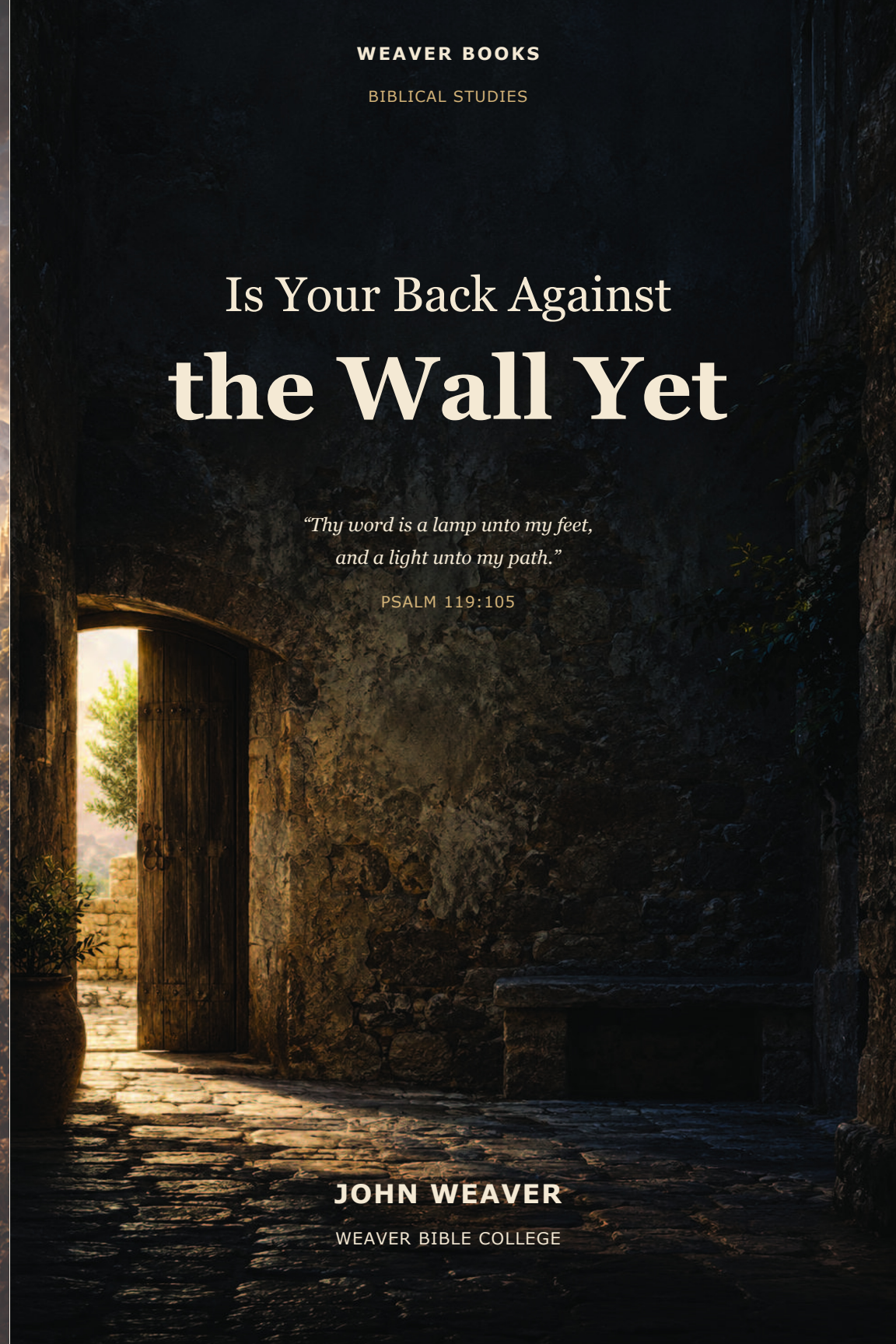
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BIBLICAL STUDIES

Is Your Back Against the Wall Yet

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

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE

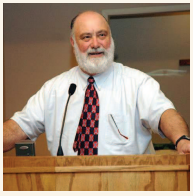
God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

PSALM 46:1

Hardship can expose the cost of refusing to hear God's Word. John Weaver draws on Israel's history to consider chastening, national judgment, and the mercy shown in God's warnings. These messages ask whether pressure will lead to further resistance or to repentance and a renewed willingness to listen.

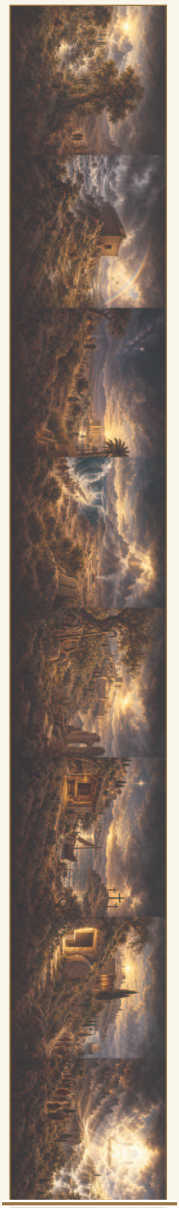
"When you refuse to hear God's Word, you will always walk after the imagination of your own heart."

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

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



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CHAPTER 1

Is Your Back Against The Wall Yet

Part One

SCRIPTURE READING - Judges 2:6-19 (KJV)

Introduction and Scripture Reading

"And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man into his inheritance to possess the land. And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel. And Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being 110 years old."

"And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath Heres, in the Mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers. And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim. And they forsook the Lord God of

their fathers, which brought them up out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and they provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtoreth. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of the spoilers that spoiled them, and He sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed."

"Nevertheless, the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a-whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them, and turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not so."

Years back, I preached a message from this very text which I titled, "Another Generation."

The Danger of Losing Truth in One Generation

When you look at verse 7, the Bible says, “And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel.” Then you skip down to verse 10: “And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers, and there rose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.” It just takes one generation for truth to disappear.

It seems as if, as long as people have an overseer, someone who holds them accountable and responsible, in one sense of the word, they kind of remain faithful, exercise a little character and integrity. But when the one who holds them accountable dies, they simply lose everything, it seems. I've seen this happen many times in 57 years of preaching. There have been people who professed to be Christians, became upset and angry, and quit coming to church. They did not go

to another church; they simply quit. Then they went downhill and downhill until they were in an absolutely catastrophic condition in their lives.

The Call to Hold Fast

So it does indeed teach us something right here. It teaches us that it is those who are mature in the faith and mature in life who maintain their character and their integrity and their faithfulness even in a world of change. It's interesting as you read through the Bible, there are a multitude of verses that command us to hold fast. And I want to just give you some of those, and I want you to listen carefully at what we are to hold fast unto. For instance, in 1 Thessalonians 5 and verse 21, the Word of God says, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” So that which is good, that which is truthful, we're to hold fast. You remember the passage in Hebrews 2 where he said that we were indeed to not just hold on, but we should be aware that we forget not, lest we let them slip. And so what the author of Hebrews is saying, if we do not hold on to truth, it certainly will slip away.

The apostle Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:13, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." He says, hold fast the form of sound words. In Hebrews 4:14, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." Or, we hold fast our confession as we confess and profess that Jesus Christ is God, that Jesus Christ is the only Redeemer, Lord, and Savior. Hebrews 10:23 says it again: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)." Finally, in Revelation 2:25, our Lord said to the church, "But that which ye have already hold fast till I come."

One of the interesting things, as I was looking up the term "hold fast," was that there were actually about three Greek words translated as "hold fast." One of them was the Greek word kratos, which would be power. Kratos means to have power, to retain, to be master of, to rule over, and to lay hands on so that you can retain. It is almost like when you and I start to move furniture and it is a little bit heavy, and someone picks it up before we are ready. We say,

"Wait, wait, let me get a better hold on this thing." That is exactly what this word means. We get a good hold, and we are to hold all of these things that he has spoken of.

This message, I hope, is going to begin demonstrating to you that if our backs are not up against the wall right now, they soon will be. Lord willing, next Sunday I am going to point this out in greater detail.

Origin and Meaning of 'Back Against the Wall'

My first question today is this: Have you ever thought about where our sayings originate? I have a book in my library entitled Why We Say It. There are all kinds of sayings that we have had all of our lives, and actually the lives of our forefathers too. This book explains where these sayings came from and how they originated. I could not find in that book "having your back up against the wall." But I did some more research, and I came up with two answers. The first one is this: Some express the fact that this saying, "having your back up against the wall," refers to execution by firing squad, because now they are placed against the wall.

If you understand it in that sense of the word, it means finality, because it means fatality: you are dead. But there is another source for this saying as well. It refers to being hard-pressed, making a last stand, and the expression comes from fighting, especially from war, because you are backing up against the wall. When you back up against the wall, it has an advantage in the sense that no one can slip up on you, but it also has a disadvantage because you cannot retreat or escape. You are simply up against the wall, and you have to fight your way out of it.

The term has been used since the sixteenth century, but became famous near the end of World War I, when General Douglas Haig of Great Britain, according to the London Times, April 13, 1918, ordered his troops, saying, “Every position must be held to the last man. With our backs to the wall, and believing in the justice of our cause, each one of us must fight to the end.” So, once again, having your back against the wall emphasizes being hard-pressed, with nowhere to go; you simply have to fight your way out of it.

I suppose it could also be understood as a term meaning helpless and hopeless, because once your back is against the wall, you really have nowhere to go. The strange thing is this: if you examine your life, and usually the lives of other people, the light did not dawn on most people until their backs were against the wall. Then they realized that something had to be done.

Although the phrase “up against the wall” is not in the Bible, there is another term that adequately expresses it. What is that term? It is the term “a hardened neck.” A hardened neck refers to those who refuse to hear and refuse to obey; it signifies stubbornness, hardheadedness, and rebellion.

Hold Judges chapter 2, but turn in your Bibles to 2 Kings chapter 17, and look at verse 14. We will look at several passages because I want you to see that having your back against the wall and being hardened in your neck, or stubborn, are sometimes equated. In 2 Kings chapter 17 and verse 14, the Word of God says, “Notwithstanding they would not hear.” What is the result of not hearing? “But hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God.” A refusal to hear always results in a hardened neck.

In 2 Chronicles 36:13, speaking of Zedekiah, king of Judah, we read: “And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel.” Notice that this stiff neck and hardened heart prevented Zedekiah from turning to the Lord God of Israel.

Nehemiah 9:16–17 puts all these things together: “But they and our fathers dealt proudly”—there is pride—“and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, and refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.”

The result of dealing proudly was that they hardened their necks. That resulted in their not hearkening to God’s commandments,

which meant they refused to obey. Their disobedience also led to their not being mindful of the wonders God had performed among them. Then, of course, there was open rebellion. They appointed a captain to return to their bondage. Yet, in contrast to their pride and rebellion, God was ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, of great kindness, and He forsook them not. The truth is really this: Most people really do not pay any attention to anything until they get their backs up against the wall.

I heard an old joke years ago, when I was a boy, about a fellow who sold his mule to a neighbor. He told the neighbor, “Yes, the mule obeys. The mule will follow any command that you give the mule.” The neighbor bought the mule and tried to plow with it, but the mule would not listen, would not obey, and would not do anything. The man came back to his neighbor and said, “Look, you told me that this mule would obey, that this mule would plow. I can’t get him to plow.” The owner reached down, picked up a two-by-four, and handed it to him. He said, “I forgot to tell you, you have to get his attention first.” Well, that is about the way it goes with people. You basically have to get their attention first.

Israel's Two Major Problems: Soteriological and Historical Ignorance

Judges 2:10 says, “And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers.” This referred to Joshua and the elders who outlived him. Then it says, “And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.”

We find ourselves today in essentially the same situation Israel faced thousands of years ago. The generation that followed Joshua and those elders ended up with two major problems, both given in verse 10. The first was this: they did not know the Lord. Their first problem, therefore, was soteriological. This is how Israel, as we will see more next week in this book, came to have their backs against the wall, so to speak. It was the first major problem that brought them toward that condition.

That is, it related to salvation. They did not know the Lord. They were not saved. It is just like it is today. We have a generation that

really and truly does not know the Lord. Most of the time they were in church because they were very religious. In fact, these people in the book of Judges were very religious. When you read the rest of Judges chapter 2, part of which I read earlier, you find that they worshiped. They simply did not worship the one true and living God. They had plenty of religion, but they certainly did not have the true religion. They did not know the one true and living God.

The Hebrew word for "know" in verse 10 is yada. With the negative, it means not knowing, and not knowing by experience. There was no personal relationship between these people and the one true and living God. They may have known of Him, but they did not know Him. They may have known about Him, but they certainly did not have a personal relationship with Him. May I remind you that in the New Testament, in John 17:3, our Lord defines eternal life. He tells us exactly what it is: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Note this: this is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

The Greek word "know" is ginosko. It means literally to learn to know, to perceive, to understand, and to acquire a knowledge of; but even more than that, it is also a word of intimacy. You will find this word used throughout Scripture: "And Adam knew his wife, and she conceived, and bare a child." In Genesis chapter 19, when the angels came to Lot and went into his house at night, the men of Sodom surrounded it and said, "Bring these men out, that we may know them." Lot said, "No," saying, "I have two daughters here that have never known man." About that time, the angels smote them with blindness and snatched Lot back inside.

The point is that know does indeed refer to an intimate knowledge. Now, holding Judges 2, turn to Amos chapter 3. Look at verse 2, where God says to Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth."

"Therefore I will punish you for all of your iniquities." God says, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." Did He not know the Philistines, the Hittites, the Jebusites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and all the other "ites"? Yes, He knew them because He judged them and destroyed them. But what does it mean when He

said, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth"? In verse 1, He speaks of Israel as "the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt." God is saying, You are the only family with which I have had an intimate relationship. You are the only family of the earth with which I have entered into a covenant. You are the only family that I have chosen. God is talking about a personal, intimate relationship. There exists between the one true and living God and His children a real, personal, intimate relationship through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Without it, there is no salvation. Salvation is not merely being saved from destruction or judgment; that is a byproduct of being saved. Matthew 1:21 says concerning Jesus Christ, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." Salvation is from sin—that is the negative—but it is unto a personal, intimate relationship with the one true and living God through Jesus Christ. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

SCRIPTURE READING - Judges 2:10-13; Numbers 25:1-8 (KJV)

When you do not know the one true and the living God personally, intimately, experientially, in salvation, you always descend into paganism and immorality.

“And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers. And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim. And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtoreth.”

The Inevitable Descent into Paganism and Self-Destruction

Baal and Ashtoreth were Canaanite gods, and they were worshipped with licentiousness and immorality. Let me give you one illustration. In the Bible, there is the incident of Baal

> Peor, and the word Baal Peor literally means “the Lord of the Gap.”
>
> In Numbers chapter 25, beginning with verse 1: “And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.” There it is, immorality. “And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods, and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods”—idolatry. “And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baalpeor. And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the

The son of Aaron the priest saw it, rose up from among the congregation, took a javelin in his hand, and went after the man of Israel into the tent, thrusting both of them through—the man of Israel and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. And those that died in the plague were 24,000.

God says in Deuteronomy 4:3, "Your eyes have seen what the Lord did because of Baalpeor: for all the men that followed Baalpeor, the Lord thy God hath destroyed them from among you."

Psalm 106:28 says, "They joined themselves also unto Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead. Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them. Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed."

Again, God reminds them of this sin in Hosea 9:10: "I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baalpeor, and separated

themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved."

Now, I want to give you three very quick truths in light of this. First of all, man by nature is inherently religious. He may not serve the one true and the living God, but he is going to serve some god. In fact, man will very easily, readily, and quickly follow false gods who offer him whatever he wants and desires.

Usually, if he is not running after some false god, he is making a god of himself. He is idolizing himself, pampering himself, and fulfilling the lusts and desires of the flesh. In other words, he is setting himself up as a god. He may not say, "I'm God, I'm God," but he is certainly acting as if the one true and living God does not exist and he himself alone is god. The Bible tells you very clearly that this is known as will-worship. Colossians 2:23 says, "Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship."

You have to stop and ask, What in the world is will-worship? The Greek word happens to be ethelothreskeia, which means worship prescribed by oneself and for oneself. It is completely arbitrary, and it is contrary to the one truth of the living God. Gary could say, “I'm going to worship this way.” Steve could say, “I'll worship this way.” I could say, “I don't want anything to do with that. I'll do what I want to do. I'll worship another way.” Someone else could do the same. In other words, it is completely arbitrary. You simply set up what you want to set up and do what you want to do.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 10, Paul writes concerning will-worship and worship that is not centered on the one true and living God or in the Word of God: “But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God. I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.”

In other words, if you are not worshipping the one true and living God, the only alternative is that you are worshipping devils. You are worshipping demons. You are not worshipping the one true and living God; you are worshipping false gods. They cannot help you at all and cannot save you at all.

So, will-worship is nothing more than devil worship. All men are inherently religious. In fact, there is a term for that, a Latin term, semen religionis. It means that by nature all men are religious. All men will end up worshipping someone or something. Here is the second truth, and you can see this very plainly and clearly in Judges chapter 2: Not only are all men inherently religious by nature, but the second truth is this.

Man left to himself will always descend to the lowest level. He will take the lowest course, always following his fleshly desires and whatever pleases and satisfies him.

God was so upset with Israel in Jeremiah chapter 13 that He gave Jeremiah an object lesson. He told him to take a new girdle and bury it in a hole by the river Euphrates. After a while, God told him to go back, dig out the girdle, and look at it. When he did, the girdle was rotten, shattered, torn, and worthless. God said about His people, primarily Judah and Jerusalem, “This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods to serve them and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing.”

Note what God says: “This evil people”—number one, they refuse to hear His words. Consequently, because they refuse to hear God’s Word, they walk after the imagination of their own heart. When you refuse to hear God’s Word, you will always walk after the imagination of your own heart. When you walk in the imagination of your own heart, you will walk after other gods and serve them and worship them. That is exactly what God says in Jeremiah 13:10. Refusing to hear and obey the Lord and walking after your own imagination always ends up in idolatry, with you worshiping other gods. Now here’s the third truth, and it is equally obvious: apart from the grace and mercy of God in Jesus Christ, there

There is no hope. So let me say this another way: Not only does man descend to the lowest level; man will destroy himself. Psalm 9, beginning with verse 15, says it like this: "The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken. The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." So man left

to himself ends up destroying himself. Why? Because he walks after the imagination of his own heart, and he always serves false gods.

Now go back to Judges 2 and look at verse 10 again, because here is the second problem that new generation had: "And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers, and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord"—that's a soteriological problem—"nor yet the works which he had done for Israel"—that is a historical problem. In other words, they were totally, absolutely, completely ignorant of the providence of God in delivering Israel. The first generation, that is, those people who came out of Egypt, along with Joshua, and those who survived the wilderness wanderings, was composed of those who had seen the works of God.

Of course, the 600,000 fighting men were killed in the desert. But there were others who did go in, who came out of Egypt. They may have been exceedingly young, but they did go in. And the Bible says that they saw, they saw the works of God.

Hold Judges 2, but go back in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 4. Look at what is emphasized. Look, if you would please, at verse 9. God tells these people, "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." Notice what God said: Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen. You saw firsthand.

Look in Deuteronomy chapter 10 and verse 21. The Bible says, "He"—that is God—"is thy praise, and he is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen."

Deuteronomy 11:7 says, “But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord which he did.” Deuteronomy 29:2–3 says, “And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles.”

Now look at Judges 2:7: “And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua,

who had seen the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel." Then verse 10 says, "And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers, and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel."

Modern Parallels: Ignorance of God and Christian Heritage

Do you realize—it is absolutely mind-boggling and completely unimaginable—that a generation could have risen right after the first generation who not only did not know God, but did not know of God's wondrous works in delivering their fathers out of the land of Egypt and everything that God had done? They were absolutely, totally, completely ignorant in one generation.

Let me tell you something else. It is also absolutely mind-boggling and completely unimaginable that we today have started a generation that is completely ignorant of God and His so great salvation and the doctrines of salvation. Moreover, we have started a generation completely ignorant of Christian heritage, Christian history, Bible history, and church history. They know absolutely nothing of the great works of God. If you were to ask the average Christian—I do not care which church you attend, whether Presbyterian, Baptist, or Church of God—to explain the doctrine of justification by faith alone, he could not.

If you ask them to explain sanctification—what is sanctification?—they could not. If you were to ask them to distinguish between regeneration and conversion, they could not do so. Ask the average Christian to identify and teach on Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, John Huss, Savonarola, John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, Martin Bucer, and Pierre Viret. Who are these men? They died for the faith, gave us the Reformation, and stood for truth. Ask the average Christian to identify the Huguenots, the Waldensians, and the Lollards, or to speak for fifteen minutes on the Inquisition and what happened to some of those Waldensians. They could not.

The truth of the matter is that Christians today are just like Israel in Judges chapter 2. We do not know God, and we do not know our own history. We do not know how our forefathers suffered for truth's

sake, nor how God miraculously and marvelously delivered them in many instances. Ask the average Christian to name ten miracles performed by Christ or the prophets in either testament or both testaments. Ask the average Christian to name the Ten Commandments or the books of the Bible. There are only sixty-six. If he cannot name all sixty-six, ask for the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament. If he cannot name those, ask for the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, the books of the law, the historical books, or the poetical books.

I am simply pointing out the fact that the average Christian is so completely ignorant of the Bible and our history. Most Christians do not even know the difference between an epistle and an apostle. Someone told me one time that he thought an epistle was an apostle's wife. I said, "No, that's not true." Most Christians cannot tell you what is Christian and what is not Christian. Why? They do not know their Bible, Bible doctrine, or church history.

Consequently, we are finding ourselves in exactly the same spot as these people in Judges chapter 2. If we have not gotten our backs up against the wall, it will not be long. I am going to show you why. Look in your Bibles, if you would, please, to Psalm 78.

Psalm 78, verse 1: “Give ear, O my people, to my law.” Pay attention, says God. “Incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old.”

Verse 3 says, “Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.” Some did pass down the truth. Verse 4 continues: “We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.”

“For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: and might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and

rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God."

Do you realize that, without a personal, intimate relationship with the one true and living God through the Lord Jesus Christ, there will not be any personal knowledge of His mighty works? Therefore, we cannot communicate what we do not know—what we are completely and totally ignorant of.

God said, "I've established this for testimony. I've appointed a law. You teach your children. You teach your children's children." Why? "That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise, and declare them to their children." Without this knowledge, they cannot set their hope in God. They must be taught so that they might set their hope in God, not forget the works of God, keep His commandments, and not be like their stubborn, rebellious fathers.

Why must we know about our fathers? Why must we know about the judgment of God? The answer is so that we will not repeat the sins or rebellion of the fathers and so that we will not reap their judgment in our lives. We do not want to be part of a generation that does not know the Lord nor His works.

Turn in your Bibles to the book of Zechariah, chapter 1. Zechariah is next to the last book in the Old Testament, right before Malachi. Notice, beginning with verse 2: "The Lord hath been sore displeased with your fathers." Stop and think about that: "The Lord hath been sore displeased with your fathers."

In Hebrews chapter 12, our earthly fathers are compared, in one sense of the word, to our heavenly Father. I remember when I was a boy and my earthly father was so displeased with me that he did not smile. He took a peach tree limb and just whipped the living daylights out of me because he was sore displeased with me, because I had sinned against him. Do you think that your heavenly Father will not chastise you? Read Hebrews chapter 12.

He said, "The Lord hath been sore displeased with your fathers. Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts."

Now look at verse 4: “Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the Lord.”

“Your fathers, where are they?” They are dead now. “And the prophets, do they live for ever?” Those who preached to them are dead now too. Verse 6 says: “But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? And they returned”—that is, the fathers—“and said, Like as the Lord of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.”

What is God saying? Look at history. Look at those men who sinned against Me, rebelled against Me, and forsook Me.

“Denied me. Where are they?” They are dead. Where are all the preachers who preached to them? They are now dead, but My words are not dead. These people tried to outrun the Word of God and get away from God, but they had to come back and say, “Our fathers may be dead, and the prophets who preached to us may be dead, but what God said He was going to do to us, He did to us.”

God spoke the truth. We cannot outrun His Word. I will show you next week how these people had their backs up against the wall. The truth of the matter is this: If we do not repent and come back as a people, we are really going to discover what it is like to have our backs up against the wall.

The Necessity of Knowing God's Works for Encouragement

We do not want to be like this lost generation in Judges chapter 2, who knew not the Lord nor His marvelous works. We need to know the Lord and His marvelous works. Here is the first application: It is impossible for us to be encouraged in desperate situations without knowing Bible history, church history, and the mighty works of God. Look in Psalm 44, 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 the times of old.” Some did communicate the truth. They

said, “We’ve heard, we know.” Now watch what they were told: “How thou”—that is God—“didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them”—that is Israel—“how thou didst afflict the people”—that’s the heathen—“and cast them out. 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.”

Now watch verse 4: “Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.” What is he saying? He is saying, “Lord, we’ve heard of all these mighty, marvelous, miraculous works that you’ve done. Lord, we’re in trouble now. We’re in desperation now. O Lord, thou art my King: command deliverances for Jacob.” In other words, do again what you’ve done in times past. Do it now. O Lord, do it for my people now. You did it for your people in times past; do it again. Do it again.

You can never be encouraged in desperate situations if you do not know the mighty works of God. Why is it that we’re so ignorant of the mighty works of God? Why are we so ignorant of our history? I’m talking about Bible history and church history. Why are we so completely, totally ignorant? Psalm 111 and verse 2 tells us: “The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.” If we have no pleasure in God, in His mighty works, or in what He has done in time and history, we will not seek out what He has done. We do not care. But those who have pleasure in Him will seek out those mighty works.

Conclusion and Anticipation of Part Two

The point is this: If we do not know God or His mighty works, and, like these people in Judges, descend further into paganism and immorality, we are going to have our backs up against the wall. If they are not up against the wall yet, they shall be shortly. We need not be in that position, but unhappily, that is the only way most ever really learn: when we get so hard-pressed that there is no other way out. Just as in Judges 2, they finally cry to the Lord.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Your Word and truth. Lord, we thank Thee that Thou art

God alone, and besides Thee there is no other. Thou art the one true and living God who has revealed Thyself in Jesus Christ. May we know Thee and Thy wonderful works, that we may pray, “Do it again, O Lord, do it again.” Awaken us, stir us, and move us. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Is Your Back Against The Wall Yet

Part Two

Judges 6:1-10

SCRIPTURE READING - Judges 6:1-10 (KJV)

Introduction and Review

> And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. And because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made them the dens, which are in the mountains and caves and strongholds. And so it was when Israel had sown that the Midianites came up and the Amalekites and the children of the east even they came up against them. And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as

> grasshoppers for multitude. For both they and their camels were without number, and they entered into the land to destroy it. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord. It came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, because of the Midianites, the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage. And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and draved them out from before you, and gave you their land. And I said unto you, I am the Lord your God. Fear not the gods of the Amorites, and whose land you dwell, but you have not obeyed my voice.
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> It was John Paul Jones of the United States Continental Navy, when facing almost certain defeat, and also with a demand to surrender to the enemy, who said, "I have not yet begun to fight." Applying that same principle in a different sphere, I would say this: unless we submit to the one true and the living God, and His commands, and humble ourselves, and repent, and turn back unto Him in biblical obedience, we may be soon saying, "We have not yet begun to suffer." Because obviously there is indeed in the Scripture the truth of judgment and the truth of chastening as well.

So, just quickly by way of review, in the first message I pointed out two reasons why Israel sank so quickly into paganism and immorality. The very first reason was a soteriological reason, according to Judges chapter 2, because the Bible said, “another generation arose who knew not the Lord.” It was a soteriological issue: they were not converted, they were not saved, and they did not know who the one true and living God really and truly was.

The second reason they sank so quickly into paganism was that the Bible said, “and they did not remember all the works which He had done.” They did not know their own history. It was a historical problem, or we could say a problem concerning God’s providence, because they were totally ignorant of their past. The truth of the matter is this: if we are ignorant of our past, we cannot apply the

principles of the truth of the past to the present or even to the future. I brought this out based upon Psalm 78 and Psalm 44. It is obvious that those who do not know their past are doomed to fail in the future and in the present as well.

Now, I believe, quite frankly, that we will soon, as a nation, basically speaking, have our backs up against the wall. Remember, I told you the origin of this phrase. First of all, some said that having your back up against the wall came from execution. When they would shoot individuals to execute them, they placed them against the wall. Of course, that spoke of finality and certain death. The second origin was simply being hard-pressed, not knowing what to do, and having to fight to the very last man.

This saying had been around since the sixteenth century, but it had actually been made popular by General Douglas Haig of Great Britain during World War I. When he was ordering his troops, he said: "Every position must be held to the last man. With our backs to the wall and believing in the justice of our cause, each one of us must fight on to the end, having our backs against the wall."

There is an advantage to having your backs against the wall. In one sense, no one can slip up behind you. But the disadvantage is that you cannot retreat. In other words, sometimes it can indicate helplessness; it can indicate hopelessness as well. The truth of the matter is that having our backs up against the wall has come to mean, in our day and time, that all of a sudden we are in a position to get some sense knocked into us.

Judgment and Chastening

God does indeed have a unique way of awakening us, and one of those ways is through His judgment. Another is through chastening. When you read through the Bible, you will find that oftentimes God judges the heathen, but He also chastens His own people when they sin. We must see the difference between judgment and chastening. Certainly, the recipients are different, and the end is different as well.

Judgment vs. Chastening

In Deuteronomy chapter 32, beginning with verse 41, God is speaking: "If I whet my glittering sword and mine hand take hold of judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood and my sword shall devour flesh. And that with the blood of the slain and of the captives from the beginning of revenge is upon the enemy." This is simply judgment, where God destroys His enemies.

Hebrews chapter 12, beginning with verse 5, says: "And ye have forgotten the exhortation, which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

"Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

The Scripture says that God chastens every son whom He receiveth. This means that each one of us is a sinner, and we are going to do something wrong in our lives that deserves chastening; that is for sure. For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

“But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.” What He is talking about is very simple. I have known Steve for many years, but I have never whipped one of his children. I never whipped Heath. I am simply pointing out the fact that I whip my own children. I do not whip anyone else’s children. That is exactly the way it is with God. God will judge His enemies and destroy His enemies, but God will chasten His own.

The Bible talks about our earthly, or fleshly, fathers chastening us after their own pleasure, sometimes because we irritate them or make them angry. But sometimes it is for our good. Whenever our heavenly Father chastens us, it is always for our good. When He finishes with us, it will always yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

He does it for holiness. God's chastening does not fail; it always works. He knows exactly what it will take to awaken us and make us change our attitude and our actions. He chastens us according to our needs. If someone can continue in sin and rebellion and not be chastened, then it is obvious that he is not a child of God.

If my child did wrong today, I would not wait six months to discipline that child for what was done today. The child would already have forgotten about it, and probably so would I. God does indeed discipline us and chasten us. The word in the Greek actually means child training. God does indeed train us clearly.

Israel in the book of Judges had sinned many, many times, and God used different methods to correct them. But the usual method in the book of Judges was this, and you will see it over and over: He sold them into the hands of their enemies. When Israel entered the land, the first thing God did was tell them to conquer those enemies, exterminate them, and drive them out, but they refused to do so. They did not. They disobeyed God. Now these very enemies they were supposed to have driven out were subjugating and enslaving them.

I want you to look back in your Bibles to the book of Judges. In Judges 6, verse 1, the Bible says, “And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian, for seven years.” We will work our way through this passage and make some applications that will be apparent concerning what is going on in our land today.

Israel's Distress in Judges 6

Of course, seven is the number of perfection, which means that during this particular affliction, the misery, the wretchedness, and the destruction were all exceedingly great. Notice, as we look at this

passage, how the Midianites destroyed Israel. We begin in verse 2. The Bible said, “prevailed against Israel, and because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strongholds.” In other words, Israel was driven from their homes, and they sought safety and security in the dens, the caves, and the holes in the mountain.

Stop for a moment and consider the distress and discouragement that had to be in their minds and hearts, because all of a sudden they had to leave their most prized possessions. They left their homes and whatever they could not carry. When you are in an emergency situation, you carry only what is absolutely needed and necessary. That means everything they prized, everything they had worked for, was left in the hands of the enemies, either to confiscate or to destroy.

When it says that these people fled to the mountains, caves, and dens, it means that they had rather flee than fight. They lost their valor, their courage, and their determination. It seems often, as you read through Scripture, that men had rather flee than fight, especially when these people are in rebellion against God.

SCRIPTURE READING - 1 Samuel 13:5-7 (KJV)

It is what happened in Judges 6 and many other passages. But if you will turn in your Bible, holding Judges 6 to 1 Samuel 13, you will see basically the same thing again. Just over a few pages, 1 Samuel chapter 13, and let us begin reading there with verse 5.

“And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel. 30,000 chariots, and 6,000 horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth-Avon. And when the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, for the people were distressed, then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan, that is, they got out of the country, to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.”

Clearly, this was another instance in which they did not have the courage to fight, and thus they left. When you have no courage or valor, usually it is because of the curse of God upon you. If you would take the time to read Deuteronomy 28 again and Leviticus chapter 26, you would find that one of the curses God placed upon people for disobedience was that they would flee. Leviticus 26:17 says, "And I will set my face against you, and you shall be slain before your enemies. They that hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when none pursueth you." These people were fleeing; they were leaving everything.

Sin causes men to be fearful and fainthearted. Sin causes men to sneak into the mountains and hide in caves and in the dens of the earth. Unhappily, the average American—and I will go even farther, the average Christian—will not fight even to protect his own home and family.

Since we are talking about people having to leave their homes, have you contemplated the fact that you may not have a home or belongings if the global elite have their way? As Klaus Schwab said, "You will own nothing and you will be happy." This means they will own everything you previously owned and will take it by theft, confiscation, taxation, inflation, war, or famine.

The state of Massachusetts has already said that electricity in that state would be increased by 64 percent on November 1, 2022. Overall, electric bills increased 24 percent from August 1, 2021, to August 1, 2022. I can certainly tell that in mine.

Have you thought about all the homes, properties, and plantations stolen from Southern people during Reconstruction? Some places were stolen by force. The owners were murdered, and the properties were simply confiscated. Many, however, were stolen legally. It was illegal, but it was still legally done. They would take the plantation or land they wanted and increase the taxes until the Southerners could not pay; they could not afford it.

And thus, they would then go in and confiscate that property, and then turn around and give it to a carpetbagger. All of a sudden, all the taxes would either be reduced or erased completely because now it was in the hand of a northern individual. Thus, the property was

actually stolen, although it was done in a legal manner. So I want you to stop and think about this.

We have our homes, or at least presently we do. But if inflation, taxation, and scarcity continue, and you really have to choose between food and a house, do you think that if you cannot eat and have no place to sleep, your back might be up against the wall? If you are forced to live in a van, on the street, or in a tent, might your back be up against the wall? In other words, there is the possibility, even through war, that we may not have homes as well.

Now, God does indeed use everything that is going on in this country. You can look out west, where there has been a tremendous drought. In some places there have been floods, and in others there have been plagues. Look in Amos chapter 4, beginning with verse 6. Look what God did to get Israel to turn to Him, to pay attention, and they refused. God said, "And I've also given you cleanness of teeth in your cities."

"And want of bread in all your places, yet you have not returned unto me, saith the Lord." In other words, drought did not do it. Famine did not do it. They did not return to Him, even though He chastened them with famine.

Now look at verse 7: "And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there was yet three months to the harvest. And I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city. One piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. So two or three cities wandered into one city to drink water, but they were not satisfied. Here it is again."

"Yet you've not returned to me, saith the Lord." I tried to get your attention through drought, but you would not listen. "I've smitten you with blasting and mildew. When your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them. Yet you've not returned to me, saith the Lord."

"Now, verse 10. I've sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt. Your young men have I slain with a sword"—war. "And I've taken away your horses and I've made the stink of your

camps to come up in your nostrils. Yet have you not returned to me, saith the Lord?"

"I've overthrown some of you as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah," that is, a miraculous divine intervention of God in destruction. "And you were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning. Yet you have not returned unto me, saith the Lord."

"Therefore, thus will I do unto thee, O Israel, and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." In other words, I've done all these things to get your attention, and you would not pay attention or listen. Sometimes some people do indeed have their backs up against the wall, but they do not realize it. God says, "You won't listen. So prepare to meet the God of Israel."

The Scripture tells you in 1 John that there is a sin unto death. Go back to Judges chapter 6, because not only were these people driven from their homes. Secondly, look at verses 3 and 4: "And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them. And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass."

So let me ask you a question. What will you do when you cannot sow and plant and reap and enjoy the fruits of your labor? Let me ask this another way. What will you do when you are forced to subsidize millions of illegal aliens? What will you do when all the illegals in this country are given a free hand to do as they please and to take what they want without suffering any consequences?

What will you do when whatever you have is violently taken from you? Some of you are probably thinking, "Ha ha ha, but that will never happen here." Really? Please explain to me and help me understand how all the homes, businesses, and properties that have been looted, burned, and destroyed by Antifa, Black Lives Matter, and a host of other organizations have been remunerated, rebuilt, or restored by our government—whether local, state, or federal.

Help me understand how all of these people who have been committing arson, looting, stealing, robbing, and raping have escaped the consequences. Hardly any of them ever stood trial. The

fact of the matter is that there are plenty of witnesses, and some of the crimes—many of them—were even videotaped. Look at what is happening in some of these fancy stores and even in some of the 7-Elevens, where a whore simply goes in, steals what she wants, trashes the store, and nothing ever happens.

“And they encamped against them and destroyed the increase of the earth till thou come unto Gaza and left no sustenance for Israel.” Think about this. They destroyed the increase of the earth, and they left no sustenance for Israel. Do you think that when you are stripped of everything you have, including the means of sustaining yourself and your family, your back would be against the wall? Do you think you might consider it this time—repentance, obedience, and turning to God?

The Purpose of the Enemy: Destruction

“For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude. For both they and their camels were without number, and they entered into the land to destroy it.” These people, God's enemies and the enemies of God's people, did not come for a friendly visit. They did not come to be entertained. They did not come to be invited for a friendly meal. They did not come to share their culture. They did not even come to work. They came to destroy the land. That was their purpose in coming.

The same truth appears in the days of Isaiah. Isaiah chapter 1, verse 7: God says, “Your country is desolate.”

"Your cities are burned with fire. Your land, strangers devour it in your presence. And it is desolate as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion, that is the people of God, is left as a cottage in a vineyard, just one little group, and as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city." Your country is desolate. Your cities are burned with fire. Your land, strangers devour it. Do you understand what happened in Judges and what happened in Isaiah chapter one? It is nothing less than the judgment of God. The country basically was destroyed. The city is desolate. The land was overthrown by strangers. It is happening here today.

How many would like to visit Portland, Oregon? How would you like to visit Seattle, Washington? How would you like to drive through the Bronx? How would you like to visit Los Angeles, California? How would you like to go to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania? I have been to practically all of those cities in times past, but today in those cities, you would not walk down the street, and certainly you would not desire to live there.

I will give you a challenge. When you get home, go to the internet and type in what is happening in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Show me the streets of Portland, Oregon. Show me the streets of Seattle, Washington. You will be absolutely dumbfounded because all you can see is drunks and dopeheads and tents and sleeping bags and trash and filth. City after city. It is astounding.

Now, cultural enrichment is not working. Not all cultures are equal, and certainly not all cultures are desirable. Christians have not understood the importance of culture. Culture is religion externalized. Whenever you try to place cultures on an equal footing, saying that all cultures are equal, that is the same as saying that all religions are equal: that Voodooism is equal to Christianity, Taoism is equal to Jesus Christ, and Mohammed is equal to Jesus Christ. No, not all cultures are equal. Not all religions are equal, because we serve the one true and living God, who has revealed Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything that the West has that is totally different from the rest of the world, we have because of Jesus Christ and His word. We have because of Christianity.

If you go to places like India and look at the hell hole and trash that people live in, you cannot say that all cultures are equal or that all religions are equal. They are not. Read the Bible, look at history, and see what happens to a society and nation that reject and forget God and refuse to worship Him.

Economic and Social Parallels

You remember Proverbs 8:35-36: "He that findeth me findeth life, and obtaineth favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death." So what is happening in this country economically? One economic writer said, "The United States economy is on a collision course with economic

disaster. Is it being done on purpose, or is it just a symptom of having an idiocracy in charge of the economy? Is it perhaps a combination of both factors?"

Having lived and worked in our nation's capital and seen the Washington bureaucracy up close, he generally leaned toward the idiocracy explanation for America's economic death spiral, but recent events caused him to reassess. The White House had effectively blockaded new contracts for cheap and efficient natural energy production, leading to skyrocketing energy prices across the nation.

"Under the guise of climate action and build-back-better statism, the government is doing its best to destroy a massive sector of the economy." When you get home, go to the internet, go to your search engine, and type in this question: "Is the government purposefully destroying the economy?" You will be astounded at the sites that will arise before your eyes, and most of them will be with a positive answer. Yes, the government is trying to destroy the economy. It's astounding, absolutely astounding.

Now, go back to Judges 6 and look at verse 6. The Bible says in verse 5, "they entered into the land to destroy it." Now look in verse 6: "And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord." I just read where there have been over 2 million illegal immigrants, aliens, who flooded in this country. I think that was just this past year, 2 million.

Who is paying for all the medical care, transportation, upkeep, food, housing, spending money, and education for all of these illegals? Who's paying for it? And the answer is, you are. You are now. Someone says, "But you don't understand, the government's doing this because they're just printing the money. And whatever they want, they can just have that money printed." But what you don't consider is this: the more money they print, the less valuable is that money that you have in your bank account, in your wallet, in your IRA, in your retirement accounts. In other words, the more they print, the value of the Federal Reserve note continues to go down. You're being stolen from and you don't even realize it. You're being taken for a ride and you don't even understand what is going on. Right now, most of the American people really do not care

because at least they still have a house and are still able to eat. But just wait a little while.

When it really gets to where their back is up against the wall, it'll change. As long as people have comfort and a little something to eat, they don't care. But wait until it really affects them.

Now, let me show you what I'm going to call the point of these two messages. Look in Judges chapter 6 and verses 7 through 10. Watch this: "And it came to pass when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites, that the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage."

God's Response: A Prophet Sent

"And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and draved them out before you, and gave you their land. And I said unto you, I am the Lord your God, fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell, but you have not obeyed my voice."

Two things are obvious here. First, these people finally got their backs against the wall, and they did indeed cry unto the Lord. Second, when they really got their backs against the wall and began to pray, God did something very unique: He sent them a preacher. He sent a prophet. And what did the prophet say? "Look, it's your sins. It's your wickedness. It's your fault. You are the ones that got yourself into this trouble. You have totally forsaken God. You've forgotten God. You've turned from Him."

Read Judges chapter 2 through chapter 13 and see how often the people sinned against God and rebelled against Him, and how graciously and mercifully God delivered them by sending them a judge. That judge ruled and finally delivered the people. But every time God sent a judge and the judge delivered them, when the judge died, the people turned right back to their sins and rebellion.

The Cycle of Sin and Deliverance

Listen to these phrases from Judges. Judges 2:11: "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baalim." Judges 3:7: "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and forgot the Lord their God and served Baalim and the groves."

In between each one of these there had been a judge and a deliverance, but now Israel was falling back again. Judges 3:12 says, “And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord. And the Lord strengthened Eglon, the King of Moab against Israel because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord.” Judges 4:1 says, “And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, when Ehud was dead.” Judges 6:1 says, “And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years.” Judges 10:6 says, “And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served him not.” Judges 13:1 says, “And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for 40 years.”

Do you realize that each time the children of Israel cried unto the Lord for deliverance, they had their backs up against the wall? They were in great distress and desperation because of the fruit of their own wickedness. Yet it took having their backs up against the wall every time. Here is a good question: Why is it that in Judges chapter 6, when they cried to the Lord in verse 7 for deliverance, God sent a prophet in verse 8? He had been sending judges; now He sends a preacher. Why? Because the Lord was showing them His compassion and mercy. What did the man of God do? He warned the people.

He told them, “You’re here where you are because of your sin, because of your rebellion, because you have forsaken the Lord, and because you have worshiped false gods. You are here because of your sin and your rebellion. God delivered you from Egypt. He told you not to serve these false gods, but you would not listen.”

Here is an important passage. Second Chronicles 36:15 says, “And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place.” The reason God sent a prophet, or a preacher, was because of His compassion. Anytime and every time in the Bible, when God is going to have compassion and mercy upon a people, He always sends them a preacher.

The opposite is also true. When God is not going to have mercy or show compassion, He will either remove the preacher or shut his mouth. What happened in Israel when Ahab and Jezebel were on the throne? The Bible says that Elijah came and said to Ahab, "As the Lord God liveth before whom I stand, there shall not be rain or dew these years, but according to my word." For three and a half years there was no rain and no dew. God moved Elijah out of the land and placed him with the widow of Zarephath. Since Elijah was not in the land, there was no word from God—no compassion and no mercy.

When you look at Jeremiah, God did not take him out of the land; He left him there but shut his mouth. In Jeremiah chapter 7, He said, "Pray not for this people." Jeremiah 11 says, "Pray not for this people." When you get to Jeremiah 14, Jeremiah wanted to pray for them so badly. Finally, God said, "Okay, I'm going to let you pray for them. But here's what you pray. You pray that I'll destroy them because that's exactly what I'm going to do." Thus, He took Elijah out of the land, but left Jeremiah in the land, shut his mouth, and refused to allow him to pray for these wicked people.

Hard times, chastening, desperation, famine, drought, plagues, sickness, defeat, subjection, and enslavement are all results of sinning and rebelling against the Lord. Curses follow disobedience, just as blessings follow obedience.

Do you remember the two sources given for the origin of the phrase, having your back against the wall? The second had been in existence since the sixteenth century and simply means being hard-pressed, in a desperate situation. As General Hague said, "We've got to fight to the last man." In other words, if we do not win, that is all there is to it. You may live or die, have victory or defeat, but you are going to fight until the last man. It refers basically to being hard-pressed.

The second source, which was actually the first one mentioned, is when you have your back against the wall and are being shot or executed. Someone is going to say, "Huh?"

When God Says 'No More'

“Well, thank the Lord. We’re not at that place. That hasn’t happened in America.” I would allow you to say that if you added one word: “That hasn’t happened in America yet.” Yet. Look in your Bibles to the book of Judges, chapter 10, beginning with verse 10: “And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God and also served Baalim. And the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians and from the Amorites and from the children of Ammon and from the Philistines? The Zidonians also and the Amalekites and the Midianites did oppress you and you cried unto me and I delivered you out of their hand. Yet you have forsaken me and served other gods. Wherefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry to the gods which you have chosen. Let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.”

When God says, “I will deliver you no more,” your back is up against the wall this time with finality. And it will end in fatality as well.

We are talking about having our backs up against the wall. We need to understand that God is indeed loving, kind, gracious, and merciful. He is that. But the same God is also holy, righteous, and just. There comes a time when God is tired of everything that He gives us, which we take and give to false gods. Look in your Bibles to the book of Hosea, chapter 2, right after Daniel. Look at verse 8, talking about Israel: “For she did not know that I gave her corn and wine and oil and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal.” God said, “I gave it to them. It came from me and they’re preparing it for Baal and his worship.” Therefore, He says, “Therefore will I return and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness.”

“And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand. I will also cause all of

her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, her Sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereupon she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me, that is, the false idols."

"And I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers and forgot me," saith the Lord. God said, "I gave Israel everything that they had, and now I'm willing and ready to take it back." When God says, "I will deliver you no more," your back is really against the wall.

In Hosea chapter 5 and verse 6, God says—speaking of Israel, and beginning in verse 5: "And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face. Therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity. Judah shall also fall with them. They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord, but they shall not find him."

"He has withdrawn himself from them. They have dealt treacherously against the Lord and they have begotten strange children." "Now shall a month devour them with their portions." God said, "They're going to seek me, but they're not going to find me." God is not only loving, merciful, just, and kind; He is also righteous and holy. There comes a time when He will say, "I will deliver thee no more." Just face your consequences. As He said, "Because you would not hear, O Israel, prepare to meet thy God."

Go back to the book of Judges, chapter 6, because the second application should be viewed in light of these verses. Look at verse 1: "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years."

Application: Cry Out Now

We have read what the Midianites and the Amalekites had done to the Israelites and how they suffered. Here is a good question: How long do you think Israel cried out to Baal to deliver them? Maybe six years. They were worshiping Baal and serving Baal. But finally, in verse 6, "And Israel was greatly impoverished." In other words, their backs were up against the wall. They were about to be absolutely and

totally destroyed because of the Midianites. Then the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.

Why did Israel not cry to the Lord when she was first defeated by the Midianites? Why did she not cry the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, or sixth year? Why did they wait seven years?

Because their backs were not up against the wall. It took seven years of real, genuine suffering before they were willing to cry to the Lord for deliverance. Why are most Americans not upset with all the sin, wickedness, filth, sedition, insurrection, and treason going on by our governments and politicians? Our backs are not up against the wall yet. When they really are, maybe we will remember the one true and living God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. Maybe then we will ask for repentance, faith, and obedience, and ask Him to restore us to His worship, that we might serve Him.

I don't know about you, but I prefer to start crying now and asking God for deliverance before I have to go to a mountain and hide, before I'm stripped of everything that I possess, and before I'm starving to death. Now would be the time to cry. What is it? Jeremiah 33 in verse 3, I quoted it: "Call unto me, and I'll answer thee, saith the Lord, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not." Now would be the time to call. Don't wait until our backs are against the wall. Don't be like Israel of old.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to thee. We thank you for your word. We thank you for your truth. We thank you, Father, for all that you've shown us. Help us, Lord, to be wise as serpents, harmless as doves. But help us to know the truth. And help us, Lord, to worship thee and serve thee and not forsake thee. And begin to cry now for deliverance. Help us, O God of our fathers. We know that thou art God, and we know of thy wonders of old. And we ask you as the psalmist in Psalm 44, "Command deliverances for Jacob." Do it again, O Lord. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

Source Notes

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Chapter 2: Is Your Back Against The Wall Yet - Part 2
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