

IMPRECATORY PRAYER

I need to make a clarification regarding something I said last week about it being wrong to *equate* America with the Church. I was partially wrong there. I say *partially* because the statement itself wasn't wrong. However, I should have kept that statement *separate* from the situation I specifically referred to, which was the comparison between Americans electing King Obama and Israel asking for a king.

Someone who heard last week's message contacted me because they were a little confused over what I said. Apparently they have been blessed with the messages of another brother who does quite a lot of comparing what happened in the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, with current events here and around the world. When I said it is wrong to equate what goes on in America with what happened in national Israel, that confused the person. They started to question whether or not they should be accepting some of the things they have been hearing from other ministers which seem to be doing just that.

I realized that if what I said caused confusion for *one* person, then it probably caused confusion for others too. Much of what this person described did not really fit what I was talking about when I made that statement. So I realized I was *wrong* for even mentioning the part about it being error to equate America with Israel. So please let me clarify myself and make this whole thing right.

Most people don't realize that the Apostolic and Prophetic Movements do precisely what I said with regards to *confusing* or *equating* America with Old Testament Israel and the New Testament Church. If you remember the two quotes I read last week by Steve Shultz, the owner of the Elijah List web site, and Chuck Pierce, you may recall that Mr. Pierce said: "*May Holy Spirit continue to be enfolded into the history of this covenant land;*" and Mr. Shultz said: "...we [America] are the most **righteous nation on the earth.**" These kinds of statements come from the kind of mind-set I am talking about. All these false prophets and apostles think God is going to primarily use America to establish His kingdom.

Mr. Pierce says America is a "covenant" land. That means he views America as having some kind of covenant relationship with God, much the same way the Church has a covenant relationship with Him. Mr. Shultz thinks America is just as *righteous* as the Church. As you study the doctrines and the goals of these people (as I have done for a number of years), it becomes obvious that they think America has the same calling, responsibility, goal and destiny as both Old Testament Israel and the New Testament Church. As a matter of fact, in many instances, they have America totally confused with Jesus Himself.

This really isn't the subject of my message tonight, so I don't want to spend too much time on it. But since I'm trying to clarify the issue, I want to take as much time as I need. What I was talking about last week is something that eventually leads to "beast worship" Let me put it this way: what we see happening on a global scale in the book of Revelation—where all the inhabitants of the earth worship a powerful *military* government (called the "beast"; *Rev. 13:1-4 & 11-14*)—has *already* been happening in America for years. These false apostles and prophets are caught up in beast worship, and they have been leading the people of God into this worship.

This all accelerated after 9/11. American Christians really started exalting the military might of America; they practically worshiped President Bush; and they began proclaiming Democracy to be the savior of the world. Not long after 9/11 a (supposedly) Christian congressman said very frankly that in his view, America

is the last hope of the world. This is clearly a blasphemous statement, and it reveals this man's unregenerate state. Neither Democracy or America can offer any real hope to this planet. Of course, when it comes to this kind of a situation we expect the *unsaved* to be deceived, for they do not have the Spirit of God, and only the Spirit of God can keep an individual out of religious delusion—especially in this hour. However, we don't expect *God's people* to be deceived so easily, yet they have been.

Though many preachers say America will be destroyed if it does not repent, most of them really *don't* believe their own words. They really don't believe the Lord would ever *actually* destroy America because deep down inside they think America will be the savior of the world. For instance, speaking of the 9/11 terrorists attacks, a self-proclaimed prophetess named Jill Austin has this to say about America:

"We were birthed to be a reflection of the freedom and liberty found only in Christ Jesus...a force to maintain world peace. America has a destiny in God as one who fights for the disenfranchised with the economic might of our wealth and resources. That mantle rests upon us and the whole world watches to see what we will do and how we will react. If our financial system comes down the needy peoples of the earth will be without an advocate and the financial systems in other nations will be shaken and swept into the New World Order..."

Our very freedom handicaps us in fending off terrorist attacks because we are an open society. Fear and paranoia can cause us to shut down and **no longer be the gatekeeper nation we were created to be...**The Lord wants to deliver this nation by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit **through His church** and with a president on bended knees...His decisions in the upcoming days and years will affect not only the future of this nation but also **the global purposes of God in the end times."**

"America Under Attack"
October 2001

Notice the *presupposition* in this message. America is *central* to God's end-time program. We can't go down because we are a "gatekeeper" nation. Our *national destiny* is to keep fighting for "the disenfranchised with the economic might of our wealth and resources". If we were to be destroyed "the needy peoples of the earth will be without an advocate". Around that same time, another self-proclaimed prophet named Keith Davis wrote:

"We have been given an allotment of redeemed time. With the election of George Bush as our president, there has been given to us an allotment of time **through which we can see kingdom purposes established in our nation and in the earth.** (See Eph. 5:15-16). The enemy is doing all that he can to undermine this divine opportunity...All that was unleashed in our nation on September 11, and the days that have followed, **has been to pre-empt the birthing of God's purposes in our nation"**

"A Space Of Redeemed Time"
November 2001

Mr. Davis says that because of the election of George Bush, God has provided us with some extra time to "see kingdom purposes established in our nation and in the earth". Because the enemy knows how *central* America is to *establishing God's purposes in the earth* (that means: establishing God's Kingdom in the earth), he tried to "pre-empt the birthing" of those purposes (ie: that kingdom) through the September terrorist attacks.

It's the same wherever you turn. All these “restored” apostles and prophets are saying the same thing. The more you read (or hear) their babble, the more you realize they are utterly convinced that God is going to *use America* to establish His kingdom on this earth. So regardless of what they say about the possibility of God destroying America if we do not repent, they don't really think He would ever actually do so because they think He *needs us* too much.

Another self-proclaimed prophet is Kim Clement. That same year he gave one of the most outlandish words of them all in a message titled: “*The United States Shall See A Christmas Like No Other Christmas It Has Ever Had!*” He said:

“The United states of America shall see a Christmas like no other Christmas it has ever had. It will be a Christmas of great celebration. It will be in every household in this nation, even if they've called themselves atheist, even if they've called themselves agnostic. It shall be the greatest Christmas. And **there shall be more salvations and more deliverances this Christmas than has ever taken place in the history of Christmas as you know it today.**

Why? Because this nation will rejoice because of the victory they have attained. And God says, **I will make you wealthy because there will be a surrender of oil. There will be oil that will be given to you** because agreements will take place, says the Lord. And I will cause there to be **an economic revival** that will begin next year and shall carry you through to the year 2005. NASDAQ, NASDAQ where are you? For God says, I shall raise you up. And you shall be victorious **because this nation is mine says the Lord.**”

Here is yet another revival minister caught up in beast worship. He says that because this nation *belongs to the Lord*—Hello? That's describe the “Church” isn't it?—we will see a great economic revival; we will be given oil; and we will see more salvations and deliverances this Christmas (2001) than has ever taken place in the history of Christmas.

Another minister people take seriously is Francis Frangipane. In one message he gives a short history on how America has been defending “freedom” around the globe since World War II. He goes on to say:

"Throughout the long and terrible drama of the Cold War, no one really thought that God actually loved the Russian peoples and desired to liberate them from tyranny. Christian writers, prophets and theologians wrote volumes about the end of the world, each predicting with finality that godless Russia would descend upon Israel. Yet, it didn't happen. Instead, **God used the USA to resist this totalitarian empire** and, after decades of struggle, overnight it crumbled...

Let me also remind you, beloved, that there was nothing overtly spiritual about America in 1941, and no revival was going on in the U.S. when Russia fell. America simply was a very imperfect, somewhat Christian nation. **Just as the Lord needed the U.S.** to stand against Japan and Germany, so **God needed America** to open the USSR for harvest. Now **He needs this nation to lead again** against the demonic nightmare of a world ruled by Islam...

Just as Nazism, Japanese Imperialism and Soviet communism were totalitarian governments bent on world domination, so is Islam. Before the Soviets fell, what they

called "glasnost" began softening their society. Glasnost meant "openness." **This is what God used America to provide: openness. And this is what He seeks to create again among Islamic people.** He desires that Muslims too would be able to think honestly and freely for themselves."

"The Muslim World Shall Hear The Gospel"
December 14, 2001

Notice that Mr. Frangipane didn't just say God *used* America to combat Nazism, Imperialism and Communism. He said God *needed* America in order to combat them. In his mind, America is the central player in the plan of God. We are it! Without us, none of those governments would have ever been defeated and the gospel would have never been taken to any of the peoples trapped under their power. According to him, *this* is America's destiny. *We* are to be the savior of the world.

Since this is what he believes, naturally he assumes that we will do the same thing to Islam that we did to Communism, Nazism and Imperialism. We will defeat it and bring the gospel to Muslim nations. There is no room for the *defeat* of America in his vision, seeing that we are practically the foundation of God's whole end-time program. Defeating *us* would be the same as defeating the plan of God—an unthinkable thought. Too bad Mr. Frangipane's visions did tell him that eight years after declaring a "War On Terror", the American people would elect an *Arab (closet) Muslim* as the President of America. Looks like we just lost the "War On Terror" big time folks!

Neither is there any room in Mr. Frangipane's vision for the final, world-wide beast government that is so clearly described by John in the book of Revelation. Neither he or any of these false apostles and prophets are expecting the emergence of a global government that is so evil, it will make Hitler and Stalin look like boy scouts. For you see, in order for such a government to emerge, one of two things would first have to happen to America: (1) we would have to rise up and fight such a government—in which case we would lose and be destroyed; or (2) we would have to become an *integral part* of that world government—in either case, there goes God's plan for America, right out the window!

Another thing he doesn't believe is the apostle Paul's prediction that at the end of this age there would be a great "falling away" of Christians from the faith. This is not going to be a falling away of nominal or cultural Christians, or people who only *think* they are saved when in fact they aren't. Paul predicted a massive defection of born-again believers from the faith.

If everything is so wonderful like Mr. Frangipane wants us to believe; if America is turning back to God, if Christianity is advancing throughout the world, if the whole planet is experiencing revival, where is the great falling away? Paul didn't say it would be a small apostasy, hidden in some corner somewhere. He said it would be a great apostasy. That means big—so big you can't miss it. And speaking of apostasy, we mustn't forget to mention the immortal words of the Protestant Pope, Sir Peter Wagner. In a message called, "*Open Memorandum Addressing The Twin Towers War*" he said:

"We must keep in mind that the true nature of the twin towers war is freedom versus tyranny. This is true also in the invisible war which God expects the church to fight...If freedom does not unify us and cause us to declare war, both in the invisible world and the visible world, tyranny can prevail, and **that is not God's will**. If our government leaders, good-hearted as they might be, **are to implement God's purposes here on earth**, the

church must be equally ready to move into a wartime mode and go on the offensive in the invisible world. It goes without saying that a first priority of warfare is to know your enemy. Don Hinton's word on September 11 was: 'Spiritually, we are being baited to rise up in racism again'...**The danger now is to consider Islam in general** and Arabs in particular **the enemy**. The twin towers war is **not** a Christian jihad. In the 1990s the church officially repented of the Crusades, especially through the Reconciliation Walk. We must not revert to a crusade mentality...Muslims must have as much freedom to worship in their mosques as Christians have in their churches or Jews in their synagogues. **U.S. Muslims are not the enemy.**"

Notice Mr. Wagner's first assumption—it's *not* God's will that tyranny prevail. Like the rest of his fellow apostles, he doesn't really believe the Scripture. He ignores John's warning about a *tyrannical* global government that is to be established on this planet just before Jesus returns. These "Prophetic Elders" who are supposed to be on the cutting edge of all things spiritual just don't get it. They can't believe God would allow tyranny to prevail for a season at the end of this age.

Next he says that if America's leaders "*are to implement God's purposes here on earth, the church must be equally ready to move into a wartime mode*". Here we have more beast worship. America is going to implement God's purposes here on earth. Again, for those who are unfamiliar with the lingo of the New Apostolic Reformation, Mr. Wagner is referring to more than just the present conflict. He is saying that America—under the influence of the Church (led by himself of course!)—is going to establish God's kingdom on the earth.

When the global government is fully established, and a charismatic leader like Obama arises, American Christians will be swept up, en mass, in the global worship of this government because they are ALREADY involved in beast worship on a *national* level. What we saw this past summer and this election was a "dry run" for the real thing. However, one of the few *good* things that has resulted from the election of King Obama is that some of those who have been getting drawn into this beast worship without realizing it, have seen the light regarding how wicked this nation is, and how far gone it is, and as a result, God is using this to deliver them from the influence the whole Church has come under.

So then, when I say people err by equating America with the Church, that's basically what I am talking about. God has no "covenant" relationship with this nation, and we are not the equivalent of either Old Testament Israel or the New Testament Church. So whenever some starts comparing current events in America to what happened in Israel in *that light* or *that context*, then they are definitely wrong. But as long as it's *not* in that kind of a context, then it's fine to make analogies and see parallels between what the people of God did in the Old Testament and what today's Christians are doing.

Is everyone with me so far?

Now, having said all that, I also have say that this does not change what I said about it not being correct (in my view) to compare what the American people just did in this election and what Israel did. As far as I am concerned, there is no comparison between the two situations, for several reasons. **First of all**, it was clearly stated in the account everyone is referring to that *God Himself* chose the king. He sought out a specific man and told Samuel to call him to that position and anoint him. I believe Satan is the one who chose Obama, and I believe it was Satan who *supernaturally* helped him to get elected.

Secondly, Saul wasn't running for Prime Minister of Israel; he had no desire to be the leader of Israel; and the people had no choice as to who would be their king. They didn't elect Saul—God chose him.

Thirdly, the Scripture also states that God made Saul *fit* to be the leader of His people by giving him a “another heart” (*I. Sam. 10:9*). He didn't choose an *evil* person to be their king because that's what they “deserved” as a result of rejecting Him a their king..

Fourthly, the people of Israel were God's covenant people. They were *asking God* (though Samuel) for a human political leader. The people of America are not God's covenant people, and they were not asking asking God for a human leader. They were asking a *human leader* to be their “god” (ie: savior). That's quite a different situation.

The main error in comparing what Israel did to what America just did is this: It *implies* that just as God personally chose and hand-picked Saul to be Israel's king at their request, so he did the same with Obama at our request. You may say, “But brother Daniel; how do you know all those who made that comparison were *also* saying that God hand-picked Obama to be president, just as he did Saul”?

My answer is, “I don't”. I'm not saying I know for sure this is what they believe. What I'm saying is that when you make a general statement like that, without any qualification, the *implication* is automatically there. Go on the web and find some of the articles that compare what America did with what Israel did, and find one that *qualifies* that comparison with some kind of statement that shows they do *not* believe that because God is sovereign, He “gave us” (in same sense as Saul) the wicked man we deserved.

No doubt, there may be some similarities between what Saul did in Israel and what Obama does, and it's not wrong to point these similarities out or draw spiritual lessons from them. It's not wrong to highlight how foolish it is to make wrong choices and things like that. What I'm talking about is *equating* the two events. They are *not* the same and they cannot be equated. I'm not just nit-picking at some unimportant distinction here. In the end, I believe you'll find that most of those who are making this comparison agree with all the *implications* of their statement.

You are all free to believe what you want. I'm not trying to pressure anyone into following my doctrines. Soon enough we'll all find out the truth of these matters. In the meantime, I'm like the Fox News channel: “*We report, you decide*”. I hope this at least clears up any confusion as far as what I believe, which I may not have conveyed very clearly last week.

Last week I also talked about the fact that there is a *perfect* hatred of sin revealed throughout the Scripture, and that King David said he hated the Lord's enemies with a “perfect hatred” (*Ps. 139:22*); and I mentioned something called “*Imprecatory Prayers*”. Below is a small example of these kinds of prayers.

Psalm 35:5 - May they be like chaff before the wind.

Psalm 55:15 - Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the grave.

Psalm 58:6 - O God, break the teeth in their mouths.

Psalm 69:28 - May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous.

Psalm 109:9 - May his children be fatherless and his wife a widow.

Psalm 137:9 - How blessed will be the one who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.

The term, “to imprecate” means to invoke evil upon, or to curse. So prayers that ask for God’s judgment are called, “imprecatory prayers”. The number of Psalms that contain these kinds of prayers is interesting. They include the following: 5:10; 6:10; 7:6, 9, 15-16; 9:19-20; 10:15; 17:13; 28:4; 31:17-18; 35:1, 4-6, 8, 19, 24-26; 40:14-15; 52:5; 54:5; 55:9, 15; 56:7; 58:6-10; 59:5, 11-13; 68:1-2, 30; (69:22-25, 27-28; 70:2-3; 71:13; 74:11, 22-23; 79:6, 10, 12; 83:9, 11, 13-18; 94:1-2; 104:35; 109:6-15, 17-20, 29; 129:5-8; 137:7-9; 139:19, 21-22; 140:8-11; 141:10; and 143:1.2. That’s a total of ninety-eight verses in thirty-two psalms. Moreover, there are fourteen Psalms which may be rightly labeled imprecatory Psalms because their main characteristic is a cry for divine vengeance. These Psalms are: 7, 35, 52, 55, 58, 59, 69, 79, 83, 94, 109, 129, 137, and 140.

Imprecatory Psalms have bothered and confused many Christians because the overwhelming emphasis in the New Testament seems to be on showing love to everyone—including our enemies (*Matt. 5:44*). The cries for vengeance in the Imprecatory Psalms seem to be in such opposition to the whole thrust of the New Testament, most Christians have concluded that David and other psalm writers, as well as Jeremiah and Isaiah, were mistaken when they prayed these kinds of prayers. The standard view is that these men are to be forgiven because they were living *before* the New Testament revelation of “love”. Basically, the only reason these kinds of prayers were included in the Canon of Scripture was in order to show *how different* our attitudes should be, now that the light of the Gospel has come.

This kind of thinking only shows how ignorant people are regarding why the Law was given and what manner of life and conduct it actually called for. It’s unfortunate that the only thing God’s people have been taught about the Law is that nobody could possibly obey it, and therefore, it’s *primary* function was to condemn everyone to Hell. The idea that the whole purpose of the Law was simply to bring people to a place where they will trust in *Jesus* for justification and salvation—as opposed to trusting in morality or dead religious works (ie: the Law)—is held by probably 99.9% of today’s Christians.

Well, if the *only* purpose—or even the *primary* purpose—of the Law was simply to condemn all people to Hell by showing that no one could ever possibly obey it, thus driving them to place their trust in Jesus Christ for justification; I have a question. Why did God bother giving the Law to a people who would NEVER live to see Jesus? Why did He give the Law to a people who would NEVER even hear the name of Jesus, let alone hear the gospel message Jesus brought? If the gospel is THE remedy to the hopeless predicament of the Law, don’t you think it’s a bit strange that God made His people live without that “remedy” for 2000 years?

One of these days I’ll do teaching on the purpose of the Law. But for now, I’d just like to demonstrate how ignorant most of us are regarding the Law, and even regarding the various New Testament *quotations* of the Law by Jesus and the disciples. For example, in the Beatitudes chapter—Matthew 5—Jesus made the following statement:

*Ye have heard that **it hath been said**, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, **Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.***

Matthew 5:43-44

Can anyone tell me *where* it's taught in the Law that we should love our neighbors but "hate" our enemies? It doesn't. When Jesus said: "*Ye have heard that it hath been said...*" He wasn't talking about Moses. Moses did say: "You shall love your neighbor"; but he never said ye shall hate your enemies. Somebody *else* said that. Moses told the children of Israel to treat their enemies with kindness and mercy.

*If you come across your **enemy's** ox or donkey wandering away, you shall surely return it to him. If you see the donkey of someone **who hates you** fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; **you shall surely help him with it.***

Exodus 23:4-5

*Thou **shalt not** avenge, nor **bear any grudge** against the children of thy people, but thou shalt **love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord**"*

Leviticus 19:18

***Do not** gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, **do not** let your heart rejoice.*

Proverbs 24:17

*For **my love** they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer. And they have rewarded me evil for good, and **hatred for my love.***

Psalms 109:4-5

Imprecatory prayers and Psalms cannot be explained away simply by saying Old Testament life was inferior to, and ignorant of, God's later revelation of love because the idea that God's people should not bear grudges and that they should love their enemies as well as their neighbors, was contained in the Law. So the common view of today's Christians, that these are strictly New Testament principles, is false.

Some have speculated that the words "hate your enemy" came from a quotation in a document called "The Rule of the Qumran Community", which belonged to a Jewish sect called the Essenes. Others conclude that the people had somehow come to believe that when Moses said to love one's neighbor, that command *implied* hatred of one's enemy. Of course, no one knows for sure how this idea came to be so popular, but I suspect we are given a clue in the verses that immediately proceed what Jesus said. For just before He makes those *seven* different comparisons between what has been said by others in the past, and what He is now saying, He makes this statement:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.** For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, **one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all

be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:17-20

Since He specifically mentioned the Scribes and the Pharisees, I think it's likely that the seven ideas or teachings He goes on to correct in Matthew chapter five came from the religious leaders of Israel. You see, it's not just that Israel's leaders were trusting in the Law for justification. They were trusting in a *corrupted version* of the Law for justification. So in Jesus' teachings, He never speaks against the Law of Moses as it was originally given. Rather, what He is constantly speaking against is the *corruption* of the Law by the Scribes and the Pharisees.

I touched on this point the other week when I talked about the difference between the Greek and Hebrew terms for “*put away*” and “*divorce*”. Moses wrote in the Law that a man should legally divorce his wife before taking another woman as a wife. But many of the men of Israel paid no attention to this commandment. They simply abandoned their present wife and married another one.

When Jesus came on the scene, the leaders of Israel questioned Him about the whole issue. But the actual commandment Moses gave about divorcing a woman before taking another wife was not even a consideration for them. They were not interested in the commandment Moses laid down about divorcing the woman instead of just abandoning her because abandoning the woman had become an integral part of their culture and tradition. All they were concerned about now was being justified in their *reasons* for abandoning their women. Thus, their question was not: “*Must we really divorce the woman we put away* (ie: abandon)? Instead, the question was: “*Is it lawful for a man to put away [abandon] his wife for every cause*”? (Matt. 19:3) Jesus told them that putting away (abandoning) a woman and marrying another one, regardless of the reason, was sin.

What He did was tell these leaders to get back to obeying the Law as it was originally given by Moses. He was trying to undo the *perversion* of that Law. He does this time and time again, all throughout the Gospels. First He seeks to correct the perversions of the Law, and then He seeks to show the people the *ultimate righteous intention* of that Law. But ignorant Gentile religious leaders look at these things and they don't really understand what's going on. They just assume that Jesus is constantly pitting the Law against Grace; and they end up teaching people that Jesus came to do what He Himself plainly stated He did not come to do—which was to break the Law or destroy it.

The Law demanded mercy. It called on the people to treat their personal enemies with mercy. It called on people to walk in love, to not hold grudges or take personal revenge. Look at King David. Even though he fought many battles and killed many enemy soldiers, nevertheless, he exhibited the kind of life called for by the Law. This can be seen in the mercy he showed to Saul, who, because of jealousy, spent years hunting him down to kill him. It can be seen in the way he treated his son, Absalom, who tried to usurp his throne and murder him. It can be seen in the way he did not take revenge on the man who cursed him as he was fleeing from Jerusalem.

This kind of conduct was demonstrated by many people throughout the Old Testament. So imprecatory prayer cannot simply be chalked up to Old Testament ignorance of love, or some kind of inferior religious ethic. There's much more to it than that.

There are basically three classes of imprecatory prayer: (1) curses against a societal enemy; (2) curses against a nation's enemy; and (3) curses which at first glance, appear to be calls for vengeance against a personal enemy. Tonight I am going to look at an example of a prayer against the enemies of society:

*Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye **judge uprightly**, O ye sons of men? Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth. The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. **Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD. Let them melt away as waters which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces. As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun. Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath. The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.***

Psalms 58:1-11

Let's begin at the end of this Psalm. David says the righteous shall REJOICE when he seeth the vengeance on the wicked. Well, doesn't that seem to directly contradict what we just read in Proverbs 24: "*Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice*"?

You see, this is why it is so important to rightly divide the Word of truth! Proverbs is talking about taking delight in the misfortune or fall of our own personal enemies. We are not to delight in their misfortune because we hate them personally, due to something they have done against us. What David is talking about here is the joy that will come to the righteous when they see iniquity and wickedness *in general* punished. This joy does not come from a *personal vendetta* against an individual, but from a general hatred for sin which comes from loving God and walking in righteousness.

There will be joy because all men will see that there is a *reward* for the righteous. When wickedness flourishes and goes unpunished, mankind says: "See; there is no God; and if there is, He doesn't care about righteousness and wickedness. If He did, He would punish the wicked and reward the righteous".

But when God punishes the wicked, men will say: "...*verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth*". When God punishes the wicked, men will say: "...*there is a reward for the righteous*". So in this prayer of cursing, David is asking God to vindicate His name in the earth.

Also, in this Psalm, I believe David is asking God to punish the *rulers* and the *judges* in the community of Israel—those who were responsible for seeing that justice is properly meted out. These rulers and judges are described as unjust, habitually dishonest, ferocious and violent, stubbornly wicked, and deadly. Therefore, the Psalm calls down God's vengeance not on occasional transgressors of God's laws, not on people who harm others out of ignorance, not on people whose abuses are casual rather than premeditated; but on those who hardened criminals who continually flaunt their position contrary to God's righteousness. They were wicked people with *seared consciences* who held positions of legislative or judicial authority, and they exploited their power for evil continually. So David appeals the God of justice to bring justice to the situation. Such vengeance would vindicate and *comfort* the righteous who had suffered so grievously and would establish God as the manifest and supreme Judge of the earth.

Moreover, this expression of exultation over the destruction of the enemies of God and His people is seen throughout Scripture. It begins in the Song of Moses (*Deut. 32:43*), and continues in the Psalms (*Ps.58:10*) and the Prophets (*Jer. 51:48*), and climaxes in the Book of Revelation (*18:20*).

I can't emphasize it enough how important it is to get the WHOLE COUNSEL of the Scripture on any given subject, or any problem and situation we face. Most of today's Christians look at all the evil in this world, and since they know they can't do anything to stop it, they end up adopting a laid-back attitude regarding it that's not Scriptural. Then somebody comes along and quotes Psalm 73 to them—where David said he was “envious” of the prosperity of the wicked, and for a moment he thought he had cleansed his heart in vain, until he considered their end. And when Christians hears this, they think: “Right; that's what I'll do. I'll just consider their end and stop worrying about all the evil I see happening”.

What we don't understand is that many times, when we do this we are *suppressing* the Spirit of God in our new man. We are actually *quenching* the Holy Spirit because there are times when what we are feeling is the Holy Spirit rising up in righteous indignation within us. When this happens, He usually wants us to do something regarding it, like warn someone or pray against something in particular. But you see, ALL Christians have been taught that God would NEVER ask us to do pray these kinds of prayers because in the New Testament, we are taught to bless and not curse. Well, these kinds of people don't really know the New Testament like they think they do.

*And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, **Avenge me of mine adversary.** And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, **which cry day and night unto him**, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*

Luke 18:1-8

Now of course, you have all read this passage. And I have no doubt you have heard ministers use it as an example of how we ought always to pray. I myself have quoted the last part of this passage over and over again regarding the apostasy. I say the apostasy will get so bad, Jesus asked if He will even find any faith left by the time He returns—and I still believe this is true. But I've never really looked at the Lord's statement in its context. What kind of "faith" was the Lord talking about? Was it just *persistent* prayer in general. Was He simply asking if there will be any one left on earth who knows how to keep praying and praying and praying and praying for something until they get it? Or was He asking if there will be anyone left on earth who is praying for *justice* and *vengeance*?

Look at the parable again, carefully. The Lord said He was sharing this parable "to the end" or for the purpose that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint". Did you ever wonder why Jesus picked this *particular kind* of story to emphasize persistent prayer? I mean, He could have used any number of different situations to get the same point across. Why this kind of a situation?

The woman in the story has been wronged; so she goes to a judge to ask for justice. But the judge is an *unjust* judge. He doesn't care about justice. He is using his position for personal gain and for the advancement of evil. But the woman is persistent, and after a while the judge gives her justice just to get her off his back. Then Jesus compares God to this unjust judge. He says, if persistent pleading can move a wicked judge to give us justice, how much more will such persistent pleading cause the Judge of the whole Earth to give us justice. Look carefully at what Jesus says next: "*And shall not God **avenge** his own elect, **which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them.***" Do you see it?

God's elect aren't praying for a new chariot or a better job. They are praying the *same thing* as the woman in the story! They are crying out, day and night, to the Judge of the Earth, about all the *injustice* they are experiencing. Jesus says the Father will avenge them speedily. Then He asks: "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" In other words, will He find *this kind* of faith. Will He find His elect crying out, night and day, for God to come and bring justice to this earth. Will He find them crying out, night and day, for God to punish the wicked and avenge His people?

The answer to that question for the vast majority of today's Christians will be *No*. They will not be walking in *that kind* of faith because they have been brainwashed by religious leaders who don't really know God, or His ways, or His Word, and who tell them that a real Christian would NEVER ask God to avenge the wickedness they are enduring. If you doubt what I say is true, go find a pastor and ask him these questions:

~ *What is a Christian to do when the government protects criminals and criminal activity such as the abortion clinic?*

~ *What is a Christian to do when the government protects homosexual mobs who terrorize homes, and who march into church services shouting profanities and throwing condemnations on the people*

~ *What is a Christian to do when he can't go to the courts, police, or the government for justice because the courts, the police and the government are the criminals?*

You may get many different answers to these questions. But one answer I promise you will never hear is imprecatory prayer. Yet this is precisely what God's people have done throughout the Scripture. Imprecatory prayer is a last resort appeal to God for justice. The so-called curses are not really "curses" in the sense that we usually understand the term. They are simply the *just penalty* called for in the Scriptures, for the crimes. This kind of prayer is an appeal to the court of divine justice for protection and the appropriate punishment for criminals. Far from condemning this kind of prayer, Jesus used it as a good example of prayer and asked if it might be extinct by the time He returns.

Of course this kind of prayer can easily be abused and no doubt it has been. Is there anything about the Christian faith or walk that hasn't been twisted and/or abused? We have to remember that our personal adversary is not always *God's* enemy. If your neighbor backs over your mail box time after time, you may be angry and extremely frustrated at him, but that does not make him the enemy of God. Confusing the issue is what the story of the disciples wanting to call fire down from heaven is all about.

The Samaritan's refusal to embrace Jesus when He came by their territory was wrong and rude, but it was certainly not the same kind of CRIME Elijah faced when the king sent dozens of men to KILL him. That was an issue of MURDER. The men who came for Elijah knew full well that he would be put to death as soon as they got him back to the king's palace. And the reason the king wanted Elijah murdered was because he hated *the God* of Elijah. So the crime of attempted murder, by a hardened criminal who hated the God of Israel, was meant with the appropriate punishment—death. However, the desire of the disciples to do the same thing to the Samaritans was wrong. For a *minor* offence they wanted God to kill a whole city. Their desire did not come from a righteous desire to see divine justice on this earth. It came from *racist* hearts that *already* hated and despised the Samaritans.

What the disciples wanted to do to the Samaritans was indeed wicked and wrong. But the *kind* of wickedness they were involved in has been *misrepresented*. It wasn't imprecatory prayer Jesus was denouncing in that situation. He was condemning their human hatred which was rooted in racism. So it's just as wicked and wrong to use this example to deny the legitimacy of imprecatory prayers, as it was for the disciples to desire the destruction of the Samaritans.

How then are we to reconcile these two seemingly opposite streams of truth in the Bible. Well, one thing we should *never* do again is try to pit the Old Testament against the New Testament. Both contain commandments regarding love, judgment and mercy. If you're looking for *apparent* contradictions, you don't even have to leave the New Testament. All you have to do is look at the apostle Paul. When dealing with Alexander the coppersmith, who did him much evil, he said: "*The Lord will repay him according to his deeds*" (II. Tim. 4:14). But two verses later (vrs. 16), when speaking of those who had abandoned him in his time of need, he said: "*May it not be counted against them*"—much like the dying words of Jesus.

So what made Paul react these two opposite ways? Well, I think he reacted towards Alexander the way he did because Alexander was (or became) a *hardened* enemy of both Paul and the gospel he preached. I think Paul felt in the Spirit that there was no hope for this man. He had sealed his fate. He would *always* be an enemy of God and try to hinder whatever God would try to do through Paul. So he refused to pray for his repentance or salvation. In the other case, he knew that was dealing with the weakness, or the failing faith, of people who were not hardened enemies of the gospel or of Paul. These were people who simply found it too difficult to pay the price that was required to be faithful to Paul at that time.

How do we reconcile Paul's admonition in Romans to bless those who persecute us and "curse not" (*Rom. 2:14*), with what is unquestionably the severest possible curse—eternal damnation—which he himself pronounces on any who preach another gospel (*Gal. 1:8-9*)? And what about Peter's curse on Simon the Sorcerer, who sought to buy the Holy Spirit with money? Peter said: "*May your silver perish with you*" (*Acts 8:20*). And how do we reconcile "curse not" with the martyrs underneath the Altar in Revelation chapter 6, who cry: "*How long, O Lord, holy and true, will you refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth*"?

The cry of the martyrs sounds hauntingly familiar to a portion of the Song of Moses where God promises to "avenge the blood of His servants" (*Deut. 32:43*). As a matter of fact, when Great Babylon is judged, one of the phrases you hear is: "...*he has avenged the blood of His bondservants*" (*Rev. 19:2*)—which sounds like it came straight out of the Song of Moses. In another place in Revelation (*Rev. 15:2-3*), an angel shows John those who "had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name". John sees these victorious saints standing on a great sea of glass, with harps in their hands—and guess what they are singing? They are singing the "*Song of Moses*"! Think there might possibly be some kind of connection there? I do. I think it's very possible those martyred souls in chapter six were reminding God of His promise to avenge the blood of His servants in the Song of Moses, and that everything that follows in Revelation is God answering that cry for justice.

So my point tonight is that there is a place for prayers of imprecation in the lives of New Testament believers. Of course, like every other area of teaching and experience, we have to be led by the Spirit in these matters. I am not telling everyone to just go out and start calling down curses on people you don't like or who have done you wrong. Every prayer of imprecation that is recorded in the Scripture was, I believe, inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit caused those people to pray the way they did, for the sake of righteousness and for the honor of His holy name. These kinds of prayers were not coming from wicked hearts seeking personal revenge.

There is a time for peace and there is a time for war. There is a time to love and there is a time to hate. There is a time to intercede for people and there is a time to fight against them. There is a time to let the Spirit work His *priestly* ministry into our personalities, and there is a time to let Him work His *kingly* ministry into our personalities. The function of a king is different than the function of a king. As I said last week, God is raising up *kings*. Having the spiritual backbone and the iron of a king is absolutely necessary for anyone who wishes to rule and reign with Jesus when He returns. For even though He is the Prince of Peace; He's also a Man of War—and the next time this world sees Him, He will not be revealed as the Prince of Peace. He will be revealed as a Man of War, as the Captain of the Host of God, who has finally come to cut off all rebellion, and to execute the fierce wrath of the Father upon the people of this earth. Only *after* his enemies have been destroyed or subdued will He be revealed as the Prince of Peace.

I've said it before and I'll say it again. God is looking for *spiritual warriors*. He's looking for people who will be ready and prepared to ride into battle on the Day of the Lord—and only those who have been made **KINGS** will be with Him when that hour arrives.