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FOUR GATES OF DELIVERANCE Acts 12:1-16

1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. 2 Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. 3 And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread. 4 So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover. 5 Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. 6 And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. 7 Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off his hands. 8 Then the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals"; and so he did. And he said to him, "Put on your garment and follow me." 9 So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. 10 When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. 11 And when Peter had come to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people." 12 So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. 13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. 14 When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. 15 But they said to her, "You are beside yourself!" (KJV - you are mad!) Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, "It is his angel." 16 Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.

Introduction

In this text, there are 4 sets of 4 soldiers. There are four gates that Peter had to walk through in order to be set free. Interesting enough Ephesians 6:12 says, For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against <u>principalities</u> (1), against <u>powers</u> (2), against the <u>rulers of the darkness of this age</u> (3), against <u>spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places</u> (4).

A. If Satan has four areas of destruction aimed at us, then God has four areas of breakthrough He wants to give the church.

1. The First Gate The Inner Prison

4 So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to **four squads of soldiers** to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover. 5 Peter was

therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. 6 And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison.

- A. God is more interested in who you are than what you do.
- B. Before you do anything for God you have to get anointed on the inside.
- C. You have to overcome the prison of your inner self.
 - 1. Intimidations that lie within you and hold you back.
 - 2. Some are held captive by their fears.
 - 3. Some are held captive by their past.
 - 4. Some are held captive by their self -worth.
 - 5. If you want to go forward with God you have first got to make peace with yourself.
- D. These are days that we must know who we are in Christ.
- E. If you don't walk through this first gate, you will never get out of the other ones.

2. The Second Gate The Expectation of the People

10 When they were past the **first and the second guard posts**,

11 And when Peter had come to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the **expectation of the Jewish people**.

- A. You have to be free from the expectations of other people.
 - 1. You can spend a life time trying to please people and never get anywhere.
 - 2. Before you please.....make sure God is pleased.
 - 3. Evangelist have lost out with God because they couldn't keep up with the expectations of the crowd.
 - 4. First and foremost, you have to be concerned about pleasing God.
- B. In the Spirit realm, the most important thing I can do, is spend time with God.
 - 1. Our ears are the womb of our soul and we need to become pregnant with the thoughts and intent of God.
 - 2. If you stand before God long enough, you can stand before any man.
- C. God needs people who can't be bought out. God needs people who can't be intimidated out. God needs people who can't be complimented out. God needs people who can't be criticized out.
- D. We shouldn't be intimidated in our worship.

- E. God doesn't want you to be someone else. He wants you to be you. All you have to do is get free from the expectations of other people and be what God called you to be.
- F. We are never going to be able to bind up the forces of evil until first we get free in our own spirit.

3. The Third Gate

The Gate that Leads to the City

10 When they were past the **first and the second guard posts**, they came to the **iron gate** that leads to the city, *which opened to them of its own accord*; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.

- A. There is a gate that leads to the city.
 - 1. There is a constant lure to the city.
 - 2. Don't underestimate the pull of the world.
 - 3. The city is calling out to you.
 - 4. But what we can't see is that once we answer its call, we are in another prison.
- B. In every city there is a ruling power of darkness.
 - 1. Satan wants you to stay oppressed by this spirit.
 - 2. In order to win the city, you have got to get out of this prison.
- C. It opened of it's own accord.
 - 1. Look at this revelation. When you are free from the first and second guards, the city gates can't hold you back. They have no choice but to open.
 - 2. The key to winning a city, it being free from yourself and the expectation of people. Conquer them and the city is yours.

4. The Fourth Gate

The Religious System of the Church

12 So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. 13 And as Peter knocked at the **door of the gate**, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. 14 When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. 15 But they said to her, "You are beside yourself!" (KJV - you are mad!) Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, "It is his angel." 16 Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.

- A. The people were praying, but the gates were locked.
 - 1. Too many churches have hidden behind their stained glass windows.

- 2. Too many churches have acted as though they are allergic to sinners.
- 3. It's easier to get into a bar, than many churches.
- B. Rhoda said, "It's a miracle, but the church said, you're mad."
 - 1. We can not conform to a religious system that doesn't practice what it says it believes.
- C. The hardest gate to get through was the one at the church. When they saw that Peter was set free, they said, it's madness.
 - 1. At every other gate, they just opened. But the one at the church, he had to knock and keep knocking and keep knocking.

D. Illustration: A man went to England to see the King. He was told that only occasionally would the king come out and sit for a while on this balcony and if he waited, he could possibly catch a glimpse of the King. He waited for four days. On the fourth day, he noticed a small mouse playing around the Kings chair. This appalled him. He got so focused on the mouse that the King came out and sit in the chair, but by this time, he was too focused on the mouse to even worry about the King.

1. Too many churches today are so focused on the little things, they don't even know that the King is sitting right in their midst.

The Incense of Heaven Hebrews 9:2-3 (I will not read the text first.)

Introduction - In order for us to understand the significance of this sermon we need take a quick journey through the Tabernacle of Moses. I want you to take notice of the 3 compartments of the Tabernacle and also the position of the furniture. Let's take a walk through the Tabernacle together.

1. The furniture of the Tabernacle

Outer Court - Brazen Altar, Laver The Holy Place - Candlestick, Table of Shewbread, Altar of Incense Holy of Holies - Ark of the Covenant (The position of the furniture forms cross.)

2. The use of incense in the Tabernacle

- A. Altar of Incense [Exodus 30:1,7-8]
- B. The Censer or Incense in order to enter the Holy of Holies [Leviticus 16:12-13]

3. The 3 Compartments of the Tabernacle

- A. The Outer Court is the place of forgiveness and cleansing The Inner Court is the place of ministry. (Worship in Spirit, Word, Prayer) The Holy of Holies is the place where God meets with us.
 - 1. We have to go through the steps to get into God's presences.
- B. In the middle compartment you see 3 pieces of furniture.
 - The Table Our body

The Candlestick - Our soul

The Altar of Incense - our spirit

- 1. It is not until we move beyond the body and soul and get into the spirit that we get near God.
- 2. Personal purity still must precede personal worship.
- 3. Worship is not a spiritual callisthenic. It is a holy man approaching a holy God.

4. The Two Altars

- A. The first altar is a bloody altar. Filled with gallons of blood from sacrifices.
- B. The second altar is a sweet smelling altar. It is the altar of intercession. The last entry point before you get into the presence of a Holy God.
- C. I want you to see the High Priest, surrounded by smoke, going before God. Fire from the Brazen altar and incense from the Altar of Incense.
 - 1. **[Psalm 141:2]**

5. The Relocation of the Altar of Incense

A. [Hebrews 9:2-3]

It appears as though the writer of Hebrews has mistakenly placed the Altar of Incense in the wrong room. In the Old Testament, we know where it was placed. But now, he has it in the Holy of Holies. Is this a contradiction?

B. [Revelation 5:8] Vials of odors, which are the prayers of the saints. [Revelation 8:2-5] Golden censer, filled with the prayers of the saints. The Altar of Incense is now before the throne and the incense is the prayers of the Saints.

C. [Matthew 27:50-51] The veil of the temple was rent in two.

Chasing Foxes

1. Foxes: The Cost of Revenge

Judges 15:4 Then <u>Samson went and caught three hundred foxes</u>; and he took torches, turned the foxes tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. 5 When he had set the torches on fire, he let the foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the vineyards and olive groves.

- A. Questions, I would like to ask this man who was raised up to be a CHAMPION in Israel:
 - 1. How much time does it take to catch 300 foxes, tie their tales together, tie a torch to their tales, light the torches and set the enemies fields on fire?
 - 2. How long did it take to catch 300 live foxes?
 - 3. Where did you have to go to get 300 foxes?
 - 4. How long did it take you to make 300 torches?
 - 5. How many days of work did you miss to do all of this?
 - 6. Was it worth all of that energy, anger and wasted time, just to get revenge?
- B. Wasted days can turn into wasted weeks, wasted months and wasted years, if you decide to chase foxes.

2. Foxes: The Cost of No or Low Priorities

Song of Solomon 2:15 Catch us the foxes; <u>The little foxes that spoil the vines</u>, for our vines have <u>tender grapes</u>.

- A. Spoiling the vines.
 - 1. Tender grapes means that it is the beginning of the season. The seeds are formed yet. The harvest hasn't come yet.
- B. Addicted to Urgency means that you treat everything as urgent.
- C. Prioritizing your life begins with putting the Big Rocks in first.
 - 1. Writer, Stephen Covey tells the story of a university experiment. Each group was given sand, small stones, Big Rocks and water. They had to see how much of the material they could get into a jar. The team that won

got all of it in. The other teams said, that is impossible, what was the secret to getting it all in. They replied, "You have to put the Big Rocks in first and let everything else filter in around it."

D. The Clock and the Compass

You need both. The clock is the system that tells you where you are.

The compass is the system that tells you where you are going.

- 1. Where are you going?
 - a. What goals keep your hope alive?

3. Foxes: The Cost of No Spiritual Goals

- A. What happens to a family that values sports of youth ministry?
- B. What happens to a family that values recreation over worship?
- C. What happens to a home that values carnal influences over spiritual influences?
- D. Home is priceless! What happens if it is PRIESTLESS! Who is the spiritual leader in your home?
- E. Read LAMENTATIONS chapter 5.

Lamentations 5:15 The joy of our heart has ceased; our dance has turned into mourning. 16 The crown has fallen from our head. Woe to us, for we have sinned! 17 Because of this our heart is faint; Because of these things our eyes grow dim; 18 <u>Because of Mount</u> <u>Zion</u> which is desolate, <u>with foxes walking about on it.</u>

Lamentations 5:21 <u>Turn us back to You</u>, O LORD, and <u>we will be restored</u>; renew our days as of old,

Conclusion: You can't live life without PRIORITIES. You can't do everything well, but you have to decided what you HAVE TO DO WELL. The rest will take care of itself. If you live with priorities, you will lose your season, lose your treasures and lose your inheritance. We have to WAKE UP and PAY ATTENTION!

A Comparison of Islam and Christianity

1. An introduction to the faith of Islam

- A. Islam is an Arabic work which means, "Submission and Peace."
- B. The word Muslim, means, "those who submit to God."
- C. There Islam is the religion and a Muslim is one who follows the religion.
- D. Muslims believe in one God whose name is Allah.
- E. Their religion began with a man named Ubul-Kassim, who would later be called Mohammed, which means, "one highly praised."
- F. They believe that Allah has revealed himself through his sacred writings, teachings and commandments that have come through his angels, messengers and prophets.
- G. Islam claims to be of the same faith as all the children of Abraham. Islam claims that Allah used the Prophet Moses to write the Torah, the Prophet Jesus to reveal the scriptures knows as Gospels and the last of the prophets, the Prophet Mohammed to recite the Holy Quran.
- H. Islam also gives validity to the other writers of the Bible, however, does not claim to Bible to be inerrant, as it does the Quran.
- I. Islam claims that the last prophet to come was Mohammed and that he sealed all prophecies.
- J. Islam is still looking for a Messiah to come, a final judgment and a paradise.

2. <u>Main Beliefs of Islam and Christianity</u>:

ISLAM

One God - Allah Allah has no begotten children Allah has many sacred writings Allah is the Creator of all The last prophet was Mohammed There is a Messiah, yet to come There will be a final judgment There is a paradise and a hell

CHRISTIANITY

One God - Jehovah God has one begotten Son- Jesus Jehovah has One sacred text-Bible Jehovah created all through Jesus The last prophet was John Baptist Jesus is Messiah, has already come There will be a final judgment There is a heaven and hell

3. Allah and Jehovah God

- A. Both groups claim to serve the One True God.
 - 1. Islam claims that Allah an Arabic word and Elohim, a Hebrew word, is one in the same.
- B. A writer by the name of Robert Morey published a book in 1992 called the Islamic Invasion. He claims that Allah was actually the name of the moon God in the city of Mecca where Mohammed was born. He claims that he proclaimed a monotheistic religion, but chooses the moon god as the only God. Islam however, refutes this claim in their publication called "Allah, the Creator and Lord of the Universe." They claim that Allah is the same as Elohim to the Jewish people.

4. The Quran

- A. The Quran:
 - 1. The Quran has 3 sections:
 - a. Parts of the Old Testament and Psalms
 - b. Parts of the Gospels
 - c. The revelations of Muhammad
 - 2. Muslims claim that the Quran was written in perfect Arabic in every respect and that Allah wrote it in heaven. However, those who study the Quran know differently. It contains many words and phrases that are not Arabic.
 - 3. The Quran gives 4 conflicting accounts of call of Mohammed to be a prophet.
 - a. Sura 53:2-18 claims Allah appeared to him.
 - b. Sura 26: 192-194 claims that the Holy Spirit called him.
 - c. Sura 15:8 claims that angels came down and told him.
 - d. Sura 2:97 claims that the angel Gabriel came to him and called him while handing him the Quran.
 - 4. There is a section referred to as the Satanic Verses in which Mohammed in a moment of weakness and temptation gave in to a pressing crowd and gave them permission to worship the 3 daughters of Allah, Al-Lat, Al-Uzza and Manat. Islam's claim to Monotheism is their greatest doctrine, while Mohammed allowed the worship of other gods in his moment of weakness. (Sura 53:19)
 - 1. Mohammad later claims that Gabriel came down and rebuked him for this.
 - 2. After Mohammad's death the "satanic verses" were omitted from the Quran, however, this is well documented in their religion.
 - 5. Either the Quran or the Bible has to be in error because they have many historical accounts that conflict.
 - a. Quran gives the name of Abraham's father as Azar, while the Bible

says his name is Terah.

- b. The Quran claims that Abraham rebuilt a temple in Mecca that Adam originally built. The Bible gives an actually physical map of Abraham's life and says he never went to Mecca.
- c. The Quran claims that Abraham went to sacrifice his son Ishmael on the altar, while the Bible claims it was Isaac.
- d. The Quran claims that Abraham only had two sons, but the Bible gives the names of 8 sons born to him.
- e. The Quran says he build the Kabah, the temple in Mecca. The Bible says that he did not.
- f. The Quran says that he was thrown into a fire by King Nimrod, who builds the tower of Babel. This is the most costly mistake of all to their text because the Bible and history place the story of King Nimrod centuries before Abraham. Nimrod had been dead for many years before he was even born.
- g. The Quran says that Pharaoh's wife adopted Moses, while the Bible says it was Pharaoh's daughter.
- h. The Quran places the flood of Noah in Moses day, while the Bible places it centuries before the birth of Moses.
- i. Another costly mistake in the Quran is that it states that Haman lived in Egypt during the time of Moses and worked for Pharaoh on the Tower of Babel. Haman however, lived in Persia and worked for King Ahasuerus of Persia. His story is in the book of Esther. The misplacement of this historical account is easy to trace.
- j. The Bible claims that Zechariah the father of John the Baptist could not speak for nine months. The Quran says he was mute for 3 days.
- k. There is only one solution to this serious conflict: BOTH CANNOT BE RIGHT. ONE HAS TO BE FABRICATED. I choose the one that lines us correctly with history.

5. Jesus and Mohammad

- A. The Quran claims that Jesus was a prophet sent from God to reveal divine truths, however Mohammad was the last and final prophet of God. I would like for us to compare the lives of Jesus and Mohammed.
- B. Prophecies concerning their births....
 - 1. The birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus were all prophesied. The Old Testament prophets told us the city he would be born in. Told us his family linage we were told the actual year that he would die. We were given prophecies to look for to make sure that he was indeed the Messiah. We were told that he would ride through Jerusalem on a donkey. We were told that they would beat him, scourge him and hang him on a cross. We were told that His own people would reject Him, but that was God's plan in order to save the Gentiles. His virgin birth was prophesied. God sent a forerunner to herald His coming. Simeon was a living prophecy, who was told that he would not see death until he saw the Messiah. At the age of 12, He was

teaching the Rabbis. His death was prophesied and even the fact that he would be laid in a borrowed tomb.

2. Yet there are no prophecies concerning the coming or birth of Mohammed. The only Holy writ about Mohammed was written by him and in his own lifetime. As a matter of fact, he himself did not even know he was a prophet until he was 40 years old. Jesus was born of a supernatural birth from a virgin who conceived of the Holy Spirit. Muhammad was born to Abdullah and Aminah. His father died before he was born. His mother died while he was young. He then went to live with his grand parents and then later was raised by his uncle.

C. Their Genealogies

- 1. In America, Islam is being promoted as a black man's religion. There will be no peace on earth with a black man's religion or a white man's religion. There must only be the worship of God. Islam claims that Allah is black, however the book of Revelation describes Him as red, green and yellow. That is the only color description of God in the whole Bible. Revelation says, to look upon the one who sits on the throne is like looking on a sardis and jasper stone.
- 2. There are a few things that we need to clarify.
 - a. Number One: Jesus was a Jew. He was not white.
 - b. Number Two: Muhammad was an Arab, he was not black. One of the sacred writings of Islam called the Hadith states and I quote from Volume One Hadith, Number 63. While we were sitting with the prophet in the Mosque, a man came riding on a camel. He made the camel kneed down at the Mosque, tied his foreleg and then said, "Who amongst you is Mohammad?" At that time, the prophet was sitting amongst us, leaning on his arm. We replied, "This white man leaning on his arm." Then the man addressed him.
- D. Divine Natures
 - 1. According to the Bible, Jesus lived a sinless life. He was fully human, yet at the same time, fully God. Even at His death, He declared that no man had the power to take his life, but that He gave it for a ransom of all. Even the elements reacted to His death. The sun was darkened in the middle of the day. The veil in the Temple was rent in two separating man from the Holy of Holies. Some of the dead were raised from their graves. 3 days later He rose again and was seen of many for 40 days. Then He ascended into heaven on a cloud and it was proven by many witnesses.
 - 2. Mohammed on the other hand, did not live a sinless life. No one even claims that he did. While Jesus never married, Mohammed had many wives. One of his brides was only six years old when he married her. He did wait until she was nine to consummate the marriage. The Quran records the prayers of

repentance for Mohammed. Yes, all of the prophets of Old sinned and repented, except for one- Jesus, who was more than a prophet, He was the Son of God. The Bible records many miracles of Jesus, yet the Quran does not record a single miracle of Mohammed. Mohammed did not die for any man's sins but his own. No one was resurrected at his death, the elements of the earth did not mourn. No veil was rent in any temple, the sun kept on shining and even the cause of his death is not fully known and is still argued among his own followers.

6. The Coming Kingdom

- A. The Bible prophesies about a Kingdom that will arise in the last days called the Anti-Christ kingdom. It is a kingdom that is looking for a Messiah. A Messiah that will unite Jews and Arabs for the first time. The Bible is clear on the Kingdom that will only last for 7 years under the headship of the False Messiah. Anyone who rejects Jesus as the Messiah, who came to take away the sins of man and promised to come again and judge the earth and set up a divine kingdom on this earth, will be looking for this false Messiah. Out of all the literature I have read about Islam, the most shocking comes from their own organization right here in St. Louis, The Islamic Foundation of Greater St. Louis. I would like to read to you from their brochure called, "Who is the Promised Messiah?" I cannot read the entire brochures, so I will only read the headings of the prophecies they are looking for in the Messiah.
 - 1. He will be the son of Mary.
 - 2. He will descend from the sky in two yellow sheets.
 - 3. He will ascend in Damacus on the white minaret of a mosque.
 - 4. He will break the cross. (No more Christianity.)
 - 5. He will kill the pig. (Abomination of Desolation)
 - 6. He shall be a just ruler.
 - 7. He will bring all of humanity under one religion, namely Islam.
 - 8. He shall kill the Dajjal, the Deceiver at Jerusalem. (False Prophet) (No concept of Anti-Christ in Islam)
 - 9. Promise to bring peace on earth.
 - 10. Promise to perform Hajj or Umra or both.
 - 11. He shall die at the age of 45.
 - 12. He will be buried in the grave of Muhammad.

7. Why Christianity and Islam will never come together!

- 1. Allah has no begotten son.
 - A quote from the Quran: "God has not taken to Himself any son, nor is their any god with Him." Sura 23:91

John 3: 16 says, "For God so loved the world He gave His only begotten son, so that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have ever lasting life."

2. We will never come together unless we reject either the Bible or the Quran, because

they conflict with each other. One is truth and the other is lie. One is a true historical account while the other is man's version of history. One is divinely inspired and the other is a decoy.

- 3. We believe that Jesus is more than a prophet, He is God's only begotten Son.
 - a. You cannot believe that Jesus was a good man or a prophet who claimed to be the Son of God. That would make him a heretic.
 - b. Either He was the Blessed Redeemer or He was a blasphemer.
- 4. Everything we believe hinges upon one single solitary fact- Jesus is Lord.

John 14:1-18

14:1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know." 5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, <u>"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.</u>

7 "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." 8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

12 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. 13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

Dealing with Difficult Relatives Psalm 55; John 7; Mark 3

Introduction- If I ask you to find a word picture that describes a relative in your family that is hard to get along with, what would your answer be? Through the years I have ask people to describe a person as an animal, so that I can get a better picture of what they mean. I have heard people described as 3-legged cats to a flea. Some of your word pictures may be something like a "tick on my neck." Other difficult relatives may include word pictures like a cactus with a silk dress on. That is some one dressed up an pretty on the outside, until you get close to them only to find out they are prickly, dry and thirsty for life.

- 1. **Psalm 55** David's problem with family talking about him.
 - A. David had a dilemma that he describes in a song found in Psalm 55. Since this is a song, I can only picture it as a country and western tune.
 - 1. **[Psalm 55: 2-4, 6-8, 12-14]**
 - B. Song- If I had Wings
- 2. **John 7** Jesus had Family Problems. Does this surprise you?
 - A. [Verses1-2]
 - 1. The Jews sought to kill Jesus in Judea.
 - 2. Jesus goes home for a while to Galilee.
 - B. [Verses 3-5]
 - 1. His natural brothers (James, Joses, Simon and Judas) try to get him to go back to Judea, where they were trying to kill Him.
 - 2. Verse 5 reveals their motive for trying to get Him to leave.
 - C. [Verse 12-13]
 - 1. So much complaining among the people concerning Him.
 - 2. But no one spoke about it openly. (Whispering)
 - D. [Verse 15]
 - 1. Questioned His education, gifts and talents.
 - E. [Verse 27]
 - 1. We know where you are from. You are just like everyone else who comes from there.

3. Mark 3

- A. [Verse 21]
 - 1. The family said, "Jesus is out of His mind."
- B. [Verse 22]
 - 1. The families pastor said, "Let's exercise the demon."
- C. [Verse 31-33]
 - 1. At first glance His comment about His family seems cold and insensitive until you remember, they are the ones that are here to "get Him some help."

4. [What do I do about dealing with difficult relatives?]

- A. David's answer in Psalm 55 is found in [Verses 19 & 22]
- B. Jesus answer in John 7
 - 1. **[Verses 8, 14]** I will cut down on the amount of time we spend together.
 - 2. **[Verse 28]** You know who I use to be, but do you know what God has done in me. Let me help you see Him in me.
- C. Jesus answer in Mark 3.
 - 1. **[Verse 25]** Do not divide the house. Don't make people choose sides.
 - 2. **[Verse 34-35]** Draw affirmation and strength from others.
- D. Here's hope: [James 1:1, 1 Corinthians 15:4-8]

Dealing with Temptation Matthew 4:1-11, James 1:1-14

Introduction

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

1 John 2:16 For <u>all that is in the world</u> — the **lust of the flesh**, the **lust of the eyes**, and the **pride of life** — is not of the Father but is of the world.

James 1:14-15 But each one is tempted <u>when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed</u>. Then, <u>when desire has conceived</u>, it <u>gives birth to sin</u>; and sin, when it is <u>full-grown</u>, <u>brings forth</u> <u>death</u>.

- 1. The devil first studies you, to tailor make your enticement.
- 2. Secondly, he looks for a time when you are weak and offers it to you.
- 3. Thirdly, if you take the bait, he will continue to offer it until he lures you into willful sin.
- 4. Every man is tempted. (Hebrews 4:15, James 1:13)
- 5. Being tempted is <u>not a sin</u>. The guilt means the Holy Spirit is convicting you.
- 6. Yielding to temptation <u>is not uncommon</u>. (1 Corinthian 10:13)
- You are in danger when you keep going back. (Looking LONG turns into lust.)

1. The Three Points of Temptation

Genesis 3:6	<u>1 John 2:16</u>	Matt 4, Luke 4
The Tree was good for food	"The Lust of the Flesh"	Command these stones to be made bread.
It was pleasant to the eyes	"The Lust of the Eyes"	The deviled "showed" him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.
The tree would make one wise	"The Pride of Life"	"I will give this to you, if you worship me."

2. The Trial of Temptation (Matthew 4:1; Luke 4:1)

Matthew 4: 1 He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted.

- a. Matthew 26:41...pray, lest you enter temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.
 - 1. Temptation benefits your spirit, so it is willing. Temptation causes you to pray, read your Bible and draw closer to God.
- b. Matthew 6:13 Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
- c. Jesus was lead into temptation to become our High Priest. We are lead Out of temptation, if we pray.

3. The Timing of Temptation (Matthew 4:2; Luke 4:2)

- a. It was during a 40 day fast.
- b. Greatest temptations come during times of physical and mental weakness.

4. The Tests of Temptation (Matthew 4:3-10; Luke 4:3-12)

- a. Do you know who you are?
- b. Temptation is designed to make you doubt yourself and God.
- c. The three temptations of Christ from Satan:
 - 1. If you are the Son of God, turn these stones to bread.
 - 2. If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down.
 - 3. If you worship me, I will give you this part of the kingdom of darkness.

(Most temptations promise to give you something!)

- d. The three responses of Christ
 - 1. Matthew 4:4"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.""
 - 2. Matthew 4:7 "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'"
 - 3. Matthew 4:10 "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

5. The Truth about Temptation

- a. Temptations never reveal the long-term results of your actions.
- b. Temptations promise to give you something to fill a void in your life.
- c. Temptations offer moments of pleasure for a lifetime of pain and ruin.
- d. Resistance disarms and dilutes Satan.

Matthew 4:11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

James 4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Introduction - There is a difference in destiny and a divine destiny. The word destiny is used commonly today to refer to a predetermined path that you will ultimately stumble across. Another word that is used with destiny is the word "fate." I want you to see the difference in destiny and divine destiny. There are words in scripture that explains the difference in the two. The word is "predestination."

- Predestination Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:11-14 A.
- Β. Predestination is not the same as predetermination.
- Predestination is therefore a predetermined destiny for those who choose Christ and C. seek to do His will.

1. We have the Holy Spirit to help us find the will of God. 8:23-25

- John 16:7 Helper/ Comforter "Parakleetos" One who goes beside you. А.
- Β. You do not have to worry about finding your destiny, if you walk in the spirit and fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

2. We must pray for the will of God or divine destiny in our life. 8:26-27

- The importance of prayer in finding the will of God.
 - Prayer gives us discipline. 1.
 - 2. **Matthew 7:7-8** Prayer makes us seek Him.
 - -The discovery makes us happy, but it is the journey that makes us strong.
 - Prayer makes us take a good look at ourselves. 3.
- 3. We must believe the regardless of what happens to us, God can use it in our lives to "fine tune" us for His will. 8:28
- 8:29 4.

Α

Jeremiah 1:5; Isaiah 49:1,5 Whom He foreknew A. Β.

He also predestined

God designed a destiny for your life, if you rely upon the Holy Spirit to lead and guide your life.

To be conformed

This requires molding and shaping. It is the hard part of Coming into your destiny.

5. 8:30

C.

A. He also called..

Don't plan on going into the ministry until you get "the call." And if you get the call...Your love for the approval of God must be stronger than your need for the approval of men."

Β. He also justified...

If God calls you, he removes your past. Don't let your past determine your future. There are a lot of people that men will not allow to minister, but God says you are justified.

C. He also glorified..

Regardless of what men say or think about you, when the glory comes, they will know it is God who called you. If you've got the glory of God in your life, don't worry about the approval of men.

If you are going to do the will of God, you must be able to overcome criticism and the 6. opinions of men. 8:31-34

7. Never lose your love for Christ.

- There are many people who want to blame men for them not being in God's will. They use the excuse, "I've been burned, or hurt or done wrong." Your love for Christ must be stronger than your love for yourself. Your love for Christ must be stronger than your love for men. 8:35-39 A.
- B.

Facing Your Future with Confidence Exodus 33-34

Text:

1. The prophet has a problem.

<u>Moses is asking God two questions:</u> 1^{st} question is, "Will the Children of Israel ever get to Canaan?" 2^{nd} question is, "Who will be my successor?"

Exodus 33:12-14

12 Then Moses said to the LORD, "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said,' I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.' 13 Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, **show me now Your way**, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people." 14 And He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Introduction:

God is everywhere!

He meets himself going when He's coming, coming when He's going. He's up when He's down. He's down when He's up. He's in when He's out. He's out when He's in. He's there when He is here. He's here when He is there. God is everywhere!

He is Alpha He is Omega!

Sometimes when God is starting something, we lose heart because we can't see how He plans to finish it. He is the First and the Last. He is the beginning and the End. He is the Aleph and the Tau. He is the Alpha and the Omega.

As Alpha, He was born a poor man, but as Omega, He died a King.

As Alpha, He wept over Lazarus, but as Omega, He raised him from the dead.

As Alpha, He slept on a boat, but as Omega, calmed the storm from that boat.

As Alpha, He taught until the crowd got hungry, but as Omega, He fed them with loaves and fishes.

As Alpha, He called out broken men to be disciples, but as Omega, He turned the world upside down with them.

As Alpha, He attended a wedding, but as Omega, He turned the water to wine.

As Alpha, He was judged, but as Omega, He will judge the world.

As Alpha, His feet were nailed to a cross, but as Omega, He put every enemy under our feet.

As Alpha, He taught the scholars at the age of 12, but as Omega, He filled us with the Holy Spirit so we could teach the whole world.

As Alpha, He took stripes on his back, but as Omega, He healed diseases.

Exodus 33:7 Moses took his tent and <u>pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp</u>, and called it the <u>tabernacle of meeting</u>. And it came to pass that everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting, which was outside the camp.

- A. When you are seeking God about your future, the first thing you need to do is fine SILENCE AND SOLITUDE.
 - 1. The purpose of being near Him is to listen, not to talk.
 - 2. Be still, and know God. (Psalm 46:10)

Exodus 33:11 So the LORD spoke to Moses <u>face to face</u>, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but <u>his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not</u> <u>depart from the tabernacle</u>.

- A. Don't get in God's face...talk to Him face to face. Have a conversation.
- B. When you are seeking God about your future, you need people who will stay with you in prayer.
- C. The best leader is one that was SEASONED IN HIS PRESENCE. God was not raising up one of Moses sons, or Aaron his brother. He was raising up a little servant boy who was assigned to be Moses translator.
- D. The answer to his question was right under his nose, but God would not let him see it until it was time, because God has to raise up Joshua, not Moses.

Exodus 33:17-18 So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name." And he said, <u>"Please, show me Your glory."</u>

A. The word translated as "glory" literally means light. Moses is saying, "SHOW ME THE FUTURE."

Exodus 33:19-20 The Lord replied, "I will make my goodness pass before you, and I <u>will</u> <u>announce to you the meaning of my name Jehovah</u>, the Lord. I show kindness and mercy to anyone I want to. <u>But you may not see the glory of my face</u>, for man may not see me and live. <u>The Living Bible</u>

- A. יָהֹוָה, or YHVH
 - 1. God is saying, I am going to reveal to you the reason my name is unpronounceable.
 - 2. What I am about to show you, will help you to understand better, who I really am.

B. Nevertheless Moses, you will not see my future glory, because you will not be alive when these things take place.

Exodus 33:21-23 And the LORD said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and <u>you shall see My back;</u> <u>but My face shall not be seen</u>."

Exodus 34:1-2 And the LORD said to Moses, "<u>Cut two tablets</u> of stone like the first ones, and <u>I</u> <u>will write on these tablets</u> the words that were on the first tablets which you broke. 2 So be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain.

Exodus 34:5-6

5 Now **the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there**, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. 6 <u>And the LORD passed before him</u> and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth.

A. **VIDEO God's Creation, "Indescribable"**, by Chris Tomlin

Conclusion:

Exodus 34:29 Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that <u>Moses did not</u> **know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him**.

- A. God doesn't have to show me the future, to prove to me that He is the God of the future.
 - 1. All that I have seen helps me to trust Him for what I have not seen. All that He has done helps me to trust Him for what He is going to do.

Song- I've Got Confidence

When trouble is my way, I can't tell my night from day. When I'm tossed from side to side, like a ship on a raging tide. I don't worry and I don't fret. God has never failed me yet! Troubles come from time to time, but that's alright, I'm not the worrying kind.

Because...

I've got confidence; God is going to see me through. No matter what the case may be, I know He's going to fix it for me.

Feeding the World from Your Lunchbox

Introduction

- 1. How many of you believe Christ gave the Great Commission to every Christian?
- 2. How many of you believe that our job is to take the gospel to the ends of the world?
- 3. What are you personally doing about it?

Text

Matthew 16:5 Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. 6 Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and <u>beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and</u> <u>the Sadducees</u>." 7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread." 8 But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? 9 <u>Do you not yet understand, or</u> <u>remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? 10 Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up?</u> 11 How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? — But to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 12 Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Jesus is saying to them, the key to understanding what I am trying to explain is in how many baskets you took up. He is asking, do you remember how many baskets you took up?

BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES

- A. What is leaven?
- B. Spiritually speaking, leaven is a false sense of spiritual security.
- C. A popular doctrine today is that as long as you believe in something you are okay.
- D. What makes the doctrine of Christianity different from other doctrines?

The Two Origins of All Religions

1. Why is it that so many cults deny the existence of evil, the personality?

of God and the need for an atoning savior? Why do they gravitate toward astrology, reincarnation and other practices of the occult? Why do they reverence the man Jesus but deny His deity?

- 2. Why is it that cults quote so much of the Bible yet deny so much of it? Either it is truth or lie. Who determines what part of it is in error? Remember the first criteria for being a cult, which is rejecting the doctrine of the Apostles. Notice that most cults have another Bible.
- E. Not the Same God
 - 1. The God of the Hindu is not the same as the God of the Hebrew.
 - 2. The God of the Mormon church is not the same as the God of the Christians. The Mormons believe, "As man is God once was, and as God is, man can become." The God of the Mormons use to be a man, and you too can be God if you achieve a higher level of spirituality than the one who is God now.
 - 3. The God of Islam is not the same God.
- F. Christianity and Islam cannot both be true at the same time. Neither can Mormonism and Buddhism both be correct simultaneously, nor can Christian Science and Hinduism.
 - 1. The Jesus of Islam is not the Son of God who died for the sins of the world. Neither is the Jesus of Mormonism or Christian Science the same Jesus as revealed in the Bible.
 - 2. If you believe in any of those religions, you believe in SALVATION BY WORKS.
- G. The thing that separates us from the religions of the world is our belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died for our sins and rose from the dead and now intercedes for us at the right hand of the Father.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Titus 3:5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

1 John 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

CRASH COURSE IN PROPHETIC NUMERIC PATTERNS:

2 is the number of Jesus

3 is the number of divine completion

5 is the number of grace

4 is the number of the World (N, S, E, W)

7 is the number of completion

12 is the number of government.

Matthew 16:9 <u>Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand</u> and how many baskets you took up? 10 Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up?

THE NEXT THING JESUS SAID WAS, "DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND WHY I FED THE FIVE THOUSAND AND THEN THE FOUR THOUSAND? He said remember how many baskets you took up and you will understand!

Feeding the <u>Five</u> Thousand - Matthew 14:13-21

Here are the details: 5,000 people 5 loaves and 2 fish. 12 baskets full of fragments.

He fed the 5,000 first to let you know that salvation comes through GRACE.

He used 5 loaves to let you know the way to grace is found in the BREAD OF LIFE.

The 2 fish is because JESUS is the only way to get the miracle of salvation.

The 12 baskets are for the 12 disciples. One for each of them to let them know God has established a government or system called the church to distribute the bread and the fish.

Feeding the Four Thousand - Matthew 15:32-38

<u>Here are the details:</u> The crowd has been listening to him teach for 3 days. 4,000 people The disciples had 7 loaves and a few fishes. They fed the multitude and took up 7 baskets full of fragments. He then feeds 4000, because 4 represents the whole world.

He does it after 3 days of preaching, to let you know this is God's way of COMPLETING SALVATION.

This time He uses 7 loaves to let you know that if we take the bread to the whole world, it will complete the mission of Jesus on the earth.

The took up 7 baskets of fragments to say, "It is finished."

NOW LET'S ANSWER THE QUESTION JESUS ASK THEM: He said, "Do you not remember how many baskets you took up?"

What is the answer to the equation? The first time they took up 12. The second time they took up 7.

12 represents the disciples or the CHURCH. 7 is the number of completion on the earth. He is saying, "I am expecting the CHURCH to COMPLETE the job of feeding the rest. I am counting on the church to take the FISH and the BREAD to a world that is dying in a wilderness.

Conclusion

It's amazing what a lunch can do. It is also amazing that for giving a lunch He gave them back baskets full. Did you know that you can still feed the multitudes with your lunch? The world is hungry for Jesus and God is still asking for someone's lunch.

FORERUNNERS OF THE RAPTURE

1. The falling star called, "Wormwood."

Revelation 8:10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

Revelation 8:11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

A. On April 26, 1986 at Chernobyl nuclear plant in the former Soviet Union, an unexpected meltdown caused a poisonous cloud of radiation to sweep across Europe. The accident released 20 times more radiation the government first admitted. As a result of this 100,000 Soviets suffered from radiation exposure. The explosion left the streams and land poisoned. The Russian word "Chernobyl" is interpreted in the English language. "wormwood."

OVERHEAD - "The Chernobyl Cover-Up" Time Magazine, November 13, 1989

2. The Anti-Christ

I John 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

I John 4:3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that [spirit] of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

- A. Others who have claimed to be the Christ
 - 1. Dr. Richard Alpert of Harvard University, a psychiatric professor led a group of college kids into Hindu rituals by using LSD as a spiritual stimulant. He founded his church, and changed his named to Baba Ram Dass. He claimed to be the Christ.
 - 2. Bubba Free John, his real name is Franklin Jones, claims to be the in carnation of God. He resides in California. After experimenting with LDS in Lutheran Seminary he became the affirmed cult leader that promises freedom and "constant laughter." His followers call him Lilas, a term used by Hindus as a God-man. His church is called, "Bubba Theatre."

- 3. Guru Maharaji of the Divine Light Mission also claims to be the Christ. The foundation of his teaching, stemming from the early seventies is the understanding of the Universe as the understanding of one's self. He was born in 1957 in Hardwar, India. His appeal is to rebellious youth who want to live without rules.
- 4. Rev. Ike. He mixed Black Pentecostalism with Christian Science to found the Ike Science of Living philosophies. Slogans such as, "You cant' loose with the stuff I use" and "Pie in the sky by and by" helped him to lure thousands. He used the twisted text that" The lack of money is the root of all evil."
- 5. The Rev. Sun Myung Moon also claimed to be the incarnation of God. He founded the Unification Church. He purposed to restore God's intended purpose for His family.

3. The Peace Treaty of Israel

Daniel 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make [it] desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

A. In 1993 God released the wedged and allowed the river of prophecy to flow once again in Israel. As God began to orchestrate the event, Israel began to move into position to fulfill the prophecy that will begin the Seven Years of Tribulation. The event will take place in a series of Peace treaties that will literally cause the Israelites to cry. "Peace and Safety." Their reputation as the "Peacemakers" will only set the tone for their destiny - "The Seven year peace treaty".

4. The Beast

Revelation 14:9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive [his] mark in his forehead, or in his hand, Revelation 14:11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

- A. The Beast of Brussels
- B. The Beast of Luxemburg, in the Monet Building
 The Monet Building not only houses the world's largest computer called the
 "Beast" but also is the headquarters building for the European Union.
 OVERHEAD -"Monet Building"

5. One World Government

Daniel 2:39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

Daniel 2:40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all [things]: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

Daniel 2:41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided, but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

Daniel 2:42 And [as] the toes of the feet [were] part of iron, and part of clay, [so] the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

Daniel 2:43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, [but] it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

- A. Every Empire that ever ruled the whole known world is listed in this scripture.
- B. The New World Order

6. Martryed Saints

Revelation 6:9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

- A. Nero burned Christians in the Imperial Gardens
- B. In Persia around A.D. 318, under Arian Heretics 30 bishops were murdered and

hundreds of christians tortured. This was followed by the brutal ruling of Julian the Apostate. This was only the beginning; martyrs have lived in every generation since then. To this very day, people are dying and put in prison for quoting a scripture or owning a page of the Bible in many parts of the world.

7. Appearance of the Sun Clothed woman in the sky.

Revelation 12:1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a Woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: Revelation 12:2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

- A. The Sun clothed woman will be a sign to Israel. This most unusual sign is not really unusual at all. All throughout history people have claimed to see the Spiritual image of Hebrew woman. Most have acclaimed her to be the Virgin Mary.
- B. Our Lady of the Snow Shrine is only 15 miles from St. Louis and was built as a result of a visitation of the Virgin Mary.

8. The Abomination of Desolation

Mark 13:14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:

Daniel 11:31 And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily [sacrifice], and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

A. Sacrificing of a pig on the Jewish altar. (Donna Jones)

9. Great sores upon men

Revelation 16:2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and [upon] them which worshipped his image. A. The plague of the sore has many predecessors. The sore of Leprosy is among the most popular.

10. Water turned to blood

Revelation 16:3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead [man]; and every living soul died in the sea. Revelation 16:4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

A. You have to look as far back as the Exodus story to find it's forerunner, but it is there indeed on the archives of the scripture.

11. Men scorched by the sun

Revelation 16:8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun, and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

A. A recent report taken from satellite reading indicated another 5% loss of the ozone. This is alarming scientist and environmentalist due to the warming effect on glaciers and global warming hazards. These scientists are blaming the Tropical Storm chain on the warming of the ocean. They claim that it will only get worse. EPA Chief William Relly states that the overall increase in skin cancers alone is a "disturbing" reality.

12. The great earthquake

Revelation 16:17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. Revelation 16:18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightning; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, [and] so great.

Revelation 16:19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

A. 33,000 earthquakes on the planet each year.

13. The cashless society.

Revelation 13:17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

14. The roaring of the seas.

Luke 21:25 "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. (NIV)

- A. Over the past five years the Insurance industry has lost 54.5 billion due to hurricanes. 17 major Natural disasters have hit the USA in the past five years.
- B. EUROPE In 1990 eight windstorms blew in off the ocean and caused more damage than any other natural disaster in the nations history.

Conclusion - We nearing the Coming of our Lord

GIVING LIVING Matthew 6: 19-32

Matthew 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

Matthew 6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, their will your heart be also.

Matthew 6:22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

Matthew 6:23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great [is] that darkness!

Matthew 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Matthew 6:25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Matthew 6:26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

Matthew 6:27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

Matthew 6:28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

Matthew 6:29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Matthew 6:30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, [shall he] not much more [clothe] you, O ye of little faith?

Matthew 6:31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

Matthew 6:32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Introduction - Bertha Adams died a pauper on March 30, 1975.

She was found without heat, food, or any basic necessities of life. In her hand was a key to a safety deposit box containing \$799,000 in cash as well as 100's of stocks, bonds and certificates. She was a millionaire. But she had a stewardship problem. Her problem was that she thought is terms of possessions being hoarded instead of used or invested. Her problem cost her, her very life.

I. FEARFUL LIVING

A. We are living in a day when people are fearful because of financial problems.

- 1. Financial stress is one of the 5 major causes of DIVORCE.
- 2. Financial stress is a major contributor to HEART ATTACKS.
- 3. Financial stress is a prominent cause of SUICIDE.
- 4. Financial stress is a SPIRITUAL hindrance.
- 5. Financial stress is a primary benefactor to ALCOHOLISM and DRUG DEPENDENCY.
- 6. Financial stress is a chief reinforcement to CRIME.
- 7. Financial stress is an ally to CHILD AND SPOUSE ABUSE.
- 8. Some people are even ABORTING BABIES over finances.

B. This age is FEARFUL when considering the subject of

finances. Have you considered the FUTURE for young couples?

- 1. Debt accumulation for many couples has already insured a life of owing and never owning.
- 2. Terms like bankruptcy and audits send us over the edge.
- 3. Social Security we are told will not be available for young couples when they reach retirement.
- 4. Inflation has caused prices to soar beyond belief.
 - New automobile 20 years ago could be bought for 2-4 thousand dollars. The same will cost you 16-20 thousand today.
 - Many in this room enjoyed a house payment of \$100. -\$150. and some even less. Today's young couple is looking at \$700 - \$1,000 per month for moderate living.
 - c. Retirement. We are told that by the time a man my age retires that a minimum of \$4- 5,000 per month will be required to live on what is now considered a moderate income for a retired couple.
 - d. Inflation is doubling the required revenue for each family every 10 years. If you make \$30,000 this year it will take \$60,000 to live exactly the same by the end of a decade.
 - e. While all the time we are enduring TAX INCREASES.
 - f. FOOD COST have escalated.
 - g. CLOTHING COST is ridiculous.
 - h. The MARKED UP items are being "key stoned" by so many agencies that by the time an item reaches the hand of the consumer it has been doubled 4 or 5 times it's value.
 - i. Have you bought a car lately. By simply driving it off

C.	 the lot, you have decreased its value by 3-4 thousand dollars on what is now TECHNICALLY called a used vehicle. Even if has less than 5 miles on it. DEBT RESIDUALS do not augment the DEBT owed. This means that by the time you get it paid for that it is worth nothing. You have no investment.
D.	This doesn't even begin to deal with INTEREST, FALLING STOCKS, CORPORATE BANKRUPTS, UNEMPLOYMENT AND JOB LAYOFFS, EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR TODAY'S COMPETITIVE MARKET, CHANGING TAX LAWS AND LOW INTEREST EARNINGS. And we could really get depressed if we cared to talk about the IRS, THE FEDERAL RESERVE BANKS or the INTER- NATIONAL BANKING SYSTEMS.
E.	As far as I can see, there is more reason to put God in our finances than we have ever had. I couldn't imagine embarking upon the sophisticated world of finance without

the ASSURANCE that God was my RESOURCE, NO MATTER WHAT

HAPPENS ON WALL STREET OR ANY OTHER STREET.

II. FAITHFUL LIVING

I Corinthians 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

- A. God has not called us to FEARFUL LIVING, HE HAS CALLED US TO FAITHFUL LIVING.
- B. Faithful living means to LIVE BY FAITH. Heb. Without faith it is IMPOSSIBLE. (repeat)
- C. Living by Faith is living according to what God said about GIVING LIVING.
 - 1. Matthew 6:25-32
 - 2. Matthew 6:19-20
 - a. Laying up treasures in heaven does not necessarily mean to be used LATER. It means to MAKE GOD A PART of your STOREHOUSE.
- D. Living by FAITH accepts the fact that we are managers not owners. (Parable of the Talents.)

Matthew 25:14-29

Matthew 25:14 For [the kingdom of heaven is] as a man travelling into a far country, [who] called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

Matthew 25:15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

Matthew 25:16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made [them] other five talents.

Matthew 25:17 And likewise he that [had received] two, he also gained other two.

Matthew 25:18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. Matthew 25:19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

Matthew 25:20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

Matthew 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, [thou] good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Matthew 25:22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

Matthew 25:23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Matthew 25:24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

Matthew 25:25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, [there] thou hast [that is] thine.

Matthew 25:26 His lord answered and said unto him, [Thou] wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

Matthew 25:27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and [then] at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

Matthew 25:28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give [it] unto him, which hath ten talents.

Matthew 25:29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

1. Which side of the chart characterizes your attitude? toward stewardship. The KING is coming back!

I AM A MANAGER	I AM AN OWNER
I AM THANKFUL	I AM PROUD
MASTER'S KINGDOM	MY KINGDOM
THINGS ARE TRANSIENT	THINGS ARE PERMANENT
I WANT TO PLEASE MY OWNER	I WANT TO PLEASE MYSELF

2. "NOT, HOW MUCH OF MY MONEY WILL I GIVE TO GOD, BUT HOW MUCH OF GOD'S MONEY WILL I KEEP FOR MYSELF?" Oswald J. Smith

III. FRUITFUL LIVING

- A. When you give God what is in your hand, God gives you what is in His hand.
- B. Giving to the Lord opens a brand new resource in your life. It seems a bit obvious to me than people who don't tithe are always the ones who say, 'I can't afford to." People who do tithe to the Lord have realized, "We can't afford not to."
- C. Illust Several years ago the Lord put me to the test. I sowed a \$116 seed into a ministry. That month our tithes soared over \$10,000 for the first time and have never gone under that yet.
- D. Illust I was with a man in our church in a service where a faith offering was taken. He sowed with expectations. That month he was salesman of the month.
- E. Several weeks ago I prayed a prayer of promotion. Someone came up to me last Sunday and said pastor, I stood in the prayer and I got my promotion last week.
- F. GIVING LIVING is putting God as your RESOURCE. Allowing God to be a part of the process.

When HE COMES I want to present him with all that I have gained for HIS KINGDOM. That's why we support missions and home missions and Evangelist.

How to Transition through a Major Change in Your Life Joshua 1:1-9

This story is about something that will affect everyone in this room in our lifetime. Perhaps you are there now. It deals with the subject of transitional change. How do I deal with change when I was perfectly satisfied with the way things were?

A. Moses is Dead. There is a new leader. A young leader. He learned the old ways, but God has given him a new assignment. Even the leader is caught in the transition. He is caught between doing it God's way or Moses way.

1:1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: 2 "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them--the children of Israel.

Joshua had to separate his faith from the faith of Moses.

- A. There is a danger in 2^{nd} and 3^{rd} generation Christians.
 - 1. The first generation knew God; the second generation knows about God, the third generation knows a man who knows about God.
- B. He has to become "Your God", not just the God of your fathers.
- C. The Lord spoke to Joshua. You must have your own relationship with God

5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.

Disconnect from the FEAR OF MEN.

- A. No man shall be able to stand before you.
 - 1. It may be a man that stands before you but don't forget that *intimidation is a spirit*.
- B. When you stand before God long enough, you can stand before any man.
- C. As I was with Moses, I will be with you. There is a new leader but the same God.
- D. God changed the way He manifested Himself. No more pillar of fire, cloud, manna or water from The Rock.
- E. Our mandate is not to tell God how to do it. But before we jump off on a tangent we are to *try the spirit* to see if God is the one doing it.
 - 1. The Pharisees rejected Jesus for one reason: He didn't do things the "old way".
- G. Some people settle for holding on to the ashes of yesterday instead of allowing the winds and fire of God blow and blaze. Don't put God in an urn. He doesn't belong in an ash vase.

6 Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.

Reconnect to the PEOPLE of God.

- G. Memories are important, but at some point we must move beyond the memories to the mission.
- H. We need to remember what God did, but not at the expense of overlooking what God is doing.
- I. In order to stay focused, we have to stay connected with who God is using now, not just who He used in the past.
- J. The glory days are where ever we see the glory of God. Today can be a glory day if we see His glory!
- K. Don't allow change to disconnect you from the people of God.

3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory.

Reconnect to the VISION of God.

- A. Remember what I said to Moses.
- B. The responsibility of every generation is to convey the promises of God to the next generation.
- C. We have to be careful not to hold back the next generation because of sentiment.
- D. We must reconnect to the vision of God not to the sentiment of Moses.

8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Reconnect to the Word of God

- **A.** I am amazed at how many generations go on this long journey to try to find God in their own way, but He just keeps bringing them back to the basics.
- B. One of the things God tells every generation is to GO BACK TO THE BOOK!

9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Reconnect to YOUR COURAGE

- A. Where is that strong courage that you use to have?
 - 1. When did you start running with the *fear crowd*?
 - 2. Where is that faith you use to have to believe God for anything?
 - 3. When did you change from being a conquering to a complainer?
 - 4. When did you loose your passion for ministry, for the lost and for God's power?
- B. Courage doesn't mean you're not afraid. Courage means that you are willing to fight the good fight in spite of your fear.

1. Courage is not the absence of fear. Courage is faith in the presence of fear.

- C. Be strong for Joshua like you were for Moses. Be strong because Joshua needs you too. This is still the work of God even though Moses is gone. Hook in to the vision of Joshua and march on.
 - 1. Get off the sidelines.
 - 2. Dust yourself off.
 - 3. Present yourself.
 - 4. Take up your arms.
 - 5. Restake your claim.
 - 6. Tell the devil you're back.
 - 7. Go to the enemies camp and take back what was stolen from you.
 - 8. Take up your shield and sword.
 - 9. Put praise in your mouth.
 - 10. Put on the whole armor.
 - 11. Show up.
 - 12. Put one more demon under your foot.
 - 13. Realize the battle is not over yet.
 - 14. It's time now. Check yourself out of "Sideline Hospital for the wounded."
 - 15. Put your boots back on.
 - 16. Report for duty!
 - 17. Give Joshua your credentials, your time and your commitment.
 - 18. Be strong!
 - 19. Be courageous!
 - 20. THE ANCHOR HOLDS IN SPITE OF THE STORM. Report for duty!

It's Time To Eat The Bread Isaiah 28:23-29

Isaiah 28:23 Give ear and hear my voice, Listen and hear my speech. 24 Does the plowman keep plowing all day to sow? Does he keep turning his soil and breaking the clods? 25 When he has leveled its surface, Does he not sow the black cummin And scatter the cummin, Plant the wheat in rows, The barley in the appointed place, And the spelt in its place? 26 For He instructs him in right judgment, His God teaches him. 27 For the black cummin is not threshed with a threshing sledge, Nor is a cartwheel rolled over the cummin; But the black cummin is beaten out with a stick, And the cummin with a rod. 28 Bread flour must be ground; Therefore he does not thresh it forever, Break it with his cartwheel, Or crush it with his horsemen. 29 This also comes from the LORD of hosts, Who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance.

Isaiah 28:23 Give ear and hear my voice, Listen and hear my speech. 24 Does the plowman keep plowing all day to sow? Does he keep turning his soil and breaking the clods?

- A. Preparation is important, but there comes a time when the season of preparation is over.
- B. Preparing the Soil of Life
 - We need to make plans. We need to set goals. We need to talk about what we are going to do.
 - 2. But there has to come a day, that we "just do it."
 - 3. A goal or plan means nothing, if nothing is ever accomplished.
- C. Preparing the Soil of the Spirit
 - Hosea 10:Judah shall plow; Jacob shall break his clods." 12 Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you.
 - a. This is a metaphor describing a spiritual truth.
 - 1. Judah or "praise" breaks up the hard fallow ground and gets it ready for the seed.
 - 2. Matthew 13:20 "But he who received the **seed** on stony places, this is he who hears the word.
 - a. There comes a time that the plowing must stop and the seed must be sown.
 - b. Nothing wrong with praising and worshiping God. But it is no substitute for the Word of God.

25 When he has leveled its surface, Does he not sow the black cummin And scatter the cummin, Plant the wheat in rows, The barley in the appointed place, And the spelt in its place?

26 For He instructs him in right judgment, His God teaches him. 27 For the black cummin is not threshed with a threshing sledge, Nor is a cartwheel rolled over the cummin; But the black cummin is beaten out with a stick, And the cummin with a rod.

A. First he deals with the process of preparing the ground. Now he deals with the process of sowing the seed.

B. **Principle One:** You have to sow in order to reap.

1. Verse 25. When the surface is level, you can just keep plowing in loose soil or you can plant. If you want a harvest, you MUST sow seed.

C. **Principle Two:** You need to understand that you need to sow more than one kind of seed.

- 1. God is always producing a harvest in your life, if you have sown. When the financial harvest is through, the joy harvest begins. When the joy harvest ends, the health harvest begins.
- 2. Seed sowing is often concentrated on financial principles. However the seed of tears bring a harvest of joy. The seed of mercy brings a harvest of mercy. (Blessed are the merciful....) The seed of kindness brings a harvest of kindness. The seed of faith brings a harvest of faith. The seeds of encouragement will bring a harvest of encouragement in your

life.

D. **Principle Three:** You need to know that all seed is not sown the same way.

- You sow black cummin. (Caraway seed) You scatter cummin. You plant wheat in rows. You plant barley in one place You plant the spelt (rye) in another place.
- 2. You have to know where to sow and how to sow.
- 3. How do I know where to sow? God instructs him. (Verse 26)

E. **Principle Four:** You need to understand the season of the harvest, in your life.

- 1. The wheat harvest doesn't come until after the barley harvest.
- 2. It takes some seed longer to grow.

F. Principle Five: You need to understand that everything in your hand is not seed. God prepares the seed, just like He prepares the land

and the harvest.

- 1. There are so many people who have been financially ravished by evangelist who come through town saying, give me your money. In good faith, they sow their money and later on realize they needed it. There are ways to avoid that.
- 2. First, understand that in this passage, God has to instruct the sower WHERE to sow the seed. Barley here, spelt here, wheat hear.
- 3. Secondly, you need to understand that everything in your hand is not meant to be sown.

27 For the black cummin is not threshed with a threshing sledge, Nor is a cartwheel rolled over the cummin; But the black cummin is beaten out with a stick, And the cummin with a rod.

- a. If you take a watermelon and plant the seeds, many times it will not come up. If you boil your corn cobb and cut off the cooked kernels and plant them, they will not grow corn. The seed has to be prepared properly.
- b. If you want to plant black cummin or "caraway", you cannot thresh the plant to get the seed. If you do, the seed will get crushed and will not produce a harvest. You can't force the seed to produce. Instead you take a stick and hit the plant. When you do the seed will fall out and can be planted.
- c. God is preparing your seed, just like He is preparing your harvest.
- d. The key ingredient to sowing and reaping is letting God guide you in your sowing. We may not sow in some places God wants us to sow.
- e. Your seed is someone else's harvest. And someone else's seed will be your harvest.

28 Bread flour must be ground; Therefore he does not thresh it forever, Break it with his cartwheel, Or crush it with his horsemen. 29 This also comes from the LORD of hosts, Who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance.

- A. There comes a time that a FINISHED PRODUCT must be produced. All the sowing and all the reaping, and the grinding were to produce one thing. BREAD!
- B. Don't spend your life sowing and gathering and not hang around to eat the bread.
- 1. We think that we sow to reap. Not so.
 - Reaping is only the step before the eating. Reaping is hard work, just like sowing.
 - Some sow and reap---but don't take time to eat!
 - 2. God isn't just wanting to give you hope. He wants you to have VICTORY!

- C.
- God did not raise you up to thresh forever. God wants us to hear His voice to direct our seed, our harvest and our victory. D.

Let There Be Peace On Earth And Let It Begin With Me Luke 2:8-14; John 14:27

Luke 2:8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 "And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

- A. Peace that the world gives.
 - 1. What is Peace?

Peace must be that feeling of lying on the couch watching TV.
Perhaps peace is lying in bed an extra hour.
Maybe it is a cup of imported tea and some soft music.
Could peace be the thing Calgon advertises? (Bubbles...phone ringing, babies crying, mailman ringing the door, mother-in-law on her way over.
But when you take out that doubled leafed, Jamaican roasted, imported tea bag, and dip it into water, kick off the slippers and dash of sugar and suddenly you have <u>PEACE</u>! Wow.

- 2. You can't find peace in relaxation. It is not the same thing.
- 3. Peace is not.... sudden sigh of relief or the after affect of a sudden release of pressure. Peace is not an escape from reality in a moment of daydreaming or denial. Peace is not a wish or a burst of hope or a glimpse of the light at the end of the tunnel

- B. In man's desperate search for peace, we have looked everywhere to find peace.
 - 1. The Ancient Greeks said be wise and understand peace.
 - 2. Rome strong and secure peace.
 - 3. Education resourceful and discover peace.
 - 4. Psychology confident and experience peace.
 - 5. Materialism says be satisfied and possess peace.
 - 6. Pride superior and realize peace.
 - 7. Humanist Self sufficient and order your peace.
 - 8. Legalism says be self-righteous and feel peace.
 - C. But suddenly there is a ray of hope in a darkened world that so severely needs peace. An angel of the Lord shows up and gives the formula for real peace.

Luke 2:10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 "And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

- A. The first thing I want you to notice is the **Peacemakers!**
 - 1. The first thing this passage tells us about peace it that it's message is one of comfort.
 - a. **Fear not!**
 - b. Peace says, I don't want to control you I want to love you.
 - c. Peace says, I am here to remove you fears and insecurities.
 - 2. The second message of the angels is that we have come to **give you** something.
 - a. We have come to bring you good tidings.
 - b. Peacemakers have a giving attitude.
 - c. Peacemakers have a servant's heart and want to give more than receive.
 - 3. The third message the angels brought was that peacemakers are bearers of **good tidings.**
 - a. Bearers of bad news will take away your peace.
 - b. In order to be a peacemaker, we have to make sure our words make

others feel better, not worse.

- B. The second thing I want you to see is the **formula for peace on earth:**
 - 1. Glory to God and good will toward men!
 - 2. Glory to God is the first part of the formula for peace. First you have to have "PEACE WITH GOD" in order to give to others the "THE PEACE OF GOD."
 - a. PEACE WITH GOD.
 Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid, for MY PEACE I leave with you and My Peace I give to you."
 John 14:26-27
 - b. THE PEACE OF GOD.

This is the antidote to worry. A christian does not automatically possess it. Jesus best illustrates this when He was sound asleep in the lower part of the boat while the 12 disciples were afraid in the midst of the storm.

- 1. The natural man is controlled by fears. But when we allow the Spirit of God to govern us, the fear is offset by the presence of God.
- 2. Just becoming a christian doesn't spare us from the difficult circumstances of life. But by allowing the Holy Spirit to control our spirit we can live in "supernatural peace", in spite of the circumstances.
- c. KNOW God KNOW Peace! NO God NO Peace!
- d. Two artist were asked to paint the perfect portrait of peace.
 - 1. The first painted a little boy on a boy in a lake.
 - 2. The other painted a waterfall with a bird's nest in a tree hanging over the millions of gallons of raging waters.
- 3. Good will toward men is the last part of the formula for Peace On Earth.
 - a. We cannot stop wars in an effort to bring world peace. World peace starts at home, one person at a time.
 - b. Jesus said that all men would know that you were disciples when you have love one to another. We only know true peace when we have a right relationship with God and we live our lives to show good will to others. **That is true peace.**

- c. The way we treat others is a direct reflection on our own relationship with God.
 - Glory to God! Good Will to Men! This is the formula for peace on earth.
- 4. Listen to this passage that explains good will toward others. Matthew 25:33 "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 'When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

Living In Days of Prophecy

Mark 13:7 But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for such things must happen, but the end is not yet.

1. **THE BEGINNING**

A. The ending is told from the beginning.

- 1. **Isaiah 40:21** Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. 23 He brings the princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth useless.
- 2. **Isaiah 46:10** Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,' 11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.
- B. The story from the beginning tells us:
 - 1. The world is judged and the righteous are blessed.
 - a. Abraham
 - b. Noah
 - c. Joseph
 - d. Exodus of Israel

2. **THE MIDDLE**

- A. The signs of the times are EVIDENCE of the season.
- B. Mark 13:7 But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for <u>such things must happen</u>, but the end is not yet. 8 For nation <u>will rise</u> against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there <u>will be earthquakes</u> in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows.

Luke 21:25 "And <u>there will be</u> signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; 26

<u>men's hearts failing them from fear</u> and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens <u>will be shaken</u>.

C. **PRIMARY SIGNS**

- 1. Realignment of World Politics and World Economies
 - a. Addendum: U.S. Economy
- 2. Family Issues Mark 13:12 Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.
- 3. Weather Patterns
- 4. Anxiety Issues
- 5. The Shaking
- D. The churches response... BE READY...IT'S ALL SHORT TERM! This is God's finale. Don't be scared...be prepared!
 - 1. None of this surprises God.
 - 2. All of this has happened before.... God's takes care of His people.
 - 3. Can't run...where are you going to go?
 - a. Have extra non-perishable foods in your house.
 - b. Own a generator.
 - c. Store a little extra gas in a container.
 - d. Flashlights and batteries.
 - e. Most critical of all...fresh water.
 - f. Communication device.
 - g. Have a family plan.
 - 4. What will we do if it happens?

We will do the same thing San Francisco did after their earthquake. We will do the same thing New Orleans did after the hurricane. We will do the same thing New York City did after 9-11. We will do the same thing Indonesia did after the Tsunami. We will do the same thing every city does after a natural disaster. We will get out our chain saws, put on our work gloves, help our neighbors, look out for each other and keep on living our lives.

- Jesus said in Luke 19:13, "Do business until I come."
- 5. Do you think it could happen? Yes...God put that fault line there for a reason. Some of you were expecting it in elementary school.

3. **THE END**

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

- a. I am looking for Jesus to return, but before He does, I am looking for a revival that will sweep this world.
- b. The is a shaking...but it's not just the ground. God is separating the sheep from the goats. God is getting the Church in a prayer posture.

Luke 21:27 <u>Then</u> they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to happen, <u>look up and lift up your heads</u>, because your redemption draws near."

Revelation 1:7 Behold, <u>He is coming</u> with clouds, and <u>every eye will see Him</u>, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

Conclusion – Some glad morning we shall see Jesus in the air.

No Ordinary Baby Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2, John 1:1-18

Jesus' Unquestionable Genealogy – Matthew 1:1-17, Luke 3:23-38

- 1. Neither Mark nor John mention Jesus' lineage
- 2. Matthew traces his lineage from Abraham forward
- 3. Luke traces his lineage from Joseph backward all the way to "Adam the Son of God"
- 4. What does this accomplish?
 - a. It reinforces Jesus' legal claim to the throne of David, to being the Messiah, to receiving the blessings of Abraham
 - b. The genealogies also demonstrate God's mercy:
 - **Tamar** a seducer and seductress who God used Genesis 38 (Son was Perez, his name means "break through.")
 - **Rahab** a prostitute whose faith led her to hide the Israeli spies in Jericho (Son was Boaz, the husband of Ruth)
 - **Ruth** a Moabites who chose to join herself to God's people in faithfulness (Son was Obed, father of Jesse, father of David)
 - **Bathsheba** an adulteress who sought forgiveness and became the mother of David's kingly line. (Son was Solomon)
- 5. The genealogies tell us of God's faithfulness to keep His promises even through the Babylonian captivity Jesus' lineage remained intact and can be traced
- 6. The genealogies validate Jesus' spiritual history as well as his lineage.
- 7. Can you imagine all of the trouble God went through to keep His promise?

Jesus Unusual Birth and Early Childhood -

There was nothing ordinary about His birth!

- 1. The conception and birth of John the Baptist Luke 1
- 2. Mary's Pregnancy an unwed mother or the fulfillment of prophecy?
 - a. Luke 1:26-35, Matthew 1:18, 22-23 "So all this was done..."
 - b. Isaiah 7:14
- 3. Joseph's dilemma Who was the father?
 - a. Joseph's love and respect for Mary Matthew 1:19
 - b. The Angel's answer to his questions Matthew 1:20
 - c. Joseph's Obedience Matthew 1:24-25
- 4. The Validation from the Shepherds
 - a. Luke 2:8-20 God revealed His Son to common people
- 5. The Validation from the Wisemen
 - a. Matthew 2:1-12 God revealed His Son to educated royalty.
- 6. The Validation of Prophets

- a. Simeon Sees Israel's Salvation Luke 2:25-35
- b. Anna Praises God for the Redeemer Luke 2:36-38
- 7. The Flight to Egypt and the Murder of Innocent Children Matthew 2:12-23
 - a. 3 times in history that governments of sanctioned abortions.
 - 1. Each time it heralded the coming of the Lord.
- 8. Jesus Grows in Wisdom and Stature Luke 2:41-52
 - a. We can lose Him, even in church if we don't remember who He is!
 - b. Jesus announces His role as Messiah to His parents.
 - c. Jesus models submission to His parents.
 - d. He did this at the age of 12. This too was a prophetic revelation. 12 is God's number of government. Jesus is literally announcing God's new system for bringing the gospel to the world.

John's Unique Perspective – John 1:1-18

- 1. Jesus the Eternal Word of God 1:1-5
 - a. The manger was not the beginning
 - b. His deity is emphasized
 - c. His personhood in the Godhead is revealed
 - d. His power over darkness is shown
- 2. Jesus the Light of the World 1:6-13
 - a. There is only one Light
 - b. The world doesn't always recognize the light
 - c. Even His own did not recognize Him
 - d. He is the source of life and light to those who believe
- 3. Jesus the Word Made Flesh 1:14-18
 - a. He's our glimpse of the glory
 - b. He has a faithful witness
 - c. We are recipients of grace AND truth
 - d. We have seen the Father through Him

THE MIDNIGHT CRY MATTHEW 25

I. THE MIDNIGHT CROWD II. THE MIDNIGHT CRY III. THE MIDNIGHT CRISIS

INTRO - WHY PARABLES? Parables were never intended to be interpreted literally. They are symbolic stories that tell help us understand divine truth. These 3 parables have something in common. They all talk about the same thing, the coming of the Lord. They all deal with the same aspects of His coming. The crowd (people), the cry (the rapture) and the crisis (those who did not make the rapture).

I. THE MIDNIGHT CROWD

A. The Parable of the 10 Virgins

- 1. ALL were virgins
- 2. All had lamps
- 3. All were waiting on the bridegroom
- 4. All were asleep
- 5. All had the same opportunity a. God is not willing that any should perish...
- B. The Parable of the Talents
 - 1. All were given talents
 - 2. All were given time
 - 3. All had the same opportunity

C. The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

- 1. All were people (Separated like sheep and goats) vs.32
- 2. All were under the care of the shepherd
- 3. All had the chance to make it in.

II. THE MIDNIGHT CRY

A. The Parable of the 10 Virgins

- 1. Vs. 5-6 Woke them up!
 - a. God is shaking everything that can be shaken.
 - b. God is exposing sin.
 - c. God is waking the CHURCH up today.

B. The Parable of the Talents

- 1. Vs. 19. Returned to settle the accounts.
 - a. Your talents are not your own.
 - b. God will call for them one day.
- 2. Reinhardt Bonnke "Jesus never went to calvary to give ministers a career. He never went to calvary so we could have conventions and enjoy fellowship, He never went to calvary so we could simply have a good time in church. We went to calvary to give life."

C. Parable of the Sheep and Goats

- 1. Vs. 31 Son of man comes in His glory.
- 2. Vs. 34 40 Those who heard the cry.

III.THE MIDNIGHT CRISIS

- A. The Parable of the 10 Virgins
 - 1. All trimmed their lamps.
 - 2. Lamps went out.

- 3. 5 went to buy oil...It was too late.a. The too late crowd.b. Procrastinators
- 4. Door is shut!
- 5. Vs. 12 ... I don't know you.
- B. The Parable of the Sheep and Goats
 - 1. 5 Talent servant returns with 10.
 - 2. 2 Talent servant returns with 4.
 - 3. 1 Talent servant returns with 1.
 - 4. To the faithful.....vs. 21.
 - 5. To the unfaithful...vs. 26.
 - C. The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats
 - 1. Vs. 32 All nations gather.
 - 2. Vs. 34 The ones on the right.
 - 3. Vs. 37 40. The righteous said to Him.
 - 4. Vs. 40 46. The kings reply.

CONCLUSION - DO WE REALLY UNDERSTAND THE KINGDOM? WHY ARE WE HERE?

ONE MORE TIME WILL DO IT

1. A popular contemporary chorus tells this story:

He came from heaven to earth, to show the way. From the earth to the cross, my debt to pay. From the cross, to the grave, from the grave to the sky, Lord I lift Your Name on high.

A. This song depicts the journey of Jesus, while on this earth. But this isn't the end of the story of Jesus. During this season of Christmas, it is important to remember the first time He came, but let it also be a reminder that He is coming again. In Acts 1: 11, the angel declared, "You men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

2. The first time He came vs. The next time He comes....

The first time He came, He came as a baby in a manger. But the next time He comes. He will be on a white horse. The first time He came, He came as a pauper. But the next time He comes, He will come as the owner of the universe. The first time He came, He came as a carpenter's son. But the next time He comes, He comes as the Son of God, rising.... healing in His wings. The first time He came, He came has deity clothed in flesh. But the next time He comes, He comes as deity clothed in glory. The first time He came, He came as a man, but was still yet God. But the next time He comes, He comes as Lord of Lords. The first time He came, He came for the purpose of redeeming mankind. But the next time He comes, He comes to judge the world and to reclaim it for mankind. The first time He came, He came as a Jewish boy. But the next time He comes, He comes as the head of every race, tongue and tribe. The first time He came, He only lived 33¹/₂ years. But the next time He comes, He's here to stay. The first time He came, He was born in Bethlehem. But the next time He comes, He will come to Jerusalem. The first time He came, He came as a teacher and prophet. But the next time He comes, He will come as the King of all Kings. The first time He came, He healed the sick, raised the dead and set captives free. But the next time He comes, He will do away with sickness, disease and poverty. The first time He came, His birth was herald by angels. But the next time He comes, He will be riding with His saints. The first time He came, A star marked the place of His birth. But the next time He comes, He will be the bright and the morning star. The first time He came, 3 wise men followed the star to find Him.

But the next time He comes, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess... **The first time He came, Shepherds came to visit Him.** But the next time He comes, He will come as the Chief Shepherd. **The first time He came, they presented to Him: gold, frankincense and myrrh.** But the next time He comes, He will present gifts to men and reward them for their labor.

3. Many would ask, who is this Jesus of Nazareth? If you ask Him, He might respond something like this:

On my Mothers Side:	On My Fathers Side:
A Lowly Nazarene	King of Kings and Lord of Lords
A Carpenter	Master Architect of the Universe
A carpenter	Laid the Chief cornerstone
	When the morning stars sang
	Twinkle in the Star
	Fire in the Sun
	Shine in the Moon
	Rain in the clouds
	Red in the Rose
	Leaf on the Tree
	Banana in the Peel
	Pea in the Pod
	& Corn on the cob
Called a Prophet	Called the Word - John 1
Man of Sorrows	Lily of the Valley
Wall of Soffows	Bright and Morning Star
	Day Star and Day Spring
	Rose of Sharon
	Plant of Reknown
	Heaven's finest Treasure
Duing Service	Risen Lord
Dying Savior	
	Rising with healing in His wings
	Captain of the Armies of God
Teacher	Wonderful
	Counselor
	Mighty God
	Everlasting Father
	Prince of Peace

4. Perhaps you know He came and was born in a manger, but have you heard that He's coming again?

TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE JESUS CAME!

Twas the night before Jesus came and all through the house, Not a creature was praying, not one in the house. Their Bibles were laid on the shelf without care, In hopes that Jesus would not come in there.

> The children were dressing to crawl into bed, Not once ever kneeling or bowing their head. And Mom in her rocker and baby on her lap, Was watching the late show, while I took a nap.

When out of the east, their rose such a clatter, I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter. Away to the window, I flew like a flash, Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

When what to my wondering eyes should appear, But angels proclaiming that Jesus was here. With a light like the sun sending forth a bright ray, I knew in a moment, it must be The Day.

The light of His face made me cover my head, It was Jesus! Returning, just like He had said. And though I possessed, worldly wisdom and wealth, I cried when I saw Him, in spite of myself.

In the Book of Life which He held in His hand, Was written the name of every saved man. He spoke not a word, as He searched for my name: When He said, "It's not here," my head hung in shame.

The people whose names had been written with love, He gathered to take to the Father above. With those who were ready, He rose with a sound. While all of the rest were left standing around.

I fell to my knees, but it was too late; I had waited too long and thus sealed my fate. I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight, Oh, if only I had been ready tonight.

In the words of this poem, the meaning is clear, The coming of Jesus is drawing near, There's only one life and when comes the last call, We'll find that the Bible was true after all!

The Family Blessing Genesis 27:26-34

Genesis 27:26 Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and <u>kiss me, my son.</u>" 27 And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said: "Surely, the smell of my son Is like the smell of a field Which the LORD has blessed.

28 <u>Therefore may God give you Of the dew of heaven</u>, Of the fatness of the earth, And plenty of grain and wine. 29 Let peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you. <u>Be master over your brethren</u>, And let your mother's son's bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, And blessed be those who bless you!" 30 Now it happened, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. 31 He also had made savory food, and brought it to his father, and said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that *your soul may bless me.*" 32 And his father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" So he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." 33 Then *Isaac trembled exceedingly*, and said, "Who? Where is the one who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate all of it before you came, and *I have blessed him; and indeed he shall be blessed.*" 34 When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me; me also, O my father!"

Listen to this song by Steve and Annie Chapman, "Her Daddy's Love."

The Family Blessing includes:

- 1. A Meaningful Touch
- 2. A Spoken Message
- 3. Attaching "High Value" to the One Being Blessed
- 4. Predicting a Special Future for the One Being Blessed
- 5. An Active Commitment to Fulfill the Blessing
- A. I was standing nonchalantly in the crowd, talking to the people and taking in their comments and much as I could. I filed their request, their compliments, their suggestions and their chit chat as neatly as I could in my memory. But I wasn't ready for what I was about to hear. A man I had talked to many times and admired for having such a beautiful and close family, squeezed my hand that day and pulled me aside from the crowd and said. She's leaving me. After 21 years of marriage, she is leaving just like that. I said, "hold on there!" Surely you aren't talking about your wife. He said, now hyperventilating, "yes, she's leaving what can I do?" It wasn't the place or the time, but we had to talk. I said, when did things get bad? He said, looking back, I can see that we had problems from the beginning. What kind of problems? He went on to say, "she never wanted to get too intimate, she always worked too hard, she got easily irritated, she demanded to much."

I said, "tell me about her parents, if it got bad from the beginning, it had to be from baggage she brought with her into the relationship. I said, "if you have problems in the first year of a marriage, that isn't a marital problem. That is an unresolved issue with a parent or a childhood issue. You can't have a marital problem until you have a marriage.

He went on to say how she was raised by a hard and stern Father, who was controlling and a mother who was passive and just tried to make up for his rigid behaviors. We weren't five minutes into the conversation, until the Holy Spirit began to show me, that this girl never felt blessed. She was still seeking her fathers' approval, love and blessing.

1. A Meaningful Touch

Genesis 27:26 Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and <u>kiss me, my son.</u>" 27 And he came near and kissed him.

- A. **Genesis 48:9-10** tells the story of Joseph bringing his children to Jacob so he could bless them before he died. Verse ten says that before he said a word, they took his two grandsons in his arms and kissed them and embraced them. In verse fourteen, it says that he then put his hands on each of their hands.
- B. There is something about touch that brings you comfort.
 - 1. Being alone in a house with only a small animal and feel safer.
 - 2. You can have a small child with you and it brings you comfort.
 - 3. Joining hands can make you feel closer to the person standing next to you.
 - 4. There is something about being close to the person you love that brings you comfort.
 - 5. Your child can be crying at night, and just a touch can calm them down.
 - 6. When a baby is scared, it wants to be held close for reassurance.
 - 7. A hand on your shoulder can bring your strength.
 - 8. A hug at just the right time can make your day.
 - 9. When a person is crying, they want to be held.

C. Mark 10:13 Then they brought little children to Him, that <u>He might touch them</u>; but <u>b</u> disciples rebuked those who brought them. 14 But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. 15 "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." 16 And <u>He took them up in His arms</u>, <u>put His hands on them</u>, and <u>blessed them</u>.

- D. You would not believe how many people have said to me with tears in their eyes, "My mother or my father never hugged or kissed me."
- E. You may say, "Pastor, I didn't come from an affectionate family and I am just not the hugging type." That may be true, but that doesn't mean the person you married, or the children you birthed don't need physical attention and affection.

 The Five Love Languages, by Gary Chapman. Just because you love someone, doesn't mean they feel loved, unless you love them in their love language.

2. A Spoken Message

27 And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said: "Surely, the smell of my son Is like the smell of a field Which the LORD has blessed.

- A. I want you to go with me in your minds to the Jordan River. Jesus is getting ready to begin His ministry. Before now, He was a boy, then a teenager. He has gone through his twenties and worked in the carpenter's shop with Joseph. Now it is time for Him to do what He was born to do.
 - 1. Before He performed any miracles and before He chose any disciples He had to make His debut as a minister.
 - 2. God sent John the Baptist as a forerunner to prepare the way for Christ. John's whole ministry was to announce the ministry of Christ. Almost immediately after John baptized Christ, he was beheaded.
 - 3. Here we are at the official announcement of Jesus earthly ministry.
 - 4. John is preaching that one is coming whom He is not worthy to tie his shoes.
 - 5. John is Jesus first cousin. They played together as children. Run around together as teens. But it was not until that moment that the Holy Spirit revealed to him that his cousin was the Messiah.
 - 6. At first John refuses to baptize Jesus, but Jesus tells him that he must.
 - 7. Jesus is immersed in the Jordan. We know this because it says, "straightway He came up out of the water."
 - 8. At the very moment Jesus entered ministry look what happened.
 - 9. The Heavenly Father, God of the Universe, stops everything He is doing. He bows back the heavens and speaks in an audible voice to all of those present at the baptism.
 - a. He could have said, " Behold the Lamb of God."
 - b. He could have said something religious like, "Now is the time for all men to seek my face."
 - c. He could have said, "Look out Satan, we have come to defeat you."
 - d. But He didn't say anything like that.
 - e. Instead He sounded like a Father.
 - f. He said, "This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."
 - 10. Dad, you want to raise a secure son, instead of saying, " why didn't you hit the ball or you swing like a girl. Why don't you say, "THIS IS MY SON AND I AM PROUD OF HIM."
- B. Listen to me parents, you have to be the one to speak into your children. If you do not speak into their lives, they will find someone who will. And they will believe what ever they tell about themselves.
 - 1. I am concerned about the message our children are receiving.
 - a. Illustrate about Saturday morning cartoons. (Cartoon killing each other.)

- b. I am amazed at the violence, anger and hostility being put in the minds our innocent children every Saturday morning.
- c. I have never seen peer pressure to the degree it is at today.
- d. High Schools are becoming a place of violence, threats, murder, and metal detectors.
- e. In 1979 when I graduated High School, a mean kid was one who put gum in a teacher's seat or wrote on a wall or got caught smoking out behind the school.
- 2. More than ever before, we need to take the time to TALK TO OUR TEENS.
- C. Too many of our kids are angry because the only time their parents talk to them is when they have done something wrong or to tell them to do something.
 - 1. If you don't talk to your children, how are you going to know them? If you don't know them, how are you going to discipline them?
 - 2. The quickest way to create a juvenile delinquent is to starting disciplining a child you don't even know.
- D. Families, we need to declare a TV fast around our homes just so we can talk again.
 - 1. One of the reasons our grand parents could stay married for 60 years is because they use to sit down after supper each night and talk. Go out on the porch and talk. Sit by the fire and talk.
- E. Mom and Dad, don't tell me your kids don't like to talk, when they can spend 1-2 hours a day on the phone and another 1-2 hours on the Internet in a chat room. They are talking; they are just not talking to you.

3. Attaching "High Value" to the One Being Blessed

27 And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said: "Surely, the smell of my son Is like the smell of a field Which the LORD has blessed.

- A. Listen to what Isaac said. "You smell like something God has blessed."
 - 1. He only said that because he was blind. Otherwise, he would have said, "you look like something God has blessed."
- B. I have heard so many parents call their children anything but a blessing!
 - 1. Your children are going to have enough people in their world put labels on them and criticize them and tear them down. They need some value attached to them.
- C. One of the favorite ways of the Old Testament, was to pick an object they could relate to and use a word picture to place value on them.
 - 1. Jacob was blessing his 12 Sons at his death, and he wanted them to value themselves so he used word pictures to place value on them. He wanted them to see themselves a certain way.
 - a. He called his son Judah a lion.

- b. Zebulin, he called a Haven for Ships. A safe harbor.
- c. Issachar was a strong donkey. (Changed it's meaning today, but in today's language, would be a nice truck.)
- d. Dan, he called a Judge.
- e. Asher, he said was bread.
- f. Naphtali, is a beautiful deer and uses poetic words.
- g. Joseph was a fruit vine by a well whose branches run over the wall.
- h. Benjamin is a great wolf hunter who hunts by day and divides his spoils by night.
- D. If I was to ask you child, what object have you compared them to, what would their answer be?
 - 1. Would they say a pig? A dumb dog? A lazy hound?
 - 2. Or do they remember you saying, "He/she is as smart as a fox." Or can run like a deer.
 - 3. You child should not have to get their "value" from the youth group or their teacher, or a neighbor. Their value has to come from home.

4. Predicting a Special Future for the One Being Blessed

28 Therefore <u>may God give you Of the dew of heaven</u>, Of the fatness of the earth, And plenty of grain and wine. 29 Let peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you. <u>Be master over your brethren</u>, And let your mother's son's bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, And blessed be those who bless you!"

- A. What have you told your children about their future?
 - 1. Notice the question isn't what have you thought about telling them.
 - 2. Every day, you are prophesying over your family, whether you know it or not.
- B. Now the head of every household wasn't a prophet. But the head of every house pronounced a blessing over their family.
 - 1. Amazing so, most of the things the fathers said over their children came to pass.
 - 2. It wasn't just because God honored a dying man's words.
 - 3. It was because, the person being blessed, believed it and made it their goal.
- C. I want to let you in on a very private chapter of my life. This is the importance of placing value on the future of another person. I have here two letters that are 20 years old. The first letter was written to me when I was undecided about my future. The second one was written when I was in college to encourage me in my studies. These letters are from an 80 year old retired missionary who took an interest in my life.
 - Letter from Harold Turner, January 2, 1980.
 - Letter from Harold Turner, August 6, 1981.

5. An Active Commitment to Fulfill the Blessing.

This blessing was given just before the Father distributed his wealth among his children. Many times this was done before the individual died, because the children took care of the parents until their death.

- A. When the blessing was pronounced, he, the father, gave them enough money to fulfill what he said they would become.
- B. The father simply says, I will always be here for you, to insure that you will be blessed. As long as I have breath, you will always be blessed.
- C. **Hebrews 13:5** For He Himself has said, "I will **never leave you** nor forsake you." 6 So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"
- D. I want to close with the words to a song by Steve and Annie Chapman.

"You'll Always be Mine."

THE LAWS OF THE HARVEST Lesson One: The Law of Sowing and Reaping

Introduction to Series - We will be covering four of the spiritual laws that govern the harvest:

The Law of Sowing and Reaping The Law of Giving and Receiving The Law of Robbing and Reconciling The Law of Ownership and Lordship

In the realm of the unseen and eternal, there are laws which are just as rigid and real as those by which we order our physical lives. Knowing the law and cooperating with the law puts us in a position to be advantaged by all its implications.

- I remember it like it was yesterday.....There I lay in a warm bed at my A. grandma's house. At her house there was little warmth, lots of draft and plenty of covers. Even though it was spring, that Tennessee air was plenty cold and 5:00 in the morning. "Bryan" she called, "Get up, it's time today we're going to plant the garden." After a breakfast of country ham, buttermilk biscuits and fried eggs, my grandpa would say, "boys let's mosey along before it gets to hot." Two of us were in charge of plowing. Two more would come along beside us and drop in the seed. Another would sprinkle the fertilizer and another would sprinkle the water. The last two would come along behind and rake the sides of the furrow over the seed. It was done, at least the planting part. (The next day we would go out and pick all the vegetables and end our whole gardening project within a few days....NOT!) It took time before the plant grew. More water, thinning the weeds, trimming off the dead leaves and at last - the harvest. It was always amazing to me, how you would always get so much more than you planted. Another thing that amazed me was how my grandpa always knew what kind of plant was growing. I had to wait until I saw the vegetables, but he always knew. We always got WHAT we planted. We always got it LATER than we planted. We always got MORE than we planted.
- **Text:** II Corinthians 9:6 But this [I say], He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

***PASS OUT ONE SEED OF CORN TO EVERYONE FOR A SERMON ILLUSTRATION.

I. You Reap WHAT You Sow.

- A. The SEED.
 - 1. **Every seed has an amazing indwelling quality of life.** Scientist can create an exact replica. Same size, ingredient and chemical. They Can produce and identical jacket and you can't tell the imitation from the real McCoy, but try planting them. The real seed has the quality of life. It reproduces. That life in the seed in imprisoned in it and is not revealed until the seed is buried. God could have made plants grow on top of the ground but he wanted them buried to demonstrate a point. When a seed is buried, God will resurrect it. Plant life is not a form of incubation, it is a resurrection. Listen to John 12:24:

John 12:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

- 2. **The seed has got to be sown.** You can put it on a mantle and look at it. You can tie it around you neck. You can hold it in your hand. But it will never produce life until it is sown.
- B. **The law of likeness.** If you sow weeds, you get a harvest of weeds. If you sow thistles, you'll get thistles. You can sow a million seeds and you will invariably get the same kind of seed you sowed each and every time.
- C. We are a seed.
 - 1. We were born of a seed.
 - 2. Our bodies must be planted in order to have a resurrected and glorified body.
 - 3. We have an indwelling life system designed to reproduce whatever we put into yourself. Thoughts, food, ideas, etc.
 - 4. Being put into circumstances that bring us to the death of our own plan we experience and out bust of the nature of that inner life system. Sown in weakness, raised in power. In our weakness, He is strong.
- D. **The same spiritual law is at work in our giving.** If we sow love, we receive a harvest of love. If we sow discord, we receive a bumper crop of discord. If we sow money, we receive a harvest of money.
 - 1. The SEED of **Money**.
 - a. Illustration of a man who accidently put a five dollar gold piece in

the offering, while trying to drop in a quarter. He told his wife, "Well God will bless me for it." She replied, "Foolish man, God will only bless you for the quarter. That is what was in your heart."

- b. Earlier I told you of an imitation seed that would not grow. When you give to God just to get a return, you are planting an imitation seed. But when you give to God because you are thankful and obedient, God multiplies what is in your heart.
- 2. Illustration of Elder Haynes donating a washer, dryer, stove and refrigerator to El Salvador. His hadn't been busy all winter. The week after this donation he sold everything in his shop. The phone rang off the hook.
- D. Look in your hand. If you keep it, it becomes your harvest. If you plant it, it becomes your seed.

II. You Reap MORE Than You Sow.

- A. **The law of multiplication.** Little is much when God is in it.
- B. Planting seed is truly and act of faith. We should learn the spiritual truth from this earthly practice. We plant a little, wait on God, water the plant, keep the weeds out and expect a lot.
 - 1. Plant a little.
 - 2. Wait on God
 - 3. Water the plant. (Water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.)
 - 4. Keep the weeds out. (Think on these things. Philippians 4:8)
 - 5. Expect a lot.

This is not only the law of multiplication, it is the law of FAITH.

C. The harvest will also give back more seed.

How many seeds are in a watermelon? How about an orange or an apple. You must invest from each harvest you receive in order to keep the cycle of supply in operation.

III. You Reap LATER Than You Sow.

A. You are reaping the seed of yesterday, today. Whatever you are sowing now will determine your harvest tomorrow.

B. Galatians 6:7-10

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Galatians 6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reaps life everlasting.

Galatians 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Galatians 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all [men], especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

THE LAWS OF THE HARVEST Lesson Two: The Law of Giving and Receiving

Text: Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

Introduction - The law of giving and receiving is found in Luke 6:38. Read and explain.

- A. Give and it shall be given unto you.
- B. Good measure.
- C. Pressed Down
- D. Shaken Together
- E. Running Over
- F. Men shall give to your bosom.
- G. With the same measure that ye mete.

I. Giving

A. Concerning WHAT to give.

- 1. God wants us to give our best.
 - a. Illustration of the spotless lamb.
 - b. Illustration of a Hindu woman sacrificed her child to the river. She had one crippled child and one healthy little girl. The missionary inquired why she didn't offer the deformed child. The woman replied, that in her religion they gave only their best to God.
 - Malachi 1:7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD [is] contemptible.
 Malachi 1:8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, [is it] not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, [is it] not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.
- B. Concerning WHY to give.
 - 1. Our motive for giving comes from THANKFULNESS for God's generosity.
 - 2. One of the Joys of Christianity is giving.
 - a. Giving makes you feel rich.Illust Penny lady in Robert Schullers church

- b. Giving makes you feel needed.
- c. Giving makes you feel full. Emptying yourself is the only way to fill yourself up. It increases your self worth and self esteem.
- 3. It follows the motto of our Savior. He came to give. God so loved the world that He gave.... (John 3:16) The Holy Ghost comes to give you power. Christianity is only fulfilling in our giving.
- 4. There is more blessing in giving than receiving. Acts 20:35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, **It is more blessed to give than to receive.**
- 5. Giving contradicts greed. It is impossible to give yourself into greed. Greed is a work of the flesh. All sin is rooted in selfishness. Giving is the opposite of selfishness. It is selflessness. Giving is one of the best ways to conquer the flesh.
- 6. Giving activates the promises of God in our life. *Psalms 41:1 {To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.} Blessed [is] he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.*

Proverbs 22:9 He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

C. Concerning HOW to give.

Matthew 6:1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 6:2 Therefore when thou doest [thine] alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. Matthew 6:3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know

what thy right hand doeth:

Matthew 6:4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

II. Receiving

- A. Receiving the blessings of God
 - 1. One promise for giving is the receiving of BLESSINGS.
 - a. Blessings may not come in the form of tangible goods.

Illust - Children of Israel were preserved for 40 years. Illust - Rusty Hughes original washing machine. (23 years old) Illust - Karen Skaggs letter on car repair.

- B. Receiving the rewards of God
 - 1. Matthew 10:42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold [water] only in the **name of a disciple**, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

Mark 9:41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in **my name**, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

- 2. *Matthew* 6:4 *That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.*
- 3. Story of Church in West Virginia that gave appliance during the flood. When they got home, they had been given a house.
- C. Receiving from men
 - 1. We have to learn how to receive.
 - a. Don't you hate to give a compliment to a person who can't take a compliment.
 - 1. That's a nice dress- . Oh this old thing, it's cheap.
 - 2. Boy you look nice today. OK what do you want?
 - 3. You smell good Are you trying to say I usually stink?

LET'S ALL PRACTICE SAYING THE **T WORD.** Thank You!

You can't ask God to bless you and when He does, not receive it.

- b. How about taking gifts or money. What if no one ever took them. We would stop giving them. We have to learn how to receive so that others can obey God in giving. Learn to accept. This is God's way of blessing you.
- c. Look at the text again! *Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*
- D. The cycle of sufficiency.

The rain cycle is similar to God's cycle of sufficiency. II Corinthians 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, [so let him give]; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. II Corinthians 9:8 And God [is] able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all [things], may abound to every good work: II Corinthians 9:9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth forever. II Corinthians 9:10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for [your] food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) II Corinthians 9:11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. II Corinthians 9:12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; II Corinthians 9:13 Whiles by the experiment of this ministration

they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for [your] liberal distribution unto them, and unto all [men];

THE LAWS OF THE HARVEST Lesson Two: The Law of Giving and Receiving Dr. Bryan Cutshall

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 - 3. It follows the motto of our Savior. He came to give. God so loved the world that He gave.... (John 3:16) The Holy Ghost comes to give you power. Christianity is only fulfilling in our giving.
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 - 5. Giving contradicts greed. It is impossible to give yourself into greed.
 - 6. Giving activates the promises of God in our life.
 - Psalms 41:1; Proverbs 22:9
- C. Concerning HOW to give. *Matthew 6:1 -4*

II. Receiving

- A. Receiving the blessings of God
 - 1. One promise for giving is the receiving of BLESSINGS.
 - a. Blessings may not come in the form of tangible goods.
- B. Receiving the rewards of God
 - 1. *Matthew 10:42; Matthew 6:4*
- C. Receiving from men
 - 1. We have to learn how to receive.
 - Look at the text again! Luke 6:38
- D. The cycle of sufficiency. The rain cycle is similar to God's cycle of sufficiency. *II Corinthians 9:7-13*

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The Laws of the Harvest Lesson Three: The Law of Robbing and Reconciling

I. The Law of Robbing - The Jericho Account

A. The City of First Fruits (Joshua 6:16-24)

Joshua 6:16 And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city. Joshua 6:17 And the city shall be accursed, [even] it, and all that [are] therein, to the LORD:

only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that [are] with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

Joshua 6:18 And ye, in any wise keep [yourselves] from the accursed thing, lest ye make [yourselves] accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

Joshua 6:19 But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, [are] consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.

Joshua 6:20 So the people shouted when [the priests] blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

Joshua 6:24 And they burnt the city with fire, and all that [was] therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.

B. Achan - His name means "trouble."

Joshua 7:1 But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

- 1. He was cursed.
- 2. His family was cursed.
- C. Ai The name means "ruin."

Joshua 7:4 So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai.

- 1. The battle against RUIN is a battle the Lord must fight for us.
- The city looked so defenseless, they didn't even bother to send a great number of troops. It is the small and unforeseen things that do ruin us.
 THE NEED FOR COD'S PLESSING
- 3. THE NEED FOR GOD'S BLESSING.
- D. Achor The name means "affliction."

Joshua 7:12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, [but] turned [their] backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

Joshua 7:19 And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide [it] not from me.

Joshua 7:20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:

Joshua 7:21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they [are] hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

Joshua 7:22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, [it was] hid in his tent, and the silver under it.

Joshua 7:23 And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD.

Joshua 7:24 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

II. The Law of Robbing and Reconciling -The Malachi Account

Malachi 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

Malachi 3:9 Ye [are] cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, [even] this whole nation. Malachi 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that [there shall] not [be room] enough [to receive it]. Malachi 3:11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 3:12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

- A. Malachi's Message
 - 1. The last book of the Old Testament contains a powerful presentation on tithing. It is most often referred to because of its great promise of blessing. Every prophet called the people back to the covenant relationship with God. Moses explained the reason why God gives us wealth.

Deuteronomy 8:18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for [it is] he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as [it is] this day.

- 2. Malachi's message moved immediately to a great biblical example of two brothers: Jacob and Esau. Both were sinners. The Bible makes this point indisputably. However, Jacob had a heart for God and Esau disdained it. Jacob desired God's blessings and even prayed for it. (Genesis 28:20-22) He recognized God as the source of all supply and the giver of all blessings.
- 3. Next Malachi dealt with the problem of dishonoring God. He spoke of people who were giving God lambs with broken legs and bread that was molded. From there he moved into the curse that would follow a deceitful giver. In chapter three He declared that the whole nation was cursed for robbing God. The nation of Israel was coming apart at the seams. They begin to ask, "Wherein shall we return?" God's response is found in Malachi 3:10-12. They had to get into the law of reconciliation.

Malachi 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that [there shall] not [be room] enough [to receive it]. Malachi 3:11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 3:12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

A. The law of reconciliation at work.

Illust - Junior Hardin, Fort Peirce , Florida - 51ft. Fishing boat. He called his wife before departing and discussed their finances. She told him, the only money she had was a \$280. Tithe check she was holding. He said, take it to the church, we can't go out believing for a miracle, owing God. When his crew found fish they were in the rocky shoals. As they maneuvered near, they struck a rock that pierced a large hole in the hull. The boat began taking in large quantities of water. The men struggled and Junior cried out, "Lord I'm a tither - you said you would rebuke the devourer."Immediately the boat broke loose from the rock and they crew shoved the pump into the hole. They made it back to the dock and repaired the boat. The next day they went out and sighted the same fish in the same area. It was as though they were still there waiting on them. Knowing he could not get in, he let down his nets in faith. He knew that the fish would have to swim to the nets and they did. They begin to haul in the nets and called to another boat for help. When the day ended, he sold his fish and received \$28,000.

- 1. Satan is a thief. He is the devourer. He will take everything you have if he can. The law of reconciliation promised that God would rebuke the devourer.
- B. Testimony of Reconciliation

Illust - Arlie Rogers of Selma, California. He and his brother invested everything they owned in Cotton. When the young plants were out of the ground a sandstorm blew through the valley and killed every body's cotton. They had no money to pay their line of credit, their debts and no way to recover. Arlie called his pastor. Pastor Burnham went out to the field, got down on his knees in the dirt and prayed a simple prayer. "Lord, these men are tithers, you said you would rebuke the devourer for a tither. I am asking you to manifest the power of your Word right here in this cotton field. Bring this cotton back and give these men a good crop, in Jesus Name, Amen". That ought to take care of it, he said, wiping the dirt off of his hands. A few days later the Rogers brothers called him back to see the miracle. That year they got the bumper crop.

The Laws of the Harvest Lesson Four: The Law of Lordship/ Ownership

Acts 10:36 The word which [God] sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

I. What is Lordship?

The word Lord is an ancient term used primarily in the Old Testament. The person referred to as Lord is the owner of the property. The term is still used in parts of Europe and in word derivations in the American English language. Renters call their property owners a landlord.

- A. What do we mean when we say He is Lord ? The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 10:9-10 ... *if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine hearts...that we can be saved.* That is the procedure for accepting Christ. But what are we saying when we say ,"He is Lord?" If He is Lord, what is He Lord of ?
- B. Lordship means Ownership
 - 1. *Who owns the earth?* It was made by a joint effort of the Father Son and Holy Ghost.

I Corinthians 10:26 For the earth [is] the Lord's, and the fullness thereof.

2. God the Father then declared that Jesus was the Lord of the earth because of His sacrificial death.

Hebrews 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by [his] Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

C. The Bible declares that all good and perfect gifts come down from the Father. When we believe that Jesus is owner (Lord) then we began to see our possessions as things God has given to us rather than things we earned and gave to Him.

It is alright to be proud of your accomplishments. It is alright to feel that you have worked hard to earn a good living, but may I ask you a few questions? We want to claim ownership of our life and possessions when we do not see life as a gift from God.

1. How much did you pay for the free air you breathed today?

Where did you get it?

- 2. How much did you pay for the legs you walked to work on and the arms you did your work with and the brain that allowed you to reason? *Where did you get those things?*
- 3. How much did you pay for being woke up this morning in your right mind? *Can you control this?*
- 4. How much did you pay for the sunshine that lit your way to and from work?
- 5. How much did you pay for the wind that brought you the weather?
- 6. Everything you did pay for, **started out as a free gift from God** !
 - a. The car you drove and paid to own.
 Where did they get the oil that made it run ?
 Where did the petroleum come from that we call gasoline ?
 Where did they get the ore to make the steel that formed the car?
 Where did they get the minerals to form the fluids ?
 Where did they get the ideas to create the car ?
 - b. The house you live in.
 Where did the trees come from for the wood that built the house?
 Who provided the resins and minerals that made the paint?
 Who gave you the ability to choose the house?
 Who gave you the strength to work, so you could pay for it?
 - c. The food you ate today?
 Who made the plant?
 Who made the plant grow?
 Who watered it and gave it sun light?
 - d. To the man who thinks he is Lord of his life, let me ask you the questions God ask Job.
 Where were you when the foundation of the earth was laid? Did you lay its cornerstone?
 Have you ever heard the morning stars sing together?
 Have you ever heard the angels shout for joy?
 Who shut up the sea behind its doors and said stop here?
 Have you ever given orders to the morning?
 Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea?
 Do you know where darkness resides?
 Do you know the way to the abode of light?

Have you entered the storehouse of the snow? Will the lightening go and come at your command? Who cut the channels for the torrents of rain? Can you raise your voice in the clouds or cover yourself with a flood? Will the wild ox consent to serve you? Does the eagle soar at your command?

e. To the man who thinks he is Lord of his life, would you trade all of your jobs for just one of God's jobs?
Perhaps you would like to be in charge of : Giving the birds their food.
Giving the horse his strength.
Designing the snowflakes.
Directing the path of the rain.
Scattering the frost.
Coloring the leaves of the Autumn.
Changing the tide of the ocean.

II. Who is Lord of Your Life?

A. Stanley Tam is a christian businessman for Lima, Ohio. Stanley and his wife had given fifty percent of their business to God. God was the owner. One day while speaking at a church, God spoke to Stanley to give Him the other half of the business. Stanley knew that he owned 25% and his wife owned 25%. He spoke to her about it and she agreed. His lawyer thought he had lost his mind. He finally found an attorney who was willing to help him carry out this strange idea. The transfer was complete. God owned all the stock and would receive all the profits. Stanley would serve as president and receive a salary like any other employee in the company. Within a few months his business grew to become the largest business in America of it's kind. As president of the company he simply explains that the new owner is unbelievably smart. He knows the solution to every problem. The company has now given millions of dollars to the work of the Lord.

There is another dimension to this story. Stanley is a layman whose heart is really in personal soul winning. Since he gave the business away, he doesn't have to worry as much about business and his harvest has increased. That year he asked the Lord for one soul per day. At the end of that year he had won 365 people to the Lord. The next year he asks the Lord for two souls per day and led 730 people to the Lord that year. Stanley was speaking recently at the National Association of Evangelicals in Columbus, Ohio and in his testimony he said that he was asking God for three (3) souls a day this year and so far the Lord had given him three souls everyday this year.

B. We sing a song that says "Jesus be the Lord of All"

The verse to that song says: In my heart are kingdoms of a world that's all my own. But in a secret corner of my heart was a kingdom that did not fall. But I surrender now, Lord make my heart your throne, Rule its kingdoms great and small, For if you're not Lord of everything , then you're not Lord at all.

C. When Jesus is Lord we realize that we are the managers of God's property. Our body is God's property, how do we manage it?
Our mind is God's property, how do we manage it?
Our home is God's property, how do we manage it?
Our money is God's property, how do we manage it?
Give God OWNERSHIP in your life and you can say, HE IS LORD!

Wake Up America, We are a Christian Nation Psalm 119:45-56

Song- "Statue of Liberty"

Verse 1: In New York Harbor, stands a lady with her torch raised to the sky. And all who see her knows she stands liberty to you and I.

Chorus - I'm so proud to be called an American, to be named with the brave and the free; I will honor our flag and our trust in God. And the statue of liberty.

Verse 2: On lonely Golgotha stood a cross, with my Lord raised to the sky. And all who kneel there, lives forever as the saved can testify.

Chorus - I'm so proud to be called a Christian, to be named with the ransomed and whole. As the statue liberates the

citizen, so the cross liberates my soul.

Psalm 119:45 And I will walk at liberty, For I seek Your precepts. 46 I will speak of Your testimonies also before kings, And will not be ashamed. 47 And I will delight myself in Your commandments, Which I love.

- A. Our liberties have not come through the ordinances of men. Our liberties were founded by men who were seeking after God. Our nation is not just free because we are Americans. We are more than Americans; we are nation founded upon the precepts of Christianity. We are not just American; we are the largest Christian Nation in the world.
- B. Our liberty was not won through a Bill of Rights or our Constitution. Many nations have adopted similar humanitarian policies and have failed to achieve the success of national liberty.
 - THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE states: We hold these truths to be _ self evident that all men are created equal, and they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights and among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

America's Christian heritage can be traced all the way back to COLUMBUS himself. He confessed, "It was the Lord who put it in me to sail to the Indies."

The PILGRIMS who landed at Plymouth Rock covenanted together to make a form of government. That covenant written in 1620 was known as the Mayflower Compact. It reads in part: We who's names are underwritten,...having undertaken this task for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith..., solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one another, combine ourselves together into a civil body.

- In 1643, the colonies of Massachusetts, New Plymouth, Connecticut and New Haven were founded and declared, "...We all came into these parts of America with the same end and aim, namely, to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ...and for preserving and propagating the truth and liberties of the gospel."
- In 1639 Connecticut formed their own constitution which stated, "The scriptures hold forth a perfect rule for the direction and government of all men in all duties..."

- The first court system known as the General Court ordered, "God's word should be the only rule for ordering the affairs of government in the commonwealth."

- The Legislature of Pennsylvania declared in 1682, "The purpose of the government was to establish laws to preserve true Christian and civil liberties..."

- As the War of Independence approached, the Continental Congress was established in 1774. The first act of the first session was to open with a prayer meeting at 9:00 at Carpenter's Hall on September 6, 1774.

- At the outbreak of the Revolution the same congress approved the importation and distribution of 20,000 copies of the Bible.
- President George Washington declared a day of public thanksgiving and prayer." On October 3, 1789 he stated, "It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor."
- President John Adams stated, "It is religion and morality alone that can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand."
- President James Madison said, "Religion is the foundation of our government."
- President Thomas Jefferson wrote a book entitled, "The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth." The 57th Congress ordered that 9,000 copies of this book be printed and bound for use of Congress."
- President Abraham Lincoln said, "We are under God and all men are created equal and deserve to be free."
- The sessions of Congress and State Legislatures are still opened with prayer.
- Our federal government employs chaplains for Congress, Armed Forces and Penal Institutions.

- Oaths in a court of law are still issued through the Bible.
- The oath to hold any public office still ends with the words, "so help me God! "
- Our Pledge of Allegiance still declares we are "one nation "under God."
- Our national motto still is, "In God we Trust and is inscribed on our currency and postage stamps."
- By faith our nation was born.
 - 1. We won the revolution; we didn't have an army, but by using squirrel rifles and fishing boats and a whole lot of faith, we licked the British army and became our own nation.
 - 2. We survived....
 - Civil War
 - World War I
 - The Great Depression
 - World War II
 - The Korean War
 - Viet Nam War
 - Desert Storm
 - And we will survive the onslaught of terrorism because we are a nation built by faith.
- C. We may see hard times. We may get scared, bloodied and beat up a bit, but I do not stand with the nay sayers that claim, we will be destroyed or our land laid waste.
 - 1. Yes America, we need to wake up.
 - Yes, we need to tear down our idol altars of lusts, greed and materialism. Yes, we need re-evaluate and reprioritize.
 - Yes, we need to shut down the abortion clinics and clean up drug trafficking.
 - Yes, we need to shut down the porno industry.
 - Yes, we need to clean up the internet and our magazine racks.

Yes, we need to un-plug every minister on TV who peddles the gospel for the sake of money. Every, hireling should be exposed who exploits the people pain and offers them empty promises in the name of merchandising and greed.

- 2. Yes, America we are sick **BUT WE ARE NOT DYING.** So, I emphasize.... wake up America.
- 3. But be it known that a "wake up call" and a "call to repentance" is a far cry from an obituary. America needs to wake up, but make no mistake; we will still be flying the Red, White and Blue when Jesus comes for His saints.

Psalm 119:48 My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments, Which I love, And I will

meditate on Your statutes. 49 Remember the word to Your servant, Upon which You have caused me to hope. 50 This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life.

- A. Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. NKJV
- B. Fear takes over in the presence of the unknown.

There are too many unanswered questions and things we do not know.... but in the midst of it all, there are many things we do know.

- 1. I don't know what the future holds, but I do know who holds the future.
- 2. I don't know which seats will change in government, but I do know who is on the throne.
- 3. I don't know.....but I do not the Word of God will stand through it all.
- C. Go to the Book!
- D. There will be no spiritual renewal until there is first spiritual integrity.

Psalm 119: 51 The proud have me in great derision, Yet I do not turn aside from Your law. 52 I remembered Your judgments of old, O LORD, And have <u>comforted myself</u>. 53 <u>Indignation has taken hold of me Because of the wicked, who forsake Your law.</u>

- A. Terrorism in America? Can it be? Can the nation who has financed most of the worlds missionaries, undergo attack? Can we be made to fear because of those who forsake God's Law? Can the wicked truly bring down the Nation of Faith, and the largest Christian nation in the world?
- B. At first I am afraid, until I remember His Judgments of old. (Verse 52)
 The Pharaoh of Egypt thought he couldn't be taken, but God drown his army in a day.
 The King of Babylon thought he couldn't be conquered, but God took his kingdom in a day.

The Medo Persia empire fell, just as Daniel prophesied.

The kingdom of Greece fell also, just as Daniel said it would.

As a matter of fact, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords can do whatever He wishes. It's not a question of military strategy and power- ARE YOU A MATCH FOR OUR GOD?

Psalm 119: 54 Your statutes have been my songs, In the house of my pilgrimage. NKJV

- A. Your statutes have been my songs....
 - On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.
 - Because He Lives I can face tomorrow.
 - Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, just to take Him at His word.
 - This is my story; this is my song, praising my Savior all the daylong.
 - Great is thy Faithfulness, Great is they Faithfulness...morning by morning....
 - Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee...how great Thou art.

Psalm 119:89 Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. 90 Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides. 91 They continue this day according to Your ordinances, For all are Your servants. 92 Unless Your law had been my delight, I would then have perished in my affliction. 93 I will never forget Your precepts, For by them You have given me life. 94 I am Yours, save me; For I have sought Your precepts. NKJV

- A. How do I know America will survive this war? I know because God's word is already settled in heaven. I know because His faithfulness endures to all generations.
- B. America will survive because of:
 - 1. **Ezekiel 38** The Young Lions of Tarshish will roar.
 - 2. Hebrews 6:10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, NKJV
 - 5. Jesus is coming back for His saint and the will be a Gentile Church rapture.

Conclusion - No More Business as Usual - WE MUST STAND TOGETHER

- No more dividing lines. We need each other.
- We are out of our comfort zone. Out of the box.
- No more mediocrity and status quo church.
- This is the time to show up.
- Report for Duty
- This is the time to make a stand- Because we are first Christians, united with Brothers and Sisters around the world. And because we are Americans and come from a nation built on the precepts of Christian faith.
- So I ask you in this moment to remember who you are.

When God Hides Himself Isaiah 8:11- 9:7

Isaiah 8:11 For the LORD spoke thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying: 12 "Do not say, 'A conspiracy, 'Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, Nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.

- A. The setting of this text.
 - 1. The people are crying, "It's a conspiracy and the ENEMY IS WINNING." Where is God?

13 The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; Let Him be your fear, And let Him be your dread. 14 He will be as a sanctuary, But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense To both the houses of Israel, As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15 And many among them shall stumble; They shall fall and be broken, Be snared and taken.''

- A. When there is a threat, there is always fear.
 - 1. Beware if your fear of Satan ever exceeds your Fear of the Lord.
 - 2. Proverbs 1:7 says, the Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.
 - a. We fear the Lord because...
- B. When you fear God, you don't have to fear anything else.

16 Bind up the testimony, Seal the law among my disciples.

- D. God says, I know it looks bad and it's been long, but wait on the Lord.
 - 1. Even though you can't see Him, wait on Him.
- E. Don't just wait, but I want you to do something while you wait.
 - 1. Bind up the testimony.
 - a. Bind it around your head and arms. The testimony represents what I have already done to get you to this point. It is My investment in you, My seed in your life.
 - 2. Seal the Law among my disciples.
 - a. Find you a group of people that still believe and reminisce what God has already said.
 - b. Get you a group of people who still walk by faith and not by sight.
 - c. EVERY BODY IS NOT AFRAID. Some people run when the enemy sends his threat, but there is still a group that rolls up their sleeves to get ready for a fight.

17 And I will wait on the LORD, Who hides His face from the house of Jacob; And I will hope in Him.

- A. Sometimes God has to use an UNSEEN HAND to guide us.
- B. SOMETIMES GOD HIDES HIMSELF ON PURPOSE!
 - 1. If He didn't hide, we would not learn faith or trust. We would not ask, seek, pray or fast.
- C. It's the JOURNEY, not the VICTORY that gives us our strength.
- D. Our power did not come from a Father who gave us a silver spoon.
 - 1. God choose not to spoil us as children who do not respect authority and do not know who they are. Rather He chooses to chastise those whom He loves, that they may grow up.

- 2. God is more concerned about changing you than He is your circumstance.
- 3. Spoiled children aren't tough, they are just loud. Spoiled children do not know there are consequences for wrong behavior. Someone has always bailed them out. GOD WILL LET YOU SPEND THE NIGHT IN JAIL, before He comes to pick you up. And He will make you pay back the bail money. God will send you to the gallows, before He signs your pardon. God will let them put the noose around you neck, before He cuts the rope. Not because He doesn't love you, but because He wants you to GROW UP. God loves you enough to show up late, let you fall and hang yourself with your own tongue. God loves you enough to let you walk in your own arrogance and pride until everything you said with your mouth falls apart.

4. **SOMETIMES HE HIDES!**

- E. He's not hiding to hurt you. He is only hiding so you will seek Him out.
 - 1. He's only hiding until...

18 Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel From the LORD of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion.

- A. Here I am?
 - 1. You have got to know where you are!
 - 2. You are never going to make it, until you can say, God is in control and I am in the center of His will.
 - 3. It is more important to know your position when you are in the dark than when you are in the light.
 - 4. Here I am. I don't see God, but this is right where He told me to wait. He'll be back.
 - a. I'm not moving until I hear from the Lord.
 - b. I am not making plans until I talk to Him first.

19 And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? 20 To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

- A. When God hides, people get desperate for a Word in their life.
- B. God said, if you need a Word, (verse 20) go to the Law and the Testimony.
- C. If the person giving you spiritual advice is telling you things that a contrary to the Word of God, YOU NEED NO OTHER SIGN THAT IT IS NOT OF GOD.
- D. In these last days we will be dealing with more deceiving spirits than ever before. They will show up in all forms.
 - 1. The new Psychic Network and hotlines is just a part of it.
 - 2. There are demons talking in the churches too. Deceptive spirits will come in all forms.
 - 3. How do I know the difference?
 - a. Satan will always use <u>part of the Word</u> to deceive you.
 - b. <u>God's word will line up with all of it.</u>
 - c. If it's God talking, you can always find it in the book.

21 They will pass through it hard-pressed and hungry; and it shall happen, when they are hungry, that they will be enraged and curse their king and their God, and look upward. 22 Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and they will

be driven into darkness.

- A. When God is trying to get you to trust Him, things may get worse before they get better.
- B. He may wait until your plan is completely spoiled.
 - 1. Remember it is the journey that makes us strong.
- C. Look at verse 21. It may get so bad that you curse God and the king.
 - 1. When God hides, it gets dark and it may get darker before His plan in your life is over.

Conclusion

Isaiah 9:1 <u>Nevertheless</u>...the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed her, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles. 2 The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.

- D. But when the light comes back on you will noticed that something happened during the season of darkness.
 - 1. **3 You have multiplied the nation**
 - 2. And increased its joy; They rejoice before You
 - 3. According to the joy of harvest, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.
 - 4. 4 For You have broken the yoke of his burden And the staff of his shoulder, The rod of his oppressor, As in the day of Midian.
 - 5. 5 For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle, And garments rolled in blood, Will be used for burning and fuel of fire.

E. How is all of this going to happen?

6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end.

YOUR BATTLE IS ALMOST OVER! Isaiah 54:11-17

Isaiah 54:11 "**O you afflicted one**, Tossed with tempest, and not comforted, Behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, And **lay your foundations** with sapphires. 12 I will make your pinnacles of rubies, Your gates of crystal, And all your walls of precious stones. 13 All **your children shall be taught by the LORD**, And great shall be the peace of your children. 14 In **righteousness you shall be established**; You shall be *far from oppression*, for you *shall not fear*; And from terror, for *it shall not come near you*. 15 Indeed they shall surely assemble, but not because of Me. Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake. 16 "Behold, I have created the blacksmith Who blows the coals in the fire, Who brings forth an instrument for his work; And I have created the spoiler to destroy. 17 No **weapon** formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me," Says the LORD.

1. Oh you afflicted one...yes he is talking to you!

- A. Satan fears God's plan for your future.
- B. He set traps for you early.
- C. Tossed with tempest and not comforted.
 - 1. A life that never has real peace.
 - 2. A person who is always worried about something going wrong.
 - 3. Tossed in the storm of what has been done to you.
 - 4. Tossed in the storm of what you have done to others.
 - 5. The storm of regret, the storm of fear, the storm of anger, the storm of victimization, the storm of our unresolved past, the storm of people we have never truly forgiven, the storm of those who abandoned us, the storm of those who never nurtured us, the storm of those who abused us, the storm of those who neglected us, the storm of those who took advantage of us, the storm of those who ignored us, the storm of those who manipulated us. It just churns and churns and churns inside of us. Never comforted! A few good days, but never comforted!

2 I will lay your foundations with sapphires.

- A. The problem is the foundation. Nothing you build on it stands very long. The marriage is shaky because the foundation is weak. The business is shaky because of rough beginnings; the relationship is shaky because of a foundation problem.
- 1. Everything you are dealing with is surface problems.
 - 2. The REAL problem has to do with something that happened a long time ago. You thought you were over it, but the emotion keeps surfacing. You thought if you never talked about, you would have to deal with it, but the anger is still locked inside of you. It causes you to see things differently. It causes you to hear words differently. Your foundation is not solid. You don't really know who you are. You were never properly identified and affirmed and now you feel victimized.
- B. I will lay your foundations with rubies.

We all know you don't put rubies in the foundation. What does He mean? He means, I will go back and make your foundation beautiful. You won't have to be ashamed anymore.

- 1. God is the only one I know that can travel back in time and make something beautiful out of a tragedy.
- C. Your pinnacles of rubies.
 - 1. These are your supports. The things that hold you up.
 - 2. That low self esteem problem that stems from how you were made to feel as a child, GOD SAYS, I will make it a beautiful as rubies.
- D. Your gates of crystal.
 - 1. Your path will be as clear as crystal.
- E. Your walls of precious stones.
 - 1. Your walls will be beautiful walls, not the kind that keep people out, but the kind that welcome people in.

3. All your children shall be taught by the Lord

A. Satan wants you to think that what has happened to you will follow your children. He wants you to think that the mistakes you made will be visited upon them. He wants you to think that because you're not perfect, the generation curse will

follow

Your children.

- 1. He's kept you up at night worrying about what you have done to them.
- 2. Satan holds you in a web of fear over what you did and how you have to now reap what you've sown.
- 3. Satan wants to torment you over your children's future.
- 4. He wants them raised by a fearful and worrisome mother. He wants them raised by a troubled and emotionally distant father.
- 5. Satan knows he got you and he is now threatening you with your children.
- B. But GOD SAYS, All you children will be taught by the Lord.
 - 1. It doesn't matter if you did it right or not- they will be taught...
 - 2. It doesn't matter that you learned too late....
 - 3. It doesn't matter that you made mistakes....
 - 4. It doesn't matter that you never got it right.....
 - 5. It doesn't matter that you think you failed....
 - 6. It doesn't matter that you were a mess during their childhood....
 - 7. It doesn't matter that life didn't turn out the way you thought it would.....
 - 8. It's okay that you had to raise them alone....
 - 9. It's okay they never bought a Father's Day card...
 - 10. It's okay they never go to throw the baseball with dad...
 - 11. It's okay they didn't get walked down the aisle by dad...
 - 12. It's okay they suffered from your mistakes....

4. In righteousness you shall be established

A. In righteousness...

- 1. God says your going to finally get it right.
- 2. Wrong behavior is going to become right behavior.
- 3. Wrong judgment will become right judgment.
- 4. Wrong choices will become right choices.
- B. You shall be far from oppression
 - 1. Satan fears your deliverance, because you will be out of his reach.
 - 2. Far.... Far.... Far from oppression.
 - a. Bad luck will come looking for you and won't be able to find you.
 - b. Self pity will come looking for you...
 - c. Victim thinking will come looking for you....
 - d. Self centeredness will come looking for you.....
 - e. Fear will come looking for you....
- C. You shall not fear
 - 1. Fear will loose its hold on your life.
 - You will have to turn in your Negative Patrol Badge.
 You will have to give up your What Could Go Wrong Squad Car.
 You will have to turn in your, I Told You So, Hand Cuffs.
 You will have to quit singing your, Doom Despair theme song.
- D. And from terror, it shall not come near you.

5. Indeed they shall surely assemble

NIV- If anyone does attack you, it will not be my doing.

- A. But not because of Me
 - 1. Sometimes it gets harder before it gets better.
 - 2. God says, while I'm delivering you, Satan will start gathering ammunition.
- B. Indeed they will surely.....

Satan is not going to stand by idly and watch you be delivered without a fight.

- 1. You keep your trust in God. Don't even be threatened by what you see.
- 2. Satan will assemble the voices of your past.
- 3. He will assemble the fears of exposing what you did wrong.
- 4. He will assemble the scenes you wish you could get out of your head.
- 5. He will assemble the fears of your future.
- 6. He will cause you to hear a seed, a word that will enter your imagination and play havoc on your mind, causing your creativity to work overtime.
- C. Whoever assembles against you will fall at your side.
 - 1. With your own eyes, you're going to see it rise, and your going to see it fall.

6. It is I who created...

- A. You fear a man... but I create him.
- B. You fear the weapon he has made....yet I made the weapon.
- C. You fear the destroyer that's behind him (Satan)... I created him too.

7. No weapon....

A.

- No.... when God says enough, it's enough.
 - 1. Satan will have his troops assemble for the final attack on your life.

- 2. He will be waiting in diatribual fashion.
- 3. I can see him now, trying to see how far he can go. Like a child who knows he's breaking the rules, who knows he is doing something wrong, he will lift his head and peek at God to see if He is going to stop him, them he shoots another fiery dart.
- 4. But the times finally come, when God knows you have been a faithful warrior.

He knows you put your trust in Him.

He knows that His word says in Isaiah 49:23

Kings shall be your foster fathers, And their queens your nursing mothers; They shall bow down to you with their faces to the earth, And lick up the dust of your feet. <u>Then you will know that I am the LORD, For they shall</u> not be ashamed who wait for Me.''

- 5. The time will come God who knows His word is true, that God who is faithful, will stand up, point the omnipotent finger at Satan and say," THAT'S ENOUGH!"
- B. No weapon...

1.

- NO gossip.
 - NO rumor.
 - NO accusation.
 - NO past history.
 - NO revealed sins.
 - NO childhood wounds.
 - NO victimization.
 - NO verbal abuse.
 - NO vented anger.
 - NO bad attitudes.
 - NO misguided spiritual advise.
 - NO ignorance.
 - NO evil looks.
 - NO intimidation.
 - NO old buddies.
 - NO old flames.
 - NO old friends.
 - NO old sins.
 - NO newspaper articles.
 - NO media exposure.
 - NO photos.
 - NO old habits.
 - NO new habits.
 - NO old phone numbers etched in your mind.
 - NO psychic hotlines.
 - NO psychiatric label.
 - NO weapons of the mind.
 - NO weapons of the body.
 - NO weapons of the flesh.

- NO weapons of the emotions.
- NO weapons of the spirit.
- NO weapons in your home.
- NO weapons at your job.
- NO weapons in your past.
- NO weapons in your family history.
- NO generational curse.
- NO hocus pocus nonsense.
- NO weapons of low self esteem.
- NO weapons of NO self esteem.
- NO weapons of sins of the flesh.
- NO weapons of addiction.
- NO weapons of allurement.
- NO weapons of entanglement.
- NO-NO-NO-NO-WEAPONS!
- THE BATTLE IS ALMOST OVER !!!
- C. NO weapon formed.....
 - 1. It may get formed....
 - a. You may see it getting started.
 - b. You may hear the rumor.
 - c. You may see Satan plans coming together.
 - d. IT MAY GET FORMED-- BUT IT WILL NOT PROSPER!
- D. NO weapon formed against you will be able to prosper.
 - 1. God will crush it under your feet.
 - When God says, "that's enough"---- NO devil in hell can oppose you. When God says, "that's enough"---- every plan will fail.
 - ---- every tongue will silence.
 - ---- only God's truth will prevail. only God's righteousness will matter. only God's reputation will be at stake. only God's anger will prevail. only God's word will remain. only God's armor will stand. only God's power will reign.
 - Satan's plan will turn on him.
 - Your enemy will fall at your side.

You will watch God bring them to their knees.

- You will see the salvation of your God!
- 2. You will know then why He said, IF GOD BE FOR YOU-- WHO CAN BE AGAINST YOU!

8. Every tongue

- A. I know what they said, **don't fight them with words.**
- B. In the end- you can condemn them with your victory.
- C. You won't have to condemn them with words. You won't have to defend yourself.

They are going to know that **it was God who paid your ransom.** They are going to know that **it was God who set your free.** They are going to know that **it was God who signed your pardon.**

9. This is your heritage.

- A. Don't forget who you are!
 - 1. God designed you to win.
 - 2. He created you to be the head and not the tail.
 - 3. You were made in His own image.
 - 4. You are more than a conqueror.
 - 5. You are heirs to God's kingdom.
 - 6. You are a joint heir with Jesus.
 - 7. Your Father is the Creator of the Universe.
 - 8. Your name has been written down in glory.
 - 9. You have been bought with a price.
 - 10. Your destiny has been purchased on Calvary.
 - 11. Your pardon has been signed in blood.
 - 12. Your victory has been guaranteed by the Zeal of the Lord of Host.
 - 13. Your path has been ordered by God.
 - 14. Your body has been assigned to resurrection.
 - 15. Your soul and spirit is eternal.
 - 16. Your future is in heaven.
 - 17. You have been destined to rule and reign with Christ.
 - 18. Your hope is not in this world alone.
 - 19. Your home is heaven.
 - 20. Your path is straight.
 - 21. Your God is King.
 - 22. Your future is secure.
 - 23. Your race is almost won.
 - 24. Your finish line is just in sight.
 - 25. YOUR BATTLE IS ALMOST OVER!!!!