

# A Day of Terror

by Ralph Sexton

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*The sermon 'A Day of Terror' teaches us about the importance of faith, obedience, and redemption in our lives, and how these principles can help us navigate the challenges we face today.*

**Duration:** 33:13

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 7:1, 1 John 3:14

**Topics:** "Terror"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the presence of terror and fear in the world and how it affects our lives. He mentions the story of the children of Israel crossing the Jordan and facing seven nations led by giants, symbolizing the obstacles we must conquer in our spiritual journey. The preacher emphasizes the importance of obedience to God's teachings and the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding us to do good. He also references Romans 1, highlighting the 23 inconvenient things associated with sin and death. The sermon concludes with a mention of Psalm 23, specifically verse 4, which offers comfort and assurance in the midst of fear and terror.

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## Transcript

...this morning and turn with me in the Old Testament, if you would, to the book of Deuteronomy, chapter number 7. The thought on my heart today is this subject, a day of terror, or the day of terror that we live in. In the book of Deuteronomy, we read of Israel's encounter with the seven nations of Canaan. And Deuteronomy 1 says, when the Lord, Deuteronomy 7, verse 1, when the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land, whither thou goest to possess it, and cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Gergesites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou.

And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, notice God said these nations are stronger and mightier than you are, but God's going to take care of you, he'll deliver you, and utterly destroy them, thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them. Skipping down to verse number 5, but thus shall you deal with them, ye shall destroy their altars, they were false gods and false altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. Many times you've heard people say, well, I heard a minister on radio or TV say that it was wrong to have a Christmas tree, and that you shouldn't do that.

But when you read this passage, you understand that the grove and the tree that they were decorating was they cut the limbs off and they carved the trunk into God's. He said you cut them down and you burn them, has nothing to do with the Christmas tree that we're all familiar with. Verse number 6, for thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God, the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, and above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

In the book of Deuteronomy, we read about these seven nations, these seven nations of Canaan. These nations were fierce and were physically led by giants. At the very least, Israel's future and even their faith was in doubt due to the testing that was ahead.

A day of terror was approaching. Also in Genesis chapter 10, we are introduced to some of these elements of this historic study. One of the things that we have planned for 2006 is that we would like to take these seven nations and study them together because they have an application for us today.

Bible studies are important, but more important is that we understand what God said, how it applies to me today. These seven nations, the Hittites, the Gergesites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, God said in his word, these seven nations are greater and more powerful than the whole nation of Israel added together. If you go to Genesis 10 and verse 15, backing up to the first book of the Bible, you'll read that the Bible says in Genesis 10, 15, that Canaan began Sidon and his son was Heth, not Seth, but Heth, H-E-T-H.

Verse 18 of Genesis 10 talks about the families of the Canaanites. The Hittites were the actual physical descendants of Heth. Now, if you will put in your mind for just a moment, Heth is the head or the father of the Hittites, and the Hebrew name of Heth means great dread or terror, great terror.

Now, the Hittite name Heth, just that one word would symbolize fear because the word Hittite in Hebrew translated to the word fear. It was symbolic of fear. So we have Heth, dread, and terror.

We have the Hittite tribe being fear. And if we take this sidebar down the road and explain that even now, as we gather here on Sunday morning, there are things that keep you from possessing the promised land spiritually in our lives. And those seven giant tribes represent or symbolically stand for things that hinder me from being what God wants me to be.

It's one thing to read something way back in Genesis or Deuteronomy, but it's another thing to go to work on Monday. It's another thing to be around this afternoon to pray for Carolina when they engage Tampa. Could I get a witness right there? Do you understand what I'm saying? We need to know that these great biblical truths and shadows and types apply to us today.

This is a day of terror. It is a day of fear. And God says that the children of Israel, when they crossed the Jordan and they went into the promised land, they had to deal with seven nations.

Seven nations. And they were marked because those nations were led by giants. That's where you find the great story of Og, O-G.

He was one of these seven nations. You remember David had to encounter a giant from the city of Gath, that territory. So what we're seeing in the Word of God is we're seeing that they had to cross their Jordan River to go to the promised land.

And they had to live in obedience to the Word of God to have the victory. And guess what? We have to do the same thing. We have to cross our Jordans.

And that's symbolic of old things passing away, all things becoming new. I am in church today, but I didn't used to go to church. You understand what I'm saying? I'm trying to read my Bible today, but I didn't used to read my Bible.

I'm trying to walk with the Lord today, but I didn't used to walk with the Lord. The old things have passed away. I'm crossing Jordan.

It's also symbolic that when we have a baptismal service, the water is a symbolism of the Jordan River. Because John the baptizer, he baptized Jesus in the Jordan, and then Jesus baptized him, right? And what happened was that when you're buried in that water, you know, it's not the water that does the saving. It's only a symbolism.

It's a heart change that makes salvation real. I can sprinkle you, and I can baptize you to the tadpoles know your social security number, but that's not going to change your world. It's the blood of Christ moving in on the inside that's going to change your world.

A new creature, right? And so what would happen is when we baptize, it's symbolic of going down into the Jordan. Buried with Jesus. Resurrected the newness of life.

And so when you come out of that experience, you cross your own personal Jordan, and you're going to serve God, then you find out that just because you get saved, all the giants don't go away. There's still giants in the land. We still have battles after salvation.

And for many of us, if we're honest, the biggest battles we've ever had as adults have been since salvation when we've said we're going to serve God. And we've had to encounter unbelievable trials, emotional battles, physical battles, financial battles, having your world turned upside down, children getting in trouble, heartache in marriages, and the devil the whole time just hammering you, hammering you, hammering you. Whatever you do, just give up.

It's not worth it to try to serve God. Is that not the case that we're finding? It's a day of terror. It's a day that we're seeing that experience.

So what God's teaching you and God's teaching me is that there's a reason for this being included in the Word of God. These seven nations are a typology possessing the promised land. Spiritually, we all have giants that we must conquer in our lives to live victoriously.

Today, we do encounter a day of terror. And not only is it spiritual terrorism, but you think about what we're facing as a world. You think about terrorism in the world.

Terrorism is illogical. Why would someone want to capture a school in Russia and cause little children to be terrified and to die? Who would want to walk on a bus in Israel with a vest loaded with ball bearings that exploded and blow themselves up and kill boys and girls, teenagers? I mean, the terror of that. Who would want to do that? Who would want to, last weekend, to think about a bomb going off in Baghdad and as these new army and police recruits scrambled for a bomb shelter that when everyone was running into the bomb shelter that there was a man running into the bomb shelter with them and he had an explosive device and inside the bomb shelter, he blew it up and killed 40-some human beings.

A day of terror. War and rumors of war. Afghanistan, North Korea, Iran, Iraq.

We're seeing that there are no places on this planet without trouble today. The pandemic of AIDS in Africa. Seeing many nations ravaged and ripped apart.

Oil prices related to everything that you do. The price of your gasoline. The price of your heating oil.

The price of your groceries. Everything connected to a volatile market you have no control over. When I read those reports, that's terrifying.

Because you seem so powerless to do anything about it. And then I think about this passage of Scripture. The great dread of Heth.

The great fear and the terror of the Hittites. These giants are still in the land. Many ways we are living in the land of promise.

Many ways we are. We've never been so blessed. Never had such good food.

Never had such nice homes. Never worn such nice clothes. Driven such fine cars.

We have been blessed. But at the same time, as we're in the land of promise. The church of the living God and the Bible-believing Christian.

We've not dealt with the giants of unbelief and apathy and unconcern. And because of that, we're seeing more and more darkness come into our land. And more and more terror filling the hearts of our children.

God offers complete deliverance from these things. Especially from all fear. But there's always one condition.

And that condition is obedience. We know to do good. To him that knows to do good and doeth it not, to him it is what? Sin.

God says, I've built into you a small minister called the Holy Spirit. And that you know when you're doing good and you're not doing good. Fear and terror are powerful enemies.

And you know what? If we allow them, they'll keep us from God's best. In Genesis 23. Let's turn to this chapter.

This is an important chapter. Turn with me in the Old Testament to Genesis. Chapter 23.

And notice with me what the Bible says. And in chapter 23 of Genesis. And Sarah was 107 and 20 years old.

These were the years of the life of Sarah. And Sarah died in Kerjoth Arba. And the same is what? Hebron in the land of Canaan.

Now where is Hebron today? Some of you just got back from the Holy Land. It's right south of Jerusalem. If you go out into the desert area.

It's almost the same level on the map as in Gedi down by the Dead Sea. And that's the land or the city of Hebron. And it says, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

And Abraham stood up from before his death and spake unto the sons of what? Heth. That's who we just said. H-E-T-H.

Not Seth, but Heth. Saying, I'm a stranger and I'm a sojourner with you. Give me a possession, a burying place with you.

That I may bury my dead out of my sight. It's an interesting phrase that Abraham uses. My dead because he knows he'll see Sarah again.

He doesn't give her away. He says my dead because he knows that there is life after death. How many of you have been to the cemetery this year and left a loved one in a cemetery? A dad? A mom? A best friend? You've gone to the cemetery.

Well let me tell you something. You're going to see that person you love. If they knew the Lord, you're going to see them again.

Old death's not going to win. He's terrifying right now. He's scary right now.

There's fear right now. But it's not over right now. This is not the end.

There's a better day coming. And you see Abraham had that hope. He knew.

He said I'm going to bury my dead. And the children of Heth answered Abraham saying unto him. Hear us my Lord.

Thou art a mighty prince among us. In the choice of our scepters, bury thy dead. None of us shall withhold from thee his scepter but that thou mayest bury thy dead.

In other words, the residents there, they recognized Abraham. And Abraham at this particular time is the richest man in the world. On planet earth, he's the Bill Gates of his day.

Alright? He is the royal house of Abraham. He's got gold. He's got silver.

You go back in Genesis and read about the wealth of him. Okay? And he's the wealthiest man in the world. On this journey, he left the Ur of Chaldees.

He's journeying and he's going out. What's he looking for? Why did he leave? He's looking for a city whose foundation is not made with hand. Right? He's looking... I'll never get through this good part.

A foundation who's built by God himself. Alright? On the journey, the love of his life, Sarah dies. Now, the lesson for us is that just because we love God, we're not insulated from pain.

We're not kept from heartache. We do have sad days. The difference is, the Apostle Paul wrote about it.

He said, yes, we cry. Yes, we weep. We go through hard places.

But we don't go through hard places like people that don't have the Lord. We've got the Lord to go through the hard place with us. And what God's striving for in your life and in my life is obedience.

Now, if I read through this passage, notice what happened in verse 7. Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of heaven. And he communed with them, saying, if it

be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me and entreat me. Now, he said, if you will honor my request.

Why did he do that? Why did he go and say, honor me? I need to bury a place or buy a place to bury my wife. You've got to know Jewish culture. I've talked to you about that before.

That if you traveled and you were a Jew, that the custom was, if you died, you had to be buried before sundown. That was the culture of the day. So no matter where you were, let's say that we all were on a trip together.

And we went to the outer banks to fish and do God's will, surf fish. And we're down there and we've got a big old skillet on the beach, a big old black skillet. And we've got onions and fried potatoes cooking.

And we've got some chicken stewing in the old cast iron skillet. And we got our sand steaks up in the sand. And we got some bait out there and the blues and the puppy drum are running in the surf.

And we're out there just trying to do what's necessary to sustain life. Eating fish. And we are of the custom and care of that day and one of us died.

Then what we would have to do is we would have to find a place to bury you before the sun goes down. Think of that, we'll get buried on the outer banks. Man! Hey, and so you would have to be buried.

And that was the reason that when Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem and the baby came and they didn't know the baby was coming and they didn't have any baby clothes, Mary said, Joseph, I'm in labor, what am I going to do? I don't have any baby clothes. And the only thing he had was the Jewish death clothes that if you traveled, every Jewish family had to take with them. And he runs over to his camel, his donkey, whatever he had, and he grabbed that rolled up cloth, the burial cloth, and he brought it into that cave there at the end in Bethlehem.

And he said, here Mary, use this, wrap him up in this. And they wrapped him in swaddling clothes. That's the Jewish name for the death clothes.

They put him in there. And that's why when Jesus died on the cross, he had to be buried before sundown. He didn't have a tomb.

And they borrowed the tomb of Joseph of where? Armistice. They borrowed it and said, can he use this for three days and three nights? You can have it right back. We just don't have a place to put him.

The custom was before sundown. So now Abraham and Sarah are in chapter 23 of Genesis. He's sojourning in obedience to God, and the love of his life dies.

And he goes over there to the sons of Heth, and he bows himself to them, and he says, would you entreat me? Could I use one of your family burial sites? Or could I buy it from you? Or I need a place to bury my wife. And they did that. And notice something with me about Genesis 23.

The number 23 in the Bible is the number of death. A lot of you studied through the numbers with me. The number 25 is the number of redemption.

The number 17 is the number of victory. Number 13 is the number of rebellion. Number 11 is the number of confusion or chaos.

Number 10 is the number of law or government. The number 12 is the number of human government, the 12 tribes of Israel. Okay? You come up here to 23, it's the number of death.

The number of death. The 23rd chapter of Genesis, we see that. There's several passages.

I don't have time on a Sunday morning to go all through this with you. But in Romans 1, Romans chapter 1, which I used in the message on Are We Seeing America's Last Christmas just a few days ago. You remember that message? Romans 1, you'll find 23 inconvenient things that people do when they're sinning.

23 inconvenient things. And when you come down to the end of Romans 1, and you read these 23 inconvenient things, it says, And these are worthy of death. That number 23 has got a death association.

The words death, die, dead, or die, you're going to find 23 times in the book of Hebrews. 1 John 3, 14. 23 words.

And the 23rd word of those 23 words is death. Is the 23rd word in that passage. Psalms 23.

Notice what, Psalms 23, verse number 4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of what? Death. Death, 23, in the Bible, is associated with death. Now we're at Genesis 23.

Let me give you 6 things that you first encounter in Genesis 23. Number 1, the first account or record of the purchase of a piece of land is found in Genesis 23. That's the first time in the Bible you find someone buying land.

Number 2, the first time in the Bible you find silver used as money for a purchase is found in Genesis 23. Genesis 23, the first time we see a funeral and mourning for the dead is in Genesis chapter 23. The first record in the Bible we have of a funeral is in Genesis 23, a burial exercise.

The fifth thing we find for the first time in Genesis 23 is that we see for the first time God records that man sheds a tear. And author Pink in his research, he wrote down this. In Genesis 23, the first property owned by Abraham in the promised land was a grave.

God sent him to go to the promised land and it looked like the first thing he got when he got to the promised land was a grave. How many times does the devil try to discourage you from serving God with all your heart? The circumstances of life, the transactions of Genesis 23. We have Abraham as a man of faith versus the sons of Heth, the Hittites.

And we have the man of faith versus great dread or terror. Death is called the king of terrors. And we're living in this day of death worldwide when it seems like life is so fragile.

Abraham purchased a piece of property. He redeemed a burial site from the children of Heth in Genesis 23. And 2,000 years ago, outside of Jerusalem, Jesus Christ, your kinsman redeemer, your relative of love, He purchased death, hell, and the grave so you could walk right through a day and an hour of fear and terror.

And saying, I'm casting all my cares upon Him because He cares for me. Not foolish, not nonchalant, but knowing with a surety that our hearts belong to the Lord God Almighty. And if He wanted me alive in a day of terror, He's got the power to allow me to walk through the day of terror and not be intimidated by the giants of this day and this hour.

Abraham purchased that burial site. Abraham paid for that burial site with silver. Silver is a type of redemption.

And when Jesus hung on the cross 2,000 years ago, He redeemed you and He redeemed me. Hebrews chapter 2, if we had time to go through verses 14, 15, and 16, God's record and God's Word about the redemptive power of the Lord Jesus Christ. We see in His Word that we could see a foreshadow of Jesus purchasing our safety and our sanity.

Notice in closing what happened to Sarah. She's a member of the royal family. She's a princess.

She died in Hebron. The city Hebron means fellowship or friendship. It is the death of one who belongs to the royal family, the princess.

You go to the cemetery and leave your sweet mother. You go to the cemetery and leave your darling dad. You go to the cemetery and bury the love of your life, your husband, your wife.

Out of season, bury a son or a daughter. You just remember when you walk down that long, lonely road to the cemetery, that if they loved God, they were a member of the royal family. And they were a prince or a princess in the eyes of God.

And if they loved God, they died in Hebron. They died in fellowship. They died in the faith.

And Abraham sought out a burial place. And he speaks to the sons of Beth. He even bows before them.

And you say, well, I thought Heth was terror and dread and fear. The Hittites, that's what that means. But what God's telling you is that it's very natural.

Matter of fact, if you read Genesis 23, you'll find out Abraham bows himself twice. He bows down twice to those children of Heth. And you know what it's symbolic of? That even saved people that loved God, part of the royal family of God, that we are not impervious to the fear of this world.

And Abraham even had to bow down and acknowledge, just because you're saved does not mean that you'll never have a fear or a second thought or an anxiety. Because when you have those moments of fear, the devil tries to come and he says, I told you, you're not saved. You're not a Christian.

You're afraid. Well, you just remember that Abraham, he bowed. He had those moments of remembering.

And you'll have your moments. But what we all go back to, it's not what Abraham said. It's not what the preacher said.

It's not what you feel or your emotions. It's what God's Word says that will get us safe home. The archaeologists have been working and digging around the pagan and heathen cemeteries of ancient Thessalonica.

And almost on every headstone they have found these words. Almost every headstone had a word carved in there that meant good night. If you go and translate that phrase on these headstones, good night, the literal translation is no hope.

They buried their loved ones in a cemetery without God, without a Bible, without Jesus and any hope of resurrection. And they carved it on the rock. Good night! There's no hope! But church, when we go to the

cemetery, we don't even call it a funeral.

We call it a celebration of life because we know that there is life after death. Old things have passed away and there is life after death. You will see your mom, your dad, your brother, your sister again.

Paul wrote, yes, we sorrow. But buddy, we don't sorrow like the rest of the world. They don't have any hope and we have hope.

The redemptive power of Jesus Christ. Chapter 23 tells of one who died in fellowship. The faith of a man and the natural human dread of death.

The redemptive power, the silver that symbolized there, is he purchased from terror, bought from death, bought from fear, life. And 2,000 years ago, that's just what Jesus did. He bought me and he bought you that we wouldn't have to live in terror or dread or fear today.

The hope of resurrection morning. Jesus defeated death. The day of terror, yes, we're in it.

But we have the peace that passes understanding. If you're in this auditorium and you don't know Jesus, it's not an accident God had you here. The fear and the terror of your world can be changed by looking up into the face of God and saying, God be merciful unto me, a sinner.

If you once walked with God and you turned your back on Him, you'll be the first to tell me there's no peace without Him. It just doesn't work. But you can come home today.

You can have that renewed fellowship.

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