

## I. Review

You'll remember last week we put together what I called our after-action report from our Missions and Bible Conference. I wanted to recap and keep it before you and kind of break it down. In fact, I did in that sermon what the ladies do with the book of Psalms when they break it down. I kind of went in and highlighted the points. It's out on the website and available for everybody to keep up on it and keep it in our hearts so we better know what we should be praying for and looking for what God is going to do this next year.

You'll remember that I ended last week with the story of the little lad with five loaves and two fishes found in John 6. He came to hear Jesus preach, and there was a great multitude that came with him. He brought with him to the meeting, evidently his mama packed him a little lunch, and he brought the five loaves and the two fishes. God took that, blessed it, and then multiplied it and used it to feed the great multitude. We know it as the story of the feeding of the 5,000. As I look at that, the application obviously is pretty clear about God taking one little guy to reach the world. We think that we have to be some missionary organization or some great man or woman to really make an impact in the world, but it's stories like this that show us that's not necessarily true. God took one little guy who was willing to give what he had, and God took it and blessed it and fed the multitude of 5,000 people.

I look at you that way. I look at this church that way, the little church that could, so to speak. A church made up of just common, ordinary people, little guys, men and women, to whom God has given the Word of God. You have your five loaves and fishes, but that week we were together, we saw that God had taken your unselfishly giving that week and multiplying it and now showing us that we can take it to the world.

I thought about this, it's much like Proverbs 31 where you have the great story of the virtuous woman. It goes down through that chapter and lists out all the qualities that she does with her family, reaching out to others. But in Proverbs 31:16 it says, "*She considereth a field, and buyeth it...*" Yet when you go through and do that word study and come over to Matthew 13:38 and other places in the Bible, you'll find that the field represents the world. The virtuous woman, like this little lad, gave what they had to the Lord. The Lord took it and multiplied it like He did in our week together. It is like you coming there and bringing what God has already given you and unselfishly saying, "Lord, take it, multiply it, and use it." Our church has been moving toward this time for quite a while. As a church, after our conference and God taking what you brought and multiplying it, we now are looking at the field that God would have us to buy.

The most amazing aspect of that whole story, I think, not only the multiplying of what he brought and how God was using it to feed the multitude, but how God will take each one of your lives—you're just a common, ordinary person, and you can have a part in reaching the world. I

think the real exciting, amazing aspect of that whole story was found in the twelve baskets that were left over, the fragments. God said, "Nothing shall be lost."

When we have food here at the church, I tell people, "You know, we do two things well here. One is the Word of God, and the other one is eating." Not necessarily in that order. But we always get more food than we need. I'd rather have more food than we need than be short, and not have something for everybody to eat. With food, I'm kind of like that with the Bible. I want you to have more than enough and have all you want. We always have stuff left over. We try to box it up and send it home with you. We try to make sure that, especially if you've got kids, especially you single guys, I mean, you'd eat the carpet off the floor if you have to. So we box it all up and we send it all home with you. We try not to throw any of it away. Now, sometimes we have to, I mean, but we try not to. I thought to myself, that's exactly the amazing part of this, **how the twelve baskets really represent the fact that over the next twelve months, till we get to our next conference, that we will feed off of what God gave us from that week.** So nothing will be lost. The great Bible principle is that God will add to your faith as you grow and minister. God continually adds. What He will do is those baskets that were left over, God will always add to your faith. The devil's job is to subtract from your faith. Those twelve baskets represent that over the next year.

The Bible says in Isaiah 55:11, it says that God's word shall never return void. It will always accomplish its intended purpose.

*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*  
*Isaiah 55:11*

In the week of our conference, God gave us an abundance of truth and examples of the revelation of God's Word to all of us. Absolutely, there's no way we can absorb all that. You go through something like that with the time and the intensity and the fellowship and the preaching and all of the things that we do. By the end of the week, you're not only worn out and tired, but your brain is spinning because of everything that you've got. You can't take notes fast enough. You cannot even listen fast enough. There's absolutely no way that we can absorb in one week all that. But over the next twelve months, you'll see, God will reveal out of those fragments, the leftovers, the things that we couldn't process, the ongoing truth as He puts things in your life, circumstances and situations. Then He'll bring something back into your memory and allow you to see even deeper than you do right now.

One of my favorite places in the Bible, and I've claimed this many, many, many times when things came into my life that were really a blessing and I wanted to enjoy it, but I didn't totally understand it. I thought about in Luke 2:19 when Mary was confronted by the angel, and he told her all that she was going to do in bringing forth Christ and all this stuff. Keep in mind now, she's a virgin. This was overwhelming to her. Yet the angel of the Lord told her, "This is what God's going to do. He's going to do this, He's going to do that, He's going to do this, He's going to do that." It had to overwhelm her. My favorite verse out of that story that I've used many, many

times in Luke 2:19, after she heard all of that, saw all that, tried to absorb all of that, it simply says and **Mary pondered all these things in her heart.**

*But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. Luke 2:19*

That's what will come out of our conference together over the next twelve months with the fragments that God has left for us. God will reveal ongoing truth, and it'll add to the depth in your life with the things of God. This is how He puts depth in our lives. We talked about that in preaching. He will put depth in our lives by the things that He gave us that week, and then by the things He will give us through the fragments over the next year. It is a time when you're going to see how every one of you can impact the world if you want to.

Just a word of update, last Sunday, which was a tremendous Sunday when we packed the altar with people that really wanted to be used of God, we had Michelle, her and her boyfriend came up from Texas, and she trusted Christ as her own personal Savior that morning. Our ladies have been in contact with her. She's doing great, asking questions, wants to learn the Bible. There is another great blessing that came out of that week. So that's what we did last week. Today we're going to be back in Psalms. As I said, open your Bible if you would to Psalms 28.

## II. Psalms 28:1-9

You will remember that when we started Psalms, I told you that the book of Psalms would doctrinally represent three things in your Bible. You will always know wherever you're at in Psalms, the Psalms doctrinally is one of these three areas:

1. It's going to deal with the tribulation.
2. It's going to deal with the second coming.
3. It's going to deal with the millennium.

So you're going to find from the doctrinal side of things, tribulation Psalms, second coming Psalms, and millennial Psalms, and you can put it all together doctrinally just like that. Obviously, Psalms 28, as you will see, will be a tribulation Psalm. Historically, we know that it is David going through his struggles, inspirationally you and I going through our struggles, but doctrinally Israel in their time of trouble. So, let's read Psalms 28 verses 1-9, and we'll get into this great chapter.

- 1. Unto thee will I cry, O LORD my rock; be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.*
- 2. Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.*
- 3. Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.*
- 4. Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.*

5. *Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.*

6. *Blessed be the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.*

7. *The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.*

8. *The LORD is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.*

9. *Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.*

### III. O LORD my rock (Verse 1)

First off, I want to draw your attention to verse one where it says in the reference to, "O LORD my rock."

**Doctrinally, let's look at that first.** This will be the rock that will be talked about in Deuteronomy 32:4, a reference to God displaying Himself to the nation of Israel as the solid rock. It says:

*4. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. Deuteronomy 32:4*

This is God displaying Himself as a rock for Israel's foundation to build the nation upon. This was the rock we found in type back in the book of Exodus, in Exodus 17 when the nation of Israel was in the wilderness of sin. There was nothing to eat. There was nothing to drink. It's a picture of our life today that we are living in the wilderness of sin and there's nothing substantiating about what the world wants to feed us or give us to drink. But in the chapter, it's Israel. It's Israel going through the tough time in the wilderness journey, and God tells Moses to take his rod, the rod of judgment, and he smites the rock. That rock brought forth water. That rock is a type of Christ. His using the rod of judgment to smite that rock which is a picture of God smiting Christ, the rock of Israel, and the water coming forth, and Israel drank to their fulfillment. This is the rock in Isaiah 32:2 where the Bible says that "he's a rock in the weary land."

*And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, **as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.** Isaiah 32:2*

This is the rock for Israel in Psalms 95:1, where it says, "*O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the **rock of our salvation.***"

God, the rock that Israel's salvation and trust and protection is built on. This is the Old Testament concept of what he's talking about in verse one.

Now, **let's talk about the inspirational for you and for me.** For you and for me, this is the rock of Matthew 7:24-27. You know the story of a wise man and a foolish man. The wise man built his house upon a rock. The foolish man built his house upon the sand. When the winds came and

the storms of life came, the house that was built on a rock stood, and the house on the sand was destroyed. That's the picture. This is the rock for you and me that's found in Psalms 40:1-3. The story about your salvation and my salvation, and it's built on this. Psalms 40 says:

1. *I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.*
2. *He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and **set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.***
3. *And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. Psalms 40:1-3*

That's what God did the day that He saved all of us. We may not recognize anything at the time. Some people never fulfill it in time. But along with God's salvation of setting our feet on the rock came the establishment of our going. Then it says, "*He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.*" This is the rock that in Matthew 16 when Jesus was speaking to Peter, He told Peter that Christ would be the rock that He was going to build the church upon. In 1 Corinthians 10:4, we're told that for us in the New Testament, that rock was Christ.

*And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and **that Rock was Christ.** 1 Corinthians 10:4*

For the Old Testament, Israel, it was God. For the New Testament, body of Christ, it's Christ. So, we sing from time to time in our hymnals "*Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee.*" **So we see that doctrinally it's Israel dealing with God as a rock. Inspirationally, it's you and me and Christ as our rock.**

#### IV. Unity in the Church (Verses 3-4)

I want to draw your attention to verses three and four. We're going to look at this **doctrinally** first again. During this time, we see people who will claim to be Israel's friend and yet will really become their enemy. He calls them "*the wicked, the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.*" Their deeds of wickedness against Israel, the wickedness of their endeavors. We talked about this Thursday night. We talked about it quite a lot, but this is what you are seeing right now developing not only in our own country, but around the world: the rise of anti-Semitism. You're seeing it on every level, everywhere. It's unprecedented. Fifty years ago, forty years ago, even thirty years ago, none of this was happening. But as we move toward the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, we know that it has to be this way if you know your Bible. We're seeing the world completely turn against the nation of Israel. One by one, every nation that one time said they were Israel's friend, in time, right now, they're turning against them. You're seeing in America that, forget the other nations, you're seeing this in America, America was Israel's greatest ally. There's still an element in this country that will take care of Israel. But I'm telling you right now, that will change in time. If you know the book of Daniel, you know that it can't last forever.

As we talked about Thursday night, I showed you how that the tribulation is in two parts. Right now, the first part, when you get into it after the rapture, the Antichrist brings a false peace and safety. This will be alluring Israel that everything is okay. He sets them up during that time for the second half. I showed you that in the book of Daniel Thursday night, the abomination of desolation when we get into the great tribulation period, and he wipes out Israel. You're seeing it right now. You are seeing the fulfillment of verses two and three right before your very eyes. Everything you're seeing today is a pregame for the coming tribulation. I don't care how good some things look. I don't care how much better some things get. Don't fall into the trap that America or the world is really going to get better. I don't care who the president is. No president is going to bring in the golden age. But I know who is going to bring in the golden age, and it's when the Lord comes back.

Yet you'll see, not only in the doctrinal sense with Israel in our current events, you'll see it in the world of New Testament Christianity. I'm not talking about the Jew now. I'm talking about you as a Christian. If you do what God wants you to do, if you allow God to continue to grow you and you begin to work with people, I mean, there's an upside to dealing with people, and then there's a downside to dealing with people in the ministry. The upside clearly outweighs the bad side, but most people get into the ministry never fully understanding the downside. When you begin to invest your life with people, believe me, there will be people that you think are your friends. Yet they will turn against you just like they will do the nation of Israel. Honestly, the quicker you learn this lesson, the better off you're going to be.

I think often of that little verse over there in Zechariah 13:6. It's the Lord Jesus talking. Somebody says to Him, "What are these wounds on your body?" And He says, "I was wounded in the house of my friends."

*And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. Zechariah 13:6*

I am telling you, last week I told you the number one area in any church, in any ministry, is to maintain that unity. That is the key. Protect it at all cost. Staying close together. Working together. Being there for each other. It's no great surprise that when and where the attack will come, it will be to destroy the unity of any church, any ministry. It doesn't matter if it's a church. I've seen it happen in Sunday school classes. I've seen it happen in ministries. A disruption of the unity will always be something you want to watch out for. Because what God is going to do is the model of the church in Antioch, as I showed you last week, was where the unity was. There will be people who try to cause division among you. I don't care what church it is. I don't care if you have the King James Bible, a thousand King James Bibles. The devil will always try to get into the details. You're going to find that this was the problem in the church of Corinth. We know that the church of Corinthians is a church that has a lot of spiritual problems. He said in 1 Corinthians 11:17-19 that this was the problem with the church of Corinth.

*17 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.*

*18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.*

*19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. 1 Corinthians 11:17-19*

In the first chapter, 1 Corinthians 1 he says there should be no division among you. There was a division.

*10. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and **that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.***

*11. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 1 Corinthians 1:10-11*

As I said many times, the attack to destroy any church, any ministry, even your life personally, will always come from the inside, never the outside. **Unity must be preserved at all cost.**

I don't know if you've ever looked at this and ever thought about this, but there's lots of sins that can come into a church. I mean, you have people who are human beings and they're not perfect. People make mistakes. People do things that they shouldn't do. They hurt other people or this or that or their own personal life. They get messed up. But did you ever stop and think about this? The only sin, the only sin listed when Paul talked to the churches, and this is found in Romans 16:17-18, the only sin that Paul ever said, he put up with drunkenness, adultery, murder, I mean, everything. The only sin that Paul said that we are to mark is **someone that causes division.**

*17 Now I beseech you, brethren, **mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.***

*18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. Romans 16:17-18*

That's pretty incredible, considering all the things we can get into. The only thing he said, mark them. Because this is the devil's plan. The devil's plan is to divide and conquer. It's just that simple. Unity must be preserved at all cost.

You're going to see that in Genesis 4, God put a mark on Cain. The reason He put a mark on Cain was because Cain divided himself from his own brother and killed him. The devil will use people that you think are your friends, but will use them to divide and destroy the unity. We talked about this Thursday night in one of the questions about Job. The devil tried to use Job's wife to divide Job from God. When that didn't work, he tried to use his three buddies. The model for all that is found in Genesis 3, when the devil divides and then he subtracts from what God gave in Adam and Eve. He divided them from God. Then it conquered them to the point that Christ had to come down and die to repair that damage that was done. I don't care if it's adults that divide, high school, junior high, kids that divide, or in the nursery the babies are stealing the bottle from the other babies. Unity is the key. Making sure that nobody gets to divide. That's what happened to Israel, and that's what the devil will try to do to the church.

## V. When People Regard not the Work of the LORD, nor the Operation of His Hands (Verse 5)

Now look at verse five. Doctrinally, in the world, the devil wants to divide Israel from the rest of the world and destroy them. In the church, in a spiritual sense, he'll want to do the same thing with the church. Now, I'm going to show you why. All the issues, here's the reason. Here's the reason why, and I'm going to show it to you doctrinally and I'm going to bring it back around inspirationally. All the issues will start both with Israel and with the church, right here in verse five. When people "*regard not the work of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands.*"

### ➤ Two Kinds of History

For Israel, you're going to find that there are two kinds of history. When you study history, if you want to get a biblical perspective on it, there are two kinds of history you have to study. Because we live in a world that is run by the Gentiles. So the Gentiles have written their own history. This will be the history of Europe. It'll be history of the development of the nations in Europe. The kings, the queens, the monarchs, the wars, Thirty Years' War, Hundred Years' War, World War. All of that is recorded and documented by Gentiles. When you get into American history, same thing. The writers of history are Gentiles who write from a Gentile perspective of how they see history. That is totally bogus and totally wrong, but incredibly valuable. You have to understand the negative side of history, as well as the positive side of history. Though you may go to high school and you may go to college and you may go to grammar school, and I'm sure that every different college, every different school has a different history book. When they teach you American history or world history, there's probably a hundred books out there on history that the Gentiles have written. **But there's only one that's true history and that's the one that God wrote, the Word of God.** You have to get them both. You have to understand why Gentiles look at things the way they do, this is Romans 1 and then write the things about history the way they do. Then you compare that with the book of history, which is the Word of God, and God's perspective cares nothing about Gentile history.

It's always been amazing to me that as I came through the Bible, and when you get into other than Daniel 2, where he goes through Daniel's image and he shows the Gentile nation, but there's a reason for that. All through the Old Testament, from a Gentile perspective, things are happening all over the world. You got Genghis Khan, you got Attila the Hun, you got all of this stuff that's going on all over the world. God cares nothing about that. He writes nothing about that. You know what He writes about? The nation of Israel. Because from God's standpoint, all history is built around that Jew in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament, all history is built around the church. Gentiles can do whatever they want to do. There are two kinds of history. For Israel, the reason why nations today, countries today, people today, are against God and His people as His chosen people, is they have no clue of the works of the Lord in history. They don't understand the operation of God's hands as He brought this nation out of Egypt, a type of the world, established them, and chose them to be His people, and then wrapped everything in this world around them, and pushed everybody out over here. They can't get that. So, the world looks at Israel, they see the blessings, and it's the only ancient nation that has

survived. The Babylonians are in the dustbin. The Egyptians, as far as the biblical Egyptians, gone. **There's only one language, one ancient language, that has survived down through 6,000 years of history. It's Hebrew.** The world can't understand that, the Gentile world. They can't see the hand of God, the operation of His hand, and they regard not the work. There's no regard for what God is doing in history with His people. So the devil will use these nations to destroy the nation of Israel, and they have no regard for what God's hand is doing down through history, in His work with that nation.

That's the world picture. The world looks at all the other nations. You got Russia wanting to be the world power. You got America wanting to be the world power. You got North Korea wanting to be the world power. You got China wanting to be the world power. We rate the nations as second and third-rate nations, and world-power nations. God doesn't recognize any of them, and none of them will regard the one nation that God looks at and says, "All you other nations, you're just a drop in a bucket to My people." The problem today in the world, the world has no regard for what God is doing with His people.

Now for the church, it's the same issue, just on a smaller scale. In any church, there will be people who try to divide the church, cause problems, and God's people will always be part of who know nothing about God and do nothing for God. They simply are in a church, maybe go every Sunday, Sunday night, and Wednesday night, but they see nothing that God is doing. They never see the hand of God doing anything. They have no regard for the work. Whether it's people getting saved, ministries around the world, all they see is themselves. The reason why they have problems is the same reason why the world has problems with Israel. *"Regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands."* There will be people who go to church every Sunday, every Sunday night, Wednesday night, who see absolutely nothing that God is doing. They have no clue what God is doing right in front of them. Ten thousand people could come down the aisle and get saved, and all they could see is themselves. Having no regard for the work of God, that's why.

In both cases, in verse four, he says, *"he shall destroy them, and not build them up."*

Understanding this is very important here. You know, when the world attacks Israel, Hamas, the Middle East, the Muslims, Americans, any nation, it looks like they're getting away with it right now. But when the Lord comes back, you know as well as I do, He has a judgment of those nations, and He will destroy them. When a child of God in any church, attacks the church or God's people, they try to destroy the unity, divide people. You're not attacking a building or a person. You need to understand this. You're attacking very God Himself. In the end, when all of the nations who regard not the work that God is doing with the nation of Israel, they're going to be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. **For the child of God who does not regard the work of the Lord, you're going to be judged at the judgment seat of Christ.**

Suicide is a terrible thing. People sometimes don't understand why people commit suicide. The answer to that will be found that there are seven suicides in the Bible. When you lay out those seven suicides, you have a complete understanding why people will take their own life. We have a tendency to think that suicide is some self-inflicted wound. You know, you pick up a gun and you shoot yourself. You take an overdose of sleeping pills on purpose. I've had eight or nine

suicides in my fifty years in the ministry that I had to preach. One of them was a suicide murder. Not the easiest thing to do. I remember years and years and years ago, I had a guy who left and quit going to church. For a while he was really doing good in the Bible. But somehow, he got really out there. He went under one of the bridges downtown, and the cops found his body. He had gotten some kind of gas, sealed up all the windows and turned it on and gassed himself to death. When the police found him, he had his Bible in there and it had my name and phone number in it. So they called me and asked me if I knew the guy and I had to go down and identify the body. But, you know, there again, some people gassed themselves. There were people that put their cars in the garage on purpose, shut the garage door, turn the ignition on and let the carbon dioxide fuel go up and die that way. There are people that hang themselves. When we think of suicide, we think of self-inflicted wounds.

But I want to tell you something. In life that is true. But when you get into the seven suicides, you'll find that there is a slow suicide that people enter into that is just as deadly as the jerk at the end of the drop of the rope. I've seen people, known people, that drank themselves to death and died of alcoholism. I've seen people that took drugs all of their life, could not get that monkey off their back and died doing drugs. I've seen people that have eaten themselves to death. You have on TV, I don't watch it, but you have thousand-pound people. Now that's a big person. If he fell down, I don't know that I'd be able to help him up. Gluttony in the Bible is just as much a sin as alcohol, drugs, or anything else. Though it's not as quick and fast as blowing your brains out, it certainly has the same end result. But along with those slow suicides, there's a slow spiritual suicide of attacking God all of your life in the work of God. It's going to wind up at the end of disaster. I'm telling you, this psalm lays it out.

## VI. God Our Strength and Shield (Verses 6-8)

Then look at verses six, seven, and eight. "*The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him.*" This will be the shield of faith found for us in Ephesians 6:16. That will be the key to Israel's surviving all that she goes through in the tribulation period. It will be the key to our surviving all we have to go through in life. Because of that, the Lord being our strength, and you remember that Israel goes into the tribulation period completely against God, but in the middle point, God reveals Himself to the nation of Israel, and she comes back to God, and that's where the hand of God's protection, verses six, seven, and eight, doctrinally comes in. But for you and for me, this is how we survive life on planet earth. The Lord being my strength, not just my strength, but being my shield, that will quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and then my heart trusting in Him. "*Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.*"

In the Bible, we're talking about the doctrinal and the inspirational. There are two songs in your Bible, one doctrinally for Israel, the other one inspirationally for you and for me. The one doctrinally for Israel is called the Song of Moses, found back in the Old Testament. The song for you and me is the one I gave you in Psalms 40:1-3.

*"He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD." Psalm 40:3*

But we see that the Lord being our strength for Israel, our shield, and then our heart trusting in Him is the key. Look at verse eight. I already talked about "*the LORD is their strength.*" Now look at this, "*and he is the saving strength of his anointed.*" This is one of the greatest promises in the Bible right here. Doctrinally, it talks about His anointed. Doctrinally, the anointed will be the nation of Israel. Inspirationally, God's anointed will be the church. You'll find the word anointed in the Bible means that God has blessed that person or given that person to be over something. The devil himself was called the anointed cherub before he fell. He was given everything over God's creation before he fell. Christ is also God's anointed.

I love that term, "*saving strength.*" I love it because it has nothing to do with our salvation. But rather, His saving strength has to do with after salvation. God's preserving hand in our lives to keep us. God called Israel out in Exodus 4, "my son." (Exodus 4:22)

*And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, **Israel is my son, even my firstborn:***

You've seen God's saving strength, His preserving hand in Israel, all down through history, in spite of what the Gentiles try to do. For you and for me, once you're saved, God's preserving hand is upon you. His saving strength will get you through anything. When I think about this, I look at the Bible, King James Bible, the Word of God. There's no book in the history of the world, that has been more hated, reviled, attacked than God's Word. For over 2,000 years, since the Word of God, New Testament came into being, men have tried to rid the world of the greatest book the world has ever seen. Whole nations, even today, whole nations ban it. You can't even have one without going to jail. In our world, Christian scholarship has tried to destroy it and daily takes it from young Christians. But God's hand has preserved it. His saving strength has kept it alive and well, in spite of those who would try to take it from us. So shall it be with each one of us. Nothing will stop us. All because of His saving strength. **The only thing that will stop any of you from fulfilling what God has saved you to do, will be you.** His saving strength, the hand of that saving strength will protect you. It'll preserve you. It'll give you everything to get you through this life that the devil will try to use to stop you. Matthew 24:35 says,

*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. Matthew 24:35*

When Mike was here, he told me that he had just been to Scotland to meet that missionary there. We have two of our guys that are going to Scotland here in February, same missionary. They do a lot of street preaching up there. Mike told me the incredible thing is when you go down the street, there'll be little cement plaques in the pavement that'll tell you in this particular year, 1450, 1550, 1650, so and so was burned at the stake for his belief in Christ on this very spot. He said they're all through the town where this missionary is. You see, they're gone. The Catholic Church took them, tortured them, burned them at the stake, and they're gone. The Catholic Church thought that because they killed them, they would rid the world of their witness. So you know what this missionary in Scotland does when they go preaching? They stand on that very plaque and preach the same message that six, seven, eight hundred years ago, the person was

burned on their stake for. You don't get rid of it and you do not stop it. The hand of God's protection, His saving strength. The fact that these guys died at the hand of the greatest enemy Christianity has ever seen. God says, "Welcome home, boys." Now here it is, the body of Christ standing on the same spot preaching the same message twelve hundred years later. That's the preserving hand of God, my friend.

## VII. Four Key Aspects to God Building Your Life through Ministry (Verse 9)

Then the last verse you find one of the key aspects to God building your life through ministry. So far, I showed you verses one through eight, how He's your rock. I laid it out doctrinally and inspirationally. We're to build our lives on that rock, Rock of Ages, my rock in a weary land. We sing the song, "Rock of Ages." I've always enjoyed the history behind the songs we sing. We sing, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee." When we sing that song, we never think about it. That song was written somewhere in the middle of the 1700s. It was written by a circuit riding preacher, by a name of Reverend Toplady. He was traveling from one town to another when a tremendous storm broke the sky, thunder, lightning, crashing and everything. He took refuge under a big overhanging rock. While the lightning crashed into this, the Holy Spirit of God gave him the idea and the words, "*Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee.*" That's where it came from. Incredible, incredible.

Then I showed you that we saw the opposition from people who would cause a division in your life, division in ministry or the church. How they "*regard not the work of God nor the operation of his hands.*" By the way, just throw this in for you and me in the church age, the operation of His hands is found in Colossians 2:11. Its people being saved by the operation of God, winning people to Christ.

*In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Colossians 2:11*

Then we saw how God will be our saving strength when we trust in Him with all our hearts, the saving strength for His anointed.

### ➤ Four Things God will do in your Life for Spiritual Growth

Now, lastly, let me show you four things God will do in your life as He develops you through your spiritual growth. In your Bible, there are many ways to look, to see, to understand and to study growth in your life. Many models in the Bible. The basic one that we start with, is there are seven stages of spiritual growth found in a believer's life. You know that. But now I'm going to show you another one today. Your spiritual growth is the most important aspect to your Christian life after salvation. We all know you can never lose your salvation. The eternal security of the believer is one of the major doctrines of the Bible. We can never lose our soul, but boy, we can surely lose this process of spiritual growth. He starts out by saying this in verse nine:

## 1.) Save Thy People.

**God saved us for a purpose, for a reason.** The majority of God's people today take what God has given them, the work of His hands, the greatest gift that God could bestow to the human race, and do nothing with it. Today, I'd say looking at Christianity in the 20th and 21st century, I think its greatest quality, and I say that facetiously, of New Testament Christianity would be simply the indifference to the things of God. God's people regard nothing of the work of His hands. I've said it many times. God saved you. God separated us from the world. Then He called us to finish the work that He started. He died at thirty-three. God could have had Him live to a hundred. He was God. God could have had Him live forever. He could be around today preaching the message. God chose to take Him out of this world at thirty-three years after He put Him in this world. God expected you and me to finish the work that He started. "Save thy people." Save thy people to finish the work God started with His Son. But it will only be accomplished as you grow.

## 2.) Bless Thine Inheritance.

The second thing he says in verse nine, as you grow, you'll understand this great truth. *"Bless thine inheritance."* We as God's people have an inheritance with God. We can forfeit that inheritance. In the Bible, you're going to find that there are two types of rewards for the child of God. At the judgment seat of Christ, it looks like that there are five crowns that are handed out at the judgment seat of Christ. But when we get into the millennium, and it looks like from the book of Revelation that we get those crowns, and then at some point we lay those crowns at the feet of Jesus and give them back to Him because it all came from Him anyhow. That's the crowns. Obviously, there's another song that is in our hymnal that we don't sing, probably because we don't want to sing it, but it deals with this same aspect: "Must I go in empty-handed?" Now, that's why we don't sing it. I don't want to sing it. That's the judgment seat. But in the millennium, you have an inheritance and 2 Timothy 2:12 says that we can forfeit that inheritance.

*If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: 2 Timothy 2:12*

The best way I ever understood my inheritance. I heard this years ago, I heard an old preacher, and he was preaching on our millennial inheritance. He was going on and on, and he said, "Folks," he says, "let me illustrate this to you the best I can that everybody today can leave understanding your inheritance. Let's pretend. I have no money. I take my last dollar and buy a lottery ticket. Come to find out it was the winning lottery ticket, and now I have 600 million dollars. But I got to go to St. Louis and pick it up within the next two days. I don't have any money. I go down to the bus station. 'How much for a ticket to St. Louis?' '\$70.' 'I don't have \$70.' 'I'm sorry. You can't go.' So, \$600 million waiting for me. All I need is \$70 to go and get it. I'll call my friend. I haven't talked to him for years, but I'll call my friend. So I call him on the phone and I say, 'Hey, Fred, I just won the lottery. But I got to get to St. Louis to get the money. I need \$70 to get a bus ticket to go get it. Fred, if you give me that \$70 when I get my money, I'm going to give you \$1,000 in return.' Fred said, 'Wow, absolutely.' Gave him the money, went

there, got it, and he gave Fred \$1,000." You say, what's the point of all this? Well, here's the point. Psalms 90:10 says,

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

God's given us 70 years and God says this, "You give me those 70 years, like so and so gave me the \$70. You give me those 70 years and you dedicate those 70 years to me." I got a message I preach on this. I said 70 years, but in the message I preach on, I break it down of really how much time we have to give to the Lord. In 70 years of your life, you know, you sleep 20 years. In 70 years of your life, you eat, I don't remember, almost 10 years. So now 30 years is off the 70. We're not even counting the time we get out of fellowship with God. I figured it out in a message, but the time we get done in life, that's 70 years, threescore and ten, the most we got to give the Lord maybe 20 years. But God says this, "You give me that 70 years and when I come back, I'll give you a thousand-year inheritance." Now, who wouldn't do that? Who wouldn't look at that as the best deal you'll ever get from God and blessing your inheritance? You give Him 70 years now and when He comes, He'll give me a thousand years over there. Who wouldn't take that? 99% of God's people. You give God your 70 years now and He'll bless your millennial inheritance for a thousand years. You see, whatever God gives us, it's always a thousand million times better than what the world will give you. When you got saved, God held nothing back of the blessings that you could have the most blessed life on this earth that you could ever want. The world will never give you that. You give God that 70 years of your life, and God will give you the millennial inheritance. A thousand years for 70. I'm not even going to get into that theological, but there's a thousand generations after that before eternity even starts. It's the deal of all deals.

### 3.) Feed Them.

Then the third thing He says, "*feed them.*" The feeding of the 5,000 or the feeding of the manna back in Exodus 17 when God brought the manna right to where they were. God will feed us with the manna of heaven in both cases, John 6 and the book of Exodus. You can have all you want. Revelation 3:20 says,

*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

We talked about this Thursday night. Your supper time with God, fellowshiping around that table. We sing the song, "*Come and dine, the Master calleth, come and dine.*" You can feast at Jesus' table anytime. But I'm afraid today, the truth of Amos 8:11 tells us,

*Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of **hearing the words of the LORD.***

I want you to notice the famine is not that there is no Bible here. The famine is that it's here, but nobody's hearing it. You can have all you want of the Word of God. God may put limits on some things in our lives, but there's one thing there are no limits on, and that's how much you get out of the Word of God. It all comes down to what you want out of it.

#### 4.) And Lift Them Up For Ever.

Then the fourth thing, "*and lift them up for ever.*" The world and people in the world, saved and lost, will always try to put you down, but **God will always lift you up.** The job of every church, and the job of every Christian to other Christians, should be to edify them and to lift them up. You'll find people in churches who, for whatever reason, will always try to tear people down. You see this, especially with young kids, teenagers. I was a youth pastor for years and years and years, and I'll tell you, it always was a problem trying to get teenagers not to hurt each other by things that they say. Girls and guys. Sometimes they mature out of it, and sometimes they don't, and they carry it on into adulthood. Two key chapters in your Bible: Romans 14 and Romans 15. Those two chapters talk about our relationship with other people. Lifting each other up. Romans 15:1 says,

*We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

**You lift them up.** As a pastor, a Christian, I have a simple rule that I always try to follow. It's always before me when I'm around people, with people, talking to people. I just simply always try to leave people better than when I found them. Give them some kind of encouragement. Give them something that makes them feel special. A simple word of encouragement.

When I tell you of God taking you to a higher level spiritually, this is what I'm talking about. He lifts us up continually. God continually lifting you up to higher ground, developing you, maturing you, giving you discernment, giving you discretion, giving you depth of a better perception. As I studied church history years and years ago, there were some really humorous things that took place in church history. One of them was a guy whose name was Simon Stylites. He was a pagan. He lived about 390 to 450 someplace in there, right around the start of the Catholic Church. He was a pagan and a forerunner of the Catholic Church and what they would turn out. He founded the Royal Order of Spiritual Flagpole Sitters. I'm telling you the truth. His idea of this verse being lifted up was a series of pillars of various heights through his life that showed people who saw him sitting on different pillars how God was lifting him up and he was getting closer to God. His first pillar pole was ten feet tall. He sat on that for four years. He never came out, sat there through rain, snow, blistering heat, never came down for four years. The second pole was twenty-two feet high, same thing. The third one was thirty-five feet high. He's going higher someday. His last pillar pole that he stayed on twenty-four/seven was forty feet high and he stayed on it for twenty years. The platform was only three feet. I mean, he couldn't lie down. He couldn't sit down comfortably. This was his way of showing everybody that he was getting higher with God. When they found him dead on the top of the forty-foot pole, it was a mess. He actually thought that depriving himself of comfort and staying on for thirty years different poles of different heights would show that he was getting higher with God. So he lifted himself up.

As I read that story in church history, as I laughed and thought to myself how crazy that is, I thought also to myself, there's a lot of God's people who do that. You just don't get on a pole. All your Christian life, unlike our flagpole sitter, God's process of growth in your life will lift you up. Right now, every one of you are on some different level of spiritual growth. God will take

you where you're at and continue these four things in your life and He'll continually lift you up. As you grow, God will lift you up and the higher you get, the better you'll be able to see what's going on around you, spiritually speaking. This will be the high tower that's talked about in your Bible, Tower of David. But it starts, number one, with your salvation, "save thy people." Then understanding the blessing of God's inheritance for you, understanding that you're a joint heir with Jesus Christ, Romans 8:17.

*And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. Romans 8:17*

Then understanding that God will continue to feed you. There's no limit. All you can eat. I must say I thought it was quite amusing. I love going to Cinzetti's on New Year's Day. All you can eat. I watched some of you ladies, your plate was so high and so heavy. I think after we left, they changed the sign and took down all you can eat. I thought to myself every time, and I love those places. I go back six or seven times, you know, I get two plates sometimes. I'll tell you another place is down here, right down the road, Legend of Asia. I love that place. But I never ate someplace like that that I don't enjoy it, one and two, think to myself, this is just what the Bible is. It's an unending buffet. God keeps bringing the food out and you can have as much as you want. "*Feed thy people.*"

Then the lifting up of the believer. God getting you to higher ground. You know, it's a standard operation in any war, in any combat. You always want to take the high ground. The high ground gives you a distinct advantage. Anybody that's got a fight up a hill has got a tough fight on their hands. You can see farther. You can control the whole battle if you've got the high ground. In Christianity, it's the same way. You can control the battles of your life that you have to struggle with as God lifts you up, puts you on the high ground.

## VIII. Summary

What God did for us in our church a couple of weeks ago in our conference, He lifted all of us up. Whatever level you were on, if you came and you brought your two loaves and fishes and you let God multiply it in your life, He brought you up. By lifting you up, you were fed that week with the manna from heaven. It's so exciting to watch in your life what God is going to do. When I talk about depth, we think of depth going down. That may be true in the world, but depth for the Christian life is going up. God lifting you up to the different levels, giving you the perspective, the discernment, the understanding. Now with where we are all at, it's not just my job but it's all of our jobs. To keep what God gave us that week, to keep it going. Don't get stagnant on the level that you're at. You're going to have to dig into those twelve baskets of the fragments. You're going to have to let God continue to take you up. God is going to give us the opportunities to work with people, to do this, to do that. But it's your own personal life of how much you're going to get out of the Word of God. You can have as much of the Bible as you want. You can have as much of me as you want to help you put it together. **But the key is for all of us now, where we're at, how we keep it going.** Psalms 28 is a great psalm to come back to after what God gave us in that conference.