***Pay Attention to What God has Said

RV171-01***

We are studying the subject of "The Antichrist." This is segment number 17 in Revelation 13:1-10.

**The Antichrist**

The revelation of God about the future world ruler, the antichrist, is of major importance to mankind. We have been looking at that in the opening part of Revelation 13. This antichrist will be empowered by Satan, and be able to bring all nations under his authority in a world government. The reign of the antichrist during the tribulation era will be Satan's final campaign to defeat God before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The whole of unsaved humanity in the tribulation will worship antichrist as a divine being. Those who have this prophetic preview about the evil antichrist are commanded by the Holy Spirit to pay attention to God's revelation and to act accordingly.

**If Anyone has an Ear, Let him Hear**

I must stress to you again that Revelation 13:9 is a command: "If anyone has an ear, let him here." This is not an optional response. The worship of the antichrist, the man, is blasphemous, and is, in fact, the worship of his master Satan as well. The Holy Spirit directs individuals here to exercise negative volition toward the antichrist, and positive evolution toward Jesus Christ.

This command to pay attention to the doctrine revealed about the antichrist is not directed to a church body. It's not directed to a local congregation. It is directed to individuals, because at this point in time, during the tribulation, all the church people have gone to heaven, so there is no church left on the earth – only the false religious systems. Satan today does all that he can, of course, to discredit paying attention to what God has said. He has done this from the very first in the Garden of Eden: "Hath God said."

So, Satan has his agents who convey the idea that learning doctrine is not all that important. In fact, the resistance is very great in some Christian circles. If you come in and you are a proponent (a fan) of doctrine, and perhaps even a teacher, you'll be eliminated; you'll be excluded; and, you'll be frozen out. That is not welcome in most Christian circles.

**Empiricism and Rationalization**

Therefore, this encourages approaching God by the empiricism of experiences and emotions, and the rationalism of the mind. The liberals dismiss the Bible as a book of errors without absolute truth, while the experiential, emotional Christians, like the charismatics, operate on their feelings and emotions, and so neutralize the Word of God.

We paused in the previous session to look at Colossians 1:9-10. This ties in directly with what John has been admonished to do, and what John is admonishing the tribulation people to do in their day, and paying attention to what God has said. Here's why this is so important. It is the means of great capacity for the Christian believer. What we are talking about is you turning loose the power of God that potentially resides in you, to make you a factor in the angelic warfare; to bring your life together with meaning; and, to bring your life together where you are fulfilling the highest calling that any human being can have – the will of God. Doing that will affect your eternity in a very dramatic way.

In Colossians 1:9, we have pointed out that there is a deficiency in the soul of every human being when he comes into the human race. This is the deficiency of divine viewpoint. Therefore, a person by nature has no basis to be guided by God in his life. A lot of people who are unbelievers talk to God for guidance, but they get none. A lot of carnal Christians talk to God for guidance, but they get none. They have a deficiency in their soul that makes them incapable of receiving God's direction. This deficit must be corrected with the storing of the full knowledge (the Greek word "epignosis" – the complete knowledge) of doctrine through the grace system of perception. We call it full knowledge because it includes the things that you have received, and you are willing to act upon.

**We Should be like Jesus Christ**

The result of this, we're told here in Colossians, is that the Christian will live as befits a child of God; that he will please his heavenly Father in all things; that he will bear the fruit of divine good works; and, that he will grow in spiritual maturity with a fully developed spiritual maturity structure in his soul. I don't know how that strikes you, but that strikes me as four enormously important consequences of filling our minds and our human spirits with the Word of God. What could be greater than to be able to live in a very natural way, not trying and not struggling, but just by second nature in a way that befits a child of God? You just respond in the proper way that you should as a Christian. What could be greater than to be able to say (with Jesus, because He operated on this system), "I do all things to please My Father."

Do you get the connection? In His humanity, he was no different than the rest of us. He was free of the temptations of the sin nature, but He still had to live in the devil's world like all human beings. He had to eat, and drink, and sleep, and breathe, and do all the other things, but He did that on the basis of the capacity of doctrine in the soul, and the Holy Spirit making it work. So, He pleased His Heavenly Father in all things.

**The Spiritual Maturity of the Soul**

What could be greater than to know you're not chasing rabbits in your divine good works? You're not putting money in the offering box down a rat hole. You're not coming out and wearing out the exhaustion of your body and the time of your life in useless works such that you are investing yourself in that which God the Holy Spirit is doing through you. What could be greater than to realize that you're growing up as a Christian, and you will be nobody's fool in the devil's world? You are growing up capable of discerning what people really are on the inside. What is really making people tick? What are people really after? You have developed Paul spiritual maturity structure with all the facets of the structure in your soul.

**The Pastor-Teacher**

It is, of course, the pastor-teacher gift communicating doctrine in the local congregation that is the key to filling up this natural deficiency of divine viewpoint in the soul. In Ephesians 4:12, we pointed out to you that God explains that to us by giving us the chain reaction that is involved in filling the deficiency in the soul of the believer. The apostle Paul points out that God has given pastors and teachers: some have the pastor-teacher combination; and, some are teachers only, but not pastors.

**Equipping the Saints**

He gives the pastor-teacher gift for equipping the saints. The word "for" there is "pros," which means face-to-face. It is giving you the spiritual equipment that you need in the angelic warfare. The series of studies we have on Ephesians 6 gives you that Christian soldier's armor in great detail.

**The Work of Service**

Secondly, if the pastor-teacher does that job, then the result will be another thing, and that is for the work of service. This is a different Greek word for "for." This is the Greek word "eis," a preposition that is the result of the first "for." If the preacher doesn't do this, you're not going to do this. That's why so many Christians are so weak their whole lives. They go to church all their lives, every Sunday, and they listen to a bunch of twaddle, and they're nothing but a bunch of spiritual wimps. They talk about the Lord; they praise the Lord; it's all so shallow; it's also empty; and, in the middle of the night, they know that it's nothing.

Here is reality: to come to know the mind of Christ, so that the result is that you are really capable of serving God. The result of that will be "to" or "for" (either one – some translations have "for" and some have "to”), but it's the same Greek word again, "eis:" "To the building up of the body of Christ. This is how you build yourself into spiritual maturity. This is how you build up other believers within the body of Christ.

This is, of course, based on what we have pointed out to before – the HICEE method of interpreting Scripture. That must be the background of the preparation on the part of the preacher if he is to produce what the Word of God means. And that's his job – to take the text and say, "Here is what God the Holy Spirit is saying." Here is what He means. It takes all of this as background to enable you to do that.

The Christians who are going to be taught in the Word of God in this way will have the frame of reference by which to judge good and evil; by which to judge what is true and what is error; and, by which to judge what is the will of God, and what is the will of men.

**Filled with Knowledge**

Coming back to Colossians 1:11-12, I want to follow through there a little bit. This gives us the consequences of the Christian who has developed spiritual maturity within his soul. In verse 9, Paul prays for them: "That they may be filled with knowledge (that is the Greek word 'epignosis' – full knowledge, knowledge which they have believed) of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so they can walk worthy of the Lord; bear fruit; increase in knowledge; and, please him in all respects.

**Strengthened**

And verse 11 says, "Why can you do this? Verse 11 gives us a very important statement as to why it is possible for you to do these four tremendous things. It is possible because: "You have been strengthened." The Greek word for "strengthened" is "dunamoo." "Dunamoo" means to have strength within your being instead of weakness. This refers here to having spiritual strength. The reason you can do the four great things of verse 10 is because something has given you a basis of enormous spiritual strength. Here, it is in the present tense, which means that this will be the constant state of the believer who has full knowledge in his human spirit. It is passive voice, which means that this is done to the believer by God's Word. You do not strengthen yourself. It is God's Word that gives you this spiritual strengthening. It's in the participle mood. It's a spiritual principle.

**Power**

You will be strengthened with what? With all power. The Greek word for "power" is "dunamis." "Dunamis" is capacity which is residing within a person. If you think this word looks like "dynamite," you're right. This is where "dynamite" comes from. You know that dynamite has an inherent capacity of power.

The meaning of this word is illustrated in Mark 5:30, where Jesus is touched. His clothing is touched by this woman that has been suffering a hemorrhage for 12 years, and doctors have not been able to help her: "And immediately (after she touched His garment), Jesus, perceiving in Himself that the power (the "dunamis") proceeding from Him had gone forth, turned around in the crowd and said, 'Who touched My garments?' And the disciples said, 'People are pressing all around You. What do You mean, who touched You?'" But He knew that this woman touched for a need, and out of Christ burst a bolt of power. And He was very conscious of the power of God, not in His deity, but in His humanity. I don't think that very many of us are ever going to come under the Word of God in such a functioning base that we know when a jolt of power has gone from us. Once in a while, you get very close. Once in a while, you transmit something of the Word of God, and you see the explosion in the eyes of somebody; you see the alertness; you see the coming alive; you see that something has clicked; and, you know that power has gone forth. This is an inherent power. God strengthens us with this kind of internal power.

We also have this same word used in Luke 6:19: "And all the multitude were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him, and healing them all." Here, on another occasion, the throng gets around Jesus, and suddenly, somebody discovers: "You know, if you touch Him, something comes out of Him, and it deals your physical ailment." And when the word got around, they were storming Jesus just to reach out and touch Him, believing (faith-confident) that here was someone who had the power of God. He had the "dunamis: of God operating in Him, and something very great was taking place.

**Might**

This is an inherent power from God that is placed in the believer who is immersed with divine viewpoint in his human spirit. What does it do? It enables you to do things. You have the power. I'm going to be strengthened spiritually by having taken doctrine into my soul; metabolized it into my spiritual being; stored it in my human spirit; I'm in the inner circle of temporal fellowship, so doctrine will do me some good; and, I've got this spiritual capacity. There resides within me the very power of God that is inherent in my being, and this is done for me according to His glorious might.

The word "might" is another important word in this context: "kratos." This is a word for power that overcomes. This is power that is manifested externally. This is power that will bowl you over. This is what the charismatics pretend to do when they slay people in the spirit. Have you ever seen them do that? They stand in the service, and they have people all hyped. This preacher goes through his stuff and he says, "In the name of Jesus," and he hits them on the forehead. And these people bowl over on the floor. Of course, it looks terrible with the ladies, so they quickly run around with their cloths and cover their feet so that they don't look too disrespectful. But there they are. If they have a meeting where bodies are lying all over the floor, they feel that they've had a great experience with God. What are they trying to do? They're trying to imitate this "kratos." Who's doing it? It is the devil. But that is the same concept. It is a power that bowls you over. It is a power that get things done. It is a power that is able to exercise dominion. That's a good translation: "dominion."

Jude 25 uses this word: "To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion" (there it is – "kratos'), and authority before all time, now and forevermore."

Revelation 1:6 uses the same word, with this same idea. This is power in the believer to achieve spiritual victory in the angelic warfare.

It is good to know that you have this kind of power residing within you when you're functioning on the power system that God has given us. This is why we call this a power system created by God the Father for the humanity of Christ. And this power system accomplishes its mission.

**Steadfastness**

We are strengthened (spiritual capacity) with all inherent ability exercised according to His glorious might (God's accomplishing power) for doing something that all of us need if we're going to keep going on in the angelic warfare: "For the attaining of steadfastness." The word "steadfastness" is the Greek word "hupomone." This word is made up of two words, and it means "remaining under." You get under a tough situation, and you don't bug out. You get under a demanding situation of service as a Christian, and you stay with it. You don't desert the team. You don't deserve the forces of God.

**Endurance**

James 5:11 uses this word, where it is translated as "endurance," and that's the idea: "Behold, we count those blessed who endured (and Job is the great example). You have heard of the "hupomone" (the endurance) of Job, and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and merciful." Who could have suffered more than Job? Who could have had more discouragements? His family was dying. His wealth was gone. His physical capacity was stripped from him. He had pain and suffering, and then his friends come along and say, "Come on, Job, admit it. What have you been up to? You've done something terrible, or God wouldn't do this to you. Job has a magnificent experience with God because there was doctrine in his soul. He could say, "I know that my redeemer lives, and though my flesh be eaten by worms, yet I shall see Him again." That, folks, is a deep doctrine of the things of God. Therefore, this man could take this kind of punishment at the hands of Satan.

This is the endurance in the Christian life. We don't give up the battle, because we have been strengthened by God's Word of doctrine to fight. It is the lack of endurance which often leads the Christian to despondency, and to losing heart. Why don't we go into despondency and lose heart about the situation that we cannot get enough students and bring academy? This doltish city is filled with religious people who do not understand the importance of protecting their children in the environment of a Christian school, and does not appreciate the opportunity. This would make some of us very blue indeed.

I've always operated on the principle that: "If you build it, they will come." But I find that, though we have built it, they have not come. Now, that makes us prone to bid to get very, very blue and despondent. But the Word of God says, "It is that human spirit filled with God's orientation that gives us the divine viewpoint, that gives us the endurance. We don't knuckle under.

**Patience**

Also, along with endurance, therefore, Paul says that we also have patience. This is a kind of a long word: "makrothumia." This word "makrothumia" means self-restraint. 1 Corinthians 13:4 illustrates this word for us: "Love is 'makrothumia.'" Love is patient. That's the characteristic of divine viewpoint "agape" love. This is an attitude which does not retaliate in the face of negative volition. It is the lack of patience that leads a Christian to wrath and to revenge. When we as Christians do not have "makrothumia" (patience) operating within our being, then we go for wrath; then we go for getting even; and, then we go for striking out at people because of the situations that have come upon us. In the angelic warfare, you cannot afford to strike out, especially at other Christians. We don't have time to be fighting each other, and picking on each other. We have enough of the enemy in the angelic conflict of Satan; his demon agents; and, his human agents to pick on, so we shouldn't be picking on one another. A Christian who is operating on the maturity that doctrine gives in the soul, so that you can hear God and pay attention – he will have this kind of patience.

This same concept as we found in Proverbs 15:18: "A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but the slow to anger pacifies contention." This is why you never want to marry a hot-tempered man or a hot-tempered woman. The Bible warns us that they are a grief to you. Many people like to excuse people who are hot-tempered as feeling so deeply. The Word of God condemns that, and what it exalts is the guy who is a rugged, patient type.

**A Hot Temper**

Another way that the wisdom of Proverbs puts it is in Proverbs 16:32: "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and, he who rules his spirit than he who captures a city."

When I was in Officer Candidate School in the Marine Corps, I had the toughest, strongest Marine in the class as my roommate. I mean, this guy was a bruiser. He happened to be from Baylor University, where I came from, so we had known each other. He was a football player, and a star, and all that, and he was my roommate. He considered me his buddy, and he took care of me. I had a lot of respect from everybody.

The Navy periodically has what they call "smokers," where you get together, and the boys entertain themselves, and they have these smokers, which would be prizefights. The Navy would put up its best man, and the Marines would put up their best man. We put up this guy. He would go into the ring, and it was like old Joe Lewis. The fight would last for about 30 seconds. Then, boom! It would be over. But this guy could not control his temper. He was always getting into trouble. He was always being brought up on the carpet. If you're in this kind of a program, this is the one thing you do not want to keep getting on your record, because you then are considered an unreliable and untrustworthy personality to be entrusted with the lives of other men.

When he got into some real deep trouble one time, I said to him, "Listen, Bill. I want to show you something out of the Bible." And I read to him this verse in Proverbs 16:32. If you want to listen to what God's smarts are, here it is. "Being slow to anger is better than all the muscle that you carry. He who rules his spirit is better than a man who can capture a city." We're in the business of capturing cities. But the greater thing is to have your own self-control, and to have your self-restraint. The sad thing about it was that he was a tender person.

One time when I got sick, I was down in sick bay. He came to see me, and he brought me a big chocolate bar. I wasn't feeling well, and I said, "Oh, Bill, I can't eat that." Then he gave me a great gem of wisdom. He said, “Well, you can do it when you get well." I said, "Yeah, that's right." So, I kept it. But this was just the kindness that he had – for him to come out to do this.

However, he never could whip his hot temper. He did not have the spiritual capacity. He did not have the development in his soul such that he could have this kind of power that God gives. And the sad day came when he had to be eliminated from the program. I remember that the colonel in charge said, "This makes me very sad." As he spoke to Bill, he said, "I consider you one of the most potentially valuable officers we could have had." But he got flushed out of the program. It is better indeed to have the capacity of this restraint.

This is an amazing thing – that the solution for having something like that, that makes you a winner in life, is doctrine. God strengthens us with the spiritual power inherent within us, according to God's glorious impact that makes things happen, for the attaining within us of a perseverance and of a patience of self-restraint.

In Ephesians 6, the apostle Paul talks about spiritual warfare that all of us are engaged in. If you'll notice, in Ephesians 6:10-11, the apostle Paul has been describing the various parts about the Christian, and he is going to speak about the Christian soldier's armor in the verses that follow. So, he introduces this problem of being a Christian warrior in the angelic conflict. In verse 10, he talks about the Christian soldier's power: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might." Immediately, even in the English, you will notice some very familiar words. Paul here is speaking to Christians, all of whom are in full-time Christian service. He is talking to Christians who have erected a spiritual maturity structure in their souls; who are living according to the techniques of the Christian life; who have identified their spiritual gifts; and, who are functioning on them.

**Be Strong**

After all he has said, he is now finally going to close down this book. He introduces the approach to spiritual combat. He explains how to perform all that he has called upon them to be, and to do, in the book previously. All of these believers are now active combatants in the angelic warfare: "Finally, be strong." This word "strong" is a variation of our word "dunamis." This just has a preposition. It's the verb form "endunamoo." It means to be inwardly strengthened – to have strength in your body, your soul and your spirit. It means "to make strong," or "to make powerful." The Christian is made spiritually courageous because of the doctrine in his soul. This is a constant state, and it is a command of God: "Get yourself strong."

This is what the tragedy is – that we have so many weak Christians, and yet God says, "I want everybody to be strong." And even a lot of Christians who would like to be spiritually strong, so that they're not bowled over by the world; the devil; and, the sin nature, don't know how to do it. They don't have the ammunition. They don't have the spiritual equipment that it takes for this combat. So, they're sitting ducks. It is doctrine in the human spirit that does it: "Be strong in the Lord." This indicates the source of the Christian's courage in the face of demon adversaries.

This is not: "Be strong in your positive thinking." That is the approach of the New Agers. This is everything that flows out of that grace system that God has given for learning spiritual things. He gave us a completed Bible; He gave us the local church organization; He gave us the indwelling Holy Spirit; He gave us the pastor-teacher gift; He gave us a human spirit that's alive; He gave us a soul that has emotions and will and mentality that can direct us; and, gave us the privacy of our priesthood to deal with God, so that we keep ourselves operational.

"Be strong in the Lord and in the strength." Here we again have our word "kratos:" We are to be strong by means of the strength of the Lord. This is the same what we have in Colossians 1:11 – a capacity that outwardly conquers. Be strong in the strength of the Lord that makes things happen. Then he adds another word: "And in His might." The word "might" is just a variation of this word "dunamis." It's the word "ischus" this time, but it means the same basic force that is inherent within the believer.

So, in verse 10, Paul is repeating the same concept. It is a call to military arms in the spiritual warfare. You as a Christian do not need to be weak and helpless in serving the Lord. Those of you united to Jesus Christ, through salvation, possess, and have made available to you the doctrines of Scripture. You can be stronger in Christ than the demons are. 1 John 4:4 tells us that. All of this is divine viewpoint.

What is it all tied to? It's all tied to the knowledge of the Word of God. The order from our Heavenly Father to us, as His soldiers, is to get tied to knowing and practicing doctrine, and to prepare to fight in the strength that God gives as we face a non-human enemy. It is the believer's personal responsibility to do this. The Bible indicates that each Christian is his own priest, and thus he is responsible for his spiritual well-being. If you're married, you're responsible for the spiritual well-being of your wife, and of your children.

1 Peter 2:9 says, "You are a chosen race, the royal priesthood. In the church age, every Christian is a priest, and a priest always has to deal with God, one-to-one, and face-to-face. So, God provides this technique for our spiritual well-being, but you have to decide to use it – the capacity to know the Word of God. The Bible indicates that our spiritual life has to be nurtured on a daily basis.

Matthew 4:4 says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God." If you're going to mature spiritually, you have to be in touch with the Word of God on a daily basis. If there is to be maximum blessings, stability, productivity, and divine viewpoint, you have to be in touch with the Word of God on a daily basis – not on an erratic basis. When you get on an erratic basis, you're going to lose your perseverance. When you're on an erratic basis, you're going to lose your patience. When you lose your perseverance, you're going to get despondent. When you lose your patience, you're going to start striking out.

The Bible stresses that we should know all the counsel of the Word of God, as Paul said in Acts 20:27. Most Christians know only snatches of the counsel of the Word of God. The total panorama of doctrine is understandable, and it's usable, and it's absolutely essential in Satan's world. The Bible stresses knowing the Word of God. Psalm 119:11 says, "Hide it within your soul."

Maximum progress in the knowledge of the Word of God is made by the Christian who consistently pursues it; who is taught by the HICEE technique; and, who is responsive to the instruction that he has received. The Bible, as you well know, is the manual that God has given us for life, and God holds everyone responsible for knowing what He has taught (John 15:22). The unbeliever is going to pay for his sins for all eternity in hell. The untaught Christian will pay forever in heaven with the loss of rewards and crowns.

When you buy a new car, the manual that you get with it gives you guidance on how you should maintain that vehicle, and how you should care for it to keep from damaging it, and to get maximum pleasure and use from it. If the owner treats the car according to the logic or the opinions of other people, he will lose out. The manufacturer is not to blame for damage or poor performance of your new car if you violate the guidelines of the manual that you received with it. Furthermore, your ignorance of the guidelines within the manual does not protect the car from damage, nor is it excuse for releasing you from responsibility.

**The Bible**

The same thing is true with us as Christians. Here it is. This is a manual, the Word of God, and God has fully provided the means for our learning it. We have the system within the local church. In spite of this, many Christians think that God is not going to ask them, "Why were you so sloven about knowing and living by means of doctrine? Why were you so indifferent to be ignorant of the principles of doctrine?"

I see people pretty regularly who come alive to the Word of God. I cannot explain that any more than I can explain why somebody is called to salvation – why he is among the elect. But I very strongly suspect that there is a gracious choice on the part of God, from among Christian believers, for whatever reason, that He reaches out, and He puts His arms around some of us and says, "I want you to come on the inside." He did that to only three of the disciples. Peter, James, and John were close to the Lord. Of the three, John was the innermost of the innermost. Why? What was it about him? What was the reason? I doubt that it was because there was so much in them, but rather that God simply chose them. Suddenly, these were the men who understood the greatest and the deepest things of the Word of God.

There are some of you that God brings in. There are others who will listen, and who will go on; will yawn; will say, "That's nice;" will feel that they've heard it before; and, will think that they know all about it, and it will pass right by them. Yeah, they know it, but they never put the strength of God into action by "kratos." The capacity to make things happen spiritually is never their experience. They don't win spiritual battles.

Our good, intentions in honoring the Lord are substituted for learning doctrine: "Yes, I've got to go to church. Oh boy, am I tired tonight!" There used to be a time when you'd have to stay home Sunday night to see some of these spectacular Sunday evening television programs. But now God has given us the VCR recorder, and that has solved that whole problem. That's why God gave us the recorders. You don't have to stay home now. You can be very selective, and it's all controlled. However, it is really sad what people will give for the excuses for not being here for a simple time in the Word of God. It takes many years to replace the deficiency of our souls. It doesn't just happen overnight.

Let's look at a few quick reviews of historical examples of people who don't pay attention to what God has said.

**Uzzah**

There's the case of Uzzah in 2 Samuel 6. This dealt with the ark of the covenant, which was the most sacred object of furniture in the tabernacle of Israel. The ark was an oblong box, and it represented Jesus Christ in His humanity and in His deity as the God-man.

The lid of the ark was called the mercy seat from which God's glory radiated within the holy of holies, where the ark was kept. From this point, on the mercy seat, God spoke to the priest to deliver messages to the people. On the mercy seat, there was sprinkled, once a year, the blood of a sacrificed animal, typifying the future blood of Christ to forgive the sins of mankind.

Inside the ark, under the mercy seat, within this oblong box were three objects portraying the sin of mankind. There were the two stone tablets which contained the Ten Commandments, which had been given to Moses, which represented the absolute righteousness of God, which man lacks, and which man violates. There was also the pot of manna, which fed the Exodus Jews, and which typified Jesus Christ as the bread of life and unto salvation from hell. That was, furthermore, Aaron's dead rod which burst forth with a live bud, signifying the resurrection of Jesus Christ, in the face of man's rebellion against God, which resulted in crucifying Him.

This ark was located in the holy of holies in the tabernacle. When the tabernacle (this tent-like structure) had to be moved, God gave very explicit directions as to how it was to be done. The high priest had to come in and cover it with the appropriate material coverings – the cloths from around the tabernacle itself. Then he placed the wooden poles through the hoops on the side of the ark. Then the other appropriate priest came in without touching the ark; picked up the poles; and, carried it on their shoulders. To look upon the ark (to touch the ark), except for the high priest, was a capital crime, and was punishable by death by God.

In the 10th century B.C., the Ark was lost in a battle with the Philistines. The ark brought so much grief to the Philistines that they sent it back to Judah on a cart drawn by two cows. They didn't send it God's way, because they didn't know anything about that doctrinal principle. So, the ark ended up in a place called Kiriath Jearim, and it remained there for 70 years in the home of a man named Abinadab, who cared for it with his two sons, Ahio and Uzzah. They cared for it by God's rules.

When King David then, 70 years later, established Jerusalem as the new capital of the nation, he wanted the ark to be brought back to where it fittingly should have been – in the tabernacle, which was set up in Jerusalem, and to be placed back in the holy of holies. So, he proceeded to do that with great ceremony. He ... hooked up two oxen, and proceeded to transport it to Jerusalem. What was he doing? He was not paying attention to God, whose directions were explicit on how to move this sacred object which represented the person of Christ. He violated the doctrine on every principle. He acted just like the pagan Philistines. Abinadab's son Uzzah walked by the side of the cart as it was rolling along toward Jerusalem, and transporting the ark. When the oxen stumbled in a rough spot in the road, the cart shook, and the ark looked like it was going to slip off, and Uzzah reached out suddenly and touched it to steady it. Immediately. God struck him dead.

Everybody in the party was horrified, and David was just as shocked as he could be. This was a classic example of not doing what Revelation 13:9 says, "If you have ears to hear, pay attention." Well, David was indignant with God over this matter – putting Uzzah to death, so he stopped the procession; took the ark; put it aside in the house of a man nearby; and, David himself, who had been guilty of not having ears to hear, was indignant with God. There is no arrogance like that of someone who thinks he is qualified to decide how God should deal with him in a situation, when good intentions put aside good doctrine. Both Uzzah and David were really trying to honor the Lord, but they had no doctrine relative to this matter. They had ignored it, so they had nothing to guide them. They went negative.

I don't believe that David did not know these rules. He just thought he could do it another way just as well. So, they couldn't meet their moment of crisis when it came in the right way for God to bless them. The ark was placed in the home of Obed Edom for three months. This man cared for it in a proper way, and the place was blessed beyond his fondest dreams. The servants came back to David and said, "David, you can't believe how God is blessing the home of Obed Edom: his family; his kids; and, everything. The man is prospering. David made the connection. He's dealing with the ark of God in the right way.

So, David organizes another expedition. He comes back for the ark. He now transports it in the proper way, with the staves on the shoulders of the priests, and everything goes well. It is returned safely to the holy of holies in the tabernacle. It's a joyous procession as David leads his people to do the job according to God's revelation. What a difference it makes when you have ears that hear!

Believers living the tribulation better know what God has revealed about the antichrist in order to respond properly.

**King Saul**

The second classic example is the case of King Saul in 1 Samuel 15. Saul is told by God, through Samuel the judge, to exterminate the morally cancerously vile Amalekites, and along with them, all of their possessions and all of their cattle. Saul goes into battle, and conquers the Amalekites, but he saves the king, and he saves the best of the animals, contrary to God's revelation. Saul knew what to do, but did not have ears to hear. When Samuel confronts him about this, Saul pleads good intentions – to use these animals to sacrifice to the Lord, even though he had not done what God directed.

The most important thing with God is to obey the Word of God. The most important thing is to pay attention, and to do it God's way. So, Samuel, on that occasion, made this great declaration that none of us should ever forget. Saul said, "I'm going to sacrifice all of these valuable animals to God. 1 Samuel 15:22-23: "And Samuel said, 'Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination (witchcraft), and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the Word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king.'" Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, God has rejected you. Since you have not listened to God's doctrine, then God is not going to listen to you.

Do you see the connection? It was at this point that the dynasty of Saul came to an end, and his family was no longer to be in the royal line.

**The Man of God**

The third example is the case of the man of God in 1 King's 13. King Jeroboam of the northern country of Israel was setting up an idolatrous system of worship. The man of God was sent to pronounce God's judgment on Jeroboam and on his false religious system. He was told to deliver God's revelation, and then immediately to return home by a different road without accepting any hospitality from the king. The man of God confronts Jeroboam; delivers his message of condemnation; and, tells him that God is going to bring up a man 300 years later named Josiah, who will come and destroy and burn up this whole altar and everything that Jeroboam is setting up. This is one of the great prophecies of Scripture. It is one of the great evidences of inspiration. 300 years later, here comes on the scene King Josiah who does exactly this. And I mean 300 years to the year.

The man of God delivers his message, and he leaves an angry and humiliated Jeroboam the king. On the way home, an old prophet runs after him; meets him; and, says, "I've got a new message from God for you. God has told me that you should come by, and stop by my house, and have a bit of hospitality with me before you leave. The man of God said, "But God told me not to do that." The prophet said, "Well, He gave me a new message."

When was the last time somebody told you that they have another message for you from God, and that they have a new direction for you from God?

Wonder of wonders, this tremendous, splendid young man, acting with genuine sincerity, but in violation of the message of God to him, turns aside and accepts the hospitality of this prophet who is a minister of Jeroboam. After the hospitality is over, the man of God leaves the old prophet, and on the way home, he is killed by a lion. And to show that it's an act of God, the lion is standing there, and he doesn't eat the prophet's donkey. He doesn't harm the donkey that the prophet was riding on, but he kills the man. This was the judgment for not hearing doctrine.

Tribulation believers are going to have to heed John's revelation in order to know how to view the antichrist, and how he will be conducting himself.

We closed with Luke 24. We are to pay attention to the Word of God: "You have ears, hear." You can get the Word of God within you, creating the great power of God that enables you to accomplish great things, but the system doesn't work if you don't pay attention to the Word. In Luke 24:13, you have the description of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is Easter Sunday. The resurrection has taking place, and two men are walking to a village named Emmaus, just about seven miles from Jerusalem. They're talking with each other. They're reviewing all the tremendous events that have taken place in Jerusalem the past few days, including the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, along comes another Man. They look, and here's this Man. It's Jesus. They don't recognize Him. Their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. So, He said to them, "What are you talking about?" They stopped; they faced Jesus; and, they looked very sad. One of them (his name was Cleopas) answered and said, "Are you just visiting Jerusalem? Are you a visitor such that you don't know what's been going on, and you ask us what is all this hubbub that we're talking about?" And Jesus says, "What things?" "So, they said to him, "Things about Jesus, the Nazarene, who is a prophet, mighty in deed and Word in the sight of God and all the people. And how the chief priest and our rulers delivered Him up to the sentence of death and crucified Him. Well, we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since all these things happened.'

"Then they said, 'Some of our women were at the tomb early this morning, and they said, 'He's gone.' They didn't find the body. They told us that they had talked with angels who were sitting there, and that the angels had said, 'The reason the body isn't there is because He's alive.' We don't know what to think about this. We're all confused. Some of those who were with us (some of our party) ran to the tomb, and they found that the women were telling the truth. That's exactly what happened. He is not there.'"

Then Jesus says something in verse 25 that might sound like it was rather harsh statements. He said, "O, foolish man, slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets had spoken." What is the Lord saying? "You people, acting on this occasion, a great crisis indeed, with a lot of emotions, who know the Scriptures; who know the Old Testament; who know all about the coming Messiah; who have been shown from Old Testament Scriptures that the Messiah is going to be both God and man; who have been shown that He is going to die as the Lamb of God; who have been told all these things; plus that Jesus Himself clarified that this was going to happen; that He would rise the third day; and, that His resurrection would be proof that God is satisfied with your sins. You are a bunch of really foolish men. What are you thinking of? Can't you pay attention to God?"

So, in verse 26, Jesus said, "'Was it not necessary for Christ to suffer these things and to enter in His glory?' Then, beginning with Moses, and with all the prophets (the Old Testament Bible), He explained to them the things concerning Himself in the Scriptures." What did Jesus do to solve the problem? He didn't give them some positive thinking thoughts. He did give them some thoughts-for-the-day to hang on to. He didn't give them a little devotional, inspirational talk. He gave them the Word of God.

This week, I read the report of a very prominent minister's commencement address to a very prominent Christian college. And I know this man. His style of preaching is inspirational talks. As I read through the message, he used the fact of David, with his five little stones, coming up and attacking the giant Goliath, this nine-foot monster. With these 5 stones, he was potentially able to accomplish great things. He said, "In your life, as college graduates, you will have giants to slay."

That rang a bell with me. I remember that years ago I sat in a Christian Science service, and a lady was preaching. She also talked about the giants that you must slay in your life with the stones, that your mental attitudes will give. It was the same inspirational approach. So, he went through five things, and he said, "I wish somebody had told me this when I graduated from college several decades ago." They were inspirational things – all of them good. I thought you would have to be awfully dumb not to know all of them to begin with. Nobody had to tell me really some of those things that are the realities of life when you graduate from college. But that was it. There were only a couple of Scriptures interjected. He just included the giants; the stones; and, probably three Scriptures in the whole thing. And this is it. This was a magnificent moment in the lives of young people going out, having achieved graduation, and they're going to face life. This is the little inspirational thought.

As I read it, I thought back several years ago when I was at the Alaska Bible College, and I had a two-week seminar. Upon their graduation at the end of those two weeks, what I taught those people was basically what you have heard in this session. I taught them the grace system of perception. I taught them the spiritual maturity structure of the soul. I taught them the role of God in the life of the believer. I told them that they were going out, and on their hands lay the keys of the kingdom to open to people the knowledge of the Word of God, and to give Christians the capacity to be winners in the devil's world. I was able to be there to attend their graduation exercises at the end of that two weeks. This was just the small Alaska Bible College. Five or six graduates at that time each got up and gave a testimony.

One young woman got up and said, "It was only these past two weeks, during our special Bible lectures, that I finally realized what my mission is for all of this training that I have received at Alaska Bible College, and all these years I spent here, and my graduation exercise now has a meaning. Two weeks ago, I didn't have an orientation of meaning to my life, with all that I have been learning. Now, I have learned my mission – doctrine in the souls of God's people."

Now, that's what you ought to do when you deal with people – lead them into the Word of God. They don't need inspiration. They don't need thrills. They don't need laughs. They don't need stories. They need to know doctrine.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1991

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