

“And being let go (i.e., Peter and John), they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined to be done. And now, Lord, BEHOLD THEIR THREATENINGS; and GRANT UNTO THY SERVANTS, that WITH ALL BOLDNESS THEY MAY SPEAK THY WORD.” Acts 4:23-30.

“And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, THAT I MAY OPEN MY MOUTH BOLDLY, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds” – (i.e., Gill: *“in a chain, he means, that he was in such circumstances, not for any crime, but for the Gospel, for which he was an ambassador; and therefore was not ashamed of his bonds, or chain, but rather gloried in them; and he makes mention of them to engage persons to a regard to him as an ambassador, and to his embassy;”* – [as used here, the word “embassy” means “an ambassador’s mission to a foreign government;” ergo, the meaning here is, that Paul was on a holy mission (a holy EMBASSY) from the great King and the Kingdom of God, to this vile and putrid world of depraved rebels and ingrates] – *“for an ambassador, especially an ambassador of Christ, that comes with his Gospel, and more especially that is suffering for it, ought to be received, heard, and honored.”*) – ***“THAT THEREIN I MAY SPEAK BOLDLY, AS I OUGHT TO SPEAK.” Eph. 6:19,20.*** *“That is, the apostle beseeches the saints to pray for him, that since he was an ambassador for the Gospel, and in bonds, that he might speak in it, or rather of it, BOLDLY AND FREELY; that he might have both liberty from his bonds, and liberty in his soul, and FREEDOM OF SPEECH.” Eph. 6:20.*

So, you see, Beloved, that Bro. Gill was using the term “freedom of speech,” long before it was banded about by politicians in colonial America where copies of Gill’s Expositor were in most Puritan preachers’ libraries and sermons. In fact, it is probable that THE Freedom of Speech in the First Amendment identified and referred to a certain long-existing “Freedom of Speech” – well known to the Framers. After all, the First Amendment does not forbid abridging “A” Freedom of Speech, but “THE” Freedom of Speech; to wit: *“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging THE freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”* (Please see, the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.) Thus it appears that freedom of speech in a religious context is light-years more important than freedom of speech in a political or any other context. Look again at the enumerated advantages of being a Jew under the Old Testament; to wit:

“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way; CHIEFLY, BECAUSE THAT UNTO THEM WERE COMMITTED THE ORACLES (UTTERANCES) OF GOD.”(Rom. 3:1,2)

Nothing – but absolutely nothing – is more important than having and hearing the utterances of the Lord our God. *“O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.” Jer. 22:29.* When the Lord cuts off His utterances – His words, as from the mouths of His holy prophets and servants – it is a sign that the storm clouds of His condign wrath and fury are about to break upon doomed mankind; to wit:

“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.”
(Amos 8:11)

We have often said that America and the World need the Lord’s words out of the mouths of His faithful servants at Westboro Baptist Church more than they need bread to eat and water to drink. Isn’t that what our text says? A worldwide famine of HEARING the words of the Lord, presupposes a worldwide famine of PREACHING the words of the Lord. It is axiomatic; to wit: One cannot HEAR what is not there to be heard. *“(A)nd how shall they believe in him of whom they have not HEARD? and how shall they HEAR without a PREACHER? and how shall they PREACH, except they be sent?”* Rom. 10:14,15. Those only who are qualified to be sent and to preach are those such as are identified in **Isaiah, chapter 59**, who come to Zion (the church), and who turn from transgression in Jacob; and those identified in **2nd Chron., ch. 29**, and who sanctify themselves, and carry forth the FILTHINESS from the holy place – in other words, only God’s Elect in His churches are qualified to preach His holy words; to wit:

“And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and MY WORDS WHICH I HAVE PUT IN THY MOUTH, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.” (Isa. 59:20,21)

“And he brought in the priests and the Levites (typifying God’s Elect, i.e., God’s holy, anointed servants), and gathered them together into the east street. And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place” – (the church, which must be peopled by living stones and presented as a chaste virgin to the Lord Jesus Christ). **2 Chron. 29:4-5, & 2 Cor. 11:2.**

Gill: *“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God. Which Kimchi interprets of all the days after Malachi, when prophecy ceased.”* Or, more like the days after the ten northern tribes were conquered and then scattered abroad throughout the whole world, and they had no more prophets or prophecy among the few remaining Israelites in the land; to wit: *“We see not our SIGNS; there is no more any prophet; neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.”* **Psa. 74:9.**

Beloved, this evil nation does not know how indebted to Westboro Baptist Church they truly are, but the day is coming when they will know, and then it will be forever too late for repentance. They are willingly ignorant of all truly important things, and they are bent upon self-destruction; to wit: *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me;”* – (i.e., no chosen one, not elected to salvation by Christ, since all His chosen ones are made kings and priests unto God and His Father – **Rev. 1:6**) – *“seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.”* **Hosea 4:6.** *“I WILL ALSO FORGET THY CHILDREN,”* is a dreadful declaration by the Almighty God, which the Hell-bound population of this God-forsaken nation should pay earnest heed to. Children are a barometer of a society’s mores and spiritual condition.

The 42 little children who mocked Elisha while rejecting the glorious supernatural translation of Elijah to Heaven in a chariot of fire – and were slaughtered by she-bears – were accurately reflecting the contempt for the things of God by their parents; to wit: *“And he (Elisha) went up from thence unto Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. And he (Elisha) turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of*

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them.” 2 Kgs. 2:23,24. As for our text, the words are very emphatic, “**I WILL FORGET THY CHILDREN, EVEN I,**” their natural children would be cut off; which expresses the certainty of it more fully, as well as more clearly points at the justness of the divine retaliation. “I, even I, the Lord God Almighty, will forget thy children,” saith the Lord God. “I will have no regard for them, and take no notice of, or care for, them – as if they had never existed.” **Hosea 4:6.**

Beloved, this is very refreshing to me. Due to our extensive experience trying to deal with and preach to the wild and filthy gangs of America’s young people throughout the nation, I find myself in full agreement with Elisha turning to those kids and cursing them in the Name of the Lord. And in even fuller agreement with the dear Lord God in ordering those two she-bears to come out of the woods and kill those 42 smart-mouth kids. And I wouldn’t be a bit surprised if Elisha didn’t picket their funerals, or its equivalency – if he could stand all the hypocritical blubbering that undoubtedly went on. Beloved, this subject could justify a sermon all its own. After all, the TRANSLATION of Elijah was one of the most glorious events in human history.

“By faith (Elijah, as it was with Enoch) was TRANSLATED that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had TRANSLATED him; for before his TRANSLATION he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”(Heb. 11:5)

And so it was that when all the “*hard speeches*” of their hateful parents – mocking the holy TRANSLATION of the prophet Elijah, – had done its predictable work upon the minds and hearts of the 42 “*little children*” – (i.e., incorrigible brats) – of Bethel, they were fit for nothing but FRESH BEAR-BAIT – to be torn asunder and devoured alive at the will of two very hostile she-bears – all upon the express commandment of the fretted and enraged Lord God Almighty. All as the final logical conclusion of a glorious event that descriptively should be called, “THE TRANSLATION OF ELIJAH;” to wit: “*And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal*” (whereupon, the amazing translation of Elijah, from earth to Heaven, and after which, the following) “*And he (Elisha) went up from thence unto Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. And he (Elisha) turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them* (it thus seems from this wording that there were many more wild kids involved in this fiasco than 42, but only “42 of them” were torn to pieces and destroyed.)”

Gill: “*He (Elisha) turned back and looked on them. With a stern countenance, thereby reprov- ing them, and in order to intimidate them, and make them ashamed, and cause them to leave off, but to no purpose; they repeated their mockeries. And perhaps these children were sent out to intimidate Elisha with their taunts and jeers from entering Bethel; but having heard of Elijah going up to Heaven, as was said, they jeeringly bid Elisha go up to Heaven after him, and then they should have a good riddance of them both; thus at the same time mocking at him for his baldness, and MAKING A JEST AT A WONDROUS WORK OF GOD, THE TRANSLATION OF ELIJAH, which, with behaving so irreverently to a hoary head, a prophet of the Lord, was very heinous and wicked, and therefore what befell them need not be wondered at. The she-bears are the fiercest, especially when bereaved of their cubs, which the Jews say these were, and far off from their native habitat and finding themselves in a strange woods – all of which was very extraordinary. As for the deadly fierceness and violence by which these disrespectful juveniles met their Maker, they knowingly and willingly committed gross, grievous sacrilege – AS DID THEIR PARENTS IN THEM, who had trained them and brought them up in such impiety, and put them on that pathway of sin and rebellion against God, and sent them out to sin away their day of grace and end up, inevitably, in Hell, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” **Mk. 9:43-48.***

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Making a jest of a wondrous work of God – (i.e., the rapture of Elijah, while living, translated immediately and directly from this world to Heaven and the world to come) – may not have been the most heinous and outrageous and unforgivable of the sins of these brats and their parents. Fresh from having witnessed Elijah’s glorious ascension, and having received from the Lord a double portion of Elijah’s spirit and Elijah’s prophetic powers, that Elisha **“tarried at Jericho.” 2 Kgs. 2:18. “And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation”** – (i.e., location and natural beauty of the surroundings and view of the place, in a plain, surrounded with lush gardens and orchards, with vineyards, oliveyards, and groves of palm-trees, and other odoriferous trees and plants) – thus you see, **“the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth; [Bang(!)] BUT THE WATER IS NAUGHT, AND THE GROUND BARREN.”**

This is deadly serious business. Here the word signifies, **“caused to miscarry.”** Josephus: **“Not only trees cast their untimely fruit, which it watered, but women became abortive that drank of it, and so the cattle.”** Any city must have an abundant, dependable, safe supply of good, clean, fresh water – or that city will die. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Jericho and the surrounding area – already struggling under the residual effects of Joshua’s conquering curse:

“And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it. So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame was noised throughout all the country.” (Josh. 6:26,27)

And so it was, that without Elisha’s immediate and miraculous help, the municipality of Jericho and its surrounding watershed area would have quickly become uninhabitable. Whereupon, Elisha, in a magnanimous display of kindness, sprang into action; to wit: **“And he (Elisha) said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein”** – SALT? Salt in water for drinking and for vegetable irrigation? Would that be to make the forthcoming miracle even greater and mightier? – **“And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring (fountainhead) of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters”** – (flowing from the fountainhead in Jericho, thence throughout the region round about and ultimately settling in the watershed. Such that there is no doubt but that Bethel, closely neighboring Jericho, benefitted enormously, both directly and indirectly, from Elisha’s kindness and generosity to Jericho. Adding the craven sin of base ingratitude to the demon-possessed parents and kids of ancient Bethel.) – **“So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.” 2 Kgs. 2:22.**

Just think how fortunate those people were that Elisha the prophet lived and labored amongst them. He stood, as it were, between them and the outraged wrath and curses of God. Beloved, behold the ungrateful wretches of Bethel:

“And he went up from thence unto Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.” (2 Kgs. 2:23)

On 29th of Jan., 2003, the Capital-Journal published a letter from Pastor Ron Lassiter; to wit: **“Wouldn’t it be humbling and shocking in the end to find that God’s wrath was diverted from Topeka (even though many of the churches allow, condone and sympathize with homosexuals) due to Rev. Phelps and WBC’s open protestation, however strong and graphic they are?”**

I love you.

Amen.