

# Marked Men #2

by Gareth Evans

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*The church is called to intercession, worship, and revival, bearing the mark of God's ownership and character, and bearing the weight of his heart as intercessors.*

**Duration:** 27:57

**Scripture:** Judges 21:25, Ezekiel 8:18, Ezekiel 9:2, Ezekiel 9:4, Ezekiel 9:6, Ezekiel 10:4, Ezekiel 11:19

**Topics:** "Revelation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares two powerful stories that illustrate the brokenness and suffering in the world. The first story is about a missionary in Haiti who brings doctors to remote villages to provide medical care. Despite their efforts, the speaker emphasizes that God's wrath is raised against those who neglect the needs of the vulnerable. The second story is from the book of Judges, highlighting the consequences of people doing what is right in their own eyes. The speaker concludes by emphasizing that man is inherently sinful and that the world would be much worse without God's restraining hand.

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## Transcript

You've been enjoying your preaching. It's wonderful to hear God's Word expounded in the way that you do, and the challenges that you give us week by week. I just thought I'd say that.

Thank you so much. And we're looking forward to the message from God through you today. Those kind words.

I've certainly enjoyed being here with you these months. It's wonderful. Honeymoon! When a pastor goes to a new church, the first year is always considered honeymoon.

And then the problems arise, and sadly, oftentimes... You know, in North America, the average tenure for a pastor in a church is less than three years. It's very, very sad. It tells me that honeymoon is followed by problems, and the pastor either runs away or is forced away, whatever it might be.

Very, very sad. A church only grows when they work through the valleys and through the problems. But it's a delight to be here.

I've got a condensed honeymoon in four months, and it's wonderful. Thank you. Last week... Let me just make one little comment.

We've drawn to the end of the Ramadan month. This is the last Sunday, and I just pray that you've been faithful in praying through Ramadan for the Muslim peoples. God is doing incredible things in the world today among Muslim peoples.

And where there are barriers to the Gospel being presented, God is not a God of barriers. He's a God who forces doors that men would close. And right through the world today, there are many, many Muslims coming to Christ with visions and dreams.

And when we worked in West Africa, we certainly saw that through the Muslims of West Africa. So continue to pray for the Muslim people. Even when Ramadan has passed, continue to pray for them.

I read in the Internet just this week that Al-Qaeda has now declared that the UK is its number one target, British Britain, Great Britain, and that they've already got cells in operation there. Now, if I was in Britain right now, I'd probably be among the many people who'd be having fear arise. Yet, I think what a wonderful, glorious opportunity for the Church of Jesus Christ to really show where our hope is found at this time.

So when persecution comes, it's often a time when the Church really comes into strength. Last week, I talked to you about leaving the Church of the lukewarm, the Church of those who've lost their first love, the Church of compromise, the Church of politicking and unethical behavior, and to join the Church of Philadelphia, a people known for their love for one another, a people known because they operate in the things of the Spirit of God, a people known because they're faithful to the Word of God and to their testimony, a people for whom God is a God of holiness and integrity, a people who know a God of destiny. I challenge you to join the Church of Philadelphia, a people that God is pleased to put his mark of ownership upon.

I want to continue with that theme this week and next week concerning the marks of God, marked men, marked women. And I'd like you to turn with me today to the book of Ezekiel. I trust you have your Bibles with you.

If you do not, shame on you. Book of Ezekiel. Now, my content for the next two weeks is going to be from chapter 8 through 11, or even 12.

I'm not going to look at all that, but I certainly want to start in chapter 8, and I'm going to paraphrase what is recorded there. You can certainly follow it as I speak, and I'm just going to tell you what has happened here. Ezekiel the prophet is in captivity with a great majority of the children of Israel.

They've been taken there under the Babylonian rule. There is a small remnant that remains in Jerusalem. And here in chapter 8, Ezekiel tells us that the Spirit of God comes to him, takes him by a lock of his hair, and transports him in vision back to Jerusalem.

He finds himself standing outside the temple in Jerusalem. Outside the east gate, the main entrance to the temple. He's invited to look inside and see what happens.

And he sees that an idol of jealousy has been set up there by the conquering tribes, and that the children of Israel, the priests, are even tending to worship this idol of jealousy at the north side. It's an abomination to God. He brought me to the door, verse 7, and there was a hole in the wall.

He said, look inside the hole, dig in, go and see what's happening inside the temple. And I went in, and I saw portrayed upon the wall all kinds of creeping beasts, and the elders, 70 elders that were remaining there in Jerusalem, were worshipping these beasts. And the Spirit of God says, Son of man, have you seen what the elders are doing to the house in the dark? Every man in his room are pictures.

And immediately I read that, of course, I thought of how many Christian men are involved in pornography in their little rooms. And so sad to God. He said, however, you will see greater abominations than this.

He brought me to the entrance to the north gate of the house of the Lord. And behold, there were women there weeping. But they were not weeping because God was not being worshipped there.

They were weeping because they were weeping before the Egyptian god, Tumors, who had been set up. They were seeking to worship a pagan god. So not only the priesthood worshipping these idols and these images upon the walls in the temple, but the women there are worshipping an Egyptian god.

Have you seen this, O son of man? He said to me. You will see still greater abominations in the house. And he brought me to the inner court of the house of the Lord.

And behold, at the door of the temple there were 25 men with their backs to the temple. And they were worshipping the sun towards the east. He said, have you seen this, O man? Is it too slight a thing for the house of Judah to commit the abominations which commit you? They should fill the land with violence, provoke me to further anger.

They put a branch to the nose. He is simply saying they snuff at me. Catch your nose up in the air.

Therefore I am going to deal in wrath. My eye will not spare, nor will I have pity. And though they cry in my ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them.

What a terrible situation has happened here at Jerusalem. If the judgment of the Babylonians has not been sufficient upon the children of Israel, so that they have been scattered into a foreign land where they cry out. They have been teased and mocked by the local people.

The first opera I ever went to see was Nabucco by Verdi. A fabulous opera. And in that it talks about Nabucco conquering the Jerusalem.

They brought into captivity. And there into captivity they have been teased. And the people say, sing us a song, one of the songs of Zion.

How can we sing, they say, when our harps are hung up on the trees? We can't sing the songs of Zion in a foreign land. And in Nabucco you have the song there of the Hebrew slaves. A beautiful song.

Those of you who like music, I love that piece. I was in Mexico City a few years ago, and on the subway, that is the music they play. They play classical music on the subway in Mexico City.

They play pop and rag and jive and everything maybe on our subways or certain things, I don't know. But in Mexico they love playing classical music. And that's what they sang.

They would play on that day on the subway. And I sang it, and as I sang I noticed everybody else in the compartment was singing along. The song of the Hebrew slaves.

They cannot sing, they say, songs of Zion. Because of the violent things that happened to them. But right back in Jerusalem, even the remnant there, were the priests there.

They have turned away from God and they worship in Egyptian and Babylonian gods. And moving images upon the wall. And God says, my wrath is raised against them.

Then we come into chapter 9. God says this, draw near you executioners of the city. Draw near each one with your destroyed weapon in your hand. And behold, says Ezekiel, six men came from the north with weapons in their hand to slay the inhabitants of the city and the priesthood.

This is the judgment of God. And with them was a man clothed in linen. Chapter 9 verse 2. And with them was a man clothed in linen with a writing case at his side.

And those seven men went and stood beside the bronze altar. The altar of sacrifice. Now the glory of God was still in the temple.

However, it had gone up from the cherubim where it rested. Let me remind you. In the inner holy of holies.

Where the ark of the covenant was and the mercy seat. Where God dwelt. In the tabernacle in the wilderness.

And now in the temple. Where God was traditionally dwelling. The glory of God had risen from that place.

And it now came to the threshold of the house. At the doorway of the house. Want to get this picture? Even though the abominations had occurred around of worship from the priests and the women.

And all the other elders. The glory of God is still there at the entrance. It is as though he has left the holy of holies.

And he has now gone to the entrance of the temple. And the Lord spoke to the man clothed in linen. Who had the right in case.

He said to him. Go through the city of Jerusalem. And put a mark.

Upon the foreheads of those men and women. Who sigh and groan over the abominations committed in it. The mark of God.

I called the mark last week. The mark of the name. Because God's name.

God's ownership. God's character. Is established upon the people of the church of Philadelphia.

I call today's mark. The mark of intercession. These are people in the church.

These are people in the state of God. Who groan and ache. For the state of their nation.

And their church. Are there such people today? Do we need to be groaning for the state of our nation? Do we need to groan for righteousness in Canada? And certainly in the world? Do our hearts feel heavy when we look at the rise of militant Islam? We see the persecution the church is going through in the world. When we look at departure of a Baptist church.

And we know a little bit of the history. And we have our opinions about certain things of the past. Do our hearts ache that God's righteousness might be established here? Are there people in this church who feel heavy about that? I came into my office yesterday morning.

And I was aware of some of the struggles the church is going through. And trying to seek a new path. And I committed myself yesterday to pray for you.

I will be leaving in January. It is no position for me to hold all your new passions. Should be or shouldn't be.

But I know there's a dilemma going on. Are there people in this church who are trying to solve that dilemma by prayer? And intercession? Seeking God's heart, God's mind? In the country of Canada. Are there things that appall you as Christians? Are there things that really weigh heavy upon you? The state of our country when it deals with the gay community? Do we feel heavy about the gay community? Do we feel heavy of compassion for those who need to know Christ and the freedom that found in him? Do we feel heavy about some of the bills that have passed through Parliament? Are we a people really concerned about our country and about our church? God is looking for such people.

In fact, I find in the Scriptures when I consider what God is seeking, I find two peoples that God is looking for. Jesus speaking to the woman of Samaria said to her these words, For God is still seeking those who will worship him in spirit and truth. God is looking for worshippers.

I delight in the songs that Larry and Paul pick every Sunday for us and the worship we have. And I find it so easy to worship here. And I don't know if you're good Baptist people, but I stand at the front.

I'm not aware what you think of me raising my arms, but I raise my arms because I want to worship. I certainly raise my heart and my spirit. I certainly bow in spirit before him when we say we bow down.

I'm a worshipper. I want to worship. And they lead me so easily to worship.

But, you know, it is so easy on a Sunday morning to sing the songs and not be a worshipper. I had the privilege of speaking on the radio in Australia on two occasions over a week each time. And one of the series was on worship.

And I believe God is still looking today for worshippers. Men and women who will worship him in spirit and in truth. But he's also looking for men and women to stand in the gap.

In Ezekiel, it recalls there is a gap, and God says, I'm looking for men to stand in the gap. Who will stand in the gap? Who will be those who stand between lost men? And who will be those who stand between Canada and me, the nation of Canada? For righteousness exalts a nation, but unrighteousness debases a nation. And the people of God are the ones he's looking to to become the intercessors who will stand in the gap between this country, this church, and himself.

God's judgment was to be great upon the nation of Israel, at this time upon Jerusalem and upon the church. He was going to begin his work in the church. He was going to begin his work in the tabernacle by destroying all these priests.

But before he was going to do that, he says to the man clothed in linen, I want to go and mark everyone who groans and intercedes for the state of my people. And when you go through the nation and you slay

everyone, you are to spare these. They are to be kept.

The mark of God upon them. Pass through the city, smite, he says to the six men with the swords. Pass through, after him, smite.

Do not touch, however, anyone upon whom is the mark. And begin your smiting, the six in the sanctuary. I look at the situation in the world.

My world view is that the nation of America, the nation of Canada, the nations of the West, probably need a great shaking by God. I believe such shaking is coming. And if my understanding theologically is correct, I believe that God will start his shaking in the church.

And I think the church needs to be shaken. We've become so complacent in the church. I'm not talking about departure day.

I'm talking generally. We've become so complacent. We've become so acceptable of milk sopped from the pulpits.

We've become so acceptable of a lifestyle that is contrary to what Christ called us to. And I believe God needs to shake the church. I long for revival.

Any of you long for revival? I long for God's spirit to move in this church and in Nanaimo so that the people who do not know him will look at you and me and see a people who are marked by God and say, like we read last week, that they will come and fall down before you because they know that God loves you, because they see it in your character and in your response. I long to see that. God needs to shake us out of our complacency.

And he's looking for men and women who have the mark upon them of the intercessor. Men and women whose hearts ache for their church and ache for their nation and ache for their own righteousness before God. That's the kind of people he looks for.

And we have them here. However, Ezekiel here in this order, going out to six, he cries out to God. He said, Oh God, verse 8, chapter 9, will you? And he falls upon his face and he cries.

He's a good example of an intercessor, isn't he? Will you destroy all that remains of Israel in the outpouring of your wrath? And God replies and says, The guilt of Israel is great and Judah is exceedingly great. The land is full of blood, the city full of injustice. For they say the Lord has forsaken the land.

The Lord does not see, the Lord does not care. I can do what I like for God. God doesn't matter, even though we are people of God.

However, for me, my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity, but I will requite their deeds upon their heads. There comes a time, you know, when the people of God really need to see sin as God sees it. We don't hear much these days about preaching on sin and repentance, do we? How sad.

We need to be a people that are challenged by our sin and see sin as God sees it. God sees sin in such a way that he sent his son to die upon the cross for it. There was no other remedy.

And when God sees sins, it's an abomination to him. It is only the covering of the righteousness of Christ that protects us from the wrath of God. I read in Romans, it says there, about men doing that which is evil

in the eyes of God, and God's wrath was revealed unto them.

Do you ever wonder what the wrath of God is? How does a God of love display wrath? Wrath, maybe I should say, if I'm pronouncing it correctly in English. Wrath, wrath. How does a God of love display that? Well, when I read the book of Romans there, that chapter one, it says this, and God took his hand off.

What would happen to your city if God took his hand off the city? If Satan had free sway to do his work in this city, what would happen? What would happen in the land of Canada if God took his hand off? We would see very much as what we see here in Jerusalem at this time in Ezekiel. The wrath of God is revealed not by his sending lightning bolts and thunder and hailstones and all the rest. The wrath of God is revealed when he takes his hand off.

And he allows this world to be what this world wants to be. In the book of Judges, we read in the last five chapters of the book of Judges, we read the same verse five times. And there was no king in Israel, Larry.

And every man did that which was right in his own eyes. And just read those five chapters. You see the abomination that came upon the land.

Man is not inherently good. Man is inherently evil, for he is sinful. If man were left to do what man wants to do, this world would be a very, very much worse place than it is today because God has kept his hand on.

Particularly the nations of the West where the gospel has had freedom. But if God took his hand off and we saw wrath, what an evil day that would be. God keeps his hand on because there are people of God that he calls intercessors who bear upon their own hearts the weight of his heart.

And who bear upon them for it is the mark of intercessors. I remember being in Mexico City and I think I told you this story. I took a party down there.

We were in an orphanage one day. I preached on missions. I was in a denomination.

I believed in missions. A great missionary organization. And I took a party of 14 or so people to Mexico City.

And we're in an orphanage. And my friend is taking the photographs of the children to send back to Canada and America and Britain for compassion. Somebody who sponsored Children with Compassion.

And every little child would come up and they'd have a little name tag, M.E.45. Somebody would write the name and M.E.45 is little Alowenzie. And then M.E.46. And they'd keep a record. And my friend Francisco is taking the photographs and Cindy from Victoria is sitting on the gutter in the orphanage with her arms around two little orphan girls.

And Cindy is crying and she can't wipe the tears away because her arms are occupied. And Francisco looks over and he sees her and he says, Cindy, our hearts break every day. And at that moment I had a deep tugging in my own heart.

As though God spoke to me and said, Gareth, my heart breaks every day. Every day. And I am seeking men and women who will bear my pain upon their hearts and cry unto me as intercessors for my people.

Upon the intercessors of this city God put his mark and they were protected from his wrath and from the avenging angels. I find it very interesting that the mark is the Hebrew word tau. Put my tau upon them.

And the tau is exactly like a cross. The early church understood that and in some of the early church writings you will find reference to this mark of God, the tau. It's why the early church and even today people anoint one another with the mark of the cross.

Because that is the mark that was put here upon intercessors. The mark of the cross. So not only is God looking for the mark of intercessors and I tell you it's my experience that there are many One of the reasons I believe the Lord is coming soon is because of the great increase today in the church of men and women particularly women who feel a burden for intercession.

And here on the island we have many who are known as intercessors spend many hours with God seeking to hear God's voice seeking to know God's leading. But I'm also interested in people who bear the mark of the cross upon them. Paul said this when he was criticised he said be very careful when you criticise for I bear in my body the marks of the cross.

Now maybe he's referring to the welts across his back from the beatings he suffered. I'm sure he is referring to those. But I believe there are people today who need to bear upon themselves the mark of the tau the mark of the cross.

You see if we're going to understand something of sin as God understands it we need to go back to the cross. We need to be people who make the cross focal in our lives. The cross is a place of sacrifice.

I long to see people who display in their character the fact that they've been to the cross that they've put the old nature to death that that old nature that was there that arrogant old nature has died. That old stubborn nature disobedience has died. I'm looking for men and women as a pastor I long to see those people I long to be such a man myself that when people see me they see the mark of the cross in my life.

When people saw Jacob after he had wrestled with God you remember Jacob his very name means deceiver, twister that's what he was all his life. He deceived his brother then he deceived his uncle then he was deceived himself by his uncle his uncle was just as good as Jacob was in deceiving and twisting one another. He worked for seven years for his daughter's hand and then he gave him the wrong daughter.

How about that Larry? How would you like to go up to the wedding front and be married and find that the wrong girl turned up? He had to work another seven years and then finally labour made him work for less pay and so finally Jacob has to deceive him that's what he is he's a deceiver, a twister. And finally after all his journey as though God has been meeting him at Bethel and other sites Jacob finally comes back and he's got to meet his brother Esau and Jacob expects to be reprimanded he expects to have a warfare with his brother and so he sends the women and the children on ahead he's still a deceiver but God meets him and God wrestles with him and in the morning when he releases Jacob he touches him in his strength in his groin so that from that moment on Jacob limped and everybody who saw Jacob after that knew that Jacob had had an encounter with God and people look at you and me do they know that we are people who have had an encounter with God?

The only place we can have an encounter is not at our Bethel it's not at Horeb it's not wrestling with God there but it is an encounter that begins at the cross and anyone of us that has been to the cross walks away with a limp we have to be a people transformed by the cross forgive me, forgive me I tell stories so often and I probably told you this story before about being in Haiti tell it again, it's worth it there's a missionary in Haiti whose work is bringing in doctors to the land bringing three doctors every week and every week he takes the doctors up into the highlands of Haiti where there's no electricity and they do

medical work in the village they go to they come back and he sends them back to America then he meets three more doctors who come in and he takes them to another

village the following week another three doctors to another village and they do a circuit of about thirteen villages every quarter at the end of the week they come into a home there in the village they have a generator for electricity and they type up on their computers their report for the week whom they treated for what what prescriptions they gave what medication they prescribed what treatment they should have and they keep a record so my friend, the missionary has a record ongoing of medical treatment for all the people in these villages up in the mountains the week I was with him the day before they had come back to their home and they were typing up their report by their gas generator and they noticed a fire up the hill and they came out and they looked back up the village where

this fire was and realised the house was on fire now the witch doctors of all the towns they're the prominent people they're the lawyers the doctors the advisers they're the chief of each village and as you drive through Haiti you can easily tell a witch doctor's house because it's the most prominent house on the hill and he's usually got flags and bunting and even skulls on poles and all sorts of amulets and everything hanging around his house so the doctors this day drove back up in their four wheel vehicle to the top of the hill to the village and they found it was the witch doctor's house was on fire and the witch doctor was standing by the smouldering ruins of his house and they go up to him and they start to commiserate with him what happened? and instead of commiserating in return

he said oh no he said I've given my life to Jesus when I came back to my house I took all my amulets and all my charms and I put them inside the house and I burnt the lot down he said I don't want any of that anymore that's called repentance brothers and sisters that man had been to the cross his life was transformed and not only once but we're called constantly to go to the cross when we come into those battles in our life the old nature starts to rain on his head the only way you're going to defeat the old nature is by going to the cross it's only at the cross it can be defeated and God is looking for people to not only bear the mark upon their foreheads of intercession and prayer but to bear the towel upon them for that's the mark of the cross the world needs to see people who are

marked by the mark of the cross I find it very interesting that here this man clothed in linen he is the man in the midst of judgment in midst of God's wrath who brings grace to the people and I see here a Christophany I see here a picture of Jesus prior to his coming in flesh through Mary but here he is ministering of grace of God and he comes and he touches the people and puts the mark of God upon those who groan and sigh for the state of their nation and for their church people who will bear upon themselves the mark of the cross transformed lives pleasing to God and in the midst of God's wrath these are the people whom he keeps in his hand keeps him from wrath may we may I be a man upon whom God is pleased to put his mark I want to be a man who knows the heart of God and in my teaching

pray that God will speak through my teaching that through me as an intercessor I will hear his word when he speaks to me in my preparation he put anointing upon my preparation so that through me he can speak to you that's my desire if I had any other desire to preach and to teach there would be no point in doing it but God is still looking not only for worshippers but for people who will bear the mark upon them may we be such people today amen amen the Lord bless you praise God now by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of you this day and until he comes or calls may we be a people hungering after him so that he will be delighted to place his mark upon us so that the people of Nanaimo will look at you and me and see

a people whose God is our God we know him just one comment I'd like to make you'll see Tom is here today and Jennifer is coming home on Monday we're absolutely amazed at her spirit she is so dynamically positive and as Tom said we just want you to know she's coming home on Monday she will still have the oxygen still have the tubes but she would love to have visits and Tom says please do not hesitate love one another be a people of love and fellowship and support one another in Jesus name amen

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