

“And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands. Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee; be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound (or, break to pieces) thee before them. For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee... Therefore thus saith the Lord, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me; and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth; let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall; and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the Lord. And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.” Jer. 1:16-19; 15:19-21.

Not long after I arrived at Prairie Bible Institute (PBI) – (in a little town called Three Hills, near Calgary, Alberta, Canada, in 1948) – one of the students who hailed from Texas, was speaking at the morning chapel services. He was preaching out of the **first chapter of Joshua**. As he gradually warmed to his subject, he worked his way to the side of the pulpit, where he could be seen from head to toe; and where he struck a pose with his legs spread like a Texas cowboy preparing to rope a bull. In his left hand he held an open Bible aloft. With his right hand he gestured vigorously in a huge swinging motion as though cutting wheat, each time he sounded out the name of some famous dead preacher and grandly announced that he was dead. Like this:

“Brethren, the Lord God made the announcement to Joshua that Moses, the Lord’s servant, was dead – preliminary to encouraging Joshua in the work He was calling Joshua to do in the conquest of Canaan; to wit: ‘Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of nun, Moses’ minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.’” Josh. 1:1,2.

I never read or think of the **first chapter of Joshua**, without recalling the big Texan’s sermon that day. Each time he called the name of some famous preacher, his right hand held high, made a little circling motion and then came down fast as though throwing a lasso or cutting a swath of standing wheat with a sharp sickle; to wit: *“Brethren, Jonathan Edwards is dead (!) (Bang!) Let us arise and go over this Jordan. Charles G. Finney is dead” (!) (Bang!) I can see him now with the eye of memories long past. “Jonathan Edwards is dead (!) (Bang!) Charles Spurgeon is dead (!) (Bang!) Billy Sunday (the great major league baseball-playing evangelist) is dead (!) (Bang!)”* Down comes the hand, emphasizing the work of God yet to be finished on the earth, by those who, in the providence of God are yet living on the earth. The young Texan’s sermon that day long ago, could not have been more stirring and dramatic. On and on he went. *“Dwight L. Moody is dead. B.H. Carroll (father of the Texas Baptists) is dead. John Bunyan (of Pilgrim’s Progress fame) is dead. William Cowper and Isaac Watts”* – (hymn-writing geniuses) – *“both dead.”* Bang, Bang,

Sunday, July 26, 2009

Sermon Outline...page 2

Bang, Bang. *“Arise, therefore, Joshua. Man-up, as they say, thou art bound for the Promised Land – eternal bliss and glory await thee and thy people!”*

“Go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.” (Josh. 1:2)

Whereupon, the Lord God gave unto His servant Joshua a short (9 verses) sermon, super-calculated to finish the job of manning Joshua up to the formidable task of promptly invading and conquering Canaan – all of which is the foremost, standing symbol in Scripture of God’s Elect pilgrims battling manfully through this dangerous life, overcoming all adversities, and landing safely on Heaven’s happy shores at last; to wit:

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet. 1:10,11)

Now let us identify a few of the attributes that the Lord God equips His people with, from the standpoint of God Himself, as revealed in His Book, the Bible. John Brown of Scotland comments on this point in his book, “Parting Counsels,” being “An Exposition of 2 Peter 1”; to wit: *“There is no room, however, for rational doubt on the subject. That the Bible is the revelation of the Divine will, is proved by a variety and power of evidence such as very few propositions of any kind can boast; and, if it is so, nothing is more certain than that there is a class of men called by God through the instrumentality of His Word, by the agency of His Spirit, – out of their natural state of IGNORANCE, ERROR, GUILT, and DEPRAVITY, into a state in which they have the true knowledge of God, the enjoyment of His favor, and an ever-growing conformity to His image, – and THUS DISTINGUISHED FROM THE REST OF MANKIND as a SELECTED, SEPARATED, and PECULIAR PEOPLE; and that these, and these alone, are in a safe state in reference to their highest and eternal interests.”*

I have spent time gathering together all the attributes which God endows His “*peculiar people*” with under the heading of “*virtue*;” to wit: *“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a PECULIAR PEOPLE, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.” Titus 2:13-15.*

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a PECULIAR PEOPLE; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” (1 Pet. 2:9,10)

Those attributes of God’s Elect which I have gleaned from Brown’s book under VIRTUE, are these: ENERGY, COURAGE, POWER, BRAVERY, BOLDNESS, ACTIVITY, and FORTITUDE. We have seen a veiled threat from the Lord God to the prophet Jeremiah, at the time he received his original commission – a warning, lest when the battle got fierce Jeremiah should be tempted to give up the struggle. After all, every servant of the Almighty must have a wholesome fear – yes, a GODLY FEAR, or his worship and service will not be acceptable to God; to wit: *“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace,”* – (or, let us hold fast) – *“whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; For our God is a consuming fire.” Heb. 12:28,29.* Our text for today contains the warning from God to Jeremiah, that if Jeremiah should fail to deliver the fearsome message of God to the wicked and hostile Jews, and should become *“dismayed at their faces,”* then and in that event, the Lord God could set about the grisly business of breaking Jeremiah in pieces before them; to wit:

“And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands. Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them ALL THAT I COMMAND THEE; be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee (or, break thee in pieces) before them. For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.” (Jer. 1:16-19)

And, if anything, God’s similar threats and warnings against Ezekiel were worse, lest Ezekiel also become rebellious, having become afraid of the rebellious Jews, and their words, and having become dismayed at their looks and their painful retaliation for Ezekiel’s harsh preaching; to wit: ***“And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me. And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me; they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent (hard of face) children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them. And thou, son of man, BE NOT AFRAID OF THEM, NEITHER BE AFRAID OF THEIR WORDS, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions; BE NOT AFRAID OF THEIR WORDS, NOR BE DISMAYED AT THEIR LOOKS, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; for they are most rebellious. But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; BE NOT THOU REBELLIOUS LIKE THAT REBELLIOUS HOUSE; open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.” Ezek. 2:1-8.***

As though the Lord should say unto Ezekiel, If you balk at chastising Israel for their great sins and iniquities, for their mighty rebellions; then you yourself will be in open rebellion against God, even as the Jews are a nation of transgressing rebels – and you are likely to receive the same punishments. It would be nothing but the fear of man – in both Jeremiah and Ezekiel. And, ***“The fear of man bringeth a snare; but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.” Prov. 29:25.*** And, the only effective antidote for the fatal disease of the fear of man, is the fear of God.

Beloved, it hath pleased the Lord to allow Satan to place this humble little church under severe satanic attack; and it is, if viewed in the proper way, a glorious thing. It signifies that the dear Lord has confidence in us, that we will bear ourselves up most courageously, bravely, and boldly. There is absolutely no question about the ultimate outcome of it all; to wit: We shall conquer all, and triumph decisively, as it was with Joshua: ***“Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses...There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage... Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do all the law...This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” Josh. 1:3-9.***

Among the many beautiful oracles in the book of Isaiah, there is one that seems to indicate that the Lord God gets especially irritated and indignant when His servants are afraid of a man that shall

Sunday, July 26, 2009

Sermon Outline...page 4

die, rather than being afraid of Him, their Creator Who stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth. I don't know for sure, but it certainly sounds to me like the Lord is indignantly jerking that fellow up by the lapels (so to speak), and saying in a rather loud voice: "Who do you think you are?, being afraid of man whose breath is in his nostrils, and not being afraid of Me?" To wit: ***"Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head; they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. I, even I, am he that comforteth you; WHO ART THOU?"*** – (Or, Who do you think you are?) – ***"THAT THOU SHOULDEST BE AFRAID OF A MAN THAT SHALL DIE, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?"*** Isaiah 51:11-13.

Gill says that all this is in response to the fervent prayer of the church, found at **Isaiah 51:9&10**; to wit: ***"Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?"*** (i.e., Egypt, symbol of our arch-enemies who would destroy WBC if they could). ***"Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?"*** Isa. 51:9&10.

This is further Scripture support and illustrative evidence for those other exceeding great and precious promises that invite us to call upon Him for deliverance from oppressors – and the certainty of a comforting, positive response; to wit: ***"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."*** Jer. 33:3. ***"And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily."*** Lk. 18:7,8. ***"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."*** Heb. 13:5,6. ***"Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."*** Isa. 41:10.

Gill: ***"When the fear of man prevails God is forgotten, His power, His providence, His promises, and past instances of divine favor and goodness; were these more frequently recollected, considered, and thought of, they would prove an antidote against the fear of man; and especially when it is observed, that He that is our Maker is He that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; these are amazing works of His hands; and what is it that He can't do that has made these? These He upholds and maintains in being, and does all things in them as He pleases, and overrules all for His own glory and His people's good; and therefore they have nothing to fear from men."***

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded; they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee; they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel... That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it." (Isa. 41:10-14,20)

I love you. Amen.