

Psalms 90:12

Sunday 7/2/2006

We already know from our past studies that the structure of everything God created is in His pattern of threes. This pattern is often misunderstood, and Christianity today has no concept of it. That is why so many of God's people are investing so much time in the wrong areas. It is a situation where God's people are missing the real value of what God has for their lives, and that obviously leads to their problems in life and all of the things they have to deal with.

We started, if you remember, a couple of weeks ago, and I talked about God's plan for the universe. I showed you that there is a reason why God made outer space. I told you that the standard teaching, if you come from the evolutionist background, and most people come from that today, is that they are looking for life in outer space. They think that all these galaxies have evolved; they have all come through the process of evolution. Therefore, we look for other galaxies and planets and nebulas out there that we believe would contain life. Of course, if you come from the Bible standpoint, you know that is not true. Those things are not going through an evolutionary stage. God created them with the appearance of the age that they have. When God created them some six or seven thousand years ago, it was not so life could evolve. It was the fact that it was going to be a process by which we got to the point where, in the future, God was going to fulfill all of these things exactly the way He wanted to.

I took you to Isaiah 9:6-7. We talked about the government of God. When Jesus Christ comes back and establishes the millennial reign of Christ, that is called God's government, His righteous government. What happens at that point is that God starts on planet Earth, and then as eternity goes, He fulfills all of that government out through eternity. That is what the galaxies and all the planets and outer space are all for, and it is found, as I said, in Isaiah 9:6-7. That is where it is really at, and that is how it is dealt with.

So we talked about that aspect, and then I told you the second aspect: God's plan for the Earth. For that, we went to Isaiah 45, and I showed you that planet Earth was the place where God worked out the redemption of man. It was on planet Earth. I showed you how God isolated it. I showed you how God kept it from contaminating the rest of outer space. We went through the verses and showed you how God set it at the bottom of the universe. Now, in the time that we have here on planet Earth, God is working out the redemption of man.

We talked about that in great detail last week: how God's plan for planet Earth was that God put a little parenthesis in eternity, and in that little parenthesis, He put something called time. That time runs from Genesis to Revelation. That time period, and that is a little chart that I gave you, is something else I want you to remind me of today. Remember that big chart we laid up here last week? Several of you asked me for that, and I was in a hurry to get out of here. I remember a couple of you, but I talked to Bev this morning. She is our official chart maker, and she is going to bring me a number of sets on Thursday night. So if you would remind me this morning that you are one of those that want one of those sets of charts, I will have it for you Thursday night at Bible study.

We showed you on that chart that time runs from Genesis to Revelation. That is what your Bible is about. Your Bible, in its lowest, basic, common denominator of what God is doing, is basically about God coming down to redeem man because when God gets into His plan for eternity, God wants you and I to be part of that. So that was the second part of God's plan.

Now today, we are going to talk about the third installment of this plan, and that is God's plan for mankind. How do you and I fit into this plan? That is what we are going to talk about today. I told you in every session we have had the last couple of weeks that this is kind of going deep into the Word of God, maybe over some of your heads, but I am going to try to break it down as easy as I can. I am not going to preach in my normal rapid-fire, machine-gun mode. I am going to slow it down a little bit, and I want to walk you through this. As always, we have Thursday night if you have questions about this; you will be able to find out, and I will break it down for you even more. But today, we are going to talk about the third part, and that is how you and I fit into this.

God has three plans. Those three plans are all one, yet they are separate, like the Trinity. We have talked about God's plan for outer space in the universe in a future sense. We have talked about God's plan for Earth in the historical sense, from Genesis to Revelation. Now we are going to talk about how you and I fit into this.

I. God's Plan for Mankind: Our Insignificance and Purpose

I saw a picture one time; it was a drawing of the great white throne judgment. I saw it twenty-five or thirty years ago, and when I saw it, it impressed me so greatly because it gave me some kind of perspective of how big God is, how big His universe is, and obviously, how big His plan is. The painting that I saw was a picture of that which is recorded in Revelation 20.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened:

That passage is talking about the final judgment where all unsaved men and women are judged before God before being cast into the lake of fire. The artist that painted this really did it justice because I came away as a very young Christian so impressed with how absolutely all-encompassing God was. He painted a throne that was so big that it just overtook the whole picture. Then, down, bathed in the glorious light of God, you had to almost look at it. He had done such a masterful job in painting the men and women that were standing at that great white throne judgment. They were so minute that they were, at first, it looked like a mass. Then, when you looked closely at it, he had somehow in his painting broken that up so that when you really looked at it, you saw tiny specks that represented men and women.

I thought to myself, in this life, we get it all out of whack. We think about how great we are and all the great things that we do. We get so busy in life and everything that we try to accomplish—our countries, our government, whether it be a state government or a national government or a country—we all get this idea that we have control of things and we are in some kind of power. I

want to tell you something: I came away from that picture understanding that I am not in charge of anything. I came away from that understanding how insignificant I am to God, that it looked like grains of sand up against an almighty, eternal God. I have never forgotten that painting, and I have never forgotten what that picture represented because, ladies and gentlemen, that is exactly how this thing lays out.

When you understand your part and my part in this plan as a child of God, it makes you understand that early question I asked in our first lesson: "Why you? Why did God save you? What did God see in you that He did not see in somebody else? How come you got saved and are on your way to heaven, and maybe somebody else did not? What was the criteria that God looked for?" When you begin to put this plan that God has for mankind, that fits into God's plan for the planet Earth, that fits into God's plan for all of eternity, we begin to see and understand how this thing lays out.

I told you when we get into eternity, I told you how that in Revelation 21, and again in 1 Corinthians 10, and again in Isaiah 65-66, it talks about three things: it talks about a new heavens, it talks about a new earth, and it talks about a new Jerusalem. I told you a couple of weeks ago, when we were coming through the keys on how to study the Bible, that when it comes to your Bible, the Bible is written to three groups of people, and that is how you find the context of what you are trying to read.

- First of all, the Bible is written to a group of people called Jews. We know them as the nation of Israel. Much of the Bible is written directly to them.
- Then the Bible is written to Gentiles in particular, and you are going to find portions of Scripture in the Bible where He is not talking to the Jews. He is not talking to us as Christians. He is declaring something to the Gentile nations that are on this planet.
- And then you are going to find the third people group: you and me, Christians, the body of Christ.

You are going to find that your Bible is written to three groups of people: the Jews, the Gentiles, and you and I. That is why when you get out of eternity, you have the new heavens, the Gentiles get that; the new earth, the Jews get that; and the new Jerusalem, you and I get that. That is how this plan begins to break down.

II. God's Discrimination and Man's Misunderstanding

I told you a couple of weeks ago that when God looks at man and God looks at history, He looks at it differently than we do. I told you how that when man looks at God, he tries to see God. Man's concept of God today, the best way I can say it, man looks at God today like some big cream puff marshmallow in the sky. The world looks at God like some big grandfather with a big old white beard. He sits up there, and every two or three hundred years, He gets up and staggers over to the banisters of heaven and looks down on Earth, and as long as things are going okay, then He goes back and sits down. That is not the God of the Bible, but that is the way people think of God today.

Why did a man tell me one time that God was everybody's father? He was talking about the universal concept that is called universalism, that God is everybody's father, that we are all the children of God. It does not matter what you are or what you do or how good or how bad you are; we are all God's children. Of course, you know your Bible; you know that is not true. We are all God's creation, but there are clearly two families in the Bible.

The Bible says in John 8:44, Jesus Himself was talking to the religious leaders of Israel.

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.

Then the Bible says over there in 1 John 3 and a hundred other places in the Bible:

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

There are two families in history, spiritual families. Sitting here this morning, I do not know which one you are in, but you are in one or the other. There is no universal concept of God as everybody's father. He is the Creator of all life, and God is our Creator, but He is not everybody's father. He is just not. The Bible is very clear on that. Of course, we think that we are all God's children. No, we are all God's creation, but you have to choose to be God's child or choose Him as your Father.

I am going to say this, please do not take offense to it. If you are here this morning and you are unsaved, and you do not know that Christ has died for your sins, and you are not somebody who has trusted Christ as your own personal Savior, your spiritual name is "devil." "Ye are of your father the devil," that is why "the lusts of your father ye will do." Sometimes people get upset at that. I understand; the first time I heard that, I got upset about it. I remember hearing that forty years ago, and that upset me. I did not like being told that I am of my father, the devil, and that my spiritual family was Satan. I did not like it. So, you know what I did? I got so mad, I changed families. I got saved. Now that family got me another family. You do not like it? Get saved. You can get from one family to the other. It is just that simple. That is how it works.

But this idea that God is everybody's father, the brotherhood of man, it is just not the way it works. The idea today that God loves and cares for everybody, it does not matter what you do. It is like God has no standards of holiness. It does not matter what you do. It does not matter, God is your father, and He takes care of you. Now you can go out and live like hell and do all the things you want to do, and God still is your father, and He puts up with all of that. No, that would be nice if it worked that way, but that is not the way it works.

III. The World's Misconceptions of God and America

Proverbs 28:5 is a great passage. It really puts a lot of light on where we are living today. It basically says that unsaved men and women do not understand God's judgment. You know why they do not understand God's judgment? Because they think God does not judge anybody. When you take the position that God is everybody's father, and you can be whatever you want to be and do whatever you want to do, when you begin to take that position, then you have to take the next position, which is God is not going to judge anybody. That is why if you started going down this

street and started going to churches, you would find that the majority of churches today will not even tell you, because they do not believe it, that there is a literal place called hell. They do not preach God's judgment. You know why? God loves everybody. Well, if we are all God's children and God loves everybody, why would there need to be hell? You know why there is a hell? Because God does not love everybody, and there are some people that are going to wind up there because they make the wrong choice. I do not know what else to do with you.

Because of that, unsaved men and women have a tough time understanding God's judgment. They do not understand God. I remember when the AIDS concept came out, and AIDS began to become prevalent. Some of the Christian brethren began to preach about the fact that AIDS was God's judgment on ungodliness and sin in America and on planet Earth. Oh, you should have heard the rage. There were people that were just absolutely enraged at the very idea in their mind of God sending a deplorable disease like AIDS to men and women because of their sexual orientation, or I should say, disorientation. It is just unbelievable. Why? Because God accepts everybody.

I heard a man, Cleaver, one time, who was mayor of Kansas City, and now he is a senator or somebody, and he is a preacher. I heard him preach one time at a gay liberation place downtown. You know what he said? He said that everybody was God's child, and he was preaching in defense of homosexuality and lesbianism. He says, "We are all God's child," and he says, "God made us all," and then he added this little kicker, and they all applauded when he said this: "And God did not make no junk." That is what he said. By saying that, what he was saying was this: that homosexuality and lesbianism are just okay with God. That is where we are at today. Everything, God loves everybody. When somebody says, "Well, AIDS is God's judgment on the ungodliness of this planet," they have a heart attack. They do not even understand that all through the Old Testament, God took those kind of men and women.

If you get arrested in some illicit sex act, you know what it is called on the books? It is called sodomy. In every country, in every city and state in this country, if you get arrested in some act of homosexuality or lesbianism or child molestation or some act of depravity, when you get booked in and they charge you, they charge you with a case of sodomy. You know where they get that word from? Genesis 19, Sodom. That is where it comes from. We do not even know that. We do not have a clue. We do not understand that God gave diseases to those men and women back in the Old Testament.

9/11 happened, and the preachers got on the bandwagon. Oh, was there a flurry over this! 9/11, the terrorists flew two jets into the World Trade Center, another one into the Pentagon, and another one into a field in Pennsylvania. The preachers got on the radio, and immediately they began to talk about the fact that things like this are God's judgment on America for America forsaking God. Oh, was there an uproar! Oh, was it terrible! The very people that said those things had no idea that all through the Bible, God judges nations just like He judges people. They have not got a clue.

Now, I am not saying that AIDS came from God. I am not saying 9/11 was God's judgment on America. But I will say this: it was not that God missed the best chance He had in a long time to

prove a point, because God judges nations and God judges sin. You better just get set for it. I remember when Ariel Sharon, remember him? He was the last guy that was the prime minister of Israel. He got a stroke. He had a stroke, and he never came back to power. One of the radio evangelists got on there and said that God struck him with a stroke because Sharon gave away too much of Israel's land. The media went crazy. The guys that went crazy never saw what God did to Saul, never saw what God did to David, never saw what God did to Jeroboam, never saw what God did to Rehoboam. You know why? Because the Bible is irrelevant anymore. God is a big marshmallow. He is a big old grandfather, with a big, flowing, long white beard, kind of like Santa Claus without the red suit. He just walks around heaven, and he just throws out his blessings on everybody. I am telling you, that is not the God of the Bible. An unsaved man does not understand the judgment of God. He just does not.

We got the idea in America, and here is where it comes: we got the idea in America that because we are a democracy, and we are the good guys, and we go around freeing oppressed nations like Iraq, like we did with Japan and Germany, that freedom, democracy, equals Christianity. That is where we are at today. Martin Luther King went around back in the sixties, and he says, "Let my people go," quoting that Exodus. He comes around, and he says, "Well, you know, we are in bondage, we are in slavery, equal rights, let my people go." Now, if you live in America and you are black, you are white, you are purple, I do not care what color you are, you all have the same rights. When you women go to work, you ought to make as much as a man. There are some things a woman does better than a man. I am for equal rights all the way down the line. I am not arguing with it.

What I am saying is this: the freedom that they were talking about is not the freedom that the Bible is talking about. The freedom that the Bible is talking about is not freedom from oppression; it is freedom from your sin. It is not being set free by an oppressive government; it is being set free from going to hell and getting new life in Christ Jesus. That is the freedom of the Bible. We have the idea today that because we are the good guys, God is on our side. I am not fighting President Bush. I think he is the best we could come up with. I do not care one way or the other. When it comes to election times, I study it very carefully. I am not much of a politician, but I study the election very carefully before I would ever vote. What I look for is I look for the guy that is going to get the Antichrist in here to get me raptured out quicker than the other guy. That is the guy I am voting for.

Now, I am not saying that George Bush is that, but every time George Bush, and I believe George Bush is a saved man, I believe he is trying to do the best that he can. But he is like everybody else that is in public office; he is a politician. I have told you before, most politicians are crooks. Politics will always keep you from doing the right thing because you have to always consider your politics. That is a terrible thing. Many soldiers in many wars have gotten killed and paid the ultimate price because the politicians wanted to cut a deal with somebody else, and you paid the ticket for it. It happens all the time.

Every time George Bush gives a statement or address, he always closes, and I appreciate this, he always closes it by saying, "May God bless America." But the tragedy is, Brother Bush would not know how God blesses any country if his life depended on it. He thinks God is going to bless

America because we are a great country. We are quoted as a Christian nation; therefore, a Christian nation. That is where it comes down to. Now, this is all introduction, but you have to get this to get the rest of the part.

A Christian nation, you know, up in a school here, a couple of weeks ago, they had a graduation in one of these schools, and a valedictorian got up to give her valedictorian address, and because she used the word "God" one time, they turned the mic off. Is that what a Christian nation does? You realize in our Congress and our Senate, they pray before they have every session, but you have to invite a preacher. Hey, who knows? Someday I may get invited in. When you are in there, and they say, "We want you to open up in prayer because in Congress and the Senate, we want to always make sure that we are under the guidance of God." That sounds like a good deal. Now, if you get chosen for that great honor, you have to submit your prayer first. You cannot mention the name of Jesus Christ in that prayer. You can mention God. You can mention a higher power, but you cannot mention the name Jesus Christ because that is too definitive. That is not what a Christian nation does.

How long would you come to church here if I never used the name Jesus? How long would you come to church here if every time I preached, I just left out any reference to a God so I would not offend you? Is that Christian? Well, we have this idea that America is a Christian nation, and yet you cannot even pray. I read in the paper last week, "God is a loving God. God did not destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because of homosexuality. God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of inhospitality." Now, you know how I know that is not true? Because most Baptists are still walking around alive because Baptists are the most inhospitable people I have ever met in my life. If God killed you for that, they would all be dead. But that is where we are at today.

We think about earthquakes and tornadoes and hurricanes, all those natural disasters. People actually get to the idea where they think that when something happens across this planet, God just runs over to the banisters of heaven and says, "Oh, there is a tornado down there in Treblinka. Oh, there is a great disaster down here in New Orleans. Oh, there is this, there is that. Let us do something." I have some news for you: God does not care about those things. If you think He does, then you are right in vogue with ninety-nine percent of America and their thought process, because God's people, especially, and unsaved people in particular, do not understand where God is at in the judgment of God today.

We think we are a Christian nation because the president calls for a national day of prayer. We think that makes us Christian. We have a national day of prayer. Oh, God is so pleased. We think that we go down to the football game, and because the guy makes a touchdown, and he gets on his knees and he points toward heaven like that, God is up there saying, "Yeah, way to go. You are my team." We think that half of heaven is at the Super Bowl, got the one team jerseys on, and they have signs all around there. Let me tell you something: you have to get back to reality, ladies and gentlemen. God cares nothing about those things. The big problem with God's people, forget the world, they are lost. But the big problem with God's people is they do not even know how God looks and views the very planet Earth that we are part of. So how in the world are you and I going to fulfill God's plan for you and me? That is the problem.

IV. God's True Focus: Israel and the Church

God cares about two things down through history, and here is where lies our mess today. God cares about two things: in the Old Testament, it is the nation of Israel; in the New Testament, it is the church, the body of Christ. Every blessing of every nation, every curse of every nation, every destruction, every prophet, anything that is good, anything that is bad, anything that happens will all break down around those two elements: in the Old Testament, the nation of Israel, and in the New Testament, the body of Christ.

It is so clear in the Old Testament. You know what God said in the Old Testament about the nation of Israel to the Gentiles? He said, "Boys, it is real simple: I will bless those that bless you, and I will curse those that curse you." He said that in Genesis 9. Israel was not even a nation yet. He said, "I will bless those that bless you, Israel, and I will curse those that curse you." And boy, did He ever. The rest of your Bible in the Old Testament is nothing more than the Gentile nations disobeying God, thinking they could prosper by going against God, and God just kicking the fire out of them. That is where it is at. The blessings of any nation will be based on these two elements, and then the third element will be their attitude toward the Word of God. You saw it in Israel, you saw it in 1000 BC, you saw it in England from 1600 to 1900, and you saw it in America from 1700 to 1900. It is just that simple.

Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

He says, "I do not care about the nations."

As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!

The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

Hey, has America forgotten God? How about a nation that when you go to school, you cannot use the name of Jesus Christ? How about a nation where you cannot pray anymore publicly? How about you could not go down on the street corner and preach on the street if your life depended on it; you would get thrown in jail? You know why? Because this nation, no matter what it claims, has forgotten God, and the Bible says those nations are going to be cast into hell.

Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.

You know what He just said? He is going to cut off every other nation except one. I am telling you, when you begin to get the Bible's perspective and see God's perspective, you realize a great truth. Now, I am preaching to you, but I live in America. I will tell you the truth, if they put in a draft and they call old guys like me, I would go back and fight for my country again. The fact that I take the position against my country being against God and godless does not mean that I am a rebel, that if they called me, I would go fight for it. It is not my job as a Christian to disobey my government. If they tell me what to do, that is what I am to do. I obey the laws. I do not

speed. If they counted me in the draft and said, "Go to war," I would go to war. That is my job. It is not my right to sit there and judge if the war is moral or immoral. That is not my job. My job is to, upon my country, no matter how I feel about it, go fight for that country. You know why? Because God will hold the country accountable whether it is moral or immoral, and He will bless me for doing what I am told.

You say, "Well, I just do not know why God would have a war and have God's people go to war." You know the greatest blessing I ever had in my life? I met a man by the name of Jacob DeShazer. Most of you, probably none of you, unless you heard me tell this story before, which I have told it before, I do not know if I told it here. I met Jacob DeShazer back in 1990. He was giving his testimony. I met him afterwards, and I shook his hand, and it was the most stirring thing in my life. You know who Jacob DeShazer was? Jacob DeShazer was a bombardier on one of General Doolittle's planes that bombed Tokyo. Let me refresh your memory. I know you young kids, you did not even know what the Korean War was yesterday, and I helped you with that, did I not? You did not know when it was. You know when it was now? 1951, 1952, and 1953. That is okay. My own daughters are the same way. I talked to Jamie one time about Mussolini; she thought it was an Italian dinner place.

Jacob DeShazer. Here is what happened. A lot of the greatest stories. Jacob DeShazer had a best friend that was killed under Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Jacob DeShazer went out and enlisted in the Army Air Corps. He wanted to specifically become a bombardier because he wanted to pay back the Japanese for killing his friend. He wanted the relief, or so he thought, of dropping hundreds of tons of bombs on Japanese people. He volunteered for the Doolittle Raid, which was a very risky thing. Twenty-five or twenty-six B-25 bombers put on a deck of an aircraft carrier, the Hornet, took off, snuck in to about six hundred or five hundred miles from Japan, took off, had nowhere to land, dropped their bombs to get back to the Japanese, and then scooted over to try to land into China. Most of them crashed. Some of them made it. Jacob DeShazer, several of those were taken prisoner. Many of them, or some of them, were beheaded by the Japanese. Jacob DeShazer was on that flight, and his plane ran out of gas, and it crashed into China, and he was taken prisoner by the Japanese. He hated the Japanese.

I want to tell you, the Japanese made those poor guys pay for it. They starved them to death. Jacob DeShazer, that took place at the end of 1941, into 1942. He spent from 1942 to the end of World War II in a Japanese POW camp. I am telling you, it was the most horrendous thing ever in your life. They starved them to death. They beat them. They did everything. The pilots, they beheaded. There were many times, in fact, down at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, there is a little memorial in the museum there, and they actually tore the floorboard up after the war where these prisoners were being held, and they all scribbled their name on it and gave the date, telling they were still alive, and then they turned the board over because they all thought for sure they were going to be executed, and they wanted their families to know that they were still alive. They have that board down at Wright-Patterson with all the story. It is the greatest thing ever.

Jacob DeShazer tells the story that he hated the Japanese with a passion. One day, he came back to his quarters, and there was a Bible on his bunk. To this day, he does not know where that Bible came from. In that Bible was the plan of salvation. Jacob DeShazer began to read that Bible, and

he trusted Christ as his own personal Savior. The war was over in 1945. Jacob DeShazer went back to the United States, went to Bible college, and you know what he did? He went back to Japan for the next forty-five years. He became a missionary to the Japanese. That is not the best part. In his first revival, you know who got saved? A man got saved, the Japanese pilot that led the raid on Pearl Harbor. For the next forty-five years, Jacob DeShazer and that Japanese pilot were evangelists through that country and won millions of men and women to Christ. You see that thing? God always has a purpose in what He does, no matter how bleak it looks. You look at going to war as a terrible thing. God looks at sending some missionaries out there to win men and women to Christ.

That story of Jacob DeShazer is just the tip of the iceberg. I bet you there are one hundred thousand stories of men at Bastogne, the Battle of the Bulge, Guadalcanal, anywhere you want to go in every battle, saved men that were put on that spot that went out there that won men and women to Christ. That is what God does. We lose sight of that.

All governments on this Earth and down through history have been put together as counterfeits to mask and get your mind off the one government that God is coming to bring in. In New York City, we have the United Nations. It was called the League of Nations when it first started, around 1945, 1948, and after World War II, it became the United Nations. If you go to New York, there is an inscription on the wall. You know what the inscription is? I talked to you about it a couple of Thursday nights ago. The inscription on the wall is at Isaiah 2. Right there in New York City, on the wall of the United Nations, it says this:

And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

The United Nations was put into effect to end war. There have been two hundred eighty-eight wars since it was in effect. The United Nations is the most corrupt organization you are ever going to find. You know how I know it is corrupt? I did not have to see all the papers to know it was corrupt. I knew it was corrupt because they put Isaiah 2:4 down. They did not put the whole verse down. They left out the first part. You know what the first part is? They left out, it says this: "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people," and then, "and they shall beat their swords into pruning." It is after He comes back that that happens. But they left out that part. You know why? Because they do not want Him to come back to the United Nations. You know why? They think America is going to make the kingdom. They think that it is some nation down here.

All governments. This is why you have to be careful. Even though I obey my government, I am loyal to my government. I render unto Caesar what is Caesar's; unto God, what is God's. I obey Romans 13. I realize that the structure of society, the very fabric by which holds society from becoming anarchy, has to be here. Whether it is corrupt or not, God takes care of me in the midst of the corruption. That is why I can go anywhere, anytime, anyplace, and do whatever God wants me to do under any oppressive government without having them interfere. You know why? Because there is such a thing as separation of church and state. God separates me out from the believer and says, "I will do with you what they will not let you do." That is what it is.

I am telling you, this is why the bottom line down through the history of the Bible, men have hated the nation of Israel, and men have hated God's people. Now, this is going to help you today because I see a lot of you really coming on here, and I see a lot of you have a lot of potential. But I am going to tell you something: the real problem with life on planet Earth is the fact that none of the governments, none of the nations, this is why they all have to go. None of them recognize what God is doing. They all think they have taken a place, and they are doing it for God. You find it in theology. You would go down here to Midwest Bible College in Kansas City or Kansas City Bible College or any Bible college around the country. They teach you that man is bringing in a kingdom. They would teach you that you and I are getting the world a better place to live, and when we clean it all up, then God will come back and establish the kingdom after we do it. That is not how it is going to happen.

God, from Isaiah 40, Isaiah 64, Psalms 9, Jeremiah 46, Zechariah 14, the verse that I gave you, God is going to come back and wipe out all of the nations, make an end to all the nations except one. He is going to start over again. That is what He is going to do. Coming through the history of the Bible, through the history of man, God's plan for man has been built around two concepts: in the Old Testament, the nation of Israel, and in the New Testament, the body of Christ.

Here lies the real issue. The real issue is one of discrimination. God is a racist. Now, that is the buzzword today. I remember when that first came into the forefront a number of years ago, when O.J. Simpson, remember him? O.J. Simpson killed his wife. The evidence was overwhelming. But you know what got him off? He got some slick lawyers who used the race card. That is where it all started. It had been around for a long time, but it really came into the forefront with O.J. Simpson. Here is a man that murdered his wife and murdered another guy and then gets off scot-free because his slick lawyers came up with the idea that everybody was a racist. When you say the word "racist," boy, everybody gets nervous. You go into your boss's work and say, "I am filing a suit for racism." He will give you all the racism you want. He will do anything. "Racist discrimination. Oh, you discriminated against my civil rights. Oh, you did this, you did that." You see, that is why men hate God. God is a racist. He is a racist. He really is.

Now, what I am about to say, I am a Gentile. I am not a Jew. I am a Gentile. If I was not a saved man, I would have a problem with this too. But when I got saved, I got it all in perspective because I am not a Gentile anymore. Now I am a Christian, so I understand it. I see how this thing goes. God has discriminated against every nation on planet Earth for one nation, the nation of Israel. That is why the world hates the Jew. In the New Testament, God has discriminated against every individual on planet Earth for the sake of you and me as the child of God. That is why they do not like you as a Christian.

V. The One Way: God's Exclusive Plan

When you start coming through the Bible, you realize that Israel had some unconditional promises that no other nation got. Look at Jeremiah 46. You know what He said? He said, "I will make a full end of all the nations, but I will not make a full end of thee." Now, if that is not discrimination, I do not know what is. That is why the Gentiles do not like the Jews. I will tell you another one. He is over there in John. You know why they do not like you and I as

Christians? Because you and I have promises from God that the world does not have. It just happens that way. That is why when you get saved, this is what happens: you are in a group of unsaved people. You get saved, your life changes, and immediately you want to try to do the right thing. Immediately when that happens, your friends see the difference. You know what they feel? They feel discriminated against. Because now you are happy, and they are not. That is where it starts. You start talking about going to church and the promises you have; they do not have any promises. See where it starts? They start to see your life change for the better. Their life is still in a toilet. They do not like it.

Then the next stage is you start to try to show them and tell them what you got, and you try to explain it to them, and as good as you try to do it, you know what you hear back? "Well, you just think you are right, and everybody else is wrong." "Oh, you are better than everybody now." My answer to that, I would not say it, but my answer is, "Yes, it is a nasty job, and somebody has to do it. I am better than you." Not because I am any better, but because I am saved. You want to get as good as I am? Get the goodness of God, and you will be just where I am at. But they do not get that. You know why? Because they feel discriminated against. They hated Israel; they are going to hate you. When you start to change your life, you young Christians, you are going to have people say, "Well, who do you think you are?" "Well, I am God's child. Who are you?" "Well, you think you are right, and everybody else is wrong." "Yes, that is exactly right, but not in that bad way." "Well, you think you are better than everybody else." "No, my sins are forgiven. I got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart." They got the boredom and the doldrums and all of the problems of life. They say, "You are happy," and they say, "How dare you be happy when I am so miserable?" They have been discriminated against. They are dealing with all of their problems there and there. And you are saying, "Well, you used to worry about these. Why do not you worry about this anymore?" You know what your smart mouth answer is? "Well, I found 1 Peter 5:8 last night. I was worried, and the Bible says, 'Casting all your care upon Him, for He cared for you.' So I just gave it to God, and I do not worry about it anymore." What? They have been discriminated. You know why? You got blessings that they do not have. You got promises that they do not have. You got something that they need. They do not understand it. Therefore, they see you. They have been discriminated against just like the nation of Israel was.

You think those Gentile nations down there, when God started to walk them through, and everybody got in the way, God just wiped them out, killed them all? You think they liked that? Well, there are some nations down there when they see Israel coming across their borders, you know what they do? They run out there and they say, "Hey, you guys come on in, come on through, have whatever you want. We heard what your God did to the other guys. Come right on down through there. Help yourself. You want something?" Did you think they liked that? No, they did not like it. Back inside there, underneath their breath, they were mumbling and grumbling. "Who do they think they are? Walk them through here. Look at them goofy looking Jews. Why do not they even look like us? What a weird. I was talking about only having one God. I got five hundred gods. My five hundred gods do not do what that one God does. I do not like them."

The world has all kinds of gods. It is called football, softball, baseball, hockey, fishing, hunting, all these things. That is their god. They bow down to them just like you do here. You worship your God; they worship theirs. But you see, they do not get the blessings out of theirs. Oh, you get a big buck, and it makes you feel good for a while. You know what? You make that big buck home, and you put him up there, and you look at it and say, "Wow, that was really fun today." Oh, yeah. And then you start thinking about all the problems you got. When you got the God that we got, it does not matter what the day is because it all belongs to Him. You just keep on going with it. God gave you some. He gave you unconditional promises as He did Israel. He gave you unconditional blessings like He did Israel. He gave you civil rights and spiritual rights He never gave Israel. He gave you material rights. He gave you religious rights. I will tell you what, when you got the real thing, you got something special.

I remember back in 1962 when they banned prayer in the schools. Oh, the Christians just went ballistic. I was just a young Christian then, or shortly thereafter. I was just a young guy then. I remember all that. But as I got older, you know, they were going to court over the thing. I thought to myself, I never really understood the issue. It was almost like God's people were saying, "Please, you cannot pass that law because you are going to take away my right to prayer." Hey, you can never take away my right to prayer. I do not care where you put me. I do not care. The problem was not banning prayer in schools. The problem was there is no prayer in the homes to begin with. That is where the issue needs to be. You think I care if some unsaved teacher gets on a megaphone and says, "Let us bow our heads, kiddies," and "Let us all pray to God. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He leadeth me by the still waters." You think I care about that? You think that does anything for my child spiritually? Well, we got all in a huff. You know why? Because we do not really know what we have.

You cannot take my religion. I like one of my favorite passages back in Judges 18. There is a story back there about a guy named Micah. He is a religious priest, and Micah is all in a tither. Micah had a house of gods, and in this house of gods, he had all kinds of graven images that he worshipped and statues. This is where he went to pray and meditate. One day he went in there, and they all were gone. You know what he cries out? "Somebody stole my gods!" He lost his religion. Now, that is a bad deal when somebody steals your religion. You cannot take what I got. That is why the world does not like it. The world wants to ruin your day. That is why they say mean, cruel things to you. Some of God's people want to ruin your day too. You know what? "Greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world." "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." I do not care what you say to me. You are not going to get what I got. I got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart. You are not going to get it.

Somebody says, "You cannot pray." "Okay, thank you, Father. I love you so much." "What are you doing?" "I am just talking about the weather and the birdies." "Oh, Lord, I love you so much." Do not move your lip. "What are you doing?" "Having the greatest prayer time I had all day." You cannot stop me. Somebody says, "Well, I will take this off. I will burn your Bible." "Sorry. Psalms 119 is hitting my heart. Go ahead. You want to take it. It is in here." Somebody says, "Well, I will fix your song, joy, joy, joy, joy. I will take your hymn book." "Go ahead. They are in my heart too." Somebody says, "I will fix you. I will kill your priest." "I will try it. They

did that once. He did not stay dead. You cannot get Him. He is at the right hand of God the Father. I want to see you try." Somebody said, "Well, I will bust your beads and bust your candles." "Go ahead. I was not planning on using them anyhow." You cannot get what I got. It is when you got the real thing, nobody can take it from you. Nobody. That is why the world hates us. That is why you are going to pay the price, young man, young lady. If you are going to do what God wants you to do, and you are going to understand God's plan for you and the other two plans, and then do it, you are going to get it.

I never put a spot on it. When you get saved, I hear preachers do it all the time. They say, "You know, a guy comes down and gets saved," and they will say, "Well, praise the Lord, brother. How you got saved? That is so great. I am glad you got saved. All your problems are over." What a lie that is. I want to tell you something: when you get saved, have you ever got saved, or when you ever do get saved, or maybe you are already saved, your problems are over as far as eternity and heaven and hell, but all your problems are starting. You know what my job is? Get you to understand those problems do not matter. Jamie and I have a little thing we always do. Jamie, give it to him. Come up here and show us that little thing. Come on, you can probably do it. This is Jamie and I, a little thing. When things get stressful, and we get on the edge, out of control, here is what we do. I learned this from two black guys a long time ago, and it helps. Here is what we do, do we not, honey? Just show them what we do. When things are really stressful, and maybe I am down, and we get together, and here is what we do. Just do it. Ready? "It does not really matter. It does not mean nothing. It does not mean nothing. It does not mean nothing. It does not mean nothing." Thank you. Go ahead and sit down. "It does not mean nothing." That is what we do. You know why? Because it does not mean anything. "You say, 'I will kill you.'" "Make my day." Nothing you can do to me. Nothing.

But you see, that is the problem. God chose one nation, and He chose one body. The world hates it. That is not all. God has three plans. In those three plans, God chose one galaxy, remember? In that galaxy, He chose one planet, remember? On that planet, He chose one piece of ground, Palestine, remember? Then He put one nation, Israel, on it, remember? He called one people, the Jew. He has got one city, Jerusalem. He has got one King, Jesus. He has got one government, Isaiah 9. We are all saved by one Spirit, put into one body, which is the one church, and there is only one way to heaven. While I am on a roll, there is only one Book. That is why they hate us.

In the Old Testament, God's plan for man was simple. God picked one nation. That nation, all the other nations hated. That one nation was on a particular spot on planet Earth, Jerusalem, the land of Palestine that God gave to them. Right now, Israel does not have all the land. They are surrounded by all those nations. That is okay. The book of Galatians says when Jesus Christ comes back, He is going to kick everybody else out. He is putting an end. He is putting an end to all the other nations. He already said, "I will bless those that bless thee, and I will curse those that curse thee." The other nations do not matter. There is only one nation. All history is one nation. It is everything. Every war that was ever fought is about one nation. Every government on this Earth was a counterfeit of that one nation and that one government because they resented being discriminated against by God for one nation. That is why they hate the Jews. That is why

Hitler killed them. That is why Spain banished them. That is why England banished them. That is why the Roman Empire wanted to wipe them out.

You know what He said in Genesis 17:1-5 when He was talking to Abraham?

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

He said in Genesis 18:18:

Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

There it is. Now what are you going to do with that? What do you think Clinton thinks about that? What do you think Bush really thinks about that? What do you think the Muslims in Iraq and Iran and Pakistan think about that? What do the United Nations think? You know what? It does not really matter. It does not mean nothing. It does not matter what they think. It only matters what God is going to do.

In the Old Testament, every nation that got to God and fellowship with God got in through one nation. If you were an Amalekite, a Jebusite, a Hittite, if you were a Moabite, whatever those nations were, and there is a whole list of them back there, whatever you were, if you wanted to get to God, you had to become a Jewish proselyte and accept their God and become a Jew. You wanted to get a copy of the Scriptures? It was in one language, Hebrew. There were no copies in Amalekite. There were no copies in Moabite. There were no Jebusites. There were no other. You had to go through one nation to get it, and all the world hates that nation. An example is the book of Ruth. Ruth was a Moabite. She stayed with Naomi, who is a Jew. She knew what she says, "My God will become, your God will become my God, your people become my people." She became a Jewish proselyte.

Now, when we pass from the Old Testament to the New Testament, we come from the literal kingdom of heaven dealing with Israel to the spiritual kingdom of God dealing with the church. Where in the Old Testament, everybody had to get in one nation, in the New Testament, everybody has got to get in one body. It is called the body of Christ in the book of Ephesians. It is where they are first called Christians in Acts 11. It is called the body of Christ, the church. In the Old Testament, as I said, a Gentile wants to get in, he has to get in through one nation. But in the New Testament, the Jew and the Gentile have to get into one body. That is what He says in 1 Corinthians 12:13.

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

In the Old Testament, everybody got in one nation. In the New Testament, everybody gets in one body. Just like they hated the nation of Israel because everybody had to come to that one nation, everybody hates you and me because they have got to come to the one body. Because everybody wants to get there their own way. They do not like the fact that God discriminated against the whole world and every nation and every individual by saying, "Hey, all you nations, you want to get to Me, come through one nation. Hey, all you people out there, you want to get to heaven, you have got to come through one church, one body, Me." Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes unto the Father but by Me." And one way is the only way in. That is just that simple.

VI. Our Mission: Bearing His Name and Reproach

Acts 9:15 is a verse in the Bible given by the greatest Christian ever lived, which begins to help you and me understand what our mission is by seeing the plan God had for him is the plan that God has for us.

But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

You want to know what your job is? To bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. You know what your job and my job is? You know what God's plan for you and I is? It is so simple. God has a plan for the universe; it is for the future. God has a plan for the Earth; right now, He is working out the redemption of man. That redemption plan runs for six thousand, seven thousand years. You and I are at the end of the six thousand year mark, and you and I are part of that plan. That plan is made up in the Old Testament by a nation of people, in the New Testament by a spiritual body, that what they do is one thing: they bear the name of Christ to the world.

Let us just detail that out. You do not know what your plan is and my plan is? It is simple. John 14:12, Jesus speaking. He is talking to His disciples. He says this:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

You know what God's job is for you and me? God wants you and I to finish what He started. That is all. How in the world are you and I going to do greater works than He did? You and I as mortal men and women. How are we ever going to do greater works than Jesus did? It is simple. He only lived here for thirty-three years, and He went back to heaven. He never stepped outside the confines of the Palestine area. You have the ability to go to the world. Some of you will live to be eighty or ninety years old. Some of you will have the ability to reach more people than He ever reached. You know why? Because He never planned to reach them. He planned to go back to heaven and have you and I finish the job. I am just going to say this to you, my friend: when you bear the name, you will pay the price. Now, that is the big kicker. That is the kicker. How

much are you willing to bear for Him? Oh, here it comes. This is the problem. How much are you willing to bear for His name?

When you look at Hebrews 13:11-13, it never gets any clearer than this. Here is what He says:

For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

You know what your job is and my job is? Taking a neck for Him. Take a stand for Christ. You are a spoke in the wheel. You are right here, you are there. Your job and my job is to bear the name, to pay the price. The Bible says that the preaching of the cross is foolishness to men who perish. So what? Who cares? The Bible says that it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. God wants me to preach, but the world looks at my preaching as foolishness. When you are going to bear His name, you are going to bear His reproach, and when you bear His reproach, you are going to become the living sacrifice where He became the dead sacrifice. That is why the Bible says in Romans 12:1-2:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

He died so you could carry on through living. That is your job and my job. God has a plan for the universe. He has a plan for the Earth, and He has got a plan for you and I. Everything, everything, everything that God has given you and I brings us to that end. The devil does everything to get us to focus on the other things.

VII. Living Out God's Plan: Accountability and Purpose

God gave you prayer so you could be in touch with God. God gave you a church so you could be taught and trained. God gave you marriage. I am telling you, young couples getting married today, they have not got a clue. It is not all their fault. They come to the place where in Genesis 2-3, we talked about a marriage class that when God gave Adam his wife, He did not give him a helpmate. He gave him a help meet. He had a plan. He had something he had to do, and God did not give him a mate. Animals have mates because animals have no plans except to have other little animals. Your job is not just to procreate. Yes, you are going to have kids, but there is a bigger thing. God did not give you a helpmate. He gave you a help meet. He wants you to pick somebody that will help you fulfill the task that God has called you to do.

Oh, we would revolutionize. We would end the wars in a heartbeat if young men and young ladies, when they looked at a prospective young gal or a young man, the question was, "Will you love me all my life?" The question would not be, "Well, are you going to provide for me?" The question would be, "Look, pal, I am going to stand before God at the judgment seat of Christ. If you mess me up, I am going to kill you." She looks back at him and says, "Look, bozo, I am

going to stand there. You better get it straight because if you screw me up, I am going to knock your lights out." Now, that is what it ought to be. Something like that. Because I am telling you something, sweetheart, you are going to stand before God, and He is not going to care. Get it out of your mind. Just like He does not care about the football games. He does not care about the home runs. He does not care about the United Nations, America. He cares about one thing: have you got the plan down in your life? Are you picking a bozo or a sweetheart gal that is going to take from you at the judgment seat of Christ everything that God had for you?

You know what the judgment seat of Christ is going to be? It is going to be God showing you and me all that we had. Then He is going to show us what we traded it for. Oh, when we get to heaven, there may be no more tears, and God may wipe away all tears. But at the judgment seat of Christ, there is going to be some tears. God's people are going to realize that they had a job. God had a plan, and everything that He gave them was to that end. They just threw it away because they thought that God was somebody who did not care, was not keeping the record. I am telling you, if young men and young ladies, when they got married, would look and say, "Hey, look, I have a personal accountability before Almighty God. I got a job. I am part of a plan. I got to do it. And I cannot have somebody that is dead weight either. You are going to pull the load, or I am going to find somebody else." "Oh, but look at his eyes and the way his hair curls." "But look at her, how lovely she is. She is my dream girl." Well, at the judgment seat of Christ, your dream girl is going to become Freddy Krueger on the mirror of the terror of Elm Street. Nightmare on Elm Street, excuse me. Oh, we are so far out of touch. We are.

God, when He went to heaven, He replaced Himself with three things.

- The first thing He gave us was the Holy Spirit of God. That is our guide.
- The second thing He gave us was the Word of God. That is our roadmap.
- The last thing was the church. That is the vehicle by which we get to where God wants us.

You know, I do not know if we ever built a church building. I do not care. When I first, I got a little bit of attitude about this anyhow. So when we started, I got all kinds of advice from people who never built churches. One pastor told me that the first thing you do is get a building. When you get a building, he says, "You know what, people just come. They will drive down the street and they will say..." You know why I waited almost a year and a half before I put the sign out there? I am going to tell you why. I do not want to have a church filled with people because they saw a building. I will tell you the truth. Now, this is the pastor's perspective now. I do not want to have a church because people drive by and see the sign out there. Now, I put a sign out there because some of you guys could not find your way home, so I had to help you out. But you know what? Bottom line is this, I want to tell you something. I got some friends who are in the ministry, and I listened to them talk. I never say much. I am older than they are by fifteen or twenty years, so I have learned to keep my mouth shut. But I listen to what they say. You know what they got when you have a church out there? You know what you got when you got a big electric sign? I do not have a web page. Every church they see has got a web page. www.comeseemegivemeyourmoney.com. They all do.

Back in Ohio, I drove by the old church that I grew up in and really got trained in the ministry. In its heyday, it ran five thousand people. That was back in the seventies, late sixties. They are running one thousand, one thousand two hundred people now. See what happens when I leave town? Things fall apart. No, not really. I told my mom. We were driving around, and I told her, "I said, you know what happened?" I said, "They wanted everybody to come to church, but they did not do anything with them when they got them." My buddy is talking about it. I hear him talk about it. You know, they will get people to get mad at this guy's church, and they come over to their church. Then after about six months, they get mad at something here, then they go someplace else. It is like when we were kids growing up, remember the musical chairs we played? Well, they do it now called musical churches. When the music stops, you just sit down in the church someplace for a while. When you do not like it, then you go someplace else.

Now, I am going to say this to you, and I mean this with all of my heart. You may just think I am saying this because you are sitting here, but it is not. I am going to tell you something: we got the best deal going. You know why? This is what I wanted from day one. I did not care about a building. Do not care about one now. Maybe someday we will have to do one. If God does it, then He will pay for what He orders. That is not my concern. But I know this: I know you do not build a church that way. I know you do not build it by mass evangelism. I know you do not go out by knocking on doors on Saturday afternoon, getting doors slammed in your face. You know how you do it? You get a group of people, and then you throw your heart into those people, and you train them one person at a time. You know why our church is growing? Our church is growing because you are excited about the Word of God, and you are going out and telling somebody else and bringing them in. We are getting a lot of good people that are just so stupid; they have not become professional Baptists yet. You know what my job is? Keep you as stupid as I can. I do not ever want you to get professional.

There will never be a day when you will walk in here and you will say, "Well, you know, you will call me Dr. Bob. Professor Bob." "Well, yes, we have, how many?" A guy asked me, he says, "What degrees do you hold?" I went, "Yeah, black belt." Scared him. Oh, yeah. You know, whoa, that could be good. I do not go in for those things. I told you last week, a guy said, "Well, look what we got. Look at all this here." He walked me around, and I said, "Yeah, what do you, he said, what do you have?" I said, "We got a big jungle gym down there, man. It is great." Like God cares. He cares no more about that than He does. You know what you do? I get you to fall in love with the Lord and love Him with all your heart. People around you will see the difference. As simple as this: if your Christianity is not contagious, then your Christianity is contaminated. Ninety-nine percent of God's people out there, Christianity, have been contaminated. Yours is contagious. That is the way it has to be. People seeing God real, and I see it in your preaching, guys. I see it in your attitude, ladies. I see it in your zeal in the Bible. I see it in your Exodus stuff, in your Genesis stuff. I see it. There is a movement in here, brother, of the Spirit of God, that you are getting a hold of this thing. God, you are actually beginning to understand what your job and your function is.

You know what? Not everybody will get it. I wish they would, but it will not happen. It has never happened. When Gideon went to fight the Midianites, he had thirty thousand people. God said he

had too many. He cut them down to three hundred. When Noah got on the ark, there must have been four and a half billion people on planet Earth; only eight made it. The nation of Israel was two plus four or five million people back there in First Kings. When they went into the past, God said, "You know what? I got seven thousand left." God always does it with a minority. I wish it was opposite, but it is not going to be. The odds are against you. Somebody, bless your heart, as much as I love you, you are just never going to turn it over to God the way you need to. You are just never going to plug in the thing all the way. We get our occasional fruit loop that comes in and out. I mean, we all, never sure as to, hey, wherever you got light, you got bugs, man. I do not know what to tell you. But we do not have any professional Christians. We got men and women that love God, that love that Book that you just cannot wait to get in it again. That is what it takes. That is what builds a church. You do not build a church any other way than one person at a time. Taking them, training them, helping them, working them through their problems, bringing them to the point. That is what you are doing.

VIII. The Shortness of Life and Our Responsibility

I want to tell you something: you will pay the price for it. You will pay the price in your family for it. You will pay the price down the road someplace for it. That is okay. That is our job. Our job is to keep each other accountable to the plan. Our job is to help each other, pray for each other, deal biblically with problems when they come up. Our job is not that in churches, when they just live to shoot their wounded. You got somebody that is down and hurting, and instead of somebody helping them, somebody goes through a problem. Somebody goes through a heartache. Somebody goes through this. Somebody falls in the work and falls into sin. We do not lift them up and help them. We just walk over and shoot them. That is the way Christianity operates today. It cannot work that way. We have got to help each other. We have got to hold on to each other. We have got to do biblically with everything that we do. We have got to edify. We have got to admonish. We have got to take the young Christians that God gives them. We have got to protect them. We have got to see the big picture. We have got to look at the plan of God, and we have got to see that we are just one link in the chain. That chain goes for six thousand, seven thousand years.

We need to understand that you and I are an individual. He tells you in Psalms 1:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

We just got a season. We just got a short time. God's plan for you and me has been made up of millions and millions of men and women who lived less than one hundred years that God just said, "Bob, get my plan. Give me what you got." If everybody does that, we will get the job done. "Finish for Me what I did not finish because I went back to heaven because I am counting on you to do it." You know the biggest thing that keeps me straight? I do not want to let Him

down. I just do not. I understand that any wall is only as strong as its weakest brick. Any chain is only as strong as its weakest link. We know we got a lot of cute little sayings, especially with Pammy Steinmetz and I, if you know we, and we always show it each other, through different little things I have said, "Hold the line," and all that stuff.

When it comes to this, my attitude about God's plan, knowing what I know, understanding the big picture, understanding where I am at in relationship to Christ's coming, and understanding that this church will only be as strong as its weakest link. You know what the attitude of heart of everybody in this church ought to be? It ought to be simply this: "Not going to be me. I am not going to be the weakest link. I am not going to be the one that lets Him down. I am not going to be the one that breaks when the strain is on. I am not going to be the one that does not pull my share of the load. It is not going to be me. It might be you, but it is not going to be me."

If every child of God understood what I am talking about today, saw God's plan for the universe, in that God's plan for the Earth, the redemption of man on that Earth, our part, finishing for Him what He started, understanding that we only have a short time. You know what Psalms 90 says? I gave it to you a couple of weeks ago.

For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.

The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

He says, "Life is nothing." On the average, He says seventy, maybe eighty. He says, "You know what? You have only got a short time. You are just a small link in this chain, folks." So He says in verse 12, "Oh, dear God, teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." That is the key: applying our hearts to God's wisdom, simply understanding the plan. You have only got a short time to do the job. This church, we have only got a short time. I am fifty-six. Someday I will be sixty-six, then I will be seventy-six, then I will be eighty-six. Someplace along the line, I am going to go home to be with the Lord. So is everyone here. You may sit down there and say, "Well, Bob is getting older," as years go by, so are you. My season may end a little bit before you, but everybody in this room, your season is going to end. The bottom line is going to be everything in your life. What was it done? Was it done because of the fact that you have got the plan together, and you realize your job, and you said that God is not going to be me, Lord, it is not going to be me. I will not be the weakest link. It will not be me.

You are part of the greatest plan, God's plan, the plan of all the ages, and God has put it all together with a purpose and a plan. But you have got to understand, my part in it, it is only temporary. I am not going to live forever. Most of God's people are living their life like they live forever. I have never understood it. I look at the pastors today, and the churches and the Christians today, and they all equate themselves back to being biblical and scriptural, but there is not one of them, a pastor that I have seen in the last five or ten years, that lives his life like Paul did. They live in gigantic mansions. They make great salaries. Some of them make a million

dollars plus a year with all their benefits. They buy all their books, give them two cars, pay for their house, give them everything that they want. They get big fat salaries, and they have big churches, and they stand up there in those pulpits, and they actually pretend that they are akin to the Apostle Paul, who when he died, the only stocks and bonds that he had were on his hands and his feet. He had nothing, but in reality, he had everything. You know why? He figured out the plan. He figured out the plan. And you know what Paul's greatest thing was? Though he never said it, Paul knew he was just part of an intricate thing. That is why he trained other men. That is why he wrote what he wrote. He knew the plan, and he knew he was going to pass off the scene. You know what Paul's motto was? Even though he never said it, "It will not be me. This is the weakest link."