

I. Introduction to the Book of John and Sermon Purpose

We are back to the book of John today. So far, the book of John has been an incredible book, rich and full of so many great stories. As always, we are going to take our time, certainly in no hurry, laying it all out. There is so much to learn, so much to process, and then, of course, getting it into your Bible. As always, on Thursday night, if there are things that I lay out that you want clarified or more information on, you can always use Thursday night for that, and I will try to help you get it into your Bible and into your heart as best I can.

Remember that last time we finished our study on Nicodemus and his conversation with the Lord Jesus in John chapter 3. As Bible students who are working to show ourselves approved, we now have an understanding of how this story lays out. I took the time to show you historically that it was a real story, and doctrinally, that it is a picture of the nation of Israel and what they need to understand about being born again. Then I showed you inspirationally last week how, as I have told you, taking the parallels and running them from the Old Testament, based on New Testament principles, into the New Testament. This example in John 3 is a really good one; it is an easy one to show us how we do our entire Bible.

In fact, I would encourage you to make John chapter 3 a model. Go in there and lay it out the way I did so you see all the key words and how it breaks itself down. Then, when you come up against another story, follow that same pattern, and I think it will help you. Always understand that not all the Bible is written directly to you, but it is always written for you. The key is being able to understand where you are at, the context, what you are dealing with, and then make those three applications.

I took the time last week to show you a model of how I do it, how I blend John chapter 3 into the plan of salvation for the church age. I showed you how I do not use it directly, but I go to Romans, and we talked about the Romans road in Romans 3, Romans 6, and Romans 10. I wanted to give you an understanding of how you put John 3, at some place in there (everybody does it differently), into your soul-winning format. John chapter 3, the story of Nicodemus, as I showed you last week, has a lot of powerful things that you can use to show a person their need without ever getting into the born-again issue, which you can deal with in Romans.

I showed you the importance of how to make the Bible work for you. That is something I have talked about all my ministry with anybody, no matter where they are, in those almost 50 years: making the Bible work for you. I call it a working knowledge of the scriptures, how to use it in any given situation. That is my goal for you who want it.

II. The Laodicean Mindset and the Importance of the Word

I think the greatest truth out of last week, and I look back on my messages after I preach them and think about what was the most important thing I wanted to get across, was when I talked about 2 Timothy 2:15, to study to show thyself approved. Our approval rating as a child of God,

when it comes to God and His Bible, when He looks at you and me and our relationship with the Word, what level of approval rating does He put us at?

I showed you how today the Laodicean mindset of God's people, not the world, but God's people, is that they want to have a relationship with Christ, but they do not want to have a relationship with the Word of God. Omel Sobaka used to say, and I remember it like it was yesterday, there are two kinds of ministries, two kinds of works: a workforGod and a workofGod. There have been no two truer words ever spoken.

Without any real ability to use the Bible, and you just have your little pet verses on salvation or this or that, or whatever you pick and choose, people prop themselves up today with some spiritual substitute that they actually think is going to take the place of just really getting in and knowing the Bible. They do it in soul winning. I have seen this all my ministry. I have seen people whose only talk was about winning people to Christ. I remember a guy years ago who was one of the nicest guys, and I loved him dearly. He was one of the best soul winners you would ever meet. Every time I saw him, he would talk about how many people he witnessed to. I really loved him; he was a great guy. But he knew nothing about the Bible. He knew nothing about the Word of God. He lost his family. His kid did not want to come to church. His wife was a great lady. His idea that soul winning was the number one thing propped him up.

I told you last week, I have seen people do it with the concept of prayer. "Oh, the great prayer warriors!" Yet, in reality, if you threw a Bible in front of them and they had to give you the foundational passages on prayer in the Bible, they could not do it. I have seen them do it with the bus ministry. We do not have a bus ministry; I am not advocating we start one. But I grew up in the era where the bus ministry was the real deal. They brought kids from the inner city, which was great. I used to take them to camp; I used to try to win them to Christ. My favorite story with the bus kids is, as I was walking before the service through the hallway of the church, it was a big church, and there on the wall, they had a plaque of all the men and women who had gone out of that church, who had given their lives from World War II to Korea, Vietnam, and all those things. A little bus kid was standing there looking at it, and I said, "Hey, pal, how are you doing?" He said, "I'm doing good." He said, "What's this?" I tried to explain to him that this is a plaque to honor a memorial of all the people that died in the service. He looked at me and said, "Was that the morning service or the evening service?" Things like that are precious to me.

But I have seen those same people who got into the bus ministry, and all they wanted to do, and they actually thought because they knocked on doors and brought kids to church, that that really took the place of getting into the Word of God to any depth. I have seen church workers do it. I have seen them work in the children's ministry. I have seen them do this; I have seen them do that. They will go around everywhere and get involved in all kinds of stuff except the Bible. I use myself as an example, early on when I first got saved. There is no substitute. You will never get a good approval rating from God without getting into the Word of God because everything else is just a worthless workforGod. It is important to you, but the most important thing to God is not soul winning; it is not prayer; it is not bus ministry; it is truth. Until God's people pick that up and get into the book, they will have a workforGod maybe, but they will never have a workofGod.

The idea of becoming one with Christ through salvation, which I think everybody here that is saved would say amen to, is that we became one with Christ through salvation. But we will never become one with Christ in the Word of God. How phony is that? But that is the lay of the Laodicean mindset today, pretending we have this great spiritual relationship with Christ. "Oh, we care about souls. We care about this. We care about that." But we do not care about the depth of the Word of God. For us, it needs to be all-consuming: one with His word in your heart and your thoughts and your mind and your spirit and your actions and your job within your family, every aspect of your being.

As I thought about that this week, I think the greatest example of that is in the Old Testament with the nation of Israel. What many of us have with God, we only drag out on Thursday night or Sunday morning. If you are your average church, it is Wednesday night. So we live our lives the way we want to. We show up to church on Wednesday night for Wednesday night service. We show up for church on Sunday morning and probably Sunday night in the average Baptist church. That is when we drag out our Christianity. We give God Wednesday night, Sunday morning, maybe Sunday night. But the rest of the week, we pretty much are who we want to be.

As I thought about that, I thought, the great example of being totally consumed by the Word of God in every part of our life is a picture of the nation of Israel. In every aspect of their life, their culture, their lifestyle, their families, everything about them revolved around the Word of God, God, the law that Moses gave them, totally and completely. They were embedded in it. From the time they were raised, they were raised around the Word of God. They knew the law. They knew everything and understood it in every fashion of their life. I am not saying they did not do other fun things; I guess they did. But I know this: every part of their culture, their family, every aspect of their life revolved around the Word of God that God gave them.

I think that is the great model for us. Obviously, that is dealing with a literal thing back there, but for us spiritually, it is the same thing. It is God having all your heart through the Word of God. God having all of our thoughts through the Word of God. God having our mind through the Word of God. God having our spirit through the Word of God, our actions, our job, our family through the Word of God. The Word of God for us in the New Testament has to be all-consuming. It has to consume us in everything. Of course, the way it does is by studying to show thyself approved. God's model for us is the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. Your working knowledge of God's Word is God's Word working through you. But you have to get into it to make it work.

III. Introducing the Numbers 21 Story

Today, we will look at another story in John that Jesus gave the nation of Israel. Again, it is a great example, and again, we will see this open up into a complete study. That is what most of the stories do in the Bible. You do not get into a lot of stories after the book of Acts. But Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, obviously the Old Testament is filled with them. In the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and also the book of Acts, are just filled with stories. Once you get into Romans, you are on doctrinal ground. From that point on, you are dealing with doctrinal issues with the Bible's teaching us.

I will tell you, stories in the Bible, when you begin to unlock them, when you begin to open them up, they will become some of the greatest studies that you will ever take in the Bible. This is why character studies are so valuable to studying your Bible. They all open up into somebody's life. When you get into these stories like we are going to look at today, it opens up into a complete study that you can spend a week, a month on. This will be another opportunity today for those of you who really want to get the Bible down and learn and see how to unlock your Bible and make the application of principles from the Old Testament to the New Testament. My goal for those of you who want to do it is to get to that point in your life when you have a working knowledge of the Bible. You do not have to prop yourself up with some spiritual facade that you actually deceive yourself, that you think you are really doing something for God, when at the end of the day, if you do not have the book, you do not have anything. You do not have anything.

Now, I want to read John chapter 3 for you. We are going to read the next three verses. I am going to read all three verses today, but we are only going to look at verse 14. I just want the other two for a little bit of context, but we will work through the other two verses here as we lay these three verses out over the next couple of weeks.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Let us pray. Father, help us today to learn the Word of God. Help us to be able to take this verse and to see and learn from it how, as this verse, as so many verses in the New Testament, will open up into an incredible study. Lord, do not let us go home today with just a sermon under our belt. Let us go home today with an understanding of how we unearth the scriptures, how we use the Bible to unlock these great stories, because within these great stories are the issues of life. Help us today, Father, to learn how to do this. I am not interested anymore in just preaching a sermon. I am interested in taking my people that You have given to me, that I am responsible for, and the ones that will do it, the ones that want to do it, help them learn how to open up the scriptures. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.

As I said, I read three verses today, but we are only going to deal with verse 14. Again, I want to show you one of the great Old Testament stories in the Bible. I want to show you how you start here. God gives you the key, and then you run back to where the key is found in the Old Testament, and then you watch how the story will develop itself. This is Bible study 101 today. We are going to have some fun today. Not that we do not always have fun with the Bible, but it is days like today that I love times when I can help you learn your Bible.

In my book on how to study the Bible, back there in the bookstore, which by the way has sold well under a million copies, you are going to find that one of the things I do in there is I talk about the Bible being a picture book. In the bookstore, we also have little kids' Bibles. For your little kids, they can go in there, and what they do in those Bibles is you will read the story of maybe Adam and Eve, and you will read a couple of pages about that, and then there will be a

picture of Adam and Eve in the garden. For a little child, the picture illustrates what you just read. You will go on and you will read about the death of Abel by Cain, and there will be a picture of a mean old Cain with a big old rock or a club and Abel laying on the ground. You will read over there in Genesis chapter 6 about Noah, and you will read a couple of things in there about the flood, and then you will turn the page, and there will be that big old ark with the clouds looming over it and all the animals two by two going up in that ark. Little kids need that illustration, because when they just read something, for a little child, the illustration of a picture really makes what you just read understandable.

When God wrote the Bible, He did it the same way, because pictures in the Bible are what your Bible is all about. We are to be little children when it comes to the Word of God. Jesus said in Matthew 18:2-4, and I do not know why they cannot get this, He said, "Except ye come to me as a little child, ye have no part of me." There is no scholarship when it comes to the Bible. There is no Greek or Hebrew. There is no great learned man who has studied the Scriptures for a thousand years that has the key to the Bible. We are all Bible students; we are just on different levels. But you can never come to the point where you grow up when it comes to your relationship with God and the Bible. It takes a childlike faith. When God wrote a Bible, He wrote a Bible that He will tell you some things, and then throughout the Bible, there are pictures of what He illustrates. I am going to preach to you one of those pictures today.

The Bible is not a hard book to learn. I always tell you that. It is not a hard book to learn. You just have to follow three basic things.

1. You have to follow the rules. You have to stay with the rules of the Bible. You do not follow the rules when you go home today, you get a ticket. The rules are, we have given them out many, many times, but you have to follow the rules.
2. The second aspect of learning your Bible is a self-discipline to it. You have to discipline yourself to the rules. You can have all the rules; you can have them in your Bible. I have had people come over and say to me, and call me on the phone or see me here at church, and they will say, "I want you to come over. I am going to come over and I really want you to show me how to lay out my Bible." Well, okay, I got that. But me showing you how to do it is going to be very simple. I am not going to move in with you. I am not going to show up every time you study the Bible and make sure you follow the rules. I mean, I can sit down with you for a thousand hours, but if you do not do what you are supposed to do when it comes to the book, we are wasting our time. So you have to have the rules, but you have to have the self-discipline to use the rules.
3. The third thing is you have to be a workman. It is not going to just come to you. You are going to have to work to get it.

It is going to take a childlike faith based on a childlike Bible, based on your childlike relationship. The perfect or biblical balance for every one of us that is saved is that you become a man with the Word of God, but you stay a child in your relationship with Him. That is the balance.

Now, what Jesus says in John 3:14:

John 3:14

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.

Let us just look at that verse for a moment. I am not going to be like Thursday night where I ask you to raise your hand of what you saw. We do not have time for that today, but just look at it. Let us read it again: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up."

One of the things that you need to do as you discipline yourself in the Bible and you follow the rules, one of the things that you need to do, and you can put it in any one of these three you want, you need to develop a spiritual eye. You need to be able to see something in the Bible and see it almost immediately from a spiritual eyesight perspective. When you read this verse here, "And Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up," what do you see? If somebody asked you after church this morning, "Hey, would you come over to our prayer group or our Zoom group or whatever, and would you take that verse and just give us a five, six, seven, eight, ten minute deal on it?" What would you do with it? How is your spiritual eyesight when you see verses like this? Because this is, as you are going to see here in a minute, one of the greatest stories you are ever going to unearth in the Bible. The fact that you have been saved what, 10, 12, 15, 20, 30 years and you cannot unearth it, you need to get yourself a bigger shovel. There is something wrong.

When he read this in verse 14, here is the first thing I see: he is talking about an event that happened all the way back in the Old Testament. Of course, if you are a student in the Bible who shows himself approved, you know that would be Numbers chapter 21. Let me just say this, I know there are a lot of people here today that you are just at the entry level, or you are maybe not even at the entry level, or you are moving away through this thing and you are being worked with and you are growing, and you would not absolutely know that. I am okay with that. I am not saying that to make you feel bad. I am saying that because you have to develop the ability at some point to be able to see those things in the scripture. If I am getting on anybody, I am getting on to those of you who have been around for 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 120 years, and you still cannot get it.

Now, let us go back to Numbers chapter 21. Let us do that. We are going to have fun today, but I want you to see how you develop this. Numbers chapter 21. This is quite a story. Let us go back and read the account that Jesus is making a reference to in John chapter 3, verse 14. That would be the first thing my spiritual eye would see. We know from Revelation chapter 3 that one of the four or five problems the Laodicean church had is that they are blind.

Numbers 21:4-9

And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.

And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole: and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

Spiritual eye, what do you see in that? We have obviously given you the first clue. We went from John 3:14 to here. But in this passage, look at it just for a moment. What do you see? When I look at it, I see four, five, six things here that just pop out. You have to develop the ability to do that. Today, I want to help you. The way you learn it is by having somebody doing it, and then you see the pattern, and then you make a model of that for yourself, a template, so to speak. Then you use that on every story that you find. That is how I did it.

Right here in the book of Numbers, you have a picture, whether you know it or not, of your salvation. A couple of months ago, I preached out of Exodus 12, "The Gospel According to Exodus." Here today, we have "The Gospel According to Numbers." I want you to begin to look at this passage, and we are going to talk about several things here before we get to the verse we want.

IV. The Wilderness Journey and the Promised Land

In our study here, I want you to notice that Israel has just come out of the Red Sea Crossing. You know this story. God called them out in Exodus 12. They head down there to the Promised Land, and they come to the Red Sea. Somebody looks behind them, and Pharaoh decided that he was not going to let them go. So he is after them now. They begin to be afraid, thinking that Moses brought them out there, and now they are going to get killed. So what does God do? God opens up the Red Sea. They go across, and then they get to the other side, and somebody looks back, and they see Pharaoh's army coming through the Red Sea that is still split open, and now they start to be afraid again. So what does God do? He closes up the Red Sea, drowns all Pharaoh's army, and off they go. It is a great miracle. In our story today, they have just come out of that Red Sea Crossing. Now they start the journey to the Promised Land.

Let me help you with this. What does the Promised Land mean? In most Baptist churches today, certainly in neo-evangelical churches with most guys today who know nothing about the Bible, they say that the Promised Land is a picture of you dying and going to heaven, crossing over Jordan. They wrote songs about it. I have heard guys preach messages on it, that when you die, you cross over Jordan, and the Promised Land is heaven. That just is not true. I am sorry. That is just not the way it works. But I get it. When you do not know anything about the Bible, you are left to getting your sermons off the internet. I understand that.

Let me talk to you about the Promised Land. My first clue would be "Promised Land." Heaven is not a Promised Land. There are promises to me that I am going to heaven, but once I get to heaven, I do not need the promises. I am going to be like Christ. I am going to be everything that He is. Promises are not going to do me any good. I am going to be the Word of God incarnate.

What does the Promised Land really represent? I will tell you what it represents. It represents you and me right now in this life, going through our own wilderness journey, coming out of Egypt, the type of the world through salvation (Exodus 12), and then coming to the place in your life and my life where we live in a world that is totally against us, but we survive by the promises God gave us. You ever go back to Joshua 1 and look at the three things God tells them? Here is the way it worked for them historically: they went into the Promised Land, which God promised them, but they had to fight to keep it, and they had to stay in the Word of God to keep it. Any time they got out of the Word of God and they got into sin, they got into all kinds of problems.

The Promised Land for you and for me is the life that we get through studying to show ourselves approved, getting the Word of God in our lives, that you and I now live by the promises of God even though we are in the wilderness of sin. But nobody can get that today. Of course, it really is the key to our study here. The Promised Land is you getting to the place in your life with that book that you are strong, that you are mature, and that you have a working knowledge of the Bible. Every day you live by the promise of God. You do not live by your emotions anymore. You do not prop yourself up with some kind of spiritual facade. Your self-worth is found in a book through God doing a work with you, using you, giving the circumstances into your life.

I have people all the time, they come to me, especially, "Why don't you give me somebody to disciple?" I have heard that for the last 15, 16 years. I always say the same thing: "Why don't you go out and win somebody to Christ and disciple him?" Why is it incumbent upon me to give you somebody or give you somebody to work with? God has plenty of unprepared sinners out there. What He does not have is prepared servants, which you are not one of them. So you whine and complain about you do not have anybody to work with when all you have to do is just win somebody to Christ. I mean to tell you, it is that simple. You just have to get into the mainstream of your New Testament local church and be part of what God is doing and then let God put you wherever He wants you to go.

As a pastor, it is just in me, as a pastor, you get blamed for everything. I do not mind getting blamed for everything, but I do mind getting blamed for your lack of spirituality. Do not blame me because you are not in the book. Do not blame me because God is not using you. Do not blame me because you do not have anything going with God. That is not my fault. I had to do what I had to do to get there. Everybody else does, so do you. That is the way it works. This is an incredible story. So the Promised Land is when you and I come to the place in our life where we live by the promises of God and we do not want for anything because God supplies every need that you have, including the people that you invest. You are not going to tell me for a moment that God saved you to do a work and you do not have a work today, and that is my fault or somebody else's fault. No, no, it is your fault. You have to get in the book. If you get in the book, the book will get in you, and then you can get into others. That is how it works.

Now, I need you to see this next thing here. There are so many good things here. We are developing our story. Spiritual eye. I need you to see this. Here we are, all of us, developing a trained eye. My dad was a great mushroom hunter. We have some great mushroom hunters in our church here. My dad loved to hunt mushrooms, and it is coming that time of year here next May or sometime. They just pop out of the ground. My dad used to take me mushroom hunting with him. I must confess, I never found a mushroom any time in my life. I found toads. I found turtles. I found garter snakes. But mushrooms eluded me. My dad could spot a mushroom 20 feet away. He would say to me, "Bob, get that mushroom." And I said, "Where is he?" He said, "You are standing on it." I could not see him. You know why? He had a trained eye. He had been hunting mushrooms since he was a kid back in Maryland.

I know you hear this story all the time. My dad and his family, I think there were what, five or six brothers and three sisters. They lived in a log cabin. I saw the cabin when I was a little kid. It is gone now. They lived in a log cabin. Darlene knows this. Sharon knows this. They lived in a log cabin. They did not have any electricity. Their dad took off or died or whatever. I did not ever get the full story. When they were all there and all mom had was all these boys, five or six of them, and I think three daughters, three girls. I may be wrong on that. But it was a crowd in a log cabin. They had to survive. My dad was a crack shot. You know why? Because that is how they survived hunting. He was a great fisherman. You know why? That is how they survived fishing. That is what they did. My dad could spot a mushroom a mile away. We would be driving down the road and he would say, "There is a mushroom over there in the field," and pull over and go get it. I could not see him at all. You know why? He had a trained eye. You have to train your eye to see those suckers. Because you just look at the grass, you look at the foliage and all that stuff. They are there. I could never see them. Because it takes a trained eye. When it comes to the Bible, for you to see the things in the Bible that I want to give you, that you in time need to get yourself, you have to have a trained eye, guys. It is just that simple.

Now, let us flip back to Deuteronomy chapter 1. I want you to see this. Because here we are. You need to see this today.

Deuteronomy 1:1-3

These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab.

(There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadeshbarnea.)

And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the Lord had given him in commandment unto them;

He says in verse 2, "There are 11 days' journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir unto Kadeshbarnea." They are right here now. He says from when you come out of the Red Sea going to the Promised Land, it is an 11-day journey. It is an 11-day journey. Get it now, from the time they come out of the Red Sea, where they are at here where we are reading this thing, till they get

to the Promised Land was 11, it was only going to take them 11 days to get there. Look at verse 3: "And it came to pass in the fortieth year." This is a great sermon in itself: 40 years for an 11-day journey. They could have gotten to the Promised Land in 11 days. It took them 40 years because they simply would not do what God told them to do.

I ask God's people the same question. I ask myself the same question. How long will it be before you get the Bible down and you are living by the promises? Some of you have been with me what, two years, three years, four years, five years. All I can say about you is, "Wow, you are about to cross over Jordan or you have already crossed over." Yet I have had some with me 20, 30, 40, 30 years, and they are still wandering in the wilderness. 40 years for an 11-day journey. This goes to show you what Moses was up against. It should show you what we are up against in Christianity today. You can have that Bible almost as fast as you want it. I know there is no shortcut to it, but boy, let me tell you something. You stick with me and let me give you, and you follow the Bible Institute and the people ministry on Thursday night, and you do the work you need to do, you can be there in five years. Why is it taking you 30 years and you are still not there?

Some of God's people could not put the Word of God together if their life depended on it. I know, and I am not suggesting you do not know some things about the Bible. Certainly not. But you do not know the Bible. When I left Canton, Ohio, one of the prerequisites of being sent out in ministry, I had to answer 10 questions. I had those 10 questions in the front of my Bible. Those 10 questions I had to go before four or five guys who really knew their Bible. I had, they asked me, each one of them had a question I had to answer. I could not use my Bible. I could not have any notes. I had to teach it from what it was in my heart. I just could not give them a one-line answer. Every one of them, and there was a guy timing me, every one of them had to be 10 to 15 minutes, 20 minutes long. Because those 10 questions that they asked me, if you could answer them and answer them thoroughly, there was no question you knew your Bible.

Now, I do not make people do that today. You know why? Because you would all leave the church. Shoot, people leave the church today just because you preach a hard message. I can imagine somebody saying, "Well, I want to get in ministry. Here are these 10 questions. Wow, you sit out here and let me run them through you." Well, I am not going to do that. No, you are not going to do that because you do not know them. So I will not embarrass you. But that is what it takes. You see, this is the problem between my generation and your generation. We got nailed hard when it came to the Bible. The people that used me in ministry did not take any flimsy excuses like people give today. They held us accountable. You did it their way or you did not do anything. If you did not do what was right, you got your head handed to you publicly because they knew that we had to endure a hardness, and they were not afraid to put us on the spot because, you know what? If somebody just comes up, puts their arm around you and pats you on the little shoulder and said, "Next time you are going to do it this way," you will not remember it. Somebody calls you out in the middle of a sermon someplace and said, "Why do not you preach that right?" You remember that. Happened to me. I remember it like it was yesterday. I had nightmares about it. Best thing that ever happened to me. 40 years, 40 years for an 11-day journey.

I will tell you. This is why I feel so out of place, and I will be honest with you. This is why my ministry is not for everybody. We have people come here and they do not stay. People come here, they stay for a while and they get caught up in stuff and they are not going to do what they need to do. We will see those people here in a little bit. They are not going to stick around here. You know why? Because I am old school. I am sorry. I am the Woody Hayes of Baptist churches. I was trained hard. I was trained different than people are trained today, and I am telling you, it is a thing where that is the only way to do it, and I am caught in a time warp. I am caught in a Laodicean church mess where almost every Christian, every Christian man that I stand for God, cannot stand for anything. Everybody wants to prop themselves up and pretend they are spiritual right until you throw the book in their face and they fall apart. You know what happens when you fall apart? You get mad and leave, and it is okay. I get it. I understand.

V. Israel's Discontent and God's Judgment

Now look at Numbers 21:4. "The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way." That is the second thing my spiritual eye sees in here. Once I make the leap from John and he is talking about this is something to do with Christ's death on the cross, and we go back to Numbers 21 and we start to see that Israel had just come through the Red Sea. Now verse 4 says, "The soul of the people was much displeased because of the way." I mean, you have got to be kidding me. This has got to be a joke. This has to be a mistranslation. They have been out of Egypt, what, one week? And they are already wanting to go back and they are giving up.

Here is the real issue. I want you to see this. This is the next thing your spiritual eye. I am going to tell you, once you get your Bible down, you are not going to be real popular. Not everybody is going to love you. Not everybody is going to like you, though they will still listen to you on YouTube. Listen to me. Listen carefully. In any issue with people, you need to get to the real issue because most issues that people tell you are not the real issues. There is a great lesson here. A couple of weeks ago, I told you that the real opposition in ministry will be the people of God. Well, here we go.

Now watch Numbers 21:5. Train spiritual eye, do you? Good. Some of you need to get your spiritual glasses on because you cannot see 20/20 with your eyes, and some of you need a big pair of binoculars.

Numbers 21:5

And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

This is what you catch when you have a spiritual eye. Not that I see 20/20 spiritually, but this is an easy one. God's people just cannot discern the things of God. It is right here. They just came out of the Red Sea. They are not out a week, and they are whining and complaining and want to go back when they just saw one of the greatest miracles in the history of the world, the Red Sea crossing. If that was not enough, from Exodus chapter 2, they watched a man take a stick and turn water to blood. They watched him bring plagues of locusts and frogs, more frogs than they

have ever seen in their life. They watched the man bring in the lights. They watched him bring fire down from heaven. They saw some of the greatest miracles that in the history of the world were made. And it meant nothing to them.

Now, the second thing they said, "We have no bread." We know that is a lie. That is not true. Because you go back to Exodus chapter 16, God supernaturally brought them manna. So that is not true. They say, "We have no water." That is a lie. That is not true. Because Exodus 17:6, He brought water out of the rock. These people do not have the ability to see the miracles of God that are all around them. They have no ability to see what God is doing in their midst. They are just like God's people today that grumble and groan and complain of what they do not have when everything they could ever want is all around them.

Now, let us take our spiritual eyesight and let us break down and identify these people, shall we? Who knows? Your picture may be in here. Let us go back to Numbers chapter 11. We will pick it up in verses 4, 5, and 6.

Numbers 11:4-6

And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?

We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick:

But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.

You see where the children of Israel, that would be the 12 tribes, where they got tainted? It was with a mixed multitude. You do see that. "We remember the fish, which we did in Egypt freely, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic." See, they remember that, but they forget for 400 years they were slaves in Egypt. Their grandfather, their father, their mother died baking bricks. They were whipped. They were beaten. When they fell down and the big slabs of stone rolled over them, nobody stopped and got them out. You got crushed to death and buried in the mud. Look at verse 6: "But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes."

As I told you, the trouble in churches is the same trouble that Moses had in the Old Testament and New Testament. It is God's people. It always starts with a mixed multitude who really hate the Bible. They cannot leave the things of the world behind, even though they are in churches today.

Now, go back to Numbers 21:5. What is the dishonesty here? This is trained eye stuff. What is the corruption and the dishonesty of God's people then and God's people today? Numbers 21:5. "No bread," really? Look at the last part of verse 5 with your spiritual little glasses on. "No bread," really? But then they said, "Our soul loatheth this light bread." Oh, then you did have bread. See? That is this crowd. That is this crowd. "We do not have any bread." No, you had the supernatural bread that God gave you, but you hated that. You wanted the bread from Egypt. Well, there was bread. You just hated the bread that God gave you. Numbers 11:6: "Our soul is

dried away. Nothing at all besides this old manna." That is God's people. That is God's people back there. That is God's people through the trained eye. The story of God developing here with God's people today, complaining and murmuring about God that they have nothing when they really have everything. They just cannot see it. That is God's people today.

When you got saved, you had all the blessings in Christ Jesus you could ever have, but you know where they are at? They are in the Bible. The reason why God is not using so many of God's people is because you are not using the Bible. It is not a question that you teach the Bible wrong. It is a question you do not teach it at all.

I have to show you something else. I have to throw these glasses away. Oh boy, you will love this. Old Testament, flow into the New Testament through principles. In any church, to any pastor, this is not exclusive to any one church. It is across the board in Christianity, the mixed multitude. They will come into your church and they will hang around. They will never get into the book. They will take everything that you have. After some time, they will find fault with you who are working with them. Happened to almost every one of you that is working with people. Or they will find fault with me and they will be gone. Everybody scratches their head and says, "I wonder why they left. I wonder what mean Bob did to them. I wonder what that person working with them said to them to make them mad." I am going to sell these after class this morning for a thousand dollars. They are my spiritual glasses. You get them. You will see things too.

Let me show you how the Holy Spirit of God always corrects imperfect vision. Because what I just said, the example this gave you of poor people, "Why did they leave? Oh, why did they leave? I do not understand." That is because you are stupid. That is because you cannot see anything out of the Bible and you operate on your emotions. See, you need to develop a spiritual eye. Now I am going to show you something that is worth 60 billion dollars. A word. This is how the Holy Spirit of God keeps everybody honest. But God's people do not see it because God's people are so stupid.

Now watch how the Holy Spirit of God deals with this issue. Look at Numbers 21:5. What do you see? Just look at it for a moment. The trained eye of Scripture. What do you see? He says there, "And the people spake against God and against Moses, wherefore have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness, for there is no bread, neither is there any water, and our souls loatheth this light bread." Spiritual insight. Look what he said. Look how the Holy Spirit of God nailed it for us. Verse 5 says, "And the people spake against number one, God, then Moses." See how the Holy Spirit of God cleaned that issue up for you? Their issue was not with Moses. Their issue was never with Moses. Their issue was with God. They blamed Moses because Moses was there and the man God was using to develop their nation.

These people are in churches across this country today, and you see them by their patterns. They have been in church after church after church after church. And it is always Moses' fault. That is one of the greatest things you will ever see in your Bible, how the Holy Spirit of God keeps everything honest. I will tell you another one. Remember back in Exodus chapter 32, that Aaron, Moses is up on a mountain, and the people want a golden calf. Remember that story? So Aaron

has them break off all their earrings and all their jewelry and everything, and he puts it in and makes a molten image, and Moses comes down and Moses is just hotter than a firecracker. God says, "You better get down there, boy, because things are falling apart down there." So he goes down there, and there is Aaron. Aaron, the second in command. Aaron! Aaron! And what does he do? He does the same thing that we all do. "Well, Lord, the people. You know how these people are? And, Lord, I am really not responsible. Lord, I just threw all that stuff in the fire. This golden calf walked out." He is the first evolutionist in the Bible. He says, "I just, Lord, the people, you know how these people are? And I just took all that gold and yeah, yeah, I just threw it in the fire! And I walked this calf."

A lot of God's people are the same way with Aaron. You want to blame what you do on everybody else. It is a failure. But God keeps you honest. You know what God said in the last verse of that chapter? He says, "And the calf, which Aaron made." He knew who made it. He got it here in Numbers chapter 21. They are blaming Moses. No, no, no, no. Holy Spirit of God got it in the right order. You hate God. You hate His Word. Then Moses. I will tell you what, man. Nothing like the Bible to clear up your insanity. The issue was not Moses. It was with God. They just wanted to blame Moses for him taking God's side and being God's man. This wicked, godless, mixed multitude will always blame somebody else for their hatred of God in the Bible, and the churches across America are filled with them today. Their pattern: church after church after church after church after church after church.

Listen, that Bible says in Hebrews 4:13:

Hebrews 4:13

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

That book will fillet us like a fish. It will always show you where the real problem is. Brother, as I said, some people bring joy wherever they go. Some people bring joy when they go. Now you write that down. But that book never misses it, does it? But you see, you have to have a trained spiritual eye to see it. It was not Moses they hated. It was God. Some things never change. I have seen people all my life, all my ministry, all their adult life, they have rejected any real spiritual truth, found fault with anybody who has tried to help them, lied about them. In every case, they move from church to church to church. In every case, they are always blaming somebody else. Now we know what the real issue is. It has been fixed for you. Numbers 21:5, the real issue with the children of Israel is the same real issue with the mixed multitude today. They hate God first, then Moses. But the real issue is always the Lord.

Their sin against God and Moses will bring God's judgment on them. It always does. Old Testament or New Testament.

Numbers 21:6

And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

That is God using the devil and his crowd to deal with Israel's rejection of God and Moses. We know from Genesis chapter 3 that the devil was portrayed as a serpent. He was not a serpent in form, but he is portrayed as a serpent for a reason. Now we find fiery serpents here. Fiery connected to fire, hell, lake of fire. Because when these people died and got bit, that is where they went. This will move right into the New Testament principles.

Look at Numbers 21:7. "Therefore, the people came to Moses." A "come to Jesus" meeting. They came to Moses. Well, that may happen back then, but in all my years, it has never happened to me. They do not ever get right.

Numbers 21:7

Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

They got it. But God's people today never will. You mark my word, those fiery serpents are going to be in your world. They are going to bite you. They are going to bite your kids. They are going to bite your family. And you are all going to wind up dying spiritually. What a great story so far. We are not done yet.

VI. The Brazen Serpent and Christ's Atonement

Now what follows is what Jesus was likening himself to in John 3:14: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." Well, now we have got the background to this. We have seen the issues involved and how the trained eye sees those issues as they really are.

Let us now read Numbers 21:9 and make the parallel correlation between John chapter 3.

Numbers 21:9

And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole: and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

Here is a picture of Christ becoming sin for you and for me in the New Testament.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

That serpent on the pole represents the curse on man brought on by the serpent in the garden in Genesis chapter 3, which puts us all in the lake of fire, because at one point we all were bit by a fiery serpent and we are going to die and spend eternity in the lake of fire, which brought about the sin debt of fallen man. On the cross, Christ became that sin, that serpent, and became my curse.

Galatians 3:13

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

That written is, guess it, Deuteronomy 21:23, right in our passage. The Bible says in Job 25:6 and Psalm 22:6, crucifixion passages as Job 25 is, that on the cross He became a worm. Isaiah 66:24 says that unsaved man becomes a carcass, because in hell you and I would have degenerated into a worm. Mark 9:48: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Now I want you to notice that it is a serpent of brass, trained eye. Brass in the Bible is a picture of judgment. So this serpent now is a picture of God's judgment on something on a pole that became a serpent. This serpent on the pole, listen to me, was their healing. Christ becoming my serpent on the pole, paying my sin debt, became my healing, because Isaiah 53:5 says:

Isaiah 53:5

with his stripes we are healed.

In the medical world, you nurses, doctors, and people who are connected with the medical world, you will find that the symbol for healing in the medical world is a pole with a serpent on it. Right out of Numbers chapter 21, you cannot get away from the Bible. Just as in Israel's need, God raised up a brazen serpent, and when they looked to it, they got saved from their sin. God raised up His Son on the cross who became a serpent, my curse, my sin personified. He became that serpent, and all those who look to the cross will be healed and delivered from their sin. The bite of a fiery serpent would be the sting of death. 1 Corinthians 15:55-56: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law."

In your hymnal, look at page 195. You will find a great hymn based on John 3:14 and Numbers chapter 21: "Look and Live."

> *Look and live, my brother live.*

> *Look to Jesus now and live,*

> *To his recorded in his word, hallelujah.*

> *It is only that you look and live.*

There it is, based on Numbers 21, John chapter 3. That is taking an Old Testament story that Jesus made a reference to.

4. The first step, finding it in the Old Testament.
5. The second step, using the trained eye to start to see the parallels between God's people in the Old Testament and God's people today. My, my, my.

VII. Apostasy and the Brazen Serpent

I wish I could just stop here now and say, "God bless you. Have a nice day." But I have 15 minutes yet, and this is not the end of the story. Now, do you want to see God's people? I have shown you God's people. I have shown you how the people in the church, they get mad at Moses,

but in reality they were mad at God. Moses was just a representative of God. I showed you that crowd.

Now, do you want to see God's people and how they, when they do not stay with the book, how they fall into complete apostasy? I am going to show you now a picture of Laodicean Christianity, every Baptist church, almost without exception. Certainly every Laodicean, every neo-evangelical church and everybody else out there, and 99.9999% of Christians. Somebody said, "Why do you keep saying 99.9999% of Christians?" Because there was a guy in our church one time who was a great spiritual guru and he says, "I just cannot stand it when you say 99.9999." So I say it in honor of him. Irritation is my spiritual gift.

You have got to see this. I wish the story ended here. I really do. Because we are at a good place to end this story. They got right with God. They confessed that they were not Moses; they were upset about it with God. Everything is looking good. Oh, it did not stay good. Oh, you have got to see this. The trained eye. This must have been a hot message today because it melted all my ice in this drink here. Okay, take a deep breath. Here we go.

Numbers chapter 21, according to Usher's chronology, takes place around 1451 BC. Now I want you to turn to the book of 2 Kings chapter 18. According to Usher's chronology, 2 Kings chapter 18 takes place around 712 BC. So we are looking now in 2 Kings 739 years later. Now watch this because here is God's people today. Every Baptist, every neo-evangelical, and anybody else who dumps the King James 1611, here is where you are at today. Got your spiritual glasses on? I hope so because I would hate for you to miss this.

2 Kings 18:1-4

Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign.

Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah.

And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father did.

He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.

Do you see that? The very thing that God saved them with to heal them, 712 years ago, they now have fallen into apostasy so deeply that they take that brazen serpent that God gave them to heal them and to save them, and they rename it after another God and burn incense to it instead of God. Now what do you do with that? I will tell you what I do with it. Brother, that is God's people today. Taking all the things that God gave us and renaming it after the other gods of this world.

400 years ago, God finalized the greatest book that ever kissed this planet in the King James 1611 Authorized Version, over 400 years ago. The complete final revelation of God in the

English language was the final work of God to mankind. 300 years later, you know what scholarship, Baptists, evangelicals, and many of God's people did? They did the same thing they did back in 2 Kings. They took the Devil's Bible in 1901 with an RSV, an ASV, and today an NIV, and now they worship it instead of the God-honored Bible that God gave them.

Christ came out of that tomb, was resurrected. 300 years after that resurrection, what did "quote unquote" God's people do? They brought in all the pagans into the church and took the resurrection of Christ and wanted to connect it back to the pagan godless Asteroth, and so they connected the resurrection of Christ when He came out of that tomb to a pagan godless female deity which we know as Easter. And all God's people said amen. Glory to God. What did they do? If you have any kind of insight about the Bible at all, you know that Jesus Christ was born on September 22nd or 23rd. Take your pick. That is the Feast of Tabernacles. You know that if you know your Bible. What did we do? We changed that to another God and made His birthday December 25th, which is the birthday of Baal the Sun God. And all God's people said amen.

You see the parallels? Nothing has changed. We have taken God's salvation and made it into a doctrine, no doctrine, no repentance, made it into a wishy-washy thing that you can get saved on how you feel. God's people today have done the same exact thing with all the things that God gave us that they did in 712 BC when they took the brazen serpent by which God delivered them and saved them and healed them, and 739 years later they renamed it after another pagan god and burned incense to it.

Today, a true Bible believer not only has to separate himself from the world, he needs to separate himself from most of Christianity, or 99% of it. I do not have a lot of pastor friends. I have some that call me, they are calling me all the time, and I am spending hours with them a week. They believe just what we believe. They are just trying to put it all together, and I get calls from North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, California. I mean, I get them from everywhere, and I try to help these guys as best I can, and they are good guys, and they really understand where we are at, and I am happy to try to help them. But I am not part of any fellowship of churches. They are worthless. I do not go preach places where their doctrine is not pure. I do not hang out with Bible studies where the doctrine is not pure. There is no value in that. God is not pleased with that.

So I found out that not only today in the Laodicean church do I have to separate myself from the world, I have to separate myself from most Christians because of what takes place right here. We do not have anything in common. I have a book, you do not. I have a book I believe, you do not. I have a book that is perfect. You do not believe you have one. End of discussion. We have nothing in common. With my people, we love the Bible. We talk about the Bible. We try through the best of our ability to encompass everything we do, like the nation of Israel, around the Bible. But we have a Bible and we believe it.

This is why today you as a Bible-believing child of God, like Moses, will not only have to take your stand against the world, but you are going to have to take your stand against the people of God. The people of God who have fallen into the mixed multitude crowd or bad doctrine or heresy, and those who have taken the very things that God has given us and renamed them after their own gods of Laodicea. I am just telling you right now, and I know why so many of you will

not do it, because you too will be blamed for their ungodly lies, for their ungodly families, and the disasters that continually unfold in their lives. They will blame you for it. When all the time we now know the truth, do not we? The real issue is not you. It is not me. It is not anybody. It was not Moses. Their real issue was against God. But it is really God and His truth that they hate. Even as they are in churches this morning pretending that they are okay with God. Yet if you would look into their life and you would throw them a Bible in front of them, they could not survive if their life depended on it. When you do that, then you are the problem, and we will just skip off to another church. We will start the facade all over again. When we get caught there, we will move on to another one, and it is like a 20-act play.

VIII. Conclusion: Look and Live

But for me and you, look and live. In the time in our lives, we looked at the cross and we got God's salvation, and because of that today we live. But after you look to the cross, "look and live" is not over. After you get saved, then you need to look to the book. Because the world to work together with God, you look to the book and you live. You live a life by getting to the Promised Land. A place in your life where you do not need the props anymore. You do not need to pretend you care about winning people to Christ or you care about soul winning or you care about prayer or you care about bus ministry or you care about this. Now all you care about is the book, and that book will carry you through. That book will help you see the miracles that are going on around you. It will not only help you see it, it will put you right in the middle of them. You will not have to ask for somebody to disciple. You will not have to ask to be put in ministry. You will not have to be asked for God to use you. God will use you because you are in the book that God uses to use you. The last thing God is going to do is put you in ministry when you do not know what you are doing. You get working with somebody and they ask a question and you give them the wrong answer or you do not know the answer. I can find that in the kindergarten class.

What God is looking for is men and women who will make that book all-inclusive in their life. That you live it because look and live. We looked at salvation and the cross and today we live, but we have to look at that book to live in the Promised Land. Getting to that point where you cross over Jordan. There are so many things in the Bible that illustrate that. There are things in the Bible that actually, that is one of them. They crossed over Jordan, that they now were in a place that they could live by the promise of God. Joshua made that very clear in Joshua chapter 1, one of the greatest sermons in the Bible about what it takes to stay in the land.

You are going to find another picture in the Bible of how God does that. That is when God changes a person's name. When God changes a person's name in the Bible, there are three that are bad and there are four or five that are good. That always is a picture of when you do not, when God took Jacob whose name means schemer and changed his name to Israel, it showed that he had gotten to the place where he crossed over Jordan. When He took Abraham whose name was Abram and changed his name to Abraham, it signified a point in his life when he never looked back, and now where he could not trust God for anything, he is going to trust God for everything. Why? He is in the Promised Land. At some point God wants to change your name.

At some point God wants to change your name and put the blessings of God in your life that you never looked back. What you are up against is a Christianity that is pagan. A Christianity that is completely distraught. A Christianity that is built on falsehoods. You have to stay in that book yourself and stay in the Promised Land.

We will hold up there. Let us have a word of prayer. Do not forget.