



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

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JESUS CHRIST, THE SUBSTITUTE FOR HIS SHEEP

By Elder Wayne Cox

Preached at Central Baptist Church, Grenada, MS
1966 Annual Bible Conference

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Bro. Cox did not give this sermon a title so I have taken it on myself to give it the title above.]

Let us turn to the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. It goes without saying that one could discuss this chapter indefinitely and not exhaust its spiritual wealth.

Isaiah 53:1-12 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? 2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of

sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a
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GOD WANTS YOU SICK

By Elder Daniel Chamberlain

The title of this message will raise eyebrows, but the shock factor is necessary to counteract the constant barrage of teaching we hear from faith-healers. “God wants you well” has been their mantra for many years. A careful examination of the Scriptures will reveal that God does indeed send sickness, and He does so for our spiritual profit.

I do not speak lightly of sickness. Good health is a blessing never to be taken for granted. Bodily pain is a very great trial. Those who suffer have all my sympathy. My desire is to free them from the needless guilt that the healers have cruelly put upon them. I want to give true comfort.

1. Sickness is the common experience of mankind.

When Adam sinned, the world came under God's curse of death (Rom. 5:12). Sickness and disease are perhaps the most common means by which death comes to Adam's race. We can all expect, if we live long enough, to experience at least some sickness. We likely will develop some disease that will prove fatal.

In fact, none of us is ever in perfect health in this life. We are all dying physically. No diet or medication can reverse the effects of the curse. We are all headed for the dust! Certainly we ought to be good stewards of our body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 6:19). But at

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best, ***Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble (Job 14:1).***

2. God is sovereign over sickness.

The common assumption today is, "If it hurts me, it is not from God, because God only gives what is good and enjoyable. If it hurts, it comes from the Devil, and is a judgment for some sin or betrays a lack of faith." But several problems arise with this assumption. First, who determines what is "good"? Only God can rightly determine such a thing. Man is a poor judge.

What feels good may be far from good for us in the long run.

Second, the supposed unbreakable link between faith and healing, which makes a man totally in charge of his own health, is simply not taught in the Word of God.

Third, if God is not in control of everything including sickness, then who is? Is it you...or the Devil? That means that you—or the Devil—are really God! No, God is God! He sends sickness, as the following verses from both the Old and New Testaments show.

(1) Genesis 32:25. As Jacob wrestled with God, God touched the hollow of his thigh, dislocating the joint. Jacob walked with a limp. But none of this was a judgment against Jacob. Rather, Jacob was commended for prevailing, and he received a blessing (v. 28-29).

(2) Leviticus 14:34 says that God would put the plague of leprosy in a house. There is no indication in the context of any sin having brought leprosy as a judgment.

(3) 2 Samuel 12:15. ***The LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.*** Note first that God Himself did it. Second, He did it through no fault of the baby!

(4) Job 2:5-7. Satan challenges God to touch the flesh and bones of Job. God in turn gives permission to Satan to so touch Job, but with the restriction that Job will not die. Here is God's perfect sovereign control in every detail of Job's ordeal.

(5) Daniel 8:27. At the vision of future things he received, Daniel ***fainted and was sick.*** He was overwhelmed at what he had seen. But no sin is attached to this incident.

(6) Matthew 25:36. ***I was sick, and ye visited me.*** Christ foretells that his followers would indeed be sick. He also tells what the duty is for those who are well: they should visit the sick, offering help, comfort and encouragement. Is it not instructive that He did not say, "I was never sick, because I had lots of faith" or "I was sick, and ye healed me"? God's overall purpose includes man's sickness.

(7) John 9:1-3. Upon seeing a man born blind, the disciples question Jesus, ***Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?*** What a typically wrong perspective! Jesus corrects their superstition by

answering, ***Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*** Obviously, it was God who made him sick from birth.

(8) John 11:3. Martha and Mary sent word to Jesus, ***Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.*** This statement appears as a contradiction in today's theology of sickness. It should read, "He who has sinned, or lacks faith, is sick." But Jesus said that ***this sickness was for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby (v. 4).*** God is glorified in sickness, whether He heals it, or whether He makes it to continue.

(9) 1Timothy 5:23, ***Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.*** Paul did not scold Timothy for some lapse of faith or some hidden sin (as did Job's friends). Nor does he tell him to claim his healing, or to find a healer. He sympathetically tells him to take his "medicine".

(10) 2Timothy 4:20, ***Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.*** Here was a case that even Paul himself did not heal. Evidently, God had a higher purpose in the sickness of Trophimus and kept Paul from healing him.

(11) James 5:14-16. James' prescription for sickness is two-fold. The Greek indicates the order. First, anoint him with oil, which is probably a use of whatever medicine or means are available. Second, pray over the sick person. As with all praying, God is never obligated to give what we ask, but it if is according to His will, He will hear and grant the petition (1Jn. 5:14-15). We are to pray in faith, trusting God to do what is best. If it is God's will, He will answer the prayers and raise up the sick. ***If he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*** Note the "if". We must never assume that sickness is a judgment on sin. Sometimes it is, but not always.

These texts (and others) prove conclusively that God is in absolute control of all sickness. Let us now turn our attention to His purposes in sickness.

3. Sickness is one of God's primary teaching methods.

Sometimes, God sends sickness as a judgment on sin. Because of their disorder at

the Lord's Table, some at Corinth were smitten by God with sickness and even death (1Cor. 11:30). The sickness was remedial, to correct the offenders. The death was preventive, to keep them from sinning more. Furthermore, all who observe such a phenomenon should hear and fear!

Some cases of church discipline involve being ***delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:5).*** The church that takes this action has a good purpose in view: the ultimate salvation of the soul. God may teach saving lessons through the curriculum of suffering in the flesh.

The case of Paul's thorn in the flesh is especially important for believers walking in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor. 12:7-10). Satan was the instrument through which this physical sickness came. However, the fact that Paul prayed to God for the removal of the thorn demonstrates that Paul knew full well who was in control. Satan meant the thorn for evil, but God meant it for good. If there was ever a "prayer of faith" by a man with a clear conscience toward God, it was this prayer of Paul's, which he prayed repeatedly. But God had a better plan! Rather than remove the thorn and give Paul relief in his body, God left the thorn but gave Paul more grace to bear it. This combination kept Paul humble, and at the same time proved God's strength in the face of Paul's weakness. Listen to sick and suffering Paul, empowered by Almighty God—***I take pleasure in infirmities... for when I am weak, then am I strong.*** While Paul was on this earth, the body and soul were moving in opposite directions. The outward man was perishing, but the inward man was renewed day by day (2 Cor. 4:16). What great lessons he learned through sickness! Every true Christian would gladly endure the pain in order to gain the grace.

By means of sickness, God gets our attention. We recognize our frailty and our dependence on God. We learn humility. We taste a little of what Christ endured on Calvary. We prepare for death. We anticipate heaven and a glorified body at the resurrection. If you are sick, God has some lesson(s) for you to learn. Perhaps it is simply to draw you nearer to

Him. Do not let your sickness be wasted. If God gets your attention through sickness, He has done you a favor!

We should not fail to mention that sickness also draws earthly friends close. It provides those who are well with opportunities to show mercy. It provides those who are sick with opportunities to sympathize with their fellow-sufferers.

Above all, God is glorified in some way in your sickness, otherwise He would not have you sick.

4. Objections.

(1) "But didn't Christ take all our sickness for us, according to Isaiah 53:4-5, ***Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows... and with his stripes we are healed?***"

Answer: This text is twice quoted in the New Testament, Matthew 8:17 and 1Peter 2:24. In the first case, the prophecy of Isaiah is said to be fulfilled in the earthly ministry of Christ as He wrought miracles of healing. In the second case, the context demands a spiritual application of the healing; it therefore applies spiritually to every believer in Christ, regardless of his physical health.

I affirm that the redemption accomplished by Christ involves the total man, soul and body. Nevertheless, not all of redemption is applied in this life. The healing of the soul takes place here, in great measure. But the healing of the body takes place at the resurrection, at the second coming of Christ, when this mortal puts on immortality (1 Cor. 15), when this vile body is changed and made like Christ's glorious body (P by James Meikle, 1730-1799

(Phil. 3:21). We yet await the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:23).

(2) "Isn't 3 John 2 proof positive that God wants you well? ***Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.***"

Answer: First, this was a common greeting, a pleasantry. It should not be forced into a different use as a foundation for the prosperity gospel. Second, the priority of spiritual health over physical is plainly evident in v. 3-4. That Gaius was walking in truth brought the greatest joy to John. The remainder of the letter shows

no preoccupation with physical health. Third, there is no causal link expressed here between soul prosperity and bodily prosperity. Fourth, John's desire for the health of Gaius was in order that he might continue to show love to the church (v. 5-6). It is not unlikely that John had heard of some sickness on the part of Gaius, which would tend to hinder him from works like the entertaining of guests.

Conclusion

Christian friend, if after clearing your conscience, praying and using the means God has provided for the improvement of health, you remain sick, then take your sickness as a gift from God for your good and His glory. It must be that He wants you sick. Be at peace with His providence. Heaven will only be the sweeter for those who suffer more. ***Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:17).*** Be comforted with the assurance that "A few more rolling suns at most, will land me safe on Canaan's coast."

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lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. 9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many,

and made intercession for the transgressors.

I just have time, of course, to hit the high spots in this remarkable chapter. The 53rd chapter of Isaiah has been perhaps quoted or referred to more than any other passage in all the Old Testament. The Gospel of Christ is set forth in this chapter. And one, as I said in the beginning, could discuss this indefinitely and not exhaust the spiritual wealth to be found in this most remarkable chapter.

But let us notice the thoughts which dominate in this remarkable chapter. First of all notice the question that the premier of all the prophets raised. **“Who hath believed our report,”** and secondly, **“To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?”**

I might answer question number one by saying this, “Certainly the masses have not believed.” They have not believed and neither shall the masses ever believe. **Who hath believed our report?** It is astonishing and an astounding question.

The apostle Paul raises that same thought in chapter 10 of Romans in verses 16 and 17. In fact he quotes from this same chapter and in his exhortation to the Romans based upon Isa. 53, we find that the word obedience and the word **believe** or **believed** are synonymous in their meaning, as far as Isa. 53:1 and Rom. 10:16 are concerned.

Suffice it to say that the masses never have and they never will believe the gospel of Jesus Christ. But the question is, “Why?” Why will not the masses, when heaven and hell are presented, when a true gospel preacher stands before an audience and presents both heaven and hell, and presents Christ as the remedy for men’s sin and the only way that one can be reconciled to God is through the person of Christ, why is it that men will not receive that message?

I do not believe that we need to stagger around in the dark and speculate and conjecture upon why that they do not believe. The Bible, as far as I am personally concerned, is quite sufficient and certainly is clear on it. Jesus said in the 10th chapter of the gospel of John in verse 26, **“You believe not because I said unto you that you are not my sheep, that is**

why you do not believe.”

There is nothing strange about that. There is not anything remarkable about that. When I preach to people and preach to people and they do not respond, I am forced to accept the fact that *perhaps* they are not of God’s sheep.

Now you will never get a goat to believe. You can preach until you fall dead and you will not make a goat believe. The thing that a goat does is butt. I am often reminded of preachers who say “I believe this, but, and I believe that, but.” He reminds me of a billy goat that is constantly butting.

Do not take my word, you take what the Lord said. **You believe not because you are not of my sheep for my sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me.** Vs. 27 of the 10th chapter of the gospel of John. You are not going to make a sheep into a goat, nor are you going to make a goat into a sheep. That is an impossibility.

Let us go just a step further and turn to the gospel of John chapter 12 and begin reading in verse 37. **But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.** Jesus had performed miracles in their presence yet they had not believed. Now why? Watch verse 38—**that the saying of Esaias or Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts.** I did not say this. This is what the Book says. **That they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.**

That is plain. I do not see anything so difficult about that, do you? That is what Jesus said; I did not say it. Now the Lord said that and I believe it.

That raises the question, **who hath believed our report?** Who actually believes the Lord? Who believes the message of the Lord? Who responds to it? You do not have to, as I said, stagger around in the dark. Turn to Acts 13:48 and find the answer. Paul preached to the Gentiles—**as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.**

They did not believe in order to be ordained to eternal life, they believed because they had been ordained to eternal life. That is exactly why they believed. So then we are convinced of this one thing. **Lord who hath believed our report?** We could paraphrase that by asking this, who will believe the report? Only those to whom the arm of the Lord is revealed.

The arm of the Lord, according to chapter 52 and verse 10, has to do with the salvation of God. God does not reveal salvation indiscriminately, but just as God's love is most discriminating, so is the revelation of God's salvation most discriminating. The question is, "To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Is it revealed to everyone? If everyone had salvation revealed to them then everyone would be saved. Again, the question is, "To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" It is only revealed to them for whom Christ died.

Salvation, Brother, is a distinct revelation from God. You can call it anything else but the Bible's definition of salvation is a revelation. In Galatians chapter 1:15-16, the apostle Paul said, **"But when it pleased God who did what? Separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace that he might reveal his son in me."** Salvation then is a distinct revelation from God. Not only is Christ revealed to God's people but he is revealed in salvation in God's people. You turn to the 16th chapter of the gospel of Matthew. When Jesus ask the disciples, **"But whom do you say that I the son of man am?"** Peter being the chief spokesman said, **"Thou art the Christ the son of the living God."** Jesus replied by saying, **"Blessed art thou Simon Barjona for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father."**

His knowledge of the identity of the Lord Jesus Christ and his relationship to Christ was a revelation from God. I am glad that salvation is in the hands of the one who can save. So, **who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?** It is revealed to the sheep of God's pasture. In verse three let us notice this. Now I could stand and preach a week on verse two and so I will not go into that. It has to do with the virgin birth of Christ. **He is despised and rejected of men. A man of**

sorrows and acquainted with grief and we hid, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised and we esteemed him not. I will not take time to read, but **turn to the 27th** chapter of the gospel of Matthew verses 27-32. You find where this prophesy actually is consummated. In verse 4 we see the substitutionary death. **Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.** I want you to get that expression, **smitten of God.** In the 2nd chapter of the Acts of the apostle in verse 23 this is brought out. God held those that cried out for his death and those that actually drove the nails in his quivering flesh, and planted the crown of thorns that adorned his brow, responsible for their action. Yet at the same time **he was delivered by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God.** So then he was smitten of God and afflicted of God. He was wounded for our transgressions, not for yours but for ours. There is a lot of difference in ours and yours. **He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed.**

If Jesus died a substitutionary death, and in just a moment we are going to see if he accomplished that for which he died. The world in general, the religious world bodies, does not believe that Christ really accomplished what he came to do. They do not believe that in the death of Christ there is that which is sufficient to save those for whom he died. He was wounded for Wayne Cox's transgressions. He was bruised for Wayne Cox's iniquities, and the chastisement of my peace was upon him, and with his stripes I have been healed. All we like sheep, did not say now all we like sheep and goats, he said all we like sheep were going astray or have gone astray and we have turned everyone to his own way. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of whom? Of us all.

Now you keep in mind that pronoun **us.** He was wounded for our transgressions, and then God laid on him the iniquity of us all. The **us** and **our** are synonymous. But it is a distinct statement and it is distinguishing. It is to be distinguished from those for whom he did not

die.

Sometimes I think that a sermon ought to be preached not only on for whom Christ died, but those for whom he did not die. He was oppressed, he was oppressed, he was afflicted, and so forth and so on, but in verse 8 let us see for whom he died. Who are the **us** that he is talking about and who are the **our** that he is talking about? He said in verse 8, **for the transgressions of my people was he stricken.**

If you read into that, that that means all of mankind, then all of mankind are God's people. If all of them are God's people then all will be saved without the loss of one. You are driven irresistibly to the conclusion of universal salvation. Watch what he says. For whose sins did he atone? For whom was he stricken? I am not trying to be smart. I am just reading the Bible. Let the Bible speak.

You know we have various religious programs. I am always amazed at the stupidity of some of these scholars as they name their program. Let the Bible speak and of course they do not let the Bible speak. But let us pause a moment and let the Bible speak. For whom did he die? For whose transgressions was he stricken?

There are two families on this earth. There have always been those two families. There are today. In John 8:44 you have the children of the devil. Those are not God's people. You can not take a child of the devil and make him into a child of God. No more than you can take a goat and make it a sheep. That is contrary to nature. Therefore, when he says transgressions of my people that is tantamount to saying for my sheep because John 10 so declares. In John 10 all through the 10th chapter of the gospel of John you see that. In John 10:11, **"I am the good shepherd and the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."** You will never find where he gave his life for the goats. In this text he says he was cut out of the land of the living, for the transgressions of my people was he stricken. For the transgressions of whose people? For my people. So he is talking about those for whom he died. The elect of God. He is talking about those whom God, in the covenant of everlasting redemption, had given unto

Christ. He took hold of them, being the spiritual seed of Abraham, and for them was he crucified on Calvary's cross, and for nobody else.

Hebrews 2:14-17. I believe, of course, that verse teaches so many things, but certainly it teaches the limited atonement. I do not think that he atoned for anybody's sins except the elect's sins. Nobody else's sins were atoned for. If he satisfied the justice of God for the sins of all the world, tell me why do men go to hell?

If he was smitten for the transgressions of all the people, and the sins of all the people, what about all those millions in hell at the time he died. Did they come out of hell? If he died for the devils people just as he died for his own, if he satisfied the justice of God for all the sins of all the people of Adams race and when there were millions in hell at the time he died, tell me why they did not come out of hell. For justice had been satisfied. That would me double jeopardy, wouldn't it? It pleased the Lord to bruise him. He had put him to grief. **When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his day, he shall see his seed,** Brother.

He knew exactly for whom he was dying. He saw his seed, and watch it now, and **he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.** Jesus Christ was not defeated. He shall bring unto God everyone for whom he shed his precious blood. He atoned for the sins of all of his sheep. For all of their sins he paid. Everyone of them, and not the loss of a single one shall be reconciled to God and eternally housed with God. For he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. He won the victory. He was not defeated. He shall see of the travail of his soul, he shall be satisfied. He satisfied the justice of God for his people. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify the world. No, justify many. That is the **us** and **ours**—the sheep. For he shall bare their iniquities and he bore the sins of many and made intercession for the transgressors.

You can see, beloved, that you could preach from now until the day of the coming of the Lord and never exhaust the spiritual wealth to be gleaned from this chapter. May the Lord bless you. Amen.

ONE FRUIT OF AFFLICTION

By James Meikle, 1730 - 1799

The world complains of affliction as the worst thing that can befall a man—but for my part I never shall. Were it as bad as we apprehend, how is it that from Adam to this very day, the saints have had so large a share of it? Now, among the many precious fruits of affliction, I shall only name one, and that is—earnestness and importunity with God in prayer. A gracious soul may walk with God in close communion, as Enoch, captivated with the glory of his countenance, and lifted above the world by the outlettings of his love. But as this is not the ordinary attainment of the saints in general—it is their mercy to be *driven* near the throne, and made earnest in their prayers. A godly man may walk in the course of pious duties—but affliction gives a sharper edge to his devotions, importunity to his petitions, and makes him draw nearer to the throne, stay longer, and cry louder.

Of this we have examples in the practice of scripture-saints. See how Lot, when Sodom is in flames behind him; his wailing wife and weeping daughters hanging round him; desolate mountains before him; where he is commanded to escape; terror without, and trembling within. See, I say, how he doubles his request, "It is a little one, O let me escape there! is it not a little one?" See another example in the case of Jacob, who was not long escaped out of Laban's hand, until he is informed of another and more furious foe come out against him to cut him wholly off. Immediately he pleads the promise which God had made to him, of doing him good, and also bidding him return unto his native land, yet confessing this was less than the least of all his

mercies. Then he lodges alone that night, and when alone expresses all that grief, pours out his soul to God: 'Did you not promise that in my seed all nations should be blessed, and from my loins the promised Messiah spring? and that my seed should be numerous as the stars, innumerable as the sand? But where is the accomplishment of the promise, the veracity of the Promiser, if I and all my seed are slain?' This no doubt, was the subject of his prayer, and the theme he insisted on in the wrestling-night; and, lo! the very Savior about whose kingdom in the world he was so concerned, appears to him in the very same likeness which he would afterwards assume, and allows himself to be wrestled with—in weeping, prayers, and supplication—and to be overcome by the all prevalent strugglings of omnipotent faith—until this surprising language drops between them, "Let me go!" "I will not let you go except you bless me!" which was granted, and confirmed by a change of his name from Jacob to Israel. Surely then, never was a sweeter night on earth; and can it be doubted but that was a singular fruit of a singular affliction!

Here we must also admire the earnestness of **Moses** in prayer with God, in the time of Israel's calamity, through sin: "And now, O Lord, let the power of my Lord be great: pardon, I beseech you, the sin of this people." Of **Joshua**, when Israel was smitten before their enemies: "What will you do to your great name?" Of **David**, under his various persecutions—and of **Hezekiah** when he received the railing letter from the Assyrian monarch.

Not to mention any more in the Old Testament, I shall name one in the New Testament. Peter is apprehended by Herod, put in prison, and the day set that he should suffer: this was a great affliction to the church, one of her prime

pillars, one of her apostles, so near a shameful cruel death. But prayer is made of the church unto God without ceasing, and the outcome is Peter's deliverance in a miraculous manner. O! how, when pressed upon by affliction, do we press upon the promise, plead for the performance, and are importunate with God! As an affectionate parent keeps back from his child what he knows to be needful for him, that he may be delighted with its little pretty arguments to obtain it—so deals God with his people.

Then rather than that I should grow remiss in my supplications at the throne of grace, through the languor of my love—may the weight of my afflictions add fervor to my devotions, and eagerness to my requests!

Who Has the Majority?

By C. H. Spurgeon

And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. (2 Kings 6:16)

Horses and chariots and a great host shut up the prophet in Dothan. His young servant was alarmed. How could they escape from such a body of armed men? But the prophet had eyes which his servant had not, and he could see a greater host with far superior weapons guarding him from all harm. Horses of fire are mightier than horses of flesh, and chariots of fire are far preferable to chariots of iron.

Even so is it at this hour. The adversaries of truth are many, influential, learned, and crafty; and truth fares ill at their hands; and yet the man of God has no cause for trepidation. Agencies, seen and unseen, of the most potent kind, are on the side of righteousness. God has armies in ambush which will reveal themselves in the hour of need. The forces which are on the side of the good and the true far outweigh the

powers of evil. Therefore, let us keep our spirits up, and walk with the gait of men who possess a cheering secret, which has lifted them above all fear. We are on the winning side. The battle may be sharp, but we know how it will end. Faith, having God with her, is in a clear majority: "They that be with us are more than they that be with them."

A NOTE FROM WAYNE CAMP

As I read this article by Spurgeon I could not help but think of some things that have happened in the work in Thailand. There have been those who have viciously opposed the work that Bro. Anond, with the help of others, is doing in that kingdom. The situation of Elijah and his servant and these events of which I will write remind us that that God has more weapons in his arsenal than most people suppose; even the arrow of an aimless, nameless Bowman is his to use as he wills. I refer to the manner in which God slew wicked Ahab. ***1 Kings 22:34 And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded.***

There was a man, a village leader and a leader in the local Nazarene church in the village of Pa Sak who had threatened to kill Bro. Anond out of pure jealousy because the Sovereign Grace Independent Baptist Church was growing faster than the Nazarene church. In fact, it had outgrown the Nazarene church and was in the process of building the new building pictured above. This man was so jealous that he had threatened to kill Bro. Anond as mentioned above. But God would protect his faithful missionary by causing the man to have a fatal stroke. He only lived a few days after the stroke but never regained consciousness.

A man who was a regional leader in the area (over several villages) and who was also a member of the Nazarene church in Pa Sak was also a party to this conspiracy to kill Bro. Anond. At about the same time the other man had a stroke, this man was in the jungle hunting and was bitten by one of the several kinds of

extremely poisonous snakes one finds in Thailand. He died very quickly there in the jungle.

We have seen enemies of the work in Thailand stricken down with strokes, heart attacks, vehicles, and other weapons from God's arsenal. As pointed out before, God has many weapons in his arsenal that he can use to protect his men when he needs to do so. Elijah and his servant were surrounded by horses of flesh and chariots of wood and iron. But Elijah and his servant were also surrounded by other horses and other chariots—but these were horses of fire and chariots of fire and they were far superior weapons to horses of flesh and chariots of wood and iron.

When it fit his purpose, God has let loose his weapon of leprosy to punish those who would harm his appointed man. **Numbers 12:10** *And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.* Why did this happen to Miriam? She, along with Aaron were criticizing Moses for marrying an Ethiopian woman.

When the servant of Elisha went against the words of Elisha, lied to Naaman, and took the money Elisha had refused, God again employed his weapon of leprosy to punish the servant and his household. **2 Kings 5:26-27** *And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? 27 The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.*

When Azariah became king in Israel, he was, in many ways a good king. However, he did not obey God and destroy the high places used to worship pagan gods. Therefore, God again employed his weapon of leprosy to punish this disobedient king. **2 Kings 15:3-5** *And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done; 4 Save that the high*

places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places. 5 And the LORD smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house. And Jotham the king's son was over the house, judging the people of the land.

Another weapon that God sometimes has employed to punish those who oppose his servants is dogs. Jezebel was a very wicked woman. She inspired Ahab to steal the vineyard of Naboth. But, the prophet Elijah warned Ahab that the dogs would eat Jezebel and some of hers and Ahab's descendants. But they went on with their wickedness and God killed Ahab with his weapon of an aimless nameless bowman. And he let loose from his arsenal dogs to eat Jezebel. **2 Kings 9:30-37** *And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window. 31 And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master? 32 And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs. 33 And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. 34 And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter. 35 And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. 36 Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: 37 And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel.*

CONCLUSION

These are but a few of the weapons that God has in his arsenal. He has used hornets, dogs, bowmen, leprosy, plagues, floods, fires,

serpents, lions, hail, and blood (remember the Nile River and all the water of Egypt turning to blood). He has used famine, earthquakes, and imaginary armies to frighten the enemies of his people. He may use these weapons against his own people or against spiritual wickedness in high places. He may use them to correct his people or destroy the enemies of his people.

There are times when God may use one or more of his people to expose the error of others of his people. Paul rebuked Peter for some of his actions and errors. And, of course, God's word is like a hammer and may be used to rebuke the lost or to break their hearts and bring them to repentance when accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit. **1 Thessalonians 1:5** *For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.*

I need to close but I assure you I have by no means exhausted this list of weapons that are mentioned in Scripture. God has more than a sufficient number and variety of weapons to meet his every need. Let us be assured he will use them whenever necessary.

THANKFULNESS

By John MacDuff

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Phil. 2:5

"I thank You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth."—Matt. 11:25.

A thankful spirit pervaded the entire life of Jesus, and surrounded with a heavenly halo His otherwise darkened path. In moments we least expect to find it, this beautiful ray breaks through the gloom. In instituting the memorial of His *death*, He *"gave thanks!"* Even in crossing the Kedron to Gethsemane, "He sang a hymn!"

We know in seasons of deep sorrow and trial, that everything wears a gloomy aspect. Speechless nature herself to the burdened spirit seems as if she partook in the hues of sadness. The life of Jesus was one continuous experience of privation and woe—a "Valley of

Baca," from first to last; yet, amid accents of plaintive sorrow, there are ever heard subdued undertones of *thankfulness* and joy!

Ah, if He, the suffering "Man of Sorrows," could, during a life of unparalleled woe, lift up His heart in grateful acknowledgment to His Father in heaven, how ought the lives of those to be one perpetual "hymn of thankfulness," who are from day to day and hour to hour (for all they have, both temporally and spiritually) pensioners on God's bounty and love!

Reader! cultivate this thankful spirit, it will be to you a perpetual feast. There is, or ought to be, with us no such thing as *small* mercies; all are *great*, because the least are undeserved. Indeed, a really thankful heart will extract motive for gratitude from everything, making the most even of scanty blessings. Paul, when in his dungeon at Rome, a prisoner in chains is heard to say, "I have *all* and abound!"

Guard, on the other hand, against that spirit of continual fretting and moping over imagined ills; that temptation to exaggerate the real or supposed disadvantages of our condition, magnifying the trifling inconveniences of everyday life into enormous evils. Think rather how much we have to be thankful for. The world in which we live, in spite of all the scars of sin and suffering upon it, is a happy world. It is not, as many would morbidly paint it, flooded with tears and strewn with wrecks, plaintive with a perpetual dirge of sorrow. True, the "Everlasting Hills" are in glory, but there are numberless eminences of grace, and love, and mercy below; many green spots in the lower valley, *many more than we deserve!*

God will reward a thankful spirit. Just as on earth, when a man receives with gratitude what is given we are more disposed to give again, so also, "the *Lord* loves" a cheerful "receiver," as well as a cheerful "giver."

Let ours, moreover, be a Gospel thankfulness. Let the incense of a grateful spirit rise not only to the Great Giver of all good, but to our Covenant God in Christ. Let it be the spirit of the child exulting in the bounty and beneficence of his *Father's* house and home! "Giving *thanks* always for all things unto God and *the Father*, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

While the sweet melody of gratitude vibrates through every successive moment of our daily being, let love to our adorable Redeemer show for *whom* and for *what* it is we reserve our notes of loftiest and most fervent praise. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift!

THE FLAMING SWORD OF JUSTICE QUENCHED IN THE HOLY, LOVING BOSOM OF JESUS!

The most significant and appalling demonstration of God's holiness that the universe ever beheld, infinitely distancing and transcending every other, is the sufferings and death of His only and beloved Son! The cross of Calvary exhibits God's hatred and punishment of sin in a way and to an extent which the annihilation of millions of worlds, swept from the face of the universe by the broom of His wrath, could never have done! "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

Behold the most awful display of God's hatred of sin! Finding the sins of the Church upon Christ as its Surety, Substitute, and Savior, the wrath of God was poured out upon Him without measure! God finding the sins of His people laid upon His Son, emptied upon His holy soul all the vials of His wrath due to their transgressions! Go, my soul, to Calvary, and learn how holy God is, and what a monstrous thing sin is, and how imperiously, solemnly, and holiily bound Jehovah is to punish it, either in the person of the sinner, or in the person of a Surety. Never was the Son of God dearer to the Father than at the very moment that the sword of divine justice, flaming and flashing, pierced to its hilt His holy heart!

But it was the wrath of God, not against His beloved Son, but against the sins which met on Him when presenting Himself on the cross as the substitutionary sacrifice and offering for His

Church—He gave Himself for us. What a new conception must angels have formed of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, when they beheld **the flaming sword of justice quenched in the holy, loving bosom of Jesus!** And in what a dazzling light does this fact place the marvelous love of God to sinners! Man's sin and God's love; the indescribable enormity of the one, and the immeasurable greatness of the other; are exhibited in the cross of Christ as nowhere else. Oh, to learn experimentally these two great facts—sin's infinite hatefulness, and love's infinite holiness! The love of God in giving His Son to die; the love of Christ in dying; the essential turpitude and unmitigated enormity of sin, which demanded a sacrifice so Divine, so holy, and so precious!

By: Octavius Winslow (1808 - 1878)

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