

# Tophet - the Beating of Drums - Part 3 by Robert Wurtz

by Robert Wurtz II

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance and turning to Christ, warning of the consequences of ignoring God's goodness and the reality of hell and eternity.*

**Duration:** 28:17

**Scripture:** Genesis 6:3, Isaiah 14:12, Acts 7:51, Acts 9:5, Romans 2:4

**Topics:** "Repentance And Rebellion", "Gods Divine Judgment"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the consequences for those who resist God's attempts at drawing them to repentance, using biblical references from Genesis, Acts, Romans, and Isaiah. It explores the pride and downfall of Lucifer, emphasizing the danger of resisting God's call to repentance and the ultimate destiny of those who persist in rebellion. The sermon challenges listeners to reflect on the distractions in their lives that prevent them from acknowledging their need for Christ and the urgency of making a decision before it's too late.

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## Transcript

So just what is God going to do with those who have been striving with him according to Genesis chapter 6 or those that have been always kicking against the goats or kicking against the pricks or resisting the Holy Spirit according to Acts chapter 7 and Acts chapter 9? What about those that have ignored his goodness when he would send rain and make provision for them that the book of Romans chapter 2 says leads them to repentance? God has tried to goad. He has striven with them. He's tried to lead them.

He's done all of these things to try to draw them to a place of repentance, a place of reconciliation with himself. What is he going to do with them as they continue to strive with him and they reach the point when there's just no more hope? We're going to examine that question in this final entry in our series that I have titled Tophet, The Beating of Drums. Above the door to my library there is an object that I picked up some years ago at a rummage sale that I would like to talk about in this particular portion of this entry of the girded mind.

This particular device is a trap that was recovered on a farm. It had apparently been used probably during the 19th century to trap small animals along a creek that ran down through a particular town that I will leave unnamed. But this particular device has a spiritual significance.

I keep it over the door as an ever-present reminder of the book of Matthew chapter 16 and the encounter our Lord Jesus Christ had with the devil. Now it may seem somewhat insignificant at the first, but there is a Greek word that I'm concerned with and it is the word skandalon. You'll remember that Jesus was talking about heading to the cross to die for the sins of the whole world.

So when he began talking about suffering, Peter began to rebuke the Lord. And one of the things that he said to him literally was, pity thyself. Pity thyself, he said to him.

But our Lord Jesus Christ, looking at Peter, said, get behind thee, me Satan, for you do not savor us or understand or you're not concerned with the things that are of God, but of men. And it's interesting how our Lord was talking to the devil directly, but he was speaking to Peter indirectly. Now this is not the first time that this particular type of thing has happened in the scripture.

There's a passage in the book of Isaiah, and we're going to examine that as well, that shows how God at times will speak indirectly to the person that he's referring to, but he will be addressing Satan directly. This is very important. But this skandalon, or this trap, is what Peter was laying, as it were, before the Lord because of the influence that he was yielding himself to, which was ultimately the devil himself.

In the book of Isaiah, chapter 14, we have a similar situation happening as took place between our Lord and Peter and Satan. Only in this particular case, it's not Peter, it's the king of Babylon. And God is going to speak to the devil directly in this passage.

He's going to give revelation to us about the devil. Now you will know that the devil has many different names, so if we say the devil, we're referring to the serpent, we're referring to Satan, we're referring to the father of lies, a murderer, and there's many names that we could talk about that basically refer to the devil. But understand that it is because of his wickedness and evil that it takes several different names to describe him.

Now we're going to encounter another name here, and it's the name Lucifer, and he's known by this name. And I want to just read, beginning at verse 12, How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning? How are you cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations? You have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit also in the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High. Now you will know that it was this I will be like the Most High sort of attitude that ultimately was the temptation that was set before Eve and Adam.

He told them that in the day that they would eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that they would be as gods, knowing good and evil. So this is the desire of Satan. He makes no bones about it.

He wants to be like God. He wants to exalt himself. Over and over and over you have him saying, I will ascend into the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north.

I will be like the Most High God over and over and over again he's using the term I. And this is very important. Now I want you to notice in this verse here, chapter 12, he said, how are you cut down to the ground? See this is the language and immediately what comes to my mind is the axe is now laid to the root of the tree. Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.

But see the devil was the first partaker of this particular fruit, if you will. This particular judgment. He was the first partaker of it because he is ultimately the one that led the rebellion in heaven.

Now if we go back into the eternal past, which is ultimately what we're talking about here, this isn't stuff that happened since the creation of the world as we know it. These are things that took place in the eternal past, sometime back before man was ever created. And God saw the stuff in his heart.

He's seen what Satan was saying or Lucifer or the devil. He saw it in him and he called him out on it. Now before the devil was through, he had according to the book of the Revelation, drew a third of the stars with him.

So it's never been that the devil is just wanting to be like God and he's wanted to just sort of keep it to himself. But he is very much trying to promote this idea and he ultimately has been successful. Thirty percent or thirty-three percent, if you will, of the angels fell with the devil, if we are to understand this rightly from the book of the Revelation.

And Adam and Eve ultimately fell as well. Now of course the devil is lying. He's giving promises that he can't make good on.

We can talk about that. But I just want to emphasize the fact that this attitude of the devil is to want to be like God, is to want to exalt himself. And it is ultimately pride.

Now the Bible calls it pride specifically. In one place in the book of 1st Timothy, you'll remember that when Paul the Apostle was writing in the pastoral epistles, he was talking about the qualifications for ministers. And one of the qualifications, at least for elders, is that they must not be youthful in a sense that they must not be immature, they must not be a novice, I think is the actual word that is used in the King James.

Yes, lest being lifted up with pride, they fall into the snare and the condemnation of the devil. So the devil's problem was pride. You'll remember that the book of Proverbs tells us that pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.

You see the devil's desiring to go up. He's wanting to go up and up. Watch this one more time.

You have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation of the sides of the north.

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the most high. But see God has different plans for the devil.

And you read that in verse 15. Yet you will be brought down to hell, even to the sides of the pit. Now this is more than just the grave.

It's more than just Hades. Ultimately the devil's destination is Gehenna. Now you will know that the scripture says that hell or Gehenna has been prepared for the devil or Satan and his angels or his messengers and followers.

And this is very important to understand. A very simple way of telling us that ultimately God never designed hell or Gehenna for man. It was designed for Satan.

But if we follow him to where his destiny is going and we will not repent, we will not change our minds so as to change our direction, we're going to continue to follow him to his ultimate reward. And his reward is going to be the lake of fire. It's going to be all sorts of things that we've talked about.

We'll talk about even more in this particular entry. The tree that I'm standing beside is a locust tree. It grows very commonly in the rural parts of the Midwestern United States.

It has thorns on it as you can see that are very violent and very prickly in a sense. This tree only has a few really good uses. Number one, you can set it along fence lines to form a hedge so that animals or people are sort of barricaded from being able to come in to a particular area that you're wanting to sort of hedge in.

Now, you will know that the scripture tells us that it was Adam's responsibility to hedge in the garden or to protect it. Now, of course, back then there were not thorns, but there are other types of hedge that can be used for this purpose. Nevertheless, these trees are some of the most violent trees, if I could say that, that you will ever encounter.

You will not climb this tree and come away unscathed. But there's a Hebrew word that reminds me very much of this tree, and there is an also in Greek word equivalent that we're going to look at in the next section. But the Hebrew word is the word sooth.

And this particular word is what was used when the Bible tells us that Satan stood up against Israel and prodded or moved David. The word is sooth to number Israel. It is also the word that is used when Jezebel stirred up her husband Ahab in the many evil things that he had done.

So we see then that this concept exists throughout scripture. It's the idea of prodding. Now, the devil will imitate a lot of God's ways.

You know that Paul the Apostle was goaded, as it were, to try to get him to get on to the right path. But the devil also has some goads of his own. He has some messengers, if you will, that are bearing thorns and briars.

And they are essentially like Jezebel. They are trying to move individuals to do evil. And God sets before them opportunities to repent.

We see this in the book of the Revelation. The Bible said, I gave that woman Jezebel a space, an opportunity to repent, but she repented not. And this is very much exemplary throughout the scriptures, that God ultimately is giving man a space to repent.

Those that are bearing thorns and briars, that are to be rejected, and they are near into cursing, have this time of repentance. And this is why the book of Hebrews tells us, today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart, ask yourself a question. When was the last time that you enticed someone to do evil? When was the last time that you stirred someone up in a way that caused them or provoked them, if you will, to sin, like Jezebel had did Ahab? We need to be very careful that we are not moving in this kind of a realm.

But that is the Hebrew word, sooth, comes from a root that means thorn, or thorn bush. And we need to recognize that and realize that God can't do a whole lot with someone that refuses to quit or stop enticing others or prodding others, provoking others to do evil. He has told us to provoke one another to good works.

And that's what we are to do as Christians. But those that are provoking others to do evil, they have a serious day of reckoning coming. You see, God had given Solomon the responsibility of building the

temple in Jerusalem.

But after many years and many wives, the Bible said that his heart was turned away from the Lord, his God. And he built high places to Astaroth and to Molech, who was a terrible God to worship. You see, he did run well, but someone hindered him.

God had given express commandment in the book of Deuteronomy chapter 17, that a king must not multiply horses, they must not multiply wives. Horses perhaps so that they would never become a man of war. Solomon never was a man of war.

As a matter of fact, it seemed that he would do just about whatever he had to do to keep the peace. That's a lesson in itself. You see, that's the way that the devil works on individuals, getting them to keep the peace.

Jesus said, I didn't come to bring peace by the sword. There would be trouble in homes where individuals did not want to serve God on the one hand, but then there were those that did. But Solomon had many wives.

They were ungodly. They were foreign women that served other gods. The Bible said that he built high places to Astaroth, Molech, and other gods.

Molech was a particularly dangerous God, if I could say it that way. He was worshiped through child sacrifice. God warned Israel that they were not to take their children and let them pass through the fire unto Molech.

You see, this is a picture of how people are willing to give up what is most precious to them, so that they can have security or to attain some status that they want to in life. The things that these so-called gods offered the people. You see, people are very superstitious once they move away from the one true God.

Solomon helped to facilitate Molech worship in Israel, a terrible thing. He went from building a great temple for God to building high places for Molech, and this sowed seeds of destruction in Israel. But the thing that I want to talk about in this last entry of The Girded Mind is the way in which individuals, knowing the judgment of God, knowing that the day is coming when they're going to have to ultimately face God, yet they still find ways to distracting themselves, so they don't have to think about the reality of hell.

You see, this is one of our very first pictures of hell. The word Tophet, the place where these gods were worshipped, particularly Molech, later on, are said to come from the root word Toph, which means drum, drums, drowning out the screams, some theologians tell us. But whether or not that is true, it's irrelevant, because we know from just a cursory look at history that there was music almost always played to accompany human sacrifice, so it's not really an issue.

See, people have to do something to come to terms with what they're doing, and that's even true today. You see, there are drums that are beating in the lives of individuals, things that they are using to distract themselves from the reality of eternity. What is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little while, and then it vanishes away.

How true that that is. But yet drums are being beaten, drums drowning out the reality of eternity, drowning out the screams, as it were. And the question that I want to ask in this last entry is simply this.

What, if any, are the drums that are beating in your life? What is it that is drowning out the reality of your need for Christ, of your need to take your family and serve God? What is drowning out that reality in your life? What a terrible thing to think that these people were offering up their children, their skin burning off of their bodies, but yet they found a way to get past their conscience. They beat drums. What are you doing? What are you doing? The scripture asks the question, what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little while, and then vanishes away.

I look across this place, there are over 50,000 people that have been buried here in the last 100 years. Death is one per person. We're all going to go by the way of the grave, should the Lord tarry.

The question that I have is this. Where do you stand with God? Where do you stand with him? There are graves in this place that are little children, babies, many of them newborns, one-year-old, two-year-old. There are 100 years old people buried here.

We never know. The Bible tells us clearly, today if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart. Once you pass out of this life, it is no longer possible for you to return to Jesus Christ and repent of your sins.

It will be over with. Your opportunities will pass. This is what the enemy does.

He works. Even as the picture that we see in the time of Solomon, where the people would beat drums to drown out the screams of the children, so also people, even today, are beating drums, so they don't have to think about eternity. People spend their whole life putting eternity as far back into their mind as they possibly can.

But as these people here, as you look across this place, can see, eternity came for them. Opportunity came for them. But now they're on the other side.

It may seem strange to some, why would we even talk about hell? But I think about the rich man, who being in hell, Hades, hasn't even stood before the great white throne judgment yet, lifted up his eyes, and when he found there was no hope that he would even get a little touch of water dipped to his tongue, he asked Father Abraham, will you send Lazarus back and warn my family? And he said no. He said that if they won't receive Moses and the prophets, they wouldn't even believe if one were raised from the dead. This is a fearsome thing.

The Bible tells us very clearly again in the book of Hebrews, take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief. An evil heart of unbelief is one that sees the evidence, we've talked about it over and over again, and even at the risk of redundancy, I still say it again, the Sadducees saw Lazarus raised from the dead, but yet they still refused to believe. The Pharisees saw miracle upon miracle upon miracle, and even almost in a way they were trying to destroy the evidence, a conspiracy if you will, trying to keep people from believing in themselves also.

But you have an opportunity. You can turn to Christ. If you have an evil heart of unbelief, turn from that evil even now.

Say God, I'm not going to continue to reject what I see is so clearly before me. I want to serve you. I want to turn to you with all of my heart.

I need you to help me. And I'm willing to surrender. I'm willing to do whatever you ask.

I'm willing to do whatever it takes. I wonder what, if we would ask this individual here that just simply their last name is mentioned, this whole family that is here right beside me, I wonder how many of them if they could come back would say, if they did not make it that is, they would come back and say, will you warn my family? I wonder if one of them could, they'd walk up to me and say, Robert, will you go, will you knock on my door over on such and such a street, and will you warn them for me? I don't want them to come to this terrible place that I'm burning in, that I'm lost in. There's no hope for me, but there's hope for them.

There's hope for you today, if you don't know Jesus Christ, if you don't know the Lord, that you can turn to Him. If you hear His voice, respond rightly to it. God bless you.

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