

178 – Three Critical Steps we all must take

We have joked before about needing a cervical collar to avoid the whiplash we feel during the sudden twists and turns of walking in faith with the Lord and by faith in Him. At the same time, I have been perhaps the foremost proponent of the sovereignty of Almighty God. So, when something happened today that caught me by surprise, I found myself being reminded that IN the sovereignty of God, the course of events may change abruptly and move in a direction we didn't foresee.

Less than two days from now, Barbara leaves for a 2-day event, for which she has been preparing to present her story in two minutes, the climax of which was to be having her presentation videotaped and edited professionally. She has been at this for weeks – both of us have: writing, practicing, re-writing, rehearsing in front of a mirror, refining some more, practicing it with others watching; refining some more. It's been a major focus of time, energy and attention around here. Well, the whole direction changed with a sudden, sharp, 90-degree turn this morning. At the event beginning, which is about 60 hours away, only ONE of the two days will focus on refining the presentation of her 2-minute story, and videotaping will wait 'till spring; the SECOND day will focus now on the three critical steps to impart to people if this were Barbara's last day on Earth. What are the three things she would give people if she weren't going to be here anymore? Each one of the three steps is to be wrapped up in a specific story that has three elements: it has to be personal; it must have physicality (in other words, you gotta move with the story – it's not just a talking head speech); and it must be generous – you have to be in it and with it, and bring your audience into it with you in a way that delivers your most important messages.

I'm sharing all this detail with you, so that you can come with me on the journey I took with the Lord this morning when I learned the news of this sudden and massive change of direction, because Mr. Sovereignty of God's response was not, "Praise the Lord, Hallelujah!" After the initial shock, I felt indignant that people had changed their minds and now we had to adapt ours. "How dare they do that!" I thought. Then I went into a moment of powerlessness, thinking, "I have no idea what we're going to or how we're going to do it." Of course, the indignation of inconvenience was still seething when Barbara asked me, "So what would YOUR 3 steps be?"

Without missing a beat, I replied, "One, acknowledging and receiving she sovereignty of God; two, understanding the force within each of us that is adversarial and opposed to

the word and purpose of God, known as the sa-tan; and the word of the conciliation in which we have the means and reason to be friends with God, through the mediatorial position of the Messiah.”

As soon as the words left my lips, I realized that I was in the midst of a challenge to all three of those steps. I was bent out of shape over someone else’s change of plan that changed mine; yet, my Father knew this exact sequence of events – indeed, He wrote them in His plan for my life – and for Barbara’s – and, by the way, she was relieved not to be videotaped for seven or eight months. In fact, Barbara was ready to switch gears as quickly as God was, while I was busy grouching about the injustice and inconvenience of it all.

My Father had to remind me, dramatically, that His sovereignty included me, and His piercing questions, which lead me into our study tonight, were, “Can I help myself to your life? Am I sovereign or are you? Are you also adversarial and opposed to my word and purpose in certain areas of your life?” Are you fully and irrevocably conciliated to Me; Has Yeshua completed His mediatorial role between you and Me, and are you and I truly friends now?”

Each of those questions from the Father addresses one of what He has shown me are the three critical steps that I would impart to all humanity if this were my last day on the Earth. Well, this could easily be my last day on Earth, so perhaps it would be well to share these three steps with you tonight ... just in case.

We have studied each of the three points extensively, and they figure prominently in the book, *Go God!* However, I don’t think I’ve ever gone through them together succinctly during “*Light Up the Scriptures.*”

Here are the three points again, briefly:

1. The sovereignty of God
2. The sa-tan – facing our enemy and the enemy of God in each of US
3. The conciliation, which includes God’s approach present

All three issues exist, in my opinion, because the world has been co-opted by a gross misunderstanding of YaHoVeH Elohim by religions or denominations that bear His name. Those misunderstandings exist because men abused the scriptures, mistranslating them, and thereby misinterpreting and misapplying them, and then teaching their twisted and erroneous interpretations and conclusions to a population which mistakenly

trusted the faith and wisdom of its religious leaders. The truth of YaHoVeH's inspired word became full of error, and the teachings that flowed from it are to this day likewise full of error and even utter deceit. I know of no way to soften that indictment, because the evidence is clear throughout the history of the Christian era, the most damning of which is the condition of the Messiah's Body today, which is as sick and dysfunctional as the world which it attempts to evangelize – mostly through fear – and above which it purports to be living.

Some time ago, Barbara asked me what I thought the most important things were that I would say to people, and my number two was the salvation of all; however, today, I discovered that God will take care of winning everyone to Himself, but that understanding the nature of the adversary – the sa-tan – IN us, not outside of us, because we are dying, is of far greater importance to Him and to us.

All of us on this line right now know the basis for understanding the sovereignty of God in Psalm 139, especially verse 16, but all of the verses ahead of that also proclaim His sovereignty. Let's look at what I pray is very familiar ground to all of us by now.

A Davidic Psalm

139 O Yahweh, You have investigated me and are knowing me;
2 You Yourself know my sitting⁻ down and my rising⁻ up;
You understand [>] my thought from afar;
3 My path and my pallet You have measured off,
And for all my ways You have ^emade provision.
4 For though there be no declaration ^lon my tongue,
Behold, O Yahweh, You know it all.
5 Back and front, You have besieged me,
And You ^lset Your palm upon me.
6 Marvelous is such knowledge ^fbeyond me;
It is impregnable; I ^lcannot reach to it.
7 Whither could I ^lgo from Your spirit,
And whither could I run ^laway from Your presence?
8 If I should climb to the heavens, You are there,
And should I ^emake my berth in^d the unseen,
behold, You are there.
9 Should I wear the wings of dawn,
Should I indeed tabernacle in the hindmost sea,
10 Even there Your hand, it would ^lguide me,
And Your right hand would ^lhold me.
11 ⁺If I ^lsaid, ^ySurely darkness, it [~]snuffed me up[~],
And night ^Qis belted[~] about me,

- 12 **Even darkness, it is not darkening ^fto You,
And the night, as the day, is ^egiving light;
^{as} Darkness is as light.**
- 13 **For You Yourself achieved the making of my innermost being;
You ^lovershadowed me in my mother's belly.**
- 14 **I shall acclaim You, ^{on} for ⁷You are ^{~Qes} fearfully ^ldistinguished;
Marvelous ^lare Your ^dworks.
^{+ ~You have known~} my soul very thoroughly;**
- 15 **My skeleton was not suppressed from You,
^wWhen I was ^dmade in concealment;
I was woven together as in the nether parts of the earth.**
- 16 **Your eyes saw my embryo,
And my days, all of them were ^lwritten upon Your scroll;
The days, they were formed
^{+when there was not one ^lof them.}**
- 17 **^{+ wt}How precious are Your thoughts to me, O El,
^{wt}How plentiful are their sums:**
- 18 **If I ^lnumber them, they are ^lmore ^fthan the sand.
I awake, and I am still with You.**

The sovereignty of God is declared, illustrated, and demonstrated throughout the Scriptures, from Genesis 1:1 through Revelation 22:21. The prophet, Ezekiel, captured one of the most succinct expressions that illustrate God's sovereignty in **Ezekiel 37:3**, but let's look at the story from **verses 1-14**:

37 The hand of Yahweh ^bcame on me. <sup>+ He ^lbrought me ^lforth
^lby the spirit of Yahweh and ^lstopped me in the midst of ^avalley. <sup>+ It was full of bones. ²⁺ He ^cmade me pass ^{on}through them
all around, and behold, there were exceedingly many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry.</sup></sup>

³⁺ He ^lsaid to me: Son of humanity, shall ^lthese ^lbones live?

And I ^{h^a}answered, My Lord Yahweh, You ^lknow.

⁴⁺ Then He ^lsaid to me: Prophecy over ^lthese ^lbones, and you will say to them, ^lDry ^lbones, hear the word of Yahweh.

⁵ Thus says my Lord Yahweh to ^lthese bones: Behold, I will bring ^lspirit into you, and you will live. ⁶⁺ I will ^gbestow sinews on you and ^lbring up flesh upon you and encase ^{on} you with skin. ^{+ I will ^gbestow spirit in you, and you will live. ^{+ Then you will know that I am Yahweh.}}

⁷⁺ So I prophesied just as I was instructed, and as I prophesied⁻ there ^hwas a sound, and behold, a quaking! And the bones drew ^lnear, each bone to its next bone. ⁸⁺ As I ^{see}watched, ^{+ behold, sinews appeared on them, and flesh came up, and skin ^lencased ^{on} them overall; ^{+ yet there was no spirit in them.}}

⁹ +Then He ^lsaid to me: Prophecy to the spirit; prophecy, son of humanity, and you will say to the spirit, Thus says my Lord Yahweh: Come from the four winds, O ^spirit, and blow into ^these who were killed^l, so ⁺that they may live.

¹⁰ +When I prophesied as ^u He had instructed me, ⁺ the spirit ^lcame into them, and they ^llived and ^lstood on their feet, a most exceedingly great ^tassembly[~].

¹¹ +Then He ^lsaid to me: Son of humanity, ^these ^bones are the whole house of Israel, ^{they}who ^{bd}hitherto have been saying, Our bones are dry, and our expectation has perished. We have gotten ^ourself severed. ¹² Therefore, prophecy, and you will say to them, Thus says my Lord Yahweh: Behold, I will open^l ^your tombs, and I will ^lbring ^you up from your tombs, My people, and bring ^you to the ground of Israel. ¹³ +Then you will know that I am Yahweh ^lwhen I open[~] ^your tombs and ^lwhen I ^lbring ^you up[~] from your tombs, My people. ¹⁴ + I will ^gbestow My spirit in you, and you will live, and I will settle ^you on your own ground. ⁺Then you will know that I^l, Yahweh, have spoken, and I will do it, averring is Yahweh.

Every figure we read about in the scriptures, from Adam to Noah, to Abraham, Joseph, and Moses, to Samuel, David, every judge, king, and servant; Rahab, Esther, Naomi and Ruth, Miriam, the mother of Yeshua; the Messiah Himself and all the Apostles, including Paul, of whom the Lord Himself said, “He is a choice instrument of Mine,” found himself or herself face to face with the sovereignty of God.

You and I are no different from them; our lives are no less formed in every detail by the Father of us all, Who, according to Paul, chose each of us before anything was made and before anyone was born.

Ephesians 1:3-12

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ, This blessing does not depend on you and me – God does it, because, as we will soon learn, it is His delight!

4 according as He chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world, we to be holy and flawless in His sight, The choosing is the Father’s alone; even our holiness and flawlessness is how He chooses to see us, and how we will be actually when He changes our bodies to match Yeshua’s glorified body.

5 in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus; in accord with the delight of His will, The Father needs no more reason or cause for His actions than “the delight of His will.” Clearly, you and I have nothing to do with His decision; that is, we can neither designate nor undesignated ourselves or

anyone else. All of the Father's choices in your life and mine are according to His delight!

6 for the laud of the glory of His grace, which graces us in the Beloved:

7 in Whom we are having the deliverance through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses in accord with the riches of His grace,

8 which He lavishes on us; Yeshua is the first on Whom the Father lavished His great love, favor, and immeasurable blessing; here, the Apostle shows us that the Father is likewise lavishing "the riches of His grace ... on us." Again, He does not ask us and we can do nothing to earn it. in all wisdom and prudence

9 making known to us the secret of His will (in accord with His delight, which He purposed in Him)

10 to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up all in the Christ -- both that in the heavens and that on the earth --

11 in Him in Whom our lot was cast also, being designated beforehand according to the purpose of the One Who is operating [the] all in accord with the counsel of His will,

12 that we should be for the laud of His glory, who are pre-expectant in the Christ.

Ephesians 1:11 is one of the greatest declarations of the Sovereignty of God in the New Testament:

in Him in Whom our lot was cast also, being designated beforehand according to the purpose of the One Who is operating [the] all in accord with the counsel of His will

In the face of God's sovereignty, we find our own opposition to it; our own unwillingness to accept it; our willingness, rather, to oppose it; and, we find ourselves, therefore, taking on or embodying the role of adversary. If we aren't opposing God directly, we are challenging someone whom He has sent to us as His representative, for the purpose of education, correction, or encouragement; either way, we place ourselves as adversaries to His word and purpose, and that is the definition of the Hebrew word, **sa-tan**.

Hebraic understanding of the sa-tan, as opposed to that of the non-Hebraic world, was that the adversary isn't mysterious and it certainly isn't some literal entity, spiritual or otherwise; it is simply an oppositional force within human nature itself. The sa-tan is something every human being has contended with since Eve's seduction by the serpent and Adam's disobedience in the garden. The Lord Himself met and withstood this adversarial, oppositional force within Himself at two critical points in His life when He was most vulnerable: One was in the wilderness, following His baptism by John, and the other was in the garden of Gethsemane.

Luke 4:1-13

1 Now Jesus, full of holy spirit, returns from the Jordan, and was led in the spirit in the wilderness

2 forty days, undergoing trial by the Adversary. And He did not eat of anything in those days, and subsequently, at their being concluded, He hungers.

3 Now the Adversary said to Him, "If you are God's son, speak to this stone that it may be becoming bread."

4 And Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written that, 'Not on bread alone shall man be living, but on every declaration...of God.'"

5 And, leading Him up into a high mountain, the Adversary shows Him all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth in a second of time.

6 And the Adversary said to Him, "To you shall I be giving all this authority and the glory of them, for it has been given up to me, and to whomsoever I may will, I am giving it.

7 If you, then, should ever be worshiping before me, it will all be yours."

8 And answering, Jesus said to Him, "Go away behind Me, Satan! It is written, The Lord your God shall you be worshiping, and to Him only shall you be offering divine service."

9 Now he led Him into Jerusalem and stands Him on the wing of the sanctuary, and he said to Him, "If you are God's son, cast yourself down hence,

10 for it is written that 'His messengers shall be directed concerning Thee, To protect Thee.'

11 and that 'On their hands shall they be lifting Thee, Lest at some time Thou shouldst be dashing Thy foot against a stone.'"

12 And answering, Jesus said to him that "It has been declared, 'You shall not be putting on trial the Lord your God.'"

13 And, concluding every trial, the Adversary withdrew from Him until an appointed time.

Now let's look at the "appointed time," in **Luke 22: 39-44**

And, coming out, He went, according to His custom, into the mount of Olives. Now the disciples also follow Him.

40 Now, coming to be at the place, He said to them, "Be praying not to be entering into trial."

41 And He is pulled away from them about a stone's throw, and kneeling, He prayed,

42 saying, "Father, if it is Thy intention, carry aside this cup from Me. However, not My will, but Thine, be done!"

43 Now a messenger from heaven was seen by Him, strengthening Him.

44 And coming to be in a struggle, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat became as if clots of blood descending on the earth.

Now, turn to Matthew 26:51-56, when Yeshua confronts the crowd which has come to the garden to arrest Him:

one of those with Jesus, stretching out his hand, pulls his sword, and smiting the slave of the chief priest, amputates his ear.

52 Then Jesus is saying to him, "Turn away your sword into its place, for all those taking the sword, by the sword shall perish.

53 Or are you supposing that I am not able to entreat My Father, and at present He will station by My side more than twelve legions of messengers?

54 How, then, may the scriptures be fulfilled, seeing that thus it must occur?"

55 In that hour Jesus said to the throngs, "As for a robber, you come out with swords and cudgels to apprehend Me! Daily was I seated with you, teaching in the sanctuary, and you do not hold Me.

56 Now the whole of this has occurred that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled."

In these last two scenes, both in the garden of Gethsemane, we see our first two points demonstrated: the sovereignty of God, and the sa-tan, which is no more and no less than the adversarial nature of mankind itself, opposing the word of God and *thinking* to oppose His purpose, only to carry it out *exactly* the way YaHoVeH revealed those events to multiple prophets whom He inspired to write about them separately over a period of about 1500 years, and no less than 500 years before any of the events took place.

As mankind exerts its will in opposition to the words and purpose of YaHoVeH Elohim, it demonstrates the sa-tan – the adversary of God – within its own nature; but no matter, because no adversary, fleshly or spiritual, can or will thwart, delay, or subvert the Father's purpose.

All of this brings us to what the Apostle Paul called, "the word of the conciliation," in 2 **Corinthians 5:19**. Let's look at the story from **verses 14 through Chapter 6:2**:

For the love of the Christ is constraining us, judging this, that, if One died for the sake of all, consequently all died.

15 And He died for the sake of all that those who are living should by no means still be living to themselves, but to the One dying and being roused for their sakes.

16 So that we, from now on, are acquainted with no one according to flesh. Yet even if we have known Christ according to flesh, nevertheless now we know Him so no longer.

17 So that, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the primitive passed by. Lo!

there has come new!

18 Yet all is out of God, Who conciliates us to Himself through the Christ, and is giving us the dispensation of the conciliation,

19 how that God was in the Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them, and placing in us the word of the conciliation.

20 For Christ, then, are we ambassadors, as of God entreating through us. We are beseeching for Christ's sake, "Be conciliated to God!"

21 For the One not knowing sin, He makes to be a sin offering for our sakes that we may be becoming God's righteousness in Him.

Chapter 6

1 Now, working together, we are also entreating you not to receive the grace of God for naught.

2 For He is saying, "In a season acceptable I reply to you, And in a day of salvation I help you." Lo! Now is a most acceptable era! Lo! Now is a day of salvation!

In other words, when the sting of the sentence of death is removed; when the burden and the shame of offenses – or sins – is removed, because of Yeshua's sacrifice to the Father on our behalf and to us on the Father's behalf, any reason for enmity toward God is also erased. There is no longer cause for being estranged from the Father and every reason to take His outstretched hand, through the cross of the Christ and, more importantly, through the miracle of His resurrection and the promise of our own through faith in Him, and be conciliated to the Father; literally to forgive Him for the sentence of death and the shame of offenses – both passed through Adam's disobedience – and become the Father's friends, as well as sons and daughters, thereby making Yeshua's death count.

As YaHoVeH's conciliated sons and daughters and Yeshua's faith-born brothers and sisters, we silence the sa-tan within the nature of our old humanity; we bear witness to and acknowledge the Father's sovereignty throughout our lives and in the world around us; and we rest in our conciliation as friends.

Thus the Scripture is fulfilled, which Yeshua spoke in **Matthew 11:28-30**:

Hither to Me, all who are toiling and laden, and I will be giving you rest.

29 Lift My yoke upon you and be learning from Me, for meek am I and humble in heart, and you shall be finding rest in your souls,

30 for My yoke is kindly and My load is light.

And **John 7:37-38**:

If anyone should be thirsting, let him come to Me and drink.

38 He who is believing in Me, according as the scripture said, out of his bowel shall gush rivers of living water.

Father, may those with ears to hear, apprehend Your sovereignty and acknowledge it in their lives; may they recognize and then silence their own adversarial tendencies; may they receive Your one-sided conciliation, and become Your friends.

As You Yourself have declared throughout the Scriptures, you are the Lord; You are YaHoVeH Elohim and there is no other. Apart from You there is no other God. Apart from You there is no salvation. In Jesus Christ – Yeshua the Messiah – is our expectation of life beyond death's reach. All this and more you have accomplished for the delight of Your will. And we give you praise, honor, and glory, as we worship You in the name of the One Who died that we might live with You.

Amen.