

## I. Growing Through Adversity and Purging

Last week, we were in John chapter 15, looking at Christ as the true vine. We examined one of the key aspects of our growth in the Lord: growing through our adversities in life. Through the verses we read last week, God will purge us, and throughout our lifetime, He will place circumstances that help us become not only stronger but also closer to the Lord. He does that by, as the Bible says, purging us and cutting back the branches, as the example He uses, to bring forth more fruit.

You see this in a physical sense with men who grow orange trees, apple trees, pear trees, or any fruit-bearing trees. When they do it commercially for the market, they have to cut back the branches at some point, pruning them so they will bring forth more fruit. We know that in the Bible, clearly in Mark 8:24 and other places, men are likened to trees. That is a great study in itself. We too need to be pruned and purged to continue to grow and be fruitful in God's work and what He wants us to do.

The idea of purging something, when you study it in the Bible, is more than just to bring forth more fruit. The purging will do that, but the purging or the pruning will also be a purifying process. Most people, even many of them that have the right Bible and believe the right Bible, do not understand, or they maybe have never gotten to this point in their life yet, that they realize that the Word of God went through the same purging and purifying that we have to go through as God's people.

You will find in Psalms 12:6-7, two great verses there, and it says:

*Psalms 12:6-7*

*The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.*

*Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*

That is one of the greatest verses in the Bible that tells you that just like you and I, for the work of God, have to get purged, go through some adversity, grow through it, get perfected through it, and actually purified for the work of God through it, so did the Word of God. God's work went through the same process that you and I have gone through.

## II. The Purging of God's Word

First off, they went through the purging of the seven periods of church history. We could put that in a general sense. The purging there was under the pagan Roman Empire for the first 300 to 400 years, and then, of course, the Holy Roman Empire after that. We saw that the Bible itself that you are holding in your hands, maybe not the exact same Bible but where your Bible came from, it was a capital offense to have the Word of God. If you were found with the Word of God, you

were executed. The whole world at that particular time wanted to wipe out the Word of God. This is the reason why the 1,000 years from 500 AD to the Reformation in 1500 is called the Dark Ages, because the oppression of the Word of God to wipe it out and the adversity that the Word of God went through during that time was simply to stamp out the light of God's Word to a world that was in darkness. So we see it that way.

The second thing that we begin to see in the Word of God being perfected and purged, as it says in Psalms 12, is that we see God, through the history of Europe, which is a fascinating study, of how God brought about the English language. You are going to find in your Bible that there are three universal languages that God recognizes.

- 1.) In the Old Testament, it was Hebrew.
- 2.) A little bit later on, when the world became a Greek-speaking world after Alexander the Great, which dominated all of the known world and impacted the world in such an incredible way that even we see the effect of it even today, God recognized the Greek language as a universal language.
- 3.) In the latter days that we are here now living in, English is the chosen language that God has designated to be the universal language.

### III. The Development and Purity of the English Language

The English language is a complicated thing. The language that we speak today, we call it English. It is really not. It is more like the gutter language of a bunch of unregenerate people who lost the beauty and the majesty of their language. Languages go through a development. They reach a point in time when they are at their perfect, purest form. Then they begin to degenerate. The law of second thermodynamics kicks in, and it begins to degenerate, and this is what we see in everything in life. The proof of that is you go out and buy a \$60,000 car, you drive it off the lot. It is now worth about \$50,000. Everything depreciates. You build a brand new house. Your house does not get better. It gets worse. Everything in life gets worse and runs down. Man does the same thing. That is why God has to keep injecting Himself into man to keep man from degenerating back into the primitive mess that he is today.

So we see the English language developing, and by the time we get to 1600, the English language is in its pristine form. You are going to find that the great classics like Shakespeare, they are all written in that Elizabethan Shakespeare language of the English language of the 1600s. Now we make fun of that today, and this shows you how stupid people really are when it comes to the Bible. People will tell you today that they do not like the King James Bible. They cannot read the King James Bible because it is a language they cannot understand. That is because you are speaking a gutter language. You have lost the purity of your own language, and that is the problem.

But when you look at the development of the Bible that you have in your hand, you are going to find that it went through a purifying process. It went through a purging. Now you have a King

James 1611 Authorized Version in your hand this morning, and you know that is the complete Word of God. Most of God's people do not understand the purging process, the purifying process, that it took to get that Bible into your hand in a perfect language that can be as perfect as it can be as far as the language is concerned.

You are going to find around 1392, things were moving in a direction, and there was a guy by the name of Wycliffe. Wycliffe actually translated the first English Bible that would be a great-great-great-grandfather of your King James Bible. It was off the same text that your King James Bible came from. But if you would look at Wycliffe's Bible, you could not read it. It would be impossible to read. Oh, you might guess at a word here and there. The language in English was completely different back then. It was in some kind of infant form which was still developing. But God put the Bible into that language for the people where they were at that time. But things develop.

The next English translation was almost 200 years later with Tyndale's in 1532. It was also an English translation. It was basically based off of Wycliffe's, but the language had changed. The persecution had changed. In 1537, you have a guy by the name of Miles Coverdale. He comes out with an English translation. Shortly after that, Matthew Henry, about 1538, he comes out with one. You have the Coverdale's Great Bible that comes out after that. And then you have the Geneva Bible. The Geneva Bible, as I told you the other night and I have told you many times, was the Bible that the Pilgrims came over with. All of these are English translations off the text that came out of Antioch, where they were first called Christians of Syria.

It is a thing where you have everything that you need now to see as the church moved through these seven periods, and the persecution was stepped up to stop the Word of God. God now brought men in who took the English language, and as the English language developed, God brought it to a point through English translations that in 1568, we have the Bishops' Bible. Then in 1603, James the First from Scotland came to the throne, kicked the Roman Catholic Church out of England, and now he gave the decree for a new Bible to be written, and it became the King James 1611 Authorized Version.

It is a situation where the language now in English had become at its apex. It was at its perfect form. Today we laugh at it. The Bible has too many "thees" and "thous." The Bible is hard to understand. That is because you are such a degenerate in your own language. You cannot even get close to anything that is pure. God waited until the English language got to the purest aspect it could ever be, and then He gave the Bible in the final time in the final English that was going to set the standard. Listen to me, set the standard for Christians for the next 400 years. It went through the same perfecting process and purging that we go through.

Then you are going to find that the King James Bible, also once it comes out in 1611, through the next hundred years, there are six or seven editions where they change the weights and the measures, nothing in the text, but just as things change. When you get the Bible you have right now, your King James Bible is off the 1769 edition that was the last one. It was fixed for all time and eternity right then, and it has not been changed since. It is just the way God wants you to have it. So you need to understand that even the Bible you have had to go through some things.

Dr. William Lyon Phelps, who is the professor of English at Yale University in 1900, wrote a book called *Reading the Bible*. He stated on page 10, also on page 12, also on page 13, he said this. Now, this guy is the English professor at Yale. He knows much more about the English language than anybody today does, certainly more than you and I. He stated that the King James Version of the Bible was the most important and influential book in English literature. No English in all the world is equal to that what is found in a King James 1611 Authorized Version. Whether the originals were inspired or not, I have never had any doubt in the divine inspiration and preservation of a 1611 King James Bible. Now, that was the mindset of one of the greatest English teachers of understanding the English language that the world has ever seen.

#### IV. The Bible's Perfection and Man's Perfection

Now this is what the Bible means when it says in 2 Timothy 3:16, when it tells you and me that the Word of God will perfect the man of God. It will not make you perfect as a sinless life, but it talks about the fact that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. The Word of God in your life, in my life, and the purging that you and I go through, like last week, just like the purging that the Bible went through, it made the Bible perfect so now man can take it and do the work of God. God will take that perfect book, and through your life, as you yield yourself to it, God will perfect you for the work of God that you can do God's work. Doing God's work does not mean you do not make mistakes in a perfect sense, but rather doing exactly what God wants you to do the way that He has called you to do it. God's perfect work in our lives. God's through God's perfect Bible to build you for God's work as a perfect man.

There are three aspects to us being perfect for the work of God, not perfect in sinlessness, we all know that.

- 1.) The first thing, God gave you a perfect salvation.
- 2.) The second thing that God gave you after He gave you the perfect salvation, He gave it to you through a perfect book.
- 3.) And then the third thing that He will do, once He gives you the perfect salvation through the perfect book, now He wants to do the perfect work, and He wants to take that through God's New Testament structure of the church and begin to do it.

We saw it last week that God will develop patience in your life. Through patience, you will get experience, and through experience, you will get hope. This all comes through the trying of your faith, all through our pruning and our purging and the adversity and the trials and the things that we face and grow through, not only go through them, but we grow through them.

You know as well as I do, there are many examples of that in the Bible. You have Noah. I have often thought, you know, when you read the story of Noah, you do not really, if you do not really get between the lines there, it is just another story about a man in the Bible. But when you stop to think about it, you stop to think that Noah was the only man on planet earth back then that took

his stand for the things of God. He is the only one. It is a thing where he took what God told him, tried to tell the world that God's judgment was coming in a world that did not believe in God's judgment. When he tried to tell them that God was going to bring a flood, it had never rained in his time before. He is building a 600-foot boat out there in his backyard, telling everybody that God's judgment. They laughed him to scorn, and it is much like you and me today trying to tell people in America and around this world that God's judgment is coming. They do not believe it either, except the difference is Noah did it for 120 years. We do it in a church. You have ministry teams together. Noah did not have anybody. He did it all by himself, and he lasted for 120 years.

Now, do you think there were not times that he doubted the things? There were not times that when he got laughed at? I think on Sunday afternoon, after everybody got done at the Episcopal Church and the Methodist Church, they probably went down to Noah's house and had an afternoon of what they called "arkin." They watched this guy laboring to build this big boat, made fun of him, laughed at him. Some people set up hot dog stands and taco stands and everything in the world, and everybody just made fun. It was an afternoon thing. It was funny, and they made fun of him right up to the fact that the day it started to rain. You know what? I am sure there were lots of people back then that when that door got shut and the dark cloud rolled in and that rain started coming down, that they realized they were wrong, and they beat on that door. I know as well as I am standing here, Noah was on the other side of that door saying, "I cannot open the door because I did not close it."

I want to tell you something, there is going to come a time in your life when God closes the door. Now He is giving you all this time right now, and you have a wonderful church, you have people around, you have tracts everywhere, you have gospel things while there, you have Billy Graham's son getting on Fox News and talking about how to get saved. Praise the Lord for all of that stuff. But I am telling you right now, there is coming a time when God is going to shut the door, and you are not going to get in. Noah is a great example of the struggles that he went through.

Abraham, nobody in the Bible would get a clear look at the struggles that he had, but the struggles that he had brought us through to the other side where he winds up being a friend to God. Jacob, his name means schemer, but from him comes the twelve tribes in time. You have Job who goes through and loses everything that he has, but he gets back double at the end. You have people like Isaac, you have people like Joseph, you have people like Moses, you have people like David. In the New Testament, you have people like Paul. You are going to notice when you study their life, just like you and me, they all go through a time that perfects them. They all go through a time that purges them. They all go through a time where God trims them back a little bit so they can do greater things. Every one of them, and this will be true of you and me too, every one of them come out of whatever they went through better than when they went in. Just the way it works, folks.

## V. Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

Then I took this passage, and you will remember I began to show you how you have to rightly divide your Bible. This will be 2 Timothy 2:15, understanding fundamentally in the Bible what is

to you and what is to the nation of Israel. This is where heresy comes in. This is where people who believe and teach the Bible in a false way that send people to hell, and they are going to go to hell themselves. This is where it starts, not being able to discern, rightly divide what is to the church and what is to Israel. It is a fundamental flaw that will cause problems in everything that you do, understanding what is to you and what is not to you.

I used a great example, if you remember last week, I took it over to James chapter 1, which is clearly to the Jew, the twelve tribes. Then I took you over to Romans chapter 5, which is clearly to the church, and I showed you how that in this particular case, some of these things match up. Then I walked you through it, and of course, the great example of using what Paul gives us to rightly divide the word of truth. Paul's writings to the church will always be the gold standard for the entire Bible for us as a church. Paul in his books will be everything that we need to know. We use that as a standard to judge everything else we read. When it lines up, good. When it does not, we do not put it directly to us. We are going to see some examples of that today and next week because I really want you to grasp this concept.

Now today, I want to look at our passage in John 15:1-6, and I want to look at our second part of this passage. Remember last week, I said there were two things, and I would probably only get to one of them last week, and I knew that that would happen. But we are going to look at the second one this week. Last week, we looked at the purging of the branches. Now today, we are going to look at the abiding of the branches.

So let us read again John 15, and we will pick it up in verse 1 down through verse 6. It says:

*John 15:1-6*

*I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.*

*Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

*Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*

*Abide in me, and I in you: As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

*I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

*If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

Let us pray. Father, thank You for today. Help me to lay this all out that these good folks here today, Father, who are here because they want to have a desire to learn Your Word, but Lord, they have to learn it correctly. They have to be able to put it into a workable format that will show them and guide them and give them what they are looking for. Help us to do that today. Forgive us where we failed You. Put us under the blood. Forgive us, Lord, and allow us to not only give out the Word of God today cleanly, but receive it cleanly and truly as the great verse says, "You

are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." Cleanse us today, and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.

Now what we are going to do today is we are going to look at this, and we are going to try to, I am going to try to show you how that you put things like this in the proper context. I am not just interested in giving you a message. I am not just interested in giving you some spiritual trinket that you can hang on your spiritual necklace and carry. I want to give you, I want to show you, I want you to go away today with more than just signs of a spiritual pep rally. I want to give you something. I want you to leave here today with a better understanding of how to do the Word of God for yourself. I mean, I will not always be around. This church may not always be here. You may find yourself at some point in a place where you are all by yourself, and you are going to have to be able to use the scripture for your own survival, and I want to show you how to deal with places like this so you do not get, how do I say this, over your head doctrinally and getting messed up.

## VI. The Shallow Depth of Modern Bible Teaching

The idea today of somebody abiding in me, verse 4. Now the Bible teaches, or excuse me, the Bible teachers and pastors are today for the most part very shallow when it comes to the Bible. You are going to find that there are some really good guys out there, and I praise the Lord for them, but the average pastor, they have been taught and trained, and their level of depth in the Bible is very limited. They know a lot of things about the Bible. They have read books. They listen to other guys' sermons. They, and unfortunately, that is how most of these guys survive because they do not want to really delve into the Word of God and spend the hours and hours and years and years it takes to really learn the Bible. It is an easy fix just to listen to something, read something, correlate it up a little bit, put a little dash of salt and pepper on it, and put it back out. That is what most of them do when it comes to their sermons, and hey, I have been in this business over 50 years. I know what I am talking about. I know how these guys work, and they know many things about the Bible, but that is a big difference than somebody who really knows the Bible.

For you, I do not want you just to know some things about the Bible. I do not want you to be able to parrot what somebody else has told you. I want you to be able to know the Bible for yourself. We are about to enter into a level of this church, of an attempt in this church, that is unlike anything we have known up to this point. Things are going to move very quickly. I have spent 19 years building into you everything I could, the best way I knew how, trying to do everything I could to get you to see it, understand it, and then giving you the opportunities through ministry to use it and to grow through it. Everything we have done now has brought us to this point, and now you are going to get into situations where I am not going to be there. I am not going down to Arkansas. I am not going to be there so that when you do something, you look over to your shoulder and see if I have approved it. No, no, no, no. This is going to be your purging. This is going to be your development. This is going to be you going down there as guys, as a team, and you are going to have to learn to get the job done, and you are going to find yourself with a bunch of people down there who want to know the Bible. They are not interested in your

opinion. They are not interested in what you think. They are coming to you because they want you to give them the Word of God. They want you to do for them what I have done for you, and now is the time where you are ready for this, and you are going to see that you are going to have to have a depth to you.

It is easy when you are the guy that just sticks into the pulpit, and you do not have to really be accountable to anybody of what you teach. You do not allow people to ask you questions about the Bible because that way you do not come up short, and you always can pretend you know. You really know. You really want to hang yourself out there, just do what you guys are about to do, and you are going to see that it has paid off for many of you. These guys for the most part, they could not follow what I call the 30-second rule. My 30-second rule is that I want to get you ready that wherever you go, you could teach any book in the Bible in 30 seconds or less. I do not mean you teach it all in 30 seconds, but I mean you are opening up and you are going in 30 seconds. If you went some place and somebody said, "Hey, could you teach us the book of Job tonight?" You say, "Absolutely," because that may happen. Somebody may say to you, "Could you, you know, could you give me the, I am trying to study Genesis, could you give me the outline of Genesis?" "Absolutely." "How about Exodus? How about Numbers? How about Joshua? How about Ezekiel? How about Isaiah? How about Nehemiah? Ezra?" You ought to be so prepared with the Word of God.

Now you are looking at me like you are just like a deer in the headlights in the middle of the night. I understand many of you are not there yet. This is not a criticism. This is a challenge to you because for you to do what God wants you to do, you have to know what you are doing. If you have to have brain surgery, say you have a tumor in your brain, and you know it is very complicated, it is not something that you go in with a chainsaw and you work out. You want the best brain surgeon that you can have. You want somebody who knows the brain inside and out. You do not want Billy Bob with the scalpel in his hand saying, "Oh yeah, I have always wanted to do this." You want the best. If you have got to have heart surgery, you do not want somebody who said, "Yeah, I read a book on this one time. I think I can do this." You want the best heart surgeon on the planet. Why should anybody who gets the eternal Word of God, dealing with their eternal soul for all of eternity, why should they expect anything less when it comes to us teaching the Bible? I am not interested in second stringers. I am not interested in somebody that does not know what they are doing. Now I have got a lot of people that are in the process of growing, but you have people you are working with and going to help you who know their Bible. You have got everything you need because you are going to have to come to the place in time where you can handle it. It does not matter where you go or what question somebody asks you, you are ready and prepared to give a reason for the hope within you, and that is where, that is where they need to be.

Most pastors and teachers today, they will give you some good practical stuff. They will give you some, you know, inspirational material, but there is no depth to it. There is no doctrine to it. When it comes to our getting into the depth of the Bible, or like we talked about in Bible Institute, the three toughest books in the Bible, Matthew, Acts, and Hebrews, they are lost. They have to make things up to get by with it. They have to create something that is nowhere near

anything with Bible truth to put it on people who do not know the truth, and it is the greatest injustice that you ever see, lack of depth. So in their teaching and their preaching, when they hit a tough passage like we are looking at in John chapter 15, we saw it in John chapter 14, we saw it in John chapter 3. There have been places all through the Gospel of John that I have shown you how things get messed up and how they try to stick it into the church age when it has nothing to do with the church age, and when you do that, when you do that, it is only a matter of time before your teaching gets into the heretical side of things, and you start teaching false doctrine. It is just that simple.

## VII. Misinterpreting Hebrews and the Concept of "Hebrew Christians"

Now last week, I gave you a great example in the book of James. If you will remember, I showed you how that James, again, like I said, your Thursday night, the first thing you want to do about any book in the Bible is look at the title, look who wrote it, get, begin your context by the author, knowing some things about him. When I read James chapter 1, the first thing I see is this: "to the twelve tribes." Now, in all honesty, how could I as a pastor tell you that the book of James is directly to you? Now there is a lot of good things in James, we saw some of that, but directly, it is written to the twelve tribes. Now, how in the world do I pretend that that is not there? What do I do with that? When you do not know your Bible, when you do not know what to do with that, then you make stuff up. I do not care if you make stuff up if you are at home and you are trying to put your car's engine back together. I do not care if you make that up, it is your car. I do not care if you are painting your house and you do not know what you are doing and you mix the paint with the wrong colors and it comes out orange. I do not care about that. But what I do care about is when you step into this pulpit or you start to teach somebody the Word of God, you get it right. They deserve that. Nobody deserves bad teaching. It is like nobody deserves a bad heart doctor. Nobody deserves a bad brain surgeon, and especially when it comes, as I said, to your eternal soul, you should demand the very best. But see, God's people, they do not do that.

Now again, just for a few moments, let me show you this because I want you to learn. I do not want to get up here and just lay out a lesson for you and then send you on your way and you say, "Well, that was really good," or "pretty good," or "I did not like it at all." It is a thing where I want you to leave understanding how this all goes together.

Now you take the book of Hebrews. Just bear with me for a moment. I picked the book of Hebrews because it is the most probably mistaught, misconstrued book on the planet. In this book, the first thing I would do is if you do not get the title right, you are done before you get started. Just like the book of James, you do not have to read verse 1 to see "to the twelve tribes." You do not have to read anything in Hebrews. The name Hebrews itself tells you that this book is written to the Hebrews, to the Jew. Now this poses the problem for most pastors and most Bible teachers, certainly for Bible scholars, because now here is your dilemma: you have a book in the New Testament that is seemingly written exclusively to the Jew, and that is hard to comprehend for Christians today because you ask yourself, "Why would that be? I thought the Old Testament was done. I thought that He nailed it to the cross. Why, why now in the New Testament do I have

a book, one that is written to twelve tribes which has nothing to do with me, and now I run into this next book which is called Hebrews? Why would God do that? What is He trying to do?"

So not being able to rightly divide the book, stay with me now, and you say, "Well, what has this got to do with John chapter 15?" I do not know, but I am going to try to get it back there in just a minute. I will show you. So not being able to rightly divide the book and see its outline to the nation of Israel and to understand who the author is, why he wrote what he wrote, in the time frame that he wrote it, and not to be able to break it down chapter by chapter to see what he is doing in each chapter, they have to now invent a non-biblical term. Christianity today is filled with non-biblical terms that have nothing to do with the Bible. They are passed off to you as God's people. You trust the guy in the pulpit. You believe he is telling you the truth. He is not maybe outwardly lying to you. He is just so stupid he does not know what he is talking about, and he puts it out there to you. You are trusting people. You want to learn the Bible. You think this guy is a Bible teacher. He is in a church. He is a pastor. When he says something like this, you fall for it. You fall for it, and now the term that they come up with out of the book of Hebrews because they do not know what to do with it, they will tell you this: "Well, this was written to Hebrew Christians." And that is where they go, and people out there write that note down in their Bible. They write that down in their little notebooks, and they go home from church thinking, "Well, the book of Hebrews now is to Hebrew Christians."

Let me just say this to you, it is things like this that begin the descent into the pit of hell with lousy Bible teachings. It shows me clearly that any man who says that, anybody who gets in a pulpit or writes a book or teaches classes who makes that statement, is someone who has absolutely departed from any real doctrinal backbone, foundational truth when it comes to the Word of God. Because if you knew Galatians 3:28, if you understood the outline of Colossians 3:10-11, you would realize that it is impossible for there to be Jewish Christians because the Bible says in those two passages that if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, and in Christ, listen to me, in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Gentile. The idea that you are a Jewish Christian is 150 million light years from any truth in the Word of God. If you are saved here this morning, I do not care if you are black, I do not care if you are Chinese, I do not care if you are an Indian, I do not care what you are. The moment you got saved, you are now a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things are passed away. You are not black anymore. You are not red anymore. You are not yellow anymore. You are not white anymore. You are Christian. There is no race in God's family. You are not black, you are not yellow, and you are not Indian. No, no, we are all red. We are all washed in the blood of Christ. There is no, there is no Gentiles, there are no Jews anymore. When you got saved in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Gentile. You are Christian.

Now, if America could get that, if Al Sharpton could get that, the problems of race in America would be over in 15 seconds. There is an agenda behind this race card everybody likes to play because real Christians, there is no race issue. We are all in Christ. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. End of story. But you know, you begin to see that the Bible teachers want to make it Hebrew Christians, and when you do that, you open up a whole Pandora's box of bad teaching that now you have to try to support. Now you are building your lessons, your sermons, your teachings on a false idea that never existed, and now you are in serious trouble. My best advice

to you, get out of being a pastor. Working in a drive-through with McDonald's would probably really be a good change for you.

Now allow me to show you the problems you get into, and then I want to use this to show you John chapter 15 because you have to see this. First of all, come to Hebrews chapter 2. Now here is one that you hear all the time. It says:

*Hebrews 2:1-4*

*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.*

*For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;*

*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;*

*God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

Now, how many times have we used that verse? When you get in there and somebody teaching the book of Hebrews, it will tell you that you need to be careful, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" Now folks, I am just going to be honest with you today, how in the world do you put that into the church? How do you put that into the church? Now I realize if you neglect God's salvation, you are going to die and go to hell. But read the verse. It says, "How shall we escape?" Listen, he is writing this to God's people. He is not writing this to unsaved people. He is including them with him. "How shall we?" He is not saying, "How shall you?" He is saying, "How shall we?" He is putting himself in this. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" He is not talking to unsaved people. He is talking to the nation of Israel. Look at verse 3 and 4. Why, why would you quote verse 3 and not read verse 4? Let us do them both.

*Hebrews 2:3-4*

*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;*

*God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

It is not to you. That is to the nation of Israel. See what happens when you do not get the book in the right context? You start taking verses like that and put them into the church, and then it magnifies itself on and on and on.

I will show you another one. Look at Hebrews 4:1-4.

*Hebrews 4:1-4*

*Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.*

*For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*

*For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

*For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.*

Now the first thing I would have you to know, hopefully you know this, that in the Bible there are two sets of promises. There is a promise to the nation of Israel, and then there is a promise to God's people. This here is not a promise to God's people. Look what he says. The rest here is not your salvation. He says in verse 9:

*Hebrews 4:9*

*There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*

If you are a people of God, then you should already be in the rest. When you got saved, you got in Christ, you got the rest. Your promise for you is Titus 1:2:

*Titus 1:2*

*In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;*

That is your promise. You know when you got your rest? The day you got saved. For you right now, if you are saved this morning, you have got all the rest you are going to get. There is no more rest remaining for you, but there is for Israel. Now see, if I was a Bible believer and I was reading that, I will tell you what, verse 4 would just catch my eyeballs like I could not believe it. Verse 4, it talks about God resting on the seventh day. How many times have I took you back to Genesis and showed you those seven days of creation, and on the seventh day God rested, and it is a picture of what the millennium of Christ did? It is in no way, shape, or form to you. But this is what you have got now.

Now look at another one, Hebrews chapter 9. Just look at a few of these, and then we are going to hit it hard in John chapter 15. It says in verse 24:

*Hebrews 9:24-28*

*For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:*

*Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;*

*For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

*So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

Those are good verses. I can use that. I am a verse, verse 27 down there, I can lift that up, preach that anywhere I want. Now here is where your problem comes in. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." That is the second coming of Christ. He does not appear to rapture. Read 1 Corinthians 15, 1 Thessalonians 4. That is the second coming. That is a second coming. You see, the first time He appeared, first coming, He bore your sin and my sin. The second time He comes, I am not looking for Him. I am not looking for Him because I am Him and He is me. I am not looking for the second coming. I am, somebody said, "You know what, as a Christian, what are you looking for?" I said, "I am not looking for anything." Somebody here, the Jew, is looking for Him the second time. I am not looking for Him. I am listening for Him. I am listening for a trumpet, the voice of a trumpet that is going to say, "Bob Alexander," and off I go. All to Israel.

Now look at Hebrews 10. Pick it up in verse 24. This is a good one.

*Hebrews 10:24-26*

*And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:*

*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

*For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,*

Now I can use that verse. I will tell you that you ought to be in church on Sunday. There is nothing wrong with playing golf, just not on Sunday morning. Nothing wrong with bowling, just not on Sunday morning. You have got to not forsake the assembling yourselves together. I can use that. That is okay. That fits across the board. Now watch what happens. "For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." Now you know what you have got to do with that if you are a Christian? Because if it stands right there, after you get saved, if you sin willfully, you lost it, and there is no more sacrifice. You cannot get back. So you know what they do with that? They change it that we do not sin willfully, that we sin accidentally. It is an "oopsie daisy."

Now I am going to speak to the men just now for a moment, and you ladies can tag along because I know it is true, but I want to be respectful to you. I am 72 years old. Sin never snuck up on me in 72 years. I cannot think of one time that I would walk through the door of life and sin jumped on me. I walked through the door of life, shook hands with him, and then we went on our way together. That is right. We all sin willfully. It is a thing where we want to pretend, "Well, the devil made me do it." No, the devil did not make you do it. You and the devil did it together. You were like Adam. He came home one day, and Eve, he said, "Baby, what happened to you? When I left here this morning, you were snow white. Now you have got this pinkish color to you. What happened?" She says, "Well, the, the devil came by, the woo woo, the devil. Yeah, he

looked like the Lord. He had a rhinestone suit on, and he was singing, 'Wise men say, only fools rush in.' He was really, you know, and he gave me this fruit, and I ate it." Now the woman was deceived. You know what Adam did? He heard everything that God said. He knew what God said. He now knew what the devil did, and he achieved what it did to Eve. Now he has to choose between going with God or going with her. You know what he did? He did what we all do. He looked at her, looked at God, looked at her, looked at God, looked at her, looked at God, never looked back at God, and took the fruit, and we went with her. We all sin willfully.

But when you do not put this into the right context, you have got to change it. You have got to now make it, "Oh, well, it just sin snuck up on me." What he is saying here, get it in the context. He is saying here, look at verse 25 of verse 25, "the day approaching." That is the second coming of Christ. What he is saying in verse 26, that we, Israel again, sin willfully after they receive the knowledge of the truth. God gave them, read Matthew chapter 20 and 21, God gave them everything to be fruitful. Everything. They had it all, and they rejected it and went and sinned willfully, and now they crucified the Lord Jesus Christ. You know what? Now for Israel, there is no more sacrifice for sin. They have got to go through the tribulation period, and they have got to endure to the end, and they have got to look forward to the day when their Messiah, the one they killed, came back, and that is how they get their salvation. Not to me. Never was to me.

Look at Hebrews 10:30-31.

*Hebrews 10:30-31*

*For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.*

*It is not the church. It is the nation of Israel.*

*For it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

Not for me, it is not. You know what? You know how I know that verse is not to me? Because I could not fall into the hands of a living God if my life depended on it. Do you know why? Because I am part of His body. I am His hand. You see how you have to get your doctrine right on the money, or you get messed up? And boy, they do get messed up. Now if you try to stick James or Hebrews and these verses with many others into the church age, you will wind up teaching heresy, and there are many times, excuse me, there were many things that I am going to tell you that will line up there, but you are going to have to remember that the gold standard to tell you where you place it is what Paul writes. I cannot emphasize that enough.

## VIII. Abiding in Christ: Israel's Relationship vs. the Church's Fellowship

Okay, with all of that that I have given you as good examples, and I want you to learn from this. I am not just interested in tickling your ear and sending you home. I know you all have a roast in the oven that you are saying it has got to be done by 12. Pot roast is the greatest thing you will ever have.

Now I want to just for a few moments here lay out when he says in John 15:4-6 what it means when he says "abiding in me." How many times have I heard this? Last week we saw in Romans chapter 9 and then again in chapter 11, I showed you that the natural branches were the nation of Israel. Christ was the olive tree. The natural branches of that olive tree was the nation of Israel, and we saw how that when they departed from God, as we saw here in Hebrews just a few verses ago, that those natural branches got broken off, and then God took some wild branches, which is you and me, the Gentiles, and we got grafted in. That is a picture of your salvation.

Now in John 15:4-6, he brings up the teaching of someone abiding in Christ, and then also in verse 6, it gives the indication that if they do not abide, they get gathered up and get cast into the fire, definitely posing a problem if we are going to put this into the church. He says in John 15:4-6:

*John 15:4-6*

*Abide in me, and I in you: As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

*I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

*If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

Now I just read this. I am reading it. I have listened to Bob Alexander in his Bible lessons and teaching, and I am trying to learn the Bible, and he keeps telling me that you have to make sure you get the right context, and you have to ask yourself, "Who is he writing to?" And then he told me over and over again, I get so sick of this guy telling me this stuff, he tells me over and over again, Paul's writings are the gold standard. You have to stay with him and evaluate what you are reading through that. So the first thing I see, using that great man of God's words, believe me, I know him better than you do. Now the first thing I see here is how easy it is for me now to establish my context. It is not hard now. Thanks to Paul and his laying out in Romans 9, 10, and 11 the view of the New Testament church and God's dealing with Israel, I have got it now. I do not have to scratch my head and say, "I wonder what." Paul gave me the key. I now know that in Romans chapter, now this is how you do it, now watch. I now know from Romans 11 what Israel is, those natural branches. Amen. And now here in John 15:1 and 5, you were clearly told that Israel is the branches that he is talking about. Verse 5 says, "For ye are the branches." That has to be the branches of Romans 11, Israel, because Christ has not even died yet. I am not anywhere near grafted in. This branch has to be Israel. You see, all this has absolutely nothing to do with me in the church because I do not get grafted in until after Acts chapter 7. Whoever he is talking here, he is telling them, "Ye are the branches," Israel. It is not me.

The next term I would see here is he says, "abide in me." Now that could never be a reference to any born-again believer. Listen to me, that could never be a direct reference to a child of God. I cannot abide in Him. You know why? Because I am Him. There is no abiding with me with Christ. He is in me, and I am in Him. I was put into His body at the time of salvation. I am bone

of His bone and flesh of His flesh. I am sealed in Him unto the day of redemption. There is no abiding in Christ for me. My salvation is never about my abiding in Him or not. I am sealed.

Now my next clue, he says in verse 6, "If a man." Now what have I told you before? Every time you get into the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and you read the story about "a man," "a certain man," "a man," remember Nicodemus in John 3, about that little study we had where he says, "Except a man," he was not talking to Nicodemus. He did not say, "Nicodemus, you must." He said, "Except a man." And how many times have I told you, every time you find that phrase talking about Israel, Israel is the man. Every time you find it, it is Israel who did not abide as a nation, and then as the natural branches, they got broken off, and they are cast into the fire now at the second coming of Christ, and many of them are going to wind up in the lake of fire. It is not complicated.

Notice John 15:7:

*John 15:7*

*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

It is conditional. There are no conditions to your salvation. Once you trust Christ as your own personal Savior, you are stuck. It is not so much that you are stuck with Him, that is a good thing. The bad side of it is, He is stuck with us. But you are not getting out of it. He is not going to wake up someday and say, "You are miserable, and I am going to take back My salvation and put you in hell." You know how I know? And these guys who believe you can lose your salvation, they all say the same thing, "Well, you lose your salvation because you do something, and now you do not deserve it." Really? Well, let me ask you a question, what did you do in the first place to deserve it? Not a thing. He is going to take it away from you because you did not deserve it when He gave it to you when you did not deserve it. How stupid is that? We never deserve it. The only thing you and I deserve is to be in hell right now screaming our lungs out. You got in because God loved you and gave you grace, and that is the same grace that will keep you when we should not be. No, I will tell you, and I will preach against my own message, we all should be like Israel as far as I am concerned. You know how rotten we are. Do not pretend to me you are good. We do the best we can, but we are all rotten. There is not one of us here that does not deserve to be ripped off those branches, ripped off of that thing, and put in the fire, in a lake of fire. We all deserve it, but it is not going to happen because abiding in Him is not for you once you became. You see, the only way He could put you in hell was to cut off part of His arm and put it in a lake of fire. You are part of His body. He is in you. You are in Him. There is no abiding to it. I am Him. That is why He gave me His mind. That is why He gave me His body. That is why He gave me His spirit. People just do not get it.

Now when you and I got saved, we were all, Ephesians 4:30, we were sealed with a, here it comes, "sealed with the spirit of what promise?" There is your promise. Titus 1:2. That is not Israel's promise. Israel is not sealed with anything. Israel's promise is going to come with the second coming. You are sealed with the promise now. So when the Bible says back in Hebrews that there is a promise yet to come, there are two promises in the Bible. You better figure out

which one He is talking about. You do not abide in Him. You fellowship with Him. Remember, Israel's kingdom is a physical one, the kingdom of heaven. The church is here, and my kingdom is a spiritual one, the kingdom of God. Israel abides in Him, and when they did not and they left Him, like Hebrews showed us, once they had the knowledge of the truth and they sinned willfully and left God, they got broken off, the natural branches. That is what He is talking about in Hebrews. That is what He is talking about here, and they will get cast into the fire at the second coming of Christ if they do not do what God tells them to do in the tribulation. This is what we were reading, Hebrews 10:26, "fiery indignation." Hebrews 10:3, this is what we were all making a reference to. It is not about you. It is about the nation of Israel.

Now you see why I dialed Hebrews into where we are at now. If we want to make, if I wanted to make a spiritual application to this "abiding in me" thing, I would, I would, I would have to change one little word. I am not saying I would do it. I would not argue with somebody that did it. I mean, there is a certain license in preaching that you can make applications if he is going to get to a point as long as it does not mess up the doctrine or teach bad doctrine. But here he is, for me, it is not "abiding in Him," abiding in me, that is salvation, but rather "abiding with me," that is my fellowship. I cannot abide in Him, but I can abide with Him. That is fellowship. You see, I cannot lose my salvation. My branches cannot get broken off, but I can lose my fellowship, and if you look at John 15:3 again, it says:

*John 15:3*

*Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*

That is true of Israel, but brother, that is also true of me and you. You see, Israel has to abide in Him or get broken off, and she did. I have to abide with Him or my fellowship gets broken off, but it is never my salvation. It is never being cast into the fire.

## IX. Doctrinal Purity in Music and Ministry

Now, page 75, do not turn to it. Great old hymn. This hymn was written in 1793. It is one that we sing a lot, but it shows that the men who wrote the songs in the Philadelphia church age knew their Bible doctrine. They knew that when they wrote songs, they wrote them from a biblical depth that they had of doctrine being done correctly, even in music, that we do not have today. Because this old song is about abiding, and this title, this song is "Abide With Me," not "in me." No, old boys knew the difference. He knew that we as God's people, we could not abide in Christ, but we could abide with Him, fellowship. And it goes to show you the great mindset of the Philadelphia church age and how that they, they knew their doctrine, and this is why you find the great difference between the men and women back there and the preaching back there than what you find today.

The reason, if I may just say this, the reason why they had right doctrine back then is because the only Bible they had was a King James 1611 Authorized Version. They did not have the luxury that many men and Christians have today of getting a screwed up Bible that ruins the doctrine. They had one book that preached one message that was right on the money, and those guys back there knew their Bibles, even the guys who wrote the songs. It was not like you find today, "I got

a little cabin in the corner of glory land, yay hoo ha." It was not like, "I got a mansion over a hilltop." These guys, when they wrote their songs, they were doctrinally correct, just as Colossians chapter 2 and 3 tells us that we need to be in our music.

Now this is why in this church, we sing the songs out of this old book. I know that some of the folks sing here contemporary songs, and I am okay with that, and I think that is good. He says in Colossians, "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs." There is a difference between those three, and I get that, and I allow that, and I understand that. But at the same time, we are not going to have dancing bears up here on the platform twirling around while somebody with the bongo drums in back there, and a band up here, the praise band, and the singers up here holding those serpent microphones. You ever see that big long microphone like a snake? We stick with the book. We stick with the songs that were written when the book was at its peak. I am not against modern stuff. I like stuff. I like stuff the Bill Gaither says. I enjoy it. I do. I like, you know, I like country gospel, and yet the Bible says that there is only one gospel. I do not know where we come up with country gospel, but I get that. I like it.

Well, we are going to send the boys down there, and I have got a plan for that. Go down there to Arkansas. They are going to love them. You know, Donny is going to be autographing Bibles and books and everything, and everybody is going to want to know, get their picture taken with Big Donny up there. You know, Bob will be driving the bus, waiting to pick everybody up. They are going to love those. You know why? Because they identify with the culture of where we are all at. I love them. I can listen to them all day long. I would rather have that than have some gal in a cat suit going on up in the field and some kid breakdancing up on the platform. Strange, strange world we live in, Master Jack.

So this is how you put places like John chapter 15 into a proper context. I showed you James last week, showed you a little bit of Hebrews this week, but then I dial Hebrews into the fire and all those things with where we are at about the branches clearly. You know, you have to get it into the proper context, and if you do not, then you get completely off track, and you have to start making it up to make it fit. When you do not have the ability to rightly divide out the material that is not to you, when you are able to do that, it will show you so much clearly how the Bible goes together, and you will always keep the balance. The Bible is a balance. Preaching is a balance.

I am going to take some of the things that we are going to do, some of the things that we are going to do coming up. I am going to take all the older guys who were part of my old circuit riding ministry, and I am going to take all you young guys, and the girls can come too. It is open to anybody, but we are going to have some classes that teach you how to preach, and I am going to let these guys, I am going to give them some assignments, and they are going to talk to you. They are going to show you how you do this. They are already working with a bunch of you guys, and that is how you want to learn because we are going places, and we are going to get some things done, and you guys have to, you know, you do not become a better preacher just by preaching more bad sermons. You do not wake up someday and get it all together. You have to have a plan. You have to know what you are doing. You have to realize that preaching is a balance of some things, just like the Christian life is, and the Bible is about. It is a balance

between doctrinal, historical, and inspirational, and your message has to be that balance. We will show you how to do that. But I overall want to show you how you get the Bible in the box because that is what you are going to have to do with it in your own personal life, in your own family, in Operation Arkansas, because we go down there and we work, and I am telling you right now, this thing is going to start out once a month, but it is going to wind up, if it takes off and goes the way I think it looks like it is going to go, we are going to be going down, sending a group down almost every week, and there will be, we will have to have 16, 20 teams maybe, and that is why we are putting it together the way we are because God has given us the greatest opportunity. Then you know what God will do? He will reach down in the heart of one of you guys. You will go down there and take that church, and you will pastor it, but we will have done all the work for you, and you will be ready to go. Then God will take us someplace else, and we will do it there. We are at that point now, folks. We are not bush league anymore. For 19 years, I have built, labored, put everything together for this moment right now. We have got the right men and women in the right place at the right time with the right Bible, and we are going to take it. We are going to get something done with it. We are going to do everything we can. I do not look at us as some great church with some great agenda that we are better than anybody else. No, I just look at me and you and this church as just an old dog that the Master has thrown a few crumbs on the floor for us, but we are going to do everything we can with those crumbs, and we are going to get the job done these last days.