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Old Testament Principles and New Testament Truths

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

PSALM 119:105

JOHN WEAVER

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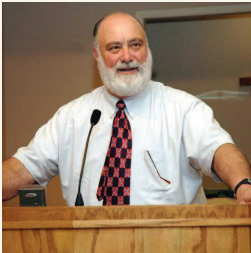
All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16, EXCERPT

The Old and New Testaments belong to one coherent revelation. John Weaver considers the continuing authority of Scripture, God's government of rulers, repentance, humility, and the conditions of understanding. These messages challenge isolated readings and invite believers to learn from biblical history as they seek to obey the whole Word of God.

“We must examine our lives, find anything in them that is contrary to God and His Word, and turn from it.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume contains 2 messages from that collection.



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New Testament Studies

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Edited from the sermon corpus of John Weaver.

Contents

Chapter 1: Old Testament Principles and New Testament Truths - Part One
of Two 5

 Old Testament Principles and New Testament Truths 6

 Consideration Precedes Enlightenment 13

Chapter 2: Old Testament Principles and New Testament Truths - Part Two
of Two 27

CHAPTER 1

Old Testament Principles and New Testament Truths

Part One of Two

January 27, 2012

SCRIPTURE READING - Daniel 9:1-15 (KJV)

In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments.

We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our

kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice.

Old Testament Principles and New Testament Truths

“Therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

“And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.”

There is so much hatred, misunderstanding, and outright denial of the Old Testament Scriptures that it needs to be demonstrated that we have one Bible and not two Bibles. The Old Testament is just as much the Word of God as is the New Testament. All of God’s Word is authoritative and applicable.

What do I mean when I say that there is so much hatred, misunderstanding, and outright denial of the Old Testament Scriptures? Has anyone ever heard, in this day and time, of an Old Testament Baptist Church? No. Everybody calls it a New Testament Baptist Church. Why? The answer seems obvious: we are under the New Covenant.

I certainly understand the New Covenant, and I know that Christ fulfilled all the ceremonial law. Jesus Christ fulfilled all of the Old

Testament types, symbols, and emblems, and these have vanished away in the sense that we now have the reality and not the shadow. When we talk about the New Covenant, the covenant has not changed.

It has and it hasn't. It has not changed as to its content. The only thing that has changed has basically been the method of writing of the covenant. For instance, I want you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Hebrews chapter 8 and let me show you something. Hebrews chapter 8 and notice if you would please begin reading there with verse 7. Because when we begin reading here you think just momentarily, "Well, boy, there's really something wrong with that Old Testament covenant." Look what it says. Hebrews chapter 8 and notice if you would verse 7, the Bible says, "For if that first covenant"—we're talking about the Old Testament, now the old covenant—"for if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." Oh, well, there must have been a fault with the first because there has to be a second. Well, let's read on. "For finding fault with"—what's the next word? "Them." Not "it." "Them." "For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah."

The fault was not with the covenant, but the fault was with the fallen sons of Adam. They could not keep that Old Testament covenant. By the way, it did absolutely no good to try to keep the covenant or to only keep part of the covenant. How can I say that? Do you remember—let me just quote it—Galatians 3 and verse 10, God says, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." How much of God's law were they required to keep? Someone tell me. All of it. Did they keep all of it? No. Could they keep all of it? No. What does James say? He that keepeth the law and yet offendeth in one point is guilty of how much? All. So the problem was not with the covenant. The problem was actually with the people.

Now let me show you. God's law demands three things from every individual. God's law demands a personal obedience, a perfect obedience, and a perpetual obedience. No fallen son of Adam could

ever keep the law in that way. He could not keep it personally, he could not keep it perfectly, and he could not keep it perpetually. For instance, I don't care if we're talking about the Old Testament saint or if we're talking about the New Testament saint, how many have sinned?

There is none righteous, no, not one. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Suppose someone in the Old Testament, or someone in the New Testament, suddenly became absolutely perfect and from that day forward kept God's law personally, perfectly, and perpetually. Would that person have salvation? No. Why? What about all the sins committed before becoming perfect? The sin has to be dealt with; the sin has to be paid for.

God has not changed His law, and God has not changed His covenant. What God has changed is the method of writing that covenant. As Hobie pointed out, and as 2 Corinthians 3 points out, the Old Testament covenant was written in stone, while the New Testament covenant is written in our hearts.

By the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, because of the work of Jesus Christ, we are empowered and enabled to keep God's law. Someone may say, "Although we are in the New Testament and under the new covenant, we still do not keep God's law personally, perfectly, and perpetually." The answer is yes, we do. We may not keep it that way personally, but we keep it that way through our substitute and through our surety, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the only individual who ever gave the law what it demanded: personal obedience, perfect obedience, and perpetual obedience. That is why Jesus Christ 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." Always. Christ never displeased the Father at any time.

Galatians 4:4-5 says, "But when the fulness of the 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." Why did God send forth His Son, Jesus Christ, made of a woman and made under the law? When Jesus Christ came into this world as the perfect man, the perfect Adam, and the second man, He was obligated and responsible to keep God's law personally, perfectly, and perpetually, just like anyone else. Jesus Christ is the only one who ever did that.

Consider 2 Corinthians 5:21: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Let me read that the way we should understand it: "For he"—that is, God the Father—"hath made him"—that is, God the Son—"to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Here is my tube of chapstick. That represents our sins. Here is my little pocket knife. That represents the obedience of Jesus Christ under God's law. Jesus Christ worked out a perfect obedience and a perfect righteousness.

What did God do differently in the New Covenant? God took our sins and imputed them—that is, charged them to the account of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was not a sinner, but He suffered and bled and died as a sinner, not because He sinned, but because our sins were charged to His account. Then that perfect righteousness that He earned and worked out, God took and imputed to us, charged it to us, so that now we not only have forgiveness of sins, we have a perfect righteousness in Jesus Christ. So when God sees us, God does not see us as sinners; God sees us in Jesus Christ.

His obedience—it is our obedience. His righteousness is our righteousness.

When God writes the law in our heart, we understand that we are still sinners. But do we want to obey Him? Yes. Do we want to please Him? Yes. Do we want to keep His law? Yes. Are we capable in and of ourselves of keeping it perfectly? No. But in Christ and through Christ, we do keep it perfectly.

In the Old Testament, in the Old Covenant, if you wanted to worship God, you had to come to the tabernacle. You had to come to the altar.

Under the old covenant, you had to bring a sacrifice and come to the high priest. No one could get to God except through that tabernacle, that altar, that sacrifice, and that high priest. It is exactly the same in the New Testament, in the New Covenant. You may say, “Well, I don’t go to a tabernacle, I don’t go to an altar, I don’t bring a sacrifice, and I don’t have a high priest.” In that case, then you’re not saved.

The Bible tells us in Revelation 21:3 that Jesus Christ is our tabernacle, or our temple. The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 5:7 that Jesus Christ is our sacrifice. The Bible tells us in Hebrews 13:10 that Jesus Christ is our altar. The Bible tells us in Hebrews 4 that Jesus Christ is our great high priest. Then Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Unless you come to God’s true tabernacle, sacrifice, altar, and high priest—Jesus Christ—you’re not saved. We do exactly the same as they did under the old covenant, except now we have reality. We do not have the types, emblems, and shadows.

Matthew 5:17 says, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.” When He says, “Think not” in verse 17, it literally means this.

God forbid; do not even let it enter your mind. The apostle Paul uses that expression repeatedly in the Bible: “God forbid.” In other words, do not even think it. Do not let it enter your mind. Jesus said, “God forbid, don’t even begin to think that I’ve come to destroy the law or the prophets. I have not come to destroy, but to fulfil.” Then, in verse 18, He said, “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

What did Jesus Christ do? He fulfilled all those Old Testament ceremonial types, emblems, and shadows. The type, emblem, and shadow are now done away with, and we have the reality in Jesus Christ. That is why the Bible says in Ephesians 2:15, “Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.”

Jesus Christ did not abolish the law. He abolished the ordinances connected with the tabernacle and temple types, emblems, and shadows. How did He abolish them? By fulfilling them. The only reason they are abolished is that He fulfilled them. Christ did not abolish the moral law or the judicial law. The law still stands. In Romans 7:12, in the New Covenant, the Bible says concerning the law that it is “holy, and just, and good.” If the law is holy, just, and good, why would God abolish it? Why would God destroy it? You do not destroy that which is holy, just, and good; you destroy that which is unholy, unjust, and wicked.

Now, let us look at Romans 3:20, which provides an easy way to explain all the negative passages concerning the law in the New Testament: “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” Was the law given for justification? No. Why?

I have already demonstrated that there was no one who could keep the law personally, perfectly, and perpetually. So the law was never given for justification. When you read in Romans 6, “We're not under the law, but we're under grace,” he is not saying that the law has been done away with. He is saying that we're not under the law as a means or a standard of justification.

Just because the law was not given for justification, and just because one cannot be saved by keeping the law, does not mean the law is good for nothing. God never designed His law to be an instrument of salvation. Scripture says, for verily, if salvation had been by the law, then Christ would not have needed to have died. You cannot give a law that saves. The law was never given for justification, but the law is needed and necessary for a number of things.

Look in verse 20 again: “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” We would never know what sin is except for the law. How do we know adultery is wrong? God says, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” How do we know stealing is wrong? God says, “Thou shalt not steal.” When people try to deny the law of God, they put it under a broad spectrum, push it aside, and say the law is not good for anything just because you cannot be saved by the law. No. God never gave the law for someone to be saved by the law. First of all, by the law is the knowledge of sin.

What is sin? It is very simple. Write down 1 John 3 and verse 4: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” Sin is the transgression of the law. In other words, I cannot sin unless I violate God's law. If I do something and you do not like it, and it is not a violation of God's law, have I sinned? No. If I do something Congress has passed a law against, but it is still not a violation of God's law, have I sinned? No. If a ruling king or monarch says, “Thou shalt not do such and such,” and I do it, but it is still not a violation of God's law, have I sinned? No. You can only sin by violating the law of God.

Every negative passage concerning the law in the New Testament can be explained in one of three ways. If you look in the context, you will always find that one of these three answers explains the passage. First, the passage may be like Romans 3, Romans 6, or Galatians 2, denying or stating that the law was never given for justification: “For by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

Second, some passages refer to the death-dealing nature of sin in relationship to the law: “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” “Cursed is he who continueth not in all the works of the law to do them.” In other words, God pronounces a death penalty. When Paul says, in one instance, “We're not under the law,” especially in Galatians, he means that we are not under the curse and penalty of the law. The penalty of the law has been exacted upon Jesus Christ; therefore, it will not be exacted upon us. We are not under the law as a means of justification, nor are we under the law as a means or penalty of condemnation. Third, some passages refer to the ceremonial laws, where Christ has fulfilled all those types, emblems, and shadows.

Let me say it very pointedly: the New Testament, or the New Covenant, has not destroyed, abrogated, or nullified the Old Testament, or the Old Covenant. You remember 2 Timothy 3:16: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." When Paul wrote that, he had in mind particularly the Old Testament, because the New Testament had not been completed at that time.

Now go back to Daniel chapter 9. I want to show you some principles from Daniel chapter 9 and other passages in the Old Testament, and compare them with passages in the New Testament. I want you to see that the Old Testament and the New Testament go hand in hand. They walk together. They agree. They complement each other. They do not contradict each other. I've got five of these principles.

Consideration Precedes Enlightenment

The first principle is that consideration precedes enlightenment. The second is that confession precedes forgiveness, and the third is that disobedience precedes judgment.

Let us go back to Daniel chapter 9 and look at verses 1 and 2. Daniel says, "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; in the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem."

Many have a faulty understanding of enlightenment. Some think that God moves mysteriously and reveals knowledge and enlightenment to a select few individuals. It is absolutely true that God is sovereign in His bestowment of enlightenment. But it is absolutely untrue that God bestows it willy-nilly upon certain individuals. Daniel was a man greatly beloved of the Lord, yet enlightenment was not simply dumped into his head.

Many believe that they can go to sleep ignorant, apathetic, and empty-headed, and wake up smart, brilliant, and understanding all things. It does not work like that. Was Daniel a brilliant man? Yes. Did Daniel have understanding concerning his times and the last days of the nation? Yes, he did. How in the world did Daniel get that understanding? How did Daniel get that enlightenment? How did he acquire all that knowledge?

Here is the answer: He studied, and he studied the Scripture. Look what he said in verse 2: "In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by"—what's that next word?—"Books." "I understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." The books he refers to are the scrolls that contained Jeremiah's writings. He said, "I understood by books."

I began to study the Scriptures. As I read the prophet Jeremiah, I found that God had determined that Judah and Jerusalem would be in captivity for seventy years. Look in your Bible to Jeremiah 25:11-12: "And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations." Note, seventy years.

Jeremiah 29:10 says, "For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place." If you were studying the Bible and were alive in Daniel's time, what conclusion would you come to? At the end of seventy years, God was going to cause them to return to the land—not at the end of sixty-nine years, or forty years, or fifty years, but at the end of seventy years. Their trial, their persecution, was going to be for seventy years.

That was all there was to it. Daniel said, "I understood by books." He learned by studying the Word of God. You will never progress in your Christian faith, nor increase in knowledge, enlightenment, and

understanding, unless you study the Word of God. That is how Daniel learned.

Deuteronomy 29:29 says, “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God.” There are some things we do not know and will never know until we get to glory. But it continues: “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.” God has revealed to us what He wants us to know and what He wants us to do—to obey. We will never know it until we learn to study the Word of God.

Now, let me show you something else Daniel did. In verse 3 he said, “And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: and I prayed unto the Lord my God.”

Daniel not only studied the Scriptures; he also sought the Lord. In other words, as he studied the Word of God, he sought wisdom, knowledge, and enlightenment from God.

Our studying alone is insufficient. You could say, “I’m going to sit here until I understand the book of Daniel. I’m going to read it and reread it and reread it until I understand the book of Daniel.” You could sit there until you die and never understand the book of Daniel if God does not turn the lights on for you. You not only have to study; God must give us enlightenment. Hold Daniel 9, and turn back in your Bibles to Proverbs chapter 2.

Look at Proverbs 2:6. I think this passage will really put these two things together for us. The Bible says, “For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.” Notice the word “giveth.” Knowledge and understanding are God’s gifts, right? You do not get those things unless God gives them to you. We have come to the conclusion that God must give us wisdom and understanding.

But does God simply dump wisdom and understanding upon us? Does He say, “Well, I’ll give Doc some. I’ll withhold it from Doc; he will not have that knowledge. I’ll give some to Hobie, but I will not give it to Ed”? Is that what God does? No. Let us go back to Proverbs 2:1. Watch this: “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous. He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.”

Now let me emphasize something from Proverbs 2:1 through 5: “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.” Notice the conditions: “if thou wilt receive,” “if thou criest,” “if thou seekest,” and “searchest.” Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

His gifts are given to those who seek Him, who study, who cry, who search, and who want the truth more than anything else. So let us put it like this: God normally bestows His gifts upon those who are using the means that He has ordained as they seek Him to bestow those gifts.

The New Testament confirms exactly this same principle. In 2 Timothy chapter 2, verse 7, the Apostle Paul writes Timothy, “Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.” What did Paul just say? “Timothy, understanding is God’s gift. You must get understanding from God. Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.” But is God going to give Timothy understanding apart from his considering the Scriptures? No. Paul said, “Consider what I say.” Paul was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

He says, "You meditate, you study, you think about what I'm saying, what I've written. It's the word of God. You consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things." In other words, it is only as we consider God's truth, meditate upon God's truth, study God's truth, and seek God for enlightenment that we actually have enlightenment. That is why, in Daniel chapter 9, the text we are using there, Daniel said, "I learned by books. I studied the scripture. I studied the prophet Jeremiah and I prayed and God opened my eyes."

This is the same principle shown in Mark chapter 4. You cannot study a little and learn a lot. You cannot study a little and learn a lot. Nor can you consider God's truth in a hit and miss fashion and expect to become a theologian and a scholar. I would say that our people here are probably far superior in their knowledge and their understanding of scripture than most congregations. Right? But think about how little you actually study, how little you meditate and consider, and how little you seek truth. There is not one in here who could not study more. You say, "I just don't have the time." Yes, we do; it's priorities.

Look at verse 23. God says, "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear." You cannot be a hit and miss student and expect to be a scholar and a theologian. Look at verse 24: "And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear." You had better make sure that what you are hearing is the word of God. "Take heed what ye hear." Now look at this principle.

"With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you." You cannot study Scripture for fifteen minutes and get two hours' worth of knowledge. You are going to get fifteen minutes' worth of knowledge. You cannot study the Scriptures for two hours and get forty hours' worth of knowledge. You are going to get two hours' worth of knowledge. With what measure you mete, or what measure you use in studying Scripture, God says that is going to be measured right back to you.

There is a difference between studying and reading. Everybody reads the Scripture, but very few of us really study it. We do not really consider or meditate. Now watch this. It is right here in the Bible. If you want to progress in the Christian faith, if you really want

enlightenment and the truth, look in verse 24: "And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear"—"shall" what? "More be given."

What if you do not hear? You are not going to get any more. Why would God give you truth if you are not going to obey it? In other words, once you study, you have to understand this principle: God measures truth to you according to the amount you give in studying the truth. Once He reveals something to you, once He illuminates and enlightens your mind, if you obey Him, He is going to give you more as you continue to study. But if you do not obey Him, you are not going to get any more. So it does not matter where you look in the Old Testament or the New Testament.

Here is the principle: consideration precedes enlightenment. God is not going to dump into our minds what we need without studying. We are living in perilous times—economically, politically, socially, every way you want to imagine. I have made it a point in my life to seek the Lord for wisdom to know what to do. And I have news for you: you better be thinking, meditating, praying, and searching the Scripture to find out what you need to do for your life, your family, your church, your friends, and your neighbors. It is not that one day we are going to wake up and say, "I know exactly what to do," without study, consideration, and meditation. How can you?

If you have never thought about it, how will it enter your mind? In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, the principle is this: consideration precedes enlightenment.

Go back to Daniel 9, our text. Here is a second principle: confession precedes forgiveness. Beginning with verse 3, Daniel says, "I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces."

Daniel is confessing. In verse 20, which we did not read earlier, he says exactly what he is doing: "And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God." Daniel confessed not only his own sins but also the sins of the nation. All the great intercessors in prayer did this. Read Ezra, Nehemiah, or Daniel; all cried out to God because of sin.

When was the last time you confessed the sins of your country and your people? When have you confessed before God, "We're murdering our babies, we're a nation pervading sodomy and wickedness, we're a people who are thieves, and we have a fraudulent economic system"? When do we confess these things as a people?

You may say, "I don't do those things." I understand that, but we live among a people who do them. Daniel was confessing.

It should be obvious that confession precedes forgiveness. How can anyone be forgiven unless he confesses and asks forgiveness? Daniel explicitly says he was confessing his sin. Confession is the same in the Old Testament as it is in the New Testament. Let me show you pointedly how confession always precedes forgiveness.

Proverbs 28:13 says, “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” If you try to cover your sins, you will not prosper. But whoever confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy. In other words, your confession precedes forgiveness.

In Psalm 32:5, David says, “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.” David acknowledged his sin; he did not hide his iniquity. He said, “I will confess my transgression.” And what did God do? God forgave. Confession precedes forgiveness.

The Hebrew word for confess in both passages is *yada*. It means to confess and to give praise and thanksgiving. Sometimes it carries the impact of casting out, throwing out, or shooting out. In other words, this confession, this acknowledgment, comes spontaneously and forcefully, especially when we are convicted by the Holy Spirit of God. Have there ever been times in your life when you could no longer hide your sin, when it troubled you, and suddenly you began blurting out everything in your mind and life to God? That is exactly what this means.

In James 5:16, to show this in the New Testament, we read, “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” The word confess there is *exomologeō*. It literally means to confess out, or to withdraw—to get it outside. When we confess our faults to one another, we are asking each other for prayer and encouragement.

That does not mean I have to come over and whisper all of my sins to Tom. But it does mean I can come to him and say, “Look, I need your prayers. I need your prayers in this area. I’m having a very difficult time. Please pray with me. Please help me.” Look in your Bibles at 1 John 1:9. This verse ties everything together and shows that confession precedes forgiveness: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us. Confession precedes forgiveness.

The same way applies in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. The word confess in the Greek is *homologeō*. It is made up of two words: *homo*, meaning one or the same—homogenized milk, homosexual—and *legō*, the Greek word meaning “I say.” *Homologeō* means, “I say the same thing.”

Real confession is when you say the same thing about your sin that God does. It is when you take God’s attitude toward your sin.

Suppose I had stolen from Doc and came to the Lord saying, “Oh Lord, I stole 50 bucks from Doc. Oh Lord, forgive me.” Then I went and stole another 50 bucks from Dr. Bowen, and now I was going after Roy to steal 50 more. Am I confessing my sins? I am verbally saying that I have stolen, but no. I have not taken the same attitude that God takes about my sin.

I have not said that my sin is wicked, vile, wrong, and deserving of death, or that I need to turn from it. If I confess my sins, I take the same attitude God has; therefore, I repent of my sins. Confession and repentance are basically synonymous. No one really confesses his sins until he turns from them.

Remember when David sinned against God in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah? God sent Nathan to confront David. When Nathan had finished, David said, “I have sinned against the Lord.” He acknowledged that everything he had done was a violation of God’s law and word, and he was saying, “I now agree with God.” Nathan understood this, because he said, “The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.” In other words, it took a special pardon from God so that David would not die. His sins were worthy of death.

If we truly confess and acknowledge our sins, we seek God’s forgiveness in the sense that we turn from our sins. We freely acknowledge them, come to God upon His terms, turn from our sins, and conform our lives to His Word. We take God’s thoughts and God’s attitude toward our sins.

This is true whether we are confessing vertically or horizontally. Suppose that I have stolen from Henry and come to God saying, “Lord, I’ve stolen from Henry. It’s wicked, wrong, foul, and deserving of death. Please forgive me.” I have confessed my sin.

What will evidence that I have really repented? I must go to Henry, confess to him, ask his forgiveness, and restore what I have stolen.

The Bible says, "Take heed to yourselves." He said, "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him." And "if he repent, forgive him." If Hobie steals from me, perhaps I do not even know it. Am I obligated to forgive him if he does not repent? No. I am always to be ready and willing to forgive, but I am not obligated to forgive unless he confesses and repents. If he has stolen from me and I do not know it, how can I forgive him until he confesses?

Psalm 86:5 says of God, "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." Is God ready to forgive? Yes. Is God willing to forgive? Yes. Will God forgive anyone who does not confess and repent? No. Confession precedes forgiveness. If we want forgiveness, we must learn to confess our sins as God requires.

In confessing our sins, we take the same attitude that God takes: we turn from them and do whatever is necessary to bring our lives into conformity with the Word of God. We have seen that consideration precedes enlightenment and confession precedes forgiveness. Thirdly, disobedience precedes judgment.

Go back to Daniel chapter 9, beginning with verse 10: "Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice. Therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him."

Disobedience precedes judgment. Whenever the judgment of God is upon an individual, a family, a church, or a nation, it is because of rebellion, disobedience, and sin.

Just like night follows day, judgment follows disobedience. It constantly amazes me that many professing Christians have not realized that their sins have consequences. Somehow people have gotten the idea that it is possible to sin against God and escape the penalties for their sins, which is not true. They cannot figure out why everything is going wrong in their lives. Think about this: we are in turmoil, in trouble, plagued, defeated, and judged. Why? The answer is because of the sins in our lives. If we were biblical and scriptural, we would take the Word of God like David in Psalm 32, when David said, “For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me.” Using biblical terminology, we would understand that it is God's hand judging us.

Why is God's hand heavy upon us? Why do things go wrong in our lives? Numbers 32:23 gives the answer: “But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out.” You cannot escape God's judgment. If you are disobedient and sinful, understand that some preachers have perverted the gospel and turned the grace of God into disgrace by implying that God will not judge or avenge Himself. Many people have accepted that pernicious doctrine and tried to say, “Well, God will let us get by.” The truth is that God will not let us get by.

It is true that God is love, merciful, and gracious, but it is equally true that God is just. Exodus 34:7 says, “Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.” He will by no means clear the guilty. Deuteronomy 28:15–25 declares, “But if you will not obey my law, all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.” They will chase you down and throw you down, and there is not one thing you can do about it.

Read all the prophets—Amos, Hosea, or whoever you read—and you will find that God's judgment always follows disobedience. It is a principle of Scripture, Old Testament and New Testament. Read Leviticus 26; it is the same thing. Ephesians 5:5–6 likewise shows that disobedience precedes judgment.

"For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words"—or empty words, useless words—"for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." What follows disobedience? Judgment. Colossians 3:5-6 says, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." What follows disobedience? Judgment.

It does not matter if you are an individual, a family, a church, or a nation. It is a principle in the Old Testament and the New Testament that judgment follows disobedience, or that disobedience precedes judgment. I have heard people say, "Well, I'm afraid America's in for some judgment." Folks, we're not only in for some judgment; we are already under judgment, have been under judgment, and I've got news for you: unless we repent, you ain't seen nothing yet.

That may not be good English, but based upon the good Word of God, it is truth. Disobedience precedes judgment.

We have looked in the Old Testament and in the New Testament on every one of these points. Please understand this: We have one Bible, not two. The Old Testament is just as much the Word of God as the New Testament. The New Testament has not abrogated, nullified, or outlawed the Old Testament.

God's law has not been repudiated. If you believe that God's law has been done away with, I would invite you to jump off the Empire State Building. The law of gravity is not Newton's law; that is God's law. God's law is still in effect, and He will judge those who violate His Word.

Let's pray. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for Your blessing and Your help. We pray that You will give us understanding. Give us a greater admiration and respect for the Word of God, and greater discernment in understanding, Lord, that Your Word does not contradict itself, that Your Word is truth, and that we can lean upon Thee, depend upon Thee, trust in Thee, and trust in Thy Word;

for forever, O Lord, is Thy Word settled in the heavens. We give Thee praise. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Old Testament Principles and New Testament Truths

Part Two of Two

January 27, 2012

Turn again to Daniel chapter 9. We will begin reading with verse 20 and read through verse 23. We read the first fifteen verses last week.

Daniel said, “And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.”

It is my intention, as last week, to demonstrate that there are absolutely no grounds for despising the Old Testament. The Old Testament is just as much the Word of God as the New Testament. All of God’s Word is authoritative, and it is applicable.

One of the most common objections people make when you quote Scripture or say, “The Bible teaches such and such,” is this: “But that is in the Old Testament.” My answer is, “So? Is not the Old Testament the Word of God?” When a person says, “But that’s in the Old Testament,” he is either demonstrating his ignorance or showing his hostility to the Word of God.

Certainly, there are many things in the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, that we do not understand. Probably we will never understand them until we get to glory. But you may not be able to understand everything, comprehend everything, or explain everything. At least you can bow to the authoritative Word of God and say, "Yes, that is what the Bible says."

I don't know how to apply it. I don't know how to understand it. But still, it is the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God, and I bow to it. At least you could take that attitude.

There are three ways to explain every negative passage in the New Covenant concerning the law. First, there are passages that denounce the law as a means of justification. Over and over in Scripture, the Bible teaches, "For by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." When the Apostle Paul said, "For we are not under the law, but under grace," he was not saying the law has been done away with; he was simply saying we are not under the law as a standard for justification.

Secondly, there are passages that refer to the death-dealing nature of sin in relationship to the law. The Bible places a curse upon anyone who does not continue to do all the things written in the law of God. The wages of sin is death. Jesus Christ has delivered His people from the curse and penalty of that broken law.

Thirdly, there are passages that refer to the ceremonial law. The ceremonial law has not been done away with, abrogated, nullified, or set aside; it has been fulfilled. We still come to the temple, and the Bible tells us our temple is Christ. In Revelation chapter 21, we still come to the altar; Hebrews 13 and verse 10 tells us our altar is Christ. We still bring a sacrifice. 1 Corinthians 5:7 tells us that Jesus Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us. He is our sacrifice. We still come to the high priest, and Hebrews chapter 4 tells us Jesus Christ is our high priest.

The ceremonial law was filled full by Jesus Christ. We no longer have the emblem, symbol, or shadow; we now have reality. When I came to Daniel chapter 9, I tried to show you that a number of truths more fully developed in the New Testament are plainly illustrated and taught in the Old Testament. The Old Testament and the New

Testament go hand in hand. They go together. They complement each other.

We looked at three principles last week from Daniel chapter 9, verses 1 through 15. I am not going to re-preach them, but I will remind you of them. In Daniel chapter 9, the principle is that consideration precedes enlightenment. Notice verse 2: “In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.” What was Daniel doing? He was studying the scrolls of Jeremiah, and he found where God was going to accomplish seventy years and then restore the people to the land. Consideration precedes enlightenment, and Daniel also prayed and sought the Lord for enlightenment.

The second principle is that confession precedes forgiveness. That is exactly what Daniel does. From verse 3 onward, he is confessing and acknowledging not only his sins, but also the sins of the people. How can you be forgiven if you do not confess and acknowledge your sin? Scripture says, “Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy, but he that covereth his sin shall not prosper.” Then, in 1 John 1:9, it says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

The third principle is that disobedience precedes judgment. Daniel admits that everything that had happened had come upon them because of their disobedience. Disobedience precedes judgment. Just as surely as we disobey, and just as surely as we sin against God, His judgment is going to come. The Bible says, “Be sure your sins will find you out.”

Today I want to deal with two more principles plainly and clearly taught not only in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament as well. The first one, which is point four, is this: repentance precedes understanding. If you look back in verse 20, Daniel says, “And while I was speaking and praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God.” In other words, Daniel is confessing, acknowledging, and repenting of his sins. Naturally, he could not repent for the people of the land, but he was

acknowledging their sins as well. One of the most common complaints I have heard concerning the Word of God is this complaint. Listen carefully.

"The Bible is so hard to understand. It's so difficult to comprehend." I cannot count, probably, all the people I've heard in 43 years of preaching who say, "I just cannot understand the Bible." Let me tell you, there is a reason why most people cannot receive or understand the Word of God. Here's why: they might want knowledge, but at the same time, they want their sin and their rebellion and their disobedience against God.

You are not going to have understanding without repentance. Repentance precedes understanding. Let me ask you a question. Why in the world would an unrepentant man want understanding of the Word of God to begin with? The only reason I could think of is that he would like to add the sin of pride already to his sins and vault his knowledge of the Word of God. In fact, I have seen some people in my life who were just as lost as the day is long and yet so arrogant in the fact that they read their Bible and they could quote some scripture.

Let me tell you something, folks. The Bible clearly teaches that repentance precedes understanding. There is a passage that most people are able to quote. You may not be able to quote this verse, but I guarantee you, you have heard this verse over and over as preachers have preached and taught. Consider what God says in Isaiah 1:18: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

"Come now, let us reason together." Probably every commentator you read will interpret this passage as God giving an invitation to sit down and reason, presenting the things of God so that men may understand them. Albert Barnes says, "This is addressed to the nation of Israel and the same exhortations made to all sinners. It is a solemn act on the part of God submitting the claims and principles of his government to reason on the supposition that men may see the propriety of His service and of His plan." No doubt, that is exactly what verse 18 says: "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord."

But when most people quote verse 18, they overlook the preceding verses 16 and 17: “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, let us reason together.” Do you see what God gives as a prerequisite for reasoning with Him? It is repentance. He says, “You need to cease from your evil doings. You need to cease from evil. You need to learn to do well,” that is, learn to obey Me. “Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.” All these things are plainly commanded in Scripture. Then He says, “Come and let us reason together, saith the Lord.” One is never going to reason with God, or submit to God's rationality or understanding, until he repents. Repentance precedes understanding. You are never going to understand the Scripture until you repent of your sin.

John Trapp, one of the old Puritans, said in his commentary that in the Greek church, at the beginning of divine services, the deacon cried, “Sacrosacros,” that is, “holy souls to holy service.” Trapp added, “God will not treat with his people till purified, till resolved upon better practices, as when he is content by wonderful condescension to make them even as judges in their own cause.” “Sacrosacros,” holy souls to holy service. If you want to reason with God, if you want to understand God, you have to repent of your sins and bring your life into conformity to His Word.

All of the prophets taught this same principle. Notice Jeremiah 31:19: “Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.” Now note closely what the verse actually says: “Surely after that I was turned,” that is, turned by God, “I repented.” What happened after repentance? “And after that I was instructed.” After he was instructed, what did he do? He said, “I smote upon my thigh, I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I bore the reproach of my youth.” In other words, after God turned him, he repented; after he repented, he was instructed. What in the world is Jeremiah teaching us? Jeremiah is teaching us that no man repents until, first of all, God turns him.

God has to turn him. God has to give him grace. God has to give him mercy. Scripture very plainly teaches in the New Testament that even repentance is a gift of God: Acts 5, Acts 11, and 2 Timothy chapter 2. So God turns and God gives repentance, and then he says, “After that, I was instructed.” Then he said, “I smote myself upon the thigh.”

Let me give you a clear illustration of what is being taught. I can think back to my own conversion experience. I remember when God converted me. I was convicted of certain sins. They were sins that were very prominent in my life. I was convicted of them, and I repented of them by God’s grace and turned from them. After God saved me, I had a real hunger for the Word of God, and I began to study and read the Scripture. As I read the Scripture, I discovered an amazing thing: I had a lot more sins in my life than I ever thought or imagined. In fact, I found out there were things in my life that were wrong that I did not even know were wrong.

I have done far more repenting since I have been saved than when I got saved. When I got saved, I repented specifically of those sins that God convicted me concerning. After He convicted me, after I turned and repented by His grace, I was instructed. And after I was instructed, just as the Scripture says, I smote upon my thigh. I not only bore the reproach of my youth; I found out there were things in my life that needed correcting and repenting of, constantly and continually being brought into conformity to the Word of God.

So the Scripture is teaching us that before understanding is repentance. It is God who must turn us, and God who must give us repentance. Therefore, when we repent, when we turn from our sins, we can learn to do well, sit down, reason with God, and find out exactly what God is teaching us.

Does the New Testament teach the same principle? The answer is yes. Romans 3 and verse 11 says, "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." How many people understand by nature? None. How many seek God by nature? None. In Ephesians 2 and verse 18, speaking about fallen man, the Bible says, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them." How many of us are ignorant of the things of God by nature? All of us. How many have our understanding darkened and are alienated from God by nature? All of us. When God came to us, He found us ignorant and alienated from Himself.

In Matthew 13, our Lord teaches the parable of the sower, a passage also found in Mark 4 and Luke 8. In verse 3 we read, "And He spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow." When he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up. Some seed fell in stony places, some among the thorns, and some on the good ground.

Once our Lord gives us a parable, we do not have to wonder about its interpretation, because He interprets it for us. Thus, in verse 3, He said, "Behold a sower went forth to sow."

In verse 4, our Lord says, "And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside and the fowls came and devoured them up." All of us who live in a farming community understand what this wayside is. In order for the seed to be received in the ground, the ground has to be prepared. As you go into any field, however, there is a road. You have to have a road to get your tractor and equipment in, or, in old times, to get your mule and donkey in. That wayside, or road, is always packed very firmly. It is packed very hard. Consequently, any seed that falls on that hard-packed ground is not taken into the soil. It simply lies on top of the ground.

Notice how our Lord interprets this in verse 19. He says, "When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the wayside." The wayside hearer is the hard-hearted individual. He hears the Word of

God, but he understands it not. Consequently, the evil one, or wicked one, comes and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.

The Greek word for “catcheth away” is *harpazo*, which refers to a forceful or violent taking away. Those who hear the Word of God without repentance do not understand the Word of God; immediately, the evil one comes and with violence and forcefulness takes that word from them.

They are also willing, eager, and ready to give up that Word because they do not want it. They do not understand it, and it is of no value to them. Moreover, it probably conflicts with their plans and desires. They do not want it anyhow. Thus our Lord says that when someone hears the Word of God and does not understand it, immediately the evil one takes it from him.

Compare the wayside hearer with the good ground hearer. Our Lord tells us about the good ground. He says, “But he that received seed into the good ground”—notice it went into the ground—“he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.” What is the difference between the good ground hearer and the wayside hearer? The difference is between night and day. The good ground hearer hears it, absorbs it, applies it, and understands it. It brings forth fruit in his life.

Repentance has to precede understanding. The good ground hearer had already repented. That is why he received it; that is why he understood it. When our Lord began His ministry, in Mark 1 and verse 15, He said, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” Notice what He said: “The time is at hand, repent ye and believe the gospel.” What does that mean? It means repentance precedes faith. If you have real biblical repentance, you repent and believe, because faith immediately follows biblical repentance.

You could say they are the two sides of one coin. He that believes savingly repents, and he that repents savingly believes. It is impossible to understand without repentance. Repentance precedes understanding. How can you believe that which you are unable to understand or comprehend? You cannot. Just as in Daniel 9, Isaiah 1, Jeremiah 31, and Matthew 13, you must repent and believe the gospel. Repentance precedes understanding.

The second, or last, point is that humility precedes exaltation. This would actually be number five. The whole of Daniel 9 illustrates this point. Daniel was exalted and given understanding because he humbled himself, made his confession and repentance, and sought the mind and will of God. Humility precedes exaltation. It is impossible to be exalted unless you are humbled, just as pride and arrogance precede a downfall.

Everyone can quote Proverbs 16:18: "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." If you have a haughty spirit, you are going to fall. Proverbs 29:23 says, "A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit." Remember what the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

When you and I become so self-confident in ourselves and our abilities, we had better look out, because we are being set up for a fall. It is only the grace of God that holds us up.

Let me give you two classic illustrations of this simple truth: humility precedes exaltation. Look in your Bibles at Daniel chapter 4, beginning with verse 24.

King Nebuchadnezzar was a proud, arrogant, haughty monarch. God showed him some dreams, and Daniel interpreted those dreams for him. Daniel says:

"This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king: that they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. And whereas they

commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.”

SCRIPTURE READING - Daniel 4:28-37 (KJV)

“All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. 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? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

“And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of

heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.”

Now what happens? Nebuchadnezzar, the proud, arrogant, haughty monarch, was brought low.

In fact, Daniel, in telling the king the interpretation of his dream, preached to him. Daniel admonished the king: "Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness," that is, repent and do what is right, "and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity." In other words, the only hope that Nebuchadnezzar had was repentance and faith, repentance and obedience to the Word of God. God was determined to bring him down and teach him a lesson. He was going to find out that he was not God, that he was not in control, and that his plans, purposes, and programs could be made null and void instantaneously.

For seven years, he was driven insane. The condition is known as boanthropy, where a man lives like an animal. His hair grew like eagles' feathers, the Bible says, and his fingernails grew like birds' claws. He ate grass like an ox. For seven years, he was literally driven insane, until he came to one conclusion: God is in charge.

Nebuchadnezzar then said: "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." Our God, the sovereign God of heaven and earth, can take care of the one-worlders, the Bilderbergers, the CFR, and the trilateralists. He can bring them down in a heartbeat.

Nebuchadnezzar learned the truth of Daniel 2:21. Daniel had tried to warn him, but he would not listen: "Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding." It is God who removes kings and sets up kings.

He removes them, and He sets them up. The psalmist gives a great admonishment: "Lift not up your horn on high"—your power, your position. In other words, do not become proud and arrogant.

"Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck." Do not be rebellious. Why? "For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another." Who is in control? It is God.

Nebuchadnezzar, that proud, arrogant, haughty monarch, refused to humble himself. He was told who was in control. He was admonished to break off his sins, told to repent and do what was right, but he refused. What did God do? God brought him to his knees. He lost his understanding and his reasoning ability. He lived like a dumb animal for seven years, until he decided, "You know, I'm not God, I'm man. I can't do a thing. God is in control." Then God restored him and brought him back to his kingdom.

Daniel 4 should be compared with Philippians 2, showing the contrast between the proud, arrogant monarchs of this world and the Lord Jesus Christ. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

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

Jesus Christ is mightier, more powerful, more glorious, more majestic than Nebuchadnezzar could ever dream of being. Jesus Christ is God incarnate. He is the Messiah, the Redeemer, the Savior, the Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the God of Glory, the Great I Am, the Lily of the Valley, and the Bright and Morning Star. Jesus Christ, in all of His royal splendor, glorious majesty, and eternal Godhead, thought it not something to be seized after, in the sense that He willingly laid aside His glory, splendor, and majesty in order to become His Father's servant.

He humbled Himself and became obedient. What did He say throughout Scripture? "I came not to do my will, but the will of Him that sent me." Over and over, He referred to Himself as the Sent One. He humbled Himself, not only becoming obedient, but obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, in all of its horror, indignities, and pain. He willingly laid aside all of His splendor and majesty and humbled Himself that He might honor His Father and save His people.

What was the result of that willing humiliation? Verse 9 says, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

If God the Father required His Son, Jesus Christ, to humble Himself before He was exalted, do you think any fallen son of Adam will be exempted from this requirement? The answer is no. Humility precedes exaltation. If we are unwilling to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, unwilling to submit to His will and obey His commands, we will not be exalted. Before honor is humility. If we try to exalt ourselves, are you listening? We will be knocked down. We will be abased.

Our Lord states the principle in Matthew 23:12: "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." If you lift yourself up, God says you are going to be knocked down. If you humble yourself, you will be exalted. The same principle is illustrated beautifully in Luke 18, beginning with verse 10.

Our Lord says, "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican." The publican, of course, was the hated tax collector. Verse 11: "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the

other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Probably this Pharisee was punctilious in everything that he said. He probably gave tithes of all that he possessed. He probably fasted twice in the week. He probably lived what you and I would call a good clean life. But he was still a proud, arrogant, rebellious sinner. He refused to humble himself. In fact, he was so proud, he was thankful that he was not like other men, even as that publican.

But our Lord says that publican smote himself upon the breast and just simply said, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." The scripture teaches us that God resists the proud. James 4 and verse 6 says, "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." 1 Peter 5, verses 5 and 6, says, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." I have told you repeatedly that the word "resist" means to fight against. Whoever is proud and arrogant, God fights against him. Pride is one of the grosser sins listed in Romans 1 and 2 Timothy 3. When we think of gross sins, we think of fornication, adultery, murder, and drunkenness, but God includes pride.

In Psalm 94:2, David prays, "Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud." God will render a reward to the proud. Proverbs 16:5 says, "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished." Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to God. Remember, "abomination" means a stench in God's nostrils. Though hand join in hand, you may say, "We're not going to do this." God says, "Oh yes, you will." You may say, "Joe, hand joined in hand, we will do this." God says, "Oh no, you're not." All the proud, arrogant, rebellious people in this world could unite in rebellion against God in occasions. God, no uneasiness. God is still capable of punishing them.

Isaiah 13:11 says, "And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." The arrogant, rebellious rulers of this country and the countries of the world are in for a hard time. God is going to lay them low. Since God is opposed to pride, arrogance, and haughtiness, He will judge and destroy them. Do you think that God will allow a proud, arrogant, haughty individual into His kingdom? The answer is no. When God saves us, He brings us to the end of ourselves. Everyone who has ever been savingly converted has been brought to the end of himself.

He sees his helplessness, his hopelessness, and his worthlessness. Our so-called righteousnesses are as nothing but filthy rags. When we are brought to the end of ourselves, we are found weighed and wanting, not only in God's sight, but in our own sight as well. We have been convicted, condemned, and pronounced guilty in the sight of God and His law, in the sight of man, and in our own sight. The man brought to the end of himself realizes that he has nothing in and of himself: no righteousness, no work, no good deeds, and nothing to offer God. He is absolutely and totally helpless and hopeless and can do nothing.

When you get to the end of yourself, that is where you will find the Lord in His grace. But as long as we think we can, we cannot. Salvation is not by trying; salvation is by trusting in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Salvation has already been accomplished. Before God exalts us even in salvation, He humbles us. He lets us see exactly what we are: sinners who can do nothing and have nothing.

In Mark 10:15, and also in Luke 18:17, our Lord says, "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." What can a little child do? Nothing. What does a little child have? Nothing. If the parents did not support, sustain, nourish, and take care of a little child, he would die. If we cannot enter the kingdom of God unless we become as a little child, we must realize that we are nothing, have nothing, and can do nothing. He must do it for us. We are humbled before we are exalted.

Let me make a couple of applications today. I believe they are vitally important and will hopefully tie together the message from last Sunday and this Sunday. All Scriptures are the inspired,

infallible, inerrant Word of God, and all are equally authoritative and applicable today. We must never divide our Bibles by becoming the judges of what is authoritative and applicable and what is not. We must never divide the Scripture so as to deny any portion of the Bible as applicable to our lives.

If you would read 1 Corinthians 10—do not do it now—but if you would read 1 Corinthians 10, the Apostle Paul took what happened to Old Testament Israel and applied it to the Corinthian church. Scripture says, “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning and our admonition.” There is nothing in the Bible that you can do away with. All of God’s Word is authoritative and applicable.

Secondly, as we humble ourselves to enter into the kingdom of God, likewise, we must continue in humility in order to please our heavenly Father. Think about this statement: Greatness is not in accomplishments. Greatness is not in successes. Greatness is not in self-promotion. Greatness is not in doing wonderful things. Greatness is in humility. Listen to the words of our Lord. In Matthew 18:4, when the disciples were fighting over who would be greatest in the kingdom of God, our Lord took a little child, put him on his knee, and said, “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Greatness does not have anything to do with buildings. It does not have anything to do with programs. It does not have anything to do with followings. It does not have anything to do with numbers. “Well, we had 480 in Sunday school this morning. How many do you have?”

Greatness is not in things; it is in humility. A multimillion-dollar building or a vast following does not mean a thing. Humility is not being a foot mat, nor is it walking around with your head down. That is poor posture, not humility. Humility is taking your proper position and place before God.

He is the Father, and you are the child; He is the King, and you are the servant; He is the Master, and you are the slave; He is the Creator, and you are the creature. Your position before God is to do

what He says. That is humility. Humility is disciplined strength under God. It is not cowardice, fear, or being afraid. You move when God tells you to move, and you do what God tells you to do. When you fight, you fight according to God's grace, mercy, power, and Word.

The Bible says in Micah 6:8, "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?" To walk humbly with thy God.

Thirdly, if we humble ourselves, He will exalt us in due time. First Peter 5:6 says, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." If you humble yourself, obey God, and do what He commands, inevitably and invariably you will be exalted in His time—not in your time, but in His time. When it is time for you to be exalted, God will exalt you.

The opposite is true as well. If you exalt yourself, God will humble you in due time. He will bring you down. No one steals promotion from God. You try it, and He will bring you low. He said, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."

The fourth application is this: if we desire to understand more of God's Word, we must continually turn from our sins. We must examine our lives, find anything in them that is contrary to God and His Word, and turn from it. The more we turn from our sins, the more understanding God gives us. The more pleasing we are in His sight, the more He realizes that we want His will, and He shows us His will. God wants us to do His will and obey Him far more than we want to do His will and obey Him. When He sees an inkling of a desire to please Him, He will encourage that.

God will give us more truth if we use the truth He has already given us. If we apply the Scriptures in our lives, He will continue to give us more truth. Repentance precedes understanding. If we want understanding, we must turn from our ways to His ways.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for Your grace and Your mercy to us. We pray that You would lift us up, build us up in the most holy faith, and give us a biblical humility, that we may

understand Thee and Thy Word and apply Thy Word to our lives. May we praise Thee, honor Thee, and glorify Thee. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

Source Notes

Chapter 1: Old Testament Principles and New Testament Truths Part 1 of 2
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Chapter 2: Old Testament Principles and New Testament Truths Part 2 of 2
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Topical Index

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

C

Consideration Precedes Enlightenment p. 13

O

Old Testament Principles and New Testament Truths p. 6

Old Testament Principles and New Testament Truths Part 1 of 2 p. 5

Old Testament Principles and New Testament Truths Part 2 of 2 p. 27

Scripture Index

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

Exodus

Exodus 34:7 p. 23

Leviticus

Leviticus 26 p. 23

Numbers

Numbers 32:23 p. 23

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 28:15-25 p. 23

Deuteronomy 29:29 p. 15

Psalms

Psalms 32 p. 23

Psalms 32:5 p. 20

Psalms 86:5 p. 22

Psalms 94:2 p. 40

Proverbs

Proverbs 2:1 p. 16

Proverbs 2:6 p. 15

Proverbs 16:18 p. 35

Proverbs 16:5 p. 40

Proverbs 28:13 p. 20

Proverbs 29:23 p. 35

Isaiah

Isaiah 1 p. 35

Isaiah 1:18 p. 30

Isaiah 13:11 p. 41

Jeremiah

Jeremiah 25:11-12 p. 14

Jeremiah 29:10 p. 14

Jeremiah 31 p. 35

Jeremiah 31:19 p. 31

Daniel

Daniel 2:21 p. 37

Daniel 4 p. 38

Daniel 4:28-37 p. 36

Daniel 9 p. 15, p. 19, p. 35

Daniel 9:1-15 p. 5

Micah

Micah 6:8 p. 43

Matthew

Matthew 5:17 p. 10

Matthew 13 p. 33, p. 35

Matthew 18:4 p. 42

Matthew 23:12 p. 39

Mark

Mark 1 p. 34

Mark 4 p. 33

Mark 10:15 p. 41

Luke

Luke 8 p. 33

Luke 18 p. 39

Luke 18:17 p. 41

John

John 8:29 p. 8

John 14:6 p. 10

Acts

Acts 5 p. 32

Acts 11 p. 32

Romans

Romans 1 p. 40

Romans 3 p. 12, p. 33

Romans 3:20 p. 11

Romans 6 p. 11, p. 12

Romans 7:12 p. 11

1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 5:7 p. 10, p. 28

1 Corinthians 10 p. 42

1 Corinthians 10:12 p. 35

2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 3 p. 8

2 Corinthians 5:21 p. 9

Galatians

Galatians 2 p. 12

Galatians 3 p. 7

Galatians 4:4-5 p. 9

Ephesians

Ephesians 2 p. 33

Ephesians 2:15 p. 11

Ephesians 5:5-6 p. 23

Philippians

Philippians 2 p. 38

Colossians

Colossians 3:5-6 p. 24

2 Timothy

2 Timothy 3 p. 40

2 Timothy 3:16 p. 13

Hebrews

Hebrews 4 p. 10

Hebrews 13 p. 28

Hebrews 13:10 p. 10

James

James 4 p. 40

James 5:16 p. 20

1 Peter

1 Peter 5 p. 40

1 Peter 5:6 p. 43

1 John

1 John 1:9 p. 20, p. 29

1 John 3 p. 12

Revelation

Revelation 21:3 p. 10

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