

The Incredible Signs That Follow Those Who Believe

by Carter Conlon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of rightly dividing the word of God and being discerning in our spiritual pursuits to avoid spiritual deception and judgment.

Duration: 53:33

Scripture: Jeremiah 14:13, Jeremiah 15:3-4, Jeremiah 15:13-16, 2 Timothy 3:16

Topics: "Belief"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the four judgments that God will bring upon his people. These judgments include the sword to slay, the dogs to tear, the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. The preacher also mentions that the New Testament instructs believers to take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. He then uses the story of Paul gathering sticks and being bitten by a viper as a type or symbol of the world falling apart and people realizing their own brokenness. The preacher emphasizes the need for God's people to turn to Him and warns against the blindness and ignorance of the watchmen and shepherds.

Transcript

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This recording cannot be posted on any website. However written permission to link to the Times Square Church homepage may be requested by emailing info at [timesquarechurch.org](mailto:info@timesquarechurch.org). Other recordings are available by calling 1-800-488-0854 or by writing to Times Square Church Tape Ministry, 1657 Broadway, New York, New York, 10019. I have a message this morning for people who feel that they have failed God.

And if that's you today, I'm trusting that you have an inner sense today that God is for you and not against you. You've become aware of it and you may have walked in here feeling like an absolute failure. But there's something in your heart that only the Holy Spirit can put there that's already telling you in this service that there is more hope in Christ than you have realized and more grace and there's more mercy than you have ever known.

I'm going to speak this morning about an incredible sign that follows those who believe. Now, I know the scripture talks about certain signs, but there is one sign more incredible than every other sign. And it follows everyone who believes and trusts in Jesus Christ and it will follow you today.

Now, I'm going to have to go on a journey and this journey is going to take us into some places where we have to look at some practices. They may or may not be your practices, but they have been in measure at least the practice of the church, the pre-Christ as it is, people of God in Jeremiah's day. And in some measure have been the practice of the Christian church in our day.

We need to look at these things. We need to go through these things, understand what it is that grieves the heart of God and then move to something. And if you will hold with me on this, if you will not give up halfway through, there's going to be an incredible blessing for you at the end of this journey.

Father, I thank you, God, with all my heart, Lord, for the touch of the Holy Spirit. Oh, Jesus, the hour is very late. The world is getting very dark and you have sworn to have a people.

You will have a people. And God, I ask you today that every person in this sanctuary might be part of that testimony that you will always have, especially in this generation. I ask you, Holy Spirit, to guide me through this word, quicken my mind and physical body.

Give me the ability to speak this in a manner that glorifies you and that everyone here can hear. I pray, God, that you even animate my emotions. I don't want to be in this message.

I don't want to be in the mix of it. I want it to come just as you've given it to me. I thank you for this enablement and I pray God touch us now with your word and I ask it in Jesus name.

Jeremiah, we'll begin in chapter 13 of Jeremiah. If you want to just open your Bible to that chapter and just place it on your lap or wherever and we'll get to there eventually. Now, before we begin in Jeremiah, I want you to remember that when the Apostle Paul spoke of the children of Israel in a journey that they were taking from captivity, which was Egypt, to a place of promise, which was a physical place.

But in reality, the place of promise, of course, we know today to be not a land, but it's Jesus Christ himself. But in this journey, Paul tells us that they encountered and sometimes they surrendered or succumbed or gave in to opposition. The enemy of our souls will always oppose the work of God.

You have a very real enemy against you today. He is a deceiver. He's a thief.

He's a roaring lion. He sets about to devour anything that has the testimony or mark of Christ in it. And quite often, the children of Israel of that generation gave in to this opposition.

Now, Paul described it in the New Testament as something that comes against you from without. And to add to all that, we have an opposition from within. It's our own fallen natures oppose the things of God.

So when you combine the two, the devil is a roaring lion, my own heart that the scripture says is so wicked that only God himself can fully disclose it. The only hope I have now is God. The only hope I have is an inner life more powerful in me than he who's in the world and more powerful than my own fallen nature.

This, of course, is the spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is the third person of God. And if God be for us, Paul says, who can be against us? That's the hope of the Christian.

I have now the living God in this earthen vessel. I'm not just embracing concepts about God, but I have God. And I have him in full measure in the Holy Spirit inside this earthen vessel.

Therefore, there is no limit to what God can do. He can keep me. He can guide me.

He can change me. And ultimately, the desire of God and the design of God in my life is to glorify his own name through me. That's why we're here, beloved.

That's why there's a church on this side of eternity. That the whole world can see there is a people who are called by the name of Jesus Christ, a people who are otherworldly, who are divinely enabled, a people who are not like the people who are of this world, who in their most sincere efforts fall short, as the scripture says, of the glory of God. Now, the people in the Old Testament fell short.

And Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10 and verse 11 that all the things that happened to them, now he's speaking about some specific things in their journey at this time, happened to them for examples. And they're written for our admonition, or that means our instruction, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Now, if Paul believed the ends of the world were there in his generation, how much more, beloved, in ours.

All of the things that happened to them are written for instruction. And if we can hear the voice of God, we can learn from it. We will see that people always act the same way, and God always acts the same way.

We heard masterfully on Friday night through Pastor William that he cannot act outside of himself. He is who he is. He cannot act outside of his nature.

He can't wake up one day and decide that he's going to lie to humankind because the scripture says God cannot lie. Paul also tells Timothy in 2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 16 that all scripture, all scripture, how much of scripture? All scripture is given by inspiration of God. These words that we have on these pages did not come from the minds of men.

They were birthed by the Holy Spirit. Through human agents that simply put their hand on a pen and began to write down what God was sovereignly speaking to them. And everything in this book is profitable for doctrine.

That means for correct thinking, theological thinking. For reproof, that means essentially that when we're going in a wrong way, God one more time can hold up the mirror of his book and say, look, this is the right way. The way you're thinking, the way you're moving is the wrong way.

Here is the right way. For correction and for instruction in righteousness. The word righteousness in the Greek text means that which is right in conforming to the nature of God.

For instruction in that which is God, that which is God's life within us. That which is the pathway that God has set before us. That which is what God is in and through his church.

And, of course, in measure two as well, obviously, that's what he is. Whether or not we will accept that. Now, Jeremiah chapter 13 and verse 12.

Jeremiah says, therefore, or God says to Jeremiah, therefore, thou shalt speak unto them this word. Now, keep in mind, Jeremiah's ministry is in the last 40 years. Historically of Judah.

The northern kingdom after Solomon, Israel is split into two kingdoms. Really because of Solomon's backsliding, a division comes. The northern kingdom is eventually swallowed by the Assyrian conquerors and they're assimilated.

In other words, they become so intermixed with the world that they're almost indistinguishable as a separate people unto God. And in the southern kingdom called Judah, God raises up voices. One of those voices was Jeremiah to try to bring the people back again.

Now, God knows all things and he knows the people's hearts are so set on the way they have chosen to worship him. Even though that way is very distorted, they're set in it. And even though Jeremiah is speaking right from God's heart, he has an audience with God.

He knows the mind of God just like Isaiah did years before. But the people are so hardened that they're going to reward Jeremiah by putting him down a well. And whether or not they would like to kill him, but even if they can't kill him, they're going to try to do him physical harm.

Because he is bringing now a revelation to them of the true worship of God and they don't want this revelation anymore. Oh, folks, I pray God that not be in your heart today. Now, just in the years just prior to this judgment of Judah, Now, many of God's people had so distorted his word that they interpreted everything he was trying to speak to them from their distorted perspective.

Before I read this verse of scripture, I want to show you what was happening to them in Jeremiah, chapter one and verse 16. Now, God begins this ministry of this man, Jeremiah, and he tells him, he says, I will utter my judgments against them, touching all their wickedness. Now, God's looking at his own people and he's calling what they're doing wickedness.

He says, they've forsaken me and they've burned incense to other gods. Most likely, there are a lot of prayer meetings going on. Religion always produces prayer meetings, but they are, and incense is a type of prayer, but they're burning incense to other gods.

They have formed another concept in their minds of who God is and they worship the works of their own hands. Now, we immediately conjure up an image when we see this of these little golden idols and such like things. And that could be a small part of this scripture.

But really, what it means is they were governing themselves out of their own effort. And their worship of God and their service to God was not coming out of obedience to truth. It was coming out of their own will.

They were formulating ways to worship God. They were changing the ordinances of God, the commandments of God. They're beginning to modify everything to appease themselves.

And they're worshiping as it is the works of their own hand. They're worshiping human will and they're worshiping human effort, all in the name of God. And God says, Jeremiah, I can't accept this.

And I'm raising you up to stand against this. And Jeremiah is known as the weeping prophet. He didn't come in just blasting the nation.

There was a brokenness in this man's heart over the condition of God's people. What had happened to these people of promise? Now, back in chapter 13 and verse 12, here's how hardened they had become. Therefore, thou shalt speak unto them this word.

Thus saith the Lord God of Israel. Every bottle shall be filled with wine. And they shall say to thee, do we not certainly know that every bottle shall be filled with wine? And so here God is saying one thing, but they're hearing it another way.

God was speaking of a judgment that was coming. And they're interpreting his words as if he's blessing them. They're interpreting this, well, wine means joy, wine means gladness.

And surely every bottle in every house will be filled with joy and with gladness. Because, of course, we are God's people and he can't do anything but bless us. But the wine that God was speaking to them was the wine of judgment.

It was not the wine of blessing, but nobody seemingly stops and asks the question. They simply throw back their concept of God and there's no evidence that anybody even stops and says, Jeremiah, what kind of wine is God talking about? They just interpret it the way they have wanted to see it. And in that way of wanting to see God, they've run with what really is judgment and falsely believed that God was blessing them.

Look at Isaiah. Keep a marker in Jeremiah and go back to Isaiah chapter 56. Now, Isaiah is on the scene just a little before Jeremiah.

The nation is already sliding into its final stages. And God is speaking all the way through, all the way through to his people, trying to get them to turn. Isaiah 56 verse 9, he says, All ye beasts of the field, come to devour all ye beasts in the forest.

His watchmen are blind. They're all ignorant. They're all dumb dogs.

They cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they're greedy dogs which can never have enough. They are shepherds that cannot understand.

They all look to their own way and every one for his gain from his quarter. So here are, here's the spiritual condition and here's why it's happening. There's a devouring coming into the body because the shepherds have been raised up over God's people who really don't have a passion for the things of God.

They don't have a passion for the glory and the honor of God. They see ministry as an opportunity for self-improvement and self-betterment and gain. And because this is in their heart, they are leading the people of God farther and farther away while speaking to them about coming blessing.

Come ye, they say, verse 12, I will fetch wine and we will fill ourselves with strong drink and tomorrow shall be as this day and much more abundant. We will fill ourselves with strong drink. This is what they say.

This is a time of blessing. We're going to, folks, the nation is coming to judgment very, very quickly. Enemies are gathering on every side but they're saying, oh no, this is a wonderful day, no cause for alarm.

We're going to be blessed and we're going to be blessed even more. And no matter what happens, we're still going to be blessed. Now they're talking largely about physical blessing.

They're completely locked out of the spiritual side of this. It's all about how much I have and how good I look and how much wine, as they see it, is in my pantry. Now this wine that they speak about, this strong drink, offers those who partake of it strong delusion, especially the delusion of false security and

happiness.

And Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah, said it this way. This is Micah. Listen to this prophet of God in chapter 2, verse 11 of Micah.

He said, if a man walking in the spirit of falsehood do lie, saying I will prophesy to thee of wine and strong drink, even he shall be the prophet of this people. Micah says this nation has gotten so backslidden, this people of God are so backslidden, that if a man arose and he started prophesying to them of strong drink and wine, he would become the prophet of this people. If a man stood up and started making the whole lot of them drunk and act like fools, he would become their prophet.

That's how backslidden they've become. That's what Micah is saying. In Jeremiah chapter 13, verses 13 and 14, remember now, he said, every bottle shall be filled with wine.

But they said to him, do we not certainly know that every bottle shall be filled with wine? Now verse 13 and 14 tells us what he was really saying. Then shalt thou say unto them, thus saith the Lord, behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David's throne, and the priests and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with drunkenness. I will dash them one against another.

In other words, there will be no unity. There will be all kinds of disunity. Even the fathers and the sons together saith the Lord, I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them.

So this is what God is really saying. He says, what you interpret as future security is going to leave you all stunned. All that I've trusted in begins to fail in front of your own eyes.

It was coming, folks, and the people couldn't hear it. Oh God, help us, as the body of Christ in our generation, not to be found among that group of people that Paul the Apostle says, in the last days are no longer going to endure sound theology, but they're going to heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. They will be turned from the truth of God, and they will be turned to fables.

It means stories. The stories may even have a good moral to them, but they are not the word of God. They cannot offer insight into the character of God.

There is no strength in these fables. Jeremiah 14, verse 13, Jeremiah said, Then I said, Ah, Lord God, behold, the prophets say to them, You shall not see the shore, neither shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place. You see, the prophets were assuring, or the false prophets, the people of continued blessings in this place.

That means being in the spiritual state that they were in. But God says now to Jeremiah, and Jeremiah speaks to the people in chapter 15, verses 3 and 4. He says, I will appoint over them four kinds. Here's their judgment now.

Now, I want you to follow me very closely in this. Remember that Paul said, All these things are written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the earth have come. Now, I will appoint over them four kinds.

Here's four judgments God says are going to come upon them. The sword to slay them, the dogs to tear, the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth.

He says now there's going to come a judgment. There will be evidences of this judgment. And at the end of this judgment, they're going to be assimilated in a similar fashion as it is, although it was under Babylon, in the very same way that others before them have gone into captivity.

I will appoint over them a sword to slay. Now, in the New Testament, we are told by the Apostle Paul that we're to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And God says to Jeremiah, I'm going to appoint over them a word that will slay them.

And folks, you must never, you must never, you must never sit in a place and listen to any person who does not literally believe that this is the inspired word of almighty God. You must yourself get into this book. You must rightly divide it from beginning to end.

Scripture is interpreted by Scripture. It's not enough to be lazy and go and sit in some place and say, well, this man or woman who appeared to be of God opened the text and said this is what it means. You have the Holy Spirit within you.

You've got to discern this text yourself. You've got to get into this book. There is no protection for your soul outside of the word of God.

And here are a people, and God says, I'm going to appoint a sword to slay them. And false prophets always arise just before judgment. A multitude of them arise.

Ahab had 450 of them in his court just before he went into the battle that cost him and thousands of others their lives. False prophets will always arise. It's a sign when judgment is coming.

It's the rise of the good time prophets, which is a sword that has been arisen to bring and to devour. And also, he says, I will appoint over them dogs to tear and fowls of the heaven and beasts of the earth to devour and to destroy. Now, several years ago, there was an apparent revival that took place in a lot of the Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Canada, in the United States, somewhat in Europe and England, and various other places throughout the world.

They say this was the Spirit of God that came upon them. And they began to have manifestations of barking and making noises of birds roaring like lions and doing all of these animal things in this apparent blessing. Remember, Jeremiah came and said, you're going to be filled with wine.

They believed it was a blessing. But God says, no, this is a warning that's coming to you. This spirit of drunkenness that's going to come upon you is a warning that everything now is coming to an end and judgment is just around the corner.

And now here's where it gets interesting. There was a great debate that arose in the Pentecostal charismatic churches about is this the Holy Spirit doing this? Is this the devil doing this? Is this a combination of the Holy Spirit and the flesh or the flesh and the devil or any mix of those combinations? And, of course, it divided the church. Half said it's the Holy Ghost, half said it's the devil, and there were some in the middle who just said, we don't know, we're staying away from the whole thing.

Now, let's suppose just for a moment that it really was the Spirit of the Lord that came upon these people. The Bible tells us, and for the sake of learning, I'm going to repeat this, that all these things happened to the children of Israel for our instruction. There's nothing new, Solomon says, under the sun.

If something happens, you can find, if you are in Scripture, you can find it in the Scripture. You can find why it happened in the Scripture. You can find the purpose of why it happened in the Scripture.

And the people who were involved adamantly held to this and said, this is the Spirit of God. And they were possibly in some measure right because there were people who went there and they do claim that their lives were greatly touched by God. I'm not going to dispute any of that.

If you say your life was touched by God, then thank God for that. I'm happy for you. But they misunderstood the purpose.

You see, he's warning of impending judgment. And his judgment on that which claims to represent and love him, but has embraced a great measure of falseness in his name. In this time of blessing, there were no shortage of those who claimed to be speaking for Christ, but not many of their words were from the revealed text of Scripture.

They stood up and said, no, I know what God is thinking. We know what God is saying. But you see, there is a judgment that comes on a church that's out of the Word of God.

This thing didn't just happen. It's the result of many years of allowing false prophets into pulpits and equating the revelations of men's own minds and hearts on equal basis with the Word of God. It produced this stupor that allowed people to be moved into this type of practice.

They would get up and say, oh, folks, this is the Holy Spirit. You see, we're barking like dogs because we're watchmen. And this is how the Holy Spirit is guarding over the nation to us.

Folks, I read these things. Others were saying we're crowing like roosters because we're waking up the church and we're waking up the nation to the blessing that God wants to pour out on all people. They had apologists, but their apologists were ridiculous.

There's hardly anybody that understood the Scriptures. And they said, well, we can't prove this because we can't find it in the Scriptures. Oh, yes, you can.

You have to be willing to look at all the Scriptures. You can find it in the Scriptures. God says, I'm going to appoint the sword to slay.

In other words, an interpretation of Scripture that is not from my heart or my word. Dogs to terror, fowls of heaven and beasts of the earth that come to let you understand that this system of religion is under judgment. It has to go.

Now, some today who are hearing this message and others are going to hear it in the future on the Internet are going to say, oh, God, how much falseness concerning Christ has been injected into my heart and into my mind, into my very being. Will Jesus Christ cast me off? And how can I hope to find and get back to spiritual truth? Now, folks, you have to understand my heart today. I'm not here to rail on these things.

I'm not fighting against the church. I'm fighting for the church of Jesus Christ, for the people of God, for the testimony of God. I'm not standing and waving my finger on any kind of a little soapbox saying to anybody, I told you so.

That's not the point. The point is we are in this battle together. There may be a few boats along the way that have gotten swamped.

And maybe in this moment of time, I might need to be a voice from God's heart to them. But who's to say in the future that it might not be my boat that takes on water and they might have to speak from God to me? We are in this together, folks. Let anyone think that we approach this topic from a position of arrogance.

That is not so. It's from a position of wanting to see the church in Canada and Europe and the USA become the church of Jesus Christ one more time in our generation. And there are people that have embraced these things.

There are people sitting here that you say, oh God, what have I been listening to? I've been on the television. I've been attending meetings. I'm just so confused.

How do I get back to God? How can I know what is spiritual truth and what is not spiritual truth? Now, remember, I started out by saying there is an incredible sign that follows those who believe. Now, I want you to go with me to the book of Acts, chapter 28, if you will, please. In this chapter of Scripture, the apostle Paul, in serving God, has been on a journey.

And in this journey, Paul has been shipwrecked along with everybody else. They set out. It looked like a smooth sailing time, but they encountered an unprecedented storm and the whole boat was destroyed.

It was all shipwrecked. They all had to grab onto pieces of wood and swim to get to shore. Now, in Acts, chapter 28, we see Paul now setting about to gather wood.

And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat and fastened on his hand. Now, I see this as a type. Now, I'm going to preach about this as a type.

It's a type of the world. They were on this ship with Paul. Paul represents the church.

The other people, let's say, represent the world. The whole thing is falling apart. People in the world know that everything around them is falling apart.

They know they are falling apart. Nobody even has to convince them. They know it.

They know that there's such an uncertainty around about them that everything they trusted in seems to be breaking into pieces. And they look to Paul because Paul was the voice for God in the midst of the storm. And I see these people from the ship as a type of the world who are gathered around and they're looking at Paul who represents the church.

And he's out there picking up sticks. And as it is, regathering pieces of wood. I see it as a type of the world looking at the church saying, you're just as shipwrecked as we are.

The world turns on the television and knows the church is shipwrecked. They know it. They see it.

They hear it. They're not foolish. They know that what they're hearing is the bulk of it, not all of it, thank God.

But the bulk of it is from charlatans that are just simply merchandising the people. And they know it. They know the church is shipwrecked.

They walk by all over this country. They walk by churches every morning and all these buildings that have a history. But they've become virtually insignificant to a large degree to so many people today.

Recent surveys are telling us that less and less and less people in America believe that the Bible is relevant or Christ is relevant or the church is relevant. They know they are shipwrecked and they know the church appears to be shipwrecked. And so they're standing on the shore and they're watching Paul pick up these sticks.

And it's a type of the world looking at the church as the church gasps or grasps for truth again, as they too have suffered in the storm. And they're picking up sticks. And that's exactly where some of you are today.

So many people are just looking for fragments of truth. And Paul starts gathering wood. And it represents to me that which remains of the cross, that which truly is of Christ.

He's out there as a type gathering this up saying, I don't know where the whole cross... I seem to have lost the cross in my life, but I'm going to go out and I'm going to gather the truths that God has revealed and wants to reveal in me. And I want to know. I read about a life that says I'm crucified with Christ, but I know so little about this.

I've been under the ministries of illusion that talk about the Christian life is just this grand big elusive party where I'm to be in this drunken stupor all the time in God's presence. But I'm heading up because there's something about the cross that I know is true. There's something in my heart that's telling me this is right.

And while everyone's standing around looking at Paul, Paul heads out and he picks up these sticks and he begins to put them under fire. And there are people gathered around and they're saying we're under judgment. I'm sure they're thinking that in their mind.

We're under judgment. They felt it on the boat in the middle of the storm. There's a season coming, folks, when there's going to be an awareness, even if it's for a moment, that the justice of God has come.

And they're standing there watching this church as it is trying to become the church again. And Paul picks up these sticks, puts them on the fire. And the moment he does this, it represents it, putting them, his fragments in a place that offers light and comfort and protection.

And as he gathers them, a viper comes out and fastens itself on his hand. And it's funny, the serpent bites him. And as the people are going through this battle, I'm sure in some measure the enemy is attacking Paul.

And he's saying, look at where your spiritual journey has taken you. Think of the mistakes you have made. You're under the same judgment as everyone else.

And everyone around you knows it, Paul. The serpent comes out and bites him. Paul knows he's on a journey.

Paul knows the hand of God is on him. There's an inner knowledge in Paul that greater is he who's in me than he who's in the world. Yes, I ended up on that ship, but I'm there according to the will of God.

And yes, we all got shipwrecked. And yes, we all ended up on the same shore. But there is a difference between you and I. And Paul took that serpent, and the scripture just says he shook him off in the fire.

That's an amazing thing. When the barbarians, it says, saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, Acts 28, 4, they said among themselves, no doubt this man is a murderer, though he has escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffers him not to live. And verse 5 says, and he shook off the beast into the fire and felt no harm.

He shook it off. Paul knew this. Maybe in his mind he might have said, I know, I probably made mistakes.

No man is perfect. No man has any perfection apart from Christ in himself. I make mistakes.

You make mistakes. Everybody makes mistakes. But Paul knew in his heart, God has promised to keep me, and keep me he will.

He will keep me. In 2 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 12, Paul says, I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day. And the word against means until I reach that day.

I know whom I have believed. And when the people saw that he should have fallen down dead or swelled up, and they saw no harm come to him, they changed their mind and they said he was a god. The reality is, they saw God.

They saw what only God can do. Folks, you've got to stay with me in this, because you're going to see something very, very shortly. Go to 2 Kings, please, chapter 8, in the Old Testament, very quickly.

2 Kings chapter 8 is about a woman who was sent into a certain place because the Lord had called for famine upon the land. Hard to think that God will call for famine in a place where his own people dwell, but he will do that for a purpose, for a reason. In chapter 8 of 2 Kings, verse 1, tells us the Lord called for a famine and would come upon the land for seven years.

And this woman, I want you to read this as a type of the church with me, arose and did after the saying of the man of God, verse 2, and went with her household and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years. It came to pass at the seven years end that the woman returned to the land of the Philistines and she went forth to cry to the king for her house and for her land. So this woman has gone because of the famine.

And she has herself gone into want. She has lost some things. But a word came to her.

And the word that came to her is, you can come home now. And so she did. She got up with her household and she came back.

And when she came back, she was aware that most likely somebody else was occupying her place or had taken away what was rightfully hers. So she came to the king and began to ask, to cry to him for her house and for her land for what was rightfully hers. And the king talked with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha has done.

And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman whose son he had restored to life cried to the king for her house and for her land. Now, this is a woman whom God had raised her son from the dead. It's a type.

Folks, we are a bride. We are the bride of Christ. We are the bride of the son that was raised from the dead.

There's a typology in here. Now, it says, Oh, Lord, Gehazi said, My king, this is the woman and this is the son, her son, whom Elisha restored to life. And when the king asked the woman in verse 6, she told him, So the king appointed to her a certain officer, saying, Now, here's what the king said, Restore all that was hers and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.

Now, folks, this is what I feel God is saying. Yet we make mistakes. I believe the church in Canada made a tragic mistake.

I believe it with all my heart. But here's what God is saying. You might have been in a land of famine for seven years.

And you might have lost what you think is a great measure of truth and a great measure of the life of Christ. You may have lost the true riches and blessings of God. But God says, You come back to me and you cry out to me and I will appoint the Holy Spirit.

And he will not only restore to you what is rightfully yours, but he will restore to you everything you lost in the seven years that you were in the place of famine. Everything will come back to you. Give her back everything.

That's the incredible truth of this particular story. Now, back in Acts chapter 28, Paul, it says, But no harm came to him. They changed their mind and they said he was a god.

Now, remember, Paul is the type of the church who's been out there picking up sticks trying to make sense of the journey. And all of a sudden, this serpent comes and tries to tell the bride that it's over for you. Tries to infuse you with this poison that comes from his mouth and say it's over.

Folks, it's never over. God has intertwined his life with his church. God has given you his life.

God has made the promise to you. He said, I will never leave you or forsake you. I will not forsake you.

No matter where you've been. No matter how far away you've walked. No matter what land you've been dwelling in.

No matter what land you've been, things you've been partaking of. If you call out to me, I will not forsake you. Paul leaves this place of having been bit on his hand by the serpent.

And the scripture says it came to pass in verse 8 that a certain man was sick of a fever, etc. When Paul entered in and prayed and laid his hands on him and he healed him. And when this was done, others also which had diseases on the island came and he healed them.

They were healed. And here it is. This is the incredible sign.

Mark chapter 16 and verse 18. Jesus said, these signs shall follow them who believe. In my name, they will take up serpents.

In my name, in other words. The enemy will never convince them that they are cut off from my life. The enemy will never do this.

They will never be infused with the poison that tells them that you are shipwrecked. You must stay there. There's no life for you.

You have to sit in a place and be punished now for years to come for the things that you have done. They will take up serpents. And if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.

Whether it's done in ignorance. Whether it's done willfully. They have opened their hearts.

They have allowed wrong reasonings about God to come into their inner being. But Jesus said, those that are mine, they will not be poisoned. They will not be killed.

They will not have my life taken from them. They will drink these deadly things. But it will not hurt them.

It will not damage them. It will not make them be put into a place where they cannot be restored. They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.

They will not be overcome. They will not be overcome by anything the enemy tries to infuse into their minds. Or by anything she has willingly or in ignorance partaken of.

If she calls out to me, this is the church of Jesus Christ, through her hands will flow my life to this sin-sick and captivated world one more time. Hallelujah! This is the incredible sign that follows those who believe. It's that God will not forsake all and any who call out to Him in sincerity.

Who long for truth. He will restore you. He will guide you.

And His life will continue to flow through yours. It's time for the church to get up again and come home and be the church of Jesus Christ. It's time for the bride to come to the throne one more time and say, Oh, Father, in Jesus' name, give me back what is rightfully mine.

And the enemy has stolen from my life. Because ultimately, the reason for the church is that through our lives flows the healing of God to sin-sick people all over the world. Speaking, touching, believing, moving in the realm of Christ's life.

Hallelujah! If you feel that you're making a mess of your walk with Christ, then this message is for you. Oh, beloved bride. God loves you so much.

Yeah, we've all in measure made a mess along the way. I've done it. You've done it.

Others have done it. But God, in His mercy, sends a word from His word. It says, Return to me.

Return to me. And this incredible sign will follow you. I'll give you back everything.

The enemy drew you away. Perhaps your own heart drew you away from walking with me. And because of it, you're now trying to regather some sense of truth.

And the enemy has bitten you and said, No, it's over for you. But this sign will follow you. Serpents will not take you up.

You will take them up. You will hold captivity captive. Whatever death has been poured into your spirit will not harm you when you call out to me.

This is where you begin to know the miraculous power of God. And I'll send you out. And my healing will begin to flow through your life.

Hallelujah. Father, I thank you so much, God, with all my heart. Lord, you are truly speaking to this generation.

I know there are pulpits all over the nation that are preaching this kind of a word. God, you have Davids. You have mighty men and women of God all over the country.

In Elijah's day, you had 7,000 that had not bent their knee to the gods of prosperity and self-indulgence. Oh, God, I thank you, Lord, that you have a bride in this house. You have a people.

I pray that you give the courage today to those who have a serpent hanging on their hand to shake this thing off in the fire and say, No, I'm not staying here, and I'm not going to be weak all my life, and I'm not shipwrecked. No, I'm not. I am walking with God, and God is walking with me.

God has a purpose for my life, and he will use my life for his glory. Through my hands are going to flow the healing touch of Jesus Christ to sin sick people all around me. Through my voice is going to come the compassion of God for a dying and a hurting world.

Oh, God, I thank you for this with all my heart. I thank you, Lord, that you have a church. You will always have a church.

You will always have a testimony. I pray this morning for every backslider in this house, everyone who has a serpent hanging on their hand. God Almighty, give them the grace to shake this thing off today and walk out of this house free.

Free. You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. I pray for freedom.

God, let there be a genuine shout of freedom. At this altar today, Father, I ask you to open prison doors and let captives go free. Heal those who have been wounded in their heart.

Give sight to the spiritually blind. God Almighty, let those who are sitting in spiritual poverty have the treasure of God's mercy revealed one more time into their mind and into their heart. Lord, only you can do this work.

This is your work. You are good, and your mercy endures forever. That's who you are.

Oh, God, do the miraculous. Do the miraculous. I pray God for every chain of hell to be broken off the church of Jesus Christ.

God Almighty, set people free. If God is speaking to your heart today, as we stand, Education NX, you can move your way, please, between the screens. We'll pray for you momentarily in the sanctuary.

Make your way to this altar. I'm calling everybody who's got a snake hanging on their hand right now. You're going to shake that thing off in the fire.

Let's stand. Balcony, main sanctuary. Slip out of wherever you are.

You can go to either exit in the balcony. Make your way down here. We are going to pray.

And this cursed thing is going to be thrown into the fire. My God, thank you, Lord, for your mercy. Thank you, God, for mercy.

Mercy. Mercy. Mercy.

Mercy. You said this building will be finished and we will put a capstone on it and shout grace. Grace.

Grace. Grace. Grace.

Hallelujah. Thank you, Jesus. What incredible mercy.

What an incredible sign that your life continues to flow through us, even when we have made mistakes. When we've dishonored your name, we've worshipped the work of our hands. Your life and mercy still continues to flow through us.

Hallelujah. Pray with me, those at the altar today. Satan, I stand against you in the name of Jesus.

I stand against your lies and all of the poison that you try to put into my heart and my mind. I am not under the judgment of God. I still am under mercy.

And the evidence of this is that I can still hear his voice. And my heart still passionately longs for him. He has said that he will never forsake me.

He has said he will never cast me away. He has said that he will restore to me everything that I lost when I lived in this place of spiritual famine. Oh God, this very moment, by faith in your words, I cast off the serpent into the fire.

God, there are sick people in this world. There are foolish people. There are darkened people.

They need to feel your touch. They need to be healed of the power of evil and the consequences of sin. Thank you, Jesus, that you are going to use my life as an agent of healing in this generation.

I will not be used of you in a lesser measure, but in the full measure of everything that you have destined for my life to be and to glorify you. I believe that no serpent has authority over me. I believe that no deadly thing can keep me from my God.

I believe that through my hands, through my hands, through my hands, your life, Jesus, will flow to a sickened world, bringing them hope, bringing them life, bringing them freedom. I declare this. And God, I say thank you.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Give him thanks.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, God. This is the conclusion of the message.

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