the Lord all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless His name, show forth His salvation from day to day." Verse 3: "Declare His glory among the heathen. His wonders among all the people. For the Lord is great and greatly be praised. He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of nations are idols. But the Lord made the heavens."

"Honor and majesty are before him. Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people. Give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name. Bring an offering and come unto his courts."

Verse 4 says, "For the Lord is great and greatly to be feared. And greatly to be praised, he is to be feared above all gods." Verse 8 says, "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name."

What did Paul see in Acts chapter 17? He saw the glory that was due unto the name of the Lord and the praise that was due only to the one true and the living God being given to idols. So it was not pity that moved Paul. It was not the fact that the people were lost that moved Paul. It was the fact that God's honor and God's glory was being given to false gods.

In Isaiah chapter 6, when Isaiah says to the Lord, "Here am I, Lord, send me," there is a human determination in the fact that Isaiah is saying, "I am willing to go." In verses 6 and 7, there is a heavenly determination, because a seraphim took the coals from the altar, touched his lip, and purged him. In verses 1 through 5, there is a holy determination, because what did Isaiah sing? He said, "In the

year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord high and lifted up, and His train also filled the temple." And what were the seraphim doing? They were singing, "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty." Every time you find in the Bible someone doing something for God, there was always, before that human determination, a heavenly determination, and the basis of it was a holy determination. You'll find that same thing in Exodus 34 and Exodus 33, dealing with Moses.

In Acts chapter 17, having seen in verse 16 that Paul's spirit was stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry, verse 17 says, "Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews and with the devout persons and in the market daily with him that met with him." The word disputed does not mean that Paul got into a knockdown, drag out argument. It means to reason or to argue in a logical, reasonable manner. So he went into the synagogue where these Jews were, and the devout persons. Who were the devout persons?

They were Grecian proselytes. Acts 17, verse 4, says, "And some of them believed in consorting with Paul and Silas, and of the devout Greeks, a great multitude, and of the chief women, not a few." Paul went into the synagogue, and whenever the synagogue was meeting, he would reason with them. When the synagogue was not meeting, the Apostle Paul was in the market on a daily basis, reasoning, arguing, using logic, and using a Christian worldview to tell them of the truth. Now watch. Look secondly, and here's where it gets interesting.

The Then of Paul's Opposition (Acts 17:18-21)

You see the therefore of his determination. Secondly, here is the then of the opposition, verses 18 through 21. As Paul was busy preaching in the marketplace, he encountered opposition from the Epicureans and the Stoics. They asked, “What will this babbler say?” Others considered him a setter forth of strange gods because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection. They brought him into the Areopagus, saying, “May we know of this new doctrine whereof thou speakest this? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears. We would know, therefore, what these things mean.” For all the

Athenians and strangers who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear something new.

Now, you have to ask yourself: Who were the Epicureans, and what did they teach? Who were the Stoics, and what did they teach? Why did they accuse the Apostle Paul of being a babbler? What is a babbler? What is the significance of the statement, "he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods"? What is the Areopagus? If you do not know the answers to these questions, you are in no position to understand the Apostle Paul's sermon.

What you have is an excellent illustration of a Christian with a worldview confronting non-Christians with a non-Christian worldview. They are going to tangle. Your worldview determines how you act and behave. If your worldview is unbiblical, you are going to act unbiblically; if your worldview is biblical, you are going to act biblically.

Who were the Epicureans? They were Greek philosophers. Epicurus lived from 342 to 270 BC. His disciples were known as the school of the garden because he taught from a garden in Athens, and he was the master who instructed them. The best-known Epicurean philosopher was the Roman poet Lucretius. What did the Epicureans teach? Remember what Solomon said: There is nothing new under the sun. The same heresies that the Apostle Paul confronted in Acts chapter 17 are with us today under a little different name, but they are still the same heresy. First of all, the Epicureans taught materialism.

Materialism is the theory that matter is the only reality, and everything in the world—including what they would call the gods, feeling, and thought—was explained in terms of matter. Matter was the only thing that counted. Therefore, to the Epicurean, comfort, pleasure, and the wealth of an individual were the highest goal and the greatest pleasure. They were a materialistic people: the more you had, the more you enjoyed life, and the better off you were.

That philosophy is still with us today. A lot of Christians have that philosophy, don't they? They're good Epicureans and don't even know it. The Epicureans also taught evolutionism, because Epicurus taught that the universe, plants, animals, and man evolved from

atoms. Darwin didn't come up with the first idea of evolution; the Epicureans taught it long before Darwin ever came along. So they were materialists and evolutionists. They also taught that there was no such thing as human immortality.

When you're dead, you're dead. You're annihilated. It's like a dog: when a dog dies, he's dead. That's it. It's the end of it. There is nothing else—no life after death, no judgment, no eternal life, and no eternal suffering. When you're dead, you're dead. So they denied human immortality.

Fourthly, they believed in fatalism. They believed that every event that happened was naturally caused—in other words, caused by nature. I cringe and get angry every time I hear the weather forecaster say, "Mother Nature." That just tears me up. That's a pagan term to the core, talking about the goddess of earth, the earth mother, which is pure paganism. That is what these Epicureans taught. Everything comes naturally; everything comes by chance, luck, or fate.

To the Epicurean, there was no supernatural intervention of God. There was no miracle and no supernatural. For the Epicurean, the greatest evil was the fear of death. Why fear death? When you're dead, that's it. You're out of it. You will know nothing.

The whole system of Epicureanism had a practical end in view. Its summation was this: the good life is in man's power. Man can be happy, and the way to be happy is to have the best of everything and live in serene detachment. The greatest good and the highest goal was to have pleasure without pain.

Many preachers preach pure Epicureanism. One of the pleasures the Epicureans emphasized was intellectual pleasure. Look down in verse 21: “For all the Athenians and the strangers who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.” Their pleasure was intellectual. How would you like to spend your day talking, trying to find out what you can find out? I want to learn, but I do not think I would want to spend my days talking and doing nothing else. That was part of their pleasure.

Since the Epicureans wanted pleasure without pain, their philosophy deteriorated into hedonism. Hedonism is the philosophy,

“eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.” In other words, do whatever you are going to do because you are going to be dead, like a dog that is going to be all over with. The Epicureans basically taught that one should want positive pleasure without pain; pain was to be avoided.

The true Epicurean would never be a drunkard. Although he would enjoy his wine and whatever else he wanted to enjoy, he would do it moderately. If he became a drunkard, there would be pain in that: cirrhosis of the liver, DTs, and all these other things. Thus, the true Epicurean wanted pleasure without pain, but his philosophy deteriorated into pure hedonism.

The Epicureans were the atheists among the Greek philosophers. They had no positive faith in anyone or anything. To them, the universe just happened. There was no lawgiver, no creator, no redeemer, and no judge. Their chief end in this life was to enjoy its pleasures without pain. Pleasure without pain would therefore be the philosophy, or slogan, of the Epicureans.

Who were the Stoics? Zeno was their founder. He lived from 335 to 265 B.C., and in the city of Citium in Cyprus he began to teach from a portico, or porch. The Greek word for porch is stoa; since he taught from this porch, his followers became known as Stoics. The Roman senator Seneca was a Stoic, and Emperor Marcus Aurelius, the most noble Roman of them all, was also a Stoic. What did the Stoics teach?

Now listen carefully, because we are going to get into some real modern-day philosophy and heresy. The Stoics taught, first of all, pantheism. Pan means all, and theism means God: everything is God. Pantheism taught that God is not a personality, not a real, genuine person; this desk is God, you are God, I am God, the earth is God, that bird is God, and that cow is God. In other words, God is not some self-existing individual who is transcendent from heaven and earth.

Here is one of their statements: “The world is the body of God, and God is the soul of the world, and apart from the world, God has no existence.”

To the Stoics, the name or term God was simply another term for fate, causation, or consequence. There was no sovereign, all-wise God who ruled according to His will. It was simply fate or chance, because everything is God. They were pantheists.

Secondly, the Stoics taught naturalism. By naturalism, I mean that man is capable of obtaining the good life, and the good life consists of not wanting things any other way than they already are. We acknowledge the cycle of nature, and yes, we might pursue knowledge, but we pursue it with detachment, because if we do not learn what we want to learn, we might be disappointed, and disappointment is bad. If we serve others, we do so in a disinterested way, because our service may be rejected, and that would be hurtful. Stoicism is known for its unemotionalism, disinterestedness, and passionlessness.

You say, "Brother Weaver, I'm not a Stoic." Sure you are in a lot of ways. Have you ever told your sons, "Come on, boy, keep a stiff upper lip. Boys don't cry"? Where did that come from? Not from the Bible. Jesus wept. Don't show your emotions. Husbands, you cannot put your arm around your wife and kiss her out in public. What would people think? They might really think you love your wife. I kiss my wife all the time, everywhere. I am not ashamed that I love her. It is all right for men to cry. This idea of keeping a stiff upper lip is pure stoicism. The Stoics also taught individualism: only the individual counts, so do not get involved in anything. Boy, are Christians good Stoics, because they do not want to get involved in anything today. The Stoics taught indifferentism.

To a Stoic, it did not matter which god you served, because, after all, everyone was going to the same place. To them, that place was simply death. I have heard people who profess to be Christians say, "Well, it really doesn't matter; we're all working for the same place." If you are working for it, I have news for you: you are going to get to where you are working for, but it is not going to be where you think it is.

Because salvation is not my works; it is by grace through faith. Here you have the Epicureans and the Stoics. The Epicureans emphasized pleasure, and the Stoics emphasized pride. The

Epicureans and the Stoics were the Sadducees and Pharisees of Greek philosophy.

The best-known Stoic philosopher was a man named Cleanthes, or Aratus. In Acts 17:28, the Apostle Paul quotes him: “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.” In that instance, Paul was quoting Cleanthes.

You have the Epicureans and the Stoics. Paul was preaching and teaching when he encountered these philosophers, and they said that Paul was a babbler. Acts 17:18 says, “Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoicks, encountered him, and said, What will this babbler say?” Where was Paul preaching and teaching when he encountered them? In the marketplace.

The Greek word for marketplace is agora. The agora was the center of public life in ancient Greece. It was where the poets, artisans, politicians, orators, statesmen, and philosophers met; everyone went to the marketplace. It was not only a place to buy and sell, but also a place for conversation, visiting, idleness, and teaching. North of the Agora was the craggy eminence called the Areopagus, and eastward was the Acropolis.

The whole area was filled with altars, temples, gods, and relics. In this Agora, this marketplace, the porches and gardens were places where the philosophers taught their students. It was there that Paul was preaching and teaching when he was accused of being a babbler.

What in the world is a babbler? I like this word because it shows how they tried to put down the Apostle Paul. If you do not think worldly philosophers endeavor to put down a Christian philosopher, look at Christians on the talk shows and see how the host does everything possible to make the Christian look like an absolute fool and idiot. These Epicureans and Stoics referred to Paul as a babbler. Probably the Epicureans called him this. The word for babbler is spermologos. A spermologos is a hapax legomena.

Hapax is a Greek word meaning “just once,” and legomena refers to words. Thus, a hapax legomena is a word that occurs only one time in the Bible. This is the only time this word occurs. It is a bad

word: spermologos. It has basically three meanings, and neither one of them is attractive.

First, spermologos refers to a bird that picks seeds from the ground, or a seed picker. Why would they call Paul a seed picker? They were referring to him as an ignorant plagiarist. He did not know what he was talking about, and whatever he said, he had simply stolen from someone else. It reminds me of some modern-day plagiarists. I am not going to name any, but one got his doctorate by stealing. It was Martin Luther King. He was a plagiarist; he stole. Of course, some of our presidential candidates did so as well. They were calling Paul a babbler, a seed picker, and an ignorant plagiarist.

Secondly, the word means a pauper, one who prowls the marketplace—a parasite who lives by his wits—hence, a contemptible and worthless person. Thirdly, it means the perpetual and useless chirping and chattering of a bird. In modern colloquialism, it means someone who runs off at the mouth, continually talking and making noise without saying anything.

Thus, when Paul was preaching Jesus and the resurrection, the Epicureans, who were the atheists, said, "This man is a babbler. He is an ignorant plagiarist, a seed picker, a pauper, and a parasite. He is just running off at the mouth. He knows not what he is talking about." Isn't it amazing? What does the Scripture say in 1 Corinthians 1? The preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are unsaved. And it still is. These Greek philosophers thought they were wise and all-knowing, but when a man came with the truth, they called him a nitpicker, a plagiarist, and a parasite.

What, then, does it mean in verse 18 when he says, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods"? In all probability, it was the Stoics who charged him with this. In Athens, introducing strange gods was a capital offense if the home deities were rejected and the state religion disturbed. You could receive the death penalty for preaching a strange God if it disrupted the state religion.

During Paul's time, who was in charge of the Greek Empire? The Romans. Once a year, if you maintained your legitimate status as a religion in Rome, you had to swear by the genius of Caesar. You had

to say that Caesar is Lord. In other words, Caesar gives you the right to believe what you want to believe. Although Athens was in Greece, the Romans had conquered it. If you introduced a strange god, and it meant tearing down the state religion, you could face the death penalty. Clearly, neither the Epicureans nor the Stoics understood Paul's message when he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection.

The Bible says in verse 19, "and they took him and brought him unto Areopagus." What is the Areopagus? That word is really two words, Areion Pagon. Areopagus literally means the hill of Ares, the Greek god of war, who corresponded to the Roman Mars. The Areopagus was the hill in front of the Agora. However, the word Areopagus also refers to the court, or council, of Areopagus. This council took note of murders, impieties, and immoralities, and was very attentive to blasphemies against the gods. When the Stoics charged Paul with being a setter forth of strange gods, they did not take him to the hill Areopagus; they took him to the council of Areopagus, where he was to be judged. In verse 34, one of those councilmen was converted by Paul's preaching: "...Howbeit, certain men clave unto him and believed, among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite." That is, a man who was on this court or council. He certainly would not be a hill. He was on the council. It was this court or council that Paul was brought before because he was a setter forth of a strange God.

This court evidently functioned not only politically and educationally, but also judicially and legally. The apostle Paul was brought before this council, which had the power or authority to take official action in questions concerning public teaching in the city. Paul was doing some public teaching, and so he was brought before the court.

“Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill.” What is Mars Hill? It is the Areopagus. They are the same thing—the same hill—but Paul is now at the hill, before the council. “Then Paul stood in Mars Hill, in the midst of Mars Hill, and said.” Here he begins his direct declaration.

The Then of Paul's Declaration (Acts 17:22-31)

The Apostle Paul's message is not being construed as a formal apology. When we say that Pastor so-and-so is offering an apology for the faith, that does not mean he is standing up and saying, "I'm sorry that we believe what we believe." Apologetics is the arm of theology termed defending the faith. Apologetics is a defense of the faith, not an apologizing for the faith. Paul is not necessarily giving a formal defense here, although he is certainly defending certain aspects of the faith.

Let us begin in verse 22 and consider the then of Paul's declaration. There are many things we can learn from the Apostle Paul. "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious." Would you like to know what the word superstitious really means?

It is not talking about avoiding walking under a ladder or throwing salt over your shoulder if a black cat crosses your path. The word superstitious, as some of you have marginal references in your Bible, literally means religious. Paul says, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive it in all things, you're too religious." Do you realize that you can be religious but lost? You can be religious and be unbiblical to the core.

What Paul did was this: he was courteous and took care not to initially upset them. He acknowledged the fact that they were religious. He said, "You're just a little too religious."

What do most of us do? I have to bite my tongue at times, but isn't it amazing how we want to jump down everybody's throat when we know they are wrong? We want to straighten them out quickly and tell them off. But you will never reach anyone by making them mad at you to begin with. It is just not going to do it. I have just enough rebellion and sin left in me that if you tell me I am not going to do something, I am going to do it just to show you. If you tell me I am wrong, I am not going to listen to you because I am going to show you. That is the way people are. Let us be honest.

Paul began with courtesy and care. He said, "Look, I know you are religious. I know you believe certain things, but look in verse 23." He said, "For as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar

with this inscription, to the unknown God, whom therefore you ignorantly worship, Him declare unto you."

Notice what the Apostle Paul did. Remember, a person could get the death penalty for introducing a new god into society if it detracted from the Roman state religion. So Paul said, "Look, I found an altar out there with this inscription, to the unknown God. I am not introducing a new God to you. I am telling you about the one that you do not know anything about. Let me explain who He really is." Paul got himself out of a legal quagmire by using their own altar to the unknown God. He said, "I am going to declare this unknown God to you."

Remember everything said about what the Epicureans and Stoics taught, because everything Paul is going to say goes directly contrary to it. In verse 24, he declares creationism as opposed to Epicurean evolutionism: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands." In other words, God is the Creator. The earth did not evolve. It did not just happen or begin by luck, chance, fate, or fortune. No, God created the earth and everything in it.

Now I want you to see what he is doing. He is not merely saying, "Look, you stupid Epicureans, you are wrong." He probably wanted to say that, but what he is saying is, "I'm declaring the truth to you." He does so without telling them how stupid and ignorant they really are.

He says that God is the Creator. Secondly, he not only deals with the fact that God is the Creator; in verse 24, he also declares the sovereignty of God over heaven and earth, as opposed to the pantheism of the Stoics: "seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth."

We have a sovereign. We have an ultimate. We have an absolute. The earth is not God. The world is not God. Materialism is not God. We have a transcendent God who is above His creation, One who is absolutely sovereign. God's handiwork may be seen in the earth and in the world, but God Himself is exalted far above heaven and earth.

Thus he teaches creationism, the absolute sovereignty of God, and the incorporeality, immateriality, or spirituality of God. He says that

the Lord of heaven and earth “dwelleth not in temples made with hands,” and that He is not worshiped with men's hands.

Paul is saying and teaching the truth of John 4:24: “God is spirit. And they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” He is saying to the Stoics, “Look, you want to think that God is material? No, no, no. He is not material; He is immaterial. It is true that He is Lord of heaven and earth, but He is spirit.”

God is not a spirit. God is spirit. Why does everybody want to materialize God? Why do they want an idol? Why do they want God confined in a temple, in a church, or around an altar?

Let me tell you why. When you get your God confined to a material object, when you walk away from that material object, you are on your own. You have control over your God. You have Him right where you want Him. That is why a lot of folks want a material God.

I never will forget the woman I saw while preaching in Wilmington, North Carolina. She had a little statue on her dashboard. I asked her, “What is that statue on your dashboard?” She said, “That’s my statue of Jesus. I wouldn’t think of going anywhere without my Jesus.” I said, “Ma’am, I wouldn’t either, but He doesn’t live on my dashboard. He’s in my heart.”

Here you have pure paganism trying to materialize God. You remember that the Syrians were defeated because they did that. They said, “God is the God of the hills, but He is not the God of the plains.” They wanted to materialize God and put Him in one of the locations. So Paul denies not only evolutionism and pantheism; he also denies materialism.

In the latter part of verse 25 through verse 28, Paul declares God's providential control over everything as opposed to Epicurean fatalism. He said, "Neither is he worshipped with men's hands as though he needeth anything, seeing he," that is, the sovereign God, "giveth it all life and breath and all things, and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us."

"For in him we live and move and have our own being, as certain also of your own prophets have said, for we are also his offspring." What he is saying is, "Look, it is God who controls everything. It's God who's placed the nations. It's God who's provided for us. It's God who set the boundaries." God's providential care is opposed to the fatalism that these Epicureans were teaching. Paul is saying, "Everything that you fellows have said, and everything that you've taught, and everything that you've believed is wrong," yet he is not merely saying that they are wrong; he is giving them the truth. In verse 29 he says, "For as much then as we are the offspring of God, if your own poet is correct, we ought not to think that the Godhead is likened to gold or silver or stone, graven by art and man's device." If we are the children of God, God cannot look like an idol.

God is Spirit, which means He has no body. However, when God became incarnate and lived on this earth, He revealed Himself in Jesus Christ and looked just like one of us. He did not look like an idol or a stone image. The Apostle Paul is saying, "You folks have no idea about the truth of God."

At the same time, he is pronouncing the Christian philosophy and showing how directly opposed it is to humanistic philosophy. He destroys the materialism of the Stoics. In verses 30 and 31, he destroys the disinterestedness of Stoicism and the annihilationism of the Epicureans: “And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now God commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” Why does God command men to repent? “Because He hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.”

What is the Apostle Paul saying? Just as surely as God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and just as surely as there is a bodily resurrection, there will be a judgment, and you will not escape. All your pagan philosophy and humanistic ideas will go down the tubes at that time. You will find out who is right. It is as though Paul, with his tongue in his cheek, said, “A babbler am I? A seed picker? A pauper? Some ignorant plagiarist? Ooh, you just wait. You will find out who was the true philosopher and who had absolutely no

philosophy." Thus he destroys the philosophy of the Epicureans and the Stoics.

Responses to the Truth (Acts 17:32-34)

Thankfully, this is the response you always have when the Word of God is preached and taught. Verse 32 says, "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. And others said, We will hear thee again of this matter." In other words, they would not deal with it then; they would put it off. But verse 34 says, "Howbeit certain men clave unto Him and believed." Inevitably, when the truth is taught, there will be mockers, some who postpone entertaining the truth, and some who, by the grace of God, believe.

Applications: Developing a Theocentric Worldview

Our worldview, our philosophy, must be like the Apostle Paul's. His philosophy started with God; it was theocentric and God-centered. We are too accustomed to saying, "I think. I believe. I have heard. I have been taught." None of those things really matter. What matters is this: What does the Word of God teach? We must come back to the fact: here is God, and here is His Word.

If you start with man, you're going to end with man. If you start with God, you can end with God. We have to have a theocentric worldview—a God-centered philosophy—to understand what is happening and interpret things in light of Scripture. Suppose the stock market crashed tomorrow. What would the humanists say? I guarantee it would be vastly different from what Christians say, if Christians have a biblical philosophy.

Do you know why this world is so much in debt and so dependent upon a stock market and paper money? Because they have no idea of a biblical philosophy of real money. There are differences. I can look out and see something and say, "That is a clear incident of God's judgment." Somebody else will say, "It just happened. It was coincidence, chance, luck, or fate." No, you cannot interpret what is happening unless you look through the special glasses of divine revelation. We have to interpret in light of the Word of God. If we understand that God is sovereign, it will also temper us in our arguments and reasoning.

I have confessed before that there are times when I have wanted to take men and women by the shirt, hold them against the wall, slap them four or five times, and say, "What in the world is wrong with you? How can you be so blind? How can you be so stupid?" Yet I know that would not help matters; it would make them worse. I still want to do it, but it really would not help.

But if I understand that God is sovereign—and that illumination and understanding are the gift of God—then I can still be kind and courteous, teach the truth, commit it to the Lord's hands, and say, "Lord, if you don't open their eyes, they're still going to be blind as a bat," and go on my way. You follow me? We cannot convert everyone, save everyone, make people believe rightly, or make them do what is right. What is our responsibility? To teach the truth and stand up for the truth. What they do with the truth is between them and God. How God applies the truth is up to Him.

And so if some mock us, so be it. If some say, “We’re not really interested in that right now,” so be it. Inevitably, invariably, however, there are going to be certain individuals who will cleave to the truth and say, “That’s what I wanted. God opened my eyes and showed me His truth.”

You see, if you do have a thoroughly biblical worldview, inevitably, invariably, you’re going to have conflicts. Please understand that everywhere you turn, we’re men of peace and we want peace. But you’re going to have conflicts because everybody’s going to think you’re a nut and a fanatic, and that you’ve gone off the deep end because you want to do things biblically and rightly. So don’t be discouraged; be encouraged.

Make sure that everything in your life is theocentric, God-centered. Interpret things in light of divine, special revelation. Look through the lenses of Holy Scripture.

Let’s pray. Father, we are so thankful today for Jesus Christ, for His grace and love and mercy to us. We ask You to help us, to build us up in the most holy faith. Father, we pray especially for a Christian worldview, that we would be biblical in our thoughts, attitudes, actions, and conduct, that we might bring honor and glory to Thee. In Thy name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 2

God is a Warrior

October 22, 2002

Introduction: The Need to Know God's Word on War

Several men have asked me to deal with this subject. I am going to deal with the biblical doctrine of war.

I have fifteen messages in this series, and I cannot preach fifteen messages in four nights. Therefore, tonight I am going to give you an introductory message, and for the next several nights I will try to combine a couple of messages so that I can give you as much of the material as possible. Tonight, we are simply going to lay the foundation for this subject.

We are living, as Ted just pointed out, in extremely dangerous times—not just nationally, but also societally and familially, that is, in our families. There is more violence in this country than you can shake a stick at.

My question is, do you really know what God's Word says? Do you know what you are allowed to do or not to do based upon the Word of God? These are not merely theoretical questions. If you wait until you get into trouble and say, “Well, I’m going to study it out,” it is

probably going to be too late. You had better make sure that you know what God allows before you ever get into trouble.

With that, turn in your Bibles, if you would, to the book of Hosea, chapter 8. We are going to look at verse 12, and I am simply going to use this as a springboard to get into the subject. The message that I am bringing tonight is entitled, “God is a Warrior.” I think you will understand when I get to the Scriptures toward the end of the message. Notice the book of Hosea, chapter 8, and verse 12.

Humanism and the Rejection of Biblical Truth

God writes, "I have written to him," that is, to Israel, "the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing." Humanism has basically captured the minds and even the bodies of American Christendom. Our ideas, philosophies, attitudes, and actions are so many times contrary to God's Word and truth. Even when we hear the truth from the Bible, many times we think it is strange. We hear God's truth and do not believe it, or we hear God's truth and certainly do not receive it. Why? Because we count it as something strange and foreign. We have been so addicted to being brainwashed and propagandized and watching television that most people cannot even think for themselves. Consequently, when we hear truth, we think it rather strange. It is a foreign way of thinking to us when we study the Word of God.

We think that if we hear it being taught, perhaps the preacher is wrong, or perhaps he is just making it up. We may say, "That's just his opinion." Many times, we try to defend what we think even when we have not studied out what we think. Do you realize that most Christians cannot even defend the doctrines they profess to believe? If I were to ask you to believe in justification by faith, most of you would say yes; but if I asked you to demonstrate that doctrine from the Word of God, you could not do it. If I asked whether you believe in baptism, you would say yes, but where is it in the Bible? You could not tell me. If I asked whether you believe in limited government, as Ted just pointed out, you might say, "Yes, that's constitutional." But it is not just constitutional; it is biblical. Where is it in the Bible? The point is that we are so used to hearing everything else except the Word of God, except the truth of God.

When we hear the truth of God, it sounds so strange and foreign to our ears. When we hear God's Word and have not been taught or brought up that way, what do we do? We say, "That could not possibly be true." We reason this way: If that is true, then I am wrong, and I have been wrong all my life. We do not want to admit that we are wrong or that we have been taught wrong.

The message tonight will amply illustrate this point, because the Scriptures teach emphatically that God is a warrior. He is a warrior God.

God as Warrior: The Biblical Theme

Now, we've been taught all of our lives that war is wrong, that God does not approve of war, or that war is sometimes a necessary evil. There have been many people who have refused to allow their children, especially little boys, to have play guns or toy guns. They refuse to allow them to wrestle because they do not want them to grow up with a warrior mentality.

My youngest daughter's boy is now eleven, going on twelve. When I was raising my children, I had four daughters, and I taught them all to hunt. They all shot—not only shotguns, but high-powered rifles and pistols as well. Most of them were very good deer hunters, and they were all raised around weapons. They hunted and shot all of their lives. My youngest daughter told me, "Now, Dad, I know that you raised us around weapons, and we hunted, and we used those weapons. But now, Dad, I'm not going to allow my little boy to even have a play gun or to be around weapons until he gets older." I said, "Well, fine, sweetheart. I raised you the way I wanted to, and so you can raise your child the way you want to raise your child."

When he was about two years old, she happened to look out in the yard, and he had picked up a stick and was going, "Bang, bang, bang, bang." I didn't even have a TV, and it just came natural. The reason many people say, "I don't want my child to have a toy gun, or wrestle, or learn martial arts," is basically because they believe that all fighting is wrong. Well, let me ask you a question. Is it wrong to fight against sin? Is it wrong to fight against wickedness? Is it wrong to fight for freedom? Is it wrong to fight to preserve one's life, or someone else's life? Is it wrong to fight for truth, liberty, freedom,

righteousness, and justice? You know the answer to all of those questions. Let me ask you another question.

If fighting is wrong in and of itself, if fighting is inherently evil in and of itself, why does God fight? You say, "Well, God doesn't fight." Oh, yes, He does, and I'll show it to you from the Bible in just a moment. But I want you to understand that if one denies the validity and the morality of fighting, he not only accuses God of sin and immorality, but at the same time invalidates church discipline, family discipline, and also civil justice. Do you realize that family discipline, church discipline, and even civil justice are to be acts of fighting against wickedness and against sin?

Now, we must learn, therefore, to fight biblically, or else we destroy ourselves, our families, our churches, and our society. You see, God is indeed a warrior, and we must follow His example and follow His commands. It is interesting to note that the word "war," the Hebrew word milchamah, occurs 313 times in the Old Testament. When you get to the New Testament, the Greek word is polemos, and it occurs 18 times in the New Testament.

Now, if you take the Bible from the beginning to the end, I want you to understand that the theme of the Bible, of God as a warrior, is given to us from Genesis all the way through the book of Revelation. For instance, first God appears as a warrior who fights for Israel against her flesh-and-blood enemies. Everyone knows it was God who destroyed Egypt. It was God who fought for Israel against the Amorites, the Hittites, the Jebusites, the Perizzites, and all those other "-ites." So it was God who was fighting against Israel's flesh-and-blood enemies.

Secondly, and I'm going to show you this from the Bible, when Israel rebelled and sinned against God, God fought against Israel. I want you to hold Hosea, but look in your Bibles to 2 Chronicles chapter 24. Let me show you several verses. Notice, if you would please, verse 24. The Bible says, "For the army of the Assyrians came with a small company of men, and the Lord delivered a very great host into their hand." Now, why did God deliver a very great host into their hand? Here's why: "Because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers, so they executed judgment against Joash." So

God now is fighting against His own people because they have forsaken His law.

Look in 2 Chronicles 25 and verse 20. The Bible says, “But Amaziah would not hear. For it came of God,” watch carefully, “that He might deliver them into the hand of their enemies, because they sought after the gods of Edom.” Now what is God doing? He is fighting against His own people.

Look in chapter 28, at verses 4 and 5, and then verse 9. Here we are looking at the wickedness of King Ahaz. The Bible says in 2 Chronicles 28:4–5, “He sacrificed also and burned incense in the high places, and on the hills and under every green tree. Wherefore the Lord his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria. And they smote him and carried away a great multitude of them, captives, and brought them to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter.”

Verse 9 says, “But a prophet of the Lord was there, whose name was Oded, and he went out before the host that came to Samaria and said unto them, Behold, because the Lord God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand, and you have slain them in a rage that reached up into heaven.” Judah was destroyed because God was fighting against them because of their sins.

So first of all, God appears as a warrior in fighting against the enemies of Israel. Secondly, He appears as a warrior in fighting against Israel when Israel sins against God.

Thirdly, the Old Testament ends with the prophets looking into the future and proclaiming the advent of a powerful divine warrior. In Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, chapter 3, verse 1, the Word of God says: “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant,” who is none other than Christ, “whom you delight in. Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.”

The Old Testament ends by looking forward to a great divine warrior who will destroy all His enemies and all the enemies of His

people. Malachi says, “But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap, and he shall sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver, that he may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.” Then, in chapter 4, beginning with verse 1: “For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble. And the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”

“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings. And you shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.”

When Jesus Christ appears, He comes as a warrior to deliver His people from their sin, from Satan, and from their enemies. Luke 1:67 records the prophecy of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist: “And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David. As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began.”

Now watch carefully: “that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all them that hate us, to perform the mercy promised our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.”

Note especially verse 71. Why did Christ come? “That we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all them that hate us.” And verse 74 says, “that He would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear.”

So the divine warrior came, who conquered sin, conquered Satan, and even conquered all the physical enemies. He came as that divine warrior. Fifthly, in this broad overview, when Christ returns at the end of this age, He is returning as the divine warrior who is going to judge and destroy all of His physical and spiritual enemies.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "...and you who are troubled, rest with us, when our Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." When Christ comes back the second time, He is going to come back in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So even when He returns fully and finally, He does so as a divine warrior. Now, the entire Bible is developed around this theme of God as a divine warrior. In fact, there is one name given of God over and over in the Bible. Many times we have read that name and never even thought about it. Look at 1 Samuel chapter 1 and verse 3. Here is Hannah and her husband, and the Bible says, "And this man," that is Elkanah, Hannah's husband, "went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice, unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh." Note the title of God: "the Lord of hosts." Look in verse 11: "And she vowed a vow and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look upon the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me."

The Lord of Hosts: God's Warrior Name

Look also at 1 Samuel chapter 4 and verse 4. It is all through the Bible; I am simply choosing this one book. The Bible says, "So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, who dwelleth between the cherubims." Note what He is called: "the Lord of hosts." Then turn to 1 Samuel chapter 15 and look at verse 2. God Himself is speaking: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for them in the way when he came up out of Egypt."

Then consider one more passage in 1 Samuel 17, verse 45. Everybody knows this story. This is David and Goliath, and there is a battle going on. Look what David says to Goliath: "Then said David

to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied."

I hope that, having read that last verse, you know what the phrase "the Lord of hosts" means. Literally, it is "the Lord of the armies." Every time you read "the Lord of hosts," it means "the Lord of the armies."

He claims to be a captain. He claims to be the Lord over all of his armies. Not only the angelic army, but also those armies of saints that he has in the earth as well. There is an entire book in the Bible that is dedicated to war. I don't know if you know that or not. An entire book that is dedicated to the subject of war. It is the book of Numbers, and I want you to turn there. Let me just show you several things in the book of Numbers. Let's begin in Numbers chapter 1. And let's begin reading there with verse 3. Numbers 1 verse 3.

The Book of Numbers: A Manual for War

In fact, you're going to see this phrase over and over. In fact, the book of Numbers is about numbering the young men of each tribe who are able to go forth to war. So Numbers chapter 1 verse 3, look carefully. "From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel, thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies." Now God says, if there's a man that's able to go to war, look carefully, from twenty years old and upward, God gave the command that they be numbered. Now skip down to verse 20. "And the children of Reuben, Israel's eldest son, by their generation, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of their names, by their polls, every male from 20 years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war." Look in verse 22. We don't have to read all of this verse, but the first part says of the children of Simeon, skip down the latter part of it, "every male from 20 years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war."

Look in verse 24, of the children of Gad, the latter part of the verse, "from 20 years old and upward all that were able to go forth to war." Verse 26, of the children of Judah, the latter part, "from 20 years old and upward all that were able to go forth to war." You'll find that in verse 28, in verse 30, in verse 32, in verse 34, in verse 36,

in verse 38, in verse 40, in verse 42, and now if you'll skip down to verse 45, "So were all those that were numbered of the children of Israel, by the house of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth unto war in Israel." So of every tribe then, God had all the men from twenty years upward, numbered, who were able to go forth to war.

Numbers 10:9 gives one of the divine rules and regulations concerning warfare: "And if you go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then you shall blow an alarm with the trumpets, and you shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and you shall be saved from your enemies."

When Israel went to war against an enemy that was oppressing them, blowing the trumpets God had given them was a religious act. When they blew the trumpets, He said they would be remembered by the Lord their God. In other words, He would help them, aid them, and fight for them.

Numbers 26:2 says, "Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel from 20 years old and upward throughout their father's house and all that are able to go to war in Israel." God was concerned with numbering those who were able to go to war.

Numbers 31 shows that warfare was something God ordered and ordained. You need to read all of Numbers 31, but verse 1 says, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying," and verse 2 continues, "Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites." Moses then spoke unto the people: "Arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the Lord of Midian." He also said, "Afterward shalt thou be gathered in thy people." Thus Moses was sending the children of Israel to war, not according to human invention, but under divine command. The Lord gave rules and regulations concerning warfare, and He Himself was the One who ordered this battle and promised to remember, help, aid, and fight for His people.

God ordered and ordained this war. Moses said, “The reason we're going is to avenge the Lord.” In other words, it was God's honor that had been sullied and His word that had been defied. This war was a war for God's honor and God's glory.

This goes all the way down to verse 53, but look particularly at verse 21: “And Eliezer the priest said unto the men of war who went into the battle, this is the ordinance of the law which the Lord commanded Moses.” There was a whole ordinance, a whole field of regulations, concerning biblical warfare. We are not talking about spiritual warfare, but physical warfare.

Look at Numbers chapter 32 and verse 20. Moses said to the people, “If you will do this thing, if you will go armed before the Lord to war.” Then, in verse 27: “But thy servants will pass over, every man armed for war before the Lord to battle, as my Lord said.”

Moses was saying, if you want the land on this side of the river, you may have it, but you cannot have this land until you help all your brethren conquer their enemies. They were to go armed before the Lord—in the presence of God, as unto God—and fight the rest of the enemies of His people. They said that was exactly what they would do.

Now, let me ask you a question. This may never have entered your mind. Many wrongly suppose that God is not a warrior, that He does not use war, and that He does not condone war. But have you ever wondered how God got Israel out of Egypt? You might say He used all those miracles and plagues. That is true too, but turn in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 4. There you will find an interesting verse where God Himself tells you what He did to get the children of Israel out of Egypt.

God's Acts of War in History

Deuteronomy chapter 4, verse 32: “For ask now the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there have been any such thing as this great thing is, or have been heard like it.” Then he asks, “Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and lived?” He is speaking of the mount, where God spoke while it was on fire and smoking. They heard the voice of God and lived. Has anybody ever heard anything like this before? No. No one had ever heard it before.

Now look at verse 34: “Or has God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation?” God took His people out of one nation. How did He do it? “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 the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes.” God Himself calls what He did to Pharaoh and the Egyptians an act of war.

There were ten plagues in Egypt because Egypt was polytheistic; they had many gods, and each plague was aimed at a particular god. One reason the firstborn died is that Pharaoh himself claimed to be a god. Yet Pharaoh, who claimed to be a god, could not save his own firstborn, much less the firstborn of the others in Egypt. All these plagues, temptations, and trials were war, said God. He was at war with Egypt and the false gods of Egypt. God brought Israel out of Egypt by war. If all war is inherently sinful, evil, and wrong, then you are saying that God Himself must be inherently sinful, evil, and wrong, because God engaged in war.

That would be a blasphemous statement because God is infinitely holy and infinitely righteous. Therefore, we must rethink and re-educate ourselves according to the Bible. We must develop a biblical attitude toward war. We must have a biblical attitude toward education. We must have a biblical attitude toward government. We must be biblical in our attitude toward economics. We must have a biblical attitude toward every subject that is mentioned in the Word of God. One of those subjects mentioned over and over is the doctrine of war. Now, God did use war.

Are there unjust wars? Oh, plenty of them. Are there unholy wars? Oh, plenty of them. But there is such a thing as a holy war, and there is such a thing as a just war. It is not wrong to fight for the right reasons, because God Himself fights. You say, “What? You say, Brother Weaver, you're trying to tell me that God Himself fights?” Well, I'll show it to you from the Bible. All you have to do is believe the Bible.

Look at Deuteronomy, chapter 1, beginning with verse 29: “Then I said unto them, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. The Lord your God who goeth before you, He shall fight for you according to all that

He did for you in Egypt before your eyes." God will fight for you? Certainly. That's exactly what the Bible says.

Now look in Deuteronomy, chapter 2, beginning with verse 19. "And when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon," now the children of Israel are passing into the land, so he says, "When thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them. For I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession, because I gave it unto the children of Lot for a possession. That also was accounted a land of giants. Giants dwelt there in old time, and the Ammonites called them Zamzummims, a people great and many and tall as the Anakim. But the Lord destroyed them before them, and they succeeded them in their stead."

Now watch verse 22: "As he did unto the children of Esau who dwelt in Seir, when he," that is God, "destroyed the Horims from before them, and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead even unto this day."

The children of Israel were marching through the land, and God said, when you come to the children of Ammon, do not bother them. I'm not going to give you one ounce of their dirt, nor a half an acre. It's their land; I gave it to them. And when you get to the land of Edom, don't mess with those folks either, because I gave them that land, and I drove out the giants out of those lands. I'm not going to give you that land. Don't mess with them.

God says, "Rise you up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon. Behold, I have given in thine hand Sihon, the Amorite king of Heshbon, and his land; begin to possess it and contend with him in battle." God says, "I have given you this land," but there are people on it. "I want you to start a battle. I want you to start a war."

I have heard people say—and I understand this—that the only just war is a defensive war. That is not necessarily so. It is true that most just wars are defensive wars, but here is one that God started. God said, "You go in and start the battle," because this was a wicked man, and God was taking the land away from him. Let me take a moment and explain this.

I was preaching in Ohio, and there was an American Indian in the church. He was a professing Christian; maybe he was, maybe he was not—I do not know—but at least he was a professing Christian. During the week I was preaching there, we went out and had meals together. The pastor always invited him and others, and we fellowshipped together and had a good time. Toward the end of the week, the man sat across the table looking plainly angry.

Finally, I called his name and said, “What in the world is wrong with you?” He said, “You white men stole our land.” When he said that, my temperature gauge rose greatly. I said, “Let me tell you something, and let me tell you something right now. First of all, it was not your land; it is God’s land. Secondly, you were not even the first people here. There was a little people here before you, and your people killed and ate them. You were cannibalistic.”

When I said that, he looked up and asked, “How did you know that?” I said, “Well, I know that is beside the point. But it is a fact. You know it is true, and I know it is true. God is the true owner of this land—not you, not your people, and not my people. God has a sovereign right to dispossess any people who will not pay Him His rent, taxes, or tithe. If you owned a house and rented it, and the man would not pay you rent, what would you do?”

He said, "I'd kick him out." I said, "Do you know why God kicked the Amorites out of the land—the Hittites and Jebusites? They dishonored God. They would not give Him recognition or glory. And here you people were worshipping the sun, the moon, and the wind, complaining because God kicked you out? I have news for you: He'll kick us out the same way if we become proud and haughty and do not give God His righteous honor and glory. Don't come here telling me that we stole this land from you.

"We didn't steal it from you. It is true there was a lot of dishonesty, but God indeed kicked them out. He dispossessed them just the way He did right here. Here were wicked, ungodly men, and God has the sovereign right to give His earth to whomever He wants to give that earth."

Look at Deuteronomy chapter 2, verse 36. When God says, "Don't touch the land," we do not touch it. Why? Because it is God's land.

God puts people wherever He wants those people. We stayed away from the land God refused to give us.

Look in chapter 3, beginning with verse 1: "Then we turned and went up the way to Bashan, and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei." Here was Og coming out. Verse 2 says, "And the Lord said unto me, Fear him not." God said, "For I will deliver him and all his people and his land into thy hand. And thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon, king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon." So the Lord our God delivered Og, the king of Bashan, and all his people into our hands, and we smote him until none was left of him remaining. On the one hand, God told Israel, "You go contend with this people and take that land. I'm giving it to you. It's mine. You get them off."

On the other hand, Og and his people came out to start a fight. God said, “Don’t be afraid, because I’m going to deliver him and his people into your hand, and you do to them exactly what you did to the other folks. You kill them.” And God gave Israel that land.

Look, if you would, in Deuteronomy 3, verse 21: “And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto these two kings.” Note what he said: “Thine eyes have seen all what? That the Lord your God hath done unto these two kings. So shall the Lord do unto all the kings whither thou passest.” “You shall not fear them.” Watch: “For the Lord your God, He shall fight for you.” God is a warrior.

Now, it is true that Israel used their sword. It is true that Israel used their bow. But may I point out the fact that it was not Israel’s bow, and it was not Israel’s sword, that saved them. It was God who gave them the victory. If you don’t believe that, hold Deuteronomy; we’re not quite through there. But look in your Bibles, if you would please, to Psalm 44. Watch this Psalm.

What’s the song that is being sung? Psalm 44, beginning there with verse 1. The psalmist says, “We have heard with our ears, O God. Our fathers have told us what work thou didst in their days, in times of old.” Now look: “How thou,” that is, God, “didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them,” that is, you planted Israel; “how thou didst afflict the people,” that is, the heathen, “and

cast them out." Now watch: "For they," that is, Israel, "got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them, but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them." How is it that Israel defeated all these other nations that were greater and mightier, rooted and established? God gave them the victory. It was God who was fighting for Israel. God is a warrior. Therefore, in Deuteronomy chapter 3, verse 21, he said, "And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto these two kings." Here is a little assurance: "So shall the Lord do unto all the kings whither thou passest." He said, "Joshua, when you take on the others, God's going to destroy them as well. God will fight for you, because God is a warrior."

Every warrior has his own arsenal. If I am going deer hunting, I am going to use a high-powered rifle. If I am going bird hunting, I am going to use my shotgun. I do not normally shoot quail with a .308. I am not that good. You have to have a different weapon for whatever you are shooting or hunting. God has his own arsenal.

Jeremiah 50:25 says, "The Lord hath opened his armory, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation. For this is the work of the Lord God of hosts," that is, the Lord God of the armies, "in the land of the Chaldeans." What did God do? God opened his armory, chose whatever weapons he wanted to use, and used them against the Babylonians.

Then Jeremiah 51:19 says, "The portion of Jacob is not like them, for he is the former of all things, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance." So Israel is the rod of God's inheritance. "The Lord of Hosts is His name," the Lord of the Armies is His name. And look what God calls His people: "Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war. For with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms."

Here He refers to His people as His battle axe and as His weapons of war. God, then, is a warrior. God has His own armory, and God oftentimes uses His own people as His own battle axe and weapons of war.

But if you think that war and fighting are inherently evil and wicked in and of themselves, then you still must answer the question: Why, then, does God claim to be a warrior and a fighter Himself? Why does God have His own armory? Why does God have His own weapons? If war is evil and wicked in and of itself, may I ask you another question? If fighting is all wrong, why would God teach others to fight? You say God teaches people to fight? Oh yes.

God Teaches and Preserves Warriors

Look in your Bibles to Psalm 18, beginning with verse 31. I am not going to make you turn there, but 2 Samuel 22:35 says exactly the same as Psalm 18:34. We are talking about the one true and living God. The psalmist says, “For who is God save the Lord? Or who is a rock save our God? It is God that girdeth me with strength and maketh my way perfect. He maketh my feet like hinds' feet and setteth me on my high places.”

“He teaches my hands to war so that a bow of steel is broken by my arm.” David says it was God who taught him how to fight, and God who taught him how to make war. Turn over to Psalm 144, beginning with verse 1. Look what David says.

“Blessed be the Lord my strength, who teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight, my goodness and my fortress, my high tower and my deliverer, my shield and he in whom I trust, who subdueth my people under me.” David said, “God taught my hands to war. He taught my fingers to fight. And it is God who subdueth the people under me.” That is, it is God who gives me the victory. It is God who taught me.

When Israel went into the land, they destroyed many kings and many people, but they did not quite conquer all of them. God left some enemies in the land. What in the world would God leave some enemies in the land for? Judges chapter 3 tells us: “Now these are the nations which the Lord left to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan, only that the generations of the children of Israel might know to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof.”

Isn't that interesting? All these men who came out of Egypt and got into the promised land knew what war was about. They fought and understood. But God said, I'm leaving some enemies in the land so the next generation can learn to make war, so they will know how to fight. If all wars and all fighting are wrong, why does God engage in them? Why does God have His own armory? Why does God teach others to fight and to make war?

Let me ask another question. If all fighting and all wars are inherently evil and wrong, why in the world would God even preserve anyone who would engage in them? I want you to understand what I am talking about. I am sure there are many men who have been in the military.

When I was in boot camp, one of the things they did was take us out on a night maneuver. There was an eleven-man squad and it was a night firing exercise. Every fifth bullet was a tracer, which means it was a red flash; you could see it. So for every one that you could see, there were four that you could not see. And you had an eleven-man squad.

Back then they had BARs, Browning Automatic Rifles, usually on this end and on this end, aimed like this. Every other man in that squad, whether he was shooting that M1 or whatever he was shooting, had a field of fire from here to here; this man over here, from here to here. All this fire was intersecting. I never will forget when that sergeant gave the command for that eleven-man squad to begin firing.

All you could see was a solid sheet of red. I thought, "Oh Lord, how could anybody ever live through that?" But hundreds and thousands crawled through that without a scratch.

Look what David said in 1 Chronicles 18, verse 6: "Then David put garrisons in Syria, Damascus, and the Syrians became David's servants and brought gifts. Thus the Lord preserved David, whithersoever he went." We're talking about fighting. He had just conquered the Syrians, and God preserved him. Verse 13 says, "And he put garrisons in Edom." That is, he had now conquered Edom. "And all the Edomites became David's servants. Thus the Lord preserved David, whithersoever he went."

Do you know why David was such a mighty warrior? Because he had the blessings of God upon him. Sovereignly, miraculously, graciously, God preserved David wherever he went. David was a warrior.

Do you remember how jealous Saul was? When David came riding into town with his band of men, all the women began to sing and dance: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." David was a man of war, a warrior, and God sovereignly preserved him.

But the Bible says something else about David: He was a man after God's own heart. Isn't that interesting? You would think that somebody who killed as many people as David could not possibly be a godly man, and yet he was. God sovereignly protected him. God is a warrior. God fights. God has his own armory. God teaches others to fight.

The Lord is a Man of War

I want to show you two verses in the Bible that, if you want to argue with me or disagree with me, you are going to have to overcome. The first is found in Numbers 21:14: “Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the Lord, what he did in the Red Sea, and in the brooks of Arnon.”

Do you realize that all of those battles recorded from the destruction of Egypt through the conquest of Canaan—all of those battles and wars—are known as the wars of the Lord? That is what it says: “Wherefore, it is said in the book of the wars of the Lord, what he,” that is, what God did in the Red Sea and in the brooks of Arnon. It goes on to tell about these battles. They are called the wars of the Lord. This was something that God did, something that God initiated.

Then look at Exodus 15. Israel had been delivered from Egypt. Pharaoh and his men tried to chase them into the sea. Moses and all the people walked across on dry ground, but when the Egyptians came in, God brought the sea back and drowned them all. Exodus 15:1 says, “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath

triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song."

"He has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will prepare Him a habitation. My Father is God, and I will exalt Him." Are you ready? "The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is His name." Jehovah is a man of war. Jehovah is His name. Then it tells how He overthrew Pharaoh and all his army. The Lord is a man of war. What does that mean? It means God is a warrior.

Now consider Joshua 5. Here is a passage that probably everyone knows about. You may not have thought about it, but you remember when Israel had come to Jericho. Jericho was a city that was going to be destroyed; it was under the curse, the anathema of God. Do you remember how Joshua went out and tried to survey the situation?

Christ as Captain of the Lord's Host

All of a sudden, Joshua sees a man standing over there. Undoubtedly, Joshua probably put his hand on his sword, but he said, "Art thou for us or for our enemy? Who are you? Whose side are you on?"

Joshua 5:13 says, "And it came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him with a sword drawn in his hand." If I were Joshua, I would be putting my hand on my sword too, because here stands a man with a sword drawn in his hand. "And Joshua went unto him and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?"

"And he said, Nay, but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." "And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."

This is nothing less than what is known as a Christophany. A Christophany is a pre-incarnate appearing of Christ in the Old Testament. It is where Christ appears in the flesh before He ever became flesh, so to speak. Joshua said, "Are you for us or for our

adversaries?" He said, "Neither. But as captain of the Lord's host, am I now come." Joshua fell down and worshipped. The same thing was said to him that was said to Moses: "Take the shoes off your feet. The ground on which you're standing is holy."

Because God is a warrior, He comes as Captain of the Host. In 2 Chronicles 13:12 we read, "And behold, God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight you not against the Lord God of your fathers, for you shall not prosper."

What did the King of Judah say? We have God as our captain. He is the Lord of His army. Since God is captain of the host, He therefore has the right to send forth His army. In 2 Chronicles 6:34 we read this.

"If thy people go out to war against their enemies." Now watch carefully. "If thy people go out to war against their enemies, by the way that thou shalt send them," Whoa, let me read that again. Did you hear that? "If thy people," now Solomon is praying to God. He said, "if thy people go out to war against their enemies by the way that thou shalt send them," that is God sends them to war, "and they pray unto thee toward this city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name, then hear thou from the heavens

"their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause." They're going, says Solomon, but you're the one that sent them. You're the captain. Look in your Bibles to 2 Chronicles chapter 20 and look in verse 22 because I want you to see something else that God does as captain of his host. He not only sends his army but God also sets ambushes. Look at it 2 Chronicles chapter 20 and look if you would please verse 21.

"And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, that they should praise the beauty of holiness. And as they went out before the army..." Now watch. "...as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord, for His mercy endureth forever. And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount

Seir, which were come against Judah, and they were smitten." God set an ambush for his enemies. Hmm.

And then if you look in 2 Chronicles 20, verse 17, in fact, let's start reading in verse 16. Look what God tells Judah. He says, "Tomorrow you go down against them. You go confront your enemies. Behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz." You know, it's hard to fight against God when he knows which way you're coming and what your plans are. But he says, "They're coming up by the cliff of Ziz, and you shall find them at the end of the brook before the wilderness of Jeruel." Now watch. Look what God tells them. "You shall not need to fight in this battle."

"Set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you. O Judah and Jerusalem, fear not, nor be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord will be with you." And they didn't even have to fight because God turned their swords on each other, and they killed each other. Now, the Lord fought.

Before I begin making some applications, look in 1 Chronicles chapter 5 and verse 22. Look in 1 Chronicles chapter 5 verse 22. You say, “Brother Weaver, war is awful.” It is awful in one sense of the word, and I concur. But do you realize that God uses war many times? Look what the Bible says: “For there fell down many slain.” Why did many people get killed in the war? “Because the war was of God.” “And they dwelt in their steads until the captivity.”

Applications: Just Violence and Rejecting Pacifism

Do you realize that one of God’s judgments, not only against His enemies but oftentimes against His own people, is war? It was God who brought the Assyrians against Israel. It was God who brought the Babylonians against Judah. The very fact that God is a warrior teaches us something. Are you listening? It teaches us, first of all, that there is a proper and a just violence. There is a proper and a right use of war. But it is a right use grounded in the principles of justice and divine vengeance. There is a proper use, but it is guided exclusively by the Word of God. You and I cannot say that war is inherently evil. We cannot say that it is wicked in and of itself, because it is not. God Himself uses it. God Himself engages in it.

Pacifism is anti-God, anti-Bible, and anti-Christian. Pacifism, that is, a refusal to fight, rejects the fundamental opposition of righteousness and sin. It teaches that the ultimate sin is violence, not rebellion against God. Therefore, the pacifist will not fight, and there is no restraint upon evil. Pacifism basically promotes evil by failing to punish it.

A number of years ago, I was preaching in Indiana. I was dealing not with the biblical doctrine of war, but with civil government, Christian civil government, in Romans 13. A visitor was there that night with several of his members. He was a pastor and a pacifist.

Afterward he came to me and said, "I want to ask you about what you taught." I said, "Go ahead and ask." He did, and I once again explained numerous verses that I had not explained while preaching. Then I asked him, "Here you are at home alone with just you and your wife. Since you have already told me that you will not fight, I suppose that means you will not defend your wife either. What would you do if someone broke into your home with the intent of raping your wife, perhaps murdering her and killing you as well?"

He said, "I wouldn't do anything." I asked, "What do you mean you wouldn't do anything?" He said, "I'd just pray and trust the Lord." I said, "Well, neighbor, I just want to tell you one thing." He asked, "What is it?" I said, "I'm surely thankful that I'm not your wife."

There is a just and righteous use of violence, force, war, and fighting. Not all fighting is evil, and not all war is evil or wicked. God does not make war against the righteous; God only makes war against the wicked.

We need to learn that. I get amused at Christians. It seems endless how we are always attacking each other. I tell people, if the enemy really knew how we were, they would leave us alone; we would kill ourselves. You do not make war against the righteous. You make war against the wicked. God never makes war against the obedient, holy, and righteous. He makes war against the wicked and punishes the wicked.

Why do you think He sent the flood in Genesis chapter 6? Why did He send Israel against the Amorites, the Hittites, the Jebusites,

the Perizzites, the Hivites, and all the other "-ites"? He was punishing wickedness. We need to learn that we fight that which is wicked and wrong. We do not fight a fellow believer just because he happens not to agree with us on every little detail, or dot every I and cross every T the way we do. God fights against the wicked. God is a warrior.

God calls us to be warriors. We are to be spiritual warriors, and physical if need be, but we are to be spiritual warriors in fighting against sin and wickedness, lifting up our voice like a trumpet and declaring to people their sin, rebellion, and wickedness, and demanding that they bow the knee to Jesus Christ.

One of the problems in Christendom today is that we have lost the warrior mentality. We do not want to fight or stand. We want to cower, run, or get out of the way. We do not want anybody shouting at us or shooting at us, spiritually speaking. We need a good dose of holy boldness. We need to go back through God's boot camp and learn once again how to be a warrior, how to stand for truth and righteousness, and how to stand biblically. You need to understand the rules and regulations of biblical warfare, so whenever you are accosted or are in a situation, you do not have to study it out.

You will say, "I know what I can do by the grace of God. This is allowed. This is biblical. This is scriptural. And I am going to trust God to make the means effectual."

Let us pray. Father, we are so thankful today for the Lord Jesus Christ and for His grace. We are thankful for Your Word and for the truth that You are indeed a warrior God and fight for Your people. Lord, where in the world would we be without You? Where in the world would we be without the sovereign, omnipotent God of heaven and earth? Give us Your grace, Lord, to serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Change our attitudes, our philosophy, and our worldview, and bring us, Lord, into a biblical position where we think biblically and scripturally in every area for Your honor and Your glory. In Christ's name, Amen.

CHAPTER 3

The Truth About the Confederate Battle Flag

January 22, 2005

SCRIPTURE READING - Numbers 1:52; 2:2, 10, 17, 25, 31, 34 (KJV)

Introduction: The Biblical Importance of Flags and Standards

The following presentation by Pastor John Weaver points out only a few of the facts our modern history books ignore concerning the war between the states. It is intended to spark interest in the true heritage of the South and expose the efforts of the politically correct to slander the noble and heroic stand of Southerners, both black and white, against the tyranny of unconstitutional usurpation of power by the federal government.

I want you to open your Bibles to the book of Numbers, chapter 1. I am going to bring a message tonight in defense of the flag, and I think you will see why before I finish. Notice verse 52: "...and the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp and every man by his own standard

> throughout their host." Note that phrase, "every man by his own standard throughout their host."
>
> Now look in chapter 2, beginning with verse 2. "Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch. And on the east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch throughout their armies: and Nahshon the son of Amminadab shall be captain of the children of Judah."
>
> In verse 10: "On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben, according to their armies: and the captain of the children of Reuben shall be Elizur the son of Shedeur." Note, "on the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben." In verse 17: "Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp: as they encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards. On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim according to their armies: and the captain of the sons of Ephraim shall be Elishama the son of Ammihud."
>
> Then verse 25: "The standard of the camp of Dan shall be on the north side by their armies: and the captain of the children of Dan shall be Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai." Verse 31: "And they that were numbered in the camp of Dan were an hundred thousand and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred. They shall go hindmost with their standards." Verse 34: "...and the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses: so they pitched by their standards, and so they set forward, every one after their families, according to the house of their fathers."

Why in the world is there so much fuss over a flag? Is a standard, a banner, or a flag worth fighting about? Everyone knows that a flag is a symbol; it represents something. But what is it a symbol of, and what does it represent? If you study your Bible, you will find that our English word "flag" does not occur in our Bibles except to represent reeds, or properly the paper plant that grows by the riverside. But if you take the time to go through a concordance, you will find that the

words "banner," "standard," and "ensign" occur frequently, over and over. I want you to see the importance of a flag, or the importance of a standard. When the children of Israel were encamped in the wilderness, they kept everyone under his own standard.

They were centered around the tabernacle according to their standards as well. In Numbers chapter 2 and verse 2, we read: "Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard." Evidently every tribe had its own standard, but the verse continues, "with the ensign of their father's house." There were not only tribal standards, but also family standards. Usually, then, each family carried two banners: one for its tribe and one for its father's house. All these families and tribes in Israel were centered around the tabernacle, and they marched according to the order God gave.

There were four leading tribes: Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan. According to tradition, the standard of Judah had a lion on it. Hence, we know Christ as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The standard of Reuben had the likeness of a man's head. That of Ephraim had the figure of an ox, and that of Dan had the symbol of an eagle. If you study Ezekiel, you will find that the four living creatures he saw had the faces of these four standards mentioned in Numbers chapter 2.

Now, I want you to turn in your Bibles, if you would please, very quickly, to Psalm 20 and verse 5. Psalm 20 and verse 5, just trying to show you the importance of a standard. In Psalm 20 and verse 5, the Word of God says this. Note carefully, Psalm 20, verse 5, "...we will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the Lord fulfil all thy petitions." Note, "...we will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners." So banners, or flags then, have a religious significance. Here's the importance of a banner. We set it up in the name of our God. It represents our theology. It represents our Christianity. Look in your Bibles, if you would please, to Psalm 60 and verse 4. Psalm 60 and verse 4. Note, if you would, how plain the Bible is here, Psalm 60, verse 4. The Word of God says, "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth."

So God then gives us a banner that we might display that banner. Why? Because of the truth. Not because of error, not because of anything else, but because of the truth.

Now I want you to go back in your Bibles to the book of Exodus chapter 17 and verse 15. And you're going to be surprised when you find one of the names of God mentioned here in the Bible. Exodus chapter 17 and verse 15. The children of Israel had fought against the Amalekites and had won. God had given them the victory. And let's begin reading there with verse 14. Note what God tells Moses. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua."

"For I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah Nissi: For he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." Now note, Moses built an altar and called the name of it Jehovah Nissi. Jehovah Nissi means "the Lord our banner." In other words, God is the banner of His people. The name of God is associated with the warfare of His people. So a flag, then, is not just given to us for the truth, but God Himself is said to be our flag, our banner.

Isaiah chapter 59 and verse 19 gives us a very powerful verse: “So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.”

Did you hear what I just read? When the enemy shall come in like a flood, then the Spirit—that is, the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit—shall lift up a standard against him.

Now, let me ask you a question. If the Holy Spirit is lifting up a banner, if He is lifting up a standard against the enemies of God and the enemies of God’s people, what standard or what banner is He lifting up? Isaiah chapter 11 and verse 10 tells us. Note, if you would please, Isaiah 11 and verse 10. The Word of God says concerning Christ: “And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people. And to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious.”

So when the enemies of the Lord come in like a flood, the Spirit of God lifts up a standard against them, and that standard is Jesus Christ. God the Father is said in the Scripture to be our banner. God the Son is said in the Scripture to be our banner. I don't know about you, but I believe God places a great deal of importance upon banners, flags, and ensigns in the Word of God. No one can deny their importance based upon the Word of God.

Overview of Confederate Flags

But what about the Confederate flag? Is the Confederate flag a Christian symbol? Is the Confederate flag a Christian flag? Interestingly, when one mentions the Confederate flag, what usually comes to mind is the battle flag as we see right here. I want you to know tonight that there were numerous Confederate flags. This is the battle flag. Let me just point out the fact that there were five major flags.

There were many more. But the first flag I want to point out was the Bonnie Blue Flag, a solid blue flag with a single star in the middle. The Bonnie Blue Flag was the unofficial flag of the Confederate States of America. It was never officially adopted, but it was extremely popular, and there was a song written about it during that period.

Secondly, there was what is known as the first national flag, sometimes called the Stars and Bars. There was a problem, which I will deal with a little later: the Stars and Bars looked a lot like the Stars and Stripes, and there was a conflict because of that.

Thirdly, there was the second national flag, referred to as the Stainless Banner. It had this symbol in the upper left-hand corner, and then it was pure white, or silver. The only problem with the Stainless Banner was that, when the wind was not blowing and it was folded, it sometimes looked like a flag of truce or a flag of surrender.

Then there was the third national flag. It was the same Stainless Banner, but with a solid red bar all the way down it. That is the one usually flying today, the third national flag. It was officially adopted, but very few of them were issued.

Then, of course, we have the Confederate battle flag as we know it. Interestingly enough, the first four flags are very rarely spoken against because most people do not even know they existed and are totally ignorant of them. Consequently, it is the battle flag that catches most of the flack.

So let me begin tonight with some negatives. I want to tell you what the Confederate battle flag does not represent and what it does not symbolize. Hear me very carefully, because I am going to give you the historical proof for what I say. First of all, the Confederate battle flag is not a racist flag.

I can hear it now: "But Brother Weaver, do you not know that the KKK uses a Confederate flag? Do you not know that white supremacist groups use the Confederate flag? Do you not know that hate groups use the Confederate flag?" Yes. But I also know that they use the Stars and Stripes, and I also know that they even use the Christian flag as well.

The Confederate Battle Flag Is Not a Racist Flag

Why are not the Stars and the Stripes and the Christian flag considered racist flags as well? If someone is going to be guilty by association, or if something is going to be guilty by association, I can show you pictures of the Ku Klux Klan marching in Washington, D.C., and there is not one Confederate flag amongst them. They are all carrying the Stars and Stripes, the U.S. flag. If we are going to condemn a flag because the KKK, the white supremacist groups, and the hate groups use it, let us condemn all the flags. Be consistent. Condemn the Stars and Stripes; condemn the Christian flag.

Do you realize that the Darlington 400 for years used a picture of the Confederate flag on its billboard and advertised itself as the Rebel Raceway? Does that mean, therefore, that all those Winston Cup drivers are racists? Does that mean that anyone who attends the Darlington 400 is a racist?

What about the Scottish soldiers? Even today, Scottish soldiers who are in the British Army wear the cross of St. Andrew. Does that mean that all Scottish soldiers are racist as well? Let me show you the enmity, hatred, and venom spoken against this flag, and I am

going to tell you why. I had a website, and the name of the website was basically "The Confederate Flag Must Go."

It was put there by Jack Crawford, who evidently is a black man, based upon his other writings. I took the following quotation verbatim from his website: "The Confederate flag is a well-recognized international symbol of racism, slavery, hatred, murder, and white supremacy. It should be outlawed, not just banned. Anyone flying it should be corrected in a manner that is usually reserved for overseers, slave masters, and leaders of lynch mobs responsible for the murder of children. Am I clear?" So what does Mr. Jack Crawford say? He says anyone who flies this flag ought to be killed.

That is basically what he is saying. What would you do to a murderer who formed a lynch mob and hung a child? Very clearly, you would see that he got the death penalty. That is what he is saying.

Mr. Crawford's statement is unhistorical, unconstitutional, and untrue. Do you realize that most attackers of the flag are either motivated by historical ignorance or pure, unadulterated malice toward the South, its symbol, its heritage, and its people? In 1994, a Harris poll found that two-thirds of black Americans had no problem with the Confederate flag. No problem at all. Why make the flag an issue? In fact, numerous black Americans speak out for the Confederate flag.

R.J. Wilkins of Miami, Florida, had this to say: "They were flying the Confederate flag at the Capitol in Tallahassee, Florida, and he wrote this, 'I'm a black man who is not offended by the flying of the Confederate flag beside the Capitol in Tallahassee, Florida. The Confederate flag is as much a part of my history as of any white person's.'

"'It may not represent the best of my race or be held by some as a contribution to this country's greatness, but it does to me. My great grandparents were a part of the plantations. They worked the cotton fields, cleaned the big houses, and in many ways supported the development of American society. We should let the Confederate flag fly as a reminder of our American history, both black and white.'"

W. Earl Douglas, a black journalist from Charleston, South Carolina, is now dead, but this is what he said concerning the Confederate flag: “If hate had been the prevailing emotion between the races, then it is a safe bet that the Confederacy would have never been born.”

“If hate had been the prevailing emotions between the blacks and the whites in the South,” he is saying, “it's a safe bet that the Confederacy would have never, ever been born.” He continues, “Fortunately, there was love, understanding, and compassion.” Then this black man says, “And the two greatest lies ever perpetrated by history are, number one, that the South instigated the war, and number two, that it was fought by the North for the purpose of freeing the slaves.”

“The Negro was merely used as the excuse for that war, while the real reason for it is reflected in every area of our lives, where the tentacles of government form the bars of a new slavery. No, don't hurl that Confederate battle flag. Let it wave all across the South to remind Americans that there exists here a yearning for liberty, freedom, and independence that will not be denied.

“Let it fly as a testimonial to real men and real women who would rather work and fight than shed tears and beg for governmental charity.” He understood. The Confederate battle flag is not a racist symbol, and it never has been. One of my favorite stories is about a black representative, John F. Harris, a legislator in Washington County, Mississippi.

He had the opportunity to vote for Senate Bill No. 25, a bill to erect a Confederate monument on the Capitol Square in Jackson, Mississippi. The bill passed. Mr. Harris, who was sick, got out of bed to give his speech before the Senate. On February the 23rd, 1890, the Daily Clarion-Ledger of Jackson, Mississippi, printed his speech in full.

Historical Testimony from Black Confederates

He said, “Mr. Speaker, I have arisen here in my place to ask for a few words on the bill. I have come from a sick bed. Perhaps it was not prudent for me to come. But sir, I could not sit quietly in my room

without contributing a few remarks of my own. I was sorry to hear the speech of the young gentleman from Marshall County. I am sorry that any son of a soldier should go on record as opposed to the erection of a monument in honor of the brave dead. And sir, I am convinced that had he seen what I saw at Seven Pines in the seven days fighting around Richmond, the battlefield covered with the mangled forms of those who fought for their country and for their country's honor, he would not have made that speech."

"When the news came that the South had been invaded, those men went forth to fight for what they believed, and they made no requests for monuments. But they died, and their virtues should be remembered. Sir, I went with them. I, too, wore the gray, the same color my master wore. We stayed four long years, and if that war had gone on till now, I would have been there yet. I want to honor those brave men who died for their convictions. When my mother died, I was a boy. Who, sir, then acted a part of a mother to the orphaned slave boy but my old missus?"

"Were she living now, or could speak to me from those high realms where are gathered the sainted dead, she would tell me to vote for this bill, and, sir, I shall vote for it. I want it known to all the world that my vote is given in favor of a bill to erect a monument in honor of the Confederate dead."

Here was a man, a black man, who wore the Confederate gray, and he understood the war was not a racist war. Now, let me tell you, the Confederate flag is not a racist flag. But now wait. If you want racism, if you want hatred, if you want white supremacy, I will tell you where to find it: under the Stars and Stripes, not under the Confederate flag.

Racism Under the Stars and Stripes

Do you realize the Emancipation Proclamation was signed on January 1, 1863? On August 14, 1862, less than five months before the Emancipation Proclamation was signed, Abraham Lincoln invited a number of leading blacks to the White House to give them his words of wisdom and to demonstrate to them why he was attempting to colonize them back in Africa. By the way, Lincoln's

Negro policy was to send them all back to Africa. That was his policy. William Seward, William Stanton, all of them, same thing.

He invited these Negroes to come to the White House to hear his words of wisdom, and I am quoting verbatim what Lincoln said. Listen carefully. He says, “Why should people of your race be colonized and where? Why should they leave this country? This is perhaps the first question for proper consideration. You and we are different races. We have between us a broader difference than exists between almost any other two races. Whether it is right or wrong, I need not discuss. But this physical difference is a great disadvantage to us both, as I think. Your race suffers very greatly, many of them by living among us, while ours suffers from your presence. In a word, we suffer on each side. If this is admitted, it affords a reason, at least, why we should be separated. You are freemen here, I suppose.”

"Perhaps you have been long free all of your lives. Your race is suffering, in my judgment, the greatest wrong inflicted on any people. But even when you cease to be slaves, you are yet far removed from being placed on an equality with the white race. The aspiration of men is to enjoy equality with the best when free. But on this broad continent, not a single man of your race is made the equal of a single man of our race." Abraham Lincoln. Blacks aren't equal to whites. Never will be.

In a speech in Charleston, Illinois, in 1858, Lincoln said, "I am not now nor have ever been in favor of bringing about in any way the social or the political equality of a white and black race. I am not now nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of Negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor of intermarriages with white people. There is a physical difference between the white and black races, which will forever forbid the two races from living together on social or political equality. There must be a position of superior and inferior, and I am in favor of assigning the superior position to the white man." Abraham Lincoln.

The Confederate flag has never stood as a racist symbol. If you want racism, you go to the Stars and Stripes. In the South, although there was separation, the blacks respected the whites and the whites respected the blacks. There was no trouble in the South back then, nor in the 1960s, until the North came down and started stirring up

trouble. So the Confederate flag is not a racist flag. The Confederate flag is not a flag of slavery. It does not represent slavery.

The Confederate Flag Is Not a Flag of Slavery

There is not one slave ever brought into this country under the Confederate flag. Every slave brought into this country was brought in by northern ships under the Stars and Stripes. There was not even a slave brought into this country on a southern vessel.

Out of the 224 years in this country that slavery was legal—and there were slaves in this country in 1620—only four of those years did the Confederate battle flag fly. One flag flew over the country more than any other flag during those 224 years: the Stars and Stripes. It was not the Confederate battle flag. If you want to hate a flag of slavery, then you ought to hate the Stars and Stripes. That was the one that brought the slaves over.

If you want to hate another flag of slavery, why not hate the British flag? England was responsible for taking five million blacks from Africa and selling them to every country under the sun. If you want to hate a flag, why not hate the Dutch flag, or the Portuguese flag, or the Spanish flag? They sold slaves. And if you want to hate a flag even then, how about hating the Muslim flags? Even they, the Muslims, are still involved in slavery.

Let us be honest. If you want to believe that the war of 1861 to 1865 was over slavery, I can show you two things that ought to forever correct your thinking in that area. The war was not over slavery. Slavery has only been made an issue by the liberal revisionists. It was not an issue. Let me prove to you by two simple statements that the war was not fought over slavery. I will give you more. Therefore, this flag could never, ever have represented slavery.

The War Was Not Fought Over Slavery

Abraham Lincoln proposed a 13th Amendment to the Constitution in March of 1861. It is the only proposed constitutional amendment that was signed by a sitting president, and it bears Abraham Lincoln's signature. Here was his proposed 13th Amendment: "No amendment shall be made to the Constitution which will authorize

or give Congress the power to abolish or interfere within any state with the domestic institutions thereof, including that of persons held to labor or service by the laws of said state."

Did you hear that? Lincoln's proposed 13th Amendment said that Congress should not have the power to interfere with institutions within any state, including those held to labor or service by the laws of that state. In other words, Lincoln was saying to the South, "If you will accept this proposed 13th Amendment, you may forever keep slaves."

Beauregard never fired on Fort Sumter until April the 9th. This was in March of 1861. If the war had been about slavery, and if the South wanted just to keep slaves, why fire a gun? Why fire a shot? Simply accept this proposed 13th Amendment, and it would all be over.

A resolution was passed unanimously by Congress on July the 23rd, 1861. You may read it for yourself in the congressional record. "The war is waged by the government of the United States, not in the spirit of conquest or subjection, nor for the purpose of overthrowing or interfering with the rights or institutions of the states, but to defend and protect the Union." Congress said the war was not about slavery. Lincoln said, "The war's not about slavery. I will even give you a 13th Amendment that will allow you to make slavery permanent."

What was happening was this: there were many issues, and I cannot cover them all tonight. One issue was economic. Do you realize the South, before the war, was extremely wealthy? Before the war, the South funded probably 75 to 80 percent of all the taxes. But the North wanted a 40% tariff. The South said, "No, the most we will ever agree to is a 10% tariff."

Lincoln and the Radical Republicans were saying, "We will give you the 13th Amendment. We will let you keep your slaves if that's what you want. You just let us keep our tariffs." In other words, the North was willing to sell the blacks out for money, for higher taxes. They were not interested in the slaves; they could care less. Hapgood's book, Abraham Lincoln, The Man of the People, on page 273, quotes Abraham Lincoln as saying, "If I could save the Union

without freeing any of the slaves, I would do it." Abraham Lincoln later said that slaves are property, and if freed, they should be paid for.

Later, Lincoln said, "I have no purpose directly or indirectly to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so." Here, Lincoln is acknowledging that he has no lawful right to interfere with slavery. Slavery, by the way, was constitutional. All 13 colonies agreed on it, and in 1776, all 13 colonies held slaves.

Not just the South, all of them. Lincoln said, "I have no lawful right to interfere, nor," he says, "do I have an inclination to do so." In a letter to Alexander Stephens, who happened to be later the Vice President of the Confederacy, Lincoln wrote Alexander Hamilton Stephens and says this, "Do the people of the South really entertain fear that a Republican administration would directly or indirectly interfere with their slaves, or with them about their slaves?"

"If they do, I wish to assure you that once as a friend, and still, I hope, not an enemy, that there is no cause for such fears. The South would be in no more danger in this respect than it was in the days of Washington." So once again, Lincoln is saying, "It's not over slavery." You say, "But Brother Weaver, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Emancipation Proclamation freed the slaves." No, it didn't. The Emancipation Proclamation did not free one slave. Do you know what Abraham Lincoln tried to do with the Emancipation Proclamation?

In fact, he says so himself, and so do other men in his cabinet. They say that the Emancipation Proclamation was a war measure. Lincoln, number one, wanted to keep England specifically, and the rest of Europe particularly, from joining in with or recognizing the Confederate States of America. That was his first goal in that Emancipation Proclamation. His second goal was a war measure, another war measure, in the sense he was hoping that the blacks in the South would rise up in rebellion against their white masters and their white people.

The Emancipation Proclamation as a War Measure

Just to show you there was no trouble in the South, there was not one rebellion during that war of black folks. Do you realize that a thousand torches in a thousand black hands would have emptied the Confederate armies? The men would have gone home to protect their families, and Lincoln knew that.

What Lincoln did was this: he tried to free the slaves in the South, where he had absolutely no authority, and refused to release the slaves in the North, where he did have authority. Did you know that in the Northern armies, even while they were fighting the South, there were over 300,000 slaveholders? Did you know that General Robert E. Lee, before the war ever began, freed the slaves he inherited? General Ulysses S. Grant, the main general of the North and afterward president, kept his slaves even after the war was over.

He did so with this excuse: “Good help is hard to find.” The truth of the matter is that the Emancipation Proclamation was not only unconstitutional, as everybody recognized; it also cost the Republicans a lot of elections. Five Northern states refused afterward to elect Republicans to Congress. Moreover, many Union soldiers deserted because of it and refused to fight.

Slavery was not the issue. Slavery has never been the issue until recently, when political revisionists and politically correct people wanted to make it the issue. There have been numerous warnings throughout history concerning our flag, heritage, and culture. One came from General Patrick Cleburne, who warned the South concerning subjugation in January of 1864.

And you’re talking about a prophet? Listen carefully to what General Cleburne said: “If the South lost, it means that the history of this heroic struggle will be written by the enemy, that our youth will be trained by Northern school teachers, will learn from Northern school books their version of the war, will be impressed by all of the influences of history and education to regard our gallant dead as traitors and our maimed veterans as fit subjects for derision.”

That is exactly what has happened in this country. Pick up any textbook, and it will simply say, “The war was over slavery, the North was right, the South was wrong.” Most folks believe that because

they have been taught it. The war was not over slavery—not over slavery at all.

One of my favorite stories concerns a reconstructed Southerner who encountered Mildred Lewis Rutherford, one of the finest Southern historians one could ever come across. I believe she died in 1928. The reconstructed Southerner said to Mrs. Rutherford, "My father was a Confederate soldier, but had he lived, I'm sure he would have regretted having fought for the wrong side." Mrs. Rutherford replied, "Far more probably, he would have regretted having a son so disloyal to the principles for which he was willing to give his life." The Confederate flag is not a racist flag. It is not a flag of slavery.

The Confederate Flag Is a Christian Flag

Here is the third thing I want to teach you tonight: the Confederate flag is a Christian flag, and it represents freedom from tyranny. The Confederate battle flag as we know it really did not come into existence—or, I should say, into full-blown presence—until after First Manassas, July 21, 1861. Most of you know, or at least should know, that the South and the North call their battles by different names: it is either First Manassas or First Bull Run, depending on what section of the country you are from. During that battle, the Confederate battle flag was the Stars and Bars. The Stars and Bars was easily confused with the Stars and Stripes, not only at a distance but especially under battle conditions.

Remember all the smoke that those black powder rifles and cannon made at that particular time. During this battle, General Beauregard was observing the action when he saw a large body of troops moving toward the Union right flank. He tried repeatedly to make out the flag, to determine whether it was northern or southern, but he simply could not see it. So he called some of his young lieutenants and said, "Tell me, is that our flag or is that their flag?" They could not make it out either. He stood there cautiously, trying to determine whose flag it was and what group was there.

All of a sudden, a little puff of wind came, and the flag unfurled. He could see that it was Stars and Bars, and he cried, "The day is ours! Attack! Attack!" With that, of course, they won the day, and the

Yankees literally threw down their weapons and ran all the way back to Washington, D.C.

Later, Beauregard wrote, “At the Battle of Manassas, I found it difficult to distinguish our then-Confederate flag from the United States flag, the two being so much alike, especially when General Jubal Early made the flank movement which decided the fate of the day.” He continued, “I resolved to have our flag changed or to adopt for my command a battle flag which would be entirely different from any state or federal flag.” After the war, Beauregard said, “After the battle it was found that many persons in both armies firmly believed that each side had used as a stratagem the flags of his opponent.”

It was General Miles who proposed this battle flag with the Saint Andrew's cross on it. Now, why in the world is this battle flag carrying what is known as the Saint Andrew's cross? Andrew was the first disciple of Jesus Christ, a faithful follower of Jesus Christ, and he faithfully preached and taught the Word of God. He taught and preached not only in Asiatic nations, but also in what is in Russia today. Andrew was crucified around 69 A.D. in Patras, Greece.

Andrew persuaded his persecutor, prosecutor, whatever you want to call him, not to crucify him on a Latin cross, but to crucify him on an X-shaped cross. He did not want to be crucified on a Latin cross because that was the way Christ was crucified, and he did not believe himself worthy to be crucified like Christ. Secondly, he convinced his persecutor not to nail him to that X-shaped cross, but literally to tie his feet and to tie his legs there.

Because once again he did not believe he was worthy to be crucified in the same manner Jesus Christ was crucified. When this occurred, Andrew was approximately 90 years of age. Andrew knew that being tied to this cross would prolong the agony and pain—not ease it, but prolong it. Andrew remained alive, tied to that cross, and preached to everyone that came by for three days.

Finally, after the third day, many of the people believed his preaching, and some were so moved that they went to the persecutor and asked him to have Andrew cut down from the cross. He consented, and they cut him down. When they did, he fell to the

earth absolutely dead as a martyr for Jesus Christ. Andrew became the patron saint of Russia and of Scotland.

According to the census, two-thirds of the Americans living in the 1860s were either Scotch or Scotch-Irish. Many already had St. Andrew's crosses on their flags because they were Scotch. The cross of St. Andrew is a symbol of the Christian faith and of the heritage of the Celtic race. The Confederate battle flag is based upon the national flag of Scotland. Another name for it is the Southern Cross. General Miles, General Beauregard, and men of the South adopted this flag deliberately, consciously, and premeditatingly to display their faith in the sovereign God of heaven and earth. They realized that God is the God of providence, history, and salvation. General Miles received a letter from Samuel Barrett of Washington, Georgia, written on May the 23rd, 1861, and forwarded to South Carolina.

It was Congressman William Porcher Miles. Miles headed the Congressional Committee tasked with adopting a flag for the Confederacy. Barrett said the flag should be “a token of humble acknowledgment of God and be a public testimony to the world that our trust is in the Lord our God.” Colonel Walton wanted to have the Latin cross, but Colonel Miles said, “No, we’ll use the St. Andrew’s cross.”

That is basically what General Beauregard adopted. This is a Christian flag, a Christian symbol, chosen to display faith in the sovereign God. Why should it not? Did you know that the Confederate Constitution acknowledged the sovereignty and almighty power of God?

The Confederate Constitution was the first constitution that outlawed slavery. Basically, after the then-living slaves died out, there would be no more slaves imported into the South. Here is the preamble: “We the people of the Confederate States, each state acting in its sovereign and independent character, in order to form a permanent federal government, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, invoking the favor and guidance of Almighty God, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the Confederate States of America.” Even the Confederate States’ motto was Deo Vindice, which means “the Lord is our Vindicator.”

The Flag Represents Freedom from Tyranny

The Southern Cross, this St. Andrew's Cross, is also the Greek letter Chi, which has historically been used to represent Christ because Chi happens to be the first two letters of the word Christ. Many people object to cards saying, “Merry Xmas,” but that X was the St. Andrew's Cross. Historically, it meant Christ. Moreover, let me tell you this.

Uneducated and educated people understood the St. Andrew's Cross. They understood the Chi. They understood the importance of it. Because even on legal documents, a man who was uneducated and could not write made his what? His X, because it was the first two letters of the name of Christ. And it was made in faith and recognition before God as the sovereign God and the God of providence. And he was giving an oath as he made his X that he would keep his word and do what he had signed.

The Confederate battle flag, dear friend, is indeed a Christian flag. What does it mean to attack the battle flag? It means attacking the sovereignty, majesty, and might of Jesus Christ and His divine role in our history, culture, and life. To attack the battle flag is to attack Christ because it is a Christian flag.

Moreover, this flag stands for the heroic efforts and courageous acts of our Confederate dead. Did you know that General Beauregard received one of the first three original battle flags? On May 28, 1883, Beauregard donated his battle flag to the Louisiana Washington Artillery. Colonel Walton accepted the flag, and Judge Alfred Roman presented it. Here is what the judge said: "In the name of General Beauregard, under whose eyes you first went under fire at Manassas, I have the honor to present to you this sacred emblem of Southern valor and patriotism."

"Its colors are yet as fresh as when it received its parting look of its fair maker. Its value is enhanced by the fact that the upper portion of its staff is made of a piece of the flagstaff of Fort Sumter, shot down by the Confederate gunners in April 1861." Those gunners were under the command of General Beauregard. "Unsullied though it be by the smoke of the battle, it was nonetheless born in war, and the breeze first kissed it in the tinted field."

"It is the genuine model of the glorious flag all around which all of us fought, and so many of us bled, and so many of us died."

What did the judge say? "Here's an emblem of Southern valor and patriotism." He did not say, "Here's an emblem of racism and our fight for our slaves." He said, "Here's the emblem of Southern valor and patriotism."

Why attack the Confederate flag? Why attack Confederate monuments? Why attack the Confederate South? To attack the Confederate South, its flag, and its monuments is an attack on truth. The South was fighting for independence. The South was fighting for states' rights. The South was fighting for the Tenth Amendment that you and I know. Did you know that the South threw up a petition against Congress and against the United States government exactly like the Declaration of Independence? They only changed the names and made it reflect exactly what the North was doing, how they were acting exactly like George III.

It may surprise you to know that some Southerners wanted to keep the Stars and Stripes. They said, “It’s not we who have left the Constitution, it’s the North. Let them get another flag. We’re the ones who are fighting for truth.” To attack the Confederate flag is an attack on political incorrectness. If you want to be politically correct, liberal, and pink today, then you attack the Confederate flag and the Confederate monuments.

The Confederate flag represents all those who are opposed to unlimited government. The North wants unlimited government. Washington, D.C., wants unlimited government, and unhappily, most of our state capitals want unlimited government. The Confederate flag says, “Oh no, there is a limitation. There is a Constitution.” We have God-given rights, and we are not going to surrender them. To attack the flag is to attack the truth.

The Confederate flag stands against everything that you now see in Washington, D.C. Two hundred fifty thousand Confederates gave their lives to prevent what we have today: the intrusion of government into every area of our lives. The Confederate battle flag stands for truth, freedom from tyranny, states’ rights, liberty, and freedom—liberty against tyranny and freedom against tyranny.

The Confederate battle flag is indeed an international symbol, but not an international symbol of racism, white supremacy, hatred, and murder. Some of you remember when the Berlin Wall was torn down. We watched it on television, but you may have forgotten what was waving on that wall: the Confederate battle flag—victory over tyranny. The battle flag was adopted and used by the people of Poland, Hungary, the Ukraine, Lithuania, and East Germany as they were victorious over the Union of Soviets. Even Quebec used the battle flag in trying to secede from Canada a few years ago.

The battle flag is an international symbol for liberty, freedom, and independence against tyranny. It represents truth against error, freedom against tyranny, light against darkness, and the kingdom of Christ against the kingdom of darkness. What we have forgotten is that the War of 1861 and 1865 was not simply a war involving politics and economics; it was indeed a cultural war and a religious war.

The North was predominantly Unitarian and humanist to the core, while the South was predominantly Christian. It was a war to wipe out Southern heritage, Southern culture, and Southern Christianity. As Greg said earlier, public schools were only forced upon the South after the South lost the war of northern aggression.

Why the Flag Must Be Attacked

Why must the flag be attacked? Why must all Confederate monuments be attacked? Why must the Confederate dead be libeled and slandered? Because if we keep our symbols and see them constantly, we might begin to inquire as to their origin and meaning. In doing so, we begin to question the myths and propaganda promulgated down through these years, and, questioning those myths and propagandas, we begin to see the truth. Then we begin to stand for the very things our forefathers stood for, believed in, and died for.

That flag is a threat to the socialists, to the communists, to those who hate God and hate Christ and hate liberty and hate freedom. It is a threat, and they want it taken out of sight. We better say, "Lord, let that flag wave."

When that flag goes down, do not think that will be the end of it. It will only be the beginning, because they will want to take everything else until our heritage, our culture, and everything are totally destroyed. In order to keep a people enslaved, and in order to keep your slaves content, you must destroy their past. The people who have no past have no future.

One of these days, the South is going to awaken again. We have sacrificed our children too long on the altar of humanistic and northern appeasement. We have to come back and say, "We have a heritage, we have a culture, we have a life."

Conclusion: Return to the Old Paths

I remember when I was in college, I had a voice and diction class. My teacher, unhappily, was a Yankee, but he told me, "Mr. Weaver, you still have that Southern drawl." I said, "Sir, do you know why I have that Southern drawl?" He asked, "Why?" I said, "Because I was born in the South, I'm living in the South, and bless God, I plan on keeping my Southern drawl. I'm not ashamed of it. I'm not ashamed of that battle flag. I'm not ashamed of our history and our heritage, and I want to challenge you."

If you do not believe what I am saying, go down to the library, get the official volumes on the War of Rebellion, and get the official records, as I did. Read them for yourself, and you will find that what I am saying is absolutely true.

Jeremiah chapter 6, verse 16, says, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein." But look what he said: "Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein."

Let me tell you something. If I had a choice today, if I could choose between the society that we have today and the society that existed in the South before the war of northern aggression, I can assure you I would take the society that existed in the South before the war of northern aggression. If I had a choice as to whether I would take the morality of the day or the morality of the South in the

1860s, I would take the morality of the South in the 1860s. If I had a choice as to whether I could take the character—or, I should say, the lack of character today—or the character that was around in the 1860s in the South, I would take the character in the 1860s in the South.

A man's word was still his bond back then. I know there were some criminals, but generally speaking, a man's word was his bond. It is time we get back to our history, our heritage, our culture, and truth. It is time we get back to Christ. We need to do exactly what Jeremiah says: stand in the ways and ask for the old path.

wherein is the good way, and walk therein. And long may that Christian Confederate battle flag wave. It's a symbol of Christ and Christianity and patriotism and valor and courage and independence and freedom.

Father, we bow to Thee tonight. We thank Thee for Jesus Christ. We thank Thee that He is the true banner and that in Him and in Him alone is salvation. I pray, Father, in Christ's name, move on our hearts and stir our souls. May we not give up, give in, or give out. May we fight for Thy truth, Thy honor, and the honor of Thy people. In Jesus Christ's name we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 4

A Professional Army vs. A Militia

December 29, 2006

SCRIPTURE READING - 1 Samuel 8:1-17 (KJV)

Introduction: Israel's Request for a King

> Now the name of the first was Joel, and the name of the second Abiah, and they were judges in Beersheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre and took bribes and perverted judgment. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together and came to Samuel and to Ramah and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways.
>
> Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, and they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people, and all that they say unto thee. For they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

> According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore, hearken unto their voice; yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king, and he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you.
>
> The word take is important: This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you. He will take your sons and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, to be his horsemen, and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands and captains over fifties, and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war and his instruments of his chariots.
>
> And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, to be cooks and to be bakers, and he will take your fields and your vineyards and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants, and he will take the tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and give to his officers and to his servants, and he will take your menservants and your maidservants and your goodly young men and your asses and put them to his work, and he will take the tenth of your sheep, and you shall be his servants. And you shall cry out in the day, because of your king which you shall have chosen you, and the Lord will not hear you in that day.

Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel, and they said, “Nay, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.” Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord. The Lord said to Samuel, “Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king.” And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, “Go ye, every man, into his tent.”

Israel's Organization as a Militia

We have just finished a series of three lessons on military regulations from Deuteronomy 20. I hope by now everyone understands that Israel was organized as a militia. In fact, if you do not know it, I want to make you aware of this certain truth: when Israel left Egypt, when God ordered Israel out of the land of Egypt, they marched out in a military rank. Exodus 13:18 says, “But God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea, and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.” The word harnessed there literally means they went up by five in a rank. So they were marching by five. You will find that this word harnessed is not only a military term, but it also refers to being armed.

Numbers 32:17 says that the people would “go ready armed before the children of Israel until we have brought them into their place,” while their little ones would dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land. They said, “We will go ready armed.” The phrase ready armed means five in a rank. They were marching military style, ready armed.

Joshua 1:14 says, “Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan, but ye shall pass before your brethren, armed or marshaled by five, all the mighty men of valor, and help them.” Once again, we find that they were arranged by five in a rank. The same thing is true in Joshua 4:12 and in Judges 7:11.

So Israel came out of Egypt marching by five in a rank. They came out in military fashion. They came out as armed men of war.

According to the book of Exodus, chapter 18 and verse 25, the militia was organized as a nation, with elders over it, over tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands. Five squads of ten men would be fifty, which would equal a platoon. Two platoons of fifty men would equal a hundred, which would be a company, and so on. During the time of peace, the militia was led by elders. The elders ordered the men and directed them. But in a time of war, those men who were most skilled in military maneuvering and military strategy would take positions as the heads of the militia and order them in war.

Implications of the Militia System

Every able-bodied man, twenty years and over, was to present himself for battle when it was absolutely necessary. The minimum age was twenty years of age. Since Israel was organized as a militia, every family was armed and trained in the use of arms. That had to be so because every family had to present every male twenty years and older for military service when the occasion demanded. So godly people have always sought to be armed and trained in weaponry. Now, where in the world can I make that statement? How can I say that godly people have always sought to be armed and trained in weaponry?

Let me give you a couple of reasons. First of all, because they understand, biblically speaking, that self-defense is obligatory. When God says, "Thou shalt not kill," the sixth commandment, the opposite or the positive of "Thou shalt not kill" is, "Thou shalt preserve life." That means every individual has an obligation to preserve his own life. Self-defense is obligatory if you are going to keep the commandments of God. You must defend yourself.

Secondly, godly people understand that depraved, perverted people will always seek to pervert dominion and try to oppress and tyrannize others. Therefore, they must have weapons to overthrow tyranny and wickedness. There is nothing sinful, wicked, wrong, or unbiblical with the just use of force.

There is nothing sinful, wicked, wrong, or unbiblical with the just use of force. If there was something wrong in and of itself with the just use of force, then God himself would be sinful, because God used force or power to create. God used force and power to redeem. God uses force and power to preserve and sustain. God also uses force and power to punish and destroy.

Revelation 19 makes this clear: "And I saw heaven open, and behold, a white horse. And he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war." We are talking about Christ. "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns, and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God. And the armies who

followed in heaven followed upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, and out of his mouth forth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and the wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords."

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God. Watch now, that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and of the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beasts of the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse and against his army." Everything was destroyed by Christ. Very obviously, we have a just use of force here, where Christ is punishing and destroying the wicked. There is nothing wrong with the just use of force.

You say, "Brother Weaver, where in the world did Israel gather its arms from? Because I remember reading in my Bible that Israel was a bunch of slaves, and slaves usually are not armed." That's true.

Have you ever thought that once God drowned Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, probably thousands of weapons washed up on the shore? Very obviously, the Israelites gathered the weapons that Pharaoh's army had lost. Not only that, some of those men were skilled enough to make their own weaponry.

Thirdly, after every successful battle, they armed themselves with the weaponry of their defeated enemies. They confiscated those weapons and used them. So very obviously they were armed. In the Bible, when citizens presented themselves for military service, usually they brought their own weapons with them. Look in your Bibles to Numbers, chapter 31 and verse 3. God was sending the people to war, and the Bible says, "And Moses spake unto the people, saying, Arm some of yourselves unto the war." Where were they getting their arms? Out of their own homes. Very obviously, the people were armed in and of themselves.

In 1 Samuel 25:13, the Word of God says, “And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword.” Every man had his own weapon. That is like David saying, “Pick you up, every man his AR-15 or his AK-47.” Everybody was armed, and they brought their arms from home.

The very first implication of Israel being a national militia was that every family was armed and trained in the use of arms. Can you think of a country today where every family is armed and trained in the use of arms? Switzerland. How many wars have they been in lately? None. The people there have automatic weapons, too, not just semi-automatic weapons, but they are all trained in weaponry and in the defense of their country.

Here is a second application: it is the wicked, satanic, and evil aim of a tyrannical and oppressive government to disarm the people.

SCRIPTURE READING - 1 Samuel 13:17-22 (KJV)

> Whenever you have tyranny and oppression, one of the main aims is to disarm the people.
>
> And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies. One company turned the way that leadeth to Ophrah unto the land of Shual. Now the Philistines have come against the Israelites. Another company turned the way to Beth-horon. Another company turned the way of the water that looked into the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness. Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears. But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes to sharpen the goads.

So it came to pass in the day of battle that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan, but with Saul and Jonathan his son were they found. When Saul and Jonathan went to fight the Philistines, there were only two with swords. Why? Because the Philistines were a wicked, tyrannical, oppressive people, and they said, “We’re not going to let

the Israelites arm themselves, lest they use those arms against us." Any time you find a wicked, tyrannical government, it will always seek to disarm its people.

The Second Amendment to the Constitution says that the right to bear arms shall not be infringed. Our Founding Fathers spoke not only about arms and weaponry, but about the militia. When America was first formed, it was based upon the militia organization found in the Bible in ancient Israel. Thomas Jefferson said, "No free man shall ever be debarred the use of arms." John Adams said, "Arms in the hands of citizens may be used at individual discretion in private self-defense." Here's James Madison, the father of the Constitution.

The Constitution preserves the advantage of being armed, which Americans possess over the people of almost every other nation, where the governments are afraid to trust the people with arms. Here's what Thomas Paine said, ...arms discourage and keep the invader and plunderer in awe, and preserve order in the world as well as property. Hard mischief would ensue were the law-abiding deprived of the use of them. Thomas Jefferson said once again, Laws that forbid the carrying of arms disarm only those who are neither inclined nor determined to commit crimes. Such laws make things worse for the assaulted and better for the assailants. They serve rather to encourage than to prevent homicides, for an unarmed man may be attacked with greater confidence than an armed man. Here's what Richard Henry Lee said, ...a militia, when properly formed, are in fact the people themselves, and include all men capable of bearing arms. To preserve liberty, it is essential that the whole body of the people always possess arms and be taught alike how to use them. Samuel Adams, ...the Constitution shall never be construed to prevent the people of the United States who are peaceable citizens from keeping their own arms.

George Mason asks, Sir, what is the militia? It is the whole people. To disarm the people is the best and most effectual way to enslave them. Alexander Hamilton, The best we can hope for concerning the people at large is that they be properly armed. Thomas Jefferson, The strongest reason for the people to retain, to keep the right and bear arms is as a last resort to protect themselves against tyranny in government.

As the bumper sticker says, the Second Amendment is not about duck hunting, stupid. That's what Thomas Jefferson said. The strongest reason for the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is as a last resort to protect themselves against tyranny in government.

Listen to Patrick Henry: The militia, sir, is our ultimate safety. We can have no security without it. The great object is that every man be armed. Everyone who is able may have a gun.

George Washington said, That no man should scruple or hesitate a moment to use arms in defense of so valuable a blessing as liberty, on which all the good and evil of life depends, is clearly my opinion. Yet arms should be the last resort, he said, but there is to be no scruple about using them.

So very obviously our Founding Fathers talked about the militia and the right to bear arms, because godly people knew that arms were to be used to defend themselves and preserve their liberties. I hope you know—and I did not bring it with me—but the United States Code says the militia is every able-bodied man in America. We have a militia in America. I have an unusual birth certificate. It contains a little block that says, Militia District.

I am in the second Militia District of Georgia, and I was assigned that position from birth. So am I a militiaman? I guess I am. The state gave it to me. Very obviously, godly men have sought to be armed because they knew that wicked, oppressive, cruel, tyrannical governments would always seek to disarm them.

Thirdly, since the militia was a citizen army, even though the state had the right to summon it, the citizens could refuse to fight. In other words, the government did not control the people; the people controlled the government. There were no unpopular wars in the Bible, because if there was no reason to fight, the people would not fight. It was not the government saying, “We’re going to send you over to Vietnam,” or, “We’re going to send you over to Saudi Arabia.” The people said, “We’ve got no business over there. They’re not bothering us. Let somebody else protect their oil wells. We’re not doing that.”

Look in your Bibles to 1 Kings chapter 12. Let me show you how this division came about. Rehoboam was king over Israel, and he tried to tax the people unmercifully, so the people simply separated. Note 1 Kings 12:16: “So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them,” in other words, he would not listen, “the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your own tents, O Israel.”

“Now see to thine own house, David.” So Israel departed into their tents. What did the ten tribes say? They were not fighting for him anymore; not only that, they were not serving him anymore. “Take care of your own house.” They were saying, “We are not only refusing to fight for you; we are refusing to serve you.”

Even when there was an elite bodyguard, the people knew when not to fight. In 1 Samuel 22, David has escaped from Saul, who has been seeking to kill him. David goes to Ahimelech, a priest at Nob. Ahimelech does not know David is fleeing from Saul. David lies to him, and Ahimelech gives him sacred bread and the sword of Goliath.

Saul learns of this through Doeg the Edomite. Doeg is with Saul, who is going to kill all the Lord’s priests because he believes they are conspiring against him, though they did not even know what was happening. This passage shows us this. Now let us begin reading 1 Samuel 22 with verse 16.

The king said, “Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou and all thy father’s house.” What had Ahimelech done? He had simply given David the sword of Goliath and some bread from the altar. That was all. Yet it was no longer just Ahimelech; it was all his house.

The king said unto the footmen—that is, to his militia, to his army standing about him—“Turn and slay the priests of the Lord, because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled and did not show it to me.” But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord.

The king then said to Doeg, an Edomite, “Turn thou and fall upon the priest.” Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priest, and slew that day fourscore and five persons that did wear linen ephod. Thus Doeg slew eighty-five priests, while the Israelites said,

"We're not about to kill the Lord's anointed. We're not going to do that. We're not going to fight for you. We're not going to murder those people."

In the Bible, the militia could refuse to fight. Even in our service today, as ungodly and unbiblical as it is, our men have a moral obligation to disobey an immoral command. That never changes. Many do not, but they have that moral obligation.

The Sin of David's Census and Standing Army

I read 1 Samuel 8 to show one of the main reasons why Israel asked for a king. Even after Samuel warned them, "You don't want a king; here's what it's going to be like," they insisted that they did want one. They gave two or three reasons, depending on how the verse is divided. First, "that we may also be like all the nations." This was peer pressure: everybody else had a king, and they wanted one too.

Second, "our king may judge us." In other words, he would be their Supreme Court. Third, they wanted him to "go out before us and fight our battles." They wanted somebody to fight for them. They were willing to deny their personal responsibilities to defend their lives, their families, and their homes, and to give up their rights just so they could have a king who would fight for them.

Here is a clear repudiation of self-responsibility. They were no longer going to be concerned with self-defense; they were going to let someone else fight for them. Yet there is nothing wrong with a king in and of himself if the king is going to be God's king.

God could use a monarchy. He did so in the Bible. But here is what Samuel is saying: You are trading God for man, a theocracy for statism. You will have a king who ultimately takes your sons, your money, and the best of everything you have; everything will be for the government, not for God and not for the people.

Instead of a theocracy—the rule of God over you—you are trading it for statism, the rule of the state over you. The state will then take your sons and make a professional army. That is what he says. Look in verse 11: "This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you."

He will take your sons and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen. Some shall run before his chariots, and he will appoint them captains over thousands and captains over fifties, and so on. Men will no longer serve in the militia only in times of invasion and war.

Now they will be ripped from their families and torn from their homes to do their civic duty and fight for the state whenever and wherever the state demands. In the beginning, some kings were satisfied to have their own private corps of bodyguards and professional soldiers. Saul had his 3,000; David had his 600. But unhappily, it did not stop with 3,000 or 600.

David, although he was a man after God's own heart, was the one man who committed the sin that Samuel prophesied would happen. Turn in your Bibles to 1 Chronicles 21. You also find this in 2 Samuel 24, but we are not going to read from there. We will look at it in 1 Chronicles 21, beginning with verse 1: “And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, and bring the number of them to me, that I may know them. And Joab answered, The Lord make his people a hundred times so many more as they be, but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? And why then doth my lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel? Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab. Wherefore, Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem. And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David, and all of Israel were a thousand thousand and a hundred thousand men that drew sword.” That's a million and a hundred thousand.

And Judah was four hundred thousand, threescore and ten thousand men, so that is four hundred and seventy thousand men that drew sword. You have a million and a half people here prepared to fight. But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them, for the king's word was an abomination to Joab. Here are two tribes not even counted. And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel. And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly because I have done this thing, but now I beseech thee, do away with

the iniquity of thy servant, for I have done very foolishly. David is here saying, “And you know the choice that God gave David.”

The Lord sent a pestilence over Israel, and there fell of Israel 70,000 men. David bought the threshing floor of Ornan, set up the sacrifice, and the plague stayed. But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid, because of the sword of the angel of the Lord. In other words, the angel had just killed 70,000 men, and David said, “I’m afraid, too.”

What has David done? He has mustered Israel in a time of peace. What David did was a clear violation of the law of God. First and foremost, the army was not David’s army; it was God’s army. Don’t you remember the title in Scripture, Jehovah Sabaoth? It means the Lord God of armies. He is not only God of the armies of heaven, but He is God of the armies of the earth, especially the army of His own people.

David was going to boast in his army. He was going to literally steal it from God. He was giving a peacetime muster. Secondly, the militia or army could only be mustered in a time of war. There was no war going on. David simply wanted to glory in the fact that he had a couple of million fighting men under his belt. Joab, as wicked as he was, knew exactly that David was doing wrong and tried to stop him, but David would not listen.

David was mistaken not only in treating God’s army as his own, but also in mustering it in a time of peace instead of a time of war, which was unbiblical. Thirdly, Exodus chapter 30 teaches that whenever the army was mustered, every man had to give a half-shekel to the sanctuary. Here the army was mustered, and the half-shekel was not taken. Go back and read Exodus 30. It says that it must be taken lest a plague fall upon you. The money was given to God, recognizing His providential safety of the soldiers during battle. That money was not taken on this occasion.

I want you to see how wicked David was here. Evidently, David was going to even number the Levites. Look down to verse 6. The Bible says, “But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them, for the king’s word was an abomination to Joab.” We just went over how Numbers 1:47–49 tells us that the Levites were not to be mustered.

They were not to be counted. David was going to go ahead and count them as well. Look in your Bibles at 1 Chronicles 21:6, which we just read: "But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them." Why? "For the king's word was an abomination." In other words, Joab knew better, but David was going to count anyhow. Everything that David did in this instance was unbiblical, ungodly, and statist.

Now, we are not through. Turn over to 1 Chronicles 27. You are going to get the gist of what David has done.

Now the children of Israel, after their number, after this muster, to wit, the chief fathers and captains of thousands and hundreds and other officers that served the king in any matter of the courses which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, of every course there were 24,000. What did David do? He divided the land into twelve military districts, and there were 24,000 men in each district. Once a month, 24,000 men were on duty, and then they were to swap places. Verse 2 says, "Over the first course for the first month was Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel, and in his course were twenty-four thousand. Of the course of Perez was the chief of all the captains of the host of the first month, and over the course of the second month was Dodai an Ahohite, and of his course was Mikloth also the ruler, and his course likewise were twenty-four thousand."

You read all down and find that all these people were numbered. Skip down to verse 23. David took not the number of them from twenty years old and under, because the Lord had said He would increase Israel like the stars of heaven. Joab, the son of Zeruiah, began to number, but he finished not. Because there fell wrath for it against Israel, neither was the number put into the account of the Chronicles of King David.

When you get to 1 Chronicles 27, here are the courses that Joab numbered at David's request. So, actually, what you have in First Chronicles, chapter 27, is the land divided into twelve military districts. When David divided the land into twelve military districts, he did not do so according to tribal lines. He violated the tribal allegiances. Why? There were to be no local loyalties. I suppose it may be news to most of you to find out that America has been divided into military districts the same way right now.

Let me explain the breaking down of loyalties. I am from the South. I do not care one stinking thing about football. I never have liked it, never played it, never liked it, do not even watch it on television, and do not go to it in person. To me, it is a waste of time. Other folks really enjoy it. But if I see the Washington Redskins playing the Atlanta Falcons, automatically I say, "I hope the Falcons win." I do not even care anything about football. Why? Because I am a Southerner and they are from the South. That is local loyalty.

I would fight for Alabama and Florida just as I would fight for Georgia. I would fight for anyone in the South like that. Why? That is local loyalty. But once that is ripped apart, to whom do you give your allegiance? To some military officer over some military district that you do not even know? The point I am trying to make is this, folks.

Everything that David did in his sin in 1 Chronicles 21 has been followed by men ever since. It was this sin that cost David the blessing of building the temple. In 1 Chronicles 28:3, David said, "As for me, I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building. But God said to me, Thou shalt not build a house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood."

Is God saying to David, "David, you cannot build my house because you killed a lot of people"? May I remind you that God told David to kill a lot of those people. Is the only reason David could not build the temple because he killed people? Solomon killed people, too. He may not have killed as many as David, but he certainly had people killed.

No. 1 Chronicles 21 is the mustering, or numbering, of the people. First Chronicles 27 shows the twelve military districts David set up. Then, in 1 Chronicles 28, God says, "You cannot build my house." Look at why David was the one most likely to build the house. First Chronicles 26:27 says, "Out of the spoils won in battles did they dedicate to maintain the house of the Lord." David fought more battles than anybody. He had more spoils and more money. He was the most logical one to build a house for God because he had prepared to do it. But God says, "No, you are not going to build my house." Why?

Because David created a standing professional army. It was to be on the job twelve months out of the year. Although a percentage of the spoils from battle went to the church and the ministry, and although David fought many battles, God still said, “David, you cannot build my temple because of this.” This standing army did not stop. In 2 Chronicles 26, we see what happened with it.

The Continuation of the Standing Army under Uzziah

It continued to go and continued to grow. In 2 Chronicles 26, we read about King Uzziah. Uzziah was a good king. He served fifty-two years. But watch what is said: “Moreover Uzziah had a host of fighting men, that went out to war by bands, according to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel.” They went out to war by bands according to the number of their account.

In other words, he has done the same thing David did; he has continued it. The bottom hand of Jeiel described Maaseiah, the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king’s captains. The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valor was 2,600. That was just the chief. Under their hand was an army of 300,000 and 7,500 who made war with mighty power to help the king against the enemy.

Uzziah prepared for them throughout all the host shields, spears, helmets, habergeons, bows, and slings to cast stones. He made in Jerusalem engines invented by cunning men to be on the towers and upon bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. His name was spread far abroad, for he was marvelously helped, till he was strong. What had he done? He had continued the standing army.

Now, let me ask a question. You say, “Brother Weaver, when David numbered the people, God judged him. God judged the people because no one stopped him, and they all knew what he was doing wrong. Seventy thousand died! Why did David, in his repentance, not undo what he had done? Why did he not say, ‘Not only have I sinned, but, Lord, I have sinned; I am going to undo everything I have done’?” He said, “I have sinned,” but he did not say, “I am going to undo everything I have done.” Let me answer that question for you.

First Samuel 8:20 says, “We want a king.” Why? “That we may be like other nations; and that he may judge us, and fight our battles for us.” God gave the people exactly what they wanted. When they gave up their personal responsibility to fight and defend their families, homes, and land, they gave up a number of their rights and began to be exposed to tyranny and oppression.

Applications for Today

Let me make a couple of applications before I close today. First, a large, professional, standing army, historically speaking, has always been the weapon of tyranny and oppression. Look at Rome. Who got to be the ruler in Rome? Whoever controlled the army. Julius Caesar did not win by popular election. He was a military genius and had control of the army. How does China keep its people in subjection? By the army. You saw Tiananmen Square on television; you saw the tanks rolling over the people. How are we kept in subjection in America?

You say, “Brother Weaver, you don’t understand. In America, our armed forces are not used against us. That is why there is the Posse Comitatus Act, which forbids the federal government from using our armed forces against us.” Tell that to the folks at Waco. Tell that to Randy Weaver and his family. Our soldiers were used against our citizens.

Second, it is proper to have a small professional army to defend the land while the militia is being organized. I have just finished reading a book on the life of George Washington that specifically deals with the founding of our country. George Washington, probably at the height, had a maximum of only 8,000 men; usually it was around 3,000. Those 3,000 or 4,000 were the ones who stayed with him through the war. The rest came and went as militiamen from different states or colonies. There is nothing wrong with having a small standing army to defend the country while the militia is being organized, nor with having it lead the organized militia, because those men are the professional soldiers.

But you say, “Brother Weaver, where in the world was the militia so important in the Bible?” For the same reason it is so important today: the militia was the balance of power. If the government is the

only entity with weaponry and trained individuals to use it, then the government can run roughshod over its citizens at its pleasure. But if the government has only small armed forces and the people are armed and trained, it is not very likely that the government will attempt to tyrannize or oppress the people. In other words, the militia gives us a balance of power.

That's why in the Bible, God's army was composed of what we would know as citizen militiamen. Here was the balance of power. Let me put it to you once again: it is impossible for a government to run roughshod over an armed and trained citizenry. It is impossible. If you're wondering why the Brady Bill was passed, why the assault rifle ban was passed, and why Brady II is coming up, you need wonder no longer, because it has always been the aim of a wicked, tyrannical, oppressive government to disarm its citizens. Fear the government that fears an armed citizenry. You see, God's law is so simple. His answers are so obvious and so right, and yet men all over this country still refuse it. They'd rather be slaves than free. They'd rather give up their rights than exercise personal responsibility.

Father, we vow to Thee this day, in the name of Jesus Christ: help us to see, Lord, our responsibilities before Thee. Help us to see, Lord, the source of tyranny and oppression: it is when we forsake Thee, the one true and living God; it is when we turn our backs upon the true King and the true Lord of heaven and earth. Secondly, it comes when we forsake our own personal responsibility and want someone else to do our work, our job, and our fighting for us. Give us, Lord, grace and mercy to turn our hearts back to Thee, and give us courage and stamina to do what we need to do, to train ourselves and teach ourselves in Thy law and Thy word, and to be obedient in every area of our lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 5

5 Sanctification & Sexual Purity

October 22, 2007

1 Thessalonians 4. Lord willing, the message today is not necessarily going to be that long, only because I cannot complete what I want to complete and then deal with the total verse. So I've decided instead of having one extra long message, I'm just going to cut them down in two, and hopefully we'll be able to remember the points a little bit better. But let's read in 1 Thessalonians 4, beginning with verse 1: "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God."

"That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto

uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit."

Review of Previous Verses (1 Thessalonians 4:1-3)

Now this is the fifth message in the general theme, "Sanctification and Sexual Purity." And let me just give very quickly a brief review of the verses that we've already covered. First of all, in verse 1, we noticed the apostle's main point and exhortation. He says, "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus." Now in this verse I showed you there were three main truths. First of all, there was a practical necessity. He says, "that as ye have received of us"—and the practical necessity is we must be taught the truth of God, we must be taught the Word of God. And then secondly, in verse 1, there was a personal application: "how ye ought to walk and to please God."

So all the teaching in the world is not going to do you any good unless you personally apply and personally obey it. And then thirdly, in verse 1, you have a progressive reality. He said, "so ye would abound more and more." So we would be more holy and more obedient every day of our life. And then secondly, in verse 2, we have an explanation. He says, "For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus." So the commandments then refer actually back to verse 1. It was the teaching, the explanation of the Word of God and the law of God that taught these people how they ought to walk and so to please God. And then we came to verse 3, and that is where he began his exposition.

Under this point, first of all, we have an affirmation. He says, “For this is the will of God.” Then, in verse 3, there is an explanation: “even your sanctification.” The word sanctification is hagiasmos. It means to sanctify, to purify, and to set apart exclusively for God. It means to be prepared for God and to be pure and upright. This is the will of God—your sanctification.

Then there is a negation: “that ye should abstain from fornication.” We went through exactly what fornication is, considering the Scriptures throughout the Word of God. Fornication and adultery are not one and the same thing. Fornication is a much

broader term. Adultery is brought in under that term, but fornication can refer to pornography, incest, or what we would call sodomy. It can even refer to stubbornness and rebelliousness.

In Judges chapter 19, the man's wife, the Bible says, played the whore against him, or played the harlot against him, and went to her father's house. She was not down at her father's house engaging in incest. That would have merited a double death penalty. Moreover, a Levite would never have deigned to go there and bring his wife back had that been what was happening.

The word fornication simply refers to her rebellion and stubbornness. She would not abide under her husband's house, would not obey him, and left him and went back to her parents, so to speak. That is referred to as fornication in the Bible. This was explained in detail.

Clarification of the Truth in Verses 4-5

Now we come to verse 4: "that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour." We are still under the exposition, and verses 4 and 5 provide a clarification. First, verse 3 gives an affirmation: "This is the will of God." Then comes an explanation: "even your sanctification"; a negation: "that ye should abstain from fornication"; and, in verses 4 and 5, a clarification.

The Apostle Paul frequently does this in his teaching. He states a truth and then turns around and restates that same truth in different words. In other words, he further clarifies what he has just said. Verses 4 and 5 are a further clarification of verse 3: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication."

In verse 4, we have the truth clarified and positively stated. In verse 5, we have the truth clarified and negatively stated. Paul is clarifying the truth, but he gives it first positively and then negatively.

Notice that he is talking about individuals. Look at verse 4. He says, "that every one of you"—that each one of you—"should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour." Notice what

he does. Let us go back and read verse 3: “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.”

If you do not really understand what he has just said, he is going to clarify it further: “that each one of you”—this is what I want—“every one of you should know how to possess your vessel in sanctification and honour.” So, first of all, we are going to look at verse 4, the truth clarified and stated positively. He says in verse 4, “that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel.” The first question we must ask is: What in the world is our vessel?

The Meaning of 'Vessel' in Verse 4

It may surprise you to find that some commentators say the vessel in verse 4 refers to a man’s wife. The Scripture does indeed speak of a man’s wife as a vessel, and we will show you that Scripture in just a moment. Nevertheless, I do not believe that, contextually, the word vessel here can be interpreted as wife. It is true that God tells us as husbands that we are to maintain our wives in sanctification and honour, but I do not believe that in verse 4 the vessel can refer to the wife. Look in your Bibles at 1 Thessalonians 4, but turn over to 1 Peter 3 and look at verse 7. Look what God says: “Likewise, ye husbands.”

“Dwell with them”—that is, your wives—“according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” First, he says, “Ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge.” There is a certain knowledge that you must have to live with your wife. That knowledge is the teaching of the Word of God. One reason there are so many divorces in America is not only immorality, though that is true; it is also that people are trying to live together without knowledge.

What do most couples do today when they have problems? They do not sit down and work them out biblically; they simply get divorced and marry somebody else. Alice and I—the same young folks with whom we graduated—will soon have been married thirty-six years. Yet we have met some of those with whom we graduated, and they have been married four or five times in that same length of time, and some probably more than that.

God says it requires a certain amount of knowledge. Then he says, “giving honour to the wife,” and calls her “the weaker vessel.” The Bible is referring to the wife as a vessel. It also says that we are to give honour unto the wife, teaching us that the wife is indeed to be maintained in sanctification and honour. Still, this does not mean that 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 and verse 4 refers to the wife.

Let us turn to Ephesians chapter 5. This passage also shows that our wives are to be maintained in sanctification and honour, and that the Bible refers to the wife as the weaker vessel. When the Bible calls the wife the weaker vessel, that does not mean the husband is the strong vessel. The husband is weak, too; the wife is simply weaker. The opposite of weaker is not strong; it is weak. There are degrees: weak, weaker, and weakest. God says we are to give honour to the wife. Now, in Ephesians chapter 5, let us begin reading at verse 25.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." I'm not preaching today on the responsibility of husbands, but let me point this out: "love your wives, even as Christ loved the church." We are to love our wives exactly like, or equal to, the way Christ loved the church. It is true that we cannot love our wives quantitatively the same way that Christ loves the church, because Jesus Christ is God and he has a greater capacity of loving than we do. But while we cannot love them quantitatively, we can love them qualitatively. In other words, it can be the same kind of love.

What kind of love did Christ have for the church? First of all, it was an exclusive love. He loved his church. He didn't love the world. He didn't love the harlot. He loved his church. It was a sacrificial love, which means he gave himself for it. And so when we love our wives the way Christ loved the church, we love them exclusively. We love them sacrificially, but that's not all.

Look at it in verse 26. After he says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it"—here's why Christ loved the church: "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Watch verse

28: "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself."

Why did Christ love the church exclusively? Why did he love the church sacrificially? The answer is so that he might make it holy and pure. Men, here's the question: Has your wife become more holy because she's married to you? That's what the Scripture just says. In other words, if we love our wives the way Christ loved the church, then our wives ought to be more holy and more godly because they're married to us. So the Bible does teach us that we are indeed to maintain our wives in sanctification and honour, and we have a vast responsibility to lead and to guide and direct them in holy and godly living.

Now let us look at verse 5 in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. We will come back to it, but even a perusal of this passage ought to let you know that, in verse 4, the word vessel cannot refer to the wife. He says in verse 4, “that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.” And then he says in verse 5, “not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God.” A quick perusal of verse 5 ought to demonstrate the fact that verse 4 does not refer to the wife. Why?

The Bible is alive with passages concerning marital joy, bliss, and passion. Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled," but also, "whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed is undefiled. Is it lawful for me to desire my own wife? Yes. God says I am not to live in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles who know not God.

Proverbs 5 gives the same distinction. As I told you last week, you need to read Proverbs 5, 6, and 7. In this passage, all fornication, all adultery, and everything of that kind is condemned. Yet right in the middle of the condemnation of fornication, adultery, and all types of perversion, God tells the husband: "Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well." Do not drink anybody else's water. "Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee. Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth."

Note that command: "rejoice with the wife of thy youth." Then Scripture says, "Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love." The word ravished literally means to err. If you go astray, go astray in her love—that is what he is saying: "Be thou ravished with her always."

Then verse 20 asks, "And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?" The Bible is not condemning passion when it condemns the lust of concupiscence. It condemns passion directed toward a strange woman, while honoring desire within marriage and commanding a husband to rejoice in, be satisfied with, and be ravished by his own wife.

Why would you do that? You have your own wife. "For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings." So while God, on the one hand, is condemning all adultery and fornication and perversion, on the other hand, he is elevating marriage and the joy and the bliss and the happiness of marriage. He is saying, "rejoice with the wife of thy youth" while condemning all the others. So when he says, "not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God," he is not saying, Do not be loving and kind and passionate towards your wife. He is not condemning that at all; he is elevating it. I will show you in just a moment what he is condemning.

Now, if this passage has not convinced you, and if Hebrews chapter 13 and verse 4 has not convinced you that marital love is elevated to a high plane in Scripture, then read the Song of Solomon, because the Song of Solomon is all about marital love. Go back in your Bibles to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. He says in verse 4, "that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour." We are going to get to the negative in just a moment: "Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God." He says you are not to act like the ungodly act. Then he says in verse 6, "that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter." We will get to that in just a moment. But verse 6 is another verse that teaches undeniably that the vessel cannot be the wife in verse 4, and I am going to tie it

together and show you in just a moment. If the vessel in verse 4 is not the wife and does not refer to the wife, what does it mean when it says that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour?

Now, let me tell you what the vessel is. The vessel is your body. In the context, the vessel refers to the male believer, particularly in the context. I am going to prove it to you in just a moment. But let us look at some other scriptures to show you how the word vessel is used in other places. Look in your Bible to the book of Acts chapter 9.

Here is the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. God told Ananias what to do: go, lay his hands upon Saul, and let him receive his sight. Ananias balked because he had heard about this man and knew what he had done to the saints. He understood Saul had letters authorizing him to cast Christians into prison. But the Lord told him, "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." Saul, then, was referred to as a chosen vessel.

Inevitably, someone is going to say, "But you know, Paul served the Lord with his spirit." Yes, the Bible says that in Romans, chapter 1. Paul said, "whom I serve with my spirit." But may I ask you, what was it that took his spirit to the uttermost sections of the Roman Empire? How did his spirit get around? It got around in his body. Without his body, his spirit would not be going anywhere, because death is the separation of the spirit from the body. So it was his body.

God said that he was a chosen vessel. Look in your Bible to Romans, chapter 9. In this passage, the word vessel very clearly refers to people or persons. Beginning with verse 21, Paul asks, "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" What are vessels of wrath? They are people. What are vessels of honour? They are people. The body, the person, then, is referred to as a vessel. Now look in your Bibles to 2 Timothy, chapter 2, verse 20.

He uses this analogy: “But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.” Verse 21: “If a man therefore purge himself from these”—that is, the vessels of dishonour. These refer to his habits, dispositions, attitudes, and the things in his life that have not been brought into the form of the Word of God. “If a man would purge himself from these”—that is, from these vessels of dishonour—“he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.” Thus, not only are our vessels—our bodies—referred to as vessels, but sometimes certain parts of us are even referred to as vessels.

In 2 Corinthians chapter 4, Paul says, “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure”—that is, this salvation, this grace, this glory of God—“but we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

The body is referred to as a vessel. In 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 and verse 4, the word vessel refers to our body, primarily, in the context, the body of male believers. Verse 3 follows.

Possessing the Vessel in Sanctification and Honor

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication." So we know what the will of God is. It is the will of God that we be sanctified, that we abstain from fornication, and that truth is further clarified in verse 4: "that every one of us should know how to possess our vessel in sanctification and honour." The word sanctification, once again, is hagiasmos. It means purification. It means holiness. God says that we should know how to possess our vessel in holiness. And then he said, "and in honour." The word for honour is timē. The word timē means dignity, esteem, value, and worth. God says that we are to know how to possess our bodies in sanctification and in esteem, in value and worth. The world has a lot of garbage when it comes to self-esteem. We say, "Well, he just has low self-esteem." There is a lot of

psychological babble concerning that, but there is a biblical truth. If you have a low esteem or a low value of yourself based upon the Word of God, then you are going to be living a dishonourable life.

Are you listening to me? The man who commits fornication, the man who commits adultery, has a low estimate of himself, a low value of himself. He does not place a great deal of worth upon himself. In fact, the Bible teaches that he dishonours his own body. Let me show you. Pull 1 Thessalonians 4. Look in your Bibles to Proverbs chapter 6. Proverbs chapter 6. And let's begin reading there. Verse 32, just so you can see the context: "But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding." You do not have good sense if you commit adultery. "But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away." What comes with fornication? What comes with adultery? Dishonour. "A wound and dishonour shall he get."

Turn over your Bibles to Romans chapter 1. Fornication is a term that includes sodomy, incest, and everything. Look at what the Bible says concerning these sodomites. "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts." To what? "To dishonour their own bodies between themselves." To dishonour.

To have a low value and a low estimate of their worth is the result of sexual sin. In 1 Corinthians 6:17, Scripture says, “But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” Verse 18 says, “Flee fornication.” Why? “Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.” He sins against it by dishonouring it. Moreover, if a man is a Christian, he defiles his body, which is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Thus, the man who commits fornication dishonours his own body. The same is true of a woman who commits fornication or adultery: she dishonours her own body.

In this context, Paul is speaking primarily to men: “Men, I want you to understand that this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and in honour.”

It is impossible to live a holy, consecrated, honourable life when lust, adultery, fornication, and covetousness are consuming you. What is God saying? God is saying that we must know how to possess our vessels in sanctification and honour, dealing with impure thoughts and impure desires and ensuring that, in every area of our lives, we obey God and honour him. This is the will of God: our sanctification and abstinence from fornication, so that each of us may possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.

The Negative Clarification: Not in Lust of Concupiscence

Verse 5 clarifies the truth and states it negatively. He gave the positive in verse 4; now he gives the negative: "Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God."

First, consider the word lust. The Greek word is pathos. We use that word in our English language; it is taken straight from the Greek. The word pathos refers to passion. In this context, it means passion which is lustful, wicked, unclean, and ungodly. Thus he says, "not in the lust of concupiscence." What in the world is concupiscence? Most folks cannot even pronounce it, much less know what it is. Let me show you how this word is used. Look in your Bibles to Romans 7 and verse 8. Paul says, "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead."

Paul says, "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner"—all different kinds—"of concupiscence." What is concupiscence? Colossians 3:5 says, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." Here it is called evil concupiscence. Every time the word concupiscence is used, it is used in a bad light.

The Greek word for concupiscence is epithumia, a simple word. In our Bibles, epithumia is translated not only concupiscence, but sometimes lust. Whenever we talk about lust, we usually refer to sexual impurity or sexual lust. However, you can be lustful without having a sexual thought in your mind. How can that be so? Let me tell you how. Epi is a preposition meaning upon. Thumia, or thumos,

is where we get the word soul or passion. What is your lust? It is whatever you set your soul upon; it is whatever you set your passion upon. I could lust after Sam's tie. I could lust after Roy's truck. I could lust after a fine automobile or a horse. I do not have to lust after a woman. Your lust is whatever you set your soul upon. It is whatever you set your passion upon.

Although we normally associate the word lust with evil, the word lust sometimes can be a good word and can be used in a positive sense. The word lust is not always used in the Bible in an evil sense. In Luke 22:15, Jesus said to His disciples, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." The word desire is epithumia. Literally, He was saying, "With lust have I lusted after to eat this passover with you before I suffer." In other words, "I have set my soul upon eating this last supper with you." Was Christ sinning when He did this? No. It is simply a good use of the word epithumia. Would it be sin for me to lust after obeying God?

No. Would it be a sin for me to lust after serving God or being obedient to God? No. The word lust can be used in a good sense and a bad sense. However, every time you see the word concupiscence, it is used in a bad sense. The word concupiscence literally means to desire, to lust after, or to covet that which is unlawful. It also refers to irregular desires of sexual pleasure.

So when he talks about concupiscence, go back to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. He said in verses 3 through 5, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel"—that is, his body—"in sanctification and honour, not in the passion of lusts, even as the Gentiles which know not God."

Do most unconverted men set their hearts and their souls upon their wives? No, they set their hearts and souls upon the wives and daughters of other men. They are not consumed with their wife; they are consumed with everyone else. Do those who are unconverted only do that which is lawful and right, according to God's Word? No, they do that which is unlawful and violative of the Word of God. Thus, the Word of God tells us that this is not how we are to live. We are not to live in constant, irregular, unlawful lust, even as the Gentiles who know not God.

Verse 5 clarifies that the vessel in verse 4 cannot refer to the wife, because it is lawful for me to desire my wife. Paul writes, "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."

Here is the rule: "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence," meaning that husbands are to take care of their wife's needs sexually, "and likewise also the wife unto the husband." The wife has the responsibility to take care of the husband. "The wife hath not power of her own body," for the husband's needs would take care of that, "but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife."

And then God says—and note this word—“Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.” When a husband withholds himself from his wife, or when a wife withholds herself from her husband without a biblical reason, it is theft. That is what he said: “Defraud ye not one the other.” Why? Because my wife belongs to me and I belong to her.

Everything she has is mine. Everything I have is hers. I owe her due benevolence, and she owes me due benevolence. If I withhold myself or she withholds herself, it is fraud; it is theft. So is it lawful for me to desire her? Of course. Is it lawful for her to desire me? Of course. Is it lawful for me to desire Janet? No. She is not mine; she is Henry’s. Is it lawful for Henry to desire Alice? No.

Here he says, “not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God.” There is a lawful use, and there is an unlawful use. Concupiscence refers to that which is unlawful and irregular. God wants us to know how to possess our vessel in sanctification and honour, and what we owe our wife and what our wife owes us. You have your full satisfaction in her; she has her full satisfaction in you, and that is it.

Elaboration: Defrauding a Brother (Verse 6a)

All our desires, all our attitudes, and everything else are to be regulated by His Word. Go back to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. Verse 1 gives an exhortation, verse 2 an explanation, and verses 3, 4, and 5 an exposition. When you get to verses 6, 7, and 8, Paul is elaborating further—not on the fact of his exposition, but on the application or implication of his exposition. Verse 6 ties this together so that you can see what he is talking about in verses 4 and 5. He says, "that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we have also forewarned you and testified." The latter part of that verse will be dealt with next week, but consider this: "that no man go beyond and defraud his brother."

Earlier, I said I would prove that the word vessel in verse 4 refers to our body, and in context to the male body in particular. Verse 6 says, "That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter." First, the word "any" is in italics, meaning it was added for clarification and is not really in the original. In the original there is a definite article, "the." Literally, the verse should read, "That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in the matter." What matter are we talking about? The matter of sexual purity. Therefore, the matter refers to sexual impurity with any man's wife, daughter, or maid.

Look at what he says as we put verses 3 and 6 together: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication, that each one of you"—that is, each man—"should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God." Men, make sure that you do not go beyond and defraud your brother in the matter.

Even if a woman is single and unmarried, it would still be defrauding someone else down the line when she later married. The word defraud is the Greek word pleonektēs, literally meaning one who is greedy, covetous, and eager to have that which belongs to someone else.

Let me make an application and tie this together. If we obeyed God's law, God's law would take care of most immorality in this

country. I am not talking about the death penalty, although I will address that next week. You may ask, “Well, what are you talking about?” Look in your Bibles to the book of Exodus, chapter 22. There, God’s law addresses the matter of a man who entices a virgin and lies with her.

Let us look at Exodus 22 to see that God is talking about restitution. Verses 1 through 15 deal with theft and restitution. The law says, “If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.” It also says, “If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him; for he should make full restitution.” Verse 12 says, “And if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof.” All this is talking about restitution.

Now come down to verse 16: “And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.” Here is a young man who seduces a young girl. What does God say he must do? He must marry her, and, as we will see, he can never put her away—never divorce her.

The only exception, the only thing that will stop him from marrying her, is found in verse 17: “If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him.” The father has the final authority, even when the daughter has been defiled. If the father says, “You defiled my daughter, but I am not going to let her marry you,” what is the young man to do? He is to pay money according to the dowry of virgins. A dowry was three years’ wages in the Bible. If the average wage in this area is $50,000 a year, that young man, who may not marry the girl, owes her $150,000. That would tend to cut back on some fornication, would it not?

Deuteronomy 22:28 says, “If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her.” “He may not put her away all his

days." What God says is this: the reason He says in 1 Thessalonians 4 "that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in the matter" is that sexual sin involves restitution.

The reason he used the word defraud is that seduction, adultery, and fornication are not merely a breach of the seventh commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." They are also a breach of the eighth commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." That is why seduction demands restitution in Exodus chapter 22 and Deuteronomy 22: it is theft. You are taking that which does not belong to you, and it is called a defrauding of the brother.

Although, as I said earlier, the young woman may be single, it does not matter. Later on, she may marry someone, and you have defrauded that individual. Go back to verses 3 through 6 in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 and put it together carefully: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification," and part and parcel of our sanctification is that we abstain from fornication. It is that every one of us know how to possess our bodies in sanctification and honour. Do not live like the Gentiles in the lust of concupiscence, who know not God, and do not go beyond and defraud any brother in the matter.

So if you take what does not belong to you, it is theft, plain and simple. We will see the extreme warning Paul gives: "because the Lord is the avenger of all such."

Let us pray. Father, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ that You would indeed make us holy. Sanctify us. Give us knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, that we may know how to possess our vessels in sanctification and honour. May we be set apart exclusively for Thy use, prepared for Thy service, and live holy, pure, and godly lives. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask, amen.

CHAPTER 6

Are You Special?

July 13, 2008

SCRIPTURE READING - Psalm 4:1-8 (KJV)

"Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness. Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress. Have mercy upon me and hear my prayer."

"O you sons of men, how long will you turn my glory into shame? How long will you love vanity and seek after lying? Selah. But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself. The Lord will hear when I call upon him. Stand in awe and sin not. Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still." And then there is the word Selah. The word Selah literally means to pause or stop and think about what has been said. "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness and put your trust in the Lord."

"There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in mine heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

Introduction: The Desire for Special Treatment

> So notice the question: Are you special? I can assure you that each of us desires to be treated in a special way. No one wants to be treated as someone who is common and ordinary. In fact, if you and I were really honest, we would confess that we really like what is known as the VIP treatment. We want to be treated as a very important person. Some people have such a desire to be treated as very important people that they go to very expensive resorts in order to receive such special treatment. It costs them a fortune, but according to their perspective, it is worth the price.
>
> Several years ago, Alice and I were invited to accompany Ovid and Betty Neame to the Bahamas. They had secured a condominium there. It was free for us except for the plane fare, so we agreed to go with them. We stayed at a place called Atlantis, which is a very expensive resort. Looking around, there was an amazing thing: one part of Atlantis went over a body of water, and you could look out and see the ocean. It was a huge condominium over the water.

We were told that it cost $25,000 a night to stay in that compartment. Needless to say, we did not stay there. But I understood that many Hollywood movie stars stayed there. When people go to places like that and spend that kind of money, they are waited on hand and foot, exactly what they want: people to treat them like royalty, treating them very, very specially.

Now, how would you like to receive special preferential treatment from God, the sovereign of the universe? Instead of being the teacher's pet, how would you like to be His pet? Would you not like special access to Him, His love, grace, mercy, and blessings? I can hear many objecting, "Oh, but Brother Weaver, wait a minute. You're talking about God treating us specially, preferentially. Don't you know, Pastor, that God treats everyone alike and there is no respecter of persons with God?"

God Does Not Treat Everyone Alike

Well, let me burst your bubble. First, God does not treat everyone alike. Look around you. Why are you saved and other members of your family lost? Why do you know God's grace while friends and neighbors are total strangers to it? Why do you have health and others do not? Why do you have liberty and freedom while others are in bondage? Why do you possess knowledge, skills, and abilities that others do not have? Who makes you differ from the other?

In 1 Corinthians 4:7, after the Apostle Paul begins to talk about differences, he asks, "For who maketh thee to differ from another?" This is indeed a biblical question with a biblical answer. He continues: "And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" You have to answer the first question: Who makes you to differ? The answer is God. What have you received that you did not have as a gift from God? The answer is nothing.

So he asked them, why do you glory? Why are you boasting? Why are you proud as if you did not receive it? In other words, it is God who makes the difference. You can truthfully say that you are what you are only by the grace of God.

Now, just to show you that God does put a difference between people, look in your Bibles to the book of Exodus chapter 11 and verse 7. Everyone knows the story, or at least you should know the story, of how God delivers the children of Israel out of Egypt. He is getting ready to deliver them in Exodus chapter 12 after the Passover. But notice what He said in chapter 11, verse 7: "But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel." He said there is not going to be a dog that will lift his tongue and bark against His people. And God was doing this so that they might know that He put a difference between the Egyptians and the children of Israel.

The Hebrew word for difference here is the word palah. It means to be distinct, to be marked out, to be separated, to be distinguished, and to be set apart. The verse says, "But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that

ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel." Now you have to ask the question: Did God treat the Egyptians and the Israelites alike?

And the answer is no. He destroyed Egypt while He delivered Israel. Did His people receive preferential treatment? The answer is yes. Does God still make a distinction between His people and those who are in rebellion to Him? The answer is yes. All you have to do is read the Bible to discern that distinction.

Biblical Evidence of Distinction Between Righteous and Wicked

Now, I am going to come back to Psalm 4, but I want you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Proverbs. Let me show you a number of verses that clearly teach that God does make a distinction and does place a difference between the saved and the unsaved. Look in Proverbs chapter 15 and verse 8 to begin with. I could multiply these verses, but a few will be sufficient. Proverbs 15, verse 8, says, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight."

Is there a difference? If the sacrifice of the offering of the wicked is an abomination, if it is a stench in God's nostrils—and it is—He says, “but the prayer of the upright is his delight.” What is that teaching you? It teaches that God delights in the upright, but holds the wicked in abomination.

Look at Proverbs 15, verse 29: “The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.” Why? The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous; in other words, He is close to the righteous, willing to hear and answer their prayer, but far away from the wicked. The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous. Is that a difference? Yes, it is.

Proverbs 28, verse 9, says: “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.” The wicked disobey God; they do not want to hear God, His law, or His word. God says even their prayer is an abomination. Does God put a

difference between the prayer of the righteous and the prayer of the wicked? Yes, He does.

God does place a difference between His people and the ungodly. Psalm 34, verse 15, says: “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.” The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry. This contrasts with the one who turns away from hearing the law: his prayer is abomination. For a righteous man, His eyes are upon him, and His ears are open to his cry. Does God make a difference? Yes, He does.

Look in verse 17: “The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.” Is there a difference? If you want a verse in the New Testament that will teach this, I’m going to give you several later on, but consider James 4 and verse 6, where he says, “Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” The Bible teaches that God fights against the proud, arrogant, haughty, heady, high-minded person, but gives grace to the humble.

Now does God hear the cries and prayers of the wicked and the righteous alike? No, there is a difference. He hears the prayers of the righteous. His eyes are upon the righteous, but the wicked are an abomination to Him. So the scripture does not teach that God treats everyone alike. He does not.

Clarifying 'No Respecter of Persons'

Secondly, someone will say, “But pastor, you’ve not answered the objection because the scripture says that God is no respecter of persons.” What does that mean? Let us examine the four times that phrase occurs in the New Testament. Look at Acts chapter 10 and verse 34. Peter is preaching to Cornelius, who was a centurion. Peter says to Cornelius: “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.” What in the world does that mean? Look in Romans 2 and verse 11.

You see it again. Here again the Bible says, “For there is no respect of persons with God.” I will explain it without taking time to examine all the context, but skip to verse 12, since you’re right there.

“For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.” That ought to give you some indication as to where we’re going. Look in your Bibles to Ephesians 6 and verse 9.

Ephesians chapter 6, verse 9: "And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him." Lastly, in the book of Colossians chapter 3 and verse 25, you read this: "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." In three of the passages, that phrase dealt with judgment. One of the passages in Acts chapter 10, it dealt with salvation. It means this: man's merits cannot commend him to God, neither does man's demerits, nor can they keep him from God. In other words, here's what it means when it says that God is no respecter of persons. It means this, that God does not respect what a man has or what he does not have. In other words, the riches of the rich cannot commend that man to God, nor the poverty of the poor can keep God from blessing the poor man or saving the poor man. It means this, it doesn't matter what a man has, it doesn't matter what a man does, if he is wicked, God will judge him. Period.

There is no way that he can escape. Now let me show you what it means to have respect of persons. When the phrase says that God is no respecter of persons, that does not mean God treats everyone alike. It means simply that there is nothing man can do to commend himself to God, nor anything he has that can keep God from reaching out to him.

Notice James 2, verse 1: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons." Now skip down to verse 9: "But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors." What were they doing to respect persons?

Go back to verse 2: "For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay

clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool."

"Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well."

"But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin." What is respect to persons? Suppose the President of the United States comes through those doors, and I say, "Harry, get up and let the President sit there. That's the most comfortable seat in this house. Let him. Harry, go back there and sit." What am I doing? I am having respect to persons. In other words, it does not matter what a man has or what he does not have.

We all stand equally as sinners before God. If a poor man comes in and I say, “There’s a chair back there,” when there is a comfortable seat right here in front, I am showing respect to persons. Having respect to persons does not necessarily mean treating everyone equally in that sense. It means that something a man has, or does not have, is either commending him to you or failing to commend him to you.

The people in James chapter two were showing partiality by honoring the rich with their best seats and despising the poor, who happened to be godly. He says, in effect, that these rich politicians were pulling them to the judgment seat, putting them in jail, and taking everything they had, yet they were honoring them. They despised the poor because he had nothing, and God certainly condemns that.

When the Bible says that God is no respecter of persons, it means that the rich man cannot commend himself to God. The poor man, because of his demerits, is not thereby kept away from God. God does not look at what a man has or does not have. Yet God very obviously does not treat everyone alike. Proverbs 12:26 says, “The

righteous is more excellent than his neighbour." There is a difference that God puts.

Exposition of Psalm 4:1-2: David's Prayer, Praise, and Protest

Having established this, go back in your Bibles to Psalm 4. There are those who are marked out as distinct and treated with special preferential treatment by God himself. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, that prince of preachers, said concerning Psalm 4 that it was apparently intended to accompany Psalm 3, and that Psalms 3 and 4 make a pair. If Psalm 3 is called the morning psalm, Psalm 4 deserves the title of the evening hymn because of verse 8. David says, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep. For thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." I quote that verse frequently, especially when I go to bed at night.

Psalm 4 is indeed an evening psalm, in the sense that we are to commune upon our beds. Verse 3 is the morning psalm, and verse 4 the evening psalm. It is the Lord who gives peace and restful sleep. I want to deal only with the first three verses of this psalm, passing very quickly and lightly over verses 1 and 2 in order to get to verse 3. In verse 1, we see David's prayer and praise; in verse 2, David's protest; and in verse 3, David's pronouncement.

In verse 1, David says, "Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer." David beseeches God in his prayer: "Hear me, O God of my righteousness."

When David says this, he is referring to the fact that God is not only the author of righteousness; He is the witness to our righteousness, the maintainer of our righteousness, the judge, and the rewarder of righteousness. Therefore, when we are wrongly and wickedly condemned by man, we may rightly and justly appeal to the Supreme Court Judge of all the earth, God Himself. God knows our righteousness, since He is the author of it.

There is a sign along I-75 North, probably in other places too, with little messages signed "God." This one says, "The real Supreme Court meets up here, signed God." And that is true. We live in a day and

time when the righteous are often wickedly and wrongly condemned. I could name numerous preachers, as well as numerous Christians, who are in prison—not because they have done something wicked and wrong, not because they are rapists, murderers, bank robbers, or thieves, but because they have taken a stand for righteousness and refused to support evil. David said, "Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness."

Men may disregard our pleas. Men may ignore our cries. Men may stifle their ears. They may sear their conscience. But God, the righteous Judge, will always hear our case. And David is saying, "Hear my prayer when I cry."

David does something in Psalm 4 that you are going to find as you read through the Psalms: David often appeals to God's past mercies, not only to remind him, but to encourage him in his present distress. Look at verse 1: "Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness." He says, "Thou hast"—that is past tense—"Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress." Now look what he says: "Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer." So he said, "God, You have delivered me in time past. You have helped me in time past. You have given me grace and mercy in time past."

Now, Lord, I am in trouble again. Hear my prayer again. You and I need to learn to praise God for His past deliverances and His past mercies, and use them as a stepping-stone to plead for present mercies in our present distress. That is exactly what David is doing.

You know what the Bible says? Let me quote these verses. In Job 5:19, the Scripture says, "He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee." He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea, and seven, no evil shall touch thee. What is he saying? God constantly and consistently delivers His people. In Psalm 34:6—and I love this verse—David said, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." Then Psalm 34:17, which I read earlier, says, "The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles."

What is David doing in verse one? He is praying for help, but he is also praising God for past help. He is saying, "Lord, because You have been so gracious and kind in the past, please continue that." We

must understand that God is immutable; He does not change. He who has helped us in the past will help us also in the present.

Then, in verse 2, we have David's protest. After giving his prayer and praise, 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 leasing?" He is speaking to men in general, probably certain rulers or powerful men in particular. "How long will ye turn my glory to shame?" This concerns not only God's glory, but David's as well. "How long will ye love vanity?" Remember that vanity in the Bible is another word for idolatry. Then he asks, "and seek after leasing." Leasing means lying, falsehood, and fabrications.

Spurgeon wrote of verse 2: "In the second division of the psalm, we are led from the closet of prayer into the field of conflict. Remarkably undaunted courage of the man of God. He allows that his enemies are great men, for such is the import of the Hebrew word translated, sons of men. But still he believes them to be foolish men, and therefore he chides them as though they were but children. He tells them that they love vanity and seek after leasing, that is lying, empty fancies, vain conceits, wicked fabrications.

"He asks them how long they mean to make his honor a jest and his fame a mockery. A little of such mirth is too much, why need they continue to indulge it? Had they not been long enough upon the watch for his halting? Had not repeated disappointments convinced them that the Lord's anointed was not to be overcome by their wickedness? Did they mean to jest their souls into hell and go on with their laughter until swift justice should turn their merriment into howling?

"In the contemplation of their perverse continuance in their vain and lying pursuits, the psalmist solemnly pauses and inserts a Selah. Surely, we too may stop a while and meditate upon the deep-seated folly of the wicked, their continuance in evil, and their destruction, that we may learn to admire that grace which has made us to differ and taught us to love truth and seek after righteousness."

"O you sons of men, how long? How long will you seek after vanity? How long will you seek after lying?" Look around at our present society and government, at the vast circumstances of evil in

which we are living. Look at our economy and our money supply, and then look at our congressmen and say, "Oh, you sons of men, how long will you love vanity and lying? How long will you continue in your foolishness? Paper is not money. Debt is not money. War is not peace." I mean, come on.

That is exactly what David is doing. We can see multitudes of illustrations in our society of men who speak falsehoods, love vanity, lying, and deceit. That is their normal way of life. Like David, we need to protest their wickedness, stupidity, and foolishness. In Proverbs 8:35-36, Christ said, "For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death." David is right when he protests against the wicked.

Psalm 4:3: God Sets Apart the Godly

Now notice verse three, our verse for today, David's pronouncement: Are you special? "But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call." Look at that verse: "But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call."

I want to emphasize the first two words: "but know." These words are extremely instructive. David is informing us of a truth that we must comprehend, perceive, understand, and know. The Hebrew word for know is yada, and it literally means to know, to perceive, to understand, and to comprehend. It speaks of certainty in knowledge. In other words, you had better know this; you had better comprehend it and understand it.

In the New Testament, Paul used similar language. He would use a phrase like, “Know ye not.” This is something that everyone should know. He would use the phrase, “But I would not have you ignorant, brethren.” I am teaching you something; I am telling you something you need to know.

Have you ever noticed that when our Lord was teaching in the New Testament, He used two terms over and over, especially when emphasizing a very important point? He would say, “Verily, verily, I say unto you,” or “Truly, truly,” or “Amen, amen.” What was He

saying? He was punctuating the truth: this is extremely important; you must know it.

So in verse four He says, “But know.” The next words are: “that the Lord.” The word Lord is Yahweh, or Jehovah. What David is about to tell us is something that God does. This is an act of God, a work of God, something that He does. David is saying, Sit up and pay attention. I am about to tell you something that God Himself does, and you had better know it. Know for certain and comprehend that this is an act, a work of God: “But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.” We read certain phrases in the Bible, but we have never really comprehended them.

Have you ever noticed that we are to be His peculiar treasure, or His peculiar people?

Verse three says: “But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.” Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, contains a parallel passage similar to Psalm 4 and verse 3. In Malachi 3:16–17 we read: “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts. In that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.” God said, “They shall be mine.”

Psalm 4:3 says, "But know this, that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself." Matthew Henry, commenting on this verse, said, "The Lord has set apart him that is godly, every particular godly man for himself. In his eternal choice, in his effectual calling, in the special disposals of his providence and operations of his grace, his people are purified unto him a peculiar people. Godly men are God's separated, sealed ones."

"He knows those that are his and has set his image and superscription upon them. He distinguishes them with uncommon favors." That is, they get special treatment. "They shall be mine," said the Lord, "in that day when I make up my jewels." Know this. Let godly people know it and never alienate themselves from Him to whom they are thus appropriated. Let wicked people know it and

take heed how they hurt those whom God protects. Here is something you better know.

Old and New Testament Teaching on God's Peculiar People

God ordained that His people always be His peculiar treasure. In Exodus 19:5, He tells Israel, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." "For all the earth is mine." God says, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice, and keep my covenant," and, "ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me." Does God put a difference? Does God make a distinction? Oh yes. What is required in Exodus 19:5 for you and I to be above all people? We must know His voice. We must keep His commandments and His covenant.

Deuteronomy 14:2 says to Israel, "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself," "above all the nations that are upon the earth." God has chosen you to be a peculiar people. Deuteronomy 26:18 likewise says, "And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments." Now go back to Psalm 4 and verse 3. Notice Deuteronomy 26 and verse 18 here.

Here again, the Bible says—and this is in a chapter concerning obeying God, especially in giving and tithing—“And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments.” He says this in verse 18. It continues, “And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken.”

It seems to me, just reading the Scripture, that God not only makes a difference; He makes a vast difference. That vast difference is based upon whether or not we obey Him. The difference is not merely a name or distinction, but a vast difference established in relation to obedience.

Psalm 135:4 says, “For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.” The word peculiar comes from the Hebrew word segulah, literally meaning a valued property, a peculiar treasure that belongs particularly to someone. It describes something belonging particularly and personally to its owner, not something common or undistinguished.

This exact same truth is taught in the New Testament. Why did Christ give Himself for us? Why did He sacrifice Himself? Why did He become our substitute? Titus 2:14 tells us, “Who gave himself for us.” Why? “That he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Christ gave Himself to redeem and purify a people for Himself, and that people is to be zealous of good works.

As Israel was to be that peculiar people in the Old Testament, now we who are the redeemed children of God are still to be that peculiar people. First Peter 2:9 says, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” Peter uses the same truth and applies it to the redeemed people of God.

In the New Testament, the Greek word is periousios, referring once again to one’s own belonging, particularly and peculiarly to an individual. It means that here is a possession selected by God above all people and nations for Himself. Thus, the people who belong particularly to God are selected by Him for Himself and are to show forth His praises.

Defining Godliness: Not Perfection but Conformity to God's Will

Go back to Psalm 4 and look at verse 3. I have pointed out how God makes a difference and a distinction. David tells us, “But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.” Grasp this, understand it, and comprehend it, because this is the work of God.

What does it mean to be godly? What does it mean to be godly? It does not mean that you are merely saved. I have known, and still know, plenty of professing Christians who may not be real, genuine

Christians. I understand that. But I know plenty of professing Christians whom I would never refer to as godly. In fact, most professing Christians are worldly, carnal, and fleshly.

A godly individual is someone who lives his life in accordance with the Word of God. The Hebrew word for godly is chasid, and it refers to those who are holy, saintly, pious, faithful, and godly. A godly man is faithful to the principles of Scripture. He is constantly and continually bringing his life into conformity to the Word of God. A godly man is a saintly man in that he actually lives, acts, and talks like a Christian. A godly man is one who lives and acts the way God would have him to act.

When Scripture speaks of a godly man, it does not speak of perfection. It does not refer to a man who is sinless, perfect, and without faults. How do we know that? For two reasons. First, and most obviously, we are still sinners and we still sin. We will not have perfection until we reach eternity and have a glorified body. Until then, we are still sinners. How do I know, secondly, that a godly man is not a perfect man? How do I know that a godly man is not one who has no faults and never sins?

Psalm 32 is one of those penitential psalms where David is confessing and acknowledging his sin. David was a man after God's own heart, and David sinned. But notice what he said in Psalm 32, verse 5: "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah." Here is how we know that a godly man is not a perfect man. Watch verse 6: "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him."

If a godly man is praying for forgiveness, what does that mean? He sinned. David said, "I have not hidden my transgression. I sinned against you, Lord. I'm acknowledging it, and I want forgiveness." Then, "You did forgive the iniquity of my sin." Therefore every godly person should pray in a time when God may be found.

Godly men may sin, but godly men also repent. They do not remain in their sins, pretend they are perfect, or pretend they have

never sinned. I still remember the first time I met a professing Christian who claimed sinless perfection.

He lived in Thomasville, Georgia. I went into his place of business and said, "Isn't it wonderful to have your sins forgiven? David said, 'Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.'" He said, "I wouldn't know. I haven't sinned in 15 years." My mouth fell open.

When I got my composure, I said, "I'm sorry to upset you, but you just did. For he that says he hath no sin is a liar and the truth is not in him, according to 1 John 1. You just sinned because you lied."

David is saying that a godly man may sin, but a godly man will not remain in his sin. He will repent and turn from it. A godly man understands Proverbs 28:13: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

A godly man is not perfect. Although he is not perfect, he may desire perfection, want perfection, and strive for perfection, but he knows he is not perfect and cannot be perfect in this life. A godly man also realizes that he does not have to sin. Consider two passages: 1 John and Romans 6. Look first at 1 John 2, and then go back to Romans 6. The statement that a godly man is not perfect is certainly true. He sins because he is still a man; he is still a sinner. But a godly man also knows that he does not have to sin.

In 1 John 2:1, John wrote, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." Why did John write 1 John? In order that we not sin. Then he says, "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The reason John wrote was that he did not want us to sin. But when we do sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. In other words, he is our mediator. Now, let me tell you something, folks. What? Well, let me show you. Turn in your Bibles to two passages: 1 John and Romans 6. Listen carefully now. Look here today.

He is the one that we go to. Now, if you will go back in your Bibles to Romans chapter 6, let me explain this a little further. In Romans 6:14, there is a powerful verse: “For sin shall not have dominion over

you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." What does it mean when he says, "sin shall not have dominion over you"? If you take the time to study Romans chapter 6, you will find that sin is treated as a king and as a lord. As a king and a lord, it has dominion. Romans chapter 6 tells us that Christ has come, redeemed us, and saved us from the kingdom and dominion of sin, translating us into the kingdom of God.

Sin is no longer our king. Sin does not have dominion over us. We are now under King Jesus and under His dominion. So when sin comes to the child of God and says, "You want that woman; you want to steal that money," you can say, "Oh, no, no, no. You are mistaken. Thank you for your suggestion, but I do not want it, because I have another King, one Jesus. I am now under His dominion."

I do not have to fulfill my lusts and desires. Why? Because sin does not have dominion over me. Sin does have dominion over unsafe people, but it does not have dominion over a child of God. Very obviously, while on the one hand a godly man may sin, on the other hand a godly man realizes that he does not have to sin because of the power of God in his life. Now, will we sin? Yes.

How many of you prayed yesterday the way you should have prayed? How many obeyed yesterday the way you should have obeyed? How many honored God? How many of you have worshipped God this morning the way you should have worshipped Him? None of us, which means we have sinned. You do not have to be an adulterer, a whoremonger, a thief, a liar, or a murderer to sin. There are many ways to sin. But what a godly man realizes is that he does not have to sin.

Practical Godliness in Marriage and Daily Life

Let me show you an interesting perspective on being godly and how practical this is. Turn to the book of Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament. A godly man is one who honors God, obeys His covenant, and keeps His commandments. In Malachi chapter 2 and verse 15, speaking about marriage, we read: "And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one?" Then he gives the answer: "That he might seek a godly seed." God says, "Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the

wife of his youth." Why did He make the husband and wife one? The answer is that He might seek a godly seed. So, Alice, I've been married forty-five years.

I can't say now, "Sweetheart, I'm going through a midlife crisis. I need a couple of twenty-year-olds." That would be dealing treacherously against the wife of my youth. He said that He might seek a godly seed. The word for God in Hebrew is Elohim. Does that ring a bell? I hope it does, because Elohim is a name for God in the Bible. In fact, Elohim is sometimes used of judges and rulers because they are to judge and rule for God. Here it is used when God is seeking a godly seed. What does that mean? It means He is seeking a seed like unto Himself: a seed that will honor Him, a seed that will obey Him, and a seed that will live according to His commandments. To show the practicality of being godly, He says, "Take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth."

What does He say? Keep your mind, keep your attitude, and therefore you will keep your actions. In other words, being godly means bringing your thinking, your thought life, and your actions into conformity with the Word of God. And guess what? When you get to the New Testament and find the word godly, although there are several words that are used there—

Eusebeia is one of them. But by and large, the most frequent word for godly in the New Testament is the word theos, which is another word for God. We talk about theology, which is the study of God. In other words, being godly, living godly, and acting godly literally means that you live and act as God would have you to live and act. That is, you bring your life into conformity to His words.

Our Lord said it like this in John 8:29: "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." That really ought to be our prayer when we wake up every morning: "Lord, help me today to do only and always those things which please You."

The Call to Please God and the Promise of Being Heard

We are exhorted in the New Testament to live that way. In 1 Thessalonians 4:1, Paul says, “Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.” We are exhorted by the Lord Jesus, according to what we have been taught, how we ought to walk and please God, so that we would abound more and more.

That is what I am teaching you today: how to walk and please God. That is what being godly is. In 2 Timothy 2:4, Paul writes, “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” What is our primary objective as a Christian soldier? It is to please our heavenly Father.

Hebrews 11:6 says, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” A godly man is one who pleases God by his faith, by his attitude, by his conduct, and by his faithfulness. He sets the Lord and His Word first and foremost and above all, and seeks in every area of his life to please God. Is the godly man perfect? No!

But he sure would like to be. He sure wants to be. Yet he is a man who, when he sins, is willing to be reviewed. He is willing to face his sins, acknowledge his sins, and repent of those sins. He is willing continually to bring his life into conformity to the Word of God.

Turn back in your Bibles to Psalm 4 and verse 3. David says, “But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.” Then David says, “The Lord will hear when I call unto him.” David, how do you know God will hear you when you pray? His answer is, because he is a godly man. God has set him apart for Himself. He is different; he is distinct. He is God’s peculiar treasure, His personal property. He has a special relationship to Him. God will hear him when he prays.

You know what the Bible says in James 5 and verse 16? “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” You

could say, “The effectual fervent prayer of a godly man availeth much.” Now, here is the question: Do you want to be treated special by our Lord? Or are you satisfied to be the common, everyday, ordinary, run-of-the-mill professing Christian who is satisfied with disobedience, ignorance, and apathy? If you want VIP treatment from God, you must render VIP treatment to God. What God does is set apart him that is godly for Himself: “You’re my peculiar treasure. I’m going to listen to you particularly. I’m going to take care of you. I’m going to protect you. I’ll be your sun and your shield.”

Application: The Need for Godly Men in Society

Let me make just a couple of applications. Why is what I am preaching to you today so important? It is important not only to you as an individual, but also to our society. The lack of godly men should be a great cause of frustration and consternation. It was to David. Psalm 12 begins, “Help, Lord! For the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.” Notice how godly and faithful are used interchangeably; they are synonymous. He says, “Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.”

What happens to society when the godly man ceases and the faithful fail? Psalm 12 says, “They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak. The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us? For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.”

When the faithful fail and the godly man ceases, there are pride, arrogance, and rebellion. The people say, “Who is Lord over us?” They do not recognize any Lord. In other words, society deteriorates. We almost see that in America, do we not? Almost my foot. I am simply pointing out the fact that we are in the mess we are in this country partly because there are no godly, faithful men in it as we should be. There are some, but the deterioration and loss of godly, faithful men equals the deterioration in society.

So again, the question is this: How do you want to be treated in this life? Do you prefer the common, ordinary treatment, or do you prefer to be treated as someone special, someone given preferential treatment by the sovereign God of the universe? Do you want to travel through this life first class or coach? If you want first class, then you have to make sure that you are a godly man or godly woman.

The Bible says in Proverbs 15:29, "The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous." Psalm 5:12 says, "For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield." Do you want the special favor of God? Do you want God to hear you when you cry? Do you want to be blessed with uncommon favor?

Conclusion and Prayer

Then, dear friend, you better learn this simple truth: "But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself." If you want to be treated specially, differently, preferentially, you better make sure that you are godly, obedient, and faithful in every area of your life. David said, "The Lord will hear me when I call." Oh, to be heard by God. God sets apart him that is godly for Himself. Let us pray.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we thank You for Your grace and mercy. Lord, we thank You that You are the One who made the difference in our lives. Thou hast made us to differ, saved us, given us grace and mercy, preserved us and kept us alive. Thou hast given us knowledge and abilities, and we give Thee the honor and glory. Lord, make each one of us more holy, godly, obedient, and faithful, that we may bring more honor and glory to Thy great and holy name. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 7

Are You Special?

August 16, 2008

Psalm 4 begins: “Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness. Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress. Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer. O you sons of men, how long will you turn my glory into shame? How long will you love vanity, and seek after leasing? But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself. The Lord will hear when I call unto him. Stand in awe, and sin not. Commune with your own heart upon your own bed, and be still.”

The word “Selah” means pause, stop, and think about what has been said. The psalm continues: “Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord. There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety.”

Introduction: The Desire to Be Special

I suppose that each of us wants to be treated in a special way. We like to be counted as special individuals. None of us wants to be treated as common, everyday, ordinary people. If we were really honest, we would probably admit that we like what is known as the VIP treatment—very important person. Many people go to very expensive resorts just to be treated royally. They pay an arm and a leg to be pampered and waited on hand and foot.

According to their interpretation and perception, it is worth all of it because they are treated as kings and queens. Some years ago, a pastor friend and his wife, Alice, called us. They had been given three or four days at a resort in the Bahamas and invited us to go. Since everything was paid for except the plane tickets, we went with them.

The resort was the Atlantis, which was mind-boggling and eye-boggling when you see it. The beaches were beautiful, the pools were beautiful, and fish were swimming everywhere. A huge arch went from one building to the next, with water underneath, and there was a view of the ocean. I did not go in there, but we were told that portion, probably from here to the other church across the street, rented for $25,000 a night.

Now you understand why I did not even want to look at it. Yet there were people who would pay $25,000 a night simply to be pampered and treated as royalty. How would you like, instead of being the teacher's pet, to be the pet of the sovereign God of heaven and earth? How would you like to be treated special by God, to have special access to Him and His special favor, especially His love, mercies, grace, and blessings?

When I ask those questions, I can hear someone saying, because you hear it everywhere you go, "But now, Pastor, there's a problem here because don't you understand that God treats everyone just exactly alike and there is no respect of persons with God?" Have you ever heard that? Of course you have. But let me point out something very plain and obvious: God does not treat everyone alike.

God Does Not Treat Everyone Alike

All you have to do is look around. Why is it that you are saved and others are lost? Why is it that you have health while other people have extreme illness and sickness? Why is it that you have liberty and freedom while the majority of the people in this world are in bondage and slavery? Why is it that you possess certain knowledge, skills, and abilities while other people do not?

Consider the question the Apostle Paul asked the Corinthians: "For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" Who made you to differ from another? Who made you to see? Who made you to hear? Who made you to live in a land of opportunity when other people do not? The answer is very obvious: God. You are what you are by the grace of God. It is God who made the difference.

God does indeed place a difference between people. In Exodus 11, God was getting ready to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt. The Exodus takes place in Exodus 12, but God was telling Pharaoh through Moses this truth about what would happen. Exodus 11:7 says, "But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel."

Did God put a difference between the Egyptian and Israel? Did God treat the Egyptians exactly like He treated the Israelites? The answer, very obviously, is no, He did not. He delivered the Israelites while He destroyed the Egyptians. Against the Israelites, against His people, there was not even going to be a dog move his tongue. God said the reason was that they might know He had put a difference there.

The Hebrew word for "difference" actually means to be distinct, to be marked out, to be separated, to be distinguished, and to be set apart. God said, "I want you to know that I've distinguished, that I've set apart, that I've marked out My people." There is a difference between His people and those who are in rebellion against Him. Very obviously, God did not treat the Israelites and the Egyptians

alike. His people received what you and I would call preferential treatment.

Does God make a distinction even today? The answer, of course, is yes. All you have to do is read your Bible. Here are general principles showing how God distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked. For instance, Proverbs 15:8 says, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight." Think about the distinction God is making: the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is His delight.

Is there a difference? Very obviously there is. Proverbs 15:29 says, "The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous." That is another difference. Proverbs 28:9 marks out another distinction that God is making: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." So the man whose prayer is heard is acceptable, but the man who does not hear the law is abominable. Is there a difference? Of course there is.

James 4:6 says, "Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." Is there a difference? Of course there is. Psalm 34:15 says, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." Are His eyes and ears open to the wicked? No, not in the same sense as they are to the righteous. Psalm 34:17 says, "The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles."

Very obviously, in all these verses, God makes a distinction. God does not treat everyone alike. Very clearly, Scripture teaches that. You may say, "Although I can see that God does not treat everyone alike, you have not answered the fact that God is no respecter of persons. How in the world do you answer that?"

God Is No Respecter of Persons Explained

That phrase occurs four times in the New Testament, and interestingly enough, three of those four times deal with judgment. In Acts 10:34, Peter is preaching to Cornelius, a Gentile and Roman centurion: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I

perceive that God is no respecter of persons." In other words, Peter is going to explain this, but that is what he said to Cornelius. In Romans 2:11, in the context of judgment, Paul says, "There is no respect of persons with God."

In Ephesians 6:9, God gives this warning: "And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him." Finally, Colossians 3:25 says, "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."

Now you have to ask yourself this question: What does that mean? Very obviously, it occurs four times in the Scripture: “There is no respect of persons with God.” Does that mean that God treats everyone alike? No, because we have just seen that God does not treat everyone alike. Does that mean that whatever God has done for you, God is obligated to do for me? The answer is no.

When it says that God has no respect of persons, it means that man’s merits cannot commend him to God, nor can man’s demerits stop God from intervening in his life. There is nothing in man that will draw forth and merit the favor of God. God does not respect what a man has, and God does not respect what a man does not have. Just because a man is rich, has great abilities, or has great skills, that does not commend him to God. And just because someone is poor and has no abilities or skills, that does not keep God from intervening in his life and displaying His grace and mercy to him.

James 2 gives a perfect illustration, and the sin is plainly mentioned. He says, “My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.” Then, in verse 9: “But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.”

What is he talking about when he speaks of the sin of respecting persons? “For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor,

Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?"

Suppose Brother Jack comes in, and I see Jack, and I say, "That guy's a multimillionaire. I know him. He's got the money. I want him to sit close because, if I can impress him, he might give to me, or he might give to the church." And there sits poor old Ernie up front, poor old church mouse. And Ernie, I tell you what you can do: You can either sit back there in the corner, or you can just sit right here at my feet.

What am I doing? I am respecting persons. In other words, what that man has is commending himself to me, while what Ernie does not have is not commending himself to me. I think I can dispense with Ernie and dispose of him very quickly so that the man who commends himself to me can have the best seat. Then, of course, James chapter 2 tells us not to overlook that these rich men are drawing you into court anyhow.

They are the ones who try to take everything you have. Why would you respect them in the first place? When you count what a man has, or what a man can do or might do, that is having respect to him. God does not count what a man has, nor what he might or could do. Very obviously, then, having respect of persons is a sin. When the Bible says that God is no respecter of persons, it means that God does not regard a man according to what he has or does not have.

That does not imply that God will treat everyone alike. In fact, Proverbs 12:26 says, "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour." Very clearly, God places a premium upon the righteous.

I hope I have established this simple fact: God does make a difference. God is not obligated to treat everyone alike, and God does not treat everyone alike. With that in mind, look in your Bible to Psalm 4. This wonderful psalm has been termed the evening psalm, while Psalm 3 has been termed the morning psalm. Especially in verse 4, the Bible says, "Stand in awe, and sin not."

"Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still." It is biblical to lie in bed and pray, to think about God, and to commune with Him through His Word. There is nothing wrong with that. Verse 8 says, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou,

Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." It is God who gives us safety and sleep during the night. Plenty of nights, I quote that verse. There is nothing wrong with communing with God on your own bed.

You no doubt heard about the man who prayed, "Lord, I thank Thee that this day I have not sinned against Thee. I have not broken Thy law. I have not committed any sin whatsoever. And Lord, so far this day I've done that which is right. But Lord, in just a few minutes, my feet are going to hit the floor and I'm going to need all the help I can get the rest of the day." He had just woken up and was fixing to go out and face the world.

This is the evening psalm. In verse one, David's prayer and praise; in verse two, David's protest; and in verse three, David's pronouncement. The first two points can be considered quickly, because it is the third point that deserves our attention.

David's Prayer and Praise (Psalm 4:1)

David's prayer and praise are found in verse one: "Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness. Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress. Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer." David beseeches God to hear his prayer.

Note the title he gives to God: "O God of my righteousness." When you acknowledge God as the God of your righteousness, you are saying that God is the author of your righteousness. He is also the witness of your righteousness, the maintainer of your righteousness, the judge of your righteousness, and the rewarder of your righteousness. In other words, everything is of God.

Do you realize there are times in this life when you and I, and many of God's people, are wickedly and wrongly condemned? I have seen innocent men in prison, totally, absolutely innocent. I know one pastor who, with his wife, went to prison. The reason he went to prison first and foremost was that he had a church treasurer who happened to be a woman, and the woman happened to make a pass at the pastor. The pastor rebuffed her, and she began to form lies and lied about him in light of some of the church business. He ended up in jail.

Hadn't done a thing wrong. But it doesn't matter what the world says or what the so-called judicial system says. Do you realize that the sovereign God, the Judge of all the earth, knows who is innocent and who is not? David says, “You're the God of my righteousness.” Men may disregard our pleas, ignore our cries, stifle their ears, and sear their conscience. But God, the righteous Judge, will hear our calls. So David begins by calling God the God of his righteousness.

Then notice what else he says in verse one: “Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress. Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.”

David is doing something in this verse that he has done in many other verses in the Bible: he is pleading past blessings and past favors as the foundation for present help. In other words, “God, You've helped me and delivered me in times past. Lord, I'm in trouble now. Since You've delivered me in times past, and You are immutable and do not change, help me now.” He is using past blessings and past mercies for present help.

To be absolutely honest, we need to learn to thank God regularly and daily for everything He has done for us, especially those things in the past.

One of my favorite stories took place many years ago, when my wife and I lived in Pensacola, Florida, and were members of a Baptist church there. At that time, I was not pastoring but was traveling and preaching in churches across the country. I did that for ten years and was very seldom at church on Sunday, although we were members there. I was away preaching. Our children were small, and Alice could not always travel with me. One Sunday night, I was home in time for church because I did not have to preach, so I went with my family.

When the meeting was over, the pastor said, “It's good to have John Weaver with us. He's very seldom with us.” He asked me to dismiss us in prayer. I had been reading the old Puritans, and one expression in their writings was, “Help us to pay up our past due rent of thanksgiving.” In other words, “Lord, help us to be thankful for everything that You've done in the past.”

To understand this, where we were living at that particular time in Pensacola, Florida, the home we were living in was furnished. I did not have any rent; I did not pay a penny for the home. We were able to live in it absolutely rent free. So when the pastor asked me to close in prayer that night, I prayed, “Oh, Lord, I pray that You would help us to pay up our past-due rent of thanksgivings.”

That night I tarried behind, talking to people, and was pretty much next to the last one out. When I went out, the pastor shook my hand, and I felt something in it. I looked, and it was a couple of hundred-dollar bills. I said, “What’s that for?”

He said, “Well, some brother gave it to me. He said, ‘Give it to you to help you pay your pastor your rent.’” I said, “Brother, I don’t even pay rent.” He said, “I know, but the Lord wanted you to have it, and here you take it.” I said, “You know, I’m going to pray that prayer a little more often, brother.”

But that is what David is doing. David is saying, “Lord, You have blessed me in time past. Help me now and deliver me in this present time.” The Bible says in Job 5 and verse 19, “He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.” I love Psalm 34 and verse 6: “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.” And Psalm 34 and verse 17 says, “The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.” We need to learn to do what David did. We need to say, “Lord, we’re in trouble now, but Lord, look how You’ve helped me in time past.”

"Lord, please, please help me at this immediate time." David uses past blessings as a foundation and a jump start to ask God to help him in present trouble. Then, in verse two, we see David's protest: "O you sons of men, how long will you turn my glory into shame? How long will you love vanity, and seek after leasing?" We are led from the closet of prayer to the field of conflict. Notice the courage David displays as he begins with the sons of men and chides them for their wickedness. "The sons of men" is sometimes used for rulers, civil rulers, those in authority, and great men; undoubtedly, his enemies were great men. He says, "O you sons of men, how long will you turn my glory into shame? How long will you love vanity?"

David's Protest (Psalm 4:2)

Vanity is uselessness and worthlessness, but it is also another word used in the Bible for idolatry and idols. How long will you love idols? How long will you love idolatry? He says, "How long will you love vanity? How long will you seek after leasing?" Leasing is lying, deceit, fraud, and dishonesty. "O you sons of men, how long will you turn my glory into shame? How long will you love vanity and seek after leasing?" Then he said, "Stop."

Think about what I have just said. Are you going to jest your way into hell? Are you going to laugh at the people of God, the man of God, and the things of God? There are plenty of illustrations in our land today of rulers and important people who love vanity and try to turn God's glory and the glory of God's people into shame. They love idolatry, dishonesty, fraud, and deceit. Like David, we need to protest against their wickedness and ungodliness.

Our Lord said in Proverbs 8:35-36, "For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord."

Now stop and think about that. Whoever finds Christ finds life and obtains favor of the Lord. But listen to verse 36: “But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.” Have you ever stopped to think about this? All that ungodly men, ungodly rulers, and ungodly government can do is give us a society of death: “All they that hate me love death.”

You wonder why we have abortion on demand? You wonder why Sodomites have more privileges and more rights than ordinary, everyday citizens? You wonder why wickedness can run roughshod over righteousness? It is because we have a society of death. When our Lord comes back, He is going to straighten these things out. But all ungodly men can do is give us a society of death.

David's Pronouncement: The Godly Are Set Apart (Psalm 4:3)

Now look in verse 3, because this is the message tonight. David says, “But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself. The Lord will hear when I call unto him.” Here is David’s pronouncement. Notice the first two words: “But know.” These

words are very instructive and important. David informs us that verse 3 contains something we absolutely must know. The Hebrew word means to perceive, comprehend, understand, and lay hold of. David says, “Here is something you better perceive, comprehend, and lay hold of. Make sure you understand it.”

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul used similar language: “Know ye not,” or, “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren.” He is saying, “Here is something very important. You better learn, sit up, and pay attention.” Our Lord likewise often said, “Verily, verily,” “Truly, truly,” or “Amen, amen.” What was He saying? Here is something important. Pay attention.

David, in verse 3, says, “But know,” here is something that you must know. Look at the next three words: “But know that the Lord.” In other words, David is telling us that this is an act of God, a work of God, something that God does. If we are interested in what God does and what God is doing, we had better sit up and pay attention. God does something in His sovereign pleasure, in His perfect will, in His grace and in His mercy. What is it that God does? “But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.”

Would you let that sink in just for a moment? “Hath set apart him that is godly for himself.” They are God’s peculiar treasure. He wants them. He desires them. He has pleasure in them. He sets them apart for Himself.

A similar truth appears in Malachi chapter 3, verse 16: “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”

Notice again: “Then they that feared the Lord.” What did they do? They spake often one to another. What did God do? God hearkened and heard it because they were talking about the things of God. A book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and thought upon His name. And what does God say? “And they shall be mine, saith the Lord.” In that day when He makes up

His jewels, they will be His peculiar and particular treasure. They will be His.

Matthew Henry, one of the most common, well-known commentators, wrote most of his commentaries from notes taken during home devotions taught by his father, Philip Henry. Concerning Psalm 4:3, Matthew Henry says that the Lord has set apart every particular godly man for Himself in His eternal choice, effectual calling, and the special disposals of providence and operations of His grace.

His people are purified unto Him, a peculiar people. Godly men are God's separated, sealed ones. He knows those that are His and has set His image and superscriptions upon them. He distinguishes them with uncommon favors: “They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels.” Know this.

Let godly people know it, and let them never alienate themselves from Him to whom they are thus appropriated. Let wicked people know it and take heed that they hurt not those whom God protects. Matthew Henry said, He set apart these for Himself.

Remember that in the Old Testament, Israel, the covenant people, were to be God's peculiar treasure. In Exodus 19:5, God says, “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.” If you will keep His covenant and obey His voice, God says you are going to be a peculiar treasure to Him, above all people, for all the earth is His.

Deuteronomy 14:2 says, “For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.” God chose Israel to be a peculiar people. Again, Deuteronomy 26:18 says, “And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments.” A peculiar people is associated with the covenant and with keeping His commandments. Psalm 135:4 says, “For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.”

This thought is not just reserved for the Old Testament. Notice Psalm 135 and verse 4: "For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure." By the way, every time this word "peculiar" is used, it refers to a valued property, a peculiar treasure that is something that is exceedingly precious and special and belongs to one individual. Wow.

The same truth appears in the New Testament. In Titus 2 and verse 14, the Word of God says this, in reference to our Lord's sacrifice: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." In 1 Peter 2 and verse 9, the Bible says it like this: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." The Greek word for "peculiar" here literally has reference to belonging to one particular. In other words, it refers to a particular possession. It is individuals who have been selected by God to be His peculiar treasure.

Now, I want to go back to Psalm 4 and look at verse 3, and I want to try to put this together for us: "But know"—you better know this—"that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself." In light of this simple truth, it should be obvious that we are to be a godly people.

What It Means to Be Godly

However, there is a very pressing question: What does it mean to be godly? I know many professing Christians whom I would never classify as godly. I would call them worldly, carnal, or unsaved, but I certainly would not call them godly. In the average church in this land today, there are very few godly people.

What does it mean to be godly? You may be surprised, but the Hebrew word literally means and refers to those who are faithful, holy, saintly, pious, and godly. What is a godly man? What would be a saintly man, a pious man, or a faithful man? A godly man is faithful to the principles of Scripture. He is constantly and continually bringing his life into greater conformity to the Word of God. A godly man is a saintly man; that is, he lives and acts like a saint. He lives

and acts like a Christian. He is godly, meaning that he is like God in areas of his life.

Let me immediately dispel a misconception. When I say “a godly man,” do not think of perfection, absolute perfection, or sinlessness. A godly man is not necessarily a sinless man. How do I know that? First of all, from experience. We are sinners, and we do sin.

I never will forget the first time I met an individual who claimed sinless perfection. I went into his place of business. I knew he was a professing Christian, and I had been reading Psalm 32. I said, “Isn’t it wonderful to have your sins forgiven?” He replied, “I wouldn’t know. I haven’t sinned in five years.” My jaw went to the floor, my mouth fell open, and I was stunned. Finally, when I regained my composure, I said, “Well, sir, I’m sorry to inform you that you just did. Your reign of perfection is ended, for the Scripture says, ‘He that saith, I have no sin, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.’”

How do I know that godly men are not perfect and are not sinless? Because we are sinners, and we will not be perfect until we get to glory. But there is another way that I know that godly men are not sinlessly perfect.

How do I know that? Because of the Scriptures. Look in your Bibles to Psalm 32. You remember David sinned, and there are a number of penitential Psalms. Psalm 51, which everyone knows, but also Psalm 32. In these Psalms, David is confessing and acknowledging his sins. He says, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

David, of course, tried to hide his sins. He said, "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long." He knew he was wicked: "For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." God kept convicting him. Finally, David said, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Then, "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him."

Everyone that is godly will pray for forgiveness and repentance. Godly men may sin, but godly men repent. They do not remain in their sins, hide them, or pretend that they have not sinned. They do not pretend that they are perfect and that everything is okay when it is not. A godly man will quickly and readily acknowledge his sin, and he is willing to turn from that sin and repent of it.

A godly man understands Proverbs 28:13: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." He understands 1 John 1: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." A godly man is not perfect, but he surely desires to be. As a child of God, you do not genuinely want to sin against God—not if you are His child. A godly man understands that he is a sinner and that he may sin. But he also understands something else: he does not have to sin.

What am I talking about? I want you to turn to two passages: 1 John 2, and then Romans 6. Look in 1 John 2, and then we will come back to Romans 6. Notice, if you would please, verse 1. John the Apostle wrote this: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." Isn't that amazing? He said, "I'm writing this so that you won't sin."

I do not agree with the theology of Dwight L. Moody, but I do agree with something he had written in the flyleaf of his Bible: "Either this book will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from this book." But look what the Bible says: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

He said, "I'm writing this so you will not sin. I don't want you to sin, but if and when you do, you must understand there's an advocate, there's a good counselor with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He's the one to go to when you sin. But I'm writing this," he said, "so that you do not sin."

Now, if you will go back in your Bibles to Romans chapter 6, I will show you what he is talking about. I wish I had time to preach this. I think I probably have eighteen or twenty messages on Romans chapter 6 alone. To me, it is one of the most beautiful chapters in the

book of Romans. And let me tell you, it is one of those chapters. I tell people there are two things that really set me free as a Christian. The first one is when I understood God's absolute sovereignty, that God is on the throne. He is sovereign.

My responsibility is to be faithful and to live like He tells me to live. The rest of it is up to Him. That was the most freedom I had had in a long time when I saw that. The second most blessed truth was when I realized that I had been delivered from the dominion of sin. Look what he says in Romans chapter 6, beginning with verse 11: “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Think about this: What power does sin have over a dead man? Not anything. So the apostle says you reckon, you count, you impute yourself dead indeed unto sin. You not only count yourself dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Now, verse 12: “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.”

He did not say, “Let not sin therefore be in your mortal body.” He said, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body.” If you would study Romans 5 and Romans 6, you will find that sin and death are treated as kings. Death reigned from Adam to Moses. Sin reigned unto death, the Bible says. They are treated as kings.

What did Jesus Christ do? Jesus Christ came along and delivered us from the kingdom of sin and from the kingdom of death. The Bible says in Colossians chapter 1 that God hath translated us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son. Sin is not our Lord, our dominion, or our King. We have been translated out of that kingdom into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” “For sin shall not have dominion over you.” Why? You are under grace as a means of justification. You are not under the law.

Sin has dominion over unsaved people. When sin commands unsaved people to jump, they have to jump. But when sin comes to a child of God who has been delivered out of its kingdom and

commands you to do something, you have the power, the right, and the privilege to say, “I’m sorry, I’m no longer in your kingdom. You have no power over me.”

I don't have to obey you. I choose, rather, to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. He is my King. He is my Lord. I will not do that. A godly man is one who may sin, but he also realizes he doesn't have to. That is a fight. You remember the Apostle Paul said, "I die how often?" Daily. And I've got news for you: a thousand times a day, if you're fighting against sin, if you're fighting against your flesh, I die daily.

Practical Godliness and Its Blessings

Now let me show you how practical this is. Look at Malachi, chapter two, verse 15: "And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one?" He is talking about marriage: "That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth."

Why did God make the husband and wife one? The answer is that he might seek a godly seed. Since God wants a godly seed, and a godly seed comes from godly parents, watch this: "Therefore take heed to your spirit"—your attitude, your disposition, your way of thinking, that which motivates you—"that ye deal not treacherously against the wife of his youth."

My wife and I soon will have been married 46 years. What if I came to Brother Mooney and said, "You know, my wife's getting kind of old. I think what I need is a midlife crisis. I think I need me a couple of 20 year olds." What would you say? That's wicked. That's vile. That's sin. It's not only sin; it's treachery. God said, "Don't deal treacherously against the wife of your youth."

He wants a godly seed. How practical is godliness? It's so practical it's nothing less than obedience—obedience to the law of God, obedience to the Word of God. Interestingly enough, when the Bible says in Malachi 2:15, "that he might seek a godly seed," the word "godly" is Elohim.

Does that ring a bell? That is the name of God. It is also used sometimes of civil rulers and judges in the Bible. But a godly seed is

someone who is like God, someone who lives according to His commandments and according to His will.

The practicality of being godly begins with taking heed to your spirit, that you obey God's law. It is extremely practical. We have to watch our mind, our disposition, our attitude, and our spirit, that we do that which is right. There are several words for godly in the New Testament. One of them is Eusebius. That is where Eusebius got his name. It means godly. But by far, the greater number of Greek words for godly in the New Testament is theos, which is a name for God. Theology. Theocentric. It refers to God.

What in the world is godliness? It is living as God would have you to live, acting the way God would have you to act, obeying His law and His Word, and bringing your life into greater conformity to His Word. Our Lord said in John 8:29, "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him."

Have you ever made it your prayer, "O God, just let me do those things that please You"? We have been commanded to be conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). What did Christ do? Christ pleased the Father. If I am to be Christ-like, if I am to be godly, I must please my Father. Look in your Bibles to 1 Thessalonians 4:1.

Notice what Scripture says in 1 Thessalonians 4:1: “Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.” Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:4, “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” Hebrews 11:6 says, “Without faith it is impossible to please him.”

What is a godly man? He is a man who pleases God by his faith, attitude, conduct, and faithfulness. He sets the Word of God and the law of God before him and endeavors to be obedient in every area of his life. Consistently and constantly, every day, he says, “Lord, I want to please You. I want to be honorable. I don’t want to sin against You, God. Help me. Make me pure. Make me holy. Make me godly.”

Is the man perfect? No, he is not perfect, but he sure wants to be. When he sins, he is ready and willing to acknowledge that sin, confess it, and turn from it. Look back in Psalm 4:3: "This know. This know. But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself."

God has respect unto an individual like that. God says, "That's My kind of man. That's My kind of person. That's My kind of jewel. I'm going to take this one and set him aside for Myself. I'm going to honor him." Look at verse 3 again: "But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself. The Lord will hear when I call unto him."

Wait a minute, David. How do you know God is going to hear your prayer? How do you know God is going to answer your prayer? David says, "I can tell you how I know. I hear God and He hears me. I obey Him and He set me apart and has marked me with His special favor and blessing."

I have an intimate relationship with Him. He will hear when I call. You remember what He said in James 5:16, that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Are you special? Have you been marked out by God, distinguished by God, and set apart by God because of your godliness and obedience? Are you satisfied with being the common, everyday, ordinary, run-of-the-mill professing Christian who is satisfied with disobedience, ignorance, and apathy? If you are, do not ever expect to be treated special by God. God has marked the godly for Himself.

I want to show you how practical this is. Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 12:1. You want to know what is wrong with our country, and why we are in the trouble that we are in? Look in Psalm 12:1: "Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men." Notice what David says. He cries, "Help, Lord!" Why does David want God's help? "For the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men."

You say, "How does that concern society? How does that concern a nation?" Read on. Because the godly ceases and the faithful fail, "They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak. The Lord shall cut off all

flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?"

"For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him." When the godly ceases and the faithful fail, society disintegrates. Why do we have oppression, wickedness, and rebellion? Because the godly man ceases and the faithful fail from among the children of men.

How do you want to be treated in this life? Do you prefer common, ordinary treatment, or do you want to be treated special? Do you want to go coach or first class? If you prefer first class, then first class demands obedience, holiness, and godliness.

Scripture declares in Proverbs 15:29, "The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous." The Word of God declares in Psalm 5:12, "For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield." A shield is that which you hide behind. It protects you from the fiery darts of the wicked and from persecution; it saves your life.

If you want the special favor of God, you must be a godly man. God will hear the cry of the righteous, bless the righteous, and encompass him with a shield. Why will God do this? David gives the answer: "But know, but know, but know, that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself." I hope and pray there is a hunger in every true child of God to be more holy and more godly. Our Lord said, "Be ye holy; for I am holy, saith the Lord."

Our holiness and godliness are evidenced by our obedience to His Word.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, I ask, Lord, in Thy holy and blessed name, Thou would speak to our hearts. Oh, God, if no one else wants to be holy, I do. If no one else wants to be godly, I do. God, make us more obedient, that we may be set apart, marked with distinction, that we're yours.

Help us to know and comprehend this: the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself. May we be thine. In Christ's name, Amen.

CHAPTER 8

Nathan Bedford Forrest

June 26, 2011

Introduction and Psalm 144

I want to remind you that I have been asked constantly, when I preach in other places, “Do you preach like this to your people?” My standard response is, “I practice on them, so I can preach it better to you.” The answer, of course, is yes.

The message I am bringing today will, by necessity, have a few slang words in it. I want you to understand that I do not use these slang words personally, but if I did not use them in the quotes, it would certainly detract from what I am going to try to show you. The message today is on the principles of General Nathan Bedford Forrest.

If you look in Psalm 144, let us read the very first verse, and you will understand its impact and importance as I get started. David says, “Blessed be the Lord, my strength, which teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight.”

The very name Nathan Bedford Forrest creates controversy. In fact, there is a subdivision outside of Newton, Georgia, called

Bedford Forrest. When the man who built the subdivision named it Bedford Forrest, there was all kinds of hullabaloo being raised over Bedford Forrest.

One thing that may be said concerning General Nathan Bedford Forrest is this: There is no such thing as ambivalence concerning his person and his character. One either loves him or hates him. One either appreciates his genius, his courage, his wisdom, and his abilities, or despises everything about him. Bedford Forrest has been called every conceivable name imaginable: illiterate, a backwoodsman, a crooked politician, a hillbilly, a devil, a genius, a spiritual comforter to his people, a man full of courage, the greatest military leader in the war, and a man of character.

Forrest's Reputation and Early Influences

General Nathan Bedford Forrest was never a compromiser, and those who study his life cannot be indecisive regarding the truth concerning him. One of his old soldiers said it like this: “He wrote into my heart as well and still rides there.” After the war, General Robert E. Lee was asked who was the best soldier he had ever commanded, and Lee replied, “A man I have never met, sir. His name is Forrest.”

This message is limited because I am not dealing today with General Forrest's conversion to Christianity. Hopefully, I will do that a little later. Forrest was converted after the war; when the war was over, he was a changed man by the grace of God.

Interestingly, Forrest did have many biblical principles. Biblical principles may be taught not only by exhortation, but by example as well. In those days, many individuals were taught Christian principles either by precept or by example. His mother was a Christian, and his wife was a Christian.

His mother, Mariam, had Scotch ancestry, having migrated herself from South Carolina. She was a very forceful and determined woman, but at the same time very loving and kind. All of her children loved her, but Nathan Bedford Forrest practically adored her. He always honored her, and he always honored his wife. He also honored women in general and held them in high esteem. If I had

time, I would tell you how he won his wife; it is a very interesting story. He was a wonderful man in that respect. Mariam Forrest had a profound influence upon her son.

One of Forrest's men was Captain D. C. Kelly, who was also a Methodist preacher. When Mariam Forrest visited her son during the battles, or on the battlefront, she attended a divine service with him under the preaching of Captain D. C. Kelly, a Methodist preacher attached to Forrest's command. Captain Kelly later remarked that while he was in Forrest's tent, he found a well-worn Bible bearing the name Mariam Forrest, which she had left for her son.

This shows how particular Forrest was. Although he was not a Christian during this time, he had Christian insight and principles in a number of things. Forrest's fifteen-year-old son, Willie, joined him in the war and fought. Forrest was wise enough to know that he needed proper influence, so he borrowed a few suitable companions for Willie. He chose the young sons of Bishop Otney of the Episcopal Church and the sons of General Daniel S. Donaldson of Tennessee. Thus, for a man who was not a Christian at this time, he certainly exercised great discernment. A general overall view of Forrest was written by Bishop Gaylor.

Gaylor writes of Forrest, "He was a man of immense physical strength and size, and as resolute and audacious in personal encounters as in open battle. His temper was terrific when aroused, and his language was often violent and profane, but never vulgar or obscene. He detested uncleanness, as he despised wanton cruelness and oppression. In the midst of the battle, when his own life was in peril, he was known to rescue a woman and a child from danger and carry them to a place of safety.

"While he thrashed a scout with hickory switches for bringing him second-hand information, he degraded one of his best officers for trifling with the affections of a woman. He was unlearned, but not illiterate. A pen, he said, once reminded him of a snake, and his spelling was consistently wrong, but his natural eloquence could move his troops to enthusiasm. He did not know the first principles of the drill, being astonished at the effect of a trumpet call upon disciplined soldiers, and yet in his general plan of battle, he

instinctively adopted the mature tactics of Napoleon. He exercised an authority as a general that was absolutely intolerant of the slightest variation of disobedience. And yet he was the genial companion of his subordinates and was foremost in exposing himself in battle."

He had twenty-nine horses shot out from under him and with his own hands slew thirty men. General Forrest was six feet two inches tall and weighed 210 pounds, very large for that day and, as such, very intimidating. He used his marvelous skills as a hard rider and a fierce swordsman. Forrest was known to sharpen not only the bottom, or cutting edge, of the sword, but the top edge as well, because he would use both in battle. He did not drink, smoke, or even chew in a day when drinking and smoking were a way of life to most people. Forrest was the only soldier on either side, North or South, who went from private to general.

Forrest on Fighting

He was unique in many ways, and there was a certain uniqueness that set him apart. One of his veterans wrote this:

"Day or night, winter and summer alike, his indomitable energy never slackened or tired. He was everywhere and fell upon his enemy like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky. He was more than a born soldier. He was a born god of battle. He, in a large measure, infused his own splendid spirit into his entire command. The commonest soldier under his eye became a hero.

"I think he would have accomplished substantially the same marvelous results with almost any body of men that might have been given to him. Who of his soldiers can ever forget the electrical effect of his presence on the battlefield or the danger beleaguered march? I can now see by the flashes of lightning in the dark night, while the rain falls in torrents, the dispirited column as it struggles through the indescribable swamps of Mississippi, men and beasts worn out with loss of sleep and with work and hunger. But see how every eye flashes wide open, how each bent form straightens itself in its saddle, how the very horses whinny with pleasure and recover their strength at the sound of that strange, shrill voice, and at the sight of that dark form, the incarnation of storm and battle that rides on his

big gray war steed, his legs swinging like pendulums on either side of the saddle, and followed by his feigned bodyguard. Each man is suddenly awake and invigorated by the first breath of dawn, all apprehensions of defeat slink away at his reproach. His commission as general was signed not only by Mr. Jefferson Davis, but by Almighty God Himself."

That was what one of his veterans said, and they believed it because he was indeed a born fighter.

Forrest on Fighting

Now, I want to give you four principles of Forrest. These biblical principles, which he undoubtedly absorbed from his mother and partially, probably, from his wife as well, affected him and his fighting even before his conversion.

First of all, Forrest on fighting. Do you realize the Bible has a great deal to say about fighting? Contrary to popular opinion, neither fighting nor war are unbiblical. In fact, we are told in Exodus 15 and verse 3, "The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name." The Lord is a man of war. And Deuteronomy 4 and verse 34 teaches us that God used war to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

It was God that raised up Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Jephthah, and the judges. It was God who taught David how to fight. That is why David said, “Blessed be the Lord my God who teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight.” It was God who gave strength and discernment to men when they fought in battle.

For instance, in 2 Samuel 23, we read of some of David’s mighty men. Concerning Eleazar, the Bible says, “He, Eleazar, arose and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the Lord wrought a great victory that day, and the people returned after him only to spoil.” The Bible says that Eleazar’s hand clave unto the sword. In other words, they had to pry his fingers off the sword. Then it says, “…and the Lord wrought a great victory that day.” How did the Lord work a great victory? The Lord was using Eleazar as he fought.

In verse 12 of 2 Samuel 23, we read, “…but he, Shammah, stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines:

and the Lord wrought a great victory." Once again, it was God who gave the victory. It was God who enabled these men to fight.

Forrest had a biblical view when it came to fighting. He correctly understood the meaning of war when he said, "War means fighting and fighting means killing." Many people gasp at that statement, but it is true—not only historically, but biblically. Read through the Bible, and you will find times when God called Moses, Joshua, and other men and said, "You go in and kill every one of them." God directed Israel in battle and in times of war, and when He did so, He acted in His justice, righteousness, and holiness.

Augustine, one of the early church fathers, said, "Though defensive violence will always be a sad necessity in the eyes of men of principle, it would still be more unfortunate if wrongdoers should dominate just men."

If the wicked reign, the righteous die. Forrest fought hard and fought to win. He would not, and could not, hold back. Twenty-nine horses were shot out from under him, one by a cannonball. So far in advance of his troops while chasing the fleeing Yankees, he gave them time to form a defensive line. As the men parted, Forrest saw the cannon and wheeled his horse just as it fired. The cannonball struck behind the saddle and cut the horse in half. Forrest disentangled himself from the dead horse, fought on foot until his men arrived, and allowed them to rescue and take him away.

He killed thirty men in battle with his saber, pistol, shotgun, or bare hands. That does not include those he killed before the war while defending innocent individuals. Senator Daniel said of General Forrest: "What genius was in that wonderful man? He felt the field as blind Tom touches the keys of a piano. War means killing, he said, and the way to kill is to get there first with the most men."

"He was not taught at West Point, but he gave lessons to West Point. His career was as brilliant and devoted in its allegiance to duty in peace as it was in the conflict of arms." Shelby Foote, in the Civil War Narrative, wrote concerning Forrest: "In his first fight northeast of Bowling Green, the 40-year-old Forrest improvised a double envelopment, combined it with a frontal assault, classic maneuvers which he could not identify by name and probably of which he had

never heard in his entire life. Forrest had the uncanny ability, not unlike that of Alexander the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte, and other great military leaders, to immediately read a battlefield, read the disposition of his opponents, and know when they had reached their breaking point. Actually, Forrest duplicated many of the tactics of Bonaparte, though he had never been trained in them, nor most likely did he know the name of a single principal of war, yet few generals in history made better use of them." He then said, "Forrest's defeat of General Samuel D."

Sturgis at the Battle of Brice's Crossroads was and still is considered brilliant, and is still studied by students at the U.S. Army War College and other military schools throughout the world. It is called the perfect battle. You should read how Forrest whipped General Sturgis. It is unbelievable.

Forrest's philosophy was this: "Never take a charge, charge them too." At Parker's Crossroads, while the battle was going on, a staff officer rode up to General Forrest and said, "General Forrest, a heavy line of infantry is right in our rear. We are between two lines of battle. We've got the enemy in front and the enemy in the rear. What shall we do?" Forrest replied, "Charge them both ways." He never took a charge; he always gave a charge.

When Forrest stated how he had won most of his battles, he said, "By getting there first with the most men, planning and making my own fight, never letting the other fellow make the fight for me, strike the first blow, get them scared and keep the skeer on them, charge and give them hell." That is exactly what he said and how he did it.

Even Forrest's enemies feared him and recognized his greatness. General Ulysses S. Grant rated Forrest as the ablest cavalry general in the South. He was really the ablest in the North or the South, because he defeated all the other Yankee cavalry generals. General Sherman called General Forrest "the very devil" and said that he must be hunted down and killed if it cost 10,000 lives and bankrupted the federal treasury. Yet after the war Sherman said, "After all, I think Forrest was the most remarkable man our civil war produced on either side."

Confederate Generals Joseph E. Johnston and P. G. T. Beauregard agreed. Beauregard said, “Forrest’s capacity for war seemed only to be limited by the opportunities for its display.”

I have read probably four books or more on the life of General Forrest, and it is absolutely amazing how his enemies feared him. Even when the enemy had thousands more than Forrest ever had, they were afraid to fight him. An article titled “How the Yankees feared Forrest,” from the Chattanooga Daily Rebel, published at Selma, Alabama, November 19, 1864, records this exchange. A Yankee officer was asked by a lady of Oxford, Mississippi, why General Grierson, with his largely superior numbers of cavalry, did not attack General Forrest. The Yankee replied, “Madam, our entire force of 7,000 cavalry would not fight one of Forrest’s brigades unless our infantry was there to support them. Not one of our brigades would fight one of his regiments. No regiment would fight one of his companies, and no company would ever charge a pair of Forrest’s old boots if they were laying in the road.”

They were afraid of Forrest, and they had a right to be because he had a biblical understanding of fighting. He did not go there to play. He went there to fight, and he went there to win. In one battle, Forrest faced the famed Union Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, the noted atheist and infidel. Forrest whipped him so thoroughly and completely that even Ingersoll himself said it was impossible to defeat Forrest and his men. After the battle, one of Forrest’s soldiers wrote, “Ingersoll made a good fight, but if he really believed there was no hell, we convinced him there was something pretty close like it.” So much for Ingersoll.

In February of 1865, Forrest was promoted to Lieutenant General and given the duty of guarding from Decatur, Alabama, all the way to the Mississippi River. With a few hundred hastily gathered men, he made his last fight at Selma on May 9th. He laid down his arms, and it is stated that he was 179 times under fire during the four years. Forrest said, “My Provost Marshall’s books will show that I’ve taken thirty-one thousand prisoners.” That did not count all the equipment, horses, mules, and supplies that he gathered up. Always and everywhere when fighting was to be done, he was there, and he fought.

Here is the biblical principle: fight when it is necessary, fight hard, and fight to win. Oftentimes—practically all the time—Forrest was outnumbered and outgunned. Yet through his ingenuity, deception, and skill, he prevailed against all odds. Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." When it came to fighting, Forrest did it with all his might.

Make the most of what you have in every situation. Forrest would come to a town or fort where there were thousands of men, while he had perhaps 2,500 men and four or five cannon. He would arrange and parade his men just out of sight, over a little ridge, while those cannon and men kept passing inside. Finally, the enemy would say, "My goodness, how many men, how many cannon does he have?" At Murfreesboro, he sent word, "You need to surrender and save this effusion of blood, because if I have to come in, I'm going to kill everybody. You see what I have."

They surrendered, though he was greatly outnumbered. They thought he had forty or fifty cannon when he had only four, because he kept bringing the same ones into view over and over. Make the most of what you have in every situation. We must trust the Lord and do what is right.

First Samuel 14:6 records Jonathan's words before fighting the Philistines: "And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." Jonathan said that two of them could take care of it.

Forrest on Fighting and Forthrightness

We do not even need a regiment or a company. We do not need fifteen or twenty; two of us are sufficient as long as the Lord is with us. You simply have to make the most of what you can.

After the war was over in August 1866, a troop of Federal cavalry rode by Forrest's place, as much out of curiosity to see Forrest as for any other reason. Forrest's war horse, King Philip, was grazing in the front lot. As the blue-clad cavalry filed down the lane toward the house, King Philip's training took over. He laid his ears back,

charged the blue-clad Yankees, biting them, and then began flailing with his front feet, trying to kill them.

Finally, Jerry, who was General Forrest's slave and basically his servant, went out and got King Philip. Jerry had stayed with Forrest throughout the war. Forrest had freed his men, but they stayed on. Jerry told the men that they were not to touch or hurt the horse. After King Philip had been put back up, the captain came to Forrest and said, "General, now I know how to account for your successes. Your Negroes fight for you and so do your horses."

Another story says that after the war King Philip was pulling a carriage in Memphis, Tennessee, with two elderly ladies in it. The police force had just received new blue uniforms. Four or five policemen stepped into the street. King Philip laid his ears back and charged down the street while the two old ladies pulled back, saying, "Whoa, whoa, whoa." King Philip kept going until he scattered the blue coats left and right.

So his horse was trained. Forrest's principle concerning fighting would be this: Make the most of what you have, and when you fight, fight hard and fight to win.

Forrest on Forthrightness

Secondly, Forrest on forthrightness. Forthright means candor, openness, honesty, outspokenness, and straightforwardness. Forrest was one of those unique individuals who could speak plainly, and you never had to guess at what he said. You always knew exactly what he said and what he meant.

Before his conversion, General Forrest often emphasized his words with expletives. In Colossians, chapter four and verse six, we are told, "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." General Forrest's speech was usually seasoned, but it was not with salt. Still, he did speak plainly.

Our Lord also spoke plainly, for his disciples said in John 16, verse 29, "Then said his disciples, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb." General Forrest was known for not beating around the bush. He was absolutely intolerant of official

incompetence and stupidity, regardless of rank. Bishop Gaylor, whom I quoted at the beginning of this message, said concerning Forrest that his language was often violent and profane, but never vulgar or obscene.

Although Forrest cussed—and that is the good South Georgia pronunciation of cursed—he did not always get away with it. On one occasion, he came across a captured caisson stuck in the mud beyond the ability and efforts of the officer and crew to remove it. When they rode up, Forrest demanded, “Who has the charge here?” “I have,” spoke up Captain Andrew McGregor. Forrest replied, “Then why the hell don’t you do something?” Forrest began and then following that with some very uncomplimentary expletives. McGregor responded, “I will not be cursed out by anyone, even by a superior officer.” He seized a lighted torch and rammed it into the ammunition chest, an apparent suicidal act that sent Forrest away as fast as he could clap spurs to his horse.

When Forrest returned, he asked, “What infernal lunatic is that just out of the asylum down there?” He demanded of his staff, “He came near to blowing himself and me up with a whole caisson full of powder.” Those around McGregor knew that the caisson was empty, having been unloaded in an effort to get it out of the mud hole, and laughed uproariously at McGregor’s joke on the General. The General joined heartily in the laughter. However, Captain Morton, head of Forrest’s artillery, explained later that after that Forrest never cursed McGregor again.

One does not need to use profanity or expletives in order to speak plainly. Forrest did not always use those; however, he was unconverted, and he would use them.

At the Battle of Chickamauga, Forrest saw a defeated and demoralized Union army before him. Once again, he was correct in his assessment and wanted Braxton Bragg to command an all-out attack. The next day, the Union retreated to Chattanooga, Tennessee. Forrest went to Bragg's headquarters, beside himself because the Confederate Army had not moved or done one thing to follow up on its victory. He told Bragg the poor state of the enemy. Bragg always had some kind of excuse for not following up on victory, but he asked Forrest, "How then could they move against an

enemy without supplies?" He refused to order an attack. Forrest replied, "General Bragg, we can get all the supplies we need in Chattanooga." Bragg did not answer, and Forrest stormed out of the tent.

Later, Bragg ordered Forrest to turn over his troops and report to General Joseph Wheeler, a man whom Bragg knew Forrest disagreed with. This was the second time in about a year that Bragg had done so. Forrest went to see his superior, General Bragg, and said, "You commenced your cowardly and contemptible persecution of me soon after the Battle of Shiloh, and you've kept it up ever since.

"You did it because I reported to Richmond facts while you reported damned lies. You robbed me of my command in Kentucky and gave it to one of your personal favorites, men that I armed and equipped from the enemies of our country. In a spirit of revenge and spite, because I would not fawn upon you as others did, you drove me into West Tennessee in the winter of 1862 with a second brigade I had organized, with improper arms and without sufficient ammunition, although I made repeated applications for the same.

"You did it to ruin me in my career. When, in spite of all this, I returned with my command, well equipped by captures, you began your work of spying and persecution and have kept it up. Now, taking advantage of your position as commanding general to further humiliate me, you've taken these brave men from me—a second brigade organized and equipped without thanks to you or the government, a brigade which has won the reputation for successful fighting, second to none in the army."

Forrest told General Bragg, "I've stood your meanness as long as I intend to. You played the part of a damn scoundrel and a coward. And if you were any part of a man, I would slap your jaws and force you to resent it. You have threatened to arrest me for not obeying your orders promptly. I dare you to do it. And I say that if you ever try to interfere with me or cross my path again, it will be at the peril of your own life."

Dr. J. B. Cowan, chief surgeon for Forrest, was present. Afterwards, Dr. Cowan explained, "Well, you're in for it now." Forrest replied, "He'll never open his mouth. He'll be the last man to

mention it and, mark my word, he'll take no matter on the action. I will ask to be relieved and transfer a different command, and he'll approve it." A short while later, Forrest's transfer to Mississippi was approved by General Bragg, who never said one word.

Forrest did not appreciate Fighting Joe Wheeler's decision to attack Fort Donaldson. Wheeler foolishly led his men against the fort, contrary to Forrest's counsel. After the fiasco, Forrest said to Wheeler, his immediate superior, "General Wheeler, I advised against this attack, and said all the subordinate officers should have said against it, and nothing you can now say or do will bring my brave men back, lying dead or wounded or freezing around that fort tonight.

"I mean no disrespect to you. You know my feelings of personal friendship for you. You can have my sword if you demand it. But there is one thing I do want you to put in that report to General Bragg. Tell him that I'll be in my coffin before I ever fight under your command again."

Wheeler responded quietly and with great feeling, "Forrest, I cannot take your saber and I regret exceedingly your determination. As the commanding officer, I take all the blame and responsibility for this failure."

General Wheeler and General Forrest continued to be friends. Later, Wheeler even risked his life to save Forrest and his men. In another incident, when General Van Dorn suggested that Forrest was misrepresenting him in reports to headquarters, Forrest expressed his conviction that Van Dorn should not listen to stories to his discredit. Van Dorn then said directly that he believed Forrest was engaged in treachery and falsehood, and suggested that they settle the matter as he reached for his sword on the wall.

Forrest on Forthrightness and Fidelity

Forrest had risen from his seat, his sword half drawn from the scabbard and his face aflame with passion. Van Dorn, as he unsheathed his sword, advanced toward Forrest. All of a sudden, a calm came over Forrest. He pushed his sword back into the scabbard and said, “General Van Dorn, you know I'm not afraid of you, but I

will not fight you. And I leave you to reconcile with yourself the gross wrongs you've done to me."

"It would never do for two officers of our rank to set such an example to our troops. And I remember, if you forget, what we both owe to the cause." General Van Dorn said that he had never felt so ashamed in his entire life. Recalling Forrest's manly attitude and words, true to their position, he said, "I immediately recognized that he was right and apologized for having used such expressions then." He went on to say that he and Forrest parted better friends. Whatever else could ever be said about Forrest, Forrest was certainly not a coward. Forrest spoke the truth, and he spoke it plainly. One may have disagreed with General Forrest, but one could never have misunderstood him.

The Bible commands us in Ephesians 4:15 to speak "the truth in love." If you cannot obey both parts of that command, at least obey the first part: speak the truth. People will know where you stand and what you believe, and you should be able to speak the truth and back it up. Here is the principle: speak so plainly that you will not be misunderstood and will be able to back up exactly what you say.

Forrest on Fidelity

Forrest on fighting; Forrest on forthrightness; thirdly, Forrest on fidelity. Forrest was faithful in many ways, even before his conversion: faithful to his duty, his men, his country, his wife, and his principles. General Forrest was unique. In one incident, he not only rebuked but dismissed a personal friend and staff officer because of immorality. Major Powhatan Ellis said, "On one occasion while approaching his tent, I heard him in tones of great anger using the most bitter denunciatory language to an officer who, although as brave a man as served in the war, and a warm personal friend of Forrest's, had been guilty of immoral conduct of which Forrest had just heard. He denounced him in the severest language I think I've ever heard, dismissed him from his command on the spot, saying, 'I will not have any man about me who will be guilty of such conduct to a woman.'"

Here was a man who understood fidelity. Colonel C. R. Barteau said of Forrest, “I thought that one feature of General Forrest’s character deserves special meaning, to wit, his idea of morality.

“During the war, when the protection of the weak depended so largely upon the military arm, the violation by any soldier at his command of the strict rules he established, if reported to him, was promptly punished. In the presence of his wife, he was as tractable and loving as a child, though fierce in battle and among men when aroused; yet, as a guardian of female virtue and the sanctity of dependent homes and unprotected families, he stood in striking contrast with others in the service.”

Forrest was manly, yet Forrest was faithful. He lived consistently toward his wife. He honored her immensely, as well as honoring his mother and all ladies.

Colonel D. C. Kelly, the Methodist preacher mentioned earlier, said concerning Forrest, “His devotion to his wife was deep and sincere. She was a quiet, refined Christian woman and could control him with a word even when his temper was at its highest. He had absolute confidence in the piety of his mother and his wife, and was himself a thorough believer in Christianity, although he was not a Christian at the time, and was so fully persuaded of the efficacy of prayer in times of danger or in battle as Napoleon was a believer in fate.”

“Throughout the war, he always gave me the fullest opportunities for preaching in camp, courteously entertaining at his mess table all preachers whom I chose to invite. He was always present at such service when it was practical. When we were messmates, there was always family prayer in his tent at night, conducted alternately by the chaplain and myself.”

Here was Forrest, not a Christian, yet always having family devotions in his tent. Kelly went on to say, “On one of our expeditions a chaplain of the Federal Army was overtaken and captured. When the Federal chaplain learned that he was to be taken to Forrest’s headquarters, every feature showed anxiety and fear and depression.” They were afraid of Forrest.

As he approached General Forrest, General Forrest asked him to be seated while he took care of some other matters. A little later supper was announced, and the chaplain, the Yankee chaplain, was requested to have the evening meal with General Forrest and his men at the table. Forrest then turned to the Yankee chaplain and said, "Parson, would you please ask the blessing?" The minister could not conceal his surprise, which was evident from the manner in which he looked at Forrest before being assured that Forrest was in earnest.

He gave expression to the gratitude he felt at being thus considerably treated. He had evidently expected Forrest to kill him because Forrest was known as a fearsome fighter. The next morning, Forrest gave the Yankee chaplain an escort through Confederate lines. As the chaplain left, Forrest humorously remarked, "Parson, I would keep you here to preach for me if you were not so much needed by the sinners on the other side."

Dr. J. B. Cowan, Forrest's chief surgeon, said this concerning Forrest and his fidelity: "In those days, we never started on an expedition but what the men were drawn up in line and the chaplain, while the heads of all were uncovered, evoked God's blessings upon our cause. Nothing called Forrest's ire quicker or brought down surer punishment than for a man to disturb religious services in any part of the camp. One side of General Forrest's nature was as gentle and tender as a woman's.

"The other, when he was aroused, was desperate and thoroughly destructive. In quiet moments he was confiding, gentle, kind, and considerate. When aroused, there was no man on earth more tender. When not aroused, there was no man on earth more tender than he. It was when the battle was over that the kinder and gentler part of his nature came out.

"He would come to my hospital, help me with the wounded, go about them with kind words of encouragement, and aid me in caring for them as tenderly as a mother. I have known him to give his clothing and personal effects away on many occasions to the needy wounded. He would say to me, 'Doctor, do all you can for these poor fellows.'"

"And I've seen the tears running down his cheeks as he was speaking to some unfortunate soldier who did not have long to live." Here is a man who was a fierce fighter, and yet he was very compassionate and concerned.

There is a principle in Proverbs 20:6: "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?" We have to be faithful to our area or sphere of life, to whatever God calls us. God does not call everyone to be a great general, preacher, doctor, housewife, or carpenter. But whatever God calls us to, we must be our absolute best for His honor and glory.

Forrest on Forgiveness

You have seen Forrest on fighting, forthrightness, and fidelity. One last one: Forrest on forgiveness.

Years ago, I was with a Christian friend who took me to a large flea market. They had a section with Confederate T-shirts, and I saw one with General Forrest's picture on the front and this quote underneath: "No damn man kills me and lives." I asked how much it was. My friend looked at me and said, "You're not going to buy that, are you?"

I said, "Yes, I am." When I bought the shirt, he asked, "You're not going to wear that, are you?" I said, "Well, yes, I am." He said, "You're a preacher and you're a Christian." I answered, "Yes. But I know the story. I know what Forrest said, what happened before, and what happened afterwards. I'm going to wear the shirt, tell you the story, and then you tell me whether or not I should wear it." I did wear that shirt, and every time I wore it, someone would ask about the quote. I was then able to teach not only history, but some Bible truth as well. Here is the story behind that quote.

It was Lieutenant Wills Gould who had abandoned two of his guns—cannon—at the Battle of Sand Mountain. According to the information available at that time, Lieutenant Gould had run his guns within 300 yards of the enemy. That is mighty close for cannon. But the enemy had made a countercharge, and Gould lost two of the guns.

Thankfully, the guns were later recovered. But General Forrest was upset that two of them had been lost. After the battle, when they were back at camp and in town taking care of administrative details, one of the first things Forrest intended to do was have Lieutenant Gould transferred to another command.

When Gould found out, he was very upset and insulted because he believed Forrest thought he was a coward, unwilling to stand and fight, which was not the case at all. He believed Forrest thought he had purposely abandoned the guns he had lost in battle, and thus regarded the transfer as a censure of his conduct.

Lieutenant Gould asked for a meeting with General Forrest, who agreed. At the meeting, Forrest was quiet and listened to Gould. He had a little pocket knife kind of like in a V, twirling it on his finger. Finally, when Gould finished speaking, Forrest told him he would not give him a reason for the transfer; he did not need to give him one. Furthermore, Gould would never serve under his command again. Gould became so agitated and upset that he grabbed a pistol from his pocket and shot General Forrest.

The bullet entered into the left hip, traveled into the vicinity of the intestines, and went out. Forrest then, with his left hand, caught the man's wrist and pushed the gun away, took his mouth, opened the pocket knife, and reached down and slashed him across the stomach, perforating even the bowels. The boy dropped the pistol and ran out.

Forrest walked next door to Dr. Yandell's office. Dr. Yandell examined the wound and pronounced it dangerous. To Forrest, the word dangerous meant fatal—that he was going to die. Once you got shot in the intestines in those days, that was pretty well it. Forrest stormed out of the doctor's office and went to his horse, where pistols were on the saddle.

That's when he said, "No damn man kills me and lives." He got his pistol and followed Lieutenant Gould down the street. Gould had gone into a tailor shop and was lying on the counter, bleeding profusely. When Forrest arrived, a crowd was already there. Forrest said, "Get out of my way. He's mortally wounded me, and I aim to kill him before I die."

When Gould heard Forrest's voice, he jumped up off the counter, through a window, and five or six feet to the ground just as Forrest shot. The men around him said, "You killed him, General, you killed him." The truth was that Forrest had not killed him with the pistol; his pistol ball missed. Satisfied, Forrest turned around and went to another doctor.

The other doctor examined the wound more closely and said, "You know, it's bad. Well, it's not all that bad. It's certainly not fatal." He proposed to cut the bullet out. Forrest replied, "It's nothing but a damn little pistol ball. Let it alone. Go get Lieutenant Gould. Take him to the Nelson house and make him as comfortable as you can. Spare nothing to save him."

"And when I give an order like that, I mean it." They took Lieutenant Gould to the Nelson house. The doctors were there, but Lieutenant Gould was not to be saved because peritonitis had set in. Captain Morton, who was over the artillery and Gould's immediate superior under Forrest, talked to both Forrest and Gould, and each man expressed regret and condemned his own haste in the matter.

Two days later, the doctor said Lieutenant Gould could not last much longer. Gould sent word to Forrest that he wished to speak to him before he died and, if possible, would like to see General Forrest. So they took General Forrest's cot and placed it in the room with Lieutenant Gould, cot beside cot. When Gould saw Forrest, he reached over, took one of Forrest's hands, held it between his two hands, and said, "I shall not be here long. And I was not willing to go away without seeing you in person and saying how thankful I am that I am the one who is to die, that you are spared for the country. What I did, I did in a moment of rashness. And I want your forgiveness."

Forrest leaned over the bed, hugged Lieutenant Gould, wept like a child, and told him he forgave him freely. Then he asked Lieutenant Gould to forgive him and told him he was sad and full of sadness because the wound he had inflicted upon Gould was to prove absolutely fatal. And it was. Although Forrest had said, "No damn man kills me and lives," that statement was prior to exercising what you and I would call genuine forgiveness and reconciliation.

In his farewell address to his men on May the 9th, 1865, he said, "The war's over. Civil war such as you've just passed through naturally engenders feelings of animosity, hatred, and revenge. It is our duty to divest ourselves of all such feelings, and as far as it is in our power to do so, to cultivate friendly feelings toward those with whom we have so long contended, and heretofore so widely but honestly different. Neighborhood feuds, personal animosities, and private differences should be blotted out. And when you return home, a manly, straightforward course of conduct will secure the respect of your enemies. Whatever your responsibilities may be to government, to society, or to individuals, meet them like men."

“The attempts made to establish a separate and independent confederation has failed, but the consciousness of having done your duty faithfully and to the end will, in some measure, repay for the hardships you have undergone. In bidding you farewell, rest assured that you carry with you my best wishes for your future welfare and happiness without in any way referring to the merits of the cause in which we've been engaged, your courage and determination as exhibited on many hard-fought fields has elicited the respect and admiration of friend and foe.”

“And now I cheerfully and gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to the officers and men of my command whose zeal, fidelity, and unflinching bravery have been the great source of my past success in arms. I have never on the field of battle sent you where I was unwilling to go myself. Nor will I now advise you to a course which I felt myself unwilling to pursue. You have been good soldiers. You can be good citizens. Obey the laws. Preserve your honors.”

“And the government which you've surrendered can afford to be and will be magnanimous.” Forrest was telling them to remain men: they had fought well and done what was right, but still had to live in honor and with respect. After the war, when the Spanish-American War began, Fighting Joe Wheeler fought for the United States government in Cuba. Forrest also offered to fight.

He sent a telegram to General Sherman in Washington, D.C.: “By telegrams from Washington and other sources, it appears that we may become involved in a war with Spain. If so, I presume the seat of

the war will be in Cuba. In the event we will be involved and that the government requires assistance, I hereby tender to you my services as a volunteer."

"I think I could enlist from 1,000 to 5,000 men who served in the Southern Army during the late war and at a short notice who could rendezvous in New Orleans, Mobile, Pensacola, Key West, either as cavalry or infantry. Yours respectfully, Nathan Bedford Forrest."

He received this answer from General Sherman: "Your letter of the 24th is received and I have forwarded it to the War Department with this note." Sherman wrote, "Respectfully referred to the Secretary of War for filing with the hundreds of offers that I have received. I think it deserves a place in the archives until after the events. I think Nathan Bedford Forrest is one of the most extraordinary men developed by our Civil War. If the possibility of war required the cavalry, I would accept without hesitation his services, and I would give him a prominent position. Now I think he would fight against our domestic enemies as violently as he did against us, and that means everything."

Nathan Bedford Forrest was willing to forgive, and he did forgive. Our Lord said, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." God, in His grace and mercy, forgave Nathan Bedford Forrest and converted him by His grace.

Forrest's Conversion and Legacy

After the war, Forrest said this about reconstruction: "I love the old government in 1861. I love the old constitution yet. I think it is the best government in the world if administered as it was before the war. I do not hate it. I'm opposing now only the radical revolutionists who are trying to destroy it. I believe that party to be composed, as I know it is in Tennessee, of the worst men on God's green earth, men who would not hesitate in any crime and who have only one object in view, and that's to enrich themselves."

Perhaps the most fitting epitaph for Nathan Bedford Forrest were the words of his friend, Minor Merriweather, who spoke cheerfully

to his son, Lee, within minutes of Forrest's passing: "The man you just saw dying will never die. He will live in the memory of men who love patriotism and who admire genius and daring."

The inscription on his monument reads thus: “Those hoofbeats die not upon Fame's crimson sod, but will ring through her song and her story. He fought like a titan and struck like a god, and his dust is our ashes of glory.” Forrest was a man. He was a sinner. He was a warrior. And finally, after the war, he was a Christian. By the grace of God, his cursing ceased.

He learned to control his temper. After his conversion, he spent many hours apologizing to people because of that temper, until he got it under control. That devil Forrest, as Sherman called him, was not a devil, but a saint—a devil only to the enemies of truth and righteousness.

Father, thank you for your love, your grace, your mercy, and your truth. Thank you for men like Forrest. And Lord, I pray that you'll raise up men like that for us today. Lord, give us grace. Give us honor and, Lord, give us wisdom and insight. Lord, give us mercy, make us men, and make us willing to stand and fight for that which is right. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 9

Life in the Midst of Death

November 18, 2012

The subtitle is “A Survivor in Judgment.” In Jeremiah chapter 45, verses 1 through 5, we read: “The word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch. Thou didst say, Woe is me now, for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow. I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest. Thus shalt thou say unto him, The Lord saith thus, Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not. For behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord. But thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all the places that thou goest.”

Introduction: America Under Judgment

We will look at this passage in a very particular way, but first I want to give several large introductory passages. It should be obvious to anyone who knows the Bible that America is under judgment. It should also be obvious to anyone with discernment who looks

around and sees what is happening that we are under judgment. God is, and has been, judging our country in numerous ways; and as bad as it is now, I am afraid it will get even worse.

Remember that the judgments listed in Amos chapter 4 increased in severity and intensity with each refusal to repent and return to the God of Scripture. God is immutable; He does not change. Therefore, as He has judged other nations in times past, He will likewise judge America.

God's Sovereignty Over Weather and Judgment

I have repeatedly expressed my dismay, disapproval, and contempt for meteorologists who attribute every type of foul and inclement weather to Mother Nature. In doing so, they remove weather from the realm of the supernatural and place it in the realm of chance, fate, fortune, and raw, uncontrolled nature. Yet we are given specific words concerning these matters. Hold Jeremiah 45, and look to Job chapter 37, beginning with verse 9: “Out of the south cometh a whirlwind,”

By the breath of God frost is given, and the breadth of the waters is straightened. Also by watering He wearieth the thick cloud, He scattereth His bright cloud, and it is turned round about by His counsels, that they may do whatsoever He commandeth them upon the face of the world and the earth. The Bible says very clearly that it is God who commands the clouds, the rains, the frost—everything—that they may do what He commands.

Notice verse 13: “He causeth it to come,” that is, the weather, “whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.” God, then, is in control of all the weather. Weather, like any other judgment, is under the hand of God. When droughts, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, and other destructive forces are attributed to nature rather than God, it is not only a denial of God and His sovereignty; it also causes people to disparage and deny that the hand of God has been turned against them.

Instead of repenting or seeking the cause of destruction, they chalk it up to chance, fate, or fortune and go right on their merry way in sin and rebellion. I’ll guarantee you, of those affected by Sandy,

very few have said, “Let me check and see why God sent this our way. Let me repent of my sins and understand the cause of God’s judgment in this area.”

However, as much as people want to deny the hand of God in judgment, there comes a time when God makes it so clear that it is absolutely impossible to deny His hand. Let me show you. In Exodus chapter 10, verse 7, note what the wise men said to Pharaoh: “And Pharaoh’s servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? Let the men go that they may serve the Lord their God.

“Knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?” They said, “What’s wrong with you? Are you blind? Can’t you see the hand of God has done all this, and Egypt is basically destroyed?” In Ezekiel 6:14, God says, “So will I stretch out my hand upon them, and make the land desolate, yea, more desolate than the wilderness toward Diblath, in all their habitations, and they shall know that I am the Lord.” What did God say? “I’m going to stretch out my hand. I’m going to make their land desolate. It’s going to be more desolate than the wilderness, and they shall know that I am the Lord.”

My point is, if necessary, regardless of the nation, God can indeed make it very painfully and clearly obvious that it is His hand that is turned against the people, and it cannot be attributed to chance, fate, or fortune. When you and I, or when anyone doubts and denigrates and denies His smaller and lighter judgments, He can always make Himself known in more severe judgments. It is like when you were a child, or when your children were young, and you gave them fair warning and may have given them a little pop or a little tap. But if they continued to overlook that and deny it and continued on their ways, it got rougher, harder, and more severe. So, as we try to ignore God’s smaller warnings, they will always increase in intensity and severity.

That is why Micah 6:9 says, “Hear ye the rod, and him who hath appointed it.” If you will not listen to God’s words, God says, “I’ve appointed my rod.”

The Context: Jeremiah and the Fall of Jerusalem

The context of this message is set in the fall and destruction of Jerusalem. Jeremiah is known as the weeping prophet. He saw the fall and destruction of Jerusalem. He not only wept over its fall and destruction; he also wept over the wickedness of the people, their rebellion against God, and their refusal to listen to the Word of God and repent. Look in your Bibles to Jeremiah 9:1. Let me show you why he is known as the weeping prophet. Look what Jeremiah says.

"O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." Notice how he is weeping over the people that are slain. In Jeremiah 14 and verse 17, God says, "Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them, Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease. For the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach and with a very grievous blow." Then, in Lamentations chapter 2 and verse 11, Jeremiah said, "Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured out upon the earth for the destruction of the daughter of my people, because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city." In other words, people were basically starving to death.

Now, here's the point. God had repeatedly warned Judah and Jerusalem over and over. He had sent His messengers, the prophets, yet they would not hear them, they would not receive them, and they would not repent. They refused His Word, and they would not receive instruction. Jeremiah chapter 6 shows how recalcitrant, stubborn, and wicked the people were by not listening. God says, "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee, lest I make thee desolate and a land not inhabited." He was warning them that their refusal of instruction would bring desolation and separation from Him.

The passage continues, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall throughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine: turn back thine hand as a grapegatherer into the baskets. To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear?" The people had been warned, but they would not listen.

"Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken. Behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together: for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days. And their houses shall be turned unto others, with their fields and wives together: for I will stretch out mine hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord. For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely."

"They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the Lord."

Note what God is saying: "You wouldn't listen. I sent instructors, you would not hear." Jeremiah himself warned the people. God sent Nebuchadnezzar against Judah and Jerusalem, but not against them alone. He sent him against the entire area, giving all those nations into Nebuchadnezzar's hand so that he might smite, chastise, and judge them. Turn to Jeremiah chapter 27, verse 5, and see how God sovereignly gave all these nations into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

SCRIPTURE READING - Jeremiah 27:5-12 (KJV)

God's Determination to Destroy Judah

God said, "I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him. And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same

> Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the Lord, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand. Therefore hearken not to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and that ye should utterly perish. But the nation that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the Lord; and they shall till it, and dwell therein. I spake also unto Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live. Now look, "Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the Lord hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon?" Why will you die?

God had given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. One of the reasons Zedekiah said he did not want to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar was that some were already in captivity. He was afraid they would abuse him. Thus he was willing to die and let all his people die. Zedekiah was captured, and he watched Nebuchadnezzar slay his own sons.

Then he had his eyes put out, so the last thing he saw was his sons being slain. He was carried away into captivity, chained, and died in Babylon. God says, “Why would you die? Why would you not listen to me?” It is amazing to me that people would rather die than obey God. We are told in the Bible that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Yet somehow people get it into their heads that submission to God is servitude and slavery, while submission to sin, wickedness, and rebellion is liberty and freedom. They get it just backward. They think that if they serve God, they are a slave. The greatest freedom and the greatest liberty is in serving the one true and living God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ.

Everybody tells me, “Well, you know, I’m not a slave to sin. I can stop anytime.” Well, why don’t you stop? The truth is, you can’t stop because you are a slave. Our Lord said, “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant” or the slave “of sin.” The Bible says in James 4:6, “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” The Bible says that God resists the proud. That literally means that God fights against the proud and sets Himself in battle array against them. Here were people who were very proud, very arrogant, and very haughty. That does not remind you of any of our politicians, I know, or any people in our country. Here these people were, proud, haughty, and arrogant, and God said, “All right, I’m going to bring you down.”

SCRIPTURE READING - Jeremiah 21:1-10 (KJV)

I want to show you how determined God was to destroy Judah and Jerusalem. Jeremiah 21, beginning with verse 1:

"Then the word which came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, when king Zedekiah sent unto him Pashur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, saying, Inquire, I pray thee, of the Lord for us; for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon maketh war against us: if so be that the Lord will deal with us according to all his wondrous works, that he," that is, the king of Nebuchadnezzar, "may go up from us.

Then said Jeremiah unto them, Thus shall ye say to Zedekiah: Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and against the Chaldeans which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them in the midst of this city, and I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand, and with a strong arm, even in anger and in fury and in great wrath. And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast: they shall die of a great pestilence. And afterwards, saith the Lord, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and his people, and such as are left in the city from the pestilence, and from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that

> seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword.
>
> He shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy. But unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death. He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth out and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey. For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the Lord. It shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire."
>
> Now watch this. Zedekiah the king says, "You go to Jeremiah. You ask him to pray that it might be pleasing to the Lord. He'd send Nebuchadnezzar away. That he might not fight against this city." God said through Jeremiah, "You tell Zedekiah, I'm going to turn your weapons back.

You are the ones rebelling against Me. You are the ones fighting when I told you to submit. Not only will I aid and help Nebuchadnezzar, I Myself will fight against you. I am going to bring his army right into the middle of Jerusalem, and you and all your people are going to be destroyed.

Mark this down: when God fights against the people, they will die. It is just that simple. When God sets Himself in battle array against the people, there is nothing to expect but sure and sudden destruction.

Consider for a moment how many Judahites were slain by Nebuchadnezzar or died of disease, famine, and starvation. To me, this is absolutely astounding. You remember that Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem actually three times. He left just a few of the poor alive in the land. The rest he either killed or took into captivity.

The people he left in the land were so few that, when Gedaliah was murdered—the governor appointed by Nebuchadnezzar—Johanan the son of Kareah and a few other men forced all who remained to go into Egypt. That is how few they were. Jeremiah 52 records the number carried away captive: “This is the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year three

thousand Jews and three and twenty," or 3,023. "In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred thirty and two persons," and, "In the three and twentieth year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred forty and five persons: all the persons were four thousand and six hundred."

I do not know how many people lived in Judah and Jerusalem. Judah was a whole large area; Jerusalem just happened to be the capital, and Benjamin also lived in that area. All I am trying to show you is this: only 4,600 lived. The rest were slain, except those few poor who were carried by Johanan into Egypt. Judah was known as the Southern Kingdom. Out of that, 4,600 lived. How did God wipe them out? Ezekiel 14:21 shows the four judgments He brought upon them.

"For thus saith the Lord God; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast." God says, "Here's my four sore judgments that I'm going to use to decimate and destroy Judah and Jerusalem."

Now, let me ask you a question. How many people were required for God to be willing to spare Sodom and Gomorrah? How many righteous? Ten righteous. As wicked and vile as Sodom and Gomorrah were, and the cities of the plain—there was more than those two destroyed—God said, "I'll spare them." I want to show you how determined God was to destroy Judah and Jerusalem. I want you to understand.

There comes a time when God's mercies cease. We're in Ezekiel 14, so let's go back up to verse 12 and read through 21. "The word of the Lord came again to me, saying, Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out my hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it."

"Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God. If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through

because of the beasts: though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall neither deliver sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate. Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it: though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only shall be delivered themselves. Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast: though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughters."

"They shall but deliver their own souls by their own righteousness. For thus saith the Lord God; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast." I want you to stop and think. Have you ever wondered how Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Ezekiel got into Babylon? They were among the 4,600 spared.

Three Survivors in the Midst of Judgment

Job is known for his patience as well as his purity. He is one of the few men in the Bible of whom nothing evil is said about. Noah was a man of faith, and he prepared an ark, the Bible says, to the saving of his house. But God said that if those three men were alive in the land, they would spare only their own lives, not their families. All I am trying to show you is this: when God determines to destroy a nation, He is unstoppable.

In Zephaniah 2:3, God says, “Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.” It may be you shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.

For the rest of my time this morning, I want to show you three survivors in the midst of judgment. Two are individuals, and one is a group. Look back in your Bibles to Jeremiah 45, because the first survivor in the midst of judgment, the first one given life in the midst of death, was Baruch, the amanuensis, or scribe, of Jeremiah. Notice verse 1: “The word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Baruch the

son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch." God is speaking specifically to Baruch in Jeremiah 45. Baruch had the privilege of living in a time when God's judgment was over the entire known world at that time. The entire land was troubled and in turmoil because of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest.

Survivor 1: Baruch – Life Amidst Death

So the point is this: When this came upon Baruch, there was no place to run or hide. If he went to another nation, Nebuchadnezzar was conquering that nation as well. Those who thought to escape his anger by fleeing to Egypt, contrary to God's command, found that Nebuchadnezzar conquered Egypt and destroyed those who disobeyed him.

When Jeremiah was placed in the dungeon, held prisoner in the court, and unable to speak to the people, he called for Baruch. Baruch was his scribe. Jeremiah transmitted the word of God orally to him, and Baruch wrote it down word for word. Then he stood in the temple and read Jeremiah's words to all the people. Consequently, Baruch was under the gun. His life was threatened, and the king was after him. The entire scenario is recorded in Jeremiah 36.

Baruch's problem was the same problem prevalent today. He was doing what was right and holy, obeying the prophet Jeremiah and standing with him; in standing with Jeremiah, he was also obeying God Himself. Yet Baruch was persecuted, maligned, and vilified, and he seems to have fainted under all the pressure. Verse 3 records what Baruch said.

"Thou didst say," here is what he said: "Woe is me now, for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow. I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest."

Can you not hear Baruch? He sounds almost like a modern-day Christian: "I'm undone. I shall fall into the pursuers' hands and be imprisoned and put to death or banished. Lord, that grief to my sorrow has loaded me with one trouble after another. Along with the

sorrow of writing and reading the prophecies of my country's ruin, I have the sorrow of being treated like a criminal for doing so. Though another might make nothing of this, I cannot bear it. It is a burden so heavy and strong that I just can't stand it. I find no rest or satisfaction. The Lord has turned His hand against me. Everything is going wrong. Woe is me. It's just too much."

Baruch was what we would call a good man, but this was his infirmity: He loved himself too much. He wished to evade the dangers of the battle, even when God had ordered him into it. He valued his own safety, comfort, and consolation more than the will and Word of God, and seemed to place himself above the nation.

After Baruch's complaint, God said to Jeremiah, "You tell this to Baruch. Thus shalt thou say unto him, The Lord saith thus, Behold, that which I have built I will break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land."

It is almost as if God asked, "Do you expect me to withhold my just and righteous judgment just for your convenience and comfort?" That is what most American Christians expect. We do not want to be uncomfortable or inconvenienced, or live without electricity, plenty of food, or recreational toys. God will not withhold His righteous judgment for our convenience: "That which I planted, I'm going to pluck up. That which I built, I'm going to break down. Even this whole land."

But look at verse 5: “And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not. For behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord. But thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all the places whither thou goest.”

Survivor 2: The Rechabites – Obedience Rewarded

God told Baruch, “You’re going to be inconvenienced, uncomfortable, and plagued. But I’m going to give you life in the midst of death. No one will take your life. The Babylonians you’re afraid of will not touch you. I’m going to give you your life for a prey.” When you consider all who died, and yet God gave Baruch life, consider the Rechabites. This passage was read a few weeks ago, but

it bears repeating because it contains a prominent truth from the last message and a new truth for today.

Jeremiah was ordered to give wine to the Rechabites: “The word which came unto Jeremiah from the Lord in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying, Go unto the house of the Rechabites, and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink. Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habazziniah, and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites; and I brought them into the house of the Lord, into the chamber of the sons of Hananiah, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was by the chamber of the princes, which was over the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door. And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine and cups, and I said to them, Drink ye wine. But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever: neither shall ye build houses, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyards, nor have any.”

SCRIPTURE READING - Jeremiah 35 (KJV)

> But all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers. Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, our daughters; nor to build houses for us to dwell in: neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed: but we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us. But it came to pass, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the Assyrians: so we dwell at Jerusalem. Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the Lord.

> The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising up early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me. I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them.
>
> And ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye incline not your ear, nor hearken unto me. Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkened unto me: therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard.
>
> I have called unto them, but they have not answered. And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you: therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.

These people obeyed their father when he gave them what you and I would call illogical commands: “Don’t drink wine. Don’t build a house. Don’t have a garden. Don’t have a vineyard. Just be nomads. Live in tents. Travel around.” As inconvenient and illogical as those commands were, the Rechabites obeyed their father. God said, “How is it that you will obey the word of men, but you won’t obey my word?”

God is showing a second principle: because these people obeyed their father, He promised that they would never lack for a man to stand before Him. They were keeping the fifth commandment. “Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon

the earth." He promised that there would always be someone among their descendants who would be a godly, obedient Christian.

Survivor 3: Ebed-Melech – Trust and Deliverance

They were afraid of Nebuchadnezzar. God said, "I'm going to give you life in the midst of death. You'll be spared. And you'll never lack for a man to stand before me."

The third man given life in the midst of death was Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian. Jeremiah 38:1 says, "Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying, Thus saith the Lord, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live. Thus saith the Lord, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it."

Therefore the princes said unto the king, "We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt." Then Zedekiah the king said, "Behold, he is in your hand: for the king is not he that can do any thing against you."

SCRIPTURE READING - Jeremiah 38:6-14 (KJV)

> Then they took Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire. Now when Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon; the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin; Ebed-Melech went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king, saying, My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is: for there is no more bread in

the city. Then the king commanded Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die. So Ebed-Melech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast clouts and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah. And Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now these old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so. So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison. Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took Jeremiah the prophet unto him into the third entry that is in the house of the Lord: and the king said unto Jeremiah, I will ask thee a thing; hide nothing from me. Then Jeremiah said unto Zedekiah, If I declare it unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to death?

SCRIPTURE READING - Jeremiah 38:15-20 (KJV)

And if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me? So Zedekiah the king sware secretly unto Jeremiah, saying, As the Lord liveth, that made us this soul, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of these men that seek thy life. Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house: but if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand. And Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me. What a sorry excuse. But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver thee. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the Lord, which I speak unto thee: so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live. But if thou refuse to go forth, this is the word that the Lord hath shewed me: and, behold, all the women that are left in the king of Judah's house shall be brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes, and those women shall say, Thy friends have

set thee on, and have prevailed against thee: thy feet are sunk in the mire, and they are turned away back.

He tells him everything that is going to happen. Of course, Zedekiah does not obey; he does not listen. Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken: "and he was there when Jerusalem was taken."

Ebed-Melech has gotten him out. Now hear the word of the Lord that came unto Jeremiah while he was shut up in the court of the prison: "Go and speak to Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good; and they shall be accomplished in that day before thee. But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the Lord: and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou art afraid. For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the Lord."

Now, I want you to note something. Do you remember that it was the Apostle Paul who wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:8, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God"? Ebed-Melech was not ashamed of Jeremiah. He risked his life to go to the king and appeal for Jeremiah. And what did God say in the end? "I'm giving you your life as a prey."

Do you realize that what Ebed-Melech was doing was obeying the sixth commandment? The sixth commandment is, "Thou shalt not kill." The positive is, "Thou shalt preserve life." He was risking his life to preserve Jeremiah's life, and God said, "I've given you your life for a prey."

Applications: Hope and Obedience in Judgment

Here was the severest judgment, and God allowed Baruch to live, the Rechabites to live, and Ebed-Melech to live.

Now, let me make a couple of applications. I want you to think with me, and I hope you will agree with this first one: The preservation and continuance of life are very great mercies, and we

are bound to give thanks to God daily for preserving and prolonging our life.

The more trouble that we are in, and the thicker the arrows fly around us, the more thankful we ought to be for God preserving our lives. Lamentations 3:22–23 says, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." Do you realize that the only reason you and I are alive today is because of the mercies, the compassions, and the faithfulness of God?

When our society collapses and we are spared, we need to praise Him more faithfully, more consistently, and more constantly for allowing us to live. Here is a second application: There is hope for the child of God in the severest judgment. The wicked have no hope, but there is hope for the child of God in the severest judgment.

It does not really matter what comes upon us. There is always hope for the child of God. Second Peter 2:9 says, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." God knows how to deliver His own. As Zephaniah 2:3 says, "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."

The individuals who were spared were individuals who were obedient, submissive, and humble. The quickest way out of any tribulation and trouble is by submission to God, godly humility, and godly obedience. There is life in the midst of death, and we can be survivors in judgment by obedience and honoring Him in all that we say and do.

Thank You, Father, for Jesus Christ today. Thank You for His so great salvation, and for the great hope that we have, Lord, that there is indeed life in death. No matter how bad or severe our judgment is, the way out, the way to live, is through obedience and faith and worship in Thee. We give Thee praise for life, and we say again, it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because Thy compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness. We give Thee this praise through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

You may contact Dominion Ministry by mail at 7400 Abercorn Street, Suite 705, PMB 175, Savannah, Georgia, 31406. Or give us a call at 912-925-7000. You can also visit our website at www.dominionministry.com.

CHAPTER 10

When God Has Had Enough

May 12, 2015

SCRIPTURE READING - Jeremiah 15:1-8 (KJV)

Please open your Bibles to Jeremiah, chapter 15. We are going to read the first eight verses. Let us pray.

Our Father, we are thankful tonight for the Lord Jesus Christ and for His grace and mercy to us. We do pray that You'll teach us tonight and help us and open our eyes and grant us understanding. We pray for liberty and freedom in preaching. We pray that the Word of God would have free course, and that our Lord Jesus Christ would be honored and glorified. In His name we ask and pray. Amen.

Jeremiah 15, beginning there with verse 1:

Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people. Cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth. And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? Then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the Lord, Such as are for death to death; and such as are for the sword to the sword; and such as are for the famine to the famine; and such as are for the

> captivity to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord: the sword to slay, the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy.
>
> And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem. For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? Or who shall bemoan thee? Or who shall go aside to ask how thou doest? Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord. Thou art gone backward. Therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee.
>
> I am weary with repenting. And I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land. I will bereave them of children. I will destroy my people, since they return not from their ways. Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas. I have brought upon them against the mother of the young men a spoiler at noonday. I have caused him to fall upon it suddenly, and terrors upon the city.

When God Has Had Enough

Introduction: Human Breaking Points and God's Character

Each one of us at some time in our lives has said something like this: "That's it, I'm just not going to take it any longer." We have reached a breaking point when we were absolutely, thoroughly fed up with the circumstance, situation, or way we were being treated. So we simply put our foot down and said, "No more." Because we had suffered and been patient for so long, we viewed ourselves as justified in doing that. I don't suppose there's a person who has not said something similar at one time or another.

But do you understand that we often allow and take to ourselves that which we do not want God to possess? In other words, it is all right if you and I get upset, become fed up, and literally become ready to fight. But in our humanistic theology, God is not allowed to act that way.

I never will forget years ago when my oldest grandson, who will be twenty-seven this month, was probably about four years of age and was really taken with karate. Back then, all of that was very new to him, and he liked it. We visited him, and I was lying on the floor. He would stand beside me, jump straight up in the air, and land both feet in the middle of my stomach. He only weighed thirty or forty pounds, and I would tighten my stomach muscles. I let him do it three or four times.

But the next time he jumped up to land on my stomach, I rolled to the side. When his feet came down on the floor, I rolled over on them and held him there. I took the back of my fist and came right up to his face. I didn't hit him; I was just playing with him, pretending I was going to hit him with a back fist. All of a sudden, he snatched his feet out from under me and said, "Uh-uh, Papa, we don't play like that." It was quite all right for him to jump on my stomach, but it was not all right for me to pretend I was going to hit him.

We want certain things for ourselves, and we do not want God to have those things either. God is not allowed to act the way that we think He should not act. In our humanistic theology, we simply deny certain things to God. We all understand that God is loving and merciful. We understand that God is absolutely patient and long-suffering, and we talk about those things regularly. But the truth of the matter is that we often fail to talk about God's righteous anger, His wrath, and His indignation. We tend to think in unbiblical terms when it comes to God.

God's Goodness, Forbearance, and Longsuffering (Romans 2:1-5)

We want God to be as we think He should be, not as He has revealed Himself in the Word of God. The only God that exists is the God of Holy Scripture. Most people serve a God of their imagination, and not the God of Holy Scripture. The only God that exists, I say again, is the God that has revealed Himself in the Holy Scripture.

Paul writes in Romans 2:1-5, "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest. For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself. For thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is, according

to truth, against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance. ...but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasures up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

Now, here is the clincher in verse 4: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." Notice especially verse 4. Do you understand that men despise the goodness of God every day? Every day we take for granted the breath that God gives us and the food that He provides for us. We take for granted God's goodness, His forbearance, and His long-suffering, not recognizing that the goodness of God leads us to repentance. Yet verse 5 says that, after our hardness and impenitent heart, we treasure up unto ourselves wrath against the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

We take our health for granted. We take everything for granted, simply assuming that God will provide these things for us, and somehow even owes them to us. As you read through the book of Psalms, the Bible says, "Oh, that the sons of men would praise the Lord for His goodness to the children of men." Yet how many people, especially Christian people, can go day after day without thanking the Lord for all His goodness?

Have you ever stopped to think what happens when an individual despises the goodness of God? You would think that our God is so holy and righteous that He would simply smite down such an evil, wicked, ungrateful, and unthankful individual. But God does not do that. The Bible tells us in verse 4 that when individuals despise God's goodness, instead of smiting them instantly, He forbears with them. That is, He forbears their sin and rebellion. The forbearance of God is that aspect of His patience which manifests His self-control. God cannot be provoked to act contrary to His will.

God says, instead of smiting you when you despise My goodness, I will forbear with you in your sin and rebellion. But what happens

when God's forbearance has reached its limit? According to verse 4, that is when God's longsuffering comes into play. Longsuffering literally means that He continues to suffer long with the rebellion and wickedness of individuals who hate and despise Him.

I ran across a good illustration years ago concerning the term longsuffering. One of the words for God there actually means "long-nostril." When you begin to get angry and upset, you breathe hard, your nostrils flare, and you are easily discerned as angry. But the longer the nose, the more difficult it is to tell when someone is angry and upset. Thus, when God's goodness is despised, forbearance comes into play; and when that forbearance is despised, God's longsuffering comes into play. It is the virtue of God that enables Him to endure longer the insolence and haughtiness of the ungodly who hate and despise Him.

Have you ever meditated upon Romans 9 and verse 22? Let me quote it: "What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction?" So God suffers long with those vessels of wrath that are fitted to destruction.

According to Romans 2 and verse 4, fallen man always misinterprets God's goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering. He interprets God's patience as meaning either that God counts him innocent or that God is not going to judge him or smite him for his wickedness and sins. But God's end in His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering was not to testify to their innocence, as they imagined, but rather to lead them to repentance, of which they were totally ignorant.

If God instantly broke the reprobate vessels into pieces, His power of self-control would not so eminently appear. The very fact that God bears long with their wickedness and forbears to punish them greatly demonstrates the power of His patience.

Stephen Charnock, in The Existence and Attributes of God, gives this partial definition of God's patience: "...it is that part of the divine goodness and mercy, yet differs from both. God, being the greatest goodness, hath the greatest mildness. Mildness is always the companion of true goodness, and the greater the goodness, the

greater the mildness. Who is so holy as Christ, and so meek as Christ? God's slowness to anger is a branch of his mercy." He then quotes, "The Lord is full of compassion and slow to anger." And he says, "It differs from mercy in the formal consideration of the subject. Mercy respects the creature as miserable. Patience respects the creature as criminal. Mercy pities him in his misery. Patience bears with the sin which engendereth the misery, giving birth to more."

The Bible teaches us very clearly that God is good, gracious, forbearing, longsuffering, kind, and patient. But even in light of God's goodness, forbearance, longsuffering, and patience, there comes a time when God says, "I've had enough. That's it. I'm not going to take it anymore. It's over."

Before we look in Jeremiah 15, pause and think with me about some historical instances in the Bible where God has basically said, "I've had enough." The very first instance would be Genesis chapter 6 and verse 13, where God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them, and behold, I will destroy them with the earth."

Biblical Instances When God Said 'Enough'

That whole antediluvian civilization was destroyed with the flood. In 2 Peter chapter 2 and verse 5, the Bible says, "...and God spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly." There was a time in Genesis chapter 6 when God said, "That's it, I've had enough of this violence, I've had enough of this wickedness. It's over; it's done with. I want to destroy them with the world," and that is exactly what God did. God simply wiped them out.

Do you realize He did basically the same thing in Genesis chapter 18? In that passage, God said to Abraham, "I've come down to see if the cries of Sodom and Gomorrah are everything that I'm hearing." Of course, God knew it was. He was saying this to Abraham because Lot was in Sodom and Gomorrah. Then the two angels went down to Sodom and Gomorrah.

You know the outcome of that investigation. In Genesis chapter 19, verses 23–25, the Bible tells us, "...the sun was risen upon the earth, when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven, and He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of those cities, which grew up from the ground."

Second Peter 2:6 says, "...that which God did, and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them in an overthrow, making them an example to all them which thereafter should live ungodly." What did God do? He looked down at Sodom and Gomorrah, Zeboim, and Admah, all those cities of the plain, and said, "That's it. I've had enough. You're dust. You're ashes." And that is exactly what God did. God destroyed them.

Consider a third illustration. Have you ever thought about this? God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt after four hundred years of captivity. When He brought them out, what did He do? He put a sword in their hand and sent them into the land of Canaan and told them to kill every individual.

Deuteronomy 7:2 says, "And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them, thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them." Deuteronomy 20:17 says, "...but thou shalt utterly destroy them, namely the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee."

The Iniquity of the Amorites and National Judgment

Now let me show you something very important, absolutely astounding and amazing. Why did Israel have to go into Egypt for four hundred years? Why? Genesis 15:13 gives us the answer: "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years." Verse 14 continues, "And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge, and afterwards they shall come out with great substance." Then God tells Abram, "And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace, thou shalt be buried in the good old age."

Why did Israel have to go into Egypt for 400 years? God says, "But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again." Why? "For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." As wicked as the Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, and all those Canaanites were, God still waited 400 years before He said, "I've had enough." Here are biblical instances when God says, "That's it, it's over."

It is equally true that oftentimes God has had enough of our personal and individual sin and rebellion. Proverbs 29:1 says, "He that being often reproved and hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy." In other words, here is someone who will not listen, receive correction, or receive chastisement. God said that individual shall be suddenly destroyed and that without remedy. All you have to do is read through the Bible. You can read about Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and about Ananias and Sapphira, along with a multitude of others whom God simply wiped out. God said, "That's it. I've had enough."

"I'm not going to put up with this anymore." God just took them out. Every one of us knows of some family member or friend's family in which someone died instantly, tragically, catastrophically. I could give illustration after illustration. One young man I know was raised in a church and went to a Christian school, yet he became a drunkard and a dopehead. His parents had to sleep with a loaded pistol by their bed because he had threatened to murder them so many times. They had to call the law and have him arrested repeatedly because he was drunken and rowdy, high on drugs, and destroying everything. He would not listen. Finally, in a drunken stupor, he went to sleep in his car on a railroad track. When they picked up the pieces, the only way they could identify him was by his teeth.

Each one of us knows of individuals like that. But today I want to call your attention to this fact: not only does God have breaking points with individuals, He has breaking points with nations, even those who profess to be His people. Judah was the southern kingdom. Judah was in covenant with God, just as originally all Israel was, until Jeroboam the son of Nebat came along and instituted the golden calf worship.

The problem that we have as Christians in this land is that we tend to think somehow, someway, that God will never judge us

because we are a Christian nation. We were at one time. I do not think we are now. Our foundations certainly were Christian. But may I remind you that Judah also was once in covenantal relationship with God. At one time, God said Judah ruled with God and was faithful with the saints. Yet here, in Jeremiah 15, God is about to destroy Judah at Jerusalem.

God's Response to Jeremiah's Intercession (Jeremiah 14-15)

Before looking at Jeremiah 15:1, we must understand that it is God's response to Jeremiah's prayer, which he uttered in Jeremiah 14. Jeremiah is talking with the Lord: "And there is no healing for us. We look for peace, but there is no good. And for the time of healing, and behold, trouble. We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against Thee." Then he pleads with God, "Do not abhor us. For Thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory. Remember, break not Thy covenant with us." Of course, Israel and Judah had already broken their covenant with Him.

He asked, "Are there any among the vanities or the idols of the Gentiles that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Art not Thou He, O Lord our God? Therefore we will wait upon Thee, for Thou hast made all things."

Then he asks, "Hast Thou utterly rejected Judah? Hast Thy soul loathed Zion?" Those were the questions. And look at God's answer to Jeremiah in Jeremiah 15:1: "Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people. Cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth."

Jeremiah was not only the weeping prophet; he was also a patriot. He not only loved his people, he loved his nation. He wanted to do everything he could, not only to save his people, but to save his nation. He prayed for his people. He interceded for his people. In fact, beginning with Jeremiah chapter 7, God had already said, "I'm going to destroy Judah and Jerusalem, because of their rebellion, because of their sin."

Watch carefully, Jeremiah 7:14: "...therefore will I do unto this house which is called by my name, where ye trust," that is, the temple, "...and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh." God says, just as I destroyed the tabernacle at Shiloh, I am going to destroy the temple here, "and I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim."

The ten northern tribes had already gone into captivity in 722 B.C., into Assyria.

Now look what God tells Jeremiah: "Therefore, pray not thou for this people, neither lift up crying or prayer for them, neither make intercession to me, for I will not hear thee." God said, "Now Jeremiah, it is not going to do you one bit of good to pray for this people. I am not going to listen to you. I am not going to hear you." Jeremiah wanted to pray and intercede for those people so badly.

Look in Jeremiah chapter 11, verse 11. Again, God says the same thing: "Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape. And though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them. Then shall the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem go, and cry unto the gods whom they offer incense. But they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble. For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah, and according to the number of thy streets of Jerusalem have you set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense and to Baal."

In verse 14, God says to Jeremiah, "Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a prayer for them, for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble." In Jeremiah chapter 7, God said, "Don't pray for these people, because I will not hear you." In Jeremiah chapter 11, He says it will do neither Jeremiah nor the people any good to pray, for He will not hear them.

If you look in Jeremiah chapter 14, Jeremiah wanted to pray badly for this people. Remember, he is the weeping prophet, the patriot prophet. He wanted to save his nation. God finally says, "Okay, Jeremiah, I am going to let you pray for them. But I am going to tell

you what to pray." Look at Jeremiah 14, verse 10: "Thus saith the Lord unto this people. Thus have they loved to wander."

"They have not refrained their feet. Therefore the Lord doth not accept them. He will now remember their iniquity and visit their sins." Then said the Lord unto me, "Pray not for this people for their good."

God was telling Jeremiah, "If you want to pray for this people, pray that I will destroy them, for that is exactly what I am going to do. You can pray, but pray not for their good. Pray that I will take care of them and wipe them out." There is a time when God's goodness, long-suffering, forbearance, and patience have ended.

This was no slight upon Jeremiah or upon his prayers. In Jeremiah 15:1, God said, "Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people." He was saying, "Jeremiah, it is not just you that I will not listen to. If Moses and Samuel stood before me, I would not hear them either."

Both Moses and Samuel were great intercessors. In Exodus 32:32, Moses interceded for Israel and said, "Yet now thou wilt forgive their sin, and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book of life which thou hast written." Moses was saying, "Lord, if You are going to kill them, kill me as well."

There were times when God was so aggravated and provoked with Israel that He told Moses, "Stand aside, I'm going to kill them all and I'll make of you a greater nation." Moses would fall on his face, intercede, and beg God not to do it, and God would listen. Then there were times when Moses was so upset and provoked that he would say, "God, kill them all!" God would answer, "If I did that, what would I do to my great namesake?" If Moses and God had ever agreed, there would not have been an Israelite left. Yet Moses was a great intercessor.

So was Samuel. First Samuel 7:9 says, "And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering, holy unto the Lord. And Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him." Many times Samuel interceded. In 1 Samuel 12:23, he said, "Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord

in ceasing to pray for you, but I will teach you the good and the right way."

SCRIPTURE READING - Ezekiel 14:12-20 (KJV)

God says, "Jeremiah, I'm not going to hear your prayers. But it's no slight upon you, Jeremiah, because if Moses and Samuel were standing before me, I wouldn't hear theirs either."

Hold Jeremiah 15, but turn in your Bibles to Ezekiel, chapter 14. Let's begin reading with verse 12. I want you to watch this carefully, because there's a lesson that we need to draw.

The Limits of Intercession (Ezekiel 14:12-20)

"The word of the Lord came again to me, saying, Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, that I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it. Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God. If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts, though these three men were in it as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, they shall only be delivered, but the land shall be desolate. Or if I bring a sword upon the land, and say, Sword, go through the land, so that I cut off man and beast from it, though these three men were in it as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only shall be delivered themselves.

"Or if I send a pestilence unto that land, and pour up my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast, though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter, they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness."

Isn't that amazing? It's not just Moses and Samuel. God said that if Noah, Daniel, and Job were there, everyone knows the patience of Job, and Daniel is one of the few men in the Bible you never read anything negative about. Joseph and Daniel are

> about the only two. Of course, Noah walked with God, and you know how God used Noah. Yet He said, "Look, if Noah, Job, and Daniel were here, they wouldn't deliver their family; they wouldn't deliver anyone but themselves." What is He saying? He's saying there is a time when I've had enough.

God is saying, literally, not only in Jeremiah 15 but in Ezekiel chapter 14, that if the godliest men who have ever lived stood before Him and prayed for that land at that time, their prayers would not be heard. Their righteousness might deliver themselves, but it would not deliver their family or anyone else. It should be a very sobering thought that there comes a time when prayer for a nation is useless. What did God tell Jeremiah? “If you pray, I’m not going to listen to you. If they pray, I’m not going to listen to them. If Moses and Samuel was before me, I wouldn’t hear them. If Noah, Daniel, and Job were here, I wouldn’t listen to them either.”

The Futility of Prayer Without Repentance

Everywhere you travel in this nation, you see signs that read, “Pray for America. Pray 2 Chronicles 7:14,” or, “Prayer, our only hope.” Has it ever dawned upon you that prayer is not our only hope? In fact, prayer is not our hope at all. Jesus Christ is our only hope. Prayer is just a means to reach Him.

When you read, “Pray for America,” and “Pray 2 Chronicles 7:14,” most people never think about what 2 Chronicles 7:14 says. God said, “If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land.” It is not just about praying for a nation. It is about prayer, humility, repentance, seeking God, and turning to Him.

It is not just prayer that is going to save us. Has it ever dawned upon you that there comes a time when neither prayer, humility, nor repentance will save a nation? I want you to see this. In Ezekiel chapter 22 and verse 30, speaking of the condition of the land, God said, “...and I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it. But I found none.”

"Therefore I poured out mine indignation upon them. I consumed them with the fire of my wrath. Their own ways have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God." God said, "I sought for a man among them that would make up the hedge and stand in the gap." He sought an intercessor, but could not find any, so He destroyed them. Yet when we return to Jeremiah 15:1, where God says, "Then said the Lord to me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people," what is He saying? There comes a time when, even though there are intercessors for a people, a land, and a nation, God will not hear them because it is too late. It is over. "My mind could not be toward this people."

Let me spell it out. God is saying, "I am implacably enraged, I am unchangeably resolved against them, and no one and nothing can change my mind." Not Moses, not Samuel, not Daniel, not Job, not Noah. No one can change His mind. The only resolution is found in verse 1: "Cast them out of my sight and let them go forth."

Have you ever reached a decision concerning someone or some group that you positively no longer wanted to be around or associated with? You did not want to see them, hear them, think about them, or be around them. The only thing you wanted was for them to be gone and out of your life forever. It is the same thing here.

God says, "My mind can never be toward this people. Therefore, cast them out of my sight, let them go forth." He is not going to change His mind; He wants them gone. He abandons them because they abhor Him. How can anyone think that the holy God should have any remaining complacency, goodness, longsuffering, or forbearance toward a people that hated and despised Him, worshipping Baal and every false god that ever existed, or that they made up in their own minds? God says, "I'm not going to acknowledge them. My mind cannot be toward them. Cast them out of my sight. As they are highly odious and offensive, let them go forth. I'll not be troubled with them anymore."

“Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people.” There comes a time when God has had enough. God says, “Cast them out of my sight and let them go forth.”

If God casts people out of His sight, and we know that God is omnipresent—everywhere at one time in the fullness of His being—then in one sense that is an impossibility. Yet it is a practical thing when God says, "Cast them out of My sight, let them go forth." What are the implications? Where are they going to go, and what are they going to do?

God answers that in verse 2: "And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? Then shalt thou tell them, Thus saith the Lord, Such as are for death to death; such as are for the sword to the sword; such as are for the famine to the famine; such as are for the captivity to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord, the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. And I will cause them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem."

The Judgment on Judah Because of Manasseh

God is saying, "I don't really care where you go. Some of you are going to the sword. Some of you go into famine. Some of you go into pestilence. Some of you go into captivity. It's all one with me. This is what you wanted. This is what I'm giving you."

God says exactly the same thing to Ezekiel concerning Judah and Jerusalem, the same people Jeremiah is discussing: "For thus saith the LORD God, How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast." So God is saying, "Jeremiah, if they ask you, 'Where will we go?"

"What will become of us? What will happen to us?" Here is what you tell them: Some of you go into the sword, some to the famine, some to disease and pestilence, and some to captivity. That is how I am going to get you out of my sight.

One reason God was so intent on destroying them was Manasseh, their king. Look at verse 4 of Jeremiah 15: "And I will cause them"—that is, the people—"I will cause them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah,

king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem." Manasseh was one of the most wicked, vile kings in Judah.

The Bible tells us about Manasseh: "Manasseh was 12 years old when he began to reign. And he reigned 15 years in Jerusalem and his mother's name was Hephzibah. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord after the abominations of the heathen whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel. For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed."

Now watch: "And he reared up altars for Baal, and he made a grove." Any time you see the word grove in the Bible, with the exception of Genesis when Abraham planted a grove of trees, the word is actually the Hebrew Asherah. Asherah was a sex goddess, a goddess of sex and promiscuity. He made not only an altar for Baal, but also for this sexual goddess, Asherah, as did Ahab, king of Israel. He worshipped all the hosts of heaven and served them—the sun, moon, stars, whatever.

"And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. And he built altars for all the hosts of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord."

> And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards. He wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord to provoke him to anger. And he set a graven image of the grove which he had made in the house, that is, in the temple, of which the Lord had said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house in Jerusalem have I chosen, out of all the tribes of Israel will I put my name forever. Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers, only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them. But they hearken not. And Manasseh seduced them, to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel. And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying, Because Manasseh, king of Judah, hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before

him, and hath made Judah also to sin with idols, therefore thus said the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing

"Such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth thereof his ears shall tingle." Do you realize it was Manasseh who also had a house of sodomites right by the temple? There was also a house of prostitution right by the temple where the women wove hangings for the grove. But note that the Bible said it was Manasseh who seduced them into idolatry.

How can a king seduce a people into idolatry? Just as the American people are being seduced today. Everything evil and wicked is being promoted, while everything good and holy is being downplayed and ridiculed. Moreover, laws are being passed and made, not only promulgating idolatry and wickedness, but subsidizing them. Persecution and prosecution are directed against that which is biblical, holy, godly, Christian, and right. People say, "Ooh, man, I want to serve the Lord, but I don't want to go to jail. I don't want to lose everything I've got. I don't want to be killed." So they go along with the powers that be. That is exactly how you seduce them into idolatry, fornication, and sodomy.

In 2 Kings chapter 24, the Bible says that the Lord sent against Judah bands of the Chaldeans, Assyrians, Moabites, and Ammonites "to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servants the prophets." Surely, at the commandment of the Lord, this came upon Judah, "to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did, and also for the innocent blood which he shed." He filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, offering babies to Baal and Molech, "which the Lord would not pardon." There comes a time nationally when God says, "I've had enough." How many million abortions must there be in this country before God says, "I've had enough"? How much fraud, adultery, fornication, and sodomy before God says, "I've had enough"?

That is exactly what he did to Judah: "I have had enough and I'll destroy you." Nations think they are an exception and will never suffer the judgments of God. God sent all these peoples against Judah and Jerusalem, warning them. Did they listen? No. Finally, the Babylonians came and literally wiped them out. Even America

thinks it is the exception to the rule and will never be judged by God because it is a Christian nation.

Type on the internet, “American exceptionalism.” Listen to our politicians: We are an exceptional nation. Yes, we are—one that excels in idolatry, wickedness, and ungodliness. I am not a prophet, and I am not a prophet’s son, but I will tell you this: When God has had enough of our haughty rebellion, our haughty, arrogant indifference, our rejection of His Son, and our trampling His Word under our feet, He will wipe us out just as He did Judah. There comes a time when God says, “I’ve had enough.” You reach stages like that in your life and say, “I’m justified because I’ve patiently endured all this suffering.” Look at what God is patiently enduring.

Jeremiah prays and asks God, “Hast Thou utterly rejected Judah? Dost Thy soul loathe Zion?” And God says, “Jeremiah, though Moses and Samuel stood before me, I wouldn’t hear them. My mind cannot be changed for this people. Cast them out of my presence. Let them go forth.” If they ask, “Where are we going?” some will go to the sword, some to disease, some to the wild beast, and some to captivity. It really does not matter to me.

God's Weariness and the Finality of Judgment (Jeremiah 15:5-6)

Look at verse 6: When God is weary with our sins, He will do to us exactly what He did to Judah. “Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord.” He is talking to the nation and to the people. “Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord. Thou art going backwards. Therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee. I am weary with repenting.” Did you hear that? “I will stretch out my hand against you, and I will destroy you.” We bring God’s judgments upon ourselves because of our sin, rebellion, and wickedness.

Look at verse 5 and pay close attention: God asked Judah in Jerusalem, “For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? Or who shall bemoan thee? Or who shall go aside to ask, How thou doest?” God says, “When I judge you, no one is going to have pity upon you. No one will bemoan the fact, ‘Oh, America was such a great nation; Judah was such a great nation and such a great

kingdom.' Nobody is going to bemoan it. Nobody is even going to ask, 'How are you doing?' They do not care."

God said, "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, my mind could not be toward this people." Neither friends nor enemies would have compassion upon them. "For who shall have pity upon thee?" No one would care. "Who will even ask about you?" No one would care. The Apostle Paul said it like this in Romans 8:31: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Let us turn that around: If God be against us, who can be for us? In fact, it would not matter if people were for us if God were against us. What can man do? Absolutely nothing. The people and the nation that God judges will be left to bear the judgment alone. No one will come to their aid. No one will care.

Application: Personal Holiness in Light of Coming Judgment

Then He said, in Ezekiel 18, "Though Daniel, Noah, and Job were here, they wouldn't deliver but just themselves." If you believe the Bible and understand that God is infinitely holy, you must understand that God is not going to put up forever with our wickedness and rebellion. By His grace and mercy, when it comes to God's judgment, I want to be as Noah, Daniel, and Job, or Moses and Samuel. I want to be someone who will at least deliver myself.

In order to do that, I must be obedient and submissive to Him, trust in Him, and lean upon Him. In other words, godliness, holiness, and righteousness are the only things that will deliver an individual, a society, or a nation. I am still shaken when I read Jeremiah 15:1: "Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, my mind could not be toward this people."

"Cast them out of my sight. Let them go forth." You should ask yourself, "What am I going to do? Where will I be? What will I experience when God has had enough?" Sooner or later, His goodness, forbearance, long-suffering, and patience will come to an end. He will bring upon us that which we deserve, for we have turned our backs upon Him. That is why Peter quotes 1 Peter chapter 1, where God says, "Be ye holy, for I am holy, saith the Lord."

Let us pray. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask You for Your grace, mercy, goodness, and kindness. We confess and acknowledge that we are in a desperate situation in this country and nation. We want to be intercessors; we want to pray. Yet we understand that there is a time when intercession will not avail and prayer will be useless, when You have reached the limit of Your patience. Make us godly and holy. Until that end comes, make us faithful, help us proclaim Thy truth and Thy Word, and bring honor and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 11

The Truth about Andersonville Prison

January 26, 2012

Introduction and Scriptural Foundation

Our Father, we're so thankful today for the Lord Jesus Christ, for His grace and mercy and truth to us. Lord, help us to understand the principles of Thy Word and that all history is Thy history. Give us, Lord, grace that we may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear, in Thy name we pray. Amen.

I want to read from Exodus chapter 20 and verse 16. It happens to be the ninth commandment: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." Bearing false witness, of course, is a sin against the law of God. If you really want to know what sin is, the Bible tells you in 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." So bearing false witness, then, is indeed a transgression of the law.

The Propaganda Against Andersonville

What in the world has this to do with history? The message I want to bring today is the truth concerning Andersonville Prison. When God says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness," it applies not only to people, but also to families, churches, sections, and whole countries. I want to give you an illustration of bearing false witness against a section of our country, that is, the southern section.

When one hears the name of Andersonville, one cannot help but think of Andersonville Prison. When you think of Andersonville Prison, there is automatically conjured up in the mind the thought of torture, inhumanity, and diabolical maltreatment of prisoners. That kind of thinking has been brought to you through successful propaganda, slander, outright lies, and false witnessing by the North and the Northern Empire. Yankee propaganda has successfully made most people think that Andersonville Prison was nothing but a den of torture.

It is true that men died in prison, especially Andersonville Prison. Many died there of starvation, disease, and lack of medical attention. But Confederate men died in Northern prisons as well, and people die today in our modern-day prison system. Deaths in prison are not unique. It is one thing for prisoners to die in prison during a war while they are in captivity, and quite another thing for one section of the country to charge another section with the deliberate and premeditated murder of those prisoners. The Confederacy did not have a war policy purposely crafted and designed for the maltreatment of prisoners, as did the North. In fact, the South endeavored to treat the prisoners with humanity and compassion.

Confederate vs. Union Prison Policies

As early as May 21, 1861, the Confederate Congress passed a law: “That all prisoners of war taken, whether on land or sea, during the pending hostilities with the United States, shall be transferred by the captors from time to time, as often as is convenient, to the Department of War; that it shall be the duty of the Secretary of War, with the approval of the President, to issue such instructions to the Quartermaster General and his subordinates as shall provide for the safe custody and sustenance of prisoners of war; and the rations

furnished prisoners of war shall be the same in quantity and quality as those furnished to enlisted men in the army of the Confederacy." Thus, the Confederate government said that Union prisoners in its prisons would receive exactly the same rations, in quantity and quality, as its enlisted men.

However, the North had an official policy concerning the maltreatment of Southern prisoners. You can find this in SR 97, in the congressional records and in the old law books in universities and courthouses. It was passed by the 38th Congress, second session. Here is the official United States policy on Confederate prisoners of war: "Rebel prisoners in our hands are to be subjected to treatment finding its parallels only in the conduct of savage tribes and resulting in the death of multitudes by the slow but designed process of starvation and by mortal diseases occasioned by insufficient and unhealthy food and wanton exposure of their persons to the inclemency of the weather." The United States government said that Southern prisoners would be starved, denied sufficient clothing to keep warm in Northern camps, and treated worse than savage tribes treat their prisoners.

You cannot deny that there was a premeditated effort on the part of the North to murder Southern prisoners. On July 19, 1866, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton published a federal report about prisoners during the war. Stanton's report certainly waters down how the North treated Southern prisoners. But even in that report, from first to last, he says Confederate armies captured and held in prisons more than 270,000 Union men, while the Union captured and held in its prisons 220,000 Confederates.

Comparative Death Statistics

The South had 270,000 Yankees, and the North had 220,000 Confederates. Of the federal prisoners held in Confederate prisons, only 22,576 died in captivity. On the other hand, 26,576 Confederates died in Yankee captivity. In other words, the South held 50,000 more Union prisoners and had 4,000 fewer inmate deaths. When you look at the figures, you have to conclude that something is wrong somewhere.

Overview of Northern Prisons

Before considering eyewitness accounts and firsthand reports concerning Andersonville, consider a brief synopsis of the prominent Northern prisons. I mention Andersonville as a Southern prison for one important fact, which will become clear shortly. Camp Douglas in Illinois served as a prisoner-of-war camp from 1862 to 1865. Originally designed as a training station, it was converted to a prison because of the influx of prisoners of war. Designed for 6,000, it held 12,000, and almost 4,500 Confederates died there. Elmira Prison in New York was designed for 5,000, yet at one point held more than 9,400. In just two years, just under 3,000 Confederates died there. Elmira has been called the Andersonville of the North, or the Death Camp of the North, because so many died there. Andersonville, Georgia, was a Southern prison designed to hold 10,000 prisoners.

At its peak, however, Andersonville held 32,000 prisoners. Because of the Confederacy's lack of resources, 12,919 people died there. At Point Lookout in Maryland, during the three years it was used, 3,500 men died. At its height, it was crowded to twice its capacity, holding 22,000. Camp Morton in Indiana was established for 2,000 but reached 5,000, and 1,700 Confederates died there. When you examine all these prisons, you find that every camp had prisoners who died.

Reverend William Brown of the Central Presbyterian wrote this concerning the Confederate prison camps: "So far as the intentions and orders of the Confederate government were concerned, no blame can rest upon it. The places selected were healthy." In fact, that was one reason Andersonville was selected. It was out of the way, it was healthy, and it had many springs. He continues, "The places selected were healthy and the food and medicines ordered were the same as those assigned to our own soldiers and hospitals. The fate of prisoners, especially if the number be large, is generally and unavoidably a hard one. The volume of testimony gathered from a large number of returned prisoners, men of undoubted veracity, we were invited by the kindness of Judge Watson to inspect."

It was in the hands of the printer in Richmond when the memorable fire occurred during its evacuation in April 1865, and it was unfortunately consumed in that great fire. But Camp Douglas,

Rock Island, Johnson's Island, Elmira, Fort Delaware, and other federal prisons, if they could find a tongue, would tell a tale of horror that should forever silence all the clamor about Libby Prison, Belle Island, and Andersonville. Here, then, is a man saying that conditions were far worse in those Yankee prisons than they ever were at Andersonville. If the truth were actually known and exposed, it would show that conditions were much worse for Confederate prisoners held in Yankee prisons than for Yankees held in Southern prisons. Andersonville was bad—very bad—but it would probably look like a Sunday school picnic compared with some of the atrocities and horrors of Northern prisons. Why am I saying that? Because the horrors at Andersonville were mainly produced by the Lincoln administration.

You could accurately say that all prisons in the North and the prisons in the South were basically hell holes. But there is a difference between having the food, materials, and medicine to prevent a hell hole and someone deliberately withholding food, clothing, and medicine in order to create a hell hole. In fact, when you talk about Andersonville, you are going to find that the guards suffered just as greatly as the prisoners did during that time. Eyewitness accounts from individuals who lived through Andersonville tell what they had to say.

One of the most common charges against the South, especially in Andersonville, was that the prisoners were starved—that food was withheld. You can go online or buy books and look at pictures of some of those prisoners. You can say, "Man, they were starved. Look at them. They are nothing but skin and bones." But it was not just prisoners who died of malnutrition in Andersonville. The Confederate guards also died of malnutrition there.

The testimony of Dr. Isaiah H. White, a surgeon in the Confederate Army, regarding the treatment of prisoners, says this: "In refutation of the charge that prisoners were starved, let it be noted that the Confederate Congress in May 1861 passed a bill providing that the rations furnished to prisoners of war should be the same in quality and quantity as those issued to the enlisted men in the Army of the Confederacy. And the prisoners at Andersonville

received the same rations that were furnished to the Confederate Guard."

Eyewitness Testimonies on Rations and Conditions

That the rations were sometimes scant, every old rebel in the field can testify; but this was due to the poverty that existed in the South. There were men in both the North and the South who served and lived at Andersonville and through Andersonville. One of those men was Lemuel Madison Park, a Confederate soldier who worked there.

In Ohio, Park toured a historical exhibit depicting how prisoners were treated at Andersonville. It displayed tiny portions—three or four peas and a tiny piece of bread—and claimed that this was the daily ration given to the prisoners. Park testified: “I was for three months a clerk in the commissary department at Andersonville and it was my business to weigh out rations to the guards and prisoners alike. And I solemnly assert, or I solemnly swear, that the prisoners got ounce for ounce and pound for pound of the same quantity and quality of food as did the guards.”

He continued: “The state authorities of Ohio ought to blush at thus traducing and slandering a fallen foe and never in the first instance to have placed on exhibition for preservation of truth this fabrication of partisan hate. No Andersonville prisoner, unless he were lost to all sense of honor and shame, could make such a statement as that the rations were no more than the specimens shown.” Park was there in the commissary department and weighed out those rations to the Northern prisoners as well as the Southern guards.

John F. Frost was a prisoner at Andersonville who survived. His firsthand testimony was this: “I was orderly of Captain Folger's company, 19th Maine, and was made prisoner at Petersburg in June 1864, and was at Andersonville 11 months, or until the war ended. There was suffering among the men who were sick from the lack of medicines and delicacies, but all had their rations as fully and regularly as did the Confederate Guard.” Remember, this was a Yankee prisoner.

There were times of scarcity when federal forces cut off the supply trains. At such times, I have known the Confederate guards, themselves very short, to offer to buy rations for the prisoners. The guards would take portions of their scanty supplies from the country's people to feed them. The rebels were anxious to effect an exchange and get the prisoners off their hands, but it was reported and believed among the prisoners that federal authorities refused. Once, I was with a detail of 3,000 prisoners marched 200 miles to the coast for exchange. Federal authorities declined it, and, as reported, we marched back with no enviable feelings.

"I believe that the larger share of the responsibility for the sufferings in that prison belong to our own government. But I believe the Confederate authorities did as well as they could for the prisoners in the matter of clothing, provisions, and medicines." This was the testimony of a prisoner.

He concludes his report: "This, let it be remembered, is not the talk of a designing politician who stayed safely at home, but the testimony of a soldier of good record from an actual experience of 11 months in Andersonville Prison." Mr. Frost is saying that he lived through it and could testify that the guards and prisoners shared equally. The guards at Andersonville died almost equally with the prisoners. The highest number of guards was usually around 1,000; 226 died. Thus, approximately 22.5 percent of the guards died, while 24.5 percent of the prisoners died. The death rate among the guards was only 2 percent less than among the prisoners because the guards did not have sufficient food themselves.

Most of these men were from the Georgia reserves. Most were young boys, old men, or wounded veterans who were not fit enough for combat. A 2 percent variation is not very large. We must also remember that some Union prisoners died because of the aggression and violence of other Yankee prisoners. In those prisons, especially Andersonville, cliques and clubs would steal from new prisoners and beat them; some were murdered.

Violence Among Prisoners and Wirz's Cooperation

Albert Schatzel, a private in Company I, 1st Vermont Cavalry, gave this firsthand testimony on May 24, 1864: "Some of the old prisoners

made a raid on the new prisoners and stole their blankets and rations and the new fellows pitched in and there was a big fight and many a poor cuss got his head bashed in with clubs or stones." Prisoners who had been there longer attacked new Yankee prisoners to steal their rations.

John Urban, a private in Company D, 1st Pennsylvania Infantry, wrote on June 28, 1864: "To what extremes bad men will go to secure their own comfort was fully illustrated in the doings of a band of robbers in Andersonville." These were Yankee prisoners whom other Yankee prisoners called Mosby's Marauders because they went around stealing from and beating other prisoners.

“As the rest of the prisoners called them, that is Mosby’s Raiders. Their rendezvous was near the southwest end of the prison.” Thus, there was a group of men who made it their business to go around beating up and stealing from other Yankee prisoners.

On July 4, 1864, Johnny Warren gave this testimony. A police force had been organized among the Yankee prisoners to stop the thefts and murders. Captain Wirtz, later Major Wirtz, worked with these men to capture the marauders. Warren said: “So far as I know, the idea that brought about the overthrow of the murderous raiders came from Wirtz himself, and it is certain that the efforts of the law and order organization and of the police force—all of whom deserve great credit in arresting the raiders—would have been fruitless but for the cooperation of Captain Wirtz.” In other words, Captain Wirtz, who was over Andersonville, cooperated with the Yankee prisoners to stop other Yankee prisoners from stealing and murdering their fellow inmates.

The North was well aware that the South did not have enough food, clothing, or medicine. We could not even feed and clothe our own troops; how could we feed and clothe 32,000 men in one place? Many in the North called for retaliatory measures, saying that the South was starving their men. Of course, the South was not starving them; the South was starving itself. Union General Dan Sickles stated on August 10, 1864: “Apart from the objections which exist to the policy of retaliation, it is at least doubtful whether it would inure to the benefit of our men, for the reason that the enemy are reported to be without means to supply clothing, medicines, and other

supplies even to their own troops." Here was a Union general asking why they should retaliate: the South could not even feed and clothe its own troops.

What do you expect them to do to the prisoners? Edward Wellington Boate was a Yankee soldier with the 42nd New York Infantry. He was a prisoner in Andersonville in 1864, and soon after the war he wrote his experiences in the New York Times. Here is what Edward Boate said:

"You rulers"—and remember, he is talking to the North—"who make the charge that the rebels intentionally killed off our men, when I can honestly swear that they were doing everything in their power to sustain us, do not lay this flattering unction to your souls. You abandon your brave men in the hour of their cruelest need.

"They fought for the Union, and you reached no hand out to save the old faithful, loyal, and devoted servants of our country. You may try to shift the blame from your own shoulders, but posterity will saddle the responsibility where it justly belongs."

Here, then, is another Andersonville prisoner saying that the problem they were having in Andersonville came from the Lincoln administration, from the rulers up there.

In Rock Island prisoner-of-war camp, a Northern camp that held Confederate soldiers, John A. Bateson was a soldier. His testimony is vouchsafed by a district judge. Concerning how Rock Island treated Confederate prisoners, he said:

"During a period of 10 months, I was a member of the garrison of the Rock Island Military Prison. There were confined there about 10,000 men. These men were retained in a famishing"—that is, a starving—"condition by order of Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War. That order was approved by Abraham Lincoln. It was read before the inside garrison of the prison sometime January 1864. It was read at assembly for duty on the second in front of the prison.

"It went into effect the following day. It continued in force until the expiration of my term of service, which was the close of the war.

"At the end of the war, Colonel Hoffman proudly turned over to the federal government $1.8 million, representing what he had saved

from his budget and accumulated in the prison funds by reducing the rations of the prisoners. In other prisons, this accumulation of money often led to graft and corruption among prison officials. As Union authorities received reports of hunger and suffering among their men in Confederate hands, they instituted a policy of retaliation. From 1864 to 1865, Colonel Hoffman, backed by General Meigs, the quartermaster, and Edwin M. Stanton, intended to treat Confederate prisoners of war as they believed the Confederate government was treating Union captives. Hoffman ordered a further reduction of rations."

"Reduced or restricted sutlers' access to the prisoners and eliminated the receipt of food packages from home. The result was an increase in disease from malnutrition as well as starvation." So here is a soldier at Rock Island saying, "I can testify to the fact Edwin M. Stanton, General Meigs, and Abraham Lincoln purposefully and deliberately starved the prisoners of the South." When he turned back over $1.8 million from money given to buy food for Southern prisoners, what would $1.8 million be today? Back then, it would probably have been in gold. Here he is, purposely and deliberately starving Southern prisoners. The South had run out of food.

The Union Army had burned homes, torched crops, and shot the livestock. No medicine could be obtained, practically at any price. Sheridan said he was going to torch and burn the Shenandoah Valley so that if a crow flew over it, he would have to carry his own food because there would be nothing there for the crow to find. Although the South was basically broke and had no food or medical supplies, the North had plenty of food, supplies, and money, yet they were starving Confederate prisoners. Dr. Stevenson, a Confederate surgeon and doctor, wrote this:

"The greatest difficulty was experienced in procuring medicines and anti-scorbutics," which was a treatment for scurvy. "These were made contraband of war by the federal government." He also said "that the most rigid discipline failed to make the prisoners pay that attention to cleanliness which was absolutely necessary." What did the federal government do? They made any medicine, anything needed to treat their own men, contraband of war.

When you look at the pictures of those emaciated men at Andersonville Prison, and remember that it was designed to hold 10,000 men but at its height held approximately 32,000, you have to stop and ask: Was the South fighting that well? Were we really capturing that many prisoners at that time? If not, how did that prison camp reach 32,000 men? There is an answer. The South held so many prisoners because the North refused to exchange prisoners. The Lincoln government refused to accept and care for its own men. By June 1864, they had ended the exchange of prisoners. The Union had greater manpower, weaponry, and finances; it had everything. They decided they did not need to exchange prisoners with the South.

The Union Refusal to Exchange Prisoners

I am going to give you firsthand quotes. Here is Union Brigadier General Seymour regarding the exchange of prisoners at Andersonville, and not just Andersonville, but all Southern prisons: "The Southern authorities are exceedingly desirous of an immediate change of prisoners. Their urgency is unbounded, but it is the poorest policy for our government to deliver them 40,000 prisoners, better fed and clothed than ever before in their lives, in good condition for the field, while the United States received in return an equal number of men worn out with privations and neglect, barely able to walk, enjoying their last breath, and unfit to take the field as soldiers. It is much wiser to leave the prisoners where they are."

What did he say? Let them die. They are not going to do us any good. They cannot fight; they are too sickly, too poor, and too starved. None other than Union General Ulysses S. Grant himself decided that there was to be no exchange of prisoners. He said, "The exchange of prisoners would mean a reinforcement of the rebel army. An exchanged rebel soldier behind barricades and fortifications, fighting on the defenses, was equivalent to three Union soldiers attacking him. If we hold these men caught, they're no more than dead men as the time of enlistment is over. If we liberate them, we will have to fight on until the whole South is exterminated. It is hard on our men to be held in Southern prisons, not to exchange them, but it is humanity to those left in the ranks to fight our battles. At this particular time to release all rebel prisoners

in the North would ensure Sherman's defeat and would compromise our safety here."

That announcement must have been very comforting to the sick and starving men, not only in Andersonville, but in the other Southern prisons as well. Grant was saying that Sherman's activities and their safety took priority over captured men who were dying and needed to be exchanged. Since the exchange would benefit the South rather than the Union, they would not do it. Did the men in Andersonville know that their own government had refused to exchange them?

Yes. James Madison Page, a second lieutenant in Company A, 6th Michigan Cavalry, a Union officer and Andersonville prisoner, wrote The True Story of Andersonville Prison. In it, he vindicates Captain Wirtz and demonstrates that the federal government refused to accept its own men. In July 1864, Henry Wirtz had paroled some men to act as emissaries for the prisoners. Since Grant and Seymour did not want to exchange prisoners, Captain Wirtz selected men from Andersonville and sent them as emissaries to Washington, D.C., to plead with Abraham Lincoln and his administration to reopen prisoner exchange, so that the men being starved for lack of food and medicine could go home. When the delegation failed, some returned to Andersonville prison. Page writes: "When the Andersonville emissaries returned from Washington, there was not one word about the exchange of Negro soldiers being in the way of our release."

Prisoner Petitions and Despair

It was not thought of. I know for the past forty-two years that the matter has been publicly broadcast in the North as a reason why we were not exchanged. Grigsby—and I am going to talk about him in a moment; he was another prisoner there, and he wrote an account of Andersonville—said, “Grigsby is right in this. The Washington authorities had concluded to stop the exchange before there were any Negro prisoners.” So someone is saying that they did not want to exchange the Negroes.

But no, he said, that was not true. In spite of all the Northern post-moralizing, he said: “The real reason the Union soldiers were

not exchanged is because the Northern government considered them expendable. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton said, 'We will not exchange able-bodied men for skeletons and we do not propose to reinforce the rebel army by exchanging prisoners. Let them die.'" That was the attitude of Edwin Stanton.

Page went on: "When we heard Secretary of War Stanton's reply in regard to exchange, we felt we were forsaken by our own government. The war office at Washington preferred us to die rather than to exchange us. Many of the prisoners, being but human, raised their clenched fists, trembling hands toward heaven, and with fearful oaths cursed the authorities at Washington, and also cursed the day that they were born." He said, "Oh, what hatred was engendered for our Secretary of War." Here were these Union prisoners. They sent their own ambassadors, and Lincoln and his administration refused to hear them.

They carried a petition signed by practically every prisoner in Andersonville. When they returned and had to say that the authorities would not exchange those prisoners or do one thing for their release, those Union men clenched their fists and cursed their own authorities. Melvin Grigsby, whom Madison Page quotes, was also a prisoner at Andersonville. He states: "I do not know who is responsible for that fearful blunder, but a blunder it was"—speaking of the refusal to exchange prisoners. "The prison authorities at Andersonville permitted the prisoners to send to Washington three of their own, chosen for that purpose, who took with them a petition to the President asking that an immediate exchange be agreed on the terms proposed by the rebels, and setting out fully and plainly the suffering that was being endured and the loss of daily life occurring. The petition was signed by thousands of prisoners and is probably now on file among the records of the War Department. There are many thousands of gravestones at Andersonville, which would not be there, and many thousand widows and orphans caused by the mistaken zeal and cold-blooded principle of those in authority at that time."

When it was all over, and thousands of the poor, emaciated creatures that survived were sent home and scattered throughout the land, the truth became known. Harper's Weekly and other illustrated

papers sent out pictures of the starved heroes. Then a storm of indignation arose, threatening to burst over the heads of the misguided politicians who had refused to exchange prisoners. Something had to be done. Andersonville must be avenged; the storm must be averted. And something was done. Andersonville was avenged. Major Wirtz was hanged.

The Scapegoating and Execution of Major Wirz

What is Grigsby saying? Wirtz was nothing but a scapegoat. They knew they were wrong and wicked. Yet instead of saying, “We’re the ones responsible for those men dying,” they trumped up charges against Major Wirtz and had him hanged.

Andersonville prisoner John W. Urban, sometime after those men returned from Washington, said: “We sometimes felt embittered against the government for not making a greater effort to release us. And among ourselves, we often were tempted to say bitter things. But in the presence of our enemy, any insinuation of this kind against our own government would excite ire and indignation.” It was a sad fact, however, that hundreds died feeling in their hearts that the government they loved so well and thought so hard to save was indifferent to their sad fate.

One of the orders General Ulysses S. Grant wrote encouraged Edwin Stanton, Secretary of War, not to allow General Foster to exchange prisoners. Dated August 21, 1864, it stated: “Please inform General Foster that under no circumstances will he be authorized to make an exchange of prisoners of war.” Grant continued: “Exchanges simply reinforce the enemy at once, while we do not get the benefit for two or three months and lose the majority entirely. I telegraphed this from just hearing that some 500 to 600 prisoners had been sent to General Foster. U.S. Grant, Lieutenant General.”

Thus General Grant was saying, “Don’t let Foster take those Yankee prisoners.” Dr. Isaiah H. White, a surgeon with the Confederate Army, also says this from the private journal of this Confederate officer: “At one time an order came to Camp Lawton, which was in Millen, Georgia, to prepare 2,000 men for exchange. The order from Richmond was first to select the wounded, next the oldest prisoners and the most sickly, and then fill up the ranks with

healthy men according to date. This party went first to Savannah, from Millen to Savannah, as arranged, but by some mistake the ships were at Charleston, and the poor wretches had to be taken there."

"And everyone who knew the Southern railroads in those days and the difficulty, or rather impossibility, to procure food for such a crowd along the road will well know what those poor fellows suffered. At Charleston they were refused, the commissioner declaring that he was not going to exchange able-bodied men for such specimens of humanity." The term was more brutal, he says. Now watch: "Finding him obdurate, Colonel Ord requested that he take them without exchange. This he refused with a sneering laugh, and the crowd was ordered back to Camp Lawton. Never did the writer of this witness such woebegone countenances in which misery and hopelessness were more strongly painted than shown by these poor fellows on their return."

"And the curses leveled against the rulers who thus treated the defenders of their country were fearful, although certainly well-deserved. As the stockade gate closed upon them, the surgeon in charge said, 'Poor fellows, the world has closed upon them, and more than half of them. Their disappointment will be their death knell.'" His words proved true. Who murdered these men? He says, "Let history answer the question." Dr. White is saying that Colonel Ord begged him: if you are not going to exchange, just take them. They could not feed, clothe, or treat them; he should take his own men.

The Union officer sneered and laughed. Some Yankee prisoners drew up resolutions concerning Andersonville Prison. One, signed by P. Bradley, chairman of the committee on behalf of prisoners, stated: "Resolved, that while allowing the Confederate government all due praise for the attention paid to prisoners, numbers of our men are consigned to early graves. Resolved, that 10,000 of our brave comrades have descended into untimely graves caused by differences in climate and food."

"And whereas these difficulties still remain, we would declare our firm belief that unless we are speedily exchanged, we have no other alternative but to share the same lamentable fate of our comrades.

Must this thing still go on? Is there no hope? Resolved, we have suffered patiently, and are still willing to suffer if by so doing we can benefit the country. But we most respectfully beg leave to say that while we are willing to suffer for our country, we're not willing to suffer for any party or clique to the detriment of our families and our country."

They said this while praising the Confederate government. In other words, these men realized that the Confederacy was doing everything they could to give them the proper quantity and quality of food. Yet you always hear about Andersonville, and never hear that it was the North who refused even to take their own men when they were offered.

Senator Benjamin H. Hill carried on a controversy with Mr. Blaine of Maine concerning Andersonville and Northern and Southern prisons. Senator Ben Hill from Georgia said, "Yet after all this has been said on the subject, the stubborn fact remains that over three percent more Confederates perished in Northern prisons than federal prisoners in Southern prisons. The figures to prove this statement have been several times given in this discussion, but they are so significant that we give them again in the form in which they are presented." Then he asked Mr. Blaine, "Will the gentleman believe testimony from the dead?"

"The Bible says the tree is known by its fruits. And after all, what is the test of suffering of these prisoners, North and South? The test is the result."

"Now, I call the attention of the gentleman to this fact, that the report of Mr. Stanton, the Secretary of War"—and he was a Northern man—"you will believe him, will you not? On the 19th of July, 1866, he says—send to the library and get it—exhibits the fact that the federal prisoners in Confederate hands during the war that died were 22,576, while the Confederate prisoners in federal hands died were 26,436. Surgeon General Barnes reports in an official report—I suppose that you will believe him—that in round numbers the Confederate prisoners in federal hands amounted to 220,000, while the federal prisoners in Confederate hands amounted to 270,000. Out of the 270,000 in Confederate hands, 22,000 died, while out of the 220,000 Confederates in federal hands, over 26,000 died. The

ratio is this: more than 12% of the Confederates in federal prisons died and less than 9% of the Federals in Confederate hands died. What is the logic of these facts according to the gentleman from Maine?"

"I scorn," he says, "to charge murder upon the officials of Northern prisons as the gentleman has done upon the Confederate prison officials." Ben Hill says, if you want facts, let us deal with facts. More Confederates died in Union hands than Union prisoners did in Confederate hands, and the Confederates still had 50,000 more prisoners. Bearing false witness is wrong. Whether as an individual, a family, a church, a state, or a nation, it is wicked and wrong, regardless of whom, what, when, or where the sin is committed.

Now let me tie this together and show you what happens when you begin to bear false witness. Major Wirtz was lied about, slandered, and regarded as a monster. To avenge Andersonville, they tried Major Wirtz, found him guilty, and had him hanged. Those who gave testimony on his behalf, including James Madison Page and some of these other men, were not allowed to testify.

The most damning testimony against Major Wirtz came from Felix Delabombe, the only witness who claimed he could identify by name a victim whom Major Wirtz had shot and killed. Here was an eyewitness claiming, "I saw Major Wirtz shoot this man and murder him, and I can give you his name." That was damning testimony.

Delabombe claimed to be a Frenchman and a descendant of Lafayette. But after the trial, and after Major Wirtz was hanged, he was found to be Felix Osner, born in Saxony, Prussia. He had lied to conceal that he was a deserter from the 7th New York Volunteers who had deserted during the war. Osner had never set foot in Andersonville Prison, yet he testified that he could name a man he knew firsthand whom Major Wirtz had shot and murdered.

His testimony was so readily believed, and he so impressed the commission investigating Major Wirtz through his skill as an orator, that he received a written commendation signed by all the members of the commission concerning his testimony. He was also appointed a position in the Department of Interior before the trial ended.

Eleven days after Major Wirtz was hanged, however, it was discovered that Osner had perjured himself. He had not known Major Wirtz, had not seen him shoot anyone, and had not known anyone Major Wirtz had shot. He had never even been at Andersonville.

Conclusion: The Sin of False Witness

Thou shalt not bear false witness.

Do you realize, in this instance, the man who bore false witness lived? I don't know for how long. The man who had the false witness borne against him died. But God says, Deuteronomy 19:17-19: "Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; and the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you."

Here was a man who bore false testimony against an innocent—and I might add a very godly man—and had that man hanged for something that he did not do. And do you realize what has happened to our history? It has been rewritten by the victor.

And you are hearing all kinds of propaganda, lies, and slanders against Major Wirtz, Andersonville, the Confederacy, and the South: false witness and lies. The truth is this: Andersonville did have men who died. They died of starvation, malnutrition, and lack of medical supplies. There were numerous reasons why they died.

But the main failure, the main charge, must be laid at their own government, because the federal government refused to take the prisoners even when they were offered without exchange. They said, “We can get along better without them than we can with them. You keep them; let them die.” Thou shalt not bear false witness.

Father, we are so thankful today for Jesus Christ. We are thankful for truth, Lord. Thy Word is truth. All history is Your history. Lord, we ask You—we beg of You today—to help us not be led astray by false accusations, lies, slander, and innuendos. Give us grace to check the facts for ourselves, that we may know and understand.

Give us grace to serve Thee acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. Help us as we continue this day. May we honor those men who indeed fought for truth and righteousness and stood for Thy Word. Thank You for Your grace and mercy. In Christ's name, amen.

CHAPTER 12

When God Has Had Enough

December 13, 2015

God does not really have to smite someone down with this mighty arm of power. Just a little grain of pollen or a teeny little germ will take care of it. Isn't that amazing? It doesn't matter how strong you are; just something so minor can bring you down. I was so out of it yesterday that I went home right after the noon meal, took an hour nap, got up and did a few things, and by 7:15 I was in bed. I stayed in bed till six this morning, so obviously it was eating me alive, that's for sure.

I want you to open your Bibles today to the book of Jeremiah, chapter 15. I'm going to be bringing a message which I've entitled When God Has Had Enough. Jeremiah, chapter 15, and let's read the first eight verses.

Jeremiah 15, verse 1: "Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people. Cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth. Then shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? Then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the Lord, Such as are for death to death, such as are for the sword to the sword, and such as are for the

famine to the famine, and such as are for the captivity to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord, the sword to slay, the dogs to tear, the fowls of heaven and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy.

"And I will cause them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem. For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? Or who shall bemoan thee? Or who shall go aside and ask how thou doest? Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord, thou art gone backward. Therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee, I am weary with repenting."

When God Has Had Enough

Introduction: Human vs. Divine 'Enough'

"And I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land, and I will bereave them of children. I will destroy my people, since they return not from their ways. Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas. I have brought upon them again against the mother of the young men a spoiler at noonday. I have caused them to fall upon it suddenly, and terrors upon the city."

Each of us, at one time in our lives, has said something like this: "Enough, that's it, I'm not going to take it anymore." We reach a breaking point and become absolutely, totally, thoroughly fed up with the situation or circumstances happening to us. We put our foot down and say, "That's it, this is not going to happen anymore." In fact, we view ourselves as justified in our attitudes and actions because we have patiently endured whatever led up to the point where we put our foot down.

Do you understand that we often take to ourselves and allow ourselves that which we do not want God to possess? We may get fed up, become upset, and get ready to fight, but we do not allow God to be like that at all.

I remember years ago, when my oldest grandson, who will be twenty-eight this coming year, was about four or five years old. He

was really into karate. He had a little karate outfit, and when I went down to visit him, I taught him a few little things.

As we played, I lay down on the floor. He would stand beside me, jump straight up in the air, and bring both feet down on my stomach. It did not bother me because he only weighed about forty pounds. Each time, I tightened my stomach muscles, and he simply bounced off.

He did that three or four times, and I allowed it. Finally, about the fifth time, when he jumped up to land on my stomach, I rolled onto my side and timed his feet to the floor. I rolled back, pinned his feet to the floor, and came back with a back fist right in front of his face. Of course, I stopped; I did not hit him, but stopped right in front of his nose. He pulled his feet out from under me, looked at me, and said, "Oh, Papa, we don't play like that."

It is all right for us to play like that, but it is not all right for God to play like that. We oftentimes speak about God's love, grace, mercy, patience, and longsuffering, yet we are negligent and hesitant to speak about God's anger, wrath, and judgment. We tend to think in unbiblical terms when it comes to our heavenly Father.

We want Him to be as we wish Him to be and not as He is revealed in Scripture. I usually say that most professing Christians really do not worship the God of the Bible. They worship a God of their own imagination. They will say, “God cannot possibly be like He is revealed in the Scripture,” but He is the only God that is—the God who has revealed Himself in Holy Scripture.

God's Patience and Its Misinterpretation

Hold Jeremiah 15 and turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter 2. It is indeed true that God is loving, patient, kind, and longsuffering. The Bible tells us in Romans chapter 2 about these attributes of God. Beginning with verse 3, the Apostle Paul says, “And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?” Watch carefully verse 4: “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”

Men despise God's goodness on a daily basis. We fail to praise Him and thank Him for everything that He has done for us. Yet when men despise God's goodness daily, God does not instantly smite them and knock them down. What happens when men despise the goodness and mercy of God? His forbearance comes into play; He simply forbears with them a little longer. The forbearance of God is an aspect of His patience that manifests His self-control. Instead of smiting us or any sinner, He forbears with us. When God's forbearance runs out, according to verse 4, His longsuffering comes into play. God suffers even longer their impudence and rebellion.

The word longsuffering has a connotation of being long nostrils. We can say that God is long nostrils. God is spirit, but when you become angry or upset, you start breathing hard and your nostrils flare.

The longer or bigger your nose, the more difficult it is to see the flare and discern that an individual is really getting ticked off. When you despise God's goodness, His forbearance comes into play. When you despise His forbearance, His longsuffering comes into play. That enables Him to endure the insolence, arrogance, and rebellion of wicked people who hate and despise Him.

The Bible says in Romans 9:22, "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction?" Fallen man always misinterprets the patience, goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering of God. Many imagine that because God does not smite them instantly, either they are innocent or God will not judge them for their sins. They think God will not fulfill His word. According to Paul in Romans 2:4, God's end in His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering was not to testify to their innocence, as they imagined, but to lead them to repentance, of which they were absolutely ignorant. Do you understand that if God instantly broke the vessels of wrath into pieces, His power of control would not so eminently appear?

I have often said, I am so thankful that I am not God, because if I were, I would have killed me and a whole lot more, a whole lot sooner and a long time ago. Stephen Charnock, the Puritan, said concerning God's patience: "It is a part of the divine goodness and

mercy, yet differs from both. God, being the greatest goodness, hath the greatest mildness. Mildness is always the companion of true goodness, and the greater the goodness, the greater the mildness."

"Who is so holy as Christ, and who is so meek? God's slowness to anger is a branch of his mercy. The Lord is full of compassion, slow to anger. It differs from mercy in the formal consideration of the subject. Mercy respects the creature as miserable. Patience respects the creature as criminal. Mercy pities him in his misery. Patience bears with the sin which engenders the misery and giveth birth to more."

So God is both merciful and patient. Do you know why you did not die in your sleep last night? Do you know why you were allowed to live under this service? Lamentations, chapter 3, verses 22 and 23, says, “It is of the Lord's mercies that we're not consumed, because his compassions, they fail not. They're new every morning. Great is thy faithfulness.” When you wake up every morning, you need to thank God for His compassions, mercies, and lovingkindnesses, which are new to you and allowed you to live through the night. We know that God is love, kind, patient, forbearing, and longsuffering.

Historical Examples of God's 'Enough'

But in light of all those blessed attributes, there is still a time when God will say, “I've had enough. I've had enough. That's it. No more.” Before we look in Jeremiah chapter 15 in detail, consider several historical examples of when God has had enough. This applies not only to individuals, societies, and culture, but also to nations.

In Genesis chapter 6, verse 13, the Bible says, “And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come near unto me. For the earth is filled with violence through them. And behold, I will destroy them with the earth.” The antediluvian civilization was wiped out in the judgment of God. The Bible says in 2 Peter 2, verse 5, “And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.” There was a time when God looked at those antediluvians and all their sin and said, “That's it. I've had enough. I'm going to wipe you out.” And that is exactly what He did.

The same thing is found in Genesis chapter 19 with Sodom, Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain. “The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities and all the plain and all the inhabitants of those cities.” God said, “Look, there's a time when I had enough and I'm just simply going to destroy you.” That is exactly what happened to Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and the cities of the plain.

Do you remember when God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt? He did something very unique. When He brought them out, He literally put a sword in their hand and said, “I want you to kill all the inhabitants of Canaan.” In Deuteronomy 7, verse 2, He said, “And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them, thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them.” God said: “Smite them, destroy them, make no covenant, show them no mercy.” Later, in Deuteronomy 20:17, He said, “But thou shalt utterly destroy them, namely the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee.” Literally wipe them out.

Everyone knows that Abram and his descendants went into Egypt into captivity for 400 years. But if you ever ask yourself why the children of Israel had to go into captivity for 400 years, the answer is given in Genesis chapter 15. Verse 13 says, “And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge, and afterwards they shall come out with great substance.”

“And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace, and thou shalt be buried in a good old age.” Now watch carefully: “...but in the fourth generation they shall come hither again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.” God says, “I’m going to destroy these wicked people in Canaan, but I’m going to give them 400 more years.” You talk about patience and longsuffering and forbearance. But when God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, He put a sword in their hand and said, “Kill every one of them.” Because after 400 years, God said, “I’ve had enough.”

It is equally true that God oftentimes has enough of personal rebellion as well, because the Bible says in Proverbs 29:1, "He that being often reproved and hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy." You can only rebel against God for so long. Read through your Bible, and you will find men like Dathan, Abiram, and Korah, and Ananias and Sapphira, along with a host of others. God suddenly ended their lives, oftentimes very tragically. Not only do you have biblical examples; you have examples that you know personally.

I had a fellow before me who had his two children in a Christian school. He was called in and warned about his children. Finally, he did not correct them, and the children were expelled. I brought the man in. He was in our church, and I said, "We are going to exercise church discipline upon your children. And here's why." He stood in front of my desk; he did not sit. I spent over an hour going from Scripture to Scripture to Scripture, showing him what the Word of God says and the purpose of church discipline.

After I got through, he looked at me and said, "Preacher, I know you're right, and I know the Bible's right. But I've got to handle this my own way." Instead of facing church discipline, he took his family and left. The young girl turned out to be a prostitute. The young boy became a drunkard and a dopehead, and that mom and daddy had to sleep with a loaded pistol by their bed to protect themselves from their own son.

They had to call the law innumerable times and have him locked up because he was still out of control and threatening them. Finally, the young man got drunk and went to sleep in his car on a railroad track. After the train got through with him, they identified him only by his teeth.

Everyone understands that individually there comes a time when God says He's had enough. But God even has a breaking point with the nations, and, listen carefully, even with those nations that profess to be His people. Undoubtedly, most people in America believe that since America is a Christian nation, God would never judge us. Obviously, we were a Christian nation at one time, but no longer.

God's Answer to Jeremiah's Prayer

In Jeremiah 15:1, the Lord said, “Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people. Cast them out of my sight and let them go forth.” The words, “Then said the Lord unto me,” identify this as God’s answer to Jeremiah’s prayer. Jeremiah is praying in chapter 14, and his prayer concerns Judah and Jerusalem, the southern kingdom. He asks whether Judah has been utterly rejected and whether God’s soul has loathed Zion; he acknowledges the wickedness of the people and the iniquity of their fathers, confesses their sin, and pleads that God will not abhor them or disgrace the throne of His glory. He appeals to God’s name and asks Him to remember His covenant.

In Jeremiah 14:19, Jeremiah asks, “Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? Hath thy soul loathed Zion? Why hast thou smitten us and there is no healing for us? We look for peace and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold, trouble. We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against Thee. Do not abhor us, for Thy name’s sake do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory. Remember, break not Thy covenant with us.”

"Are there any among the vanities or the idols of the Gentiles that can cause rain, or can the heavens give showers? Art not Thou He, O Lord our God? Therefore we wait upon Thee, for Thou hast made all these things."

In verse 19, Jeremiah asked, "Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? Hath thy soul loathed Zion? Why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us?" When you look in Jeremiah 15:1, God is answering Jeremiah's petition: "Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people, cast them out of my sight and let them go forth."

Everyone knows that Jeremiah is known as the weeping prophet. But what many people do not know is that Jeremiah was not only a weeping prophet; he was also a patriot. He wanted to see his people and his nation spared. He really, genuinely wanted to pray for Judah and Jerusalem. In Jeremiah chapter 7, God informs Jeremiah early

not to pray for this people because God is going to destroy them. Jeremiah 7:14 says, "Therefore will I do unto this house which is called by my name, wherein you trust." Notice this: "Therefore will I do unto this house which is called by my name, wherein you trust." It is amazing how many times we trust in things instead of God.

The Futility of Prayer for a Doomed Nation

You remember when Israel was fighting the Philistines. Samuel was there with Eli, and Eli was still in charge, and Hophni and Phinehas, his sons, were there. Israel was being defeated by the Philistines, and they said, "Go bring us the ark that it may save us." They were trusting in the temple. So God says, "Therefore, will I do unto this house," the temple, "which is called by my name, wherein you trust, and unto the place which I gave you, and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh."

"And I will cast you out of my sight as I've cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim." Look what God says: "Therefore, to Jeremiah, pray not thou for this people, neither lift up crying or prayer for them, neither make intercession to me, for I will not hear thee." Why? God said, "Jeremiah, don't even pray for these people. Do not intercede for me. I'm not going to hear you. I'm not."

In Jeremiah chapter 11, it gets even worse, in one sense of the word. Beginning with verse 11, God says, "Therefore, thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape. And though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them. Then shall the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem go and cry to the gods on whom they offer incense, but they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble. For according to the number of the cities where thy gods, O Judah, and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem, have you set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal."

Look what God says: "Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them, for I will not hear them in the time that they cry to me for their trouble." God said, "Jeremiah, don't you pray; I'm not going to hear you." And now He says, "I'm not going to hear you. When they cry to me, I'm not going to hear them. I refuse to hear them."

Then, in Jeremiah chapter 14, beginning with verse 10, God says, "All right, Jeremiah, if you want to pray, I'm going to let you pray for them, but you have to pray what I'm going to tell you." The Bible says, "Thus saith the Lord unto this people that have loved to wander. They have not refrained their feet. Therefore, the Lord does not accept them. He will now remember their iniquity and visit their sins. Then saith the Lord unto me, Pray not for this people for their good."

In other words, Jeremiah, if you want to pray, go ahead and pray, but pray that I'm going to destroy them, for that's exactly what I'm going to do. Their impieties, wickedness, and rebellion have reached the highest pitch, and there was certainly no more mercy and no more hope for them. So, Jeremiah, do not pray for this people. If you pray, pray that I'm going to destroy them.

It was no slight upon Jeremiah that God would not hear his prayers. He said in Jeremiah 15:1, “Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people.” Moses and Samuel were great intercessors. There were many times when God was so provoked by the Hebrews that He said to Moses, “Step aside, I’m going to kill every one of them. And I will raise up a greater nation of you.” Moses would fall on his face and say, “Oh, God, you can’t do that. Remember your great name. The heathen would say that you brought them out, but you were not able to bring them in. Lord, have mercy.”

In Exodus 32:32, Moses prayed, “Yet now I will forgive their sin, if not, blot me out of the book which thou hast written.” He interceded. There were also times when Moses became so provoked that he would look to God and say, “Kill them all.” I have often said, if God and Moses had never gotten together, there would not have been an Israelite left. But Moses interceded, and God listened to him.

Samuel also interceded. In 1 Samuel 7:9, the Bible says, “And Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered it as a sacrifice, a holy, holy unto the Lord. And Samuel cried unto the Lord and the Lord heard him.” Many times Samuel interceded. In 1 Samuel 12:23, he said this small verse for me: “God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you. But I will teach you the good and the right way.”

So God is saying, “Look, here are two great intercessors, Moses and Samuel, and yet if they were standing here, I would not hear them either. I would not listen to them.” It even gets worse. Look in your Bibles to Ezekiel 14 and mark this passage. We will come back here momentarily, but let us begin reading with verse 12.

SCRIPTURE READING - Ezekiel 14:12-17 (KJV)

> We are still talking about the southern kingdom. Ezekiel chapter 14, verse 12: “Then the word of the Lord came again to me, saying, Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out my hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it.” If the land sins against me, I will send the famine.
>
> Verse 14: “Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God. And if I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beast, though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate. Or if I bring a sword upon the land, and say, Sword, go through the land, so that I cut off man and beast from it, though these three men, that is, Daniel, Noah, Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, they only shall be”

“Delivered themselves. Or if I send a pestilence unto the land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast, though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall neither deliver son nor daughter, they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.” In Ezekiel 14 and Jeremiah 15, God is saying there comes a time when He has had enough.

If the godliest men who ever lived prayed to Him, He would not hear them. Their righteousness might deliver themselves, but not their sons and daughters. When I read these passages and saw this truth, it struck me: do you realize there comes a time when it is useless to pray for a nation? Judah was a nation, the southern

kingdom. God said, “I’m not going to spare it. The godliest men that have ever lived cannot intercede for this nation; that’s it.”

Everywhere I travel in this country, I see signs in yards: “Pray for America,” “Pray 2 Chronicles 7:14,” and “Prayer, our only hope.” Has it ever dawned upon you that prayer will not save America? Prayer is not our hope. Jesus Christ is our hope.

If I were starving, dying of starvation, and you handed me a big bowl of cereal and a spoon, and I used that spoon to eat the cereal and was revived and spared, would it not be stupid to say the spoon saved my life? The spoon did not save my life; it was merely the instrument I used to reach what saved my life. Prayer is an instrument to get to God. When you think about 2 Chronicles 7:14, it is not just prayer: “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and turn from their wicked ways, and seek my face,” then God says, “Will I hear from heaven, and forgive their sin, and heal their land?” There must be not just prayer, but humility, prayer, seeking God’s face, and repentance.

Even when you see signs that say, “Pray 2 Chronicles 7:14,” the people of Judah certainly knew 2 Chronicles 7:14. But it did not save them. It did not save them at all. Has it ever really dawned upon you that there comes a time when God has had enough, and no amount of prayer from no amount of individuals will save?

It is true that God seeks for intercessors. In Ezekiel 22:30, He says, “And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me for the land that I should not destroy it, but I found none.” So God said there was a time when He sought for intercessors and could not find one—could not find one man who would stand in the gap and make a pledge that He should not destroy the land. He sought for one man, but He found none.

Yet God says in Jeremiah 15 that though you have the greatest intercessors in the land praying, it will not matter; He is not going to listen. “Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people.” Even Moses and Samuel standing before Him would not turn His mind toward this people.

Jeremiah 15:1 teaches us that there comes a time when some may be willing to stand in the gap, but it will be too late. God is saying, "I am implacably enraged. I'm unchangeably resolved against them, and no one and nothing is going to change my mind." The only resolution is, "Cast them out of my sight and let them go forth."

Have you ever reached a decision in your life, or come to a point concerning an individual or concerning a group, that you positively no longer wanted to be around them? You did not want to see them, hear them, or even think about them. You simply wanted them gone and out of your life forever. It is the same here.

God says, "I'm not going to change my mind. I want them gone." He abandons them because He abhors them. God says, "My mind cannot be toward them." How can it be thought that the holy God could have any complacency toward a people that hated Him and despised Him and refused to worship Him? They turned from Him because they hated Him. And now He abandons them because He abhors them.

It's the lex talionis of Scripture. They abandon God, God abandons them. They refuse to hear God, God refuses to hear them. So God says, "Cast them out of my sight. Cast them out of my sight because they are in the highest degree odious and offensive toward me. I don't want to be around them anymore. Let them go."

When you look in verse 1, God says, "Cast them out of my sight. Let them go forth." Would God cast someone out of His sight? God says, "Let them go forth." Where are they going? God says to Jeremiah, "If somebody asks you, 'Where are we going to go?' let me give you the answer." Here it is, in verse 2: "And it shall come to pass that they say to thee, Whither shall we go forth?"

"Then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the Lord, Such as are for death to death, such as are for the sword to the sword, such as are for the famine to the famine, such as are for the captivity to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord, the sword to slay, the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy." God said there will be different kinds of punishment inflicted upon them according to the very nature of their transgressions.

Some will be punished one way, some another way. If you go back now to Ezekiel chapter 14, look at verse 21. This is the passage again where God said, "Oh, Noah, Job and Daniel was before me, I would not hear them." So God says in verse 21, "For thus said the Lord God, How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword and the famine and the noisome beast and the pestilence to cut off from it man and beast." So here is what God is saying: "Jeremiah, I want them gone."

"And if they turn around and ask you, 'Where are we to go?' here's what I want you to say: 'Such as for the sword to the sword, such as to the dogs to the dogs, such as to the famine to the famine, such as to captivity to captivity.'" It really doesn't matter to Me where they go. They're all going to judgment. Just get them out of My sight. That is what He said: just so they're gone. That's all that counts.

The Sins of Manasseh and National Judgment

One of the reasons God was so incensed with these people was because of their king Manasseh and what he did in Jerusalem. Look in verse 4: "And I will cause them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth because of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem." God said, "I will cause them"—that is, the people—"to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth because of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for that which he did." Why are the people going to go into captivity and be judged for that which Manasseh did?

There are principles in the Bible concerning Romans 13 and Christian civil government. When a civil ruler sins privately and individually, he alone is judged for his private and individual sin. But when a civil ruler sins openly and publicly, and the people do not stop him, then they are always judged with his sin and with him.

For instance, when David committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband, Uriah the Hittite, killed with the sword of the children of Ammon, only David was judged. But when David began to number the children of Israel, he knew, and everyone else knew, that Israel was not to be numbered except in a time of war, and that the half shekel of the sanctuary had to be taken. Even Joab, as wicked as he was, knew better. He said, "The Lord make his people

so many times more, but do not do this thing." David's word prevailed, and seventy thousand men died for David's sin. Everybody knew what David was doing wrong, but nobody stopped him. The same thing happened when Saul, in his zeal for the children of Israel, sought to kill the Gibeonites. Everyone knew the Gibeonites were not to be killed. Consequently, God sent a famine for three years in a row because nobody stopped him.

Our attitude is often this: "Well, it doesn't matter to me what Obama does, or what those folks in Washington, D.C., do. It's no skin off my nose." That's not true, folks. When you say, "It doesn't matter to me what they do in my state capital," that's not true either. When we allow our rulers to sin publicly, we suffer with them, because God judges the people as well as the rulers.

Now turn to 2 Kings 21. I cannot show you today the intense wickedness of Manasseh, but he was the most wicked king in Judah. The most wicked king in the northern kingdom was Ahab; in the southern kingdom, it was Manasseh. Notice 2 Kings chapter 21, verse 1. You will not believe some of the things this man did: "Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem."

"And his mother's name was Hephzibah. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel. For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove."

Let me explain something. Every time you see the word grove in the Bible, with one exception—which I forget the exact passage in Genesis, where Abraham planted a grove—it means an Asherah, a sex goddess. When we hear grove, we think of a pecan orchard, a peach orchard, or a grove of trees. With the exception of Abraham planting trees, every time you see grove in the Old Testament, it is an Asherah. It has nothing to do with trees. When Manasseh made a grove, he made an image of the sex goddess that went along with Baal. She was a consort of Baal.

Watch what he did: "For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father destroyed, and he reared up altars of Baal, and

made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel, and worshipped all the hosts of heaven, and served them." He also built altars in the house of the Lord, of which the Lord had said, "In Jerusalem will I put my name?" He built altars for all the hosts of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord.

He had all these false images in the temple. "And he made his son pass through the fire," that is, to Moloch, "and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards. He wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. And he set a graven image of the grove," that is, the Asherah, "which he had made, in the house of which the Lord said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever."

He took these images—not only Baal, but also the Asherah—and put them in the temple. "Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers, only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them. But they hearken not, and Manasseh seduced them," that is, the people; "he seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel."

"And the Lord spake by his servants the prophets, saying, Because Manasseh, king of Judah, hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all the Amorites did which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols, therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth it, his ears shall tingle." This same wicked man also made rooms in the temple and by the temple for the sodomites.

The Bible says he seduced the people. Have you ever asked yourself how you seduce the people into idolatry? The easy way to do it is for all the civil rulers to pass laws that favor their idolatry and laws that condemn truth. For instance, look how much is going on today for political correctness. We praise the transgender, we praise the sodomite, we praise the lesbian, and we praise this and that, but here is somebody over here kneeling in prayer. That is offensive. So

we will persecute this individual, but we will subsidize these other individuals. That is exactly what he did. He made it difficult to stand for truth and the Lord and made it easy to go along with him.

Manasseh seduced the people into idolatry and fornication and sodomy and sacrificing their children to Moloch and a host of other infamous sins. Look in 2 Kings 24. Beginning there with verse 2, God sent warnings, but they would not listen. In 2 Chronicles, chapter 24, beginning with verse 2, the Lord sent against them bands of the Chaldeans, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servants the prophets. Surely at the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did, for also for the innocent blood—that is, all those children that he shed—for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the Lord would not pardon. Look at the millions that we have sacrificed to the god of convenience. The Bible says God would not pardon it.

America's Parallel and the Call to Righteousness

So many people think that America is exceptional. In fact, you will hear our civil rulers talk about American exceptionalism. Let me tell you something: God is not mocked. We think that we are immune from God's judgments, but we are not. Let me be a little uncouth and blunt, but you will get the point. When God has had enough of our snotty rebellion, arrogant, haughty indifference, rejection of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and trampling His law under our feet, hold on, because God will deal with us just like He dealt with Jerusalem and Judah. God is immutable. He does not change. His judgments are true and righteous. There comes a time when God says,

"I've had enough," not only individually, societally, culturally, ecclesiastically, and nationally. Go back to Jeremiah 15, because I want to make some applications. Notice verse 6. When God is weary with our sins and reaches His breaking point with us, He will stretch out His hand against us exactly as He did Judah. God says, "Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord. Thou art gone backward.

Therefore, will I stretch out my hand against thee and destroy thee? I'm weary with the repenting." God said, "You've forsaken me. You've gone backward. I'll stretch out my hand against you and I will destroy you."

We bring the judgments of God upon ourselves by forsaking God and refusing to repent. Look at verse 5: "For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? Or who shall bemoan thee? Or who shall go aside to ask how thou doest?" Who will cry for you, or even go aside to ask how you are doing?

When we have been sick or are feeling poorly, it lifts our spirits when someone says, "Well, how are you today? Hope you're better." It indicates that they are concerned about our physical welfare. But God says that when He judges us and casts us out of His sight, neither our enemies nor our friends will have any compassion upon us.

There is a wonderful truth in Romans 8:31: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" If God is for us, it really does not matter who is against us, because God is a majority in and of Himself. But turn it around: If God is against us, who possibly could be for us? What good would it do us if they were for us? God says, "When I judge you, nobody's going to ask how you're doing. No one will bemoan you. No one will be sorry for you. You'll be the loser. You'll be just like Judah. You'll be judged. You'll be destroyed."

God's judgment is true. If we understand what has been preached about Moses, Samuel, Daniel, Noah, and Job, then, when God judges us in severe judgment, we would want to be like them. We want to be spared.

Even old Balaam, as wicked as that reprobate was, said, “Let me die the death of the righteous.” But he did not want to live the life of the righteous. You cannot die the death of the righteous unless you live the life of the righteous. God says these men would merely have spared their own lives by their own righteousness.

You say, “That is Old Testament.” Yes. The Old Testament is just as much the Word of God as the New Testament. When Paul wrote 2 Timothy 3:16, he had primarily the Old Testament in mind, because the New Testament had not been completed. But let me quote 1

Peter 4:17–18: “For the time has come that judgment must begin in the house of God. And if it first began at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel? If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?”

Where is God going to start His judgment? The house of God. If you really believe there comes a time when God has had enough, just as He did in Judah and Jerusalem and with the northern kingdom, do you really believe that? It should make you live as holy, godly, and obediently as you possibly can.

God was willing to spare Sodom and Gomorrah if there were ten righteous people in those cities, and there are far more than ten in this room. It does matter how you live, and it matters whether or not you are godly. Make up your mind that, by the grace of God, you will be as obedient, godly, holy, and righteous as you can be by His grace.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Your Word and truth. Give us, Lord, Your mercy. Help us to live for Thee. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, in whose name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 13

A Token of Perdition

February 1, 2012

Introduction to Philippians 1:28 and the concept of tokens

Let's open our Bible today to the book of Philippians chapter 1. Philippians chapter 1. And we're going to look at a very simple verse today. Verse 28. Philippians 1 verse 28. The title of this message is, "A Token of Perdition." Years ago I preached a sermon on tokens of perdition and I used this verse. However, this is not that message that I preached years ago. In fact, I don't even know where that outline is that I preached years ago.

But I want to share some things with you that just popped up in my mind as I was reading this the other day. Philippians 1 in verse 28, he says, "...and nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation and that of God." Now look at it just one more time since we're just reading one verse. "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation and that of God." I believe that there is an amazing truth revealed here in

verse 28 concerning tokens. Certainly a token of perdition is mentioned here.

Now, when you and I think of tokens, we think of something that is not real and not genuine. For instance, a token is supposed to represent real money, but it's not necessarily real money in and of itself. In fact, if I were to hold up a Federal Reserve note and ask you, is this money? I hope everyone in here would say no. It is a token. It's a token of debt, by the way. But used to, our paper money had "payable to the bearer in silver," which in that case it was a token of that which was real.

Many of us have ridden buses. We've gone to amusement parks and played games where tokens were necessary. What you would do is you would pay with your money in advance. They would give you tokens and then you would go into the amusement park or to the bus or whatever and use that token. The tokens were needed and they were necessary. Tokens were not real in the sense that they were not real money but they were real in one sense that they represented something that is real. So tokens then are supposed to be representatives of reality. So our text then reveals to us that there is indeed a token of perdition but I'm also going to point out it also reveals that there is also a token of salvation. I looked at the word token, and I thought, well, I just wonder how many times this word occurs in the Bible. And I must be honest, I was flabbergasted when I found out how many times the word token and tokens was used in the Bible.

Biblical survey of tokens

In fact, these passages show how the word token and tokens are used. In Genesis chapter 9, God tells us that the rainbow is indeed a token that God will not send a flood as He did in Noah's day. The Word of God says, "And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you for perpetual generations. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of the covenant between me and the earth." Again, in verse 17: "And God said to Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth."

So whenever you and I see a rainbow, that rainbow is a token. It is a representative of reality; it is a representative of the promise of God that God is not going to send a flood as He did in Noah's day upon the earth again. The rainbow is identified as a token of the covenant, and the token is connected with the covenant God established between Himself and all flesh upon the earth.

In Genesis chapter 17, you will also find that circumcision was a token. Circumcision was not necessarily the real aspect of the covenant, but it certainly represented the covenant. Genesis chapter 17 and verse 11, the Word of God says, "And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt or between me and you." So circumcision then was regarded as a token. It represented the covenant.

Now, if you would turn to the book of Exodus, chapter 3, something else may surprise you. Do you realize that the blood of the Passover lamb was a token of deliverance for the children of Israel? Let us begin reading with verse 12. God says, “And He said, Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be a token unto thee that I have sent thee,” this is to Moses, “when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, and you shall serve God upon this mountain.”

Look in verse 13: “And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say to them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say to me, What is his name? And what shall I say unto them?” Skip down to verse 16. He says, “Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, seeing that which is done in this land.”

Notice what was done unto them in Egypt. God gave Moses a token. In fact, when you get to Exodus chapter 12, that Passover blood applied to the doorpost was indeed a token that God was going to deliver them. You remember, those who did not have the blood on the doorpost died. Those who had the blood were indeed delivered.

If you would turn very quickly to the book of Joshua, chapter 2, notice what Rahab asked. You remember, she had hidden the spies

and was allowing them to escape, helping make their escape possible. In Joshua chapter 2 and verse 12, here is what she asks.

"Now therefore I pray you swear unto me by the Lord, since I have showed you kindness, and you will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token that you shall save alive my father and my mother and my brethren and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." So she was asking them for a true token.

Interestingly enough, in Psalm 86—you do not have to turn there—verse 17 records David's prayer. Listen to this prayer request: "Show me a token for good, that they which hate me may see it and be ashamed, because Thou, Lord, hast helped me and comforted me." David was praying not only for comfort, but for a token for good. He wanted his enemies to see this token and know that God was with him. Tokens in the Bible can represent either good or evil; they can represent that which is holy and that which is unholy.

For instance, turn to the book of Numbers, chapter 17. Without reading all of that chapter, look primarily at verse 10. In Numbers 17, there was a rebellion against Moses and against God. Some people were upset because they thought Aaron and his house were usurping authority. God said they were not usurping authority; He had chosen them. To settle the matter, God commanded every tribe to take a rod and lay the rods before Him. The rod that blossomed and the rod that budded would identify the house He had chosen to stand before Him—that is, the Levitical line or the priesthood. Aaron's rod was the only one that budded and blossomed.

Numbers 17:10 says, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony to be kept for a token against the rebels." Verse 11 continues, "And thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me that they die not." God commanded that the rod be kept as a token against them. They were wicked, wrong, and rebellious. God would choose whom He would choose, and this rod would be a token against them.

One of the problems that you and I have with tokens in this day and time is that tokens, generally speaking, have come to represent that which is hypocritical, insincere, and not genuine. Here is where

that general attitude came from. In Mark 14:44, concerning Judas who betrayed our Lord, the Bible says, "And he that betrayed him had given them a token saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, the same as he, take him and lead him away safely." What was the token? It was an insincere kiss. Thus, when we talk about a token, we usually associate it with hypocrisy and insincerity. You have heard individuals talk about a token gift. You do not really want to give them anything, but you do it just to satisfy or pacify. There is a token conversation. You do not really want to talk with someone, but you do it. There is a token meeting. These are things that we understand are meaningless in reality. They are just tokens.

But let me tell you something: men may be insincere and hypocritical in their tokens, but God is not. You remember Psalm 138:2, where the Bible says, "Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy name." When God gives a token, that token is real, genuine, and represents reality, whether it is what we would call a bad reality or a good reality. It still represents reality. That is why God said in Isaiah 46:10, "My counsel shall stand and I will do all of my pleasure."

I do not care if you have the token of Aaron's rod that budded or the rainbow that is a token; it still represents reality. One is a token of God's promise to bless and not send the flood as He did earlier, and the other is a token that God is going to use against the rebels to demonstrate their wickedness and ungodliness. With that understanding of a token, look again at Philippians 1:28: "...in nothing terrified by your adversaries which is to them an evident token of perdition," and then, "but to you of salvation and that of God."

Christians have adversaries

Now let me draw several things from this verse. First and most importantly, Christians do have adversaries. That may shock you, but Christians do have adversaries.

I get frustrated with the modern-day concept of preachers. I am not making fun of the man, but I think of Robert Schuller, with that sweet, syrupy smile he has. The modern perception of a preacher is someone sweet and syrupy who would never harm anyone, offend

anyone, or become upset with anyone—someone who simply lets everyone walk all over him. I get tickled when I read what some Bible preachers did.

Do you remember little Samuel, the boy taken to the temple and raised there? When he went to Bethlehem, the elders of the city sent word and asked him, "Comest thou peaceably?" Why would you ask a preacher whether he was coming peaceably? If you read the preceding chapter, you will find that little Samuel took a sword and hewed Agag to pieces before the Lord. They wanted to be certain he was coming peaceably and was not going to do the same thing to them.

Can you imagine, in our day, a pastor going to a city council or county council meeting, and before he could enter, someone stepping outside and saying, "Wait a minute, preacher. Did you bring your guns? Are you coming peacefully?"

What did Moses do? Moses drew a line and said, "Whoever's on God's side, come over here." The children of Levi stepped over. He said, "Take your sword and go in and out of the camp and kill every man and his brother."

I am simply pointing out that we live in a day when people think neither preachers nor Christians should have adversaries. But all who deny that Christians have adversaries are living in a fantasy world. The godly have always been persecuted by the ungodly. Abel was persecuted by Cain; Isaac was persecuted by Ishmael. Wherever you turn in the Bible, you find the ungodly persecuting the godly. Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:12, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." If you are living godly in Christ Jesus, you shall suffer persecution. Mark it down: if you stand for truth and righteousness, you will suffer persecution.

Galatians 4:29 enunciates another principle very clearly: "But then, as he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." Ishmael persecuted Isaac. He that was born after the flesh persecutes him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Christians do have adversaries. We do have enemies. Let us consider what Scripture says concerning our enemies.

In Matthew 5:11, our Lord looks to His disciples and says, "Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake." Isn't that amazing? Here are people persecuting believers and doing things and saying things against them falsely and wickedly. There is no ground for it. There is no foundation. They are simply doing it. You do not have to do anything wicked and wrong to be hated by the ungodly. You do not have to do anything wicked and wrong to be persecuted by the ungodly.

Matthew 5:44 simply points out the fact that we do have adversaries and enemies. Our Lord says, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies." That means we have real, genuine enemies.

In John 15:20, our Lord Himself makes this point exceedingly clear: "Remember the word that I have said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also." Again, in John 16:33, He says, "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." What is He saying? In the world, you are going to have tribulation.

The apostle Paul taught exactly the same truth as our Lord. Acts 14:22 says, "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." This is a real encouragement to evangelism. These early Christians were exhorted to continue in the faith, because through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God.

How would you like to go witnessing and say, "Let me tell you something. When you get converted, you're going to be persecuted. You're going to have tribulation. You're going to have problems. It is not smooth sailing when you follow the Lord, period"? I doubt you would get too many quick takers on that, but it is still the truth.

In 1 Thessalonians chapter 3 and verse 4, Paul was honest with these people when he preached to them: "For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass, and ye know." Paul said, in effect, "I told you:

following Christ is not going to be a bed of roses." There will be trials, tribulations, and persecution.

In Romans 8:35, Paul asks, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" He names all these things which Christians have suffered and shall suffer.

Let me spell it out very plainly: we do have enemies; we do have adversaries. You can quote Ephesians 6, where the Apostle Paul wrote, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but principalities and powers." I know that our main battle is spiritual. But who is it that the wicked spirits use? Real, genuine men—flesh and blood. It was not spirits who were throwing the apostles in prison. It was not spirits who were burning people at the stake. It was real, genuine, flesh-and-blood men.

The point is this: we do have adversaries. Get your concordance and look up the word enemies. If you do nothing else, do it in the Psalms, and see how many times David prays for deliverance from his enemies. It is amazing what you will find.

The nature of our adversaries

Now turn to Philippians chapter 3, just over a page or two from our text in Philippians 1, and look at what the Apostle Paul says concerning our enemies. I have often wondered how wicked men can do what they do without an ounce of conviction in their conscience. Stalin probably killed two million people. Mao Zedong probably killed more than that.

The Turks massacred the Armenians. Who was the Idi Amin in Uganda? Yes, Pol Pot. Look at our leaders. They have not gunned down as many as these men, but how is it that political enemies can be either killed mysteriously or somehow violate some regulation, go to prison for years, and never be heard of again? How can this happen? Here is how it happens. Look in Philippians chapter 3 at what Paul says concerning our enemies and adversaries: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is

destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."

In other words, here are men who could care absolutely nothing about anyone but themselves—their belly, their shame—and who intend to grab and get anything and everything they can while they can. All they are interested in is money, power, and prestige, and nothing else. People are expendable. Mark this down: we do have enemies. We do have adversaries. They are not all behind a bush somewhere seeking to shoot us. Many of them are in our state capitals and in Washington, D.C., doing everything they can to destroy Christianity and Christians and dethrone the Lord Jesus Christ.

We do have enemies. That is what the Scripture says: "In nothing terrified by your adversaries." Here is the second truth: our enemies endeavor to intimidate and terrify us. This is very logical. Paul says, "In nothing terrified by your adversaries." If you and I are to exhibit Christian fortitude and not be terrified, evidently someone is trying to terrify us. If the enemies of Jesus Christ cannot destroy us, they seek to terrify us. Why? A terrified, fearful, frightened Christian is absolutely worthless.

Adversaries seek to terrify us

He will not venture out by faith. He will not trust God. Instead, he will cower in the shadows and seek to stay out of harm's way while he seeks to accommodate and please those whom he fears.

No battle is ever won by running away from the fight. Those who fear and are terrified always seek to convey their spirit of fear and terror to others. Why? So they will not appear to be the only coward in the crowd.

Look back in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 20. In the biblical laws regarding warfare, a number of people were excused from battle. A man who had just married, built a house, or planted a vineyard, but had not yet taken his wife or enjoyed his house or vineyard, was excused. But look at who else should go home. Deuteronomy 20:8 says, "And the officer shall speak further unto

the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted?"

"Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart." In other words, the leaders had to ask how many were afraid to go out and fight. Some would raise their hands, and the leaders would say, Go home; we do not want you, lest you convey your spirit of fear to someone else. We do not want someone in the fight who is deathly afraid.

When the Apostle Paul wrote Philippians 1:28, "and in nothing terrified by your adversaries," the word terrify literally means to terrify, to frighten, or to make afraid. Let me put it very bluntly: someone wants us intimidated and frightened. I will tell you who it is not. Turn to 2 Timothy chapter 1, verse 7: "For God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

If God has not given us a spirit of fear, then who has? Our spirit of fear does not come from God. God does not give His children a spirit of fear; He gives us a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind. Fear, then, has to come from our enemies, or from our own lack of faith and lack of understanding. But it does not come from God. God has not given us a spirit of fear.

Let me ask you, and I want you to think about this. I understand that there are wicked, powerful men in this world, and some of those wicked, powerful men are in government. Here is my question: Why should we be intimidated and terrified by those who are going to be wiped off the face of the earth? Look back in your Bible, Psalm 37. This is just one passage. I could give you a multitude of passages.

Notice Psalm 37, beginning with verse 1: “Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.” Do not get bent out of shape over evildoers. “For they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb.”

Skip down to verse 9: “For evildoers shall be cut off, but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.” Skip down to verse 20: “But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs,” that is, they are going to be consumed. “They shall consume into smoke, they shall consume away.”

Now skip down to verse 35, and let us read through verse 40. David said, “I’ve seen the wicked in great power and spreading himself like a green bay tree.” I can name a lot of modern day politicians that fit that description. “Yet he passed away. And lo, he was not, yea, I sought him and he could not be found.”

“Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace, but the transgressors shall be destroyed together. The end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord. He is their strength in the time of trouble. And the Lord shall help them and deliver them. He shall deliver them from the wicked and save them because they trust in Him.”

What is going to be the end of all the wicked? They are going to be destroyed. They are going to be cut off. Many of them are going to be cut off in time and history. Mark it down: they shall perish.

Why should we be afraid of men? Why should we be intimidated by men who are ultimately going to be cut off?

Nehemiah had a problem. He was building a wall around Jerusalem, but his enemies opposed him and threatened to kill him. Finally he was told that someone would come and kill him, and that he should flee into the temple to save his life. Nehemiah answered in Nehemiah 6:11, “Should such a man as I flee? And who is there that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in.” He perceived that God had not sent that man. Nehemiah refused to be intimidated by them; he refused to be terrified.

Our enemies may steal our wealth and take our lives, but we cannot allow them to put us into fear. We cannot be intimidated, frightened, or terrified because of them. They may take everything we have, but the same God who gave us what they took can give us that much and more again. We cannot compromise the truth of the Word of God or back down.

We must stand upon that which is right and truthful. We must take the attitude of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, who loved to say, “Duty is ours. The consequence belongs to God.” Duty is ours; the consequences belong to God. The only One we are to fear is God Himself. Our Lord said in Matthew 10:28, “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. Rather, fear Him who is

able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Jeb Stuart, the great Confederate general and cavalry leader, said, "Fear God and you'll have no one else to fear." That is true.

I want to read the last two stanzas of one of my favorite hymns, written by Martin Luther: "A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing." Listen to these words: "And though this world with devil's fill should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God has willed His truth to triumph through us.

"The prince of darkness, grim, we tremble not for Him. His rage we can endure for lo, His doom is sure. One little word shall fell Him. That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them abideth. The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him who with us sideth. Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also. The body they may kill, God's truth abideth still. His kingdom is forever."

Martin Luther faced far more than you and I could ever begin to think of facing, yet he refused to be terrified and intimidated by his enemies. When he stood before the Pope, Charles V, the ruler of the Roman Empire, and all those cardinals and ecclesiastical dignitaries, he said, "I will not and I cannot recant anything. God help me. Here I stand."

"I can do no other." We are to be in nothing terrified by our adversaries. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8:37, "Nay, in all these things, we're more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Let me spell it out: We are not the losers; we're the winners. We're not the victims; we're the victors. We're not the conquered; we're the conquerors. William Huntington, who died in 1813, said, "There is no cause to fear the fury of the oppressor."

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" It is one of the promises of the new covenant that the righteous shall see their fall. When we see the enemy in the scorner's chair, when he begins to set his mouth against the heavens and ridicule the counsel of the Most High, which are evident tokens of perdition, we know that they have almost reached the brim of their measure and the end of their chain. "God stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind."

"The wrath of man shall praise him when it meets with justice, and the remainder of wrath shall he restrain." I like what

Huntington says. You remember that old cartoon with Foghorn Leghorn and that big old bulldog? Every time that bulldog reached the end of his chain, he was jerked back. When the enemies of God get to the end of their chains, He will jerk them back permanently, completely, and totally. Christians do have enemies, and they do have adversaries. Secondly, those adversaries seek to terrify us.

The double token: perdition and salvation

Thirdly, Philippians 1:28 says, "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries," and then gives this amazing truth: "which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." God's tokens are both negative and positive. There are bad tokens and good tokens. First, let me cover the negative, because that is how it occurs in verse 28: "which is to them an evident token of perdition." The word token comes from the Greek word endeixis, which literally means to declare, to be a demonstration of, a proof of, a manifestation of, a sign and evidence, or a token. Literally, it means an evident manifestation or evidence of their perdition. Thus the actions and attitudes of persecutors who persecute God's people, hate God's people, and hate God are tokens of their perdition.

He is saying that this is a manifestation, a demonstration, an evidence, and a token of their destruction. In other words, they are on the road to destruction, and they are evidencing it.

When God speaks of their attitudes and actions as a token of perdition, the Greek word for perdition literally means destruction, utter destruction, and damnation. It means to be in a perishing state. That certainly should not surprise us, because the Scripture makes it exceedingly clear. Listen to John 3:18 and John 3:36. “He that believeth on him is not condemned. But he that believeth not is condemned already. Because he believeth not in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Verse 36 says, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not on the Son of God shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

What is God saying? God is saying that when someone persecutes His people, despises His Word, and tramples His law under his feet, it is an evident token of their perdition. They are on the road to destruction.

Did not our Lord say it very plainly in Matthew 12:30? “He that is not with me is what? Against me. And he that gathereth not, scattereth abroad.” It was John Calvin who said, “For the wicked, when they wage war against the Lord, do already by a trial fight, as if it were given a token of their ruin, and the more fiercely they insult over the pious, the more they do prepare themselves for ruin.” The more they fight, the more they prepare themselves for ruin; the more they evidence that they are on the road to perdition. Fighting against God, His people, and His gospel is a clear illustration, demonstration, and manifestation of their perdition. You have to remember what Samuel said in 1 Samuel 15:23.

He said, “For rebellion is the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is its iniquity and idolatry.” What was the sin of witchcraft? Death. What was the penalty for idolatry? Death. It does not matter whether you commit the sin of rebellion or idolatry; the penalty is still the same: death. These people are rebelling against the sovereign God, His Word, and His will, and idolizing themselves or something else. God says they deserve death. As long as one is in defiance of God and His law, His truth, His will, and His people, it is an evident token that he is on the road to perdition. You have to be insane to fight against God.

How can you hope to win against Him who is omnipotent, who is all-powerful? Job 9:4 asks, “Who hath hardened Himself against him and prospered?” No one. When wicked people persecute the righteous, it is to them an evident token of their damnation. But look again at verse 28, because here is the positive token: “and in nothing terrified by your adversaries which is to them an evident token of perdition but to you of salvation.” Here is a double token in this verse. The first is negative; the last is positive. Their persecution of you, and your constancy under that persecution, are tokens of your salvation.

There are two tokens. The persecutor manifests that he is on the road to damnation. The one who remains constant and faithful under persecution shows a token of salvation, a token that he is being counted worthy of the kingdom of God. Therefore, persecuted Christians should not be discouraged or disheartened. This does not

mean that you desire or long for persecution, or that you have a martyr's complex.

If you want encouragement, read Fox's Book of Martyrs. Read about the men and women burned at the stake, who, amid pain and suffering, sang psalms and praised God as they were cooked to death. Whenever God allows the persecutor's hand to be upon us, He always gives us grace and courage to bear whatever is put upon us.

What did our Lord say in Matthew 5:11? "Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake." He said in James 1:12, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." Our Lord said it like this in Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which you shall suffer. Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried, and you shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I'll give thee the crown of life." The Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 1:5 said that our sufferings and persecution were evidence that we are counted faithful for the kingdom of God, for which we suffer.

Now let me make something exceedingly clear. Our suffering does not save us. Our suffering does not help save us. But if you and I, by God's grace, can remain constant, consistent, and faithful over that which we cannot stop, over that which we have no control, and yet still retain our faith and courage, that is evidence, a manifestation, that we've been saved by His grace and will not forsake the faith.

What will a man who is not a real, genuine Christian do when he is faced with persecution? He'll deny Christ, because he's not going to suffer. The Bible says in 1 John 2:19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. But they went out that it might be made manifest that they were not of us."

The proof that you have ever savingly believed is that you will continue to believe. The proof that you have ever savingly repented is that you will continue in repentance. The proof that you are a real, genuine Christian is that you are not going to leave the faith. You are not going to deny Christ or the Word of God under any

circumstances. I want you to look at verse 28 again, because here's another truth.

You need to see this. Philippians 1:28 says, “And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.” Or literally, “and that from God.” Both tokens are from God. Both tokens are a clear indication of which road we are on.

Now let us tie this together. Go back to verse 28 and read through verse 30. Paul writes, “And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God; for unto you it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.” Both tokens are from God. It is given to us on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.

What is Paul saying? You are suffering like I am suffering, and I am suffering like you are suffering. We must understand that this suffering is given unto us on behalf of Christ. Are you listening? There is no shame in suffering for righteousness’ sake.

There are men and women in prison today who have done nothing to be there—nothing wicked, nothing unbiblical, nothing ungodly. They are there because they took a stand for truth and for righteousness’ sake. The apostle Paul was thrown into prison a number of times. Onesiphorus was not ashamed of his bonds; he came to him. But there were some who were ashamed of Paul because he was in prison. If you are in prison for the faith’s sake, for righteousness’ sake, you have nothing to be ashamed of. The apostle Peter wrote in 1 Peter 4:16, “Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.” Then the apostle Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2:12, “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”

Applications: judgment and reward

Suffering does have its advantages. Since God said that both of these are tokens—one of damnation and one of salvation, let us take the first. The very fact that persecution of the righteous is a token of

perdition evidences the fact that there will be a future and final judgment. A token is representative of reality. When men and women fight against God, His truth, His Word, and His people, it is an evident token that they are on the road to destruction.

Usually, God nails wicked men in time and history—not always, but usually. He says in the book of Psalms, “The wicked shall not live out half their days.” In other words, God will cut them down in the prime of life. But some seemingly escape the hand of God’s judgment in time and history. The emphasis should be upon the word seemingly. For 1 Timothy 5:24 says, “Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before the judgment.” “And some men, they follow after.” What does God say? If I do not get the wicked in time and history, mark it down: I will get them in eternity, at the full and final judgment. God will rectify every wrong.

There is good news even for those who hate God, who hate Christ, and who hate Christians. What kind of good news can you give to people like that? If we were to take a poll in the first century, during the book of Acts, of the man most likely to split hell wide open, who would have won hands down? Saul of Tarsus. What did he do? He persecuted the church, hailed men and women to prison, and hated Christ and Christians. The good news is that the sovereign God, in mercy and grace, struck him down on the Damascus road and saved him. A persecutor’s only hope is in the grace and mercy of God, and he better seek God for that grace and mercy.

We must proclaim that good news to those who are seeking repentance and faith. Without this little bit of good news, all they have is bad news, because our Lord says they are on the road to perdition.

The second application is this: the very fact that God’s people often suffer unjustly does not go unnoticed or unrewarded by our God. The Apostle Paul said in Romans 8:18, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” If we truly suffer for righteousness’ sake, we should not suffer because of our own stupidity and sin. If we suffer, we want it to be because we are doing what is right. The sufferings that we endure for that which is right

cannot even be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Just because we suffer does not mean that God is angry or upset with us. It means that God is giving us a blessed gift. “For unto you it is given on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for Him.” What shall we say in light of this? “In nothing terrified by your adversaries: which to them is an evident token of perdition, but you have salvation, that of God.” Here is what we shall say: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. For as much as you know, your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” God will be no man’s debtor.

Our duty and responsibility is to stand for truth and righteousness. The consequences are in God’s hands.

Let us pray. Father, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ that You would help us, bless us, and build us up in the most holy faith. Lord, give us backbones like steel, courage, and fortitude. Deliver us from fear, for Thou hast not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of sound mind. Help us to be willing to stand through anything and everything, by Your grace and mercy. In Christ’s name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 14

The Pattern For Christian Obedience

August 19, 2016

The Pattern of Christian Obedience

Introduction: The Need for a Pattern

This whole conference is dealing with Christian obedience, and my subject today is the pattern of Christian obedience. When we talk about the pattern of Christian obedience, we stop and think about the word pattern. In fact, we use that word almost daily, and we never really stop to consider its actual usage or its meaning.

So we have to ask ourselves this question: Is there a pattern in Christian obedience? Is there a pattern for our lives as believers? We have to remember that in 1 Corinthians 14:33, the Bible tells us that God is not the author of confusion. Obviously, if there were no pattern, and everyone were doing his own thing, there would be absolutely nothing but confusion.

The Apostle Paul, in praying for the Colossian Christians in Colossians 1:10, gave a very pointed prayer request. He petitioned the Father that you might walk worthy unto the Lord in all pleasing, being fruitful under every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. Obviously, you cannot walk pleasing unto the Lord unless you know what pleases Him. There has to be a pattern. There has to be, obviously, some direction somewhere.

Do you think that God would be so fastidious in some areas and then leave the area of Christian obedience up to ourselves or to the whim of men? When you stop and consider the direction that God gave concerning just the tabernacle, the Bible says in Exodus 25:9, "According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shalt thou make it."

Then again, in Exodus 25:40: "And look thou, that thou makest them after their pattern which was shown thee in the mount." And, of course, in Numbers 8:4: "And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold unto the shaft thereof and the flowers thereof, and was beaten work according to the pattern which the Lord God had showed Moses."

All of this is reiterated in the New Testament, in Hebrews 8:5: "For they, talking about the Old Testament priests, serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished by God when he was about to make the tabernacle. For see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was shown thee in the mount." God gave the pattern for absolutely everything in the tabernacle. He also gave the pattern for everything in the temple, giving specific directions to David and Solomon.

In 1 Chronicles 28:11-12, we read: "Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern for the porch, and the house thereof, and the treasures thereof, and the upper chambers thereof, and the inner parlors thereof, and the place of the mercy seat, and all the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the Lord, And of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and all the treasuries of dedicated things." Verses 18 and 19 also speak of the pattern for the altar of incense, the cherubim, and everything else. God gave express details.

Nothing was left to chance, fate, fortune, the whim of man, or man's desires and feelings. Moses could not make the tabernacle, nor could David or Solomon make the temple, according to what they wanted. They had to follow the pattern God gave them.

God has graciously given us patterns in many areas of life. In 1 Timothy 1:16, He has given us a pattern for conversion. The Apostle Paul said, “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to everlasting life.” The Apostle's conversion was a pattern. This does not mean that we will have the exact same experience Paul had, but we certainly will have conviction of sin, repentance, and faith. All of those things are a pattern given to us.

Likewise, in Titus 2:7, Paul told Titus, “In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity.”

Biblical Usage of 'Pattern' and 'Example'

The word pattern is used many times in Scripture. You may say, “I have never seen the word pattern when it comes to Christian obedience.” Well, you have, but it is translated differently. It is the same Greek word, but often it is translated as example. For instance, in 1 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 12, Paul writes to Timothy: “Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity.”

Stop and think about this. Timothy was a pastor, and Paul tells Timothy, as a pastor, that he is to be an example to believers. The word example is the Greek word tupos. It is where we get our English word example, or type, or pattern. It is exactly the same word. Paul is telling Timothy that, as pastor, he is to be an example to believers.

When I read that, I thought of this: I wonder how many people today would be more holy, more godly, and more obedient if they patterned their lives after their pastor. Did you know the Apostle Paul often asked people to follow him? In 1 Corinthians 4 and verse 16, he says, “Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.” In 1

Corinthians chapter 11, verse 1, he says, “Be ye followers of me, even as I am a follower of Christ.” Then, in Philippians 3, verse 17, he says, “Brethren, be followers of me, and mark them which so walk that you have us for an example.” The Apostle Paul is saying, Follow me as I follow the Lord Jesus Christ. When Paul told Timothy he was to be an example to the believers, the sad truth is that today, if most people followed their pastor, most of them would follow him almost straight to hell—or at least into sin and hypocrisy and all kinds of disobedience.

God does indeed give us examples. We even have an example when it comes to suffering and persecution. Have you ever considered James chapter 5 and verse 10, where he said, “take my brethren, they're prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example of suffering, affliction, and of patience”? He goes on to talk about the patience of Job.

If we want to understand how we are to suffer, endure afflictions, and live while being persecuted, we need to study the lives of the prophets. In other words, God says, “Here is the pattern. Here is the example.”

Christ as the Supreme Example (1 Peter 2:21)

For even hereunto where ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps. God has a calling for you in this reference. Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps.

The interesting thing about the word example here is that it is a very unique word, and it is also a word that is very explanatory. The Greek word happens to be hypogramos, and here is what the word literally means. Number one, it means a writing copy, including all of the letters of the alphabet, given to beginners so that they may learn to write. Secondly, it means an example set before one so that he may be quickly an emulation of that example.

In other words, what he is saying is that the example of Christ is so simple, so obvious, and so perfect that we need to follow in His steps. This literally means that we place our feet in the Prince that

He left. It is a very simple word. He is telling us that we are to walk in His steps, follow His directions, and live our lives as He lived.

Having understood that there are indeed patterns and examples that have been given unto us, consider John 8:29 in this light. Jesus Christ says, “And he that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.” There are several very wonderful truths given to us in this verse. First, Jesus Christ was sent by the Father. The verse begins by showing us that He was not acting independently, but was sent by the Father. The Father was with Him, and the Father had not left Him alone. Christ could therefore say that He always did those things that pleased the Father. Here is the pattern and example set before us: to follow His steps, follow His directions, and live our lives as He lived.

Christ's Sending and Our Sending (John 8:29; 20:21)

He did not come on His own. He came in obedience and in submission to His Father. He said, “He that sent Me is with Me.” Interestingly, when you read through the Bible, one of the most noteworthy titles of Jesus Christ is the Sent One. He reveled in and gloried in the fact that He was sent by His Father. It was not a humiliation for Him, nor was it burdensome for Him to be the servant of His Father. He was sent by the Father.

When you read Hebrews chapter 3 and verse 1, the Bible says, “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession Jesus Christ.” God admonishes us to consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. Do you know that the word apostle literally means sent one? He says we are to consider the Sent One, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ gloried in the fact that He had been sent by the Father.

Do you realize that, as Jesus Christ was sent by the Father, so likewise we have been sent? In John 20 and verse 21, Jesus said to His disciples, “Peace be unto you, as my Father hath sent me, so send I you.” As my Father hath sent Me, so send I you. The Father sent Jesus Christ on a mission, and now Jesus Christ sends us on a mission. Christians should be rightly called sent ones. Since our Lord sent us as His Father sent Him, our sending should emulate, copy, demonstrate, and typify the way that He was sent. How was He

sent? He was sent with a divine conviction, but He was sent in obedience to His Heavenly Father.

Do you realize that when our Lord said, “As my Father hath sent me, so send I you,” our obedience is to emulate and typify His obedience?

The Bible says, “Wives be in subjection to your husbands in all things.” Why? Because the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body. I do not have to stand here and tell you that the man is the head of the house and, as the head of the house, he is to represent Jesus Christ. The wife represents the church, and the wife’s submission to her husband typifies, exemplifies, and demonstrates the submission of the church to Jesus Christ. All that is very typical. Everybody understands that. But do we understand that our obedience is to shadow forth and demonstrate the obedience that Jesus Christ gave unto His Father? That is a bit startling: our obedience is to show forth His obedience. I understand that frequently husbands and wives fail in the typology of marriage. The husband often fails in representing Christ’s head, and the wife often fails in representing the church and its submission to Jesus Christ. But the truth of the matter is that probably every one of us has failed miserably in representing the obedience of Jesus Christ. As the Father has sent me, so send I you.

In John 8:29, Jesus said, “He that sent me is with me. The Father hath not left me alone.” Here is the second truth: We must equally comprehend the presence of the Father in our lives, just as our Lord did. Do you realize that, as His children, we are never, ever left alone?

He has promised to lead us, guide us, and direct us. In John 14:23, Jesus said, “If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” Everyone can quote Hebrews 13:5: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

Put these two truths together in your mind. Jesus Christ was sent by the Father, and Jesus Christ lived in the Father's presence. He understood that His commission was from God, and that the

Father's presence and power would enable Him to accomplish that for which He was sent. Consequently, He did always those things which pleased His Father. Moreover, the more He pleased the Father, the more He was assured of His presence and power.

If you and I wish to be holy, godly, submissive, and obedient, then first of all we must consider our calling. We must consider the fact that we are sent ones: As the Father has sent Christ, so Christ has sent us. We have a real, genuine calling and commission. We have been effectually sent by the Sovereign of heaven and earth.

The second thing we must do is recognize the Father's presence. We must live in light of both truths. God has not only sent and commissioned us, but we are surrounded by His omnipotence and omnipresence. None of us can escape the presence or power of God. What did David say? He knows my rising and my setting. He knows the words before they form in my tongue. He knows my thoughts. There is no way to escape the omnipresence of God. Have you ever really considered that you are surrounded by omnipresence and omnipotence?

I have thought about this verse innumerable times and often in my prayers said, “Oh, Lord, if I could just truly say, ‘I do always those things that please You.’” Would it not be wonderful if every Christian could truthfully say, “I do always those things that please Him”? If we are truly going to seek to please Him and pattern our lives after Jesus Christ, we must remember our commission and the presence and power of God.

Calvin said of this passage: “Because I do always those things which please Him. We must observe the reason why Christ declares that God is on His side and that He will never be deprived of His assistance. It is because He is regulated entirely by His will and serves Him in sincerity. For this is what he means by the word always, and that he does not obey God only in part, but is entirely and unreservedly devoted to his service. Wherefore, if we desire to enjoy the same presence of God, our whole reason must be subjected to his authority. For if our senses hold government in any degree, we want to share it with God, all of our exertions will be fruitless, because the blessings of God will not be upon them.”

"Though for a time we may be delighted with the joyful prospect of success, yet the final result will be dismal." If we want to enjoy the blessings of God, we must understand that God is sovereign, God is in control, God has sent us, and we must live in His presence and delight in His power.

John Gill said: "For I do always those things that please him, by submitting to gospel ordinances, as to baptism, at which the Father declared his well-pleasedness in him, and by complying with the ordinances of the ceremonial law, which were typical of him, and by perfectly obeying the precepts of the moral law, and bearing the penalty of it, or by suffering and dying in the room instead of his people, all of which were the will of God, and well-pleasing unto him."

Psalm 40, verses six through eight, relates to Jesus Christ: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required."

The Servant's Ear and Perfect Obedience (Psalm 40; Exodus 21; Deuteronomy 15)

Then said I, Lo, I come in the volume of the book that is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God. Yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation, who have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. I have not hid my righteousness within my heart. I have declared my faithfulness and my salvation. I have not concealed my lovingkindness and my truth from the great congregation.

Of course, this passage is applied to Jesus Christ in the New Testament. You can find that in Hebrews 10, verses 5-9. I am not going to turn there and read it because it is basically the same thing. But notice what He said: "Then said I, Lo, I come," and, "The volume of the book it is written of me, I delight in thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." So, the very first emphasis that we find in Psalm 40 is this: it is upon our Lord's servitude.

Have you ever stopped to think that our Lord is the preeminent servant? He is the preeminent slave of His Father. People do not like that word slave. But when you get to the Greek word doulos, which is

translated servant, sometimes it is translated slave. It is one and the same. A servant is a slave. You say, “Well, I am not a slave.” Well, let me ask you, have you ever borrowed any money? The Bible says that the borrower is servant or slave to the lender. When you go down to the bank and borrow some money, you are actually the slave of that bank until you pay it back. You are not working for yourself; you are working for them. It deals with our Lord’s servitude.

Our Lord loved His Father supremely. Consider Exodus chapter 21, verses 5 and 6: “And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife and my children, I will not go free. Then his master shall bring him unto the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, to the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him for ever.” This is permanent servitude, permanent slavery.

Deuteronomy chapter 15, verses 16 and 17, gives the same truth. There is a passage, not only in Psalm 40, but elsewhere in Scripture, concerning Christ: “Mine ear hast thou opened.”

Deuteronomy 15:16 says that if a servant says, “I will not go away from thee, because he loveth thee in thine house, and because it is well with thee,” then the master shall take an awl and thrust it through his ear into the door, and he shall be his servant for ever. “And also unto thy maidservant shalt thou do likewise.” So notice the words, “Thou hast opened mine ears.” There is another passage that says, “Thou hast opened his ear.” Jesus Christ was sent as the servant to the Father, and He loved Him supremely. Jesus Christ is the perfect servant.

In 1 Corinthians 15, beginning with verse 24, we see this in light of these Old Testament passages. “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father,” having put down all rule, authority, and power. This is Jesus Christ, who has accomplished everything, delivering up the kingdom to God the Father. “For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” When all things have been put under Him, it is manifest that the Father is excepted, who put all things under Him. “And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”

What does that tell us? Jesus Christ, after accomplishing the perfect will of God the Father, delivers everything up to Him, and is willing to be His permanent servant forever. I know that Jesus Christ is God; there is only one God. Yet Scripture shows us His absolute, perfect servitude. When you read Psalm 40 in light of this passage, the first emphasis is upon His servitude, and the second emphasis is upon His perfect obedience.

"Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Jesus Christ is not only the perfect servant; He is also perfect in His obedience. His ears were opened. He heard the Word of God. Do you realize that man by nature does not hear? Man by nature is absolutely deaf.

For instance, turn over to Psalm 58 and notice, beginning with verse 3, what God says about the wicked: "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely."

What does God say about the wicked? They have deaf ears. They will not hear; they will not listen. Man by nature does not want to hear God. He does not want to see God, and he does not want to be with God. He is totally and absolutely depraved and has no desire for anything spiritual.

Turn to Isaiah, chapter 48, and then chapter 50. I want to show you the distinction between the servants of God and the servant of God. In Isaiah 48, we are talking particularly about Israel and how deaf they were to the things of God. You study Israel, and look in the New Testament at everything they did, and you cannot help but think those people would never learn. They tempted, they provoked, and they were judged over and over and over.

I get tickled every time I read that passage when the Bible says, "But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness." With many of them? Only two got into the land. He killed all the rest of them. I look at Israel in the Old Testament and think they never learned. Then I look at us and say,

"Oh God, we are in the same boat. We will never learn either unless You open our eyes."

But watch. Look in Isaiah 48, and let us take the time to read the first eight verses: "Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness." The Lord says, "Were hypocrites." "For they call themselves of the holy city, and say themselves upon the God of Israel."

SCRIPTURE READING - Isaiah 48:2-8 (KJV)

> The Lord of hosts is his name. I have declared the former things from the beginning, and they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them, and I did them suddenly, and they came to pass. Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass. I have even from the beginning declared it unto thee, before it came to pass. I showed it thee, lest thou should say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image hath commanded them. Thou hast heard, see all this, and will not ye declare it? I have showed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them. They are created now, And not from the beginning, even before the day when thou heardest them not, lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them. Yea, thou heardest not. Yea, thou knewest not. Yea, from that time thine ear was not opened, for I knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and was called a transgressor from the womb.

So even Israel refused to hear. Look in Isaiah chapter 50 at the difference between Israel, who were to be His servants, and the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the servant par excellence. Notice verse 6, just to show that we are talking about Christ. Look in Isaiah chapter 50, verse 4: "The Lord God had given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. He waketh morning by morning, he waketh mine ear to hear, as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear," just like that servant who had the awl and the whole board in his ear. "The Lord hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to

them that plucked off the hair. And I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

I included verse 6 just so that you could understand this was in reference to the perfect servant, the Lord Jesus Christ. Have you ever understood this? His life was lived for the Father; His life was consumed with obedience. In John 4:34, Jesus said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." If Jesus Christ is our pattern, we must ask: How did He obey?

Years ago, many of you will remember it, there was a fad in which many people wore jewelry. Some even had it printed on shirts and caps: WWJD—"What would Jesus do?" I used to see that, and I would get so grieved and upset. I wanted to snatch a knot in them every time I saw it. But I would try to say very sweetly and calmly, "I can answer your question. What would Jesus do?"

Christ Magnified the Law (Isaiah 42:21; Galatians 4:4-5)

He would obey His Father. He would obey God's law. That's what He would do. So you don't really have to ask that question. The answer is obvious.

Isaiah 42:21 says concerning our Lord, "The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable." He, that is Messiah, will magnify the law and make it honourable. The Hebrew word for magnify means to make great. It means to promote, to make powerful, and to nourish up. He's going to magnify the law, make it powerful, and nourish it up. The word honourable means to make glorious, to make honourable, to make majestic, to make wide and noble.

Have you ever stopped to think that when God sent Jesus Christ, He sent Him made of woman, made under the law? That's what the Bible says in Galatians 4, verses 4 and 5: "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." What was He doing? He was making it honourable. He was magnifying God's law. He was making it majestic and noble.

Now, because Jesus Christ honored and magnified the law and made it honorable, do you think it is now right as Christians to dishonor it, to disannul it, and disobey it? No, God's law is still His standard. His word is forever settled in the heavens. His word is likened to Himself: immutable and unchangeable.

A large part of our Lord's public ministry, including His atonement, was to magnify the law and make it honorable, to vindicate its equity, to urge its binding obligations, to sustain its claim, to show that it could not be violated with impunity, and to demonstrate that the penalty was just. The whole effect of our Lord's life, person, and work was to magnify and honor God's law.

Shall you and I then disannul, disobey, or disregard it? How can I please my heavenly Father? Matthew 7:12 gives the answer: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Love Fulfills the Law (Matthew 7:12; Romans 13:10)

This is the law and the prophets. Our Lord does not intend to say that this is the only point of doctrine laid down in the law and the prophets. But He is saying that, if you understand what law really is, and if you understand the biblical doctrine of love and charity, this is a simple way to maintain justice and equity.

For instance, if I want Brother Tim to honor my wife, I need to honor his wife. If I want Brother Daniel to help me when I need help, then I need to help him when he needs help. If I do not want Kurt to steal from me, then I should not steal from him. Is this not very simple? Our Lord says, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.” This is the law and the prophets.

Do you know what the Bible says in Romans 13:10? “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” Love is not some kind of esoteric little something floating around somewhere in the universe. Love is obedience. “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them not, he it is that loveth me not.” Love is the fulfilling of the law.

I could look at Brother Shelby and say, “Brother, I love you,” and at the same time be stealing money from him. Do I love him? No, because love is the fulfilling of the law. If I love him, I may never tell him I love him, but as long as I honor him, his wife, his family, and his property, and do what God commands me to do, I love him biblically. Love is the fulfilling of the law.

It is impossible to live a holy, sanctified, and godly life apart from the law of God. Certainly, the Holy Spirit is the agent in sanctification, and love is the motivation in sanctification, but the law is the direction in sanctification. There is no such thing as a sanctified whoremonger, a sanctified murderer, or a sanctified drunkard. You cannot be a holy, godly, sanctified, obedient individual and violate God's law. It is impossible.

There are people today who think, “I can just live my own life as long as I profess to be a Christian, and all is well.” No, that is not true. We are talking about the pattern for obedience. Jesus Christ is our pattern, for He says, “I do always those things that please Thee.” If you want to please our Father, how do you do it? You do so by keeping His law and obeying the totality of His Word.

Sanctification and the Law (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8)

Here it is. First Thessalonians chapter 4, beginning at verse 3: “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we have also forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.”

How do you live a sanctified life? In this passage, God says that if you are going to be sanctified, you have to keep the seventh commandment: “I shall not commit adultery.” You must keep the eighth commandment, “Thou shalt not steal,” because defrauding someone is a form of theft. You also have to keep the tenth commandment, “Thou shalt not covet.” At the same time, you have

to keep the first commandment, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” because when you deny God, that is when you begin sinning.

You cannot violate any of God's law without violating the first commandment. The very time you begin to violate God's law, you have already dethroned God in your life and enthroned yourself, which is idolatry. This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you know how to possess your vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God. That no man go beyond and defraud his brother—that is theft. So God is telling us how we are to please Him.

Turn to one last passage, Hosea chapter 4. Most of you can quote at least half of this verse. It is the second part that is very convicting and enlightening. Look at verse 6. God says, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” We know that verse, and it is true. We are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Have you ever understood that you never have a problem if you know what to do? You only have problems when you do not know what to do. Your ignorance is your problem. “My people were destroyed for lack of knowledge, because thou hast rejected knowledge that is of His will and word and way, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me.” God says, “You reject Me, I reject you.”

The Consequence of Forgetting God's Law (Hosea 4:6)

“Seeing thou hast forgotten the law by God, I will also forget thy children.” You want to know what is happening and christened them today? Our children are being forgotten because we have forgotten God and His law. This is called the Lex Talionis, the law of retribution. It is when God makes the punishment fit the crime. What is God's law? Plain and simple, God's law is an expression of His will for His people. What are our children? They are expressions of our will. We wanted them; we had them. Now God says, “If you forget the expression of My will, I will forget the expression of your will.”

You want to know why our families have such hellions today and such rebellious children? Because they have such rebellious parents. We think that we can live our lives apart from God and everything

will be all right. We think that we can disregard Him, disobey His law, and everything will work out. It will not. It will not.

If we genuinely and truly want to please our heavenly Father and always do those things which please Him, we must be obedient in the totality of our lives and bring our lives into conformity with His Word. He, the Lord Jesus Christ, magnified the law and made it honorable. We are not keeping it for salvation; our Lord Jesus Christ is our salvation. But if He honored God's law, we must honor God's law. If He fulfilled the law, we must fulfill it in our lives. We must walk in His steps.

He has given us the example. How did He please Him? By fulfilling His Word and His will in all things.

Conclusion: Pleading for Grace to Obey

Can you truthfully say, “I do always those things that please Him”? You say, “No, I can’t say that.” Let me ask you another way: Can you say, “I genuinely, truly want to always do those things that please Him, and it grieves me greatly when I disobey Him. It breaks my heart that I am so impotent and so unable to please Him always”? At least you are on the right track. We are not perfect; we are sinners.

But it takes discipline to train your mind and your life, and to stop and think before you act and before you speak. Say, “Father, I want to please Thee in this. Would You please help me, surround me by your presence and your power, because I confess without Thee I can do nothing.” You must learn to live not only in His presence, but that He has sent you and you need Him. Without Him, you are absolutely, totally helpless.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We confess that we've sinned against Thee so greatly, and we have failed Thee so miserably. Our lives, unhappily, have not set forth Jesus Christ as the standard in obedience.

We pick and choose so many times. Help us, Lord. Teach us to do always those things that please Thee, and help us to bring honor and glory to Thy great and awesome name, the one true and living God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, the great I AM. In Thy name we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 15

When You Know You Are Going to Die

February 2, 2012

When You Know You're Going to Die

SCRIPTURE READING - Numbers 14:21-35 (KJV)

Introduction and Scripture Reading

The title of the message today is, "When You Know You're Going to Die." Of course, I hope you've noticed the last three messages have really been around the book of Numbers, because as I read through the book of Numbers, these three things popped out at me, and so I'm dealing with them today.

Numbers 14, verse 21: "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Because all those men which have seen My glory and My miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted Me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to My voice, surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked Me see it."

> "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against Me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against Me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as you have spoken in Mine ears, so will I do to you. Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which you have murmured against Me, doubtless you shall not come into the land concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun, but your little ones which you said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which you search the land, even forty days each day for a year, you shall bear your iniquities even forty years, and you shall know My breach of promise."

Hebrews 3 and verse 17 refers to this passage: "But with whom was He grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?"

When you know you're going to die, have you ever considered what it must be like to know not only when you're going to die, but also how you're going to die? Have you ever thought about the men and women who are on death row? Not only has a date been designated for them to die, but the method of their death has also been designated. What must it be like to count down the years, the months, the days, and the minutes before one's going to be executed? What must it be like to know that in fifteen minutes, you're either going to be executed by the electric chair or lethal injection? What must it be like to know that within fifteen minutes, all of your questions concerning God, death, and judgment will be answered?

The Reality of Knowing You Will Die

In one sense, we all know that we're going to die. The Bible declares in Hebrews 9 and verse 27, "as it is appointed unto men once to die, after that, the judgment." We know that the wages of sin are death. We know that we were created from the dust of the earth and into the dust we shall return. There is no escape from physical death.

As Pilgrim explained in Pilgrim's Progress, we must die and stand before God in judgment. Pilgrim said he was unwilling to do the first—that is, to die—and unable to do the second—that is, to stand before God in judgment. Therefore, Pilgrim went around saying, "I must die, I must die, I must die." What a realization when we understand that we must die. How would you like to be like Hezekiah when he heard God's words, delivered by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 38 and verse 1: "Set thine house in order for thou shalt die and not live."

We know that the Bible teaches us that the wages of sin is death. We also know that we are going to die. We do not know exactly when we are going to die, but we know about when we are going to die. Psalm 90, verse 10, says, “The days of our years are threescore years and ten. And if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we fly away.”

What God is telling us in Psalm 90 and verse 10 is that the average lifespan is from seventy to eighty years, usually around seventy, more or less. If we make it to eighty, our days are usually filled with sorrow and sickness. Some, however, do not even make the normal lifespan. Some are cut down in the prime of their life, while others do not even get to begin life.

In Scripture, there are general promises for long life, and there are also general promises for a shortened life. The most famous passage for a long life is found in Exodus chapter 20 and verse 12: “Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” That same promise is repeated in Ephesians 6, verses 2 and 3: “Honor thy father and thy mother which is the first commandment of the promise that it may be well with thee and that thou mayest live long upon the earth.”

Here, then, is a promise of long life in relationship to whether or not we honor our parents.

General Promises for Long Life

Actually, there are three promises of long life in the Bible. Each one relates to the very core of our being. The first promise concerns our attitude and our action toward our parents. We must honor them if we expect a long life. To honor our parents is certainly more than saying “yes sir,” “yes ma’am,” “no sir,” and “no ma’am.” According to Matthew 15 and Mark 7, it involves a great deal more. God is simply saying that we must honor them if we have any expectation of long life.

If God says, "Honor thy father and thy mother, for this is the first commandment of the promise, that thy days may be long upon the earth," conversely, it is also true that if we dishonor our parents, our days will be shortened upon this earth. In other words, there is an implicated and inherent threat for those who dishonor their parents. The first promise, then, is in reference to our parents, whether we honor them or dishonor them. Now let me show you the second promise in the Bible for long life.

In Deuteronomy 22, beginning with verse 6, this may surprise you, but here it is. This promise is in relation to how we treat animals:

"If a bird's nest chanced to be before thee in the way in any tree or on the ground, whether they be young ones or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam, that is the mother, with the young. But thou shalt anywise let the dam or the mother go, and take the young to thee. Now note that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days."

God has said in other passages of Scripture, for instance, "Thou shalt not kill her mother and her young on the same day." So God forbid, say like killing a cow and a calf on the same day. Here He says, if you are walking down the road and see a bird's nest, and the mother is on the nest, you may take the eggs and let the mother go, or you may take the young and let the mother go, but you cannot take both of them. Of course, He expressly forbids taking the

mother. Why? If you took the mother, then the eggs are not going to hatch or the baby is going to die. So you would be taking the mother and the young and both one day.

This is an illustration of the fifth commandment. God demands respect and honor for the family, even the families of animals. In other words, it is an argument from the lesser to the greater. If God commands us to honor the families of animals, how much more are we commanded to honor the families of men and women? And how much more particularly are we commanded to honor our own family?

Here, then, are two general promises of long life: first, how we respect and honor our own family; and second, how we respect and honor the family of animals. The third general promise of long life is found in Deuteronomy 25. Notice what he said in verse 13: “Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, different weights are great and small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers or different measures are great and small. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have, that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”

The third promise for long life concerns our money and how we deal with other people, how we deal with each other. We cannot be cheaters, thieves, or dishonest. Put these three promises together: the promise of long life concerns how we treat our family, how we treat the families of animals, and how we treat each other. We must learn to be honest and just with each other. It is not simply a quantity of life that God has promised, but a quality of life as well.

Quality of Life and Obedience

What good is long life if you live that life in misery, sickness, turmoil, and trouble? God not only promises quantity of life, but also a quality of life. First Peter 3:10-11 says, "For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that may speak no guile, let him eschew evil and do good, let him seek peace and ensue it." When he says, "Let him eschew evil," that means let him spit it out. He cannot swallow it; he cannot stomach it. If you want not just quantity of life, but quality of life, refrain your

tongue from speaking evil, restrain your lips that they speak no guile, spit out evil, seek peace, and ensue it.

God has promised long life, not just quantity, but quality as well. There are general promises for long life, but there are also general promises for shortened lives. Obedience is the way, the means God has ordained to lengthen our days. Disobedience is the means God has ordained to shorten our days.

The Means of Shortened Life

I can hear the objection: "But wait a minute, Pastor. I thought Scripture taught that our days were numbered, that we are going to die when we are going to die, and there is nothing we can do about it." That is true in one sense. It is certainly true when you read Job 7:1: "Is there not an appointed time for man upon the earth? Or is days also like the days of a hireling?" Is there not an appointed time? Yes, there is an appointed time. There was an appointed time for you to be born, and there is an appointed time for you to die.

Job 14:4-5 says, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one. Seeing His days are determined, the number of His months are with thee, thou hast appointed His bounds that He cannot pass." God has said to each one of us, like the sea, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further." However, consider this: when God ordained the end, He also ordained the means to that end.

Thus, if I live a long life, that long life will be because I have obeyed God and honored my parents and honored the families of animals and been honest in my dealings with each other and been generally obedient in all of my life. On the other hand, if I have a shortened life, it's because I've used the means. That is, I've disobeyed God, I've dishonored my parents, I've dishonored the families of animals, I've been dishonest in my dealings with other men, I've been disobedient generally in my life, and there's the means to shorten my life.

Now, let me just explain this very quickly. Does this mean, therefore, that every individual that is obedient is going to live a long life? Does it? No. Of course not. There is God's secretive will that must be applied. I do not know God's secretive will for you.

Generally speaking, this is true. Does it mean that every wicked man is going to be cut down in the prime of life? No. All you've got to do is read Psalm 73. There are plenty of wicked men that live to ripe old ages. But they're the exception and not the rule. Generally speaking, God has ordained that if we obey, we're going to live long lives. If we disobey, we're going to live shortened lives.

Now, let me just show you some of the promises or I might say some of the threats as well. Before we look in Numbers chapter 14, I want you to go to Psalm 34. Let's work our way through the book of Psalms very quickly and show you some of the warnings and some of the curses and some of the threats. Or if you want to call them promises, that's fine. Notice Psalm 34 and verse 16. Here is what God is telling you about how to shorten your days in this sense of the word: "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." Wow. God's not only going to cut them off, He's going to cut off the remembrance of them.

Look in Psalm 37 and verse 9. Here He says it again: "For evildoers shall be cut off, but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth." Look in Psalm 37 and verse 22: "For such as be blessed of Him shall inherit the earth, and they that be cursed of Him shall be cut off." Look in verse 28: "For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaken not his saints, they are preserved forever. But the seed of the wicked shall be cut off."

Proverbs 2:22 says, “But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.” God is not only going to cut the wicked, the disobedient, off; He is going to root them out. Psalm 55:23 says, “But thou, O God, shall bring them down into the pit of destruction. Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days, but I will trust in thee.” What did David just say? Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days. What is he saying? God is going to cut them off. God is going to kill them. In other words, disobedience is the means to shorten your life.

An excellent illustration of this principle is found in 1 Samuel 2. Eli had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who were wicked men. Although they were priests, they were vile and wicked. Eli refused to restrain his sons. They not only dishonored God; they committed immorality and were simply vile and wicked.

God told Eli, “Wherefore the Lord God of Israel said, I said indeed that thy house and the house of thy father should walk before me forever. But now the Lord saith, be it far from me, for they that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days come, I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, and there shall not be an old man in thine house.”

When God says, “there shall not be an old man in thine house,” He means that He is going to kill them before they get old. He continues, “and thou shalt see an enemy in thy habitation in all the wealth which God shall give Israel, and there shall not be an old man in thine house forever. And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from thine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes and to grieve thine heart, and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age.” What is He saying? “I’m going to kill every one of them, and there are not going to be old men around.” Anybody who lives a little longer will do so only to cause heartache and grief. You are under My judgment. That is the means you use to shorten your life.

Deuteronomy 30:20 shows how length of life and long days are promised to those who obey: “that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him. For He is thy life and the length of thy days, that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob to give them.” You love the Lord, obey Him, and cleave to Him because He is thy life and the length of thy days. The promise is connected with dwelling in the land that the Lord swore to give to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Lord Himself is their life, and obedience is the response He requires.

Jeremiah 7:23 likewise says, “But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people, and walk you in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.” It is not just quantity of life; it is a quality that God promises if we obey. God says, “Obey my voice,” and connects that obedience with His being their God, their being His people, and their walking in all the ways He has commanded. He promises that it may be well unto them.

God has set before them His will and His law. Deuteronomy 30:15 says, “See, I have set before this day life and good, death and evil. In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply. And the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.” The choice is set plainly before them: life and good, or death and evil. To love the Lord, walk in His ways, and keep His commandments is connected with living, multiplying, and blessing in the land.

“But if thine heart turn away so that thou wilt not hear, but shall be drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I denounce unto you this day that you shall surely perish, and that you shall not prolong your days upon the land, whether thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him, for he is thy life and the length of thy days.”

"That thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them." What did he say? "I have set before you life and death. I have set before you blessing and curses." If you want a long life, if you want quality of life, God says, obey me. Generally speaking, that is how you live long. If you want to die early, fine: disobey God. Generally speaking, that is how you die early.

The principle is very simple: obedience brings life and blessing, and disobedience brings death and curses.

Israel's Provocation and Judgment

Now go back to Numbers chapter 14. There we have people who have provoked God, and they have provoked Him grievously. Look at Numbers chapter 14 and verse 22. Here is what the Lord says: "Because all those men which have seen My glory and My miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice." God is

saying that these same reprobates have provoked Him ten distinct times.

Most of these provocations are given to us in the Bible. They provoked Him at the Red Sea in Exodus 14; at Marah in Exodus chapter 15; in the wilderness of sin in Exodus chapter 16; at Rephidim in Exodus 17; in the golden calf in Exodus 32; at Taberah and Kibroth-hattaavah in Numbers chapter 11; and here at Kadesh Barnea in Numbers chapter 14, they provoke Him again.

Look back at verse 22: "Because all those men which have seen my glory and my miracles which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times."

There are at least two painfully obvious truths from this verse. First, God does keep a record of our sins. He knew how many times these people had provoked Him. Numbers 32:23 says, "Be sure your sins will find you out." In Psalm 50:21, God told the wicked: "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence. Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such in one as thyself, but I will reprove thee and set them, that is, thy sins, I will set them in order before thine eyes." God said, I know what you have done. Just because I did not strike you down instantly, do you think I did not see it, record it, or know about it?

Many of the wicked have a peace that comes only from their own forgetfulness. They have forgotten, but I can assure you that God has not. In Exodus 34 and verse 7, He said it like this: “keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sins, and that will by no means clear the guilty.” If you are outside of Christ, if you are unregenerated, if you are unconverted, then you are unforgiven, and God knows each and every one of your sins. He has not forgotten them. He has recorded them. You may have forgotten them, but I can assure you God has not.

The second truth we find here is this: God does have a point at which time He will no longer extend mercy or grace. “I've had it with you. Ten times you provoked me. Now you're going to be destroyed.”

The Bible says in Romans 2, verses 4 through 6: “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance,

but after the hardness and impenitent heart treasures up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds."

You despise God's goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering. When you despise everything that God is and everything that He does for you, you are treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, because there will be one day when God will render to every man according to his deeds. To those who provoke God, there is nothing but judgment and destruction ahead.

Not only in this life, but the life to come as well. Look back in Numbers 14:1 and see again how this chapter opens with these wicked people provoking God and failing to obey Him: "And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, and the whole congregation said unto them, would God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would God we had died in this wilderness. And wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land to fall by the sword that our wives and our children should be a prey, were it not better for us to return to Egypt. And they said one to another, let us make a captain and let us return into Egypt." These people expressed the belief that death in Egypt or death in the wilderness would be far better for them than what God had prepared and provided for them.

They failed to believe Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb; they failed to believe God. Instead, they chose to believe the ten spies who brought up an evil report, a false and libelous report against God and His promised land. God therefore rightly charged them with provocation. In Numbers 14:11, the Lord said unto Moses, "How long will this people provoke me? How long will it be ere they believe me for all the signs which I have shown unto them?" Their unbelief led to murmuring, bellyaching, and complaining.

Unbelief dishonors God. It challenges His Word, ignores His promises as well as threatenings, and calls God a liar. Unbelief basically spits in the face of a holy God; it challenges God and dares Him to do His worst. Unbelief is a heinous sin and brings judgment upon the unbeliever.

Look in Numbers 14:2. If you really grasp this verse, it should make you very concerned for that which you pray. “And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, and the whole congregation said unto them, would God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would God that we had died in this wilderness.”

The translation of the words “would God” comes from a conditional particle that may literally be interpreted, “oh that it might be,” “if haply,” or, “I pray thee, if only that.” In other words, they were saying, “I pray that, if haply, I would, I prefer, I want to die, either in Egypt or in this wilderness.” They were not in Egypt, so they could not die there; but they were in the wilderness. God could answer their prayer very easily.

Look in Numbers 14:26: “And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as you have spoken in mine ears, so will I do unto you.”

"Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which you have murmured against me." What did God say? Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. As you have spoken to me, as you prayed, as you wished, and as you wanted, that is exactly what I am going to do to you. Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. Your children, whom you said would be a prey, are going into the promised land, but you will never see it.

Now skip down to verse 31: "But your little ones which you said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye despised. But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness."

The Word of the Lord had been given, and their sentence had been pronounced. They would die in the wilderness. There was no escaping it now. They knew that they were going to die. The

sovereign, omnipotent God of heaven and earth had pronounced His decree: "You have prayed to Me to die in this wilderness. I am going to answer your prayer. I am going to let you die. Your carcasses shall fall."

Now look at verse 35: "I the Lord have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die. And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land, even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the Lord."

What did God just do? He looked at those men and said, "You want to die in this wilderness? Fine. I am going to answer your prayer. Your carcasses shall fall." Those ten men who brought up that libelous, slanderous report died instantly by a plague before the Lord. Their death was an earnest, so to speak. By killing them instantly, God guaranteed the others' death: just as He killed those ten, so they would die as well.

You prayed for it, you asked for it, you've got it. Now let me tell you, when God said, "your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness," it means more than simply that they are going to die. They are going to die, but there is more to it than that. The statement concerns not only their death, but also what would happen to their bodies. The passage about King Jehoiakim shows this implication plainly.

The Fulfillment of God's Decree

Jeremiah 22:18 says: "Therefore, thus saith the Lord concerning Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, my brother, or Ah, sister, they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, Lord, or ah, His glory. He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem." How do you bury an ass? You don't. You drag him off, let his body rot, and let the buzzards pick his bones.

What did God say? "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness." Hebrews 3:17 refers to Numbers chapter 14: "But with whom was he

grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell," past tense, "in the wilderness?"

The passage now turns to the comment of three commentators on Hebrews 3:17, "their carcasses fell in the wilderness." Albert Barnes is introduced first. He says: "That is, they all died and were left on the sands of the desert. The whole generation was strewn along the way to Canaan. All of those who had seen the wonders that God had done in the land of Ham, who had been rescued in so remarkable a manner from oppression, were thus cut down and died in the desert through which they were passing."

“Such an example of the effects of revolt against God and unbelief was well fitted to admonish the Christians in the time of the Apostle and is fitted to admonish us now of the danger of the sin of unbelief.” Their carcasses were strewn along the sands of the desert.

Adam Clarke, commenting on Hebrews 3:17, says, “whose carcasses fell, for the Greek properly signifies the members of a body. And here there may be an allusion to the scattered bleached bones of this people that were a long time apparent in the wilderness, continually there as proof of their crimes and of the judgment of God.” They were not buried. They were not mourned. They simply fell down and died.

John Gill says of Hebrews 3:17, “whose carcasses fell in the wilderness and so never entered the land of Canaan. They died in the wilderness and they did not die common or natural deaths, at least not all of them. Their deaths were by way of punishment, in the way of wrath, in a judicial way.” The Syriac version renders it, “their bones fell in the wilderness, they lay scattered and unburied and exposed to view as an example of divine vengeance.” When God said to those wicked, unbelieving people, “turn you into the wilderness,” they began dying under the judgment of God.

Remember this: when the cloud moved, they moved; when the cloud stopped, they stopped. But if the cloud was moving and somebody dropped dead, what did the rest of the people do? They kept moving. Numbers 1:46 tells us that all those numbered—men twenty years old and upward, able to fight and go to war—were 600,000, 3,000, and 550: 603,550 men.

There were probably two million people. That did not count the younger men, the little children, or the women. If they wandered for forty years, dividing 603,550 by forty gives approximately 16,000 deaths a year, 1,300 a month, or fifty a day. These people were walking along, and suddenly fifty men fell down dead. What did they do? They kept going.

What happens to their bodies? The buzzards get them. They are unburied and unmourned. This is just the men of war. It does not count women who died or children who died, some naturally and perhaps some by the judgment of God. It does not count those who died of old age or those who died of diseases. But can you imagine not even knowing that you are going to die, but knowing that you are going to die under the judgment of God? When you die, you will be unburied and unmourned, and you will lie simply wherever you fell. Now the question is, did they all die?

Numbers 26:63-65 gives us the answer: “These are they that were numbered by Moses and Eliezer the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho. But among these there was not a man of them, whom Moses and Aaron the priests numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. For the Lord had said of them, They shall surely die in this wilderness: and there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.” There was not a man left of them.

Did God kill all of them? He killed all of them. Not one escaped. Everyone whom God said was going to die, died. Do you imagine that there were some who vainly hoped they would escape God's judgment? Do you imagine there were some who thought, “Maybe God will forget,” or, “God will overlook me”? But He did not. There was not a man of them left. God accomplished all of His purpose. His decree was totally and completely carried out.

When God told these people to turn in the wilderness, they knew they were going to die. They might not have known the exact date, but they knew that within forty years not one of them would be left.

Application: Preparedness for Death

Let me make a couple of applications today. I believe that each of us knows, just like those Israelites, that surely we are going to die. And we are. Hebrews 9:27 says, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” The question is, are we prepared to die? You remember I told you earlier about Pilgrim in Pilgrim's Progress. When Evangelist met him, Pilgrim was weeping. Evangelist asked him why he was weeping, and he said, “I must die, I must die, I must die. I find that I must die and stand before God.”

"I'm unwilling to do the first, and I'm unable to do the second." Dear friend, let me tell you: all those who are outside the Lord Jesus Christ, all those outside Him in faith, are not prepared to die. If you do not know Jesus Christ in repentance and faith, like Pilgrim, you are not prepared.

I want you to note secondly: the Israelites who refused to trust in God and obey His voice died under God's judgment. Likewise, today, those who refuse to trust in Christ will die under God's judgment.

The Bible says in 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, beginning at verse 7: "and to you who are troubled rest with us." It continues: "when our Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God, who obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, who shall perish and be punished with everlasting destruction." Those outside Jesus Christ will be destroyed and judged, just like those Israelites in the wilderness.

Not all the Bible may be written to you, and not all the Bible may be written about you, but all the Bible is written for you. What is revealed in the Old Testament, according to Romans 15 and 1 Corinthians chapter 10, is written for our admonition and our learning. Just as these men died under God's judgment in Numbers 14, 15, and 16, those who refuse Christ shall also die under God's judgment.

How can we have a greater surety of death and destruction than the Word of God? God decreed the deaths of these men in Numbers chapter 14, and it came to pass exactly as He said. God has decreed that it is appointed unto us once to die, and after that the judgment;

and, dear friend, it will come to pass exactly as God said. Psalm 138, verse 2, tells us that God has placed His Word above His name. If God's Word ever fails, then God would cease to be God.

But I do have some good news: for the child of God, the one who has been regenerated by grace and converted through repentance and faith, death has no sting and judgment holds no horror. The apostle says, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

For those who are in Christ, death has no sting. The grave holds no horror. Judgment holds no horror. Why? Because God has given us the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 14 and 15 say, "For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he, that is Christ, also likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Do you realize that when Christ died as our substitute, and the wrath of God fell upon Him in our place, He took all the stain, all the horror, and all the pain? Now, for the believer in the Scripture, it is called those who sleep in Christ.

Do you have a horror each night of going to sleep? I do not. I welcome it, am thankful for it, and look forward to it. For the child of God, death is nothing more than simply sleep. There is no horror and no pain. As children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, we know that we shall lie down and go to sleep physically; that is, we shall leave this earthly body. But for the child of God, there is no death, only life. What did Christ say? "I am come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly."

Do you remember what He said in John 5:24? "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent

Me hath everlasting life, and shall not come unto death, but is passed from death unto life." We will not experience, as believers, the agonies, sting, and pain of death because Christ has experienced them for us.

When it comes our time to die physically, it is just going to sleep. It is truly entering into life. Death is nothing more than a passport into eternity for the child of God. As the Apostle said in 2 Corinthians 5, we would rather lose this earthly tabernacle that we might have a heavenly tabernacle. The Apostle Paul said that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

How horrible could that be? To have the blessed Son of God and to be in His presence is life. It is not death and it is not pain. But those who are without Christ know that they shall die, and they will die with God's judgment upon them. So, dear Christian, be thankful for the salvation that God has given us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us pray: Father, we ask You today to help us and to teach us. Make us, Lord, thankful and grateful for Thy so great salvation.

May we trust in Thee, may we look to Thee, may we honor Thee. We pray that You would speak to hearts, convict and convert, and have Your will in every life. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask. Amen.

CHAPTER 16

Reality, Faith and Obedience

August 21, 2016

God says, “I am the LORD thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt. Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. But my people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own counsels. Oh, that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned mine hand against their adversaries. The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto Him, but their time should have endured for ever. He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat, and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.”

Introduction: The Nature of Reality

When you hear the word reality, it should jar you in one sense of the word. Reality often comes with what you and I would call a very rude awakening, because most of us live in a dream world. We live in that dream world only for a short period of time, when reality basically knocks us down and wakes us up and runs all over us.

I remember as a teenager fantasizing about my future. I could hardly wait to leave home. Now, I had a wonderful relationship with my parents. I did not hate them. I did not despise them. I loved them. We got along great, and usually, for the most part, I really obeyed them. But the simple truth was that I wanted to get out so that I could do that which I wanted to do.

They ruled over me, and I had to work many times when in reality I did not want to work. On a farm, oftentimes we would get up during the summer at 2 in the morning, and we would work in the barns until daylight, and then go to the fields, come in for dinner, then go back to the fields and come in at night for supper. So our work days were probably 15 or 16 hours. And that was day after day for several weeks or a month or two during the summer. So I just wanted to get out and be on my own so that I could run my life and do as I wanted to do and do as I pleased.

When Alice and I got married at eighteen, it really hit me hard that, all of a sudden, I had a wife to support. When the Lord blessed us and gave us our first child, reality really began to set in, because now I had a wife and a child to support. I often thought, during the first few years of our marriage, how absolutely foolish I had been as a teenager.

I was in such a hurry to get away from home, when I had it made. My father provided all the food, paid all the bills, and took care of me. All I had to do was a little bit of work and simply obey. Then, all of a sudden, I was out on my own, and everything was on me. I had to earn all the money, pay all the bills, and do everything.

And you know what I discovered? When I got away from home and was on my own, I could not do what I wanted to do, because I was so pressed doing what I had to do. I never found time to play. Reality truly sank in, and it sank in very deeply. I also remember that, when the Lord saved me, I was so excited about the news of God's salvation. That salvation was so fresh and wonderful. I just knew that everybody wanted to hear about sin, salvation, and Jesus Christ. I knew everybody was going to eat this up. After I was laughed at, rebuffed, scorned, and mocked, reality began to set in.

I understood that many are called, but few are chosen. The truth is that, in reality, the world by and large does not want to hear about its sin or its condemnation. It was a rude awakening, but it certainly awoke me, and it sank in deeply. I began to understand the old Puritan adage that a sinner is a sacred thing, because only God can make him so.

There is a vast difference between intellectually understanding that you are a sinner and being spiritually convicted by the Holy Spirit, through His revelation to you, that you are indeed a sinner. The truth is that most people actually live in a fantasy world. Even today, they really do not live in reality. Many think that if they live decent lives, try to do what is right, and do not sin too much, somehow they are simply going to make it into heaven. But reality will set in at death, and it certainly will come down hard at the Great White Throne Judgment.

Likewise, we have to consider this: Do you realize that most professing Christians never really serve the Lord? Spiritual and biblical truths rarely enter their minds, thoughts, or lives. They may be good church members. They may visit and fellowship with one another, and even try to help each other, but that is basically the extent of their Christian life. Reality will set in at death and at the judgment seat of Christ, because living the Christian life is far more than simply going to church and listening to a few sermonettes.

Most people run in fifteen minutes late, with a quarter in one hand and a quarter in the other, sit down and listen to a fifteen-minute sermonette, and think they have really worshipped and served God. They are in for a rude awakening. We tend to think as a nation that we will never suffer the righteous judgment of God. We believe somehow that all of the aborticide, fornication, sodomy, theft, fraud, deceit, idolatry, and rebellion will be overlooked, and that God is just going to let us slide by.

All you have to do is look around. The truth is, we are already under the judgment of God, and it is going to get far more difficult. Read Amos chapter 4. God said, "I said unto you, cleanness of teeth. Yet you've not returned unto me." Then He stopped the rain, sent famine, sent plagues, and caused sons and daughters to die. Yet they did not return unto Him. Every time there was no repentance, the

judgments increased in intensity and severity. So buckle up, because in reality, this country is probably headed for judgment, extreme judgment, and it is going to set in very quickly.

Man does not determine reality. Reality is not what I think, what I desire, or what I want it to be. I cannot make my own reality. Reality is determined by God. Denial of God's reality does not negate it. It is there and it is real, whether you believe it or not, agree with it or not, like it or not, or deny it or not. God is reality.

Brother Tim read me a quote from Mao Zedong, in which Mao said that he determined his own reality. He was not concerned with the past or the future, but only with what was around him at that particular time. Man, especially fallen man, always fantasizes and believes that somehow he can determine his own reality. The communist utopia, Marxist utopia, socialist utopia, and hedonistic utopia are simply man's attempts to determine his own reality.

When I first understood the word utopia, I was probably in my second year of Greek. Our English word utopia is literally made up of two Greek words: topos, which is place, and u, which is a negative. Utopos literally means no place. In other words, it does not exist except in someone's depraved, humanistic mind. Man cannot make his own reality or determine reality. Reality is determined by God alone.

The Reality of Redemption (Psalm 81:10)

Psalm 81 is of special importance to the Church now. It reminds us of our obligations for the past mercies of God, points out our sins and rebellion in the present, and shows us the blessings that could be ours if we would simply listen to God, obey Him, and serve Him.

First, in verse 10, see the reality of that which was: redemption. The verse says, "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt. Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." Note this phrase: "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." In Psalm 81, God identifies Himself exactly as He did when He gave the law in Exodus 20:1: "I am the Lord thy God, which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

God is saying, “I am the one who delivered you.” Moreover, He says exactly the same thing in Hosea 13:4: “Yet I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt. Thou shalt know no God but Me, for there is no Saviour beside Me.” So three times now God has said particularly, “I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt.” Often in the Old Testament, God speaks of this fact and the reality that He is the deliverer of His people.

Why are we continually reminded of this fact? First, the Exodus was and is an undeniable fact. It is history. It is real. God actually delivered His people from Egypt, and He delivered them and destroyed the Egyptians. Second, the great deliverance out of Egypt was a claim upon His people’s allegiance. They owed Him. He was their Savior. If ever a people was morally bound to God, certainly Israel was a thousand times pledged to Jehovah by His marvelous deeds on their behalf in bringing them out of the land of bondage. Third, the great and glorious deliverance given to them was proof that God was God and that He was able to provide, protect, and promote them as He had promised.

If God has done the greatest for us, shall He not also do the lesser things for us as well? The Apostle Paul argues that in Romans chapter 8. If God has given us His Son, how much more shall He also give us other things as well? If God has done the greatest, God is certainly not going to hesitate to do that which is lesser.

The Exodus was and is an objective fact. It is history. It is reality. Nothing can change that reality. It was accomplished by the grace and power of God alone. The Egyptians, with all of their false gods, were not able to establish their utopia or their reality. In bringing His people out, He destroyed the Egyptians and their utopia. Reality is what God says, not what man thinks.

Before He led His people out, God told them to take a lamb, slay it, and put the blood on the lintel and the doorposts. He said, “When I see the blood, then I will pass over you.” After they applied the blood, they were let out in the Exodus. If you understand the type and the emblem, should you not also be able to understand the reality?

The Passover lambs sacrificed that evening were typical and pictorial of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am not going to go back through the book of Leviticus and show you all of those pictures. All I need to do is quote 1 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 7, where the Bible says, “For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.” The deliverance from Egypt, then, was, in one sense of the word, a picture and a type of the believer’s deliverance from sin and wickedness.

God was bringing us out of the world of ungodliness. He was bringing us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Hold Psalm 81, but look in your Bibles to Hebrews 9. Notice, beginning with verse 12, what the Bible says concerning our Lord Jesus Christ and His great salvation: “Neither by blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.” The Bible teaches us very clearly that salvation—the person and work of Jesus Christ—is the great historical and objective fact of history.

Jesus Christ actually lived, died, was buried, was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God. These truths are reality; these truths are genuine. He is salvation. In fact, the Bible says in Romans chapter 1, verses 3 and 4, "Concerning His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead." Jesus Christ was declared to be the Son of God with power. This is reality. Men may deny, denigrate, or denounce this reality, but that does not change it. It is still real and genuine.

Men may wish for salvation in some other way. They may try to dream up some novel idea so that they can be saved apart from repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But all of that is humanistic and carnal. It is not reality; it is their own depraved mind trying to achieve something unreal and not genuine. Reality is determined by God and by God alone. Jesus Christ, in His person

and work, is the great objective basis for salvation. Nothing can change that—absolutely nothing.

We have to understand that there is a subjective basis of salvation and an objective basis of salvation. The objective basis is the person and work of Jesus Christ. The subjective basis is the grace, mercy, faith, and repentance given to us by our Lord. The subjective rests upon the objective, but the subjective does not and cannot change the objective. Without the objective, there would not be any subjective.

What our Lord did was outside of us; it was not in us. Jesus Christ actually fulfilled the law of God, died as our substitute and surety, sacrificed Himself, and propitiated the anger, holiness, and wrath of God. All of that is objective. It is outside of us.

Now he gives us grace, repentance, and faith. But that is subjective. Have you ever heard someone say, “Well, I don't feel saved”? There is a good reason why you do not feel saved: salvation is not subjective. Salvation is objective. It is outside of you. You cannot feel what Christ has done. It is reality.

Look in your Bibles to Acts chapter 5, verses 30 and 31. The Bible says, “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you slew and hang on a tree.” Now watch: “Him hath God exalted with or at his right hand to be a prince and a savior for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.”

So, here is what God did. God brought His great salvation through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He actually died, He was buried, and God raised Him from the dead.

Now look in your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 9. We just read verses 12 through 14, but let us begin with verse 14: “How much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”

“And for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament, or the New Covenant, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, that which you are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of a

testator. For a testament is a force after men are dead. Otherwise, it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."

Note what our Lord did. Our Lord died, and He put into effect what we know as the New Testament or the New Covenant. Some of you have wills. Those of you who do not ought to have some. On your will, it says "last will and testament." Jesus Christ left us a testament. He left us a will.

I have known and heard of individuals who died, leaving a will, and some unscrupulous attorney ended up stealing the inheritance from the wife or the children. You have to be careful, that is for sure, but note what Jesus Christ did. Jesus Christ came, lived, and died in order to put the testament, or His will, into effect. Then He was raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of God, that He might administer that will and that testament. There is not going to be any fraud in this testament. There is not going to be anyone to slip in and slip by and do something unscrupulous—not in this testament. Why? Because Jesus Christ is the administrator of the estate.

Here is reality. Here is salvation. Consequently, we owe our Lord. Have you ever stopped to think about this? We actually owe our Lord on a threefold account. We owe Him, number one, because we are His creatures. As His creatures, we owe Him glory, honor, worship, and praise because He created us.

Secondly, because we are sinners, we owe Him repentance, because He has commanded us to repent. And thirdly, because He has redeemed us by Himself, we owe Him. That is why the Scripture says in 1 Corinthians 6, verses 19 and 20, "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God? You are not your own. You have been bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are His."

Here is the reality in verse 10. God said, "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." He is saying, this is reality; this is My salvation. There is none else. If you will not be saved by Jesus Christ in repentance and faith, you will not be saved, for the only salvation that is, is that which exists in the Lord Jesus

Christ. You cannot be saved any other way. I do not care who you are or where you are. The reality is God's so great salvation, given us in Jesus Christ.

The Reality of Rebellion (Psalm 81:11-12)

Now, Psalm 81 shows a second truth here. Not only the reality of that which was—redemption; we have been redeemed—but also the reality of that which is: rebellion. After He said, "I'm the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, open thy mouth wide and I'll fill it,"

"But," he says, in verse 11, "my people would not hearken unto my voice, and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust, and they walked in their own counsels." Is it not strange that those whom God has created, and even those whom He has delivered, will not hearken to His voice? We are a most unthankful, ungrateful, and unappreciative people. We often refuse to acknowledge the goodness and graciousness of our God.

I am not necessarily talking only to everyone in this congregation; I am talking about Christendom as a whole. Look at the people who profess to be God's people. There are churches just about on every corner in every town. Have you ever stopped to think that, if all these people are real, genuine Christians, we should have changed the world a long time ago? We should have changed our communities and our states.

I do have a message here entitled by asking this question: "Are you dumber than an animal?" In Isaiah chapter 1, verse 2, God asks, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken." Then He says, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they've rebelled against me." Watch this: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider, a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corruptors, they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel into anger, and they are going away backwards."

That is why I ask, "Are you dumber than an animal?" We had a cow that had triplets, and she waited around most of the day for

those calves to follow her off. One was strong enough to do so, but the other two could not. Alice and I went and got those two calves and raised them on a bottle. Even today, they are probably close to a thousand pounds, yet they think they are puppies, and they think we are mama and daddy. The one the mother raised began hanging around with them and became a pet. Two or three others, born a week or two later, began hanging around with them as well. They are all pets.

The interesting thing is this: I can see those calves, and all I have to do is go, "Mac, Mac." They look at me, and then they come running. I can drive my golf cart out to the barn, and every cow in the pasture comes running because they know that is where they get fed. I remember, as a boy, seeing my dad, who had over 200 cows at one time, drive his truck out into the pasture. There was not a cow in sight, but he would drive out, stop, and suddenly be mobbed by nearly 200 cows. Why? Because they know who feeds them. They know where their food comes from.

And what is God saying? God is saying, "My people don't know. They really don't consider." The reality is this: as a whole, Christendom is a sinful, disobedient, rebellious, and wicked people. We claim to be Christians and revel in the fact that we are a Christian nation, while at the same time we are in the deepest rebellion and apostasy against our Lord and His law. We claim to be His, yet we do not want Him. We claim to be the people of the book, yet we will not read the Bible. We claim to be His children, yet we will not obey Him. We claim to be His servants, yet we will not preach His Word. We claim that we really want Him, but we refuse the whole counsel of God. We claim to be believers, but oftentimes we refuse to believe our own Heavenly Father.

What conclusion can you come to about modern-day Christendom? Here it is: we really do not want God. We do not want to repent. We do not want to be holy, godly, or obedient. No, we love our flesh, our lusts, the world, and our material possessions more than we love the Lord. As Christendom as a whole, we are idolaters of the worst kind. We profess to love the Lord Jesus Christ, but in reality we worship ourselves, our own lusts, and our own desires.

You have to remember Colossians 3 and verse 5: “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” Covetousness, which is idolatry. Turn in your Bibles to Jeremiah chapter 44, beginning with verse 2: “Thus said the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, you have seen all the evil that I’ve brought upon Jerusalem and upon all the cities of Judah.”

“And behold, this day they are desolation, and no man dwelleth therein.” You have seen it; you know My judgment. Why? “Because of their wickedness, which they have committed to provoke Me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, and to serve other gods, whom they knew not, neither they, ye, nor your fathers.”

“Howbeit I sent to you all my servants the prophets, rising early, and sending them, saying, O do not this abominable thing which I hate.” God hates idolatry. It is a denial of His person and a usurpation of His throne rights. You cannot violate any of the Ten Commandments without first violating the first commandment: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” So when we sin, we deny that God is God.

We dethrone Him and enthrone ourselves. Ralph Venning says, “Sin is contrary to all the names and attributes of God. It sets itself in opposition to them all. It deposes the sovereignty of God as much as in it lies. It will not that the king of kings should be on the throne and govern this world which he has made. It was by this instinct that Pharaoh said, ‘Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know no Lord above me. I will not let Israel go.’ The voice and language of sin is, ‘Our lips are our own. Who is Lord over us?’

“It was from hence that the Jews of old said, ‘We are lords, we will no more come unto thee.’ Thus it attempts to dethrone God. It denies God’s all-sufficiency, as if there were not contentment and satisfaction enough to be had in the enjoyment of God, but that vanity and wickedness had more pleasure and profit than He, whose ways are all pleasantness, and whose service is the help of man.

"Every prodigal that leaves the Father's house says, in effect, it is better to be elsewhere. It challenges the justice of God and dares God to do His worst. It provokes the Lord to jealousy and tempts Him to wrath. It disowns His omniscience. 'Pooh,' they say, 'God does not see, nor does the Most High regard.' It despises the riches of God's goodness. It turns His grace into wantonness. It will make bold with God and try to sin because grace abounds. In short, sin is the dare of God's justice, the rape of His mercy, the jeer of His patience, the slight of His power, the contempt of His love. It is the upbraiding of His providence, the scoff of His promise, the reproach of His wisdom; it opposes and exalts itself above all that is called God, and above all that God is called, so that it, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing itself as it were God."

The Reality of Revival

What is sin? It is everything that is against God. Our rebellion merits the judgment of God, and worse judgments, because our sin is exceedingly wicked. We have been warned over and over: "Oh, do not that abominable thing which I hate."

Psalm 81 shows one of the worst judgments God can inflict upon us. He said in verse 10, "I'm the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt. Open thy mouth wide and I'll fill it." But "my people would not hearken to my voice. And Israel would none of me." So what did God do? "I gave them up into their own hearts' lusts. And they walked in their own counsels."

When God wants to destroy a nation or a people, He does not have to send war, a hurricane, or a tornado. All God has to do is remove His restraining hand, leave us to ourselves, and we will destroy ourselves. He said, "I gave them up to their own heart's lusts. I left them to their own counsels." America as a whole is on a collision course with the divine hand of justice. We have thumbed our collective noses at God. We have denounced Him, denied Him, ridiculed Him, mocked Him, hated Him, and turned from Him. Now we are facing our own lusts and our own counsels, and we are going to find it absolutely devastating. We have sown the wind; we will reap the whirlwind. It does not look good for us, just as it did not look good for Israel.

But Psalm 81 shows not only the reality of God's redemption and the reality of rebellion; it shows the reality of what could be revival. In verse 13, God says, "Oh, that my people had hearkened to me and Israel had walked in my ways. I should soon have subdued their enemies and turned my hand against their adversaries. The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto Him, but their time should have endured forever. He should have fed them also with the finest of wheat, and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied them."

The Reality of Potential Revival (Psalm 81:13-16)

What did He say? "Oh, that my people had listened to me, if they had just hearkened unto me, if they had just obeyed me." Have you ever considered what it might be like if all the professing Christians in just one state or one community

When a community or a state begins to obey God and listen to Him, can you imagine the changes in that community or state? You have to remember that not just Christians, but even the world, any moral, decent people, all is our peace and provision, prosperity, protection, and preservation. But the reality is that only those things are found in the Lord Jesus Christ, in obedience to Him. They are not found in politics, government, socialism, communism, Marxism, or any other ism. They are certainly not found in the Democratic Party or the Republican Party. The only place they are found is in the Lord Jesus Christ. These are spiritual fruits and spiritual blessings, and they can only be produced by obedience to our Lord.

One of my favorite passages is in the little book of Micah, chapter 4. I often quote this passage, and I have a message dealing with it and another passage entitled, "I Thought the King of Assyria Was Dead." You find out that the king of Assyria liked to play God. But notice what the Bible says in Micah, chapter 4, beginning with verse 3, talking about His blessings:

"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. Nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall

make them afraid. For the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it."

Now where is our protection? Where is our provision? Where is our preservation? Where is our promotion? It is only in God. It is only in obedience to Him. I am particularly delighted that it says, "every man shall sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree." I love figs, and I am so thankful for them. It is my delight, when they are in season, to go out each morning, pluck them right off the tree, and eat them. God said this is His blessing. This is His provision. It is not found anywhere else; it is only found in obedience to Him.

I want you to look in your Bibles to Psalm 85. Let us begin reading there with verse 4 and read through verse 9. Psalm 85, verse 4: "Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease." Note that prayer request: "Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease."

The Need for God to Turn Us

"Wilt thou be angry with us forever? Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee? Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation. I will hear what God the Lord will speak. For He will speak peace unto His people and to His saints, but let them not turn again to folly. Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land." How does glory get to dwell in our land? When we hear what God the Lord will speak, when we turn not again to folly, when God turns us, and when He smiles upon us.

We have to learn something. The truth is this: We must be turned by the Lord. He must give us grace and mercy, repentance, and reviving. Glory will only dwell in our land when we have repented and turned back to the Lord. Corporate, congregational, and national revival comes only by the grace and mercy of God when He turns us. Personal and individual revival comes only by the grace and mercy of God.

David said in Psalm 138, verse 7, "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me." Do you realize? We have meetings all the time and say we are going to have revival. No, we are not. We are

going to have a meeting. I trust it would be God's hand and God's blessing upon us to give us revival and turn us, but we are not having revival; we are having a meeting. We should be beseeching God to revive us individually, corporately, congregationally, and nationally.

This could be our reality. Notice what God says in Isaiah 57:15: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabited eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place with Him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." God dwells with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, and He revives the spirit of the humble and the heart of the contrite ones.

Any reviving or renewal of God's work in any land is accomplished only by His grace and mercy. In Habakkuk 3:2, Habakkuk prays, "O Lord, I've heard thy speech and I was afraid, O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years. In the midst of the years, make known. In wrath, remember mercy." He is crying to God to revive His work.

The reality which was his redemption, the reality which is, is rebellion. The reality which could be is a genuine revival. Have you ever considered what it would be like if you were obedient in every area? What if your family or your church were obedient in every area? Brother Mooney, you would not have any church problems. Brother Nelson, you would not have any church problems. You never have problems when people want to do that which is right and holy and biblical and godly.

Can you imagine what it would be like if everyone in your community, your state, or America suddenly wanted to do that which is right and holy? Can you imagine how our government would be changed, and how we would be changed? We sit around saying, "Oh, I wish. I wish," and dream and fantasize. But wishing does not make something true that is not reality. Unless we are obedient, unless we come back and do that which honors, pleases, and worships the one true living God who has revealed Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ, we will never be truly blessed the way we should be.

Applications: Thankfulness, Repentance, and Seeking Greater Obedience

We must rejoice and be thankful for our Lord's so great salvation. How many of you try to thank the Lord daily for the salvation that Jesus Christ has brought to you? All you have to do is look around. If you cannot be thankful that God has sovereignly singled you out, saved you, and brought truth to you, something is wrong. When you look at the sin and rebellion in the average individual, can you not say, "Thankfully, Lord, You have delivered me from all of that. You have taken me away from that"? Can you not rejoice that our Lord Jesus Christ said, "It is finished"? Can you not be thankful that He has shown you truth and that you have received Him as He has been fully and freely offered in the gospel? Can you not be thankful for His provision? Can you not be thankful for His protection?

For His preservation, for His good hand of providence upon you, can you not be thankful for your wife or your husband or your children? Can you not be thankful for life and breath? Can you not be thankful for health? How many thank God for His salvation? How many thank God for their health, their life, for sleep, for rest?

We need to learn to be thankful. We need to learn to thank God for everything that He's done for us. I've often made this a prayer: "Lord, please, make me like that one leper who ran back and worshipped the Lord and thanked Him for His healing." And our Lord says, "Where there are nine, only one came back." One out of ten. We are a most unthankful and ungrateful and unappreciative people. God has done so much for us. If we really praised Him and thanked Him the way we should, we would be thanking Him and praising Him about every second or every moment.

The second thing I want you to listen to is this: our sins, whether personal, ecclesiastical, familial, or national, must be dealt with, and we must be turned from our sins and disobediences. Look at how David prays in Psalm 80. I think this should be emulated. His words just tear my heart out: "Turn us again, O God, and cause our face to shine and we shall be saved." In verse seven he prays, "Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." In verse 19: "Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, and cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved."

Psalm 85:4 says, "Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause Thine anger toward us to cease." Do you realize our only hope as a people, as a society, as a nation, is if God will turn us? We must be turned. And the psalmist prays, "Turn us, O God of our salvation."

The third application is this: when we consider the blessings that we are missing—the goodness and graciousness of our God and the gifts that He bestows—we must consider what could be. If we only repented and trusted in Him, what did He say? “I am the Lord, thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt. Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.” If you had obeyed, said God, “I should have soon subdued your adversaries. Those that hated you would be no more, and I would have fed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey out of the rock would I have satisfied thee.”

I surely want all that God has for me. I do not want my sins, my attitude, or my actions to interfere with what God has for me. Therefore, we must be continually and constantly repenting, changing our lives, attitudes, and actions, in order that we may continually bring them into greater conformity to the Word of God.

I cannot be satisfied with the obedience that I have; I want a greater obedience. I cannot be satisfied with the love that God has shed abroad in my heart; I want a greater love. I cannot be satisfied with the little praise I give Him; I want to give Him greater praise. For that, I need Him, and I need obedience. What did our Lord say in John 15? “Without me, you can do how much? Nothing.” Everything depends upon Him.

Think about what reality could be if God sent a real, genuine revival to His people. Reality is determined by God, and not by man.

Father, help us. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Help us to see Thy reality, Thy redemption, and Thy salvation. Help us to see our own wickedness and our own lack of praise and worship. Help us to see, Lord, what could be with Your hand upon us and Your reviving us. Lord, we do pray with Habakkuk: In the midst of the years, Lord, Thou wouldst make known, Thou wouldst revive Thy work, O Lord, and in wrath remember mercy. Revive each of us, we pray, in Christ’s most holy and blessed name. Amen.

CHAPTER 17

Expressions of a Slave Mentality

February 17, 2012

Introduction: The Prevalence of a Slave Mentality

"And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid. And the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord."

"And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness."

Have you ever noticed that most people do not think for themselves? Have you ever noticed that those who do not think independently somehow all fit into the same mold? It does not matter where you travel in America; most people think the way the news commentators, the propaganda experts, television, and

Hollywood film directors lead them. It is not something new; it is something very, very old.

It is evidence of a slave mentality. The slave mentality expresses itself in many and varied ways. There are very few things over which slaves really concern themselves. They are more interested in their comfort, provision, and rest than anything else. They do their work, eat, drink, and rest; anything over and above that is beyond them, and they do not concern themselves with it.

All they want to do is exist. I submit to you that this is where most Americans really are. They are just trying to exist, and they really just want to exist. Years ago I preached a message on the slave mentality from the book of Judges. That message is in my second book, and I am not re-preaching it. This message is totally and completely different from that. But it is amazing to me that, as I read through the Bible so many times, I find a slave mentality, and always, without exception, that slave mentality is condemned.

The children of Israel had been slaves, enslaved by the Egyptians for hundreds of years. Consequently, their thinking had been conditioned, and they basically thought as slaves think. It is not unique, then, to find the children of Israel, when they first came out of Egypt, thinking as slaves think. What is unique to me is simply this: the average American today thinks exactly the way the Israelites did when they first came out of Egypt.

Biblical Foundation: Freedom in Christ vs. Bondage to Sin

They were in bondage and they knew it. We're in bondage and we don't even realize it. We are equally enslaved as Israel was of old, and it is evidenced by a slave mentality. Someone may object, "But wait a minute, I don't have a slave mentality." May I remind you of Romans chapter 12 and verse 2: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

The word "conformed" literally means to be pressed into a mold. In this context, it refers especially to the mold of thinking as the

world thinks. God says, "Be not conformed to this world, don't be pressed into the mold of worldly thinking, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Anyone who is pressed into a mold and thinks as the world thinks, as a slave thinks, is enslaved. Romans chapter 6 teaches that those who are unsaved are already slaves to sin. That is why Romans chapter 6 talks about the domination or dominion of sin, and how we who are in Christ Jesus have been freed from the dominion of sin and are now under dominion to the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a slavery that exists by virtue of the fact that people are unsaved and by virtue of the fact that people think the way the world thinks.

The Bible teaches in 2 Corinthians 3 and verse 17, "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Where the Spirit is not, there is no liberty. If the Holy Spirit produces liberty and freedom, where He is not, there can only exist bondage and slavery. That is why Romans 8 and verse 9 says, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." If you do not have the Spirit of Christ, you do not belong to Christ. If you do not belong to Christ, then you're still under the dominion of sin, lost, and unsaved. That's why John 8 and verse 36 says, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

It is only after we are regenerated, only after we are converted, that we understand what real freedom really is. That is why Galatians 5:1 says, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Christ has freed us. But not only is there a bondage to sin by nature, and a bondage revealed by worldly conformity and worldly thinking; there is also a bondage that attends a misconception of reality. We sometimes perceive and think that we know what freedom is, and that we are free, when we are hopelessly bound by the laws and traditions of men.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe said, “None are more helplessly enslaved than those who falsely believe that they're free.” You are hopelessly enslaved when you falsely believe that you are free. Simply saying that we are free does not make us free. Simply believing that we are free does not make us free. It would be an interesting poll to discover the definition most Americans today give

to freedom. How many have heard people say, “Well, we're the most free country in the world”? Yet we say we are free while having to be licensed, regulated, controlled, spied upon, and manipulated by our own government.

I never will forget how horrified I was, nearly forty years ago, when I was in Fairfax County, Virginia. That county had been a seat of religious and political liberty and freedom in the 1700s. Yet I discovered that you could not cut down a tree on your own property without a permit from the local government. I could not believe it, and yet it was true even then.

The evidence that we are actually slaves comes forward in our slave mentality. We do not know how to think as free men or as free individuals. Practically everywhere we look, we can find expressions of a slave mentality. So let us ask: How does a slave mentality express itself? I am going to look in Exodus chapter 14 and show you four evidences of a slave mentality. First, look at verse 10: “And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes.”

Cowardice

First Expression: Cowardice

"And, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid. And the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord." First, the slave mentality expresses itself in cowardice. Notice that these individuals were sore afraid. Why were they afraid? Some of the Israelites may have been unarmed, but in all probability, the Israelites outnumbered the Egyptians marching after them. Those Egyptians may have been disciplined military fighting men, and Israel may have been inferior militarily. However, Israel was organized as a militia and marched out of Egypt as a militia.

Exodus 13:18 says, "But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt." The word "harnessed" is very interesting. It is translated as "armed" twice in our Bibles and as "armed men" once. It refers to the fact that Israel went up out of Egypt in battle array in ranks of five.

They were marching out as a militia. They were not defenseless or helpless. The Lord had already revealed to Moses exactly what He was going to do to Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and how God would get Him honor from the destruction of Pharaoh and his army. Israel had also just been miraculously delivered out of Egypt by the hand of the Lord.

The blood had been applied, and they were being led by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. You would think that, under such circumstances, the children of Israel, having been miraculously delivered and led, would have been saying, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" But they were not saying that. Instead of lifting up their faith, "they lifted up their eyes."

What they saw terrified them. What they looked at was disconcerting because they were not operating in the realm of faith; they were operating in the realm of sight. The Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:7, "For we walk by faith, not by sight." Sight looks at situations, circumstances, and fleshly observations. Faith looks to the Lord, His Word, His power, and His promises. Since the Israelites were not looking by faith, here is what they saw.

The sea was before them, the Egyptians behind them, and they were walled in by the wilderness. They basically saw no escape. To the natural eye, looking by sight, escape was impossible; captivity or death seemed absolutely certain. But look back at verse 10 again. Here is another interesting thought: “And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes. And, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid.” Now look: “And the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord.” David said in Psalm 3:4, “I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill.”

There is a vast difference between a cry of faith and a cry of desperation and fear. The children of Israel did not cry out in faith. They cried out in fear. Their cry arose only from their troubles, their observations, and what they saw. It was only a result of their despair and their upcoming defeat. They cried to the Lord, but had absolutely no confidence in Him.

They did not trust Him. They did not believe in His help, notwithstanding all the previous manifestations of His mercy and grace that had been given to them. How do we know that their cry was one of desperation and fear rather than faith? The answer is very easy. Read the next verse, verse 11: "And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?" They did not believe God, nor did they believe Moses. They had no faith.

They were afraid to fight, but they were certainly not afraid to criticize God or Moses. Isn't that interesting? When men fear men, they are not afraid to criticize God or His preacher. John Calvin observed: "Although there is an appearance of two contrary facts being here reported, number one, that they cried out to the Lord, and number two, that they mutinied against His minister, yet we may easily gather that this cry neither arose from faith nor from serious and well-ordered affections, but it was extorted by a confused impulse, since the natural sense impels all men in their adversity promiscuously to offer their prayers to God, although they neither embrace His mercy nor rely upon His power." Calvin means that it is natural for men in a very serious situation to cry out to God for help when they neither trust Him nor believe Him. They were cowards. They were afraid to fight.

They were afraid to believe the Lord. They were afraid to trust Him. They were afraid to believe His promises. It must be an awful, awful thing to all of a sudden realize how impotent, how helpless, how weak you really are, while you see your enemy advancing in power and strength and have nowhere to turn and no one in whom to trust. Sight, situations, circumstances, and looking without faith will make cowards out of everyone. If you and I are ever to conquer, we must learn to be children of faith.

Expressions of a Slave Mentality

The Bible says in Daniel 11:32, "The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits." The little word know refers to an intimate personal relationship and knowledge acquired through trust and teaching. Ancient Israel was just like modern-day

Christendom. They had the teaching, but they did not listen, nor did they believe.

Consequently, when they got in a tight, their cowardice was revealed. Where were their courage, faith, and fortitude? Why did these Israelites not lift up their eyes and say, “It’s better to die on the field of honor than to die in Egypt as slaves”? Why did they not say, “It’s better to live as God’s free men here in the wilderness than to serve Pharaoh and the brick kilns and the sweatshops in Egypt”? But they did not say that.

They said none of those things. You know why? Because they were cowards. They were afraid to fight for their lives, their families, and their freedoms. Slaves are fearful beings, and those who possess a slave mentality are always in fear. Their fear is furthered by man. The Bible tells us in Proverbs 29:25, “The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.” The more you fear man, the more you are ensnared by the fear of man. Thankfully, 2 Timothy 1:7 tells us, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” If you and I are afraid, mark it down: it did not come from God. It had to come from sin, self, or some other source. God does not give us a spirit of fear. The very fact that men are afraid shows that they are ensnared in bondage and slavery.

Second Expression: Compromise

To the extent that we are cowards, fearful, afraid, and unbelieving, we will always express a slave mentality. Secondly, a slave mentality also expresses itself in compromise. Notice verse 11: “And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?” Compromise is on the lips of every politician, usually every bureaucrat and businessman, and unhappily also on the lips of the average professing Christian. We have forgotten principles, truth, and that some things are worth fighting for and worth dying for.

Someone sent me a simple statement yesterday: "Compromise is defeat on installments."

Look at this situation. Here is this whole body of people, probably two million at a minimum, taunting Moses with a very bitter taunt. When they lift up their eyes and see the Egyptians behind them, the sea in front of them, and the wilderness on each side, they say, "What's wrong with you? Was it because there was not enough room in Egypt to bury all of us that you had to bring us out here in this wilderness? We could have stayed in Egypt. We would have been more comfortable there. We would not be experiencing all this fear and bitterness if it had not been for you. You brought us out here so that we could be buried in this stupid wilderness."

Note what they are doing. They are taunting Moses as though God and Moses were both accountable to them. They were boastful, petulant, and reproaching Moses and God for not listening to them. They were smarter than God and smarter than Moses. Had God and Moses listened to them, surely things could have been worked out; surely there could have been a compromise acceptable to them and to Pharaoh as well.

Remember, Pharaoh offered them three compromises. As Moses kept saying, "Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go," Pharaoh first refused. Then God began sending the plagues. Finally, the first compromise appears in Exodus 8:25: "All right, all right, I've sinned. I'll let you sacrifice in the land. Just don't go far away. Don't go out of the land." Moses said, "No, sir. No, no. God's told us where to go."

Moreover, they would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians. The second compromise came in Exodus chapter 10, verse 11, when Pharaoh said, "All right, I have sinned again. I've had enough of these plagues. I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I want to let all you men go out of the country and sacrifice, but your wives and your children have to stay here." Moses said, "No, that's not going to happen. When we leave, we're taking our wives and our children with us."

Finally, here was the third compromise, in Exodus chapter 10 and verse 24: Pharaoh said, "All right, all of you may go, but your cattle has to stay." The children of Israel, through Moses, said, "No. When we leave, everything is going with us."

Note that Moses had rejected all three compromises. Now the children of Israel were taunting Moses: "You just brought us out here to die. You brought us out here because there's not enough graves in Egypt. We could be back in Egypt enjoying ourselves if you had not been so stubborn and hard-headed and so principled. But no, you brought us out here to die. Besides, what kind of God would bring you out in the wilderness to suffer and to perish?" Either God did not love them enough, or God did not have enough wisdom or foresight to know what was going to happen.

They believed that they should take care of themselves and work things out. Their remedy was, "We'll return to Egypt." In Numbers chapter 14, verse 3, they asked, "And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?" And they said one to another, "Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." They thought, "We don't have to die out here. We can go back home."

The children of Israel falsely believed that they were better provided for in Egypt than in the wilderness. Yet God had given them manna. The word manna simply means, "What is it?" They did not know what it was, but God gave them the perfect food that would nourish and sustain them.

In Numbers 11:5, look what these wicked, rebellious, faithless people say to Moses: “We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.” What? “Oh, I remember those leeks and those garlics. Eating raw onions out of the field. We’d rather have the leeks and the garlics, and everything that stink, rather than the manna that God has provided for us. What kind of God would bring us out here and feed us this stupid bread?” That was their attitude.

The truth of the matter is this: If we compromise, we can have a lot of things. Do you realize that if I wanted to cut corners and compromise, I could have a huge church building with hundreds of people? I would never have to study another day the rest of my life. I have more messages than you can shake a stick at; all I would have

to do is take one message, cut it down into a third or a quarter, and water it down. One message would last me a month in the average church. Then I could say, “Look at what I’ve got. I’ve got a church and 500 folks in it.” To get people, all you have to do is trim the message and give a little entertainment. Make people feel good about themselves. What have you got when you do that? I’d rather preach to ten people who genuinely want the Word of God than to 10,000 who could care less about it.

You can get a lot of things by compromising. In Matthew chapter 4, our Lord is being tempted by the devil and offered a compromise: “Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” What did Satan offer Him? All the kingdoms of the world.

What does Jesus Christ now have? He now has all the kingdoms of the world. Satan was saying, “You just worship me. I’ll give you this, and you don’t have to die. You don’t have to suffer. You don’t have to go through the cross. Just worship me, and I’ll give you everything.”

We may compromise and get everything the world has to offer, but we would never have everything that God has to offer. We would never have His blessings or His power upon us, and we would never be in a position where we could truly and genuinely honor and glorify Him. The truth of the matter is this: compromise is only for those individuals who do not want the perfect and blessed will of God in their lives. Compromise is for people who want things instead of truth, righteousness, liberty, and freedom.

Do you know why the children of Israel were griping, grumbling, complaining, and taunting Moses? Because they did not understand what God had done for them. Psalm 106:7 says, “Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea.” They did not understand anything about God or God’s salvation. They did not remember His mercies, everything that He

had done. So they taunted and provoked Him and wanted to compromise. The reason we have a slave mentality today is that we do not understand the wonders and the work of God, and we do not really consider His mercies and His compassions.

I'm sixty-six years old. I'm not as old as some of you, but I'm going to tell you something: the only reason I'm alive today is because of God's mercies and God's compassions. I have already lived longer than a whole lot of other people have lived. We need to stop and consider, "Lord, if it's not for You, we will have nothing, we are nothing, and we can do nothing." Everything we have and everything we are is only because of God's mercies. The slave mentality is ready to compromise all of that.

Complacency

Third Expression: Complacency

A slave mentality expresses itself in cowardice, in compromise, and, thirdly, in complacency. Look at verse 12: "Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." Note what they said: "Let us alone."

Slaves are satisfied in their serfdom and slavery. They have no desire to be upset, disturbed, or have the boat rocked. They are satisfied with the status quo. Listen to what they said: "Let us alone." Slaves do not want to be bothered with the facts. They do not want to be bothered with the truth. They are not concerned about those things. The children of Israel, by the way, when they were in Egypt, were even upset that Moses was attempting to deliver them.

Look back in Exodus chapter 5 and verse 21. Pharaoh has made things a little rougher for them because of Moses. He has told them they will make the same number of bricks without straw and must gather the straw themselves. Verse 20 says, "And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh." Then the elders 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."

What, Moses? What are you doing? You said you were going to come down here and deliver us. All you have done is make things worse. That is all. You have not delivered us. Quit talking about that. In Exodus chapter 6 and verse 9, we read, “And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.”

Now wait a minute. They said to Moses, “Did we not say unto you, Let us alone?” “Let us alone” is the cry of all the slaves. We do not wish to be free. Freedom involves responsibilities. It involves thinking, planning, work, taking care of oneself and one’s family. Freedom involves preparation, education, and a willingness to fight. They said, “Let us alone.”

Now notice how these two thoughts come together in Exodus 14:12: “Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt?” Here is what they had told Moses: “Let us alone”—that we may serve the Egyptians. What? In Exodus chapter 6 and verse 9, they are groaning, screaming, and crying because of the cruel bondage and oppression. The next moment they are saying, “We’ve got it good here, Moses. Just let us alone. Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians.”

In other words, we are content. We are willing to stay here and be slaves to these Egyptians. They did not want to be the slave of the One True and the Living God. They did not want to serve Him; they wanted to serve the Egyptians.

According to the New Testament, we are to be God’s free men. He tells us in 1 Corinthians 6, “No, you're not. You're not your own. You're bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are His.” And in 1 Corinthians 7, verse 23, he says again, “You are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.” How do we become the slaves of men? The Bible answers that for us in Deuteronomy 28, beginning with verse 43. This is part of the curses of God’s law when we disobey that law: “The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail. Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed.” Why? “Because thou hearkenedst not

unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever. Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee."

What did God say? You can either serve Me or you can serve your enemy. I do not know about you, but I think I would rather be the slave of God than the slave of man. This is absolutely astounding to me. These words came from the mouths of God's covenant people in the Old Testament: "Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians." Servitude, slavery, and suffering were preferred over living and dying as free men. This is exactly what is happening in America today. Slavery and serfdom and suffering are preferred over living and dying as free men.

It is time to turn off the TV set. It is time to get up from the couch, forget the controlled media, newspapers, and magazines, and begin to search and study for yourself. It is time to get past football, baseball, and every other sport of its kind. If we do not get a little backbone and intestinal fortitude, and just plain old everyday country guts, we will continue to serve the Egyptians. They will use us, pillage us, steal from us, break us, and destroy us.

It is better to live and die as free men than to live as slaves. I do not agree with "better red than dead." It is better dead and free than suffering and living under Marxist dictatorship. There is a poem from "Revels," whose author is anonymous: "For although life is dear, Yet free men born and free men bred, we'd rather live as free men dead than to live in slavish fear." It continues, "Then call us rebels if you will. We glory in the name for bending under unjust laws and swearing faith to an unjust cause. We count it greater shame."

Fourth Expression: Convenience

It is time to shake off the slave mentality of complacency. A slave mentality expresses itself not only in cowardice and complacency, but also in convenience. In Exodus 14:10–12, when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, saw the Egyptians

marching after them, and were sore afraid. They cried out unto the Lord and said unto Moses, “Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.”

The whole passage reeks of a lust and desire for convenience. Their cries, complaints, and anguish were all brought about by their inconvenience. It was not convenient to leave Egypt, travel in the wilderness, do without the food they were used to eating, or live by faith. It was not convenient to be temporarily deprived and suffer, to be boxed in and faced with overwhelming odds, or to trust in the Lord and Moses. The whole cry of Israel was based upon their inconvenience. Surely, they thought, God could have discovered a convenient way to deliver them out of Egypt. Why did they have to suffer and fight? Why did they have to go through all of this? Surely God knew how upsetting and inconvenient the whole episode was. What was wrong with God? How could such a loving God be so inconsiderate?

Whining, complaining, bellyaching, and groaning had to be stopped. Moses said unto the people, “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.”

Let me paraphrase this. Moses said to the children of Israel, “You shall contribute nothing to the victory by your words or by your deeds. So, if you will excuse me for saying this, just shut your whining, complaining, griping mouth and watch God do what you’re afraid to do.” That is basically what he said. You are not going to have to lift your little finger or get your clothes dirty. God will take care of it.

The Scripture does tell us there is a time to keep silence and a time to speak (Ecclesiastes 3:7). David understood that, for in Psalm 38:13 he said, “But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.” He understood there was a time to

keep his mouth shut. These people had bellyached and complained so much that Moses finally said, “Just hold your peace, shut your mouth.”

The God whom you do not trust in and whom you do not believe will deliver you again. Maybe you will listen and learn. One of the problems we face in this country is the monster of convenience. We do not want to be inconvenienced or hear an inconvenient truth—not Al Gore's inconvenient truth, but God's inconvenient truth.

Application: Rejecting the Slave Mentality Today

If the average American had been around in 1776, we would still be colonies of England. There would have been no fighting or resistance because it was inconvenient. Instead, our founding fathers said, "We pledge our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor." They were willing to be inconvenienced for their children, grandchildren, and future generations. I had rather be inconvenienced and live with God in the wilderness than with Pharaoh in Egypt, or Obama in Washington.

It is time to cast off a slave mentality and learn to think biblically, scripturally, and as free men. You say, "But we have all these programs that our government is giving us." You have to understand that slave masters would rather keep their slaves sufficiently well fed, clothed, housed, and occasionally entertained in order to keep their minds away from slavery and bondage. Our slave masters also want us to think of the great beyond, the paradise that awaits us in the sky.

What about the injustice, corruption, fraud, deceit, and dishonesty? Do not worry about that; just think about what the future will be. If all you are concerned about is the future, you will never be concerned about the present tyranny, despotism, totalitarianism, corruption, fraud, and wickedness that exists today.

We have to fight a slave mentality. Why did He say, "Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind"? It is a fight to think biblically and scripturally. No one likes confrontation or to be constantly arguing, but we cannot give in, give up, or give out. We cannot think as slaves; we must think as free

men, God's free men. And what did our Lord say in Psalm 94 and verse 16?

"Who will rise up for me against the evildoers, or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?" "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil."

You cannot love God without at the same time hating everything that is contrary to Him. If you love the Lord, you will hate everything that is contrary to Him. You will hate it, expose it, fight against it, and by God's grace, overcome it and destroy it.

How does the slave mentality express itself? It always expresses itself in cowardice, compromise, complacency, and convenience. We want truth above all, and freedom first in Christ, and then in life above all.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We ask You to help us not to have a slave mentality, not to think in terms of cowardice, compromise, complacency, and convenience. But help us to think, Lord, in terms of what is right, what is our responsibility, and what is our duty before Thee and before man. Help us, Lord, to bow to Thy truth and bow to Thy Word, and make us holy and godly. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask. Amen.

CHAPTER 18

How Easily We Forget

May 11, 2018

Introduction: The Commonness of Forgetting

"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thine heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." How easily we forget. Some of the most frequently spoken words are, "I forgot." We may say, "It slipped my mind," or, "I guess I was just not thinking," but it all boils down to the fact that we forgot. As we age, we tend to forget more frequently.

Most of you have not yet come to the realization that I have. I will think of something I need to do, get up, and go into another room while thinking about two or three other things. Then I ask myself, "Why did I come in this room? What was I going to do?" I pause a few minutes, and finally it comes back. The truth is, I just forgot.

When Alice's mother, Granny Doris, was alive, she became very forgetful. Alice and I bought her some ginkgo biloba, which is supposedly supposed to help the memory. One Sunday morning, as we were driving to church, she said from the backseat, "I think that

stuff is really helping me." I asked, "Helping what, Granny?" She answered, "Helping my memory." I asked, "Well, what stuff is that?" She said, "I forgot, I don't know." We laughed, but that is normal and natural in one sense.

One day, we must understand that we forget not only little things but important things as well. One of my main concerns during my fifty-three years of preaching was that I would forget a meeting or a preaching appointment. Thankfully, I never have, but it was always in the back of my mind. I would hate for something like that to slip up on me.

We forget all the time. One day, Alice and I were at the house when our girls began calling us. Each one said, "Happy anniversary." I looked at Alice, and she looked at me. We had both forgotten our anniversary. It would have been really bad had it only been me, but thankfully she forgot it as well. We laughed and talked about how busy we had been and how we had not even thought about it.

But look back at Deuteronomy chapter 4. Look at verse 9 again, and then verse 10 in connection with it: Deuteronomy chapter 4, verse 9.

The Progression of Forgetting: Works, Covenant, God

God says, "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, now watch, lest thou forget the things that thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thine heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach them their children." They were not to forget the things that their eyes had seen. This included not only the miracles of God, but the judgment of God—the works of God. They were to pay close attention so that they would not forget those things, and were to pass them on not only to their sons, but to their sons' sons as well.

When God warns us not to forget His works, there is another step when we do forget them. Look in Deuteronomy chapter 4, verse 23:

"Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee."

Notice that in Deuteronomy 4, verse 9, He warned us not to forget His works. Now, in Deuteronomy 4, verse 23, He warns us not to forget His covenant. When we think about a covenant, we normally think of the Old Covenant. But the word testament is identical to the word covenant. Therefore, when we talk about the Old Testament or the New Testament, we are actually talking about the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

What happened in the Old Testament was that Israel forgot the covenant of God. What is happening in the New Testament is that we as Christians are forgetting the New Covenant that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. The interesting thing is that he talks about idolatry. When you forget the covenant, you are going to make some kind of false god for yourself. But you do not have to bow down before a graven idol to worship a false god, because Colossians 3 and verse 5 tells us that covetousness is idolatry. Whenever we do anything wicked and wrong and place ourselves and our desires above God, that is idolatry.

How often do you really think of the Word of God? How often do you think of the promises of God, the blessings of God, the curses of God, and the warnings of God? The truth of the matter is that it is so easy for you and me to forget. We easily, readily, and quickly forget. We forget not only our profession of faith; we even forget our baptismal oath. You say, "Did I take an oath at my baptism?"

You probably did, though you may not have realized it. In the New Testament, the original baptismal formula was three words in Greek. They would simply say, "Jesus is Lord." That was the original confession: "Jesus is Lord." Most people do not realize the importance of those words, but you have to remember that, back in those days, Caesar was claiming to be Lord.

Christians in the Roman Empire were not put to death for being Christians, because in the Roman Empire you could believe whatever you wanted to believe. If you wanted to worship Zeus, have

at it. If you wanted to worship Harpo Marx, you could go for that too, if he had been alive back then. But whatever you believed and whoever you worshiped, once a year you had to swear by the genius of Caesar and say, "Caesar is Lord." That is, Caesar gives me the right to believe as I believe. The early Christians refused to say that Caesar is Lord because they confessed that Jesus Christ is Lord. Consequently, it carried the death penalty, because Christians were viewed as traitors and treasonous individuals to the emperor cult. When someone said in the New Testament, "Jesus is Lord," they were basically signing their own death warrant, because they were willing to deny that Caesar was Lord and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Usually, when you talk about a baptismal service, most people just kind of skip it, as though it were just a little, simple ordinance. No, it is not just a little, simple ordinance. You remember that Paul told Timothy, "Remember the good confession that you've made before so many witnesses." He was talking about the baptismal confession at Timothy's baptism, because Timothy confessed that Jesus Christ is Lord.

When we forget the works of God, the next step is that we forget the covenant of God. Once you forget the works of God and the covenant of God, there is another step: you forget God. Like Demas, whom Paul said "has forsaken me, having loved this present evil world," individuals soon prefer their own flesh and lusts over the grace, mercy, and goodness of God.

Look in Deuteronomy 6 and verse 12: "Then beware, lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." He had already warned them about forgetting the works and covenant of God. In Deuteronomy 8 and verse 11, he says, "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day."

These passages are not merely reminding you not to forget the works and covenants of God; they are saying, do not forget God himself. In verse 14: "Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." And verse 19: "And it shall be, if thou do

at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them. I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish."

There is a progression here. You simply forget all the works of God—his judgments, miracles, grace, and mercy. Then you begin to forget the covenant of God. You cease obeying his commandments and following his law. The ultimate end is that you forget God. Anytime you forget God, you actually replace him.

That is what He is warning about. You may say, “I am not going to replace the one true and living God. I know that Jesus Christ is Lord. I know there is only one God, revealed in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I understand that.” But may I remind you again that when we give in to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, we are idolaters? Did you know that the Apostle Paul spoke of individuals whose god was their belly? He said in Philippians chapter 3, verse 19, “Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” In other words, God is absent from their thought. That is one of the charges made against the wicked in Psalm 10: God is not in all their thoughts. The progression is that you forget the works of God, forget the covenant of God, and end up forgetting God Himself, because you are replacing Him with your fancies, whims, and desires.

Israel's Witness of God's Mighty Works

Do you remember how Israel was delivered out of Egypt? Do you recall reading in your Bibles all the mighty works and displays of God’s power? Do you remember everything God did to the Egyptians? There are so many verses that speak of this, but consider four in which God calls His people specifically to remember His mighty works, His outstretched arm, and His power.

In Deuteronomy, chapter 4, verse 34, God asks, “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”

He speaks of the temptations, the signs, the wonders, war, the mighty hand of God, the stretched out arm, and the great terrors: "according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes." You saw it. You remember those things.

In Deuteronomy chapter 7 and verse 19, again he says it like this: "The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the Lord thy God brought thee out: so shall the Lord thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid." But note again, he is talking about the great temptations, the signs, the wonders, the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm—"which thine eyes saw." You were there. You were witnesses.

In Deuteronomy chapter 26 and verse 8, again God says this: "And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders." God brought them out.

There are many other verses that talk about this, but note Deuteronomy chapter 34 and verse 12. He says, "And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel."

Stop and put all these passages together, because each one talks about God's mighty power, His outstretched arm, His mighty hand, His wonders, His temptations, His signs, His terror, and the war that He waged against the Egyptians. He keeps saying over and over that your eyes have seen these things. Now, here is my question: How long do you think it would take for the Israelites to forget everything they saw? How could they forget what they saw?

Let me try to make this a little more personal. Forget about the Israelites for a moment. Suppose that you are there. Everyone in this congregation is there. You are an Israelite; you are there. You see the ten plagues, the mighty wonders, and everything God has done. So here is my question: How long would it take you to forget? Let me make it even more personal.

Hold Deuteronomy 4, but go back in your Bibles to the book of Exodus. Look, please, at chapter 11. We will be looking at a number of passages in Exodus. Turn to Exodus 11, and begin reading with

verse 7. Look what God says: “But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.”

Remember, you have witnessed the plagues and the mighty wonders of God. Verse 7 says this. Not only have you seen what God has done and witnessed His mighty power; you have also experienced deliverance. You were exempted. None of this happened unto you. When the plagues struck, they did not fall upon the Israelites. The Israelites were not affected by any of those plagues.

Look in Exodus 9, where the grievous murrain came upon the cattle. I will show you a few other verses momentarily, but look in Exodus 9 and begin reading with verse 4. “And the Lord shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all that is the children's of Israel. And the Lord appointed a set time, saying, Tomorrow the Lord shall do this thing in the land. And the Lord did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.”

Isn’t that amazing? You are not only seeing these plagues; you are also seeing that you are exempted. They are not harming you or touching you at all. Even when the plague of darkness hit, the Israelites were protected. Look at Exodus chapter 10, beginning in verse 22: “And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days.”

“But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.” The old joke I always heard as a child was, “Where was Moses when the lights went out?” The answer was, “In the dark.” According to the Bible, that is not true, because the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. All the Israelites had light. Remember, this was a thick darkness, and for three days they did not even move.

Years ago, Alice and I took two of our grandchildren out west. We stopped in Utah and went to Timpanogos Cave. We had to walk a

mile up a mountain to get into that huge cave. A ranger led us around until we reached a large chamber. There were lights everywhere. The ranger said, “Now, I’m going to show you something, but you must stand absolutely still. You cannot move. In fact, hold hands.” Then the ranger turned off the lights.

You could have held your hand here, but you could not see anything. It was absolutely, totally, completely dark. That is what happened here. But God said the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. You are in Egypt, experiencing these great deliverances. Everything that happens to the Egyptians does not happen to you. Let me remind you of the ten plagues—what you personally have seen and what you personally have been exempted from.

In fact, in the very first plague, the waters were turned into blood, all the fish died, and the river stank, as recorded in Exodus chapter 7. You were there, but you had fresh water, and your fish certainly did not die if you had a separate pool.

Secondly, you saw the frogs come out of the river and envelop the land in Exodus chapter 8. The Bible tells us that the frogs were so thick they were in their hands, in their houses, and in their beds. Frogs everywhere. In the third plague, you saw the dust of the land turned into lice. There was lice upon man and lice upon beast, but you were spared. The fourth plague brought swarms of flies that corrupted and destroyed everything in the land, but you were spared this corruption.

Now, I do not know if this is true, but I read it, and to be absolutely honest, I despise flies. I hate flies. I read that every time a fly lit, he spat. Whether that is true or not, I do not know. But flies are known for their corruption. In Exodus chapter 8, verses 22 and 23, God said to the Egyptians before sending this great plague of flies: "And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth. And I will put a division between my people and thy people. Tomorrow shall this sign be."

The Lord did so; and there came a grievous swarm of flies into Pharaoh's house, into his servants' houses, and into all the land of

Egypt. The land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies, but none were in the land of Goshen. You see how all these flies corrupt everything in Egypt, but there are none in your house. You see the grievous murrain upon the cattle. All the Egyptians' cattle died, but your cattle were spared, as recorded in Exodus 9. You saw the boils breaking out upon man and beast, and yet you and your animals were spared in Exodus 9.

You saw and understood that when God sent that great thunderstorm of hail and fire, destruction followed. God said that it was so great that there had been nothing like it in the land of Egypt since it became a nation: “So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation” (Exodus 9:24). You were there and saw that. Then came the eighth plague, the plague of locusts. Myriads of locusts darkened the sky and consumed and destroyed everything in the land of Egypt.

But your garden was spared, and your fruit trees were spared. Then came the ninth plague, darkness, but you had light in your dwelling. You were spared. In the tenth plague, the firstborn of man and beast died. With your own ears, you heard the anguished cries of men and women, even of animals. You heard the heart-wrenching, heartbreaking screams and cries when those people found that their firstborn was dead, and yet your firstborn lived. You were there. You saw that. You experienced that.

Moreover, there was one other thing that you really understood from all these plagues. God said, “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” (Exodus 12:12). What was God doing? He was destroying all the false gods of Egypt. Even Pharaoh claimed to be a god, but Pharaoh could not save his own child.

All of those judgments were not simply against the Egyptians; they were against the gods of Egypt. Now you have seen all these plagues, and how Pharaoh and none of those false gods could do anything. You are assured in your heart of one thing: there is only one true and living God. He is the God who has revealed Himself,

and He is the God whom you are to worship. You know that. You know that you were there.

The Red Sea Deliverance and Passover Memorial

You saw these things with your own eyes. You were there when you marched out of Egypt on Abib 15, when Pharaoh chased you and bottled you up at the Red Sea. Moses lifted that rod, the sea parted left and right, and you walked across on dry ground. Pharaoh and all his army, whom you feared, followed you into the sea. Just as the last Israelite got out, Moses raised that rod, and the sea came in and drowned all Pharaoh's army.

This is something that you saw and experienced. Exodus 14:27 says, "And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea."

"And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore."

You not only saw the miracles, the power of God, and the hand of God, the outstretched arm of God; you saw how He judged His enemies and their false gods. You were spared, and you saw His final act against Pharaoh and his army. You saw them all dead upon the seashore.

So here is my question: How long is it going to take you to forget this? How long will this cease being an impact upon your mind? How long will this cease affecting your life? Nothing. You have seen all of this; you have experienced all of this.

Now, in Exodus chapter 12, you have the Passover. I want to call your attention to a certain truth here. Look at Exodus chapter 12, verse 1.

SCRIPTURE READING - Exodus 12:1-7 (KJV)

> And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month, which was Abib, which you will see momentarily, this month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

This is the Passover. They took that lamb, and they had to keep it up until the fourteenth day of the month. On the fourteenth day, they killed it. They put the blood on the lintel and the doorpost, and on the fifteenth, they marched out. So this is the fifteenth of Abib.

Exodus 12:11 says, “And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover.” God says, once you put the blood on the doorpost, once you've eaten this lamb, you're leaving here, you're getting out. They killed it on the fourteenth, and they left the morning of the fifteenth, because they had to eat it with their shoes on their feet, their loins girded, and the staff in their hands.

In Exodus chapter 13, beginning in verse 3, Moses said unto the people, “Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. This day came ye out in the month Abib. And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey,

that thou shalt keep this service in this month. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters."

"And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt. Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year." So this is the Passover ordinance.

They kill the lamb on the fourteenth of Abib. They walked out on the fifteenth of Abib. Once they got into the land, God said they were to keep this feast for seven days, and it was to commemorate their deliverance from the land of Egypt.

You have seen all of God's judgments and miracles, all of God's power with your own eyes. You have seen what He has done to His enemies and His false gods. You have seen the Egyptians dead on the seashore. You have seen that you marched out of Egypt just exactly the way God said.

How long will it take you to forget these things? Most people say, "Man, I'll never forget these things." Really? I want you to see how easily we forget God's grace, God's mercy, God's power, God's provision, and God's providence.

How Quickly Israel Forgot

In Exodus 15:22, we read: "So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he

made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them."

Three days. God had just showed them His mighty power, and in three days they were whining, complaining, and murmuring against God.

In Exodus 16:1, we read: "And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt." They left on the fifteenth day of the first month. This was thirty days. "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger." Thirty days, and they were saying, "Would to God we had died in Egypt." We remember the flesh pots.

We remember the onions and the garlics and the leeks. We remember the fish. We want that. Within thirty days they were ready to go back to Egypt. They had rather be slaves in Egypt than the Lord's free men in the desert. Three days whining; thirty days ready to go back. How long did it take them to forget? That was not the end of it.

In Exodus 17, beginning with verse 1, we read: "And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink."

God had already miraculously given them water. Yet, "Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the Lord? And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?"

According to the context, chapter 17 happens one week after chapter 16. So within three days they were complaining; within thirty days they wanted to go back because of the onions, leeks, and garlic in Egypt; and in thirty-seven days they were complaining again, saying, "You brought us out here to kill us." How easily we forget. How small an impact the work, miracles, and mercies of God make upon our minds.

Do you remember how God came down upon Mount Sinai with thunderings, lightnings, and earthquakes? In Exodus 19:16, the Bible says, "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled." God had come down upon that mountain with thunderings and lightnings, a thick cloud, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud.

SCRIPTURE READING - Exodus 32:1-6 (KJV)

You remember, it was Moses who went up into the mount to get the law of God. How long was he up there the first time? He was supposed to have been forty days. These people had not been out of Egypt long. Look at what happened when Moses was up in that mountain the first time, getting the law from the hand of God.

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount,” the forty days was not even up yet. They were just impatient. “The people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar

> before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the Lord."
>
> "And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." And the word "play" there is a very soft word; it literally means they rose up to commit fornication, adultery. Moses is up in the mount receiving the law of God, and before he can finish forty days, they are making a molten calf, worshipping it, and committing fornication as well as idolatry. Wow.

In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. In the third month, before ninety days were up, they built themselves a golden calf.

They became idolaters, warmongers, adulterers, and fornicators. You can read about it in 1 Corinthians chapter 10. If you add another thirty days to Exodus chapter 19 and verse 1, because Moses had not even completed the forty days in the mount, it means anywhere from three to four months, probably three and a half. They were already committing idolatry, worshiping the dead.

How long did it take you to forget? We can read this Bible and see all of this, and we are absolutely astounded. We say, "We cannot imagine how this could ever possibly happen." Note what God did for these people, what they saw, and what they experienced. How

could they turn their backs upon him so quickly, so easily, so readily?

Application: Our Own Forgetfulness

The answer is, they forgot. They forgot his works. They forgot his covenant. And they forgot him. How easily, how quickly we forget our profession, our promises, and our obedience. How easily and how quickly we turn aside from the word of God, from the worship of God, and from the promises and blessings of God. We turn aside to do that which ever we want to do. We can look at these people and say, “Well, they forgot.”

We forget God's provision. It is God who has fed us, given us the ability to make money, to have things and food, and even to enjoy them. It is God who has given us life. The Bible says, “He holdeth our soul in life.” David said, “My times are in his hands.” It is God who gives us help, sustains us, protects us, and preserves us.

There are two verses I quote every day, Lamentations 3:22–23: “It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.” The only reason you and I are alive today is because of God's compassions, God's faithfulness, and God's tender mercies. They are new every morning.

How often we simply assume that God owes us life, health, work and a job, or food. God does not owe us anything. Yet the Bible tells us in Romans chapter 2 that it is the goodness of God that leadeth us to repentance. And we forget the goodness of God.

I could stand here tonight and tell you miracle after miracle, how God preserved me. Why? I don't know, other than His grace and mercy; that is for sure. But we become an ungrateful, unthankful people who take our Lord for granted, along with everything He does for us and everything He gives us.

This is what our Lord is talking about to the church of Ephesus. He is not talking to the heathen; He is talking to the church. Revelation 2:1 says, "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."

The Church at Ephesus: Leaving First Love

"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." They had all these good points. "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

What does that mean? You do not have the warmness, the heart, or the affection for the Lord that you used to have. You do not have the energy, the vitality, or the desire to love Him and serve Him. How long has it been since you actually said to the Lord, "I love you"? How long has it been since you said, "Thank you for first loving me. Thank you for sending the Lord Jesus Christ to be the propitiation for my sins and turning my heart to thee so that I could love thee"?

What about your service? What about your faithfulness? What about your love for the Word of God and the ministry? Revelation 2:4-5 says, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

Do you notice the very first thing our Lord calls us to do? Remember. There is a picture that hangs on our bedroom wall of Alice and me when we were young, and neither of us can remember whether it was taken before we were married or right after we were married.

It's been a long time. But since it is on the wall on my side of the bed, I roll over, look at it, and remember. I remember how she chased me and begged me to marry her. You remember too. You remember how it was between you and the Lord when God saved you.

You were so on fire, with such zeal and desire to honor Him and glorify Him. Now we live as if it does not matter anymore. But what does He say? Remember. Then He said, “Repent; or else I will remove thy candlestick out of his place.” God can remove an

individual, and God can remove a church, unless we remember from whence we are fallen and return to our first love.

Jeremiah's Haunting Question and Final Plea

I want you to turn in your Bibles to Jeremiah chapter 2. I hope and pray that this verse will break your heart. I pray that you will see it, that it will haunt you, and that you will think about it. Every time I read this verse, I get under conviction. Look at Jeremiah chapter 2 and verse 32.

Here is the question God asked: “Can a maid forget her ornaments?” None of you young ladies forgot to put on your jewelry tonight—your earrings, necklace, or ring. “Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire?” There has never been a bride who forgot to put on her wedding dress. Yet my people have forgotten me days without number.

How easily we forget. We forget God's words. We forget God's covenant. We forget God and live as if He did not exist. We totally ignore Him. Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent. Turn back to your first love and your first works, for God says, “I will remove you.” Do not forget the God of our salvation. Do not be like the Israelites in the old covenant. Remember that God is our all in all.

He may not need us, but we surely need him; may he have mercy upon us. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to thee. We thank you for your word, your truth. Lord, we confess we've forgotten thy works, everything that you've done for us. We assume that we're going to have life and health and food and prosperity and happiness and preservation. We fail to thank thee and to love thee. Lord, we've forgotten thy word, thy people, to pray, your works, your covenant. Lord, we've forgotten you, days without number. Have mercy upon us. Awaken us. Call us back to thyself. Turn us, O God, and we shall be turned. Quicken us, O Lord, and we shall call upon thy name. Give us your grace and your mercy. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 19

Impossible Situations

November 20, 2012

Introduction: Impossible Situations Defined

Psalm 76:5–8 reads: "The stout-hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep, and none of the men of might have found their hands. At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and the horse are cast into a dead sleep. Thou, even thou, art to be feared, and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry? Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven, the earth feared and was still."

Impossible situations are experienced by many people. Probably everyone listening could declare an impossible situation experienced in their lifetime. We need to understand that impossible situations are only considered impossible by our standards and by our power because of our limitations.

Biblical Examples of Impossible Situations

With the Lord, there is absolutely nothing that is impossible. He is the God of the impossible. He is the infinite, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God. He is the great I Am. The Word of

God declares in the book of Luke chapter 1 in verse 37, "For with God nothing shall be impossible." And then in Luke 18 and verse 27, he said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

I want to take just a little while this morning and let you follow me in Scripture and let me show you just two or three impossible situations, humanly speaking, before we get started with our text. So I want you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Exodus chapter 5. Exodus chapter 5. And let's begin reading there with verse 19. This is one of my favorite texts of Scripture. And of course I say that often because I have plenty of favorite texts of Scripture. But you'll understand why when you look at this one. Notice if you would please, Exodus chapter 5, beginning there with verse 19.

Moses has tried to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt. Pharaoh's answer was, "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Moses has tried and failed. Now the elders have tried. Exodus 5:19 says, "And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in an evil case."

After it was said, "You shall not minish aught from your bricks of your daily task." 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 you have made our savor 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 said unto the Lord, "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." Notice that Moses and Aaron have done everything that God has told them to do, and they had failed. The children of Israel, that is their elders, went and appealed to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "The problem with you is you're idle. You're going to make the same number of bricks that you normally make, but this time you're going to have to gather your own straw."

After experiencing this from Pharaoh, they looked at Moses and said, "The Lord look between you and us and judge. The only thing you've done is make things worse for us. We have not been delivered

at all." Moses falls on his face and says, "Why did you even send me? Why am I here?"

God has Moses and Aaron helpless. They've tried and failed. God has the elders of Israel helpless. They've tried and failed.

Exodus 6:1 says, "Then 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 says, "Now you're going to see what I can do." Moses and Aaron and the elders found themselves in an impossible situation. They could not deliver themselves. God says, "Now that you realize your extreme helplessness and hopelessness, you're going to see what I can do." The impossible became possible with God. You know the outcome: God delivered His people and destroyed His enemies.

Exodus 14 gives a second impossible situation. The children of Israel have marched out of Egypt and gotten to a place where it looks as if they're cornered. Verse 1 reads, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in."

"And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he shall follow after them; and I will be honored upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord. And they did so." Notice two things. First, God says, "I'm going to be honored upon Pharaoh and all of his hosts." How was he honored? In justice. And he says, "They shall know that I'm the Lord." How did they know that God was the Lord? When he struck them in his justice. Verse 5 says: "And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people."

"And they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him. And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an

high hand. But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon. And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?"

"Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

In other words, just shut up and watch. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea."

Verse 17 says, "And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honor upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten me honor upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen."

Israel is entangled in the wilderness. The Red Sea is in front of them, mountains and deserts on either side, and Pharaoh is coming on strong. They look at Moses and say, "What in the world are we going to do? We're trapped. We're like animals. We're in a cage. We're sitting ducks. And here's what's going to happen. They're going to come upon us and kill us."

"Would it not have been right for you to have just heeded our words and left us alone and let us stay in our slavery and stay in our

bondage and serve the Egyptians. Why did you bring us out here today? There's graves plenty in Egypt. What are we going to do?" And what did God say? "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. Just shut up." And God directed Moses and he raised that rod and the sea parted hither and thither.

The children of Israel went across on dry ground. When the Egyptians came in behind them, God closed the water upon them, and they all drowned. An impossible situation became possible with God. God destroyed His enemies and delivered His people.

In every impossible situation that I've given you so far, God destroys His enemies and delivers His people. Consider one more in 2 Chronicles 14. If you were Asa, would you not be doing exactly the same thing King Asa did?

The Bible says, "So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years. And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God: For he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves: And commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images: and the kingdom was quiet before him. And he built fenced cities in Judah: for the land had rest, and he had no war in those years; because the Lord had given him rest. Therefore he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about them walls, and towers, gates, and bars, while the land is yet before us; because we have sought the Lord our God, we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side."

So they built and prospered. "And Asa had an army of men that bare targets and spears, out of Judah three hundred thousand; and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand: all these were mighty men of valor." He has 580,000 fighting men. Verse 9 says: "And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; and came unto Mareshah. Then Asa went out against him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and

said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee. So the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled. And Asa and the people that were with him pursued them unto Gerar: and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves; for they were destroyed before the Lord, and before his host; and they carried away very much spoil."

"And they smote all the cities round about Gerar; for the fear of the Lord came upon them: and they spoiled all the cities; for there was exceeding much spoil in them. They smote also the tents of cattle, and carried away sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem."

Notice Asa with 580,000 men is now facing the Ethiopians with a million men and 300 chariots. Not only was Asa outnumbered 2 to 1 basically, but consider the 300 chariots. Chariots would have been considered the tanks in those days. And so Asa then with his 300 tanks was ready to wreak havoc upon Judah and upon Jerusalem. And when Asa saw how outnumbered he was, and how outgunned he was, he cried to the Lord and said, "Lord, You can help, and it doesn't matter whether You help those who have no strength at all. Help us, O God, because we trust in Thee." Do you realize in this instance, God delivered His people and destroyed His enemies.

Why So Many Illustrations?

I could multiply illustrations throughout the entire Bible. Have you considered why God gave us so many? One answer is so that we would not fear. The Bible commands us to fear not over 300 times. I encourage you to memorize 2 Timothy 1:7: "For God hath not given us a spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." What has God given us? He's given us the power of love and of a sound mind. One reason for these illustrations is so that we would not fear.

Another answer is so that we would not be disquieted, disturbed, dismayed, discouraged, and hold a defeatist attitude. I get aggravated at people who are always pessimistic, downcast,

discouraged, and downtrodden. Our Lord said in Luke 12:32, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

I don't care how small we are. It is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom. That means we are going to succeed. It does not matter how dismal, dank, dark and dangerous our surroundings are, or what the circumstances and situation may be. We're always more than conquerors through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Current Events: Government Overreach and Media Control

If you have not been jolted, concerned, upset, and thoroughly confused by things happening in this country, you haven't been paying attention. Before we consider Psalm 76:5, here is just a smattering of what is happening.

If I were to take everything I've read within the last two weeks, we would be here for hours. Here is one illustration: Anaheim, California. This has been happening for the last couple of weeks and is happening as I speak. Two men have been murdered by police. I don't recall the circumstances around the first one, but the last was an unarmed man fleeing from the police.

He was afraid of them. They shot him in the back of the head and killed him. There have been peaceful protests of police brutality in Anaheim. You haven't heard this on the mainstream news, and I'll explain why. An article reads: "Peaceful protests around the city's police headquarters proceeded, but when a picket line along Harbor Boulevard got too close to Disneyland, something unprecedented and unnerving happened."

"A paramilitary police force stripped of names and badge numbers, wearing urban camouflage utilities, and outfitted with a combat load and assault rifles emerged to blockade the world-famous theme park. These police look like National Guardsmen and some have been photographed with grenade launchers, ostensibly loaded with tear gas canisters, M16A2 assault rifles, and tear gas paintball guns. They bear simple vests or patches emblazoned with police over their camo flak jackets. It looks like a

military occupation and they are carrying out a directive reminiscent of urban combat in the Middle East."

"You're hearing this from someone who saw this sort of thing in Afghanistan." Alice and I watched videos of this happening in Anaheim, and you could not tell that these men in camis were police.

They may have had police emblazoned on the back somewhere, but they looked like soldiers. Some peaceful protesters have been charged by police. Dogs have been unleashed upon civilians. Women and children have been shot with rubber bullets and tear gassed.

Another article reads: "Riot gear orders pile up as Department of Homeland Security and Army prepare for civil unrest. Breaking news July 30th, 2012. It's more than just stockpiling surveillance drones to spawn US citizens. The United States Army is attempting to procure an arsenal of riot gear in case the military must go toe-to-toe with civilians on United States soil. A solicitation for weapons post on the official government website for federal business opportunities reveals that the United States Army has been in the market for non-lethal equipment that it very well might be used in the United States. In a web posting made earlier this summer, the Army asked for bids regarding its request for riot shields, face masks, polycarbonate batons, and body armor."

"On July the 10th, they awarded the contract to A to Z Supply Corporation of Stevensville, Montana, who pledged to fulfill their request to the tune of $6,589,000. The latest inquiry from the United States Army was filed only a few weeks before. Another call for bids was published by the Department of Homeland Security. On July the 26th, the Department of Homeland Security Office of Procurement Operations also wrote on FBO.gov that they were soliciting contractors to help equip them with riot helmets, tactical gloves, shin guards, body armor, and other equipment comparable that could be used in tandem with a complex riot control system."

Do you realize our own government is preparing for war with its own people. Paul Joseph Watson wrote an article last month. The headline read: "Warning shots will not be fired. A newly leaked US Army military police training manual for civil disturbance operations outlines how military assets are to be used domestically

to quell riots confiscate firearms, and even kill Americans on United States soil during mass civil unrest. The document, which is dated 2006, was used for a self-learning course at the United States Army Military Police School at Fort McClellan, and it makes it clear that the operations described in the manual apply to CONUS and OCONUS, meaning inside the continental United States and outside the continental United States." And I have that document downloaded.

How does all this information go with your afternoon tea? Who could read this and not be at least a teeny tiny bit disturbed and upset?

Why have you not heard much of this on the mainstream media? Why can you not turn on NBC, ABC, CBS, CNN and see the police in Anaheim attacking these civilians? Why do you have to go to the internet? Why are you not reading or hearing much bad information or negative material on Obama?

Joseph Farah wrote an article titled "Proof Establishment Media Controlled. There was a rather low key confession made in the New York Times last week that deserves to be blared throughout this country so that every American understands what we're reading in the establishment's ultra-controlled governmental managed press, and I use that word loosely. The admission came in the form of a story by Jeremy Peters on the politics page in New York Times on July the 16th it is."

"I've been waiting for others to point it out, discuss it, debate it, express shock and exasperation over it, but I've waited for naught. What this shocking story reveals is that even I, one of the kingpins of the news media, and a refugee from the state-controlled spin machine underestimated the utter and total corruption of the euphemistically called mainstream press. It shows that most, not some, members of the print media establishment with access to the White House submit their copy to governmental officials for review, correction, and approval before it reaches the American people."

"Here are some of the key excerpts from the piece if you think I'm exaggerating. I'm quoting now. The quotations come back redacted, stripped of colorful metaphors, colloquial language, and anything

even mildly provocative. They are sent by email from the Obama headquarters in Chicago to reporters who have interviewed campaign officials under one major condition. The press office has veto power over what statements can be quoted and attributed by name. Most reporters desperate to pick the brains of the president's top strategists grudgingly agree."

"After the interviews, they review their notes, check their tape recorders, and send in the juiciest sound bites for review. The verdict from the campaign, an operation that prides itself on staying consistently on script, is often, no, Barack Obama does not approve this message." The article continues: "Many journalists spoke about the editing only if granted that their names would not be used. Those reporters who did speak on the record said the restrictions seem only to be growing."

"It's not something I'm particularly proud of because there's a part of me that says don't do it, don't agree to their terms," said Major Garrett, a correspondent for the National Journal. "It was difficult to find a news outlet that had not agreed to quote approval, albeit reluctantly. Organizations like Bloomberg, the Washington Post, Vanity Fair, Reuters, and the New York Times have all consented to interviews under such terms." If you think you're going to get any major news on the major news networks and the major newspapers, you're mistaken. Everything is scripted. Everything has to be approved through the powers that be.

What has all this to do with Psalm 76:5? Consider the connection.

Psalm 76:5 and the Assyrian Threat

"The stout-hearted are spoiled. They have slept their sleep. And none of the men of might have found their hands." What does everything I've read have to do with this verse? Everything. We no longer live in the days of horses, chariots, swords and spears when it comes to weaponry. We live in the age of drones and bots and lasers and mind control techniques, thermal imaging and being able to kill and be killed from hundreds and even thousands of miles away.

It is very possible that we could soon find ourselves in an impossible situation. Another report reads: "New Homeland

Security laser scanner reads people at the molecular level. The Department of Homeland Security will soon be using a laser at airports that can detect everything about you from 160 feet away. Gizmodo reports a scanner that could read people at the molecular level has been invented. The laser-based scanner, which can be used 164 feet away, could read everything from a person's adrenaline levels to traces of gunpowder on a person's clothes to illegal substances."

"And it can all be done without a physical search. It could also be used on multiple people at a time, eliminating random searches at airports. The laser-based scanner is expected to be used in airports as soon as 2013, Gizmodo reports. The scanner is called a picosecond programmable laser. The device works by blasting its targets with lasers which vibrate the molecules that are then read by the machine that determined what substances a person has been exposed to. This could be Semtex explosives or the bacon and egg sandwich you had for breakfast that morning."

The Bible and historic Christianity mean nothing to our government. The Constitution, morality, and rights mean nothing to our government. Our government is only interested in control. Humanly speaking, as Christians and civilians, we have been and are outnumbered, outgunned, and made outlaws. Liberty and freedom have been destroyed. Most people are willing to trade what little liberty is left for what they think is security. As Ben Franklin said, "Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporal safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

God says in Psalm 76:5, "The stout-hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep, and none of the men of might have found their hands." This refers to the strong, powerful, rapacious, and violent Assyrian army that had pillaged, plundered, and pilfered the countryside around Judea. They had come to Jerusalem and wanted Jerusalem and King Hezekiah. Having conquered so many nations and countries, they demanded surrender without a fight. Hezekiah paid some tribute, but went no further. The fact that he paid tribute indicates that you cannot please the wicked. The more you give them, the more they demand. The more you give in, the more they

want. Once you pay even a little of their demands, it signals weakness, and they demand more and more.

Now, I want you to hold Psalm 76. We're going to come right back there. But I want you to turn in your Bibles to 2 Kings chapter 18, and we're going to read a rather lengthy passage only to show you the context of Psalm 76 and verse 5. So go in your Bibles to 2 Kings chapter 18, because we're going to read about the Assyrians as they come to Jerusalem. Notice 2 Kings chapter 18, and we're going to begin reading there with verse 13. And we're going to read through chapter 19. Okay? So it's going to be a long passage. I want you to follow, because I want you to see the background. Notice, if you would, 2 Kings chapter 18, and let's begin reading with verse 13.

"Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them." He has already got the surrounding cities. "And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold."

Hezekiah was a good king, not a reprobate. Notice what even a good king did. "And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house." Here's my question. If Hezekiah wanted to give away his own silver and gold, that's his business. But why did he rob the house of God? That didn't belong to Hezekiah. But he took it out of the house of God. Verse 16 says: "At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria. And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem."

SCRIPTURE READING - 2 Kings 18:17–20 (KJV)

> "And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field. And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder.

> And Rabshakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? Thou sayest, (but they are but vain words,) I have counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?"

"I have counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?"

"Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him. But if ye say unto me, We trust in the Lord our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?" He took away the places that were idolatrous. Rabshakeh is thinking he took away the worship of God, which he did not. And had said to Judah and Jerusalem, "You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem." Well, that's what God said.

"Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them." In other words, you want to fight? I'll give you horses if you can mount men on them. Verse 24 says: "How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? Am I now come up without the Lord against this place to destroy it? The Lord said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it. Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall. But Rabshakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?"

"Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria: Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand: Neither let

Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, The Lord will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me."

"And then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern." Notice what the king of Assyria is promising. During the power, rule, and reign of God, God promises that every man shall sit under his own fig tree, eat of his own fruit, and drink water out of his own cistern. The king promises an imitation of what God has promised. He is saying, "I will give you what God promises if you'll worship Me."

Verse 32 says, "Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The Lord will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand? Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?"

He is giving them references: "I've destroyed all these countries. I've destroyed all these kingdoms, all these nations. Their gods have not delivered them out of my hands. You think you're going to get out of my hand?" Verse 36 says, "But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not."

SCRIPTURE READING - 2 Kings 18:37–19:37 (KJV)

> "Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh. And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord. And he sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna the

scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy."

"For the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. It may be the Lord thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left. So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land. So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish. And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying, One more time, I'm trying to get you to surrender without a fight."

"Saying, Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Thelasar? Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah? And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said, O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. Lord, bow down thine ear, and

hear: open, Lord, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God. Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, And have cast their gods into the fire."

"For they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them."

"Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only. Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard. This is the word that the Lord hath spoken concerning him; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel. By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof."

"And I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into the forest of his Carmel. I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places. Hast thou not heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient times that I have formed it?"

"Now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps. Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the housetops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up. But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest."

> "And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof. And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this."
>
> "Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord. For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand."
>
> "And when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead."

The Assyrian army, its officers and generals, came against Jerusalem with great resolution, courage, and determination, as well as impiety and blasphemy against the Lord God of heaven. Rabshakeh demonstrated this both in what he said and what he wrote. In Psalm 76:5, "the stout-hearted are spoiled" refers to this great army. Stout-hearted literally refers to what you and I would call the bulls, the strong ones, the valiant, the courageous.

God's Methods of Dealing with Enemies

General Beauregard, the first bull I had, weighed 3,000 pounds and had nice horns. Years ago, I came from bow hunting at night. By the time I got out of my stand and started walking back, it was pitch black. Beauregard had heard or smelled me coming. Being a pet, he

had gone up to the fence line and stuck his head over the fence. I walked within a foot of him before I saw him. My heart went in my throat because all I saw was this big head and horn sticking over the fence. When I caught myself, I stopped and said, "Beauregard," and reached over and started petting him.

I said, "You scared me to death." Then I got to thinking and laughing. Can you imagine somebody trying to slip up on me and trip over him lying down? A bull is a big, strong, ferocious animal. That's what stout-hearted means. God calls them the bulls, the valiant, the courageous.

These Assyrian soldiers were warriors. They were battle-hardened and they were confident. They were sure of their powers in battle and they looked forward to the spoils of war. However, in this instance, those who were looking for prey became the prey themselves. He says, "the stout-hearted are spoiled." It is understood that a strong man may be robbed and spoiled by a much stronger man. However, in this instance, these strong men were turned into useless, helpless, worthless soldiers. When God spoils the stout-hearted, He turns them into Magor-missabib. The word Magor-missabib is in the Bible, and it means terror on every hand. So when God spoils the stout-hearted, He takes away their stout heart, and He puts a heart of fear in them, and men who were formerly terrified at nothing, are now terrified by their own shadows.

They're frightened by a child, a sound, a rumor. In 2 Kings 19:7 God says, "Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land." He heard that Tirhakah, king of the Ethiopians, was coming against him. God used a rumor to turn him. God doesn't even have to use a rumor.

In 2 Kings 7 the Syrians have surrounded Samaria. People are starving inside. If they go outside, the Syrian kills them. How did God get rid of the Syrians? Verses 6 and 7 say, "For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. Wherefore

they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life." God just let them hear a sound.

It was a figment of their imagination. They thought someone was coming against them. Those valiant, brave, courageous warriors turned tail and ran like a dog with his tail between his legs. God destroyed the stout-hearted. How easy it is for the sovereign God of heaven and earth to quash the spirit of His enemies. When God removes their stout heart, He destroys them. They cannot function or fulfill their desires, plans, and schemes. They're spoiled.

Those who come for a prey become a prey themselves. Psalm 76:5 says, "the stout-hearted are spoiled. They have slept their sleep." They are dead. They've slept their last sleep. God has various ways of dealing with His enemies. First, by His grace, He may regenerate them as He did Saul of Tarsus. Saul, formerly an enemy, became a friend. Secondly, God may restrain His enemies, as Exodus 34:24 tells us.

God demanded that every Israelite male appear before Him three times a year.

Often the women and children went. They didn't have to, but usually they did. The men had to go. They had conquered the land, and some enemies were left in it; some were their servants. What would stop those enemies, when the men went to Jerusalem to worship three times a year, from rising up, murdering the families left behind, and confiscating and stealing whatever was left?

Exodus 34:24 says: "For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year." God says, "I have such sovereign power and control even over the enemies and the wicked. I will fix it when you obey me. They will not even desire to have their land back." So God can regenerate His enemies. God can restrain His enemies, or thirdly, God can remove His enemies just like He did these Assyrians. They slept their sleep. They perished in their sleep and never awoke again. We're told in 2 Kings 19 and verse 35 that in one night, with one stroke of the sword, God killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers.

And the ones who awoke the next morning found all of their friends dead. Do you realize how easy it is for God to annihilate His enemies? That is why in Psalm 2 and verses 4 and 5, the Bible says, "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." God can just destroy them.

I don't care how multitudinous or powerful they are, or what weaponry they have. God is capable of destroying His enemies and delivering His people in any impossible situation. Psalm 76:5 says, "...the stout-hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep, and none of the men of might have found their hands."

The Meaning of 'None of the Men of Might Have Found Their Hands'

When I read this verse again, I said, "Man, I've got to look at that." I have been asleep at night with my arms tangled in the covers. You're dreaming you're tied and can't get loose, and wake up with your arm tangled. At least you're not like the fellow who woke up thirsty, thought he'd been eating dry cereal, and found all the stuffing gone out of his pillow. You've had experiences where your hands seem not to work. The Bible says, "and none of the men of might have found their hands." The Septuagint renders this, "they found nothing in their hands," that is, they obtained no plunder. Luther renders it, "all the warriors must suffer their hands to fall or to fail."

So the idea here is this. They had lost the use of their hands. That is, they had no use for them. They could not find any use for them. They could not make them work. They could not employ their hands for the purpose which they intended. In other words, they were absolutely stricken down. Here are two quotes, one from Albert Barnes on Psalm 76:5 and one from John Calvin. Albert Barnes says, "The stout-hearted are spoiled. It must be acknowledged that these two verses seem in a very particular manner to point at the miraculous destruction of Sennacherib's army when the stout-hearted who doubted not of taking and spoiling the holy city were suddenly spoiled of strength and life, they slept their sleep and found not their hands. They awakened not again to the use of their powers and faculties."

"A rebuking blast was sent from the God of Jacob, under which the flower of Assyria withered in the space of a night, and in the morning was no more. The horse and rider were cast into a deep sleep. They slept the sleep of death. How in a moment were the mighty fallen and the weapons of war perished! How astonishing is the downfall of the tyrant. How complete the triumph of the daughter of Zion! Such will be the destruction of the world, such the salvation of the people of God." Can you imagine how astonishing the downfall of the tyrant in one night?

Calvin says, "All the men of might have not found their hands, That is to say, they were incapable of fighting as if their hands had been maimed or cut off. In short, their strength of which they boasted was utterly overthrown. The words, they slept their sleep, refer to the same subject, implying that whereas before they were active and resolute, their hearts now failed them."

"They were sunk asleep in sloth and listlessness. The meaning, therefore, is this: that the enemies of the chosen people were deprived of that heroic courage of which they boasted, and which inspired them with such audacity, and that in consequence neither mind, nor heart, nor hands, nor either of their mental or bodily faculties could perform their office. We are thus taught that all the gifts and powers which men seem to possess are in the hand of God, so that He can, at any instant of time, deprive them of the wisdom which He has given them, make their hearts effeminate, render their hands unfit for war, and annihilate their whole strength." It is not without reason that both the courage and power of these enemies are magnified, the design of this being that the faithful might be led from the contrast to extol the power and the working of God.

"The same subject is further confirmed from the statement that the chariots and the horse are now cast into a deep sleep at the rebuke of God. This implies that whatever activity characterized these enemies, it was rendered powerless simply by the nod of God. Although therefore we may be deprived of all the created means of help, let us rest content with the favor of God alone, accounting it all sufficient, since He has no need of great armies to repel the assaults of the whole world, but is able by the mere breath of His mouth to

subdue and dissipate all assailants." Can you imagine? God just speaks the Word and they are destroyed.

Conclusion: Trust in God Alone

George Gordon, Lord Byron, wrote a poem on the destruction of Sennacherib: "The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold, And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold; And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea, When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee. Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green, That host with their banners at sunset were seen: Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown, That host on the morrow lay withered and strown."

"For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast, And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed; And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill, And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still! And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide, But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride; And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf, And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf. And there lay the rider distorted and pale, With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail."

"And the tents were all silent, the banners alone, The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown. And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail, And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal; And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword, Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!" We have to learn at all times the truth of Psalm 46. This is why I preach this message. We must, at all times, trust totally in Him.

For every impossible situation is only impossible with man. All things are possible with God. Psalm 46 was Martin Luther's favorite psalm, from which we get, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Psalm 46:1 says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall

not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted."

"The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah." Our God is sufficient.

With Him there are no impossible situations. Whatever circumstances exist, whatever situations we find ourselves in, we must always trust only in Him. With God, all things are possible.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee, we thank You, we praise You. We know that Thou art the sovereign God of heaven and earth. And besides Thee, Father, there is none else. We give Thee praise, we give Thee glory, we give Thee worship, we acknowledge Thy divine sovereignty, Thy power over every enemy. And we know that he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision. And Lord, we pray that Thou wouldst indeed speak in Thy wrath and punish them in Thy divine displeasure. And bring honor and glory to thyself through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 20

How Easily We Forget

December 6, 2018

Introduction: The Problem of Forgetting

God says in Deuteronomy 4:9, “Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thine heart all the days of thy life, but teach them thy sons and thy sons’ sons.” How easily we forget.

I suppose the most famous words, and probably the words most frequently spoken, are simply two words: “I forgot.” We may use similar phrases such as “it slipped my mind” or “I guess I was not thinking.” But whatever we say, usually it boils down to this one thing: that we just simply forgot. And the truth of the matter is, as we age, the more forgetful we become. But also as we age, the more we are willing to admit that we are forgetful as well.

When my wife’s mother, Granny Doris, was alive, her memory started slipping. Alice and I bought her some ginkgo biloba to take, which supposedly helped the memory. We were riding to church, and Granny Doris was in the back seat when she said, “I think that stuff is helping me.” I said, “Helping what, Granny?” She said, “My

memory." I said, "Well, what stuff are you talking about?" She said, "I don't know, I forgot." So I explained to her that it was ginkgo biloba. Here she was, ninety-five years old; it was okay to forget. But the truth is, we not only forget little things; oftentimes we forget important things as well.

Over the years, one of my fears was that I would forget a meeting or a preaching appointment. Thankfully, by the grace of God, I never have done so. But it played on my mind for the longest. I just did not want to forget. Yet one day Alice and I were at home, and our daughters began calling us on the phone and shouting, "Happy Anniversary!" We looked at each other, and both of us had forgotten it was our anniversary. I would have been in trouble if it had just been me, but she had forgotten as well. So we simply laughed about it and talked about how busy we had really been.

The Progression of Forgetting

God says, "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life. But teach them thy sons and thy sons' sons, specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children."

They were not to forget the things which they had seen. These certainly would include the miracles and the judgments of God. They were to keep them in their hearts and pass them on to their children and their children's children. God specifically singled out the day when they heard His words.

In line with this warning, Deuteronomy 4:23 says, "Take heed unto yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which He made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of anything which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee."

Interestingly, He said, Do not forget My works, My miracles, or My judgments. Now He is saying, Do not forget My covenant. When we begin to forget the works, miracles, and judgments of God, the

next thing we know, we are forgetting the covenant of God. When we think of the word covenant, we automatically think of the old covenant, or the Old Testament. We sometimes fail to realize that covenant simply means testament. Just as Israel forgot the old covenant, many times Christians forget the new covenant.

Idolatry in Modern Life

Certainly, we do indeed turn aside to idolatry. You say, "Not me. I don't fall down before an idol." I understand that. But do you realize the Bible tells you in Colossians 3:5 that covetousness is idolatry? Whenever you begin to covet, whenever you do anything that God forbids, that is, in essence, idolatry. You are placing yourself and your desires above the one true and living God.

So let me ask you a question or two. How often do you really think of the Word of God? How often do you really think of God? How often do you remember His promises and His warnings? How often do you think about His commandments? How often do you really consider Him and what He has done? How long and how often do you even think about your profession of faith?

The Significance of Baptism

How about your baptismal oath? We do not understand that oath. Usually, when we baptize someone, we ask, "Do you profess faith in Jesus Christ? Do you confess that Jesus Christ is Lord?" They answer, "Yes," and the preacher says, "Upon your profession of faith in Him, my brother, I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." Then we baptize them. But we forget exactly what oath we take when we are baptized.

The earliest oath was simply three words: "Iēsous Kyrios"—Jesus is Lord. The word Lord, Kyrios, literally means boss, owner, master, sovereign, supreme one.

The truth is that when we get baptized today, most of us regard it as only a little ordinance. We never place upon it the importance given to it in the New Testament. When a man was baptized and said that Jesus Christ is Lord, he was probably signing his own death warrant and agreeing to have all his goods confiscated. There was a

war between Christ and Caesar. Caesar wanted everybody to confess that Caesar was Lord.

Christians in the New Testament era were not put to death by the Roman Empire merely because they were Christians. In the Roman Empire, you could believe whatever you wanted. If you wanted to believe in Jesus Christ, Zeus, or Baal, it did not matter. You only had to swear once a year by the genius of Caesar and say that Caesar was Lord—in other words, that Caesar gave you the right to believe as you believed.

Christians refused to do that, and thus they were put to death, not merely because they were Christians, but because they were traitors to the emperor cult. Today, when a person is baptized, most people never pay attention to it. But when we say Jesus is Lord, we confess and acknowledge that He is the Sovereign and Supreme One.

When one forgets the works, miracles, and judgments of God, the next step is forgetting the covenant of God. Once you forget the covenant of God, the next step is that you forget God. Like Demas, you forsake Him because you love the present evil world. People forsake God because they love their flesh, lusts, and desires more than His grace and mercy. Since we are in Deuteronomy, look in Deuteronomy chapter 6.

Deuteronomy 6:12 says, “Then beware, lest thou forget the Lord who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage.” Deuteronomy 8:11 gives another warning: “Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping His commandments and His judgments and His statutes, which I command thee this day.” Here is the intimate connection between God and His Word. If you forget to obey God, you have forgotten God. If you forget His covenant, you have forgotten Him.

Verse 14 says, “Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage.” Verse 19 says, “And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day, that you shall surely perish.”

Here are the stages: God says we forget His works, we forget His miracles, we forget His judgments, and then we forget His covenant. After we forget His covenant, we actually forget Him. One step leads to the other. When we forget one truth, forgetting that truth also leads to forgetting other truths. Every time we forget Him, we replace Him.

Deuteronomy 8:19 says, "...and it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall perish." You may respond, "Not me. I will never fall down before an idol, or before a monument of stone." You do not have to. Anytime we place anything above God, it is idolatry. When we give in to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, it is idolatry.

Paul speaks of those whose god is their belly in Philippians 3:19: "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, and they mind earthly things." They have no desire for God. They do not think about Him. They have totally forgotten Him.

Here is the simple truth: you cannot forget God without replacing Him. Anytime you forget Him, you have basically replaced Him. You may have replaced Him with your own desires, your own lusts, but we forget His precepts and His covenants. We forget His commandment in order that we may satisfy and please ourselves.

Do you remember how Israel was delivered out of Egypt? Stop and think about this for a moment. When God delivered Israel out of Egypt, it was a demonstration of His almighty power. I had to be selective, but I am going to show you four passages that emphasize the power, might, and majesty God used in delivering the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Israel's Witness of God's Power

Look at Deuteronomy chapter 4, verse 34: "Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation by temptations, by signs, 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?" Now watch: "Before

your eyes." You saw the great power. You saw the great miracles. You saw the great terror. You saw it. Look in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 7 and verse 19: "The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm whereby the Lord thy God brought thee out, so shall the Lord thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid." Again, He said, "Your eyes saw everything that I did."

Deuteronomy 26:8 says, “And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders.” Deuteronomy 34:12 likewise says, “And in all that mighty hand, and all that great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel.”

Note that three out of the four passages speak of the fact that they saw: they were there firsthand, and they knew everything that happened. They had seen it all and knew what had happened. The passages speak of God’s mighty power, His outstretched arm, His outstretched hand, the temptations, and the wonders—all of this.

Now, here is my question: In light of all this, everything that we just read, and everything that you know happened—which I am going to remind you of—when you stop and think about how God delivered Israel with His mighty power, with His outstretched arm, with His signs, with His wonders, with His temptations, and with His terrors…

God demonstrated these things upon the Egyptians, and the children of Israel saw them with their own eyes. How long do you think it would take you to forget all of that? You and I might say, “We would never forget it.” Really? Let us make this personal for a little while. Pretend that you were there when Israel was delivered, that you saw what they saw and experienced what they experienced. For a little while, put yourself there among the children of Israel and consider what it would have been like to witness all that God did.

Everybody knows that there were ten plagues. But what most people do not understand is that, out of all ten plagues, the children of Israel were exempt. Not one of those plagues landed upon the children of Israel. For instance, Exodus 11:7 says: “But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue against man or

beast, that you may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel." God said that a dog would not even move its tongue against His people or any of their beasts, so that they might know He put a difference between the Egyptians and His people. He did not merely spare them from one judgment; throughout the plagues, He made a difference between Egypt and Israel.

You remember that a very grievous murrain fell upon the cattle of the Egyptians; in fact, their cattle were killed. But Exodus 9:4–7 says: "And the Lord shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt, and there shall nothing die of all that is of the children of Israel. And the Lord appointed a set time, saying, Tomorrow the Lord shall do this thing in the land. And the Lord did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died, but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. And Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go."

God sent this plague and separated the cattle of Israel from the cattle of Egypt. The cattle of Egypt died, but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. When the plague of darkness came, again God separated the Egyptians from the Israelites.

In Exodus 10:22–23, Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven, and "there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." There is an old joke that we used to ask when I was a boy: "Where was Moses when the lights went out?" The standard answer is "in the dark," but that is not true. The children of Israel had light in their dwellings. He was still in the light. It was the Egyptians who were in darkness.

Now, pretend with me for a moment that you are in Egypt, seeing and experiencing everything firsthand. You are not only seeing and experiencing it; you understand that you are spared. Everything you have is spared. None of these judgments touches you, your cattle, or your family, yet you see everything that happens to the Egyptians and their enemies. Let me reinforce these plagues in your mind.

First, you saw the water turned into blood, and all the fish in the rivers died. Stop and think about the river being turned into blood, with the bloated, dead fish stinking. You saw that. Then you saw the frogs come out of the water and envelop the land. They had frogs in the kitchen, the living room, and the bed—frogs everywhere. You saw that, but there were no frogs in your place or your neighbor's place. It was only among the Egyptians.

Moreover, you saw the dust of the land turned into lice, lice upon man and beast, in Exodus chapter 8. But you had no lice. Your animals and children had no lice, while the Egyptians were tormented. You were spared. You also saw the swarms of flies that corrupted and destroyed everything the Egyptians had in Exodus chapter 8, and you were spared this horrible corruption.

I do not like flies. I do not know whether it is true, but I read that every time a fly landed, it spit. Whether that is true or not, I cannot say, but I know I do not like flies. Can you imagine not even being able to breathe without inhaling flies? I have been deer hunting in swamps, and when you take the mosquito net off, you cannot breathe because they are in your nose and mouth. That is exactly the way it was with these flies, but there were no flies in your house and no flies in your neighbor's house. They were only in the Egyptians' houses.

You saw the grievous murrain upon the cattle. You saw all of the enemy's cattle die, but yours did not die; yours was not hurt at all. Then you saw the boils and blains breaking out upon man and beast. But you had no boils and no blains. Anyone who has ever had a boil can testify how excruciatingly painful it can be. The Egyptians and their beasts were eaten up with boils and blains, but you escaped. There was none on you, none on your family, and none on your neighbors.

You saw the thunderstorm of hail and fire and the destruction that followed. It was such destruction that there had never been a storm like it previously. Exodus 9:24 says, "So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation." This was something exceptional. You saw it firsthand, but it never bothered you; it bothered only your enemies.

You also saw the plague of locusts, so thick that they darkened the sky. Years ago, while I was driving to Pennsylvania to preach, I noticed trees with dead limbs, although most of each tree was green. I learned that locusts had eaten the limbs and leaves, and they died. In Egypt, this plague devoured everything, yet yours was not devoured. You were there when darkness fell upon the Egyptians, darkness so thick that no one moved for three days.

You and I cannot really envision this darkness. Years ago, my wife and I and two of our grandchildren went to Timpanogos Cave in Utah. We had to walk a mile up the mountain to reach the cave. It was absolutely humongous. The ranger took us into a cavern. Of course, they had lights, and we could see the stalagmites and stalactites. We could see everything. It was beautiful.

Then the ranger said, “Let me show you something. Stand still. Hold hands. Do not move.” He turned the lights off. We were probably half a mile back in the earth. You could not see anything. It was pitch black; there was absolutely no light. Without those lights, we would never have gotten out of that cave.

Here it was so dark that they sat and stayed in one place for three days. You saw that. You were there, but it did not affect you; you had light in your dwellings, while they had darkness. Lastly, you heard the cries, screams, and horror of every Egyptian family when they found that their firstborn child was dead. But your child was alive. Yours did not die. You heard their anguish, cries, and screams.

You not only saw and experienced this; you understood a truth God had revealed. Look in your Bibles to Exodus chapter 12, verse 12. Watch what you learned from all of this. God 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, now watch, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. I am the Lord.”

When you saw all of this, you knew firsthand and understood that Jesus Christ, revealed in the Old Testament, is the one true and living God, the great I Am, and there is none beside Him. All these plagues were not just against the Egyptians; they were against all the false gods. Egypt’s false gods could not do one thing. They could not hinder, thwart, or stop a single plague. Every Israelite who saw this

knew who the one true and living God was. You know there is no other God. You not only saw the plagues and understood that there was no other God but the one true and living God; you were there when Pharaoh and his chariots chased you and you were bottled up at the Red Sea.

You were there when Moses lifted the rod, and you went across on dry ground. When you got across, you looked back and saw Moses raising that rod. Pharaoh and his chariots were in the sea, and all the sea came back upon them, and they drowned. Exodus 14:27 says, "And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared. And the Egyptians fled against it, and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. There remained not so much as one of them, but the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall under them on their right hand and on their left."

"Thus, the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses." Can you imagine that?

Now, let me ask you a question: How long would it take you to forget that? You saw it. You were there. How long would it take you to forget that? You are going to say, "Man, I'd never forget that." Really? Well, let's look in our Bible, Exodus chapter 12, and see really and truly how long it took these Israelites to forget all of this. Exodus chapter 12, verses 1 through 6: this is the Passover.

How Quickly Israel Forgot

This is where God delivers them and leads them out of Egypt. In Exodus 12:1, "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month, that is, Abib, the month that he's going to deliver them, this month shall be unto you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you." God has set the date. This will be the first month of their year.

“Speak ye to all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of the month, they shall take them every man a lamb according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house. And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the souls. Every man, according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. Ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats, and ye shall keep it up until the 14th day of the same month.”

“And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.” Abib 14 was the day of Passover, and the next day they were to leave, on the 15th of Abib.

Exodus 12:11 says, “And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, and with your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand, and ye shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord’s Passover.” The Lamb has been slain, the blood has been applied, and they are marching out of Egypt.

How long is it going to take you to forget all of this? Exodus 13, verse 3: "And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage, for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place. There shall no leavened bread be eaten. This day came ye out in the month Abib. And it shall be, when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he sware to give unto thy fathers, to give thee a land full of milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month. Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days, and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be any leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. And thou shalt show thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for memorial between thine eyes, that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth. For with a strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt. Thou therefore shalt keep this ordinance in his season from year to year."

God says, Here is the month Abib. Here is the fourteenth. You have to keep this ordinance. This is to be in remembrance of everything that I have done, of how I delivered you. In other words, this ordinance is going to make you think of all the mighty power, all the miracles, all the temptations, all the terrors—everything that has happened. This is going to make you remember. You have to keep this ordinance. How long did it take them to forget everything?

Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur. They traveled three days in the wilderness and found no water. When they came to Marah, they could not drink its waters, for they were bitter; therefore the name of it was called Marah. The people murmured against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" Moses cried unto the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree, which, when he had cast it into the waters, made the waters sweet. There He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them.

Notice: three days in the wilderness, complaining and bellyaching, asking, "What are we going to drink?" What had God just done? What about all the demonstration of His mighty power? He had parted the Red Sea; they had walked across on dry ground; He had slain all their enemies; they had seen the plagues and been spared. They knew that God was God and that God had brought them out. Yet in three days they were already complaining.

It does not get any better. Israel journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation came into the wilderness of Sin, between Elim and Sinai. On the fifteenth day of the second month, thirty days—one month—after their departure from the land of Egypt, the whole congregation murmured against Moses and Aaron. They said, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, when we did eat bread to the full; for you brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

What? Thirty days! What did they say? "Would to God we were back in Egypt! We had plenty to eat back there." They had rather be slaves in Egypt than the Lord's free men in the desert. In three days they were murmuring and complaining; in thirty days they wanted

to go back, remembering all the good things they had in Egypt and already desiring its flesh pots.

They wished that they had died there. So why did they murmur and complain? Here is the answer: because they forgot God. They forgot His covenant. They forgot His works.

Look in Exodus chapter 17: “And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord and pitched in Rephidim.” “And there was no water for the people to drink.” They had already forgotten what God had done earlier. “Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? Wherefore do you tempt the Lord? And the people thirsted there for water, and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us forth up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?”

According to the context in chapter 16, this incident happened one week later. In three days they were murmuring and complaining; in thirty days they wanted to go back; and another week later they were still murmuring, complaining, and ready to return to slavery. Have you ever noticed how easily and quickly we forget the things of God, and how easily and quickly we forget the works of God?

Do you remember how God came down upon Mount Sinai? Look at Exodus 19 and verse 16: “And it came to pass on the third day in the morning that there was thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that”

“were in the camp trembled.” In other words, God came down upon this mountain, and all the people saw everything; they were frightened, and they trembled. Who was it that went up on the mount to receive the law? It was Moses. Do you remember how long he was supposed to be up there? Forty days? Forty nights.

I want to show you what happened. Hold Exodus 19; we are coming back there. But turn to Exodus chapter 32. I want to show you what happened while Moses was up on the mountain. Watch this carefully. Exodus chapter 32, beginning with verse 1: “And when

the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount," I do not know how long they thought he was to be up there. He would have certainly come back in time, but it was not quick enough for them.

"So when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron and said unto him, Up, make us gods which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, and of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool. And after he had made it a molten calf, they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is the feast of the Lord."

"And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." The word "to play" is a euphemism for fornication. Note that this happened in the third month. Exodus 19:1 says, "In the third month, when the children of Israel were going forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness, and there Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, and said, Thus shalt thou say unto the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel," and he goes on down. Note again: in the third month. Put two and two together.

In three days, they were bellyaching and complaining. In thirty days, they wanted to go back. A week later, they were still bellyaching and complaining. Let us say that this was the third month and Moses was up there for thirty days. In four months, they had made a golden calf, fallen down and worshiped it, and violated not only the first commandment, but the seventh commandment

and all of them. In four months? How could they forget? How can we forget?

Forgetting in the Christian Life

Here is what I am trying to tell you: how easily we forget our promises to God, our profession of faith, and our obedience. We turn aside so quickly, just like those Israelites. We even forget each other. We forget our pastors. I have pastored people, prayed with them, and cried with them. I was there when catastrophes struck in their homes, when deaths came, and when there were problems in their marriages. I loved them, prayed with them, and wept with them. Yet some of them today will not even speak to me.

I've got one friend, a Christian brother who helped another Christian brother financially—not just one time, but numerous times, to the tune of thousands. When the brother who had been helped held a position the other one did not like, he had one piece of his equipment there. He called his Christian brother and said, “Come get your stuff and get it out of my house and don't ever come back.” What? After this brother had helped him and literally given him thousands of dollars, how can you forget things like that? How can you forget the people who prayed with you and wept with you? How can you forget what God has done for you? How can you forget whom God has used?

Call to Remember and Repent

How long does it take? Here's the problem: we've lost our first love. Revelation, chapter 2, describes God's message to the church at Ephesus: “Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write. These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil, and how thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen,

and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." Our hearts used to be on fire for the Lord. We used to be excited just to come and hear the Word of God, to come to a prayer meeting, and to fellowship with each other. Today, if we don't come, somebody might think we're backslidden, so I guess we need to go.

There's no joy, no happiness, and no remembrance. Would you be content and satisfied for God to treat you the way you treat Him? Jeremiah 2:32 asks, "Can a maid forget her ornaments?" Can you forget your necklace, earrings, and rings? No. "Can a maid forget her ornaments?"

"Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire?" I do not know any bride who ever forgot her wedding dress. "Yet my people have forgotten me days without number."

I want to tell you something. There is a passage of Scripture I quote every day—usually two or three times: in the morning when I wake up, at night when I go to bed, and often several times during the day. So here is my question: Why did you not die in your sleep last night?

Why did you not drop dead today?

Here is the answer: Lamentations 3:22–23: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we're not consumed. Because His compassions, they fail not. They are new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness." You do not need to see the Red Sea, nor do you need to see the judgments of God against the Egyptians. God has been so gracious and so kind to you every morning, every day, and every night.

Never cease praising Him or forget all the wonderful works He has done for you. Every time I go down the road and see crosses beside the road where someone has been killed, I thank God that He spared my life.

If you forget what God has done for you, you will forget His covenant and Him. "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen. And repent. And come back to thy first love or else," He said, "I will remove thy candlestick from his place."

Father, help us to live for Thee, remember Thee, and thank Thee daily for Thy infinite grace and mercy. O God, we bow before Thee and worship Thee as the one true and living God, acknowledging besides Thee there is none else. Thank You, Lord, in Christ's name, amen.

CHAPTER 21

The Excommunication of Jesus Christ

December 3, 2012

The Excommunication of Christ

Introduction: The Strange Word 'Excommunication'

Some time ago, Brother Ron and Sister Linda were reading, I think, Rushdoony's book, and they hit this thought. Ron told me, he said, "Will you ever preach someday on the excommunication of Christ?" And I said, "Well, I will." And so I got around to it.

Hebrews chapter 13, beginning there with verse 11, says, "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." When we hear the word "excommunication," the word sounds strange to our ears simply because we immediately know that it is a strong word and that it's a word that speaks of sin, suffering, and estrangement.

Biblical Examples of Church Discipline

We think of it in reference to saints that have sinned and have refused to repent, and consequently church discipline has been exercised upon them. We immediately think of a passage like 2 Thessalonians 3 and verse 6, where the apostle Paul commanded, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourself from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received of us."

I want you to hold Hebrews chapter 13, but look in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 5, because I want to show you a passage where one individual was indeed disciplined or, as some would say, excommunicated. Notice in 1 Corinthians chapter 5, beginning there with verse 1. Paul is reproaching the Corinthians and rebuking them, for he writes, "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife."

So here was a son—it was not necessarily his mother, but maybe a stepmother—was committing fornication with his stepmother. And he says, "And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Notice that, evidently, the church discipline exercised for his sin had a desirable effect. You say, “How can you say that?” Turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 2, beginning with verse 5, because Paul now speaks concerning this same individual. He says, “But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part, that I may not overcharge you all.” Then he says, “Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many.”

So that contrariwise, now that he’s repented, you ought rather to forgive him and comfort him, lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you, that

you would confirm your love toward him. Here was an individual who had committed sin; he was disciplined by the church and put out from among them, excommunicated, as we would say, but evidently he repented. Paul was saying that they needed to bring him back.

In light of these verses, how can we speak of the excommunication of Christ? We know, acknowledge, confess, and believe that Jesus Christ was and is the sinless Son of God. We know that in Him is no sin. The word “excommunication” not only speaks of censure, but it also means to exclude from fellowship, to cast to one side, or to put out. In many instances, Christ has been censured by His professing people in that He has been set aside or excluded from fellowship because of the strictness of His doctrine and His demands for a holy, obedient life.

Christ Excommunicated by His Own

I’m going to show you this in just a moment. It is much like the incident in John chapter 6, where our Lord gave His message on the bread of life. He proclaimed that He was indeed the bread of life sent down from heaven, and that He alone could provide life and nourishment. Many of His disciples at that particular point forsook Him.

It was not necessarily an official censure from a religious body, but by forsaking Him they certainly excluded Him from any future teaching or fellowship. So, in one sense of the word, their actions cast Him out. Their refusal to believe and submit to His teaching and doctrine was, in one sense of the word, a censure against that which He taught. Look in John chapter 6, beginning with verse 32, and watch how this develops.

SCRIPTURE READING - John 6:32-35, 51-66 (KJV)

> Then Jesus said to them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." Then said they unto him, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." And Jesus said unto them, "I am the bread of life: he that

> cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."
>
> "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Then Jesus said to them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."
>
> "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."
>
> Now, of course, our Lord was not necessarily talking literally and physically. He was speaking metaphorically and spiritually. But look what happens. "Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."
>
> Then said Jesus unto the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Then Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

Rejecting Sound Doctrine Rejects Christ

> Christ has been essentially excommunicated from His own church by those who profess religion but do not possess Christ. John 6 is very emphatic. When you walk away from the doctrine and teaching of Christ, you walk away from Christ. When you exclude His Word, you exclude Christ. Listen to what the Apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 4, verses 2 and 3. Paul told Timothy, "Preach the word. Be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.” What will they do? They will heap to

themselves teachers having itching ears. In other words, they want someone to scratch their ears. They want someone to teach what they want taught and say what they want said. They are not interested in truth or doctrine; they are interested only in what they want.

When one rejects the sound doctrine of Christ, he will always turn to others who will give him what he wants to hear. At the same time, when he turns to others, he has also rejected Christ and His Word. He has effectively cut Him off and cast Him out. In other words, he has excommunicated Christ from his life.

Look back to Hebrews, chapter 13, and verse 12. I am mainly dealing with verses 12 and 13, but verse 11 shows us exactly what was happening in the context: "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp." "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."

Where Is Christ? Theologically and Morally

Now, where is Christ? We confess and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is in the heaven of heavens. He is in the most holy place, seated at the right hand of God the Father. This was prophesied in the Old Testament and confirmed in the New Testament. Psalm 110 and verse 1 says, "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." This is the most frequently quoted verse in the Old Testament. It is quoted in the New Testament more than any other verse. The LORD said unto my Lord, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

Now you will see how this is applied to Christ. Acts chapter 2, verse 25, says, "For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved." Verse 33 says, "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Verse 34 says, "For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand."

We know where our Lord is theologically and positionally, but do we know where He is metaphorically and morally? He is not anywhere around established religion. Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, and all the other isms are without Jesus Christ. Moreover, all those professing Christian churches that are more interested in entertainment, programs, buildings, ecumenism, compromise, seeker-friendly atmospheres, and building a name for themselves are without Christ. He is nowhere near them. His Word is not there. He is not there. Where is He? He is outside the gate and without the camp.

Old Testament Parallels: Empty Religion Rejected

Modern-day Christendom, or the religious establishment, has basically fallen into the same trap that ancient Israel did. Hosea chapter 8, beginning at verse 12, says concerning Israel, “I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.” They were counted as a strange thing. The word does not simply refer to something funny-sounding or to something we have never heard before. Remember, the word refers to a prostitute as a strange woman. Here it means an alien thing to him. “I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.” Now watch what happens when you reject the Word of God: “They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat it.”

"But the LORD accepteth them not; now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins: they shall return to Egypt." Here it is: "For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples." He has forgotten God and built the temples. What is he doing? He is making a profession of worshipping God and building magnificent buildings, but the worship of God is not there. God is not there. It is all external; it is all hypocritical. In other words, we basically have forgotten Christ. We have forgotten His Word, repentance, faith, and obedience. Basically, what modern-day Christendom is doing is this: We are majoring on the minors, somehow thinking that structures, rituals, ceremonies, pageants, and programs can please the sovereign God of heaven and earth. We have forgotten that empty ceremonies and heartless rituals are absolutely despised by God.

Look in Amos chapter 5, beginning at verse 21. Look what God says 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." Did not God appoint those feast days, sacrifices, solemn assemblies, music, musicians, and songs? Why, then, does God look at Israel and say, "I hate and despise all of your rituals and all of your ceremonies"? The answer is that they had turned away from God's judgment, God's word, and God's justice. Their ceremonies and rituals were absolutely empty, meaningless, and heartless.

We have forgotten the simple question in 1 Samuel 15:22, where Samuel asks Saul, "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." God would rather have our obedience than all the sacrifices, rituals, and ceremonies we can perform.

That is why, in Micah 6:8, God said, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" What does God require of thee? To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.

Remember the passage in Luke 18 where the Pharisee and the publican went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee prayed, "Lord, I thank thee that I'm not as other men. I thank thee that I'm not as this publican. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I possess." But the publican would not even lift his eyes toward heaven. He smote himself on his breast and said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Our Lord said, "Verily, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other." What was he doing? He was walking humbly.

He acknowledged what he was. He acknowledged that he deserved nothing. God has showed us what He demands of us. Look

in your Bibles at Jeremiah chapter 22, beginning with verse 13. God says, "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work; that saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion."

Now watch. Here is what he has done: he has built a big, beautiful mansion. Look at the question God asked in verse 15: "Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him?" He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: "was not this to know me? saith the LORD."

What good is a big, beautiful building without truth and righteousness and holiness and justice? I don't know if you've ever been through Atlanta on I-75, but as you get on the outskirts of the city, there's this huge church building. I mean, huge. I don't even know the name of the church. I've often said, how would you like to have one Federal Reserve note for each brick in that building? I don't know how many bricks are in it. It is humongous.

But the question is this: We can do all of those things, but what good is a building without obedience and without holiness, without righteousness? All I'm trying to show you today is this: The context of Hebrews chapter 13 is consistent with that which was foreshadowed and typified in the Old Testament. We need not look for Christ in fine buildings, in great works, in rituals, or in ceremonies. Why? Because He is not there. Hold Hebrews 13, but turn back in your Bibles to Exodus chapter 33 and verse 7.

The Tabernacle Outside the Camp

“And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.”

Exodus chapter 32 deals with the golden calf incident. Aaron collected the golden earrings, fashioned the molten calf, and said,

"These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." The people had disobeyed God. They had rebelled. They had refused to obey God's law. Incidentally, they broke all ten commandments at one time. Because of their sin and rebellion, God now refuses to walk among them. He said, "And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way."

So what did Moses do? Moses took the tabernacle, which in all of its parts, as well as its ceremonies, was pictures, symbols, and types of Christ, and pitched it without the camp. "And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp." The Israelites that really wanted to seek the Lord had to separate themselves from their wickedness and go forth unto Christ. Christ cannot and will not abide compromise, complacency, or iniquity.

Here is the whole point. Hebrews 13:12 says, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." He suffered without the gate at Jerusalem, as the sin offering was consumed without the camp, when the tabernacle abode in the wilderness.

Why Christ Suffered Outside the Gate

Why did Christ suffer without the gate of Jerusalem? Someone will say, "Well, to fulfill prophecy." That is true. Prophecy was fulfilled. That is what Hebrews 13 is telling us based upon Exodus 33 and verse 7. But that is not the practical answer. Christ suffered without the gate of Jerusalem because the religious leaders, along with the political leaders, despised, hated, refused, and crucified Him.

They did not desire Him, His Word, His rule, or His law. They wanted no part of Christ. They cast Him out. They excommunicated Him. If you think for one moment that the political and religious leaders of this world have any interest in Christ and His kingdom at heart, you need to think again. If you really believe the political and religious establishments genuinely want Christ and His law, then I believe you are deceived.

I have had many well-meaning Christians come to me after I preached a particular sermon and say, “Wow. If only our leaders could hear this, if only you could preach this before Congress, or if you could only preach this at the White House.” Do you think for one minute that Congress or those in the White House would listen or hear? It would make absolutely no impression upon them at all. Why? They do not want the truth.

It is true that they will use Christ and His followers. Have you noticed that every politician professes to be religious, and many profess to be Christians? They say one thing and then do the opposite. It is a total, absolute charade to them. They know how to talk the talk, and they know that talking the talk is sufficient for most professing Christians. Why? Because we are so dull, so dead, and so deformed, spiritually speaking, that we cannot even discern their hypocrisy.

What did our Lord say? “It is by their fruits you shall know them,” not by their words. It does not matter what a politician says, and it really does not matter what an established religious leader says; you look at his life. The interesting thing is that most of the black religious leaders as well as the white religious leaders, nationally known, are adulterers and whoremongers and fornicators and thieves. They will talk the talk, but they certainly do not walk the walk. Those who profess to be Christians to get your vote, when they get in office, will vote for and pass anti-biblical and anti-Christian laws without even wincing.

Christ Withdrawn from the Establishment

They think nothing about it. The only kingdom they are interested in is their own kingdom, much like Nebuchadnezzar when he said in Daniel 4:30, “Then the king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?” They are not interested in Christ or in His law; they are interested in their kingdom. You may look in all the political places that you would like, but you will not find Christ there. You may look in all the established religious places that you like, but you will not find Christ there. Christ is not in religion. Christ is not in the politically correct crowd.

He has been shut out, kicked out, excommunicated, and shunned. Those who think that Christ is still in the establishment have never read the Scriptures and have no understanding how governments and religious establishments really work.

In Hosea 5:6, we read, “They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them.” Why? “They have dealt treacherously against the LORD: for they have begotten strange children.” They go to seek the LORD, yet they are not going to find Him. Why? He has withdrawn Himself from them.

In the Song of Solomon, chapter 5 and verse 6, the bride is so concerned with herself. The groom is knocking at the door, and she says, “How can I arise? You know, I've perfumed myself. How can I get up now and go to him?” When she finally goes, she says, “I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake.” “I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.” She went to open the door, but he had withdrawn Himself.

In Micah 3:4, the same truth is declared.

The Scripture says, “Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.” What did he say? He will not hear them. Why? He will even hide his face from them at that time, because they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.

Now look in Revelation chapter 3, beginning with verse 14, and see what our Lord said to the church of the Laodiceans: “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.” Isn’t it interesting?

He is saying, “I’d rather you be either out and out for me or out and out against me.” Watch verse 16: “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”

If we put these Scriptures together, Christ spits out, hides His face, and withdraws Himself from those who hate Him, despise Him, and disobey Him. How, then, can Christ be in any place that rejects Him and His Word? In light of these truths, the question has to be asked: What must we do? We cannot support anything that is unbiblical and unchristian. If we wish to be pleasing to our Lord, we must be where He is.

The Plea: Go Forth to Him

Our Lord said in John 12:26, “If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.” Did you hear what He said? “And where I am”—wherever I am—“there will my servant also be.” Wherever He is, there His servant will also be.

Now let us go back to Hebrews 13:13: “Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.” Christ has been kicked out; Christ has been excommunicated. What are we to do? Here is the plea: “Let us go forth.” In other words, now is not the time to sit still. We know where Christ is metaphysically and morally, so let us arise and go forth.

The plea in verse 13, taken in its context, is actually a plea for the early believers to leave the temple worship, with all its rituals and ceremonies, and go to Christ. Why? Because the tabernacle and the temple, with all those rituals and ceremonies, were nothing but types, emblems, and shadows. They are now useless since the reality has come.

The apostle is saying that Christ has fulfilled every type and every shadow. He is not in the tabernacle, the temple, the ceremonies, or the rituals. He is here, outside the camp. He is not going to be there in the established, politically correct religion. Look in Hebrews 10, beginning with verse 9. Here is why the apostle is pleading, “Let us go forth”: “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.”

"He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away

sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

Why would we leave the tabernacle? Why would we leave the temple? Because Christ is not there. The rituals are empty, and the ceremonies are worthless. They were pictures, types, emblems, and shadows; now we have the real thing. The plea is, let us arise and go forth to Christ in the fullness of His sacrifice, His work, His obedience, and His worship. Let us leave sin and the world and the pleasures, as well as our own works and our own righteousness, and go to Him. That is the plea.

The plea is not to go forth to a system, a religion, or an establishment. It is for you and me to go forth to a person, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who is a living person. You remember what He said: "Where I am, there will my servant also be." He invited us, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The invitation was to come to Christ. He also said, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

John chapter 6 is on the bread of life, and John chapter 7 is on the water of life. In John 7:37, Jesus said, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

There is a huge difference between coming down an aisle and coming to Christ, between joining a church and being joined to Christ, and between being associated with a religion and being a partaker of Jesus Christ. The gospel is not about Christ. Christ is the gospel. The gospel is not facts about Christ. Christ is the gospel.

We must be in Him. He is a living person, and we must partake of Him. He that would be saved must come to Christ. There is no church that can save you, no act that can save you, and no religious establishment that can save you. He that would be holy must come to Christ.

Alice and I get tickled many times at the names of churches that we see. Many have probably seen that one around Nahunta, the

Philadelphia Sawgrass Wesleyan Methodist Church—Philadelphia Sawgrass. We have seen a Weeping Mary Baptist Church. I suppose the truest sign of all that we saw in Tennessee was Compromised Baptist Church. I am serious. I have got a picture of it. Compromised Baptist Church had an arrow going that way. I said, "Well, that is probably the most truthful church sign I have ever seen in my life."

But you can join every church in the world, and it will not save you. Only Christ will save you. Only Christ will make you holy. We have seen the Holy Church of God in Christ sign, and you wonder if the people are really genuinely holy. You will never be holy by joining a church. You will only become holy in Christ. You will never become obedient by joining a church. You will only become obedient by submitting to Jesus Christ. So the plea is, let us go forth. The person is unto Him.

Bearing His Reproach

Thirdly, I want you to look in Hebrews 13 and verse 13. Here is the place: "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp." Without the camp. I want to read to you three paragraphs written by Arthur W. Pink. He is dealing with Hebrews 13 and verse 13, particularly with this phrase, "without the camp." Listen to what he says: "It is that particular point, the Jews casting out of Christ, anathematizing him, condemning him to a malefactor's death, which must guide us when seeking to identify the modern counterpart of the camp."

"There is really no exact replica on earth today of that Judaism which crucified the Lord Jesus. Certainly neither Romanism, blasphemous and horrible, as are many of its doctrines and practices, nor the most degenerate branches of Protestantism, rotten as some of them are in doctrines and works, can rightly be designated the present-day camp. No, as we pointed out previously, that which most closely resembles it, that which in principle is essentially like their do, is the secular profane world."

Although he is equating the camp with the world, certainly I believe the profane religious establishments, as well as the profane governments, would be applicable also. When we get to the book of

Revelation, we read not only about a spiritual Babylon, but an economic Babylon as well.

He identifies the camp with the world: “Its unregenerate and ungodly members do not profess to love Christ. The very mention of him is hateful to them. They desire to banish him entirely from their schemes and thoughts, except when they take his holy name in vain.”

Next, we sought to show in what sense the Lord requires his people to go forth outside the camp—that is, separate themselves from the ungodly, from those who hate and revile Christ. This is not to be understood literally or physically, but metaphorically or morally. It is not a local withdrawal from the world, but a religious and spiritual one. In other words, God does not bid his people be fanatics and lead the lives of hermits.

Taking refuge in monasteries and convents is the devil’s perversion of this important practical truth. The Christian is still left in the world, but he must not be of the world. Its policy and maxims must not regulate him; its pleasures and attractions must not capture his heart; its friendship must not be sought. Its politics are no concern of his. In heart and soul interest, he is a stranger here, conducting himself as a pilgrim, passing through this scene, using this world, but not abusing it.

To go forth unto Christ without the camp means making a complete break with the former manner of life, renouncing everything opposed to Christ, and relinquishing whatever would hinder communion with him. In a word, the exhortation of our text is another way of presenting the Lord’s declaration: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” Sin must be mortified, the flesh with its affections and lusts crucified, the world forsaken, and Christ’s example diligently followed. Going forth unto him outside the camp is not a single act done once for all at conversion, but a habitual thing, a constant attitude of life. The cross must be taken up by the Christian daily.

Going forth unto Him is not a one-time thing. It is an attitude, a lifestyle, a perspective, and a worldview. We, like all the other men of faith in Hebrews 11:13, like our forefathers, must confess and

acknowledge that we are strangers and pilgrims on this earth. As the Apostle Paul said, we must learn to die daily. Where is Christ?

Theologically and positionally, He is at the right hand of God. Metaphorically and morally, He has been cast out of this world, cast out of religious establishments, and cast out of politically correct governments. Martin Luther said it like this: "I had rather be in hell with Christ than in heaven without Christ." Truly, heaven without Christ would be hell, and hell with Christ would be heaven. Therefore, we must go forth unto Him without the camp.

Hebrews 13:13 gives us the performance: "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." Are we willing to bear His reproach? Do you perform very well under pressure, criticism, and complaints? Are you able to drink of His cup? Are you ready, willing, and able to bear the reproach that will be cast upon you? Are you willing, ready, and able to suffer for His sake?

Do you understand that Christ was willing to bear the reproach of the Father? What do you mean, the reproach of the Father? Do you remember those Old Testament times when the people provoked God and sinned against Him? They reproached God. Anytime you deny God's law, you are saying, in essence, that God is not right and His law is not perfect: I can be my own god. You are thus reproaching God.

Psalm 69:9 says, "For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." It was speaking about the Messiah. Romans 15:3 says, "For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." Christ bore all the reproaches that wicked and rebellious people had placed upon God. If we identify ourselves with the reproached and excommunicated Christ, we shall be reproached and excommunicated ourselves by the religious and politically correct establishment.

We will be labeled and counted as zealots, dogmatists, right-wing nuts, survivalists, cultists, hate groups, terrorists, and narrow-minded bigots. We will probably also be referred to as a compound or a militia group. Have you ever noticed that every home

that has been invaded by the federal government has been designated as a compound? I wonder what the difference is between a compound and a home. The world may hate us, but their hatred, accusations, and ill will will not deter us.

Know what our Lord said in Luke 6:22: “Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.” The Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 4:10 said this: “For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God.”

Moses forsook the headship and all the treasures of Egypt. Hebrews 11:24 says, “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” Why? “Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.”

How much do you treasure the reproach of Christ? What is your estimation of the reproach of Jesus Christ? How do you value it? Moses turned down the headship, the pharaohship, and all the wealth of Egypt because he believed the reproach of Christ was greater than all its riches.

In that light, we can clearly understand what Paul meant in 2 Corinthians 12:10: “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.” He said, “I take pleasure in infirmities and reproaches for Christ’s sake.” The plea is, Let us go forth; the person is unto Him; the place is without the camp; the performance is bearing His reproach.

The world, religion, and political correctness have not only condemned and crucified Christ; they have excommunicated Him. He has been officially censured and cast out by the world, and He was officially censured and cast out by His own. Scripture says, “He came unto his own, but his own received him not.” Our Lord said in John 15:18, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.” The world hates Him and has cast Him out.

Personally, I would rather have fellowship with the excommunicated Christ than be excommunicated by Christ. I would rather have fellowship with Christ, whom the world despises, than fellowship with the world and be despised by Christ. If we stand for Christ, His righteousness, His truth, and His Word, the world will hate and despise us. We have been well warned: “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.”

Applications and Conclusion

There's something dreadfully wrong with professing Christendom when those who hate Christ and His law speak well and approvingly of Christians.

We need to bear the reproach of our Lord willingly, cheerfully, courageously, and patiently. He bore our shame and reproach. We should be willing to bear His.

The Apostle Paul said, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”

In this day and time, when the powers that be and the religious establishments are anti-Christian, anti-Bible, anti-God, and anti-family, we need to come to this conclusion: it is an honor to be reproached for Christ’s sake. It is an honor to be condemned with Christ. It is an honor to be excommunicated with Christ. We need not fear the reproach or reviling of men. Our goal should be to know Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, that we may be with Him without the gate. I had rather be with Christ without the gate than inside the gate without Christ.

Father, help us, I pray. Prepare our hearts and minds. May we love Thee, serve Thee, and receive grace to cheerfully and gladly

suffer with Thee and for Thee, and to be reproached for Thy honor and Thy name's sake. Help us and deliver us, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Source Notes

Chapter 1: Necessity for a Biblical Philosophy
JW01087 | 2001-04-01 | SermonAudio

Chapter 2: God is a Warrior
JW01066 | 2002-10-22 | SermonAudio

Chapter 3: The Truth About the Confederate Battle Flag
JW00988 | 2005-01-22 | SermonAudio

Chapter 4: A Professional Army vs. A Militia
JW00899 | 2006-12-29 | SermonAudio

Chapter 5: 5 Sanctification & Sexual Purity
JW00865 | 2007-10-22 | SermonAudio

Chapter 6: Are You Special?
JW00829 | 2008-07-13 | SermonAudio

Chapter 7: Are You Special?
JW00821 | 2008-08-16 | SermonAudio

Chapter 8: Nathan Bedford Forrest
JW00696 | 2011-06-26 | SermonAudio

Chapter 9: Life in the Midst of Death
JW00634 | 2012-11-18 | SermonAudio

Chapter 10: When God Has Had Enough
JW00545 | 2015-05-12 | SermonAudio

Chapter 11: The Truth about Andersonville Prison
JW01195 | 2012-01-26 | YouTube

Chapter 12: When God Has Had Enough
JW00516 | 2015-12-13 | SermonAudio

Chapter 13: A Token of Perdition
JW01213 | 2012-02-01 | YouTube

Chapter 14: The Pattern For Christian Obedience
JW00491 | 2016-08-19 | SermonAudio

Chapter 15: When You Know You Are Going to Die
JW01234 | 2012-02-02 | YouTube

Chapter 16: Reality, Faith and Obedience
JW00490 | 2016-08-21 | SermonAudio

Chapter 17: Expressions of a Slave Mentality
JW01275 | 2012-02-17 | YouTube

Chapter 18: How Easily We Forget
JW00420 | 2018-05-11 | SermonAudio

Chapter 19: Impossible Situations
JW01310 | 2012-11-20 | YouTube

Chapter 20: How Easily We Forget
JW00391 | 2018-12-06 | SermonAudio

Chapter 21: The Excommunication of Jesus Christ
JW01332 | 2012-12-03 | YouTube

Topical Index

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

5

5 Sanctification & Sexual Purity p. 95

A

A Professional Army vs. A Militia p. 77

A Token of Perdition p. 257

Adversaries seek to terrify us p. 265

America's Parallel and the Call to Righteousness p. 253

Application: Our Own Forgetfulness p. 360

Application: Personal Holiness in Light of Coming Judgment p. 215

Application: Preparedness for Death p. 308

Application: Rejecting the Slave Mentality Today p. 343

Application: The Need for Godly Men in Society p. 130

Applications and Conclusion p. 422

Applications for Today p. 92

Applications: Developing a Theocentric Worldview p. 29

Applications: Hope and Obedience in Judgment p. 193

Applications: judgment and reward p. 272

Applications: Just Violence and Rejecting Pacifism p. 51

Applications: Thankfulness, Repentance, and Seeking Greater Obedience p. 326

Are You Special? p. 111, p. 133

B

Bearing His Reproach p. 418

Biblical Evidence of Distinction Between Righteous and Wicked p. 114

Biblical Examples of Church Discipline p. 406

Biblical Examples of Impossible Situations p. 363

Biblical Foundation: Freedom in Christ vs. Bondage to Sin p. 330

Biblical Instances When God Said 'Enough' p. 202

Biblical survey of tokens p. 258

Biblical Usage of 'Pattern' and 'Example' p. 277

C

Call to Remember and Repent p. 401
Christ as Captain of the Lord's Host p. 49
Christ as the Supreme Example (1 Peter 2:21) p. 278
Christ Excommunicated by His Own p. 407
Christ Magnified the Law (Isaiah 42:21; Galatians 4:4-5) p. 286
Christ Withdrawn from the Establishment p. 414
Christ's Sending and Our Sending (John 8:29; 20:21) p. 279
Christians have adversaries p. 261
Clarification of the Truth in Verses 4-5 p. 97
Clarifying 'No Respecter of Persons' p. 115
Comparative Death Statistics p. 219
Complacency p. 339
Conclusion and Prayer p. 131
Conclusion: Pleading for Grace to Obey p. 290
Conclusion: Return to the Old Paths p. 75
Conclusion: The Sin of False Witness p. 234
Conclusion: Trust in God Alone p. 384
Confederate vs. Union Prison Policies p. 218
Cowardice p. 332
Current Events: Government Overreach and Media Control p. 369

D

David's Prayer and Praise (Psalm 4:1) p. 139
David's Pronouncement: The Godly Are Set Apart (Psalm 4:3) p. 142
David's Protest (Psalm 4:2) p. 142
Defining Godliness: Not Perfection but Conformity to God's Will p. 124

E

Elaboration: Defrauding a Brother (Verse 6a) p. 108
Exposition of Psalm 4:1-2: David's Prayer, Praise, and Protest p. 118
Expressions of a Slave Mentality p. 329, p. 334
Eyewitness Testimonies on Rations and Conditions p. 222

F

First Expression: Cowardice p. 332
Forgetting in the Christian Life p. 401
Forrest on Fidelity p. 168
Forrest on Fighting p. 158, p. 159
Forrest on Fighting and Forthrightness p. 163
Forrest on Forgiveness p. 171
Forrest on Forthrightness p. 164
Forrest on Forthrightness and Fidelity p. 167
Forrest's Conversion and Legacy p. 175
Forrest's Reputation and Early Influences p. 156
Fourth Expression: Convenience p. 341

G

General Promises for Long Life p. 296
God as Warrior: The Biblical Theme p. 33
God Does Not Treat Everyone Alike p. 113, p. 135
God Is a Warrior p. 31
God is a Warrior p. 31
God Is No Respecter of Persons Explained p. 136
God Teaches and Preserves Warriors p. 46
God's Acts of War in History p. 40
God's Answer to Jeremiah's Prayer p. 244
God's Determination to Destroy Judah p. 181
God's Goodness, Forbearance, and Longsuffering (Romans 2:1-5) p. 199
God's Methods of Dealing with Enemies p. 379
God's Patience and Its Misinterpretation p. 239
God's Response to Jeremiah's Intercession (Jeremiah 14-15) p. 205
God's Sovereignty Over Weather and Judgment p. 178
God's Weariness and the Finality of Judgment (Jeremiah 15:5-6) p. 214

H

Historical Examples of God's 'Enough' p. 241
Historical Testimony from Black Confederates p. 62
How Easily We Forget p. 345, p. 387

How Quickly Israel Forgot p. 356, p. 396
Humanism and the Rejection of Biblical Truth p. 32

I

Idolatry in Modern Life p. 389
Implications of the Militia System p. 80
Impossible Situations p. 363
Introduction and Psalm 144 p. 155
Introduction and Scriptural Foundation p. 217
Introduction and Scripture Reading p. 293
Introduction to Philippians 1:28 and the concept of tokens p. 257
Introduction: America Under Judgment p. 177
Introduction: Human Breaking Points and God's Character p. 198
Introduction: Human vs. Divine 'Enough' p. 238
Introduction: Impossible Situations Defined p. 363
Introduction: Israel's Request for a King p. 77
Introduction: The Biblical Importance of Flags and Standards p. 55
Introduction: The Commonness of Forgetting p. 345
Introduction: The Desire for Special Treatment p. 112
Introduction: The Desire to Be Special p. 134
Introduction: The Nature of Reality p. 311
Introduction: The Necessity of a Biblical Philosophy p. 11
Introduction: The Need for a Pattern p. 275
Introduction: The Need to Know God's Word on War p. 31
Introduction: The Prevalence of a Slave Mentality p. 329
Introduction: The Problem of Forgetting p. 387
Introduction: The Strange Word 'Excommunication' p. 405
Israel's Organization as a Militia p. 79
Israel's Provocation and Judgment p. 301
Israel's Witness of God's Mighty Works p. 349
Israel's Witness of God's Power p. 391

J

Jeremiah's Haunting Question and Final Plea p. 362

L

Life in the Midst of Death p. 177

Love Fulfills the Law (Matthew 7:12; Romans 13:10) p. 287

N

Nathan Bedford Forrest p. 155

Necessity for a Biblical Philosophy p. 11

O

Old and New Testament Teaching on God's Peculiar People p. 123

Old Testament Parallels: Empty Religion Rejected p. 410

Overview of Confederate Flags p. 59

Overview of Northern Prisons p. 220

P

Possessing the Vessel in Sanctification and Honor p. 103

Practical Godliness and Its Blessings p. 149

Practical Godliness in Marriage and Daily Life p. 127

Prisoner Petitions and Despair p. 228

Psalm 4:3: God Sets Apart the Godly p. 121

Psalm 76:5 and the Assyrian Threat p. 372

Q

Quality of Life and Obedience p. 297

R

Racism Under the Stars and Stripes p. 63

Reality, Faith and Obedience p. 311

Reality, Faith, and Obedience p. 311

Rejecting Sound Doctrine Rejects Christ p. 408

Responses to the Truth (Acts 17:32-34) p. 29

Review of Previous Verses (1 Thessalonians 4:1-3) p. 96

S

Sanctification and the Law (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8) p. 288

Second Expression: Compromise p. 335

Survivor 1: Baruch – Life Amidst Death p. 187

Survivor 2: The Rechabites – Obedience Rewarded p. 188

Survivor 3: Ebed-Melech – Trust and Deliverance p. 191

T

The Book of Numbers: A Manual for War p. 38
The Call to Please God and the Promise of Being Heard p. 129
The Church at Ephesus: Leaving First Love p. 361
The Confederate Battle Flag Is Not a Racist Flag p. 60
The Confederate Flag Is a Christian Flag p. 69
The Confederate Flag Is Not a Flag of Slavery p. 65
The Consequence of Forgetting God's Law (Hosea 4:6) p. 289
The Context: Jeremiah and the Fall of Jerusalem p. 180
The Continuation of the Standing Army under Uzziah p. 91
The double token: perdition and salvation p. 269
The Emancipation Proclamation as a War Measure p. 68
The Excommunication of Christ p. 405
The Excommunication of Jesus Christ p. 405
The Flag Represents Freedom from Tyranny p. 72
The Fulfillment of God's Decree p. 305
The Futility of Prayer for a Doomed Nation p. 245
The Futility of Prayer Without Repentance p. 209
The Iniquity of the Amorites and National Judgment p. 203
The Judgment on Judah Because of Manasseh p. 211
The Limits of Intercession (Ezekiel 14:12-20) p. 208
The Lord is a Man of War p. 48
The Lord of Hosts: God's Warrior Name p. 37
The Meaning of 'None of the Men of Might Have Found Their Hands' p. 382
The Meaning of 'Vessel' in Verse 4 p. 98
The Means of Shortened Life p. 298
The nature of our adversaries p. 264
The Need for God to Turn Us p. 324
The Negative Clarification: Not in Lust of Concupiscence p. 105
The Pattern For Christian Obedience p. 275
The Pattern of Christian Obedience p. 275
The Plea: Go Forth to Him p. 416
The Progression of Forgetting p. 388

The Progression of Forgetting: Works, Covenant, God p. 346
The Propaganda Against Andersonville p. 218
The Reality of Knowing You Will Die p. 295
The Reality of Potential Revival (Psalm 81:13-16) p. 323
The Reality of Rebellion (Psalm 81:11-12) p. 319
The Reality of Redemption (Psalm 81:10) p. 314
The Reality of Revival p. 322
The Red Sea Deliverance and Passover Memorial p. 354
The Scapegoating and Execution of Major Wirz p. 230
The Servant's Ear and Perfect Obedience (Psalm 40; Exodus 21; Deuteronomy 15) p. 282
The Significance of Baptism p. 389
The Sin of David's Census and Standing Army p. 86
The Sins of Manasseh and National Judgment p. 250
The Tabernacle Outside the Camp p. 412
The Then of Paul's Declaration (Acts 17:22-31) p. 25
The Then of Paul's Opposition (Acts 17:18-21) p. 17
The Therefore of Paul's Determination (Acts 17:15-17) p. 14
The Truth about Andersonville Prison p. 217
The Truth About the Confederate Battle Flag p. 55
The Union Refusal to Exchange Prisoners p. 227
The War Was Not Fought Over Slavery p. 65
Third Expression: Complacency p. 339
Three Survivors in the Midst of Judgment p. 186

V

Violence Among Prisoners and Wirz's Cooperation p. 223

W

What It Means to Be Godly p. 145
When God Has Had Enough p. 197, p. 198, p. 237, p. 238
When You Know You Are Going to Die p. 293
When You Know You're Going to Die p. 293
Where Is Christ? Theologically and Morally p. 409
Why Christ Suffered Outside the Gate p. 413

Why So Many Illustrations? p. 368
Why the Flag Must Be Attacked p. 74

Scripture Index

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

Genesis

Genesis 15:13 p. 203

Exodus

Exodus 5:19 p. 364
Exodus 6:1 p. 365
Exodus 8:25 p. 336
Exodus 9 p. 351, p. 352, p. 353
Exodus 9:24 p. 353, p. 394
Exodus 9:4-7 p. 393
Exodus 10:22-23 p. 393
Exodus 11 p. 135, p. 350, p. 351
Exodus 11:7 p. 135, p. 392, p. 393
Exodus 12 p. 135
Exodus 12:1 p. 396
Exodus 12:1-7 p. 355
Exodus 12:11 p. 355, p. 397
Exodus 12:12 p. 353
Exodus 13 p. 397
Exodus 13:18 p. 79, p. 332
Exodus 14 p. 302, p. 365
Exodus 14:10-12 p. 341, p. 342
Exodus 14:12 p. 340
Exodus 14:27 p. 354, p. 396
Exodus 15 p. 48, p. 49, p. 159
Exodus 15:1 p. 48, p. 49
Exodus 15:22 p. 356, p. 357
Exodus 16:1 p. 357
Exodus 17 p. 302, p. 357
Exodus 19 p. 399, p. 400

Exodus 19:1 p. 400
Exodus 19:16 p. 358
Exodus 19:5 p. 123, p. 144
Exodus 20:1 p. 314
Exodus 21 p. 282
Exodus 22 p. 109
Exodus 25:40 p. 276
Exodus 25:9 p. 276
Exodus 30 p. 88
Exodus 32 p. 302
Exodus 32:1-6 p. 358
Exodus 32:32 p. 207, p. 246
Exodus 33 p. 16, p. 17, p. 413
Exodus 34 p. 16, p. 17, p. 302
Exodus 34:24 p. 381

Numbers

Numbers 1 p. 38
Numbers 1:46 p. 306
Numbers 1:47-49 p. 88, p. 89
Numbers 1:52 p. 55
Numbers 8:4 p. 276
Numbers 10:9 p. 39
Numbers 11:5 p. 337
Numbers 14 p. 293, p. 308
Numbers 14:1 p. 303
Numbers 14:11 p. 303
Numbers 14:2 p. 304
Numbers 14:21-35 p. 293
Numbers 14:26 p. 304
Numbers 17 p. 260
Numbers 17:10 p. 260
Numbers 21:14 p. 48
Numbers 26:2 p. 39
Numbers 26:63-65 p. 307

Numbers 31 p. 39
Numbers 32:17 p. 79
Numbers 32:23 p. 302

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 3 p. 44
Deuteronomy 4 p. 159, p. 347, p. 350, p. 351
Deuteronomy 4:23 p. 388
Deuteronomy 4:9 p. 387
Deuteronomy 6 p. 348
Deuteronomy 6:12 p. 390
Deuteronomy 7 p. 242
Deuteronomy 7:2 p. 203
Deuteronomy 8 p. 348
Deuteronomy 8:11 p. 390
Deuteronomy 8:19 p. 391
Deuteronomy 14:2 p. 123, p. 144
Deuteronomy 15 p. 282
Deuteronomy 15:16 p. 283
Deuteronomy 19:17-19 p. 234
Deuteronomy 20 p. 79
Deuteronomy 20:17 p. 203, p. 242
Deuteronomy 20:8 p. 265, p. 266
Deuteronomy 22 p. 110, p. 296
Deuteronomy 22:28 p. 109, p. 110
Deuteronomy 25 p. 297
Deuteronomy 26 p. 123
Deuteronomy 26:18 p. 123, p. 144
Deuteronomy 26:8 p. 392
Deuteronomy 28 p. 340, p. 341
Deuteronomy 30:15 p. 301
Deuteronomy 30:20 p. 300
Deuteronomy 34:12 p. 392

Joshua

Joshua 1:14 p. 79

Joshua 4:12 p. 79

Joshua 5 p. 49

Joshua 5:13 p. 49

Judges

Judges 7:11 p. 79

1 Samuel

1 Samuel 2 p. 299

1 Samuel 7:9 p. 207, p. 208, p. 246

1 Samuel 8 p. 86

1 Samuel 8:1-17 p. 77

1 Samuel 8:20 p. 92

1 Samuel 12:23 p. 207, p. 208, p. 246

1 Samuel 13:17-22 p. 82

1 Samuel 14:6 p. 163

1 Samuel 15:22 p. 411

1 Samuel 15:23 p. 270

1 Samuel 17 p. 37, p. 38

1 Samuel 22 p. 85

1 Samuel 25:13 p. 82

2 Samuel

2 Samuel 22:35 p. 46

2 Samuel 23 p. 159, p. 160

2 Samuel 24 p. 87

1 Kings

1 Kings 12:16 p. 85

2 Kings

2 Kings 7 p. 380, p. 381

2 Kings 18:17-20 p. 374

2 Kings 18:37-19 p. 376

2 Kings 19 p. 381

2 Kings 19:7 p. 380
2 Kings 21 p. 251
2 Kings 24 p. 253

1 Chronicles

1 Chronicles 18 p. 47
1 Chronicles 21 p. 87, p. 90
1 Chronicles 21:6 p. 88, p. 89
1 Chronicles 26:27 p. 90
1 Chronicles 27 p. 89, p. 90
1 Chronicles 28 p. 90
1 Chronicles 28:11-12 p. 276
1 Chronicles 28:3 p. 90

2 Chronicles

2 Chronicles 6:34 p. 50
2 Chronicles 7:14 p. 209, p. 248
2 Chronicles 13:12 p. 50
2 Chronicles 14 p. 367
2 Chronicles 20 p. 51
2 Chronicles 25 p. 35
2 Chronicles 26 p. 91
2 Chronicles 28:4-5 p. 35

Nehemiah

Nehemiah 6:11 p. 267

Job

Job 5 p. 141
Job 5:19 p. 119
Job 7:1 p. 298
Job 9:4 p. 270
Job 14:4-5 p. 298

Psalm

Psalm 2 p. 382
Psalm 3 p. 118, p. 138

Psalm 3:4 p. 333
Psalm 4 p. 114, p. 118, p. 119, p. 122, p. 123, p. 124, p. 129, p. 133, p. 138, p. 145
Psalm 4:1 p. 139
Psalm 4:1-2 p. 118
Psalm 4:1-8 p. 111
Psalm 4:2 p. 142
Psalm 4:3 p. 121, p. 122, p. 142, p. 144, p. 151
Psalm 5:12 p. 131, p. 152
Psalm 10 p. 349
Psalm 12 p. 130
Psalm 12:1 p. 151
Psalm 18 p. 46
Psalm 18:34 p. 46
Psalm 20 p. 57
Psalm 32 p. 125, p. 146
Psalm 34 p. 115, p. 141, p. 299
Psalm 34:15 p. 136
Psalm 34:17 p. 119, p. 136
Psalm 34:6 p. 119
Psalm 37 p. 266, p. 299
Psalm 38:13 p. 342, p. 343
Psalm 40 p. 282, p. 283, p. 284
Psalm 44 p. 44, p. 45
Psalm 46 p. 384, p. 385
Psalm 46:1 p. 384, p. 385
Psalm 50:21 p. 302
Psalm 51 p. 146
Psalm 55:23 p. 299
Psalm 58 p. 284
Psalm 60 p. 57
Psalm 69:9 p. 420
Psalm 73 p. 298, p. 299
Psalm 76 p. 374
Psalm 76:5 p. 369, p. 372, p. 373, p. 374, p. 379, p. 381, p. 382

Psalm 76:5-8 p. 363
Psalm 80 p. 326
Psalm 81 p. 314, p. 316, p. 319, p. 322, p. 323
Psalm 81:10 p. 314
Psalm 81:11-12 p. 319
Psalm 81:13-16 p. 323
Psalm 85 p. 324
Psalm 85:4 p. 327
Psalm 86 p. 260
Psalm 90 p. 295
Psalm 94 p. 343, p. 344
Psalm 96:1 p. 16
Psalm 96:1-8 p. 16
Psalm 106:7 p. 338, p. 339
Psalm 110 p. 409
Psalm 135 p. 145
Psalm 135:4 p. 124, p. 144
Psalm 138 p. 308, p. 309, p. 324, p. 325
Psalm 138:2 p. 261
Psalm 144 p. 46, p. 155

Proverbs

Proverbs 2:22 p. 299
Proverbs 5 p. 100
Proverbs 8:35-36 p. 121, p. 142
Proverbs 12:26 p. 117, p. 118, p. 138
Proverbs 15 p. 114
Proverbs 15:29 p. 131, p. 136, p. 152
Proverbs 15:8 p. 136
Proverbs 20:6 p. 171
Proverbs 28 p. 114, p. 115
Proverbs 28:13 p. 126, p. 147
Proverbs 28:9 p. 136
Proverbs 29:1 p. 204, p. 243
Proverbs 29:25 p. 335

Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes 3:7 p. 342, p. 343
Ecclesiastes 9:10 p. 163

Isaiah

Isaiah 11 p. 58
Isaiah 26:12 p. 15
Isaiah 38 p. 295
Isaiah 42:21 p. 286
Isaiah 42:8 p. 16
Isaiah 46:10 p. 261
Isaiah 48 p. 284, p. 285
Isaiah 48:2-8 p. 285
Isaiah 57:15 p. 325

Jeremiah

Jeremiah 2:32 p. 402
Jeremiah 7:14 p. 206, p. 244, p. 245
Jeremiah 7:23 p. 300
Jeremiah 9:1 p. 180
Jeremiah 14 p. 180, p. 205, p. 206, p. 207
Jeremiah 14:19 p. 244
Jeremiah 15 p. 197, p. 202, p. 204, p. 205, p. 208, p. 209, p. 211, p. 212, p. 237, p. 238, p. 239, p. 247, p. 248, p. 253, p. 254
Jeremiah 15:1 p. 205, p. 207, p. 210, p. 215, p. 244, p. 246, p. 249
Jeremiah 15:1-8 p. 197
Jeremiah 15:5-6 p. 214
Jeremiah 21 p. 183
Jeremiah 21:1-10 p. 183
Jeremiah 22:18 p. 305
Jeremiah 27:5-12 p. 181
Jeremiah 35 p. 189
Jeremiah 36 p. 187
Jeremiah 38:1 p. 191
Jeremiah 38:15-20 p. 192

Jeremiah 38:6-14 p. 191
Jeremiah 45 p. 178, p. 186, p. 187
Jeremiah 50:25 p. 45
Jeremiah 51:19 p. 45
Jeremiah 52 p. 184, p. 185

Lamentations

Lamentations 3:22-23 p. 194, p. 360, p. 402

Ezekiel

Ezekiel 6:14 p. 179
Ezekiel 14 p. 185, p. 247
Ezekiel 14:12-17 p. 247
Ezekiel 14:12-20 p. 208
Ezekiel 14:21 p. 185
Ezekiel 18 p. 215
Ezekiel 22:30 p. 248

Daniel

Daniel 4:30 p. 414
Daniel 11:32 p. 334, p. 335

Hosea

Hosea 4:6 p. 289
Hosea 5:6 p. 415
Hosea 13:4 p. 315

Micah

Micah 3:4 p. 415
Micah 6:8 p. 411
Micah 6:9 p. 179

Habakkuk

Habakkuk 3:2 p. 325

Zephaniah

Zephaniah 2:3 p. 186, p. 194

Malachi

Malachi 2:15 p. 149

Malachi 3:16-17 p. 122

Matthew

Matthew 5:11 p. 263, p. 271

Matthew 5:44 p. 263

Matthew 7:12 p. 287

Matthew 10:28 p. 267, p. 268

Matthew 12:30 p. 270

Matthew 15 p. 296

Mark

Mark 7 p. 296

Mark 14:44 p. 260, p. 261

Luke

Luke 1:67 p. 36

Luke 6:22 p. 421

Luke 12:32 p. 368, p. 369

Luke 18 p. 363, p. 364, p. 411

Luke 22:15 p. 106

John

John 3:18 p. 269

John 3:36 p. 269

John 4:24 p. 27

John 4:34 p. 286

John 5:24 p. 309, p. 310

John 6 p. 408

John 6:32-35,51-66 p. 407

John 7:37 p. 417

John 8 p. 331

John 8:29 p. 128, p. 150, p. 279, p. 280

John 12:26 p. 416

John 14:23 p. 280

John 15 p. 327
John 15:18 p. 421
John 15:20 p. 263
John 16 p. 164, p. 165
John 16:33 p. 263
John 20 p. 279, p. 280

Acts

Acts 10:34 p. 136, p. 137
Acts 14:22 p. 263
Acts 17 p. 17
Acts 17:15-17 p. 14
Acts 17:15-27 p. 11
Acts 17:18 p. 22
Acts 17:18-21 p. 17
Acts 17:22-31 p. 25
Acts 17:28 p. 22
Acts 17:32-34 p. 29

Romans

Romans 2 p. 115, p. 201, p. 302, p. 303
Romans 2:1-5 p. 199, p. 200
Romans 2:11 p. 136, p. 137
Romans 2:4 p. 240
Romans 5 p. 148
Romans 6 p. 126, p. 147, p. 148
Romans 6:14 p. 126, p. 127
Romans 7 p. 105
Romans 8 p. 331
Romans 8:18 p. 273, p. 274
Romans 8:29 p. 150
Romans 8:31 p. 215, p. 254
Romans 8:35 p. 264
Romans 8:37 p. 268
Romans 9 p. 201

Romans 9:22 p. 240
Romans 13 p. 52, p. 250
Romans 13:10 p. 287
Romans 15 p. 308
Romans 15:3 p. 420

1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 1 p. 23
1 Corinthians 4 p. 277, p. 278
1 Corinthians 4:7 p. 113
1 Corinthians 6 p. 318, p. 340, p. 341
1 Corinthians 6:17 p. 104
1 Corinthians 7 p. 340, p. 341
1 Corinthians 14:33 p. 275
1 Corinthians 15 p. 283

2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 3 p. 331
2 Corinthians 5 p. 310
2 Corinthians 5:7 p. 333
2 Corinthians 12:10 p. 421

Galatians

Galatians 4 p. 286
Galatians 4:29 p. 262
Galatians 4:4-5 p. 286
Galatians 5:1 p. 331

Ephesians

Ephesians 4:15 p. 168
Ephesians 6 p. 115, p. 116, p. 264, p. 295, p. 296
Ephesians 6:9 p. 137

Philippians

Philippians 1 p. 257, p. 258, p. 264
Philippians 1:28 p. 257, p. 261, p. 266, p. 269, p. 272
Philippians 2:12 p. 15

Philippians 3 p. 277, p. 278
Philippians 3:19 p. 391

Colossians

Colossians 1:10 p. 276
Colossians 2:8 p. 13
Colossians 3 p. 321, p. 347
Colossians 3:25 p. 137
Colossians 3:5 p. 105, p. 389

1 Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians 4 p. 95, p. 98, p. 104, p. 109, p. 110
1 Thessalonians 4:1 p. 129, p. 150
1 Thessalonians 4:1-3 p. 96
1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 p. 288

2 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 1:5 p. 271
2 Thessalonians 3 p. 406

1 Timothy

1 Timothy 1:16 p. 277
1 Timothy 4:10 p. 421
1 Timothy 5:24 p. 273

2 Timothy

2 Timothy 1:7 p. 335, p. 368
2 Timothy 1:8 p. 193
2 Timothy 2:12 p. 272
2 Timothy 2:4 p. 129, p. 150
2 Timothy 3:12 p. 262
2 Timothy 3:16 p. 254, p. 255
2 Timothy 4 p. 408

Titus

Titus 2 p. 145
Titus 2:14 p. 124
Titus 2:7 p. 277

Hebrews

Hebrews 3 p. 294
Hebrews 3:17 p. 305, p. 306
Hebrews 8:5 p. 276
Hebrews 9 p. 295, p. 316
Hebrews 9:27 p. 308
Hebrews 10 p. 282, p. 416
Hebrews 11:13 p. 419, p. 420
Hebrews 11:24 p. 421
Hebrews 11:6 p. 129, p. 150
Hebrews 13 p. 412, p. 413, p. 418
Hebrews 13:12 p. 413
Hebrews 13:13 p. 416, p. 420
Hebrews 13:4 p. 100
Hebrews 13:5 p. 280

James

James 1:12 p. 271
James 2 p. 116, p. 137
James 4 p. 115
James 4:6 p. 136, p. 183
James 5 p. 129, p. 130
James 5:16 p. 151

1 Peter

1 Peter 2 p. 145
1 Peter 2:21 p. 278
1 Peter 2:9 p. 124
1 Peter 3 p. 98
1 Peter 3:10-11 p. 297, p. 298
1 Peter 4:16 p. 272
1 Peter 4:17-18 p. 254, p. 255

2 Peter

2 Peter 2 p. 241
2 Peter 2:6 p. 203

2 Peter 2:9 p. 194

1 John

1 John 1 p. 126, p. 147
1 John 1:9 p. 126
1 John 2 p. 126, p. 147
1 John 2:1 p. 126
1 John 2:19 p. 271
1 John 3:4 p. 217

Revelation

Revelation 2:1 p. 360
Revelation 2:10 p. 271
Revelation 2:4-5 p. 361
Revelation 19 p. 80, p. 81

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE

Your companion study guide

Exodus: Bondage, Deliverance, and Passover

Follow the Scripture references, reflect on each lesson,
and use the written-response space to apply what you learn.

Scan to open the matching study guide

Downloadable PDF | 8.5 x 11 inches
No sign-in required

studyguides.weaverbiblecollege.com

If you cannot scan the code, visit the address above
and search for this book by title.