***Reaching the Stage of No Remedy

RV203-02***

We are studying "The Seven Bowls" in Revelation 16:1-21. This is segment number nine.

In the final weeks of the seven-year tribulation period, God will inflict His worst judgments on mankind – judgments portrayed in the Bible as seven bowls containing the wrath of God expressed in seven plagues. These will be so devastating in nature that human life simply cannot continue on the earth very long thereafter. So, these plagues are literally events which will happen in time and space. I must stress that to you. This is not symbolic language. This is real time and space history.

**Prophecy**

Some interpreters of the Bible find these things so staggering to the human imagination that they view these plagues as mere symbols of various past events in history. Obviously, there's no agreement among them as to which event in history past, or any particular plague, or any particular event in the Revelation refers to. Those who are in the camp of the amillennialists are the people who say that Jesus Christ will never rule upon this earth in a kingdom under the Davidic promises, but that the only kingdom He will rule will be the kingdom in heaven. The amillennialists say that the whole Book of revelation was fulfilled by 70 A.D. They say that it is not a book of prophecy, and you've been reading about that in the newspaper as the pontificating (the braying) of the sophisticated theologians in explaining what's going on with the idiots down at Waco. One of the things they're trying to discredit, which is one reason the devil is doing what he's doing down there, is to discredit prophecy as nonsense. That is not true. Prophecy is a great insight for us to know where history is moving. It is time and space history.

Everything happening in the world today is, in fact, rapidly moving people into a religion where man's reason determines the truth. Yesterday, at band practice, during a break, one of our men was telling me about his infuriation and frustration of talking to a couple of poll watchers (agents at the advance voting places) that were two very confident women on spiritual matters, and the first thing that was evident was that they didn't know anything about the Bible. But they had no hesitancy in declaring what God would do for this group and for that group. They were quite sure that all the Muslims and Buddhists and Taoists and every other character on the face of the earth that's got any kind of religion is going to be in heaven. It is maddening to try to speak to people who have established human reason as the basis upon which they conclude what is true about God, and what is not true.

I have said myself, when speaking to people like that, and I find great resentment when I do it (which is why I say it): "In view of your view about Scripture and about salvation especially, may I give you this much in the way of advice? Don't die, because once you do, you are in big trouble. As long as you stay on this side with those views, you can have a happy time. Just don't die." You'd be surprised at the outrage I've gotten from people for saying something like that. Why the outrage. Here, I am a pure, decrepit, helpless creature who can't even walk. And they are outraged? What are the outraged about? Because if they get sick, then the thing gets serious, and as they see that they may be approaching death's door, what I said to them is going to ring in their minds. That's why they're nervous. And they're thinking, "How will I feel? You're making me nervous about dying. I was looking forward to it." But if you're wrong about heaven and hell; sin and death; and, Christ and salvation, through His death, you better not die, because it's really going to be bad once you're on the other side.

Everything that is happening today is a result of human reason determining what is truth. Consequently, God is not feared as the supreme judge. The moral laws of God today are discarded. Evil is taught as right. The Donahue program had a group of young punks who were in a group where every time they had an act of fornication that they had imposed upon some stupid young woman, they scored a point. And they went through telling: "I have 40 points; I have 70 points." And they were carrying on. One man in the group stood up and said, "in my opinion, all of you (and there were about eight of them up on the platform) are nothing but a bunch of white trash. They stood up and they shook their fists at this man, and they said all kinds of ugly things. They just carried on, and one of them said, "How many girls have been chasing you for them to make love."

Oh, boy, I wish I had been there when he said that. I'd have said, "None, because only the lowest life, only the dregs of society, would do that. And they recognize that you're the same kind of scum balls as they are themselves. Now, I have a great deal of class. I have a great deal of finesse. Therefore, I associate with women who don't see me as a scum ball to approach me like that."

Well, I wasn't there. But you could just see the arrogance of these characters. One lady finally said, "God's laws are different." What are you going to do with that? There were eight guys that better not die until they've straightened that out with the Almighty. But you see, we live where the moral laws of God are discarded. From the highest echelons of the White House down to the lowest levels of our government, and the lowest levels of our society now, character doesn't count, because character is based upon the Word of God.

Freedom from God is now exchanged for the tyranny of the welfare state. Thomas Jefferson would have a terrible time today. 60% of the federal budget is written out as checks to individuals. It was Jefferson who, among the other founding fathers, stressed the fact that if the federal government could ever write a check to an individual, and if the citizens could ever discover they could have a claim upon the national treasury, it would be the first step that would lead to national destruction, because it would snowball into an impossible situation. That's exactly what's happening. And the United States is on self-destruct, and it's not going to turn back. You're never going to push the snowball back up the hill.

The worst thing is coming upon this nation. I told you several weeks ago about the corporate state. I explained to you what the word "fascism" meant, where the government controls all businesses and companies and means of production, as they did in Italy, and as they did in Nazi Germany. But you are still a private owner, but the government controls what you do through regulations. Under President Bush, something like 22 industries were placed under corporate state. That's the word: get it. That is where the government and these businesses join together, so the government will supply them with funds to help them to become prosperous because they were especially needed businesses. Eventually now, the corporate state will expand, and fascism will come to the United States. That's what I told you.

The articles I have been reading from every source since I said that have amazed me. At every place, thoughtful men are saying, "Are we moving into fascism? Are we moving into the corporate state?" One of the great burdens and agonies that I bear in life is being right. It is a great burden to be right, and to know what you're talking about. Anybody who knows the principles of Scripture doesn't have too much trouble being right when you look out on society and see what's happening.

So, we who have had freedom, have found that freedom taken away from us, and the tyranny of the welfare state substituted for it. World government, under the control of an elite body, is being pursued as the way to peace. Socialism today destroys the incentive of people to be productive, making them dependent upon government care. Citizens are being forced to tolerate and to finance moral evils that are condemned in Scripture. You just try to tell the government, "I will not have you using my tax money to fund the NEA" (the National Endowments to the Arts) – that filthy, vile support of so-called art that does not even hesitate blaspheming and ridiculing Jesus Christ. The government says, "We cannot interfere with artistic expression.

Please tell me where in our Constitution, among the 20 authorized duties of the government with conducting our foreign affairs for all the states, and so on, is there the authorization to take from our treasury to support artistic endeavors over which the government has no control, and which have degenerated to indeed the level of the sin nature of man. Because we are operating on a religion of human reason, and not biblical doctrine, the governments today (not only our government, but governments all over the world) are trying to reduce their national debts by increasing taxation.

**Taxation never Increases Revenue**

I trust (I pray to heaven) that you understand that never in the history of mankind have national debts been reduced by taxation. President Bush lost his presidency because, in 1990, he imposed the greatest taxation increase upon the American people. He let the clowns in Congress con him that this would be a once-for-all thing, and the national debt would come down. The result was that not one penny of national debt was reduced, because the clowns spent it on social programs. Never does taxation increase revenue to the government. It causes people to do less. They have less. And the revenues that the government can collect go plummeting. How could this kind of madness exist in a nation that has known God as we have? Once you start taking reason as your guide, then you fall into that kind of foolishness.

Our government is now being faced with a stimulus package, and there are men who are propagating what usually doesn't happen. They're letting the people know what's in the package. I say, "You guys are lying. That is not in the package. You are not spending money to build a new swimming pool for this city. You are not putting money in there to build this recreation center for this city, in this congressman's district, and this senator's state." This whole bill is pork. It has nothing to do with making jobs. It is only the payoffs of the people who made it possible to win the election. How can that be?

Well, it's because deceit now reigns supreme in associations with human beings – one with another. They lie to themselves; they lie to each other; and, they support causes which they must deceive themselves into thinking are worthy of their support. This is the basis of human relationships, so these people in power hope that the average person is too stupid to see through what they're doing.

Need I mention that the family is attacked as the basis of human relationships? This morning, I listened to the female who is now the attorney general of the United States. The commentator went through a long list of what the moral status is in this country: the teenage pregnancies; and the 60% of black children born out of wedlock. He just went down the road. It just got worse and worse. Then he said, "We have a large number of Americans who believe that this is all caused by a breakdown in the American family. What do you think about that? What do you think the government should be doing about that?" Her reply was, "Well, it's a step back from the family. It's because of the way we treat our children." Where do children belong? Are they in the family, or not? Right away, I'm confused, because I know I'm dealing with an elevated mentality here: "It's the children. The children don't have a voice."

This is the government that wants to make it possible for children to have their rights to sue their parents. The way most of you parents are, that puts you in deep trouble with your kids. I'd sue you at the drop of a hat myself if I were your child. You're terrible parents. You make me brush my teeth; you make me go to bed; you won't let me watch those cutesy-pooh TV programs that you slip in on cable when I'm in bed; you won't let me have my own telephone in my room; and, you just don't let me do what Susie's mother and father let her do. How dare you invade my privacy and rights?"

So, the government says, "Child, of course, once you are able to understand what you want (and I'd like to know when that is), then you have a right to raise your voice, and for the government to come in to assist you."

So, we have the family attacked as a divine institution. What they need to do with children is to put them in the hand of people like Berean Christian Academy, for one thing. It would help if the state of Texas would only pass its law which it is now considering: $3,000 to every family as a voucher, and you can spend it at any school you want (private or public). It costs the state of Texas $6,000 to educate every child. What a deal to say, "If you want to go to a private school, we're only going to spend $3,000 on you, and that's it. Here it is." Boy, people would grab it. The architects would be drawing up plans for a new school building at Berean Christian Academy the day after that law was passed. People would flock to us. The state could cut its educational budget in half. In time, there would be places galore for children to have an education with a moral frame of reference; a set of values; and, twice the scores on the achievement tests. I know what I'm talking about and I am burdened again with being right. This is the truth.

Yet, they won't do that. The family is attacked with its humanistic viewpoints, and the divine institution of God Himself is what is under fire. And what's the result? Family is now perverted into adultery. It is perverted into single parents. It is perverted into abortion. It is perverted into divorce. It is perverted in children suing their parents. It is perverted into rejecting the lines of male authority. That's what the family is under our current leadership, because human reason is supreme instead of the Word of God.

**The First Four Bowls of Judgment**

Well, finally, God comes to the end of His patience. We're studying a portion of the Word of God now where He has had enough. Finally, God says, "Enough is enough." They come down to the final weeks (and it is the final weeks) of the tribulation, and the worst of the judgments (the bowl judgments) are turned loose. The fourth bowl has been poured out upon the sun, and this judgment causes the intensity of the sun's heat to increase probably seven times. That comes from a passage which we have in Isaiah. Consequently, people, animals, and vegetation are scorched by the sun's rays. Deadly radiation from the sun increases, and it hits the earth. The polar ice caps will probably melt, and the sea level will rise at least 200 feet, so that coastal areas and major cities will be inundated.

Mankind reacts to the fierce heat imposed by God by blaspheming His name. People know that God has power over this plague. They know He's responsible for sending it upon them. Now, how should they respond to that? Well, the response of tribulation unbelievers to the fourth bowl plague reveals the condition of their spiritual insanity. And that's what has happened to them. They do not repent of their evil ways. They continue determinedly worshiping the antichrist. They increase their loyalty to the antichrist. They hate God for judging them, and they hate God for punishing their evil. They are bitter over the fact that their religious views have been proven false. Indeed, here are a group of people who shouldn't die, but they're going to die like flies.

As people abandon the Bible, society tears itself apart, and the people in it become raging beasts. That is the answer for what is happening in America today. The question is: can people be good without God? And the fact of the matter is that no one can be good or do good without God, and without the guidelines of Bible doctrine. So, the situation is an impossible one.

So, we have here under, the fourth bowl, a spirit of unyielding rebellion. The result is that they have blasphemed the name of God, who has sent these plagues, and who controls them. Their reaction at the end of verse is astounding. Verse 9 says, "And the men were scorched with fierce heat. And they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not." This is the Greek word for "not" that you're acquainted with: "ou," You know that that is the strongest word for a negative in the Bible. Well, there is a strong one that can be combined, but this is the strong negative of the ordinary ones that are used.

**They do not Repent**

What they didn't do was: "repent," which is the Greek word "metanoeo." "Metanoeo" is made of two words. The word "meta" is a preposition. It means "after." The word "noeo" is a verb, and it means "to perceive." Therefore, with this word is saying is: "to perceive afterward. In other words, it is an afterthought, which changes one's mind about something. This is a very explicit and specific word. It is always used in the New Testament to refer to a change for the better, mostly of repentance from sin. But it's interesting that God the Holy Spirit never uses this word "repent" except in connection with changing your mind for the better.

**They do not Glorify God**

So, what this verse is telling us is that these people absolutely would not change their mind for the better, which would have been to discontinue their loyalty to the antichrist, and change loyalty to Jesus Christ. The worshipers of the beast the antichrist) absolutely refused to change their minds about their rebellion against God. Instead, we read that they didn't repent so as to give Him (God) glory. The Greek word for "glory" is the Greek word "doxa." The word "doxa" means "a good opinion." So, it indicates honoring a person for what he is, and for what he does. That's the meaning of glory. When we glorify someone, we honor him for the quality of his character, as compared to the standard of the Word of God; and, for what he does, as compared to the laws of the Word of God.

The tribulation unbelievers refuse to recognize God for who He is as the only true God, and what He is in the perfection of His essence. They will not honor Him. They will not glorify Him.

**Spiritual Insanity**

So, spiritual insanity is the result of the fourth bowl judgment. Human reason is so perverted by the sin nature that you cannot act rationally without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

Here is a doctrinal principle you must understand. This is why, when you leave a seat empty in this auditorium when there's a church service going on here, you have done yourself a great injury because, had you sat here, you would have had spiritual enlightenment brought to your attention. You would have been taught the doctrinal principles that enable you to keep your head screwed on straight. Nobody can act with rationality, no matter what your IQ is, without the enlightenment of God the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit of God that leads us.

**Being Led by the Spirit**

I must remind you again. I've had a lot of sad experiences personally where I finally have learned that He leaves in a gentle way. I don't care if you want to call it intuition. Maybe that's a good word for it. But when God the Holy Spirit gives you what you may just consider a fleeting thought through your mind, don't treat it like that. Act upon it. I have found that when you're in temporal fellowship, and the Spirit of God lays something on your heart (as we like to say), you better pay attention to it. It'll be to your protection; to your blessing; and, to your well-being. And if you pass it by, you'll enter a lot of grief.

This business of being led by the Holy Spirit has been degraded and discredited by the charismatics, with their jumping and jiving ways. But it is the truth. God the Holy Spirit can't wait to help you put one foot in front of another. That's good news, certainly, to help guide you to where you should go. That's His business, and that's His job. And the only reason He doesn't do it is because you and I interfere with it. That's what it means to be filled with the spirit – to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. Do the things that are right. The Bible tells you a lot of those things. Do the things that are on your heart. Don't pass them by. It will cause you to become a deep, significant Christian if you pay attention.

These people have instead gone to spiritual insanity. So, no matter what the facts are that you bring before them, they harden their hearts against God, just as Pharaoh did. They have all kinds of evidence of what God is doing here, but do they soften their stand? Do they change their minds? No, they will not repent, and they will not glorify God. Instead, they glorify the antichrist. They don't have the courage to believe the truth. It's as simple as that. The truth makes them nervous. We have Christians who sit in church on Sunday, and are well-taught in the Word of God, and then go out and speak and act in direct contradiction to the Word of God, and to their position that they claim as believers.

George Orwell, in his book 1984, called that double-speak – saying one thing in church, and outside acting in direct contrast to it. Why? Very often it is because you have a loyalty you shouldn't have: a loyalty to a false cause; a loyalty to a wrong cause; a loyalty to an institution that holds positions which you must condemn as a Christian, or you must resort to double-talk.

Those bearing the mark of the beast are only filled with greater hatred for God by the fourth bowl heat judgment. Earlier in the tribulation, recorded for us in Revelation 11:13, there was still a spirit of some people changing their mind. In Revelation 11:13, we read, "And in that hour, there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell, and 7,000 people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven." This is in connection with the ministry of the two witnesses. When the two witnesses are raised to life, they go to heaven; there's an earthquake; the city of Jerusalem is struck by this earthquake; a tenth of the city falls; and, 7,000 people are killed, and a lot of people say, "This is God acting," and they change their minds. Now they have come down to the point near the end of the tribulation where there is no response like that whatsoever. They harden their hearts, and they choose to go into hell cursing God.

This demonstrates for us once more that people are not led to faith in Jesus Christ by punishments and suffering, but only by the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. That's why you must not be tempted to come up with little gimmicks and devices to help people to believe spiritual truth. Only God the Holy Spirit can enable a person to believe the gospel: plain; pure; and simple. Don't ever think that you believe the gospel because you were so wise and sensible. It's because what Jesus predicted in John 16:8-11 is what God the Holy Spirit is doing. There Jesus told His disciples, "And He (referring to God the Holy Spirit), when He comes, will connect the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:" "God the Holy Spirit is going to come into the world. He's going to replace Me.”

**Sin, Righteousness, and Judgment**

"He's going to bring a conviction upon human hearts (upon those whom He chooses to convict) of these three things: sin; righteousness; and, judgment – concerning sin, because they did not believe on Me." To not believe on Jesus Christ sends you out into eternity with all your sin unforgiven and on you. The Holy Spirit is going to suddenly make that clear. Suddenly, your eyes are going to be opened, and you're going to see the moral guilt in which you stand before God, and in terror you will turn to Christ.

"Secondly, concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, you no longer behold Me." Absolute righteousness was clearly evident before the eyes of people by just looking for Jesus Christ; listening to Him; and, watching His conduct. You knew what perfection of righteousness was. Now the Holy Spirit is going to have to suddenly bring to the eyes of an unbeliever how absolutely perfect you have to be to go to heaven. I like to say you have to be as good as Jesus Christ, and that's the truth. And the only way you are as good as Jesus Christ is to have His absolute righteousness imputed to your credit. If you don't have that righteousness, you're never going to make it.

"Thirdly, concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged." Satan has been licked on the cross. Satan no longer can control you. Satan no longer can hold you in his slave market. You have been redeemed. Do you want to come out? Then accept the ticket out, which is faith in Christ as Savior. People are only led into salvation by that conflicting work of the Holy Spirit. These people in the Revelation show us, in the tribulation, that all these terrible things done to them will not cause them to turn to God. The rebellion of the sin nature is horrendous.

**No Remedy**

It is a terrible thing to come to this point to which these people have come – the point where there is no remedy. Negative solution to truth causes one to become a permanent victim of his old sin nature. We Christians are open to what we described in an earlier era as "backsliding." We refer to it perhaps more accurately, as reversionism. We revert from our spiritual principles. We revert from our position of temporal fellowship. And when you fall out of fellowship, if you persist in that, you harden into a position of the sin nature where it's nearly impossible to get that hard and calloused back off your soul, and for you to be able to turn back to God. You become a permanent victim.

**King Zedekiah**

In the Old Testament, we have a splendid example of how persistent sinning and persistent rebellion against God can result in the position of no remedy. Please open your Bibles to 2 Chronicles 36:10-16. Here it is describing King Zedekiah. King Zedekiah was the last king of the southern kingdom of Judah. The ten northern tribes which constituted the Kingdom of Israel have long since disappeared into captivity under Assyrian conquest. They're gone; they're dissipated; and, they're dispersed. Now the two tribes that come to the southern kingdom, Judah and Benjamin, are down to their last king: Zedekiah. This man is placed on Judah's throne by the Babylonian monarch, King Nebuchadnezzar, in place of Zedekiah's nephew Jehoiachin.

In 2 Corinthians 30:6-10, we read, "And at the turn of the year, King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon (that is, he brought Jehoiachin to Babylon), and with him the valuable articles of the house of the Lord (they stripped the temple). And he made his kinsmen, that is Jehoiachin's uncle, Zedekiah, king over Judah and Jerusalem. Zedekiah is placed on the throne at the age of 21, and he rules for 11 years.

Verse 11: "Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king, and he reigned 11 years in Jerusalem." Now what if you were in this position? You saw your country under a military conquest. You're under a foreign control. They're still letting you live in your land. They're still letting you conduct your own government. Your conqueror who now controls your nation puts you as the king in charge of the country, and gets from you an oath of allegiance and loyalty to the Babylonian government, and says, "Now run the country for us:" how would you act? This is a theocracy. God is the king of Judah. How would you respond? How would you, in all rationality, think you should conduct yourself in view of what's happened to the northern tribes, and in view of what's happened thus far to your own southern kingdom? You are devastated. You're now in the fifth stage of the cycle of discipline, where you are under a foreign conqueror, as predicted in Leviticus 26. God said, "I'll take you down by stages, and in the final stage, I'm going to scatter you around the earth." Zedekiah should have had enough sense to know that they're down on the verge of being completely taken out of the land.

Verse 12: "And he did evil in the sight of the Lord." He was as bad as all the other kings. He proceeded to violate God's moral laws. Zedekiah took the position that character doesn't count in government, and he violated the Word of God on every occasion that he could. He refused to obey, furthermore, the teachings, or to listen to the warnings from God's prophet Jeremiah who spoke for God: "And he did evil in the sight of the Lord his God. He did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet who spoke for the Lord."

This man was not without biblical instruction. This man was not without warning from God Himself through the prophet. He had not learned his lesson from the divine judgments of the captivity of the northern kingdom of Israel, nor the conquest of Judah by the Babylonians. He just did not learn a thing. He ignored the Word of God; he thumbed his nose at God; and, he broke all the moral laws again.

Well, he came to the ninth year of his reign. In the ninth year, in an alliance with Pharaoh Hophra of Egypt, he decided he could break loose of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and he broke his oath of allegiance, and rebelled against the king.

Verse 13: "And he also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear allegiance by God. But he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the Lord God of Israel." Do you know what that phrase means? It means he refused to have the courage to believe the truth – the truth that Jeremiah was telling him of how he should conduct himself; what he should not do; and, what he should do. Instead, he has thrown in his lot with the Pharaoh of Egypt. So, he breaks his oath before God – the oath he took to Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah refuses to repent of his great wickedness, and to turn to God for help. And the first way you turn to God for help is you do right according to the principles of the Word of God. And because Zedekiah, the leader of the nation, took the principle that character doesn't count in leading a people, and that it is irrelevant, the same results that always come from that kind of a position hit Judah. The people followed his example. The priests followed his example. The government officials followed his example. And corruption reigned from one end of the government to the other.

Verse 14: "Furthermore, all the officials of the priests and the people were very unfaithful following all the abominations of the nations." The word "abominations" is that loathsome, disgusting thing that the nations did that revolted God. The abominations that God refers to are those that the Jewish people were never to follow: "And they defiled the House of the Lord which he had sanctified in Jerusalem." They even brought, as I've shown you before, their evil worship of Baal into the temple itself. They approved the rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar. They united with the king in their rebellion against God and against the laws of God. They threw out the Bible, and they practiced the very abominations of the pagan nations surrounding them. They went for all the sex. They went for all the child abuse. They went for all the infidelity within marriage. They went for all the attacks on the family. They went for all of the tyranny of the government. And yes, they went for all the giveaways from the government. They never could learn their lesson. The Jews took the vile religions of the Canaanites, and introduced them into the temple in Jerusalem itself. Human reason and the old sin nature reigned supreme.

Well, God's grace was repeatedly extended to this nation in warning the Jews of the consequences that would come to them if they persisted in their evil ways, and in their rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar.

So, notice verse 2 Chronicles 36:15: "And the lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers because he had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place." Isn't it interesting that in the Bible, the word "compassion," as happens on other occasions, is connected with knowing doctrine? That is the most compassionate thing that you can for to a human being. It is not to give him food; not to give him shelter; not to give him clothes; and, not to give him medical care. All those things should be done to meet his needs in the proper way, but the most compassionate thing is telling him (teaching him) the Word of God. And God did it again and again. He sent Zedekiah and the citizens of Judah many faithful preachers who sought to orient the government to God's laws. God sent these divine viewpoint ministers out of compassion for the Jews and for their nation. God sought to take care of His temple in Jerusalem, which was His point of contact with the Jews in their national life, and in their spiritual orientation. And the message of God from the preaching prophets was met with negative volition and arrogant pride.

Verse 16 says, "But they continually mocked the messengers of God." That's the preachers, folks – the guys who were telling you the truth, and you're making fun of them. These are the guys whom you are neutralizing in one way or another, so that you don't have to hear their unpleasant message. These are the guys that you're blaming for your own spiritual deficiencies. But they continually mocked the messengers of God. They called them "fundamentalists," and they called them "rednecks." and all kinds of other bad names: "They despised His Words and scoffed at His prophets." They did not despise the prophet's words. He was quoting God: "They despised *His* (God's) Words until the wrath of the Lord rose against his people, until there was (and there are the chilling words:) no remedy."

It would behoove all of us to think carefully before we are willing to place ourselves in a position with God where there is no remedy. This can happen to you and me just as it happened to Israel. The message was received with negative volition and arrogant pride. The messengers sent by God, therefore, were mocked. They were ridiculed by the leaders as well as by the people of Judah. The Word of God preached to them was despised, and the preachers were scoffed at by the opinion-makers in the nation. And people imitated them. People thought that they knew how right they were.

They dismissed the preachers as alarmist who were not telling them the truth. It didn't seem to occur to any of them: "Say, if this guy is wrong; if he's an alarmist; and, if he has done something improper in dealing with me, I'm going to fix him: Father, I'm committing this person to your vengeance because only You have the right to impose vengeance. Me? I'm going to sit around and keep watching and see what You do."

I can give you scores of examples in 40 years of ministry where I've done exactly that. And then I've sat here, and I've watched as God began to take hold of this person who was out of line with the Word of God in the mission of this ministry, and God devastates them. You don't have to do a thing. The God of vengeance does His job, and His Word goes forth, and His work goes on. This is real stuff, but that only happens to people who go beyond the point of no remedy.

These people in Israel sought to silence the messengers of God. They accused them of trying to mix religion with government – this in a theocracy. The prophets were ultimately silenced in one way or another. Somebody ridiculed the prophets, and they broke down and quit preaching. And that's a big danger. If you can't stand the flak, it's very hard to stand up in the battle and not cave in.

They silenced some of them by refusing simply to give a hearing to them. They walked away: "I'm going to listen to you." And they left themselves in total ignorance of what God was telling them at that moment that they needed to hear. And, of course, some of them they simply killed. That's exactly what's being done today. That's the way you silence the minister who's telling you what you don't want to hear? You ridicule him; you slander him; and, you walk away and refuse to listen. And if you can, you try to bump him off.

Finally, God's patience and grace came to an end with Zedekiah and the Jews, and He exercised His whole wrath against them and against the whole nation. The whole nation that followed its government in the evil that it was promoting. And now for the kingdom of Judah, there came those chilling words: "no remedy." They had gone beyond the point of no return with Almighty God. And when that happens, things crash down very quickly.

As a consequence of this, God sent Nebuchadnezzar to bring Judah's national independence to an end. 2 Chronicles 36:17-21 describe how that was done. He came in; he tore the place apart; and, he killed Jews of all ages and of all genders without mercy (Verse 17). "He looted and destroyed Solomon's temple. He broke down the walls of the city (verses 18-19). The citizens of Judah were taken and sent back to Babylon as slaves in verse 20. The only people they left in the land were the poor people, the welfare crowd; that is, the worst of the society. The lowest socioeconomic strata were left in the land. The rest were taken (including a splendid guy like Daniel) back to Babylon.

**70 Years of Babylonian Captivity**

The Jews were told through their prophet that this captivity in Babylon was going to last for 70 years. The reason for this was that every seventh year the Jews were not to plant. They were to let the land rest. For 490 years, they had been planting on the seventh year, because they thought they could make more money doing it that way. Verse 21 says, "Now God's going to make up those 70 years, and give the land its rest that you have robbed it of.” People are always so stupid. They think that God is never going to catch up and make things right. You continually got away with it, but someday there is going to be a payday.

Zedekiah himself was captured by Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar proceeded to kill the sons of Zedekiah before Zedekiah's eyes. So, there was nobody to follow Zedekiah. Then he poked out the eyes of Zedekiah, and blinded him, and took him in shackles back to Babylon. You may read about that in 2 Kings 25:4-7. This was the end of the leader of the government who led the government in evil, and taught them that character doesn't count in administering a society.

The tribulation world is going to experience the wrath and the destruction of God just as did Zedekiah, and just as did the nation of Judah who followed their king. In time, the people of the tribulation, like the people of Judah, will reach the stage of no remedy. How is it with the United States today? How close are we, or have we already passed the stage of no remedy? I think that we have passed the stage of no remedy. But perhaps there is yet some hope. But when you pass the stage of no remedy, there is no turning back.

This is a very sobering, typical example of people who should know better; who had every opportunity to know better; and, who only had to listen to God. All you had to do was do the thing that was going to bring you blessing; prosperity; good health; and, enjoyment with coming up roses. But instead, you listened to the sin nature, and you use your reason and said, "This is the way it ought to be." And you encroached your reason into areas that belonged to God. You took yourself into areas that human government has no right to enter, and that you have no right to enter. Obedience to God is where it's all at – doing what the Word of God has declared: "This is the will of God." And if you don't do that, and if we don't do that, sooner or later, you will most certainly come to the point of no remedy, and what a tragedy that is for an individual and for a nation. But that's the truth.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1992

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