**Relaxed Mental Attitude, No. 3 – BD12-02**

We continue this morning with our study of what it means to be a spiritually mature Christian. We are looking particularly at the question of a relaxed mental attitude. Each of us may review our own situations to see how we have done this week. How many experiences we have had that demonstrated a relaxed attitude of mind. How much we have committed ourselves to the Lord and trusted to Him, or how much we have taken over in ambitions on our own, and solutions of our own.

We have found that the Christian’s defense against Satan’s attack is the divine truth of the Bible in the form of Bible doctrine, Bible principals which guide his soul. Sound doctrine is the basis for personal growth in spiritual maturity in order to lead us into competent living and service within Satan’s world. We have observed five basic facets of spiritual maturity and have noted that they combine to erect a pentagon of defense within our souls. We are looking particularly at the facet of a relaxed mental attitude which is a mind free of mental attitude sins and therefore a mind which is functioning on divine viewpoint, and thus a mind which is willing to turn all of its problems over to the Lord and let Him solve and move as He leads.

Now the technique we have observed for producing this relaxed mental attitude facet in the pentagon of our soul’s defense we have indicated is a technique which has been called the faith rest technique. Now faith, you remember, has no value in itself. It is silly when some people talk to others who are in some kind of stress, some pressure of life upon them, and somebody comes along and says, “Well, dear brother, just have faith.” Well faith (itself) is totally meaningless, I think you have already learned that faith is a non-meritorious thinking to a way of gaining knowledge as a result of accepting some authority. Faith is believing somebody. And we do this all the time all day long in our lives.

Now the value of faith lies only in its object. In the case of a Christian the value of faith lies in Jesus Christ. That kind of faith is productive of eternal life. For the Christian, the value of your faith lies in the object of Bible doctrine and the promises of the Word of God. That produces spiritual results.

Now faith rest means faith in the promises and the doctrines of the Word of God which bring peace and rest to our souls. This is the way we solve problems as Christians. Otherwise we run around in a panic solving problems on human viewpoint in our own capacities.

So when somebody comes along and says, “Have faith,” it’s comparatively meaningless. As a matter of fact, it isn’t too helpful to tell a person to have faith in God… That isn’t (always) helpful, while it is more in the direction of truth. Yet if a person doesn’t know the Word of god, he cannot have faith in God. You can’t see God, but you can see your problems.

All of you sit here this morning with some problems. You may deal with those problems in a faith rest technique only to the extent that you know about God as He has revealed Himself through the Word of God. Otherwise the thing that you see is not God, but your problems. God has revealed Himself, so to have faith in God means to have faith in the Word of God. If you don’t know the Word of God, you can’t have faith in it. If you don’t know doctrine, you can’t trust it. If you don’t know the promises, you can’t lean on them. If you don’t know the prophetic word, you can’t have confidence in where history is moving. The result is you cannot have faith in God.

The example that we looked at last week was Abram with his relaxed mental attitude. You remember that his nephew Lot had been taken captive by Chedorlaomer and his allies, and Abram with his three allies, without rebuking Lot for his foolishness of living in Sodom, pursued the enemy and freed Lot. Abram’s relaxed mental attitude also freed him from greed for the spoils of the campaign which the king of Sodom offered to him. It also enabled him not to impose his convictions upon his three allies in reference to the spoils of war, and he permitted them to take as they elected to.

Now victory, as is often the case, is followed by a certain spiritual letdown. This seems (to be) what happened to Abram as we looked in Genesis 15, if you’ll turn back there again. As we look at this record, there are some things that seem to stand out as concerning Abram. One was his fear over retaliation by the defeated Chedorlaomer. Also a certain worry over the financial security that he lost when he rejected the King of Sodom’s offer to take the spoils. But God comes along and he reassures Abram with a promise to be his shield, no matter what Chedorlaomer may do in counterattack, and to be his reward, no matter what he may have lost—the vast sums that he may have lost by rejecting the spoils, so as not to detract from the glory of God. Abram wasn’t going to allow the King of Sodom to say, “I made Abram economically secure.” That for Abram was an honor that belonged to God.

So Abram responded to God’s promises of shield and reward with the problem of his not having a son. Almost as if he were saying, “What reward are you going to give me? The rewards are all dependent to me and my posterity on my having a son, and I don’t have a son. All I have is my good steward Eleazar. He’s going to be my heir. So the long range reward, Abram couldn’t see how that was going to be fulfilled. So God made a promise to Abram that he would indeed have a son from his own body—fifteen years later, as a matter of fact; and, for most of that fifteen years he was relaxed—accepting and leaning on the promise of God.

Now the promises of God then were illustrated in such a way as to call attention to the essence of God which is behind His promises. Because a promise is only as good as the character of the one who makes it. So back in Genesis 15:5, Abram is told to look abroad. (God) takes (Abram) out of his tent and tells him to look toward heaven and count the stars. Now here is the fantastic star-spangled heavens, and He calls his attention to the fact that there are those stars, and his descendants will be as numerous as those.

Now in the process of using this illustration, naturally the essence of God is stressed here because of the fact that God made this creation, He controls it, and it all works in a perfectly synchronized manner. Now a god who is that powerful can indeed solve Abram’s problems.

Then in verse 6 He told him about salvation. Abram believed God and his faith in what God has said was counted to him for salvation. Now the hardest thing that God had to do for us was to save us. That was the most He could do for us, and He’s already done that. And Romans 5:10 says now that we’re His friends and His children, He will do much more for us than that. So that God is doing more than the most for those of us who now belong to His family. Now that’s fantastic.

The third thing, in verse 7 we noted, was that the faithfulness of God was observed. God who brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give him this land. And Abram had failed god many times but God had never failed him. God is true to us whether we’re true to God or not. Now some of you still have the idea perhaps that as long as you’re faithful to God, He’s going to be faithful to you. So forget it! And get yourself doctrinally straight. God is a god who cannot deny Himself even when you deny Him.

Now there was another divine solution. This is the divine solution of promises. That’s why we encourage you, the next time we come to the Lord’s Supper service, have a good list of promises—a couple or three good promises that have become meaningful to you that you may share with the congregation. Start making lists of promises. Somebody has said (there are) over 7,000 promises in the Bible, and they’re only good for this life. And God says every one of them you may claim, and they’re for you and your children. But they’re worthless unless you know them.

Now the second divine solution for the problem of Abram’s anxieties and in order to provide the basis for resting by faith in God is the solution of doctrine, and we have that in verses 8 through 11 here in Genesis 15. Abram is worried about his posterity possessing the land of Canaan after him. So he asks God for proof. Verse 8 says, “How shall I know that I shall inherit it?” And God proceeds to confirm this promise with doctrine in the form of typology—pictures of doctrine through the Levitical offering system.

So Abram is told to bring five animals in preparation for the divine confirmation event and service. He cuts the animals in two halves and he is told to lay them out (with) each half opposite the other, with a path between. The birds are not killed. Now in the ancient world, this was the way two people who made an agreement signed on the dotted line. They didn’t sign a legal document. They put together this fashion of confirming to one another that they were each going to keep their part of the bargain.

So they would lay out these animals and sacrifice cut in half, and then the two partners of the agreement would walk arm-in-arm down the pathway between the two halves of the animals, thus indicating before God that they were taking an oath on the basis of this sacrifice, and because of what these animals in sacrifice represented. They were confirming that they would be true, teach to the other, in their agreement.

In Jeremiah 34:18 you have this example: “And I will give the men who have transgressed my covenant, who have not performed the word of the covenant which they have made before me, when they cut the cut the calf in two and pass between these parts.” Now in this particular context in Jeremiah 34, there was an agreement about releasing certain slaves. They made an agreement with God and they walked between the pieces of the covenant of the sacrifice that they would do it, and then they went back on their word, and that’s what Jeremiah is speaking of here.

“And I will give the men who have transgressed my covenant, who have not performed the word of the covenant which they have made before me, when they cut the cut the calf in two and pass between these parts.” This is a way of signing on the dotted line.

So now Abram says, “How do I know that I’m going to have this land?” God says, “I’m going to show it to you, a confirmation based upon doctrine.” Now here are the doctrines portrayed: First of all he is to take a heifer. Now if you go back to the Levitical offering system, you’ll find that the heifer in Numbers 19 is comparable to 1 John 1:9. The heifer was used to cleanse people from uncleanness that they had contaminated in some way, like touching a dead body or being in a room when somebody died. So it was a picture of the contamination of sin that comes upon a believer and that is washed away through confession of sin.

Now it’s necessary to confess sin before you can act on doctrine, before you can trust in promises, so it was fitting that first in line here should have been the heifer. So here’s the picture: God says, “Cut this heifer in half. Put one half here, and one half here.” Then the Christian whose sins have been judged for is in like manner restored simply by confessing to God what he has done. Now the legalists among us want some human payment plan, some penance system. But even in the Old Testament, the heifer and the ashes of the heifer mixed with water represented the cleansing of 1 John 1:9, the confession of sin.

Then he was to put a she-goat, cut it in half, put half here and half here, leaving the pathway between them. Now this, as we look in the Levitical offerings, we find that the she-goat was used in the sin offering to represent atonement for sin, and it was also used in the peace offering which represented a person’s right relation with God.

So these offerings: this one speaks of confession. This one speaks of the reconciliation represented by the sin offering and the peace offering of being right with God. These offerings are where God has removed the wall that separated us from Himself. The blocks have all been removed—the block of sin, the block of the penalty of sin—spiritual death, the block of physical birth with an old sin nature, the block of the holiness, and the position in Adam. All of these have been removed by the work of the Lord on the cross. So Jesus Christ provided reconciliation eternally for us. All we need to do now is cross the line because the wall has been removed. He’s free to meet our problem in time. And in the case of Abram this was represented here by the she-goat.

Then the next animal was a ram. Again he was to take the ram, cut it in half, put half here and half here, and leave a space between. Now the ram in the Levitical system was used in the trespass offering. The trespass offering was to represent restitution when you had done injury to another person’s rights. This offering pictured satisfying God’s justice which had been offended by man’s sins. So the ram offering is a type of propitiation—satisfying the justice of God. A sovereign God reaches a sovereign decision to deal with man’s sin in such a way that He’s free to give us His love and free to give us His eternal life. Now God is holy so sin has to be paid for to satisfy His justice and His righteousness. Love can’t ignore God’s justice and righteousness. His standards have to be met.

So the Father is satisfied now with what Christ has done in propitiation. That’s what the word propitiation means—to satisfy. He is free now to give us His maximum love. Now the ram represented this in the Old Testament offerings.

Then he had two others. He had a turtle dove and he had a young pigeon. These two spoke of the heavenly origin of the Lord Jesus. These were not cut in half. They were laid apparently one on one side and one on the other. The reason was that in scripture typology the turtle dove has been viewed as representing the deity of Christ, and the young pigeon His resurrected humanity. The deity of Christ and the resurrected humanity of Christ cannot die. So it would have been unfitting to have cut these in two. So the birds are not divided.

Now this is the kind of a person that Jesus Christ is, and this is the work that He has performed in our behalf. These Old Testament offerings all stood for a specific act on the part of the Lord Jesus Christ—n confession, in reconciliation, in propitiation, in His deity, in His humanity which makes it possible for we who are human to enter heaven and to live there forever.

Now there was a challenge to this doctrine in typology in verse 11. It says, “When the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. Now the fowls are, in Scripture, a symbol for satanic opposition. Satan was opposed to Abram learning and responding to what these doctrines represented. In Matthew 13:4, 19, and 32 you have this picture of the birds used as emissaries of Satan. Now the attack upon the carcasses is, in type, again Satan’s attack on what these sacrifices represented doctrinally, and the seeking of Satan to disrupt Abram’s relaxed mental attitude by his failure to use doctrine.

Now this is Satan’s method. This is how Satan approaches you. He wants to destroy your relaxed mind in trusting God by causing you to break down in your dependence upon doctrine or your knowledge of doctrine. This is his method. 1 Peter 5:7 and 11 will tell you about that (as well as) 1 Timothy 4:1 and 16. But Abram, with positive volition toward what these sacrifices represented, rose up and he drove the birds off. Thus keeping with the picture here, he drove off the emissaries of Satan.

We have learned thus far that if you want to develop the faith rest technique, and it’s a technique for the Christian life. I don’t care if you don’t like this term and you want to find some other term—that’s all right. I read in the paper recently that we don’t have any great political leaders in this country, or for that matter, any great real statesmen in the world. The author observed that one of the indications of that is that we no longer have leaders on the world scene who have a facility with language. We no longer have a Roosevelt who can come out with a statement like, “We have nothing to fear but fear itself,” that electrifies the imagination of people. Or that “this generation has a rendezvous with destiny” that fired up the emotion and the drive of people of those days of World War II. Or a Churchill who could put words together in such a way that people were inspired in their darkest hours to rise up and resist. Well that’s true. You don’t have on the world scene, by and large, people who have capacity with language.

Dr. Chafer in seminary used to tell us about the joys that he experienced as he would struggle over trying to think up ways pertinent to his day and the way people were thinking that would reflect a doctrinal truth. He was forever trying to think of words that would create images and understanding in people’s minds, just by those sheer words, of some fact of doctrinal truth. Well, when we speak about the techniques of the Christian life, we’re trying to reduce your understanding to the fact that you live as a Christian by the fact that you are obedient to certain relationships to the Lord that may be described as techniques.

One of them is confession of sin. If you don’t know about the confession of sin, and somebody said to me the other day, “It’s kind of strange how much you hear the same people who are zealous for telling people about the gospel, which they should be, are totally indifferent toward telling those same people about confession of sin. You don’t hear Christians and preachers talking about confession of sin, confession of sin, confession of sin. You wonder and you realize that that is true. You stop and you think about it you realize again why it is true—because Satan is functioning within local churches to depress key techniques of the Christian life. A Christian who does not confess sin is a stumblebum spiritually. He is out. He will never be a problem to Satan.

But the man or woman who is constantly turning to God and calling his sins by name, that is the man or woman that God uses. That is the man or woman who is effective in the Lord’s work. These techniques are strategic, and we’re talking about one of them here which is the faith rest technique. In order to develop this facet of maturity of a relaxed attitude of mind. We have learned thus far that if you’re going to use this technique, you must learn and believe the promises of God. Two, if you’re going to function under this technique, you must learn and use Bible doctrine. Now we’re going to add a third. You must learn and use prophecy.

Now you don’t have to run your eye and think over these three and think very far to see what a night of darkness has descended upon the local church and upon Christendom. How many places can you go where people are informed and encouraged to pursue and learn the promises of God? How many places can you go and sit in a service and come out and say, “I know something about doctrine?” How many places can you go certainly and know something about prophecy in a concise intelligible way that you can use it and that you can relate it?

Well, who is going to be relaxed in his mind? Who’s going to be depending upon God for solutions? If you don’t have a relaxed mental attitude, you will not be very grace-oriented; neither will you have a mastery of the details of life. That mastery of the details of life in itself is strongly dependent and interrelated to your having a relaxed mental attitude. When you’re not relaxed in your mind, you’re hustling all the time to grasp some little detail that you think is big. And sometimes you don’t even think it is.

Are there any of you parents running around with a lot of pride in your heart because your kids make the honor roll? Years ago I realized that here is one of the most oppressive things upon a young person when his parents say, “Hey, I want you to make the honor roll.” I know a kid that made the honor roll all the time when he was in high school, and when he got to college and he blew it. I said, “What’s your trouble?” His father said to me, “It’s pretty hard on a guy who has always been a big wheel on the honor roll in high school (and, of course, Irving High School too, you know) and now to come along into college and he’s failing.” I said, “You’re kidding. He’s not failing.” He said, “I mean it. He’s failing.”

And the kid himself said, “Well, it’s ten times as hard. It’s just too discouraging.” And I knew what he was saying. He had learned by his parents’ training that the wonderful thing was to be on the honor roll. That’s a detail of life. If you go around telling your children, “Oh, it’s wonderful to be on the honor roll. This is what you want to be. Get on the honor roll. Maybe they’ll write a letter and put it in the newspaper about you.” And your children say, “Yeah.” And they pick up a cruddy little detail of life like that that becomes supremely important to them.

Nobody is saying you should be a dummy in school, but whether you’re on the honor roll or not doesn’t make any difference. It doesn’t count at all in the kingdom of God because God operates on totally different principals. You can see here’s a kid who’s all tied up with this little detail of life. How is he going to have a relaxed mental attitude? How is he going to be open to what God is telling him and leading him to do. Now I don’t want this to be viewed as an encouragement to all you poor students. Let’s keep the thing in perspective as to where the real values lie.

Alright, now here has been this challenge to doctrine. Now we’re going to go to this third one here which is prophecy itself—the divine solution of prophecy in verses 12 through 17. Abram now experiences a nightmare. Verse 12 says, “And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram.” He has a relaxed mental attitude. He has accepted the significance of these promises and the significance of these doctrines typically presented to him, and he relaxes. So he falls into a deep sleep. The mentality of his soul is relaxed.

Then it says, “And lo a horror of great darkness fell upon him.” What this is speaking of is that within Abram here as he falls asleep there comes upon him a nightmare. Now his subconscious apparently has a certain worry in it that has been unresolved. If you have worries, God did not make a human being to be able to live under tension. That’s psychologically true and sound. So if you’ve got an anxiety and you’ve got a problem that you keep fretting about and that you’re worried about in any realm of life, you can put that problem out of your mind. And when it goes out of your conscious mind, it sinks right down into your subconscious mind and it eats away there. More people are driven nuts because of what’s eating away at them subconsciously than the thing that they’re conscious of that’s bugging them.

And apparently Abram had really been worried about this business of how are my children and their children and their children going to possess this land. This thing had been eating away and it was down in his subconscious. And God is dealing with this question, this challenge—how do I know? So there’s this horror in the form of a nightmare that strikes him. He has this problem in the past about securing the land, and now it comes up from his subconscious to worry him here in his sleep.

How does God meet it? Well he meets it with the reassurance of prophecy. He informs him about the future history of his posterity in the land. Verse 13 says, “He said unto Abram, ‘Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a sojourner in a land that is not theirs and shall serve them and they shall afflict them 400 years.’” “Know of a surety” is the Hebrew word “jada” and it means, “to know.” And here it is actually repeated twice. Twice it has, “know… know.” The first time it’s in the participle “knowing,” and the second time it’s in the future tense, “thou shalt know.” It’s a Hebrew idiom. It’s the Hebrew way of saying that it’s absolutely certain of being fulfilled. What it is saying is, “knowing, thou shalt know.” Know for a certainty that something is going to happen to your people. And what is that?

Well this prophecy is going to be another basis for faith rest on the part of Abram. And he who sees the Canaanites now possessing in strength, now possessing in strength, he’s concerned about how this possession is going to take place in the face of such a formidable foe. And Abram is concerned about what’s going to happen if he dies before they secure the land from the Canaanites. He says, “Know of a certainty that thy seed (which is the people of Israel) are to be enslaved for four hundred years in a country outside of Palestine (which historically proved to be Egypt), and there will be years of nightmarish pressure under cruel taskmasters.” This prophecy is to be the basis of faith rest for the Jews for four hundred years. They’re to survive their present trials in Egypt on the basis of where the Word of God says history is moving for them. So they were relaxed in the midst of their trials. To be ignorant of the prophetic word today creates a lot of worry for Christians in our nightmarish world.

Then in verse 14 the Exodus is predicted. “And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge.” This is fulfilled in the ten plagues upon Egypt (Exodus 8:12-30). “And afterward they shall come out with great substance.” This was fulfilled in Exodus 12:35-36 where the panicked nerve-racked Egyptians gave them bon voyage gifts galore. Anything they asked the Egyptians gave them, and they got a four hundred-year paycheck all in one check.

In verse 15 God said, “Now I’m going to deal with your death, Abram.” “And thou shall go to thy fathers in peace and shall be buried in a good old age.” “Go to thy fathers” means that Abram will die and he where go to where others who have died are living. And “he will go in peace,” which is a very very interesting remark.

Abram’s going to die, and he’s going to die in peace which means that God is going to give him grace to die. I guess we better stop there for a minute. We love to talk about the grace of God in reference to living, but some are going to have to die. When they have to face the subject of death, there is a grace that God has provided for that. The older you get, the more this subject becomes important to you. Abram was told that he would die in a good old age, 175 years-old as a matter of fact, and he would die in peace—that God would give him grace to die.

**Death**

**Job 5**

Now God has a stated number of years for each life, and he hands out this to us one day at a time in a very deliberate manner. Let’s look at the divine control upon death. It seems strange how many Christians are not aware of how God controls the subject of death. Would you turn to Job chapter 5 for a moment? Job 5:19. Job, you remember, is suffering under intense physical disaster. It seems, as a matter of fact, that he’s dying. So one of his friends, Eliphaz, addresses himself to the subject of death. Under the divine inspiration of god the Holy Spirit, he makes some statements concerning death that are very revealing to us. Here is an area of doctrine that you should understand. Dying with grace.

**Dying With Grace**

Verse 19 says, “He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea in seven there shall no evil touch thee.” By the context, this word “evil” has to do with death, and the situation of Job’s case where he apparently seems to be dying. Verse 20 says, “In famine he shall redeem thee from death.” While God has a purpose for your life, you will survive even in time of national economic disaster. The way things are going in the United States today, that may be a great comfort in itself to you. You will survive in times of great economic disaster as long as God has purpose for your life. “And in war from the power of the sword.” You will be preserved through battle also.

Verse 21 says, “Thou shalt be hidden from the scourge of the tongue.” You’ll be protected from the social disaster about somebody gossiping and maligning against you, and the vocal vengeance. A lady last week said (something) to me. We had mentioned a family whose little two-year-old son was dying. The lady who spoke to me said, “I have another friend who is a friend of this family. (As a matter of fact, it was a third lady who gave me this story.) She said, “The other friend of the family, long before we ever came to Berean, had been bad-mouthing Berean Memorial Church, and even bad-mouthing you.” And it’s just hard for me to believe that anybody would bad-mouth me. Now some of you I can believe it that they would. Anyhow, I said, “Has she ever been here?” She said, “No.” I said, “Does she know me?” She said, “No.” I said, “Where did she get it?” She said, “Oh, you know, from your friends in other churches here in Irving.”

And she said, “It was strange. This lady comes to me and says, ‘What would Dr. Danish say to this family who are in real despair? All they’re getting is preacher visits, but they’re in real despair over this child.’” She said, “And then that lady came and talked to you as an emissary of that family. You told her what could happen if this child lived. You told her what God was going to do, where this child was going to go, and where these Christian parents were someday going to go in reference to this child, and the whole picture of the grace of God for dying.” She said, “I took that back to those parents, and they got on their knees and they committed that child to the Lord, and they’ve had peace about the fact that this baby is apparently doomed to die at this point. And now,” she said, “they’re no longer torn up.” And she said, “How ironic that the very lady who was bad-mouthing you should be the agent of bringing comfort from Berean Memorial Church to that family.”

Now that’s what this verse is talking about. When you go around bad-mouthing somebody, you’d better be careful because God may let you have the bitter pill of finding blessing from the very one that your mouth has been bad-mouthing. God says, “I’ll protect you from that, and from the social disaster of people who like to run around talking who don’t know what they’re talking about, who are cock-eyed fools, and expressing human viewpoint about something they don’t understand, and somebody who has simply stripped them of their psychological fronts, so they stand there exposed in their real character and they don’t like it. Because they don’t like what they see any more than we like what we see, but they don’t want to change and make it right.

Verse 21 says, “Neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh,” which refers to the fear of death. Verse 22 says, “At destruction and famine shalt thou laugh.” Now this is not a hilarious picnic that he’s talking about laughing. This is not arrogant contempt toward death, but it’s a relaxed inner joy. Whether death is sudden or prolonged for you, it will be met with a relaxed inner joy. “Neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.” That is, the sources of death in the Old Testament times, the beasts of the field. In our day, we would convert that, “Thou shalt not be afraid of riding on an airplane, of driving on the expressway, or of going on hunting trips with your near-sighted friends.” Because God will stand in your stead, and you will be protected as long as He has purpose for you.

Verse 23 says, “For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.” The dangerous things in life can’t touch you until the Lord allows. Verse 24 says, “And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace.” Your human body—the tent that you’re living in that’s going to wear out. And you shall be in peace at the time of death because God will give you grace for your moment of dying. “And thou shalt visit they habitation (heaven), and shalt not sin.” Because you’ll visit heaven without your old sin nature, and you will have ultimate sanctification. A lot of kookie people are running around and trying to achieve ultimate sanctification today, but here the Word of God tells you when you’ll get it—when you visit your heavenly habitation, because your old sin nature is the source of your evil and it will be gone.

Verse 25 says, “Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.” Here is reference to your posterity when you have died—grace to them to go on living after the funeral service. Abnormal grief can ruin a life. It is sinful to carry on and to shriek and cry as if we had no hope. As 1 Corinthians 4:13 says, we are not to act as those who have no hope, and we are not to sorrow as they do. Faith rest teaches us to deliver our loved ones to heaven’s rest and to heaven’s joy with grace. We miss them. Our tears are legitimate, and next Sunday morning we’re going to talk about crying. There are some times when it is downright sinful to be weeping, and there are some times when it is absolutely in order, whether you’re a man or a woman, to be weeping, because there are a lot of people who don’t know when they should cry and when they should knock it off and get with it. But God says that our seed shall be great after us. The people who are living go on living, and they prosper. They are not bitter and hysterical and self-destructive.

Verse 26 says, “Thou shall come to thy grave in full age.” That doesn’t mean as an old man. It means “at the right time.” There is no virtue in living a long life. God has a perfect right time for each of us to go to heaven. He gives us grace at that time to go.

I remember when my father died, I was speaking to a man, and the man said to me, “Well, he has lived his life.” And I thought to myself at the time, “That’s a dumb statement. The man is 58 years and he died, and he’s lived his life?” But I was wrong. This man was not even a Christian, but he spoke words of truth. If you die at 58, it’s because in the providence of God you have lived your life, and that’s what this verse says. That is your full age. “Like a shock of grain cometh in in its season.” A shock of grain comes to a point when it’s ripe, and that’s the time. It doesn’t have a very long life, but when it’s ripe, that’s the time to take it in.

Now god has set up a pattern for your life. There is a pattern for you to come in when you are ripe, and that’s when God takes you in. Do you feel qualified to want to take over and make this decision as to when you’re ripe and ready to go? Do you want to take over and make the decision that you know when it is right for your children to go? So let this mind be in you, dear friends, and relax. I would caution you to beware of the sin unto death which 1 John 5:16 says, and also which brings what Ecclesiastes 7:17 says about dying before your time. You can propel yourself to the point where you have built up callouses upon your soul to the point where you are completely insulated and clogged up from any expression toward God and man. When that happens, your soul is in such total darkness that God will take you home to heaven. That’s the sin unto death. You can propel yourself to die before your time.

**Suicide**

Now there is a season, and it’s the right time for our death. So it’s sinful to tamper with that right time with suicide incidentally. Anybody who is tampering with his life with suicide is way out of line because you’re presuming to take upon yourself when the grain is ready to be harvested.

Verse 27 says, “Lo this, we have searched it (or researched it—so it is, it’s really true), so it is; hear it (that’s listening to the Word and getting it into your mentality through the filling of the Holy Spirit, and then it says) “know thou it for thy good.” That’s knowing it by positive volition so that you can use if from your human spirit.

Now back to Genesis 15:16. On this background, God has made some very dramatic declarations to Abram concerning his death. You’re going to go to your fathers. You’ll go with grace and peace, and you’ll be buried in a good old age. But Israel is to return from Egypt to possess the land, but in the fourth generation they shall come hither again (Genesis 15:16), for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. A generation at this time was 100 years. In the fourth generation, that was fourth from Abram, that was Levi, Kohath, Amram, and Moses—in the fourth generation, 100 years each, they would leave Egypt.

Now the Amorites were a group of people who were in Canaan, and apparently at this time Abram’s testimony seems to have reached them, so that they were converted so they had national protection because of their response to the Word of God. But in 400 years, the Amorites had descended into the phallic cults, the sex worship cults, into the bestiality, sex with animals, into sacrificing of children in fire, and into the most degenerate practices imaginable. So by the time the Israelites came back out of Egypt, the Amorites were ripe for being exterminated.

It’s interesting. It almost indicates that when a majority of citizens in a nation have perspective toward God, have doctrine in their souls, that nation is protected. But when a majority no longer has perspective toward god, when a majority have become so calloused in spiritual things that they’re clogged off, then a nation is lost, and destruction comes.

God made clear to Abram that all that He promised him was going to be done unconditionally. When that smoking furnace and that pillar of fire went through those pieces of the offering which had been laid out, it was indicative that God alone, without Abram walking with God between those pieces, God alone would perform all that He had promised. So it wasn’t dependent upon Abram. That’s grace. All of God’s promises to us are dependent upon Him and not on us.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971