

God's Will - Simple but Not Easy

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman teaches that while understanding God's will is straightforward, living it out requires trust, obedience, and navigating challenges.

Duration: 41:47

Scripture: Genesis 12:1, Acts 6:15

Topics: "God's Will", "Trust and Obedience"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes that while God's will is fundamentally simple--trust and obey--it is often challenging to follow. He illustrates this through the story of Stephen in Acts 6, who, despite being filled with faith and power, faced opposition and false accusations. Idleman highlights that God's guidance often requires stepping into the unknown, as exemplified by Abraham's call to leave his homeland without knowing his destination. He encourages believers to embrace challenges as part of God's will, reminding them that obedience leads to clarity and that God is their ultimate reward, not material inheritance. The sermon concludes with a call to trust in God's sovereignty and to be open to His leading, even when it is uncomfortable.

Transcript

If you have your Bibles, you can turn to Acts chapter 6 verse 15. Acts chapter 6 verse 15. The message is God's will is simple, but it's not easy.

Have you ever realized that with God's will? It's actually very simple. God's will, some of you are probably saying, Shane, it's so complex, I don't know what God's will is. Very simple, we sing it all the time, trust and obey.

Trust and obey. Trust and obey. And as you look to his word, as you're obeying his principles, he leads you in the right direction.

It's very simple, but not easy. It's difficult to follow God's will. And when we get into Acts 6 verse 15, before we get there, the setting is that Stephen, who was a man full of faith and power, and because he was full of faith and power, the enemy did not like him.

Anytime you're full of faith and God's power, you will be a target. And the enemy will not like you as well. And because of this, many false witnesses came against Stephen.

And that's where we're at now. So he's obviously preaching, he's doing many things for God, and these false witnesses came against him to try to silence him. And we pick up in Acts 6 verse 15.

And all those who sat in the council, apparently there's a council here that were going to question Stephen. They were looking steadfastly at him, and they saw his face as the face of an angel. Many people sometimes don't really understand this aspect of those who have been really close with God.

You can tell. Have you ever noticed somebody, there's something about them. There's a difference.

There's this aura. There's this peace. This person's filled with the Spirit.

And then you run into somebody else, like protesters, say, you're not filled with the Spirit. I can see there's all kinds of junk around. You're a face there.

You're just, everything about you screams demonic influence or negativity. And you have others that you can just tell. You want to be around them, don't you? Kind of like a magnet.

And there's something about them. And when you're filled with the Spirit, there is something about you that people see. And they saw this in him.

Then the high priest said, are these things so? In other words, all these claims that these people are making about you, blaspheming God, are they not so? And Stephen said to them, brethren and fathers, listen. The God of glory who appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia before he dwelt in Haran, not Iran, it's close there, but it's Haran, and said to him, get out of your country and from your relatives and come to a land that I will show you. This is interesting because this is the beginning of God's people.

Now, some people might say, well, I thought God's people were, it's everybody, back with Adam. Now, true, God created everybody, but he called out from among a certain group of people, actually the whole world, he called out Abraham. He said, I'm going to call you out of your land.

You are going to be a chosen people. Basically, I'm going to bring the Messiah through you. You're going to be the apple of my eye, Israel.

And today, that's why much of the church still recognizes Israel as the apple of God's eye. And the prophetic element there of where we see things going, that Israel is still important to God. So, this is the beginning of God's people, Israel.

And I think what Stephen is doing, because it's interesting, you're going to see if you read Acts 6, he gets into this long dialogue breaking down from Abraham and Moses and all these things. I think Stephen is wanting to say, hey, guys, I know what I'm talking about. Let me break it down to you.

Let me remind you what God did with Abraham. Because what God did with Abraham, he brought the Messiah, and you stiff-necked people, you're resisting the work of God. And he's going to show them throughout history, the nation of Israel's history.

But I want to stop here for a minute because it's interesting. He told Abraham, could you imagine God saying this, Abraham, get out of your country to a land I will show you. Okay? What's that look like? Where am I going? That way? That way? This way? Where am I going? Just go and I will show you.

Many times, God guides you more by withholding information than supplying it. He withholds that information. Go and I will show you where you're going.

And we take that step. Okay, for example, Abraham probably had to start packing. And I hate moving.

I don't know about you. But that's the last thing I want to do. And so I'm sure he's not excited about packing up the camels and all his goods and going, well, Lord, we're trusting in you.

See, that's the first step. He's packing up. He's getting ready.

He's going to step out. Because what happens if God shows you where you're going, you probably won't go. I remember crystal clear, I've talked about it before, so I apologize to those who have heard the story, but it's been maybe a couple of years now, so I feel at liberty to tell it again.

When I was in 24-hour fitness and I could feel God was calling me away from this corporate position and I knew it, I was loving his word on fire for God and wanted to preach and teach and just hate it. I mean, I'm done with this job. But, you know, you've got to leave right.

You still have to be a good employee. Okay, Lord, you're showing me all these things. I mean, I remember I would have a dream, and I think it was 2001 or so, waking up and I could see I was just speaking to a group of people, a sea of people.

Like, wow, that's interesting. And I was reading Billy Graham's autobiography at that time, and the same thing would happen to him. And I could see, okay, God, this is cool.

I see what you're doing, and I'm just stepping out in faith. But guess what? There's a detour beforehand, and I moved back in with my mom. I started working in construction, digging ditches for my brother, humbling.

I'm like, I would have never done this had he showed me. Because you go from this to think, you know, think this is great. God's going to put you right here.

There's no discomfort at all. But if he shows you the path, Jonah, sometimes you might say, I'm not going down that path. So I think that's one reason we see glimpses.

He says, okay, God, I'm following you. I see where you're calling me. I see what you want me to do.

But we don't want to see all this other stuff that's on the way. So often he'll just show us certain pictures of his will. And I believe also if he showed us everything, this is exactly what you're going to do.

There's no faith involved. There's no trust involved. There's no little obedience involved because you know exactly what God's going to do.

And he leads you one step at a time. Okay, Lord, I'm obedient in this area. And I see so many people run way ahead of God, and they forget the first step of obedience.

And the second step, it reminds me of this. I want to talk about this a little bit more next week. But a story I've been reading and just focusing on a lot.

When something jumps out at me in the Old Testament or the New, I like to stay there just for a little while and kind of read it over again. But it's a story of Samuel when he was called as a young boy. And Eli was

watching him, kind of mentoring him.

And God would speak to Samuel and call Samuel. And he thought it was Eli. So he'd run to Eli, what'd you need? Oh, nothing.

It wasn't me. Again, what'd you need? It wasn't me. Again, hold on, this might be God.

So next time, say this, speak for your servant is listening. And Samuel positioned to himself, speak. God, speak, your servant is listening.

And I thought so many people, don't we do that? We say, Lord, speak for your servant is listening. And as we're listening, go repair that relationship. No, God, that's not you.

That's not going to happen. Speak, your servant is listening. Go repair that.

That's not you, God. That's the devil. The devil is a liar.

He wants me to... And what else? God, speak, your servant is listening. Be bold. No, that's not you.

I need to keep my job. Be bold. No, that's not you.

Speak, your servant is listening. Go and forgive those people. No way, God.

Anything but that. Speak, your servant is... See, we want these other things, but when God brings up areas to work on or to do, we avoid those. No, next God, like it's a checklist, like a Scrabble game.

I don't like that letter. Give me the next letter. I don't get... And we just play these games with God.

Speak, your servant is listening means we do what he tells us to do, and then you get clarity for the next step. You don't ignore and then expect God's going to continue to lead in certain areas. He goes, oh, back again.

Let's get this right. Israel wandering for 40 years to show them what was in their heart. Do you guys know that that's about 11 or 12 day journey to the promised land? 12 days took 40 years, because God's not going to mess around.

If you take anything from this morning, God is not messing around. When he says do something, you're not going to twist his arm. Okay.

All right, God. Or God's saying, okay, Shane, you don't have to do it. You're right.

You got me. He's just, no, you're going to do it. How long does this take, boy? Five years, 10? You're going to do it.

You are going to do it. And so he sometimes withhold information. And what also, what happens when he withholds information? It bothers me.

You don't know how much turmoil it was deciding on the service times. 830, 1030. Well, that time, what about 1045? That's a weird time.

That's not going to work. Well, we need a break in between, but not too long of a break. And you're just, you know, you're getting all worked up over these little things.

And God withholds, because what do I do when he's withholding? I'm running to the prayer closet. I don't know about you. I don't know how people get through life without praying and making prayer a priority.

So the more he withholds, the more I draw in. The more he withholds, the more I draw in. That's one part of God.

So don't get discouraged if he's withholding information. That's a good thing. He's not withholding it because he doesn't know.

Like, come on, God, you don't know what's going on here. Let me get this going quicker for you. He's withholding for a purpose.

And challenges are not necessarily an indicator that we are out of God's will. I was going to bring a demonstration this morning, but I kind of ran out of time. I went and got one of those pink donut boxes.

You know, that, you know, when you see, you know, everyone in this room knows exactly, come on, don't act like you don't. What's he talking about? A pink, the big pink donut boxes. I brought that into the house and the kids are like, Dad, you're the best dad ever.

Oh my goodness, Dad. Oh, I love my dad. I love my father.

Open it up. Look, look, oranges and broccoli or celery. It was, it was oranges cut up and celery.

And they're like, oh, I can't believe it. They're so mad at me. Go back to the room.

And now what happened? Same thing. Same thing. We think God's will, right, is this box of donuts and it's always going to be good, but then you open it.

Oh, it's not the celery and the oranges, but that's what I need. That's what I need. I need that nutrition, not the junk.

So in challenges, because I've seen people I've done it myself. When a challenge comes, oh, I must be out of God's will. A challenge comes, oh, I'm out of God's will.

Not necessarily. Mary, probably on a donkey. The Bible doesn't say, in case you're wondering, just says they traveled probably 80, 90 miles.

So you're pregnant. Let's say you're on a donkey from here to Long Beach. Anybody want to try that from here to Acton? So what's Mary? This stinks.

This is not God's will. You have the Messiah. Of course it's God's will.

But see, we get trapped in this. Everything has to be perfect and comfortable or I'm not in God's will. Often God's will brings in a lot of things that aren't very comfortable and it's challenging.

So be encouraged in that area. What about Abraham leaving? He had to pack. He had to move.

So sometimes God's will or challenges inside of God's will aren't necessarily an indicator that we're outside of his will. Does that make sense? Now, I know some of you are thinking, oh, great, every challenge means I'm in God's will. No, you can have self-created challenges.

You know those are, right? You create the challenge. It doesn't necessarily need to be there. And if you're facing a challenge because of a sinful act, God wants us to get out of that, reposition ourselves in his will.

Not those kind of challenges. Not self-created challenges. And if you say, Lord, speak, your servant is listening, he will tell you if there's areas.

He will convict you. He will show you. Verse 5, and God gave him no inheritance in it.

Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't get to verse 4 yet. So here's the setting. God says, get out of your country, leave your family, and I'll show you the land you're going to.

So that's pretty difficult. So then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans, that's where he was at, and he dwelt in Haran. And then from there, his father died, or was dead, it says here.

So God moved him to this land in which you now dwell. So Abraham moved to this place, his father died, and then he went to the land that now the people of Israel are dwelling, as Stephen is speaking. So this could have easily said, our point of application here is, then Abraham obeyed.

Then Abraham obeyed. After obedience, then you ask for the next step. And for some reason, I really want to get this point home this morning, that we forget about that first step.

Don't we want to kind of leave this one, and let me go to this next one. We sidestep, and we try to find God's will by avoiding the first couple things he's called us to do. He wants us to be, because when you're obedient in certain areas that he's calling you to be obedient in, then the road becomes clear.

Then you know what to do next. And I could sit here and name lots of things, areas of disobedience, but I will spare that for you this morning. If I have time, the 11 o'clock's going to get it.

But then, but you guys, but we know what they are, right? Next step of obedience. But Lord, what do you want me to, you know what I want to do is just stay there, stay and obey and pray, and let God open that door. And then God gave him no inheritance in it.

So God said, go to this land. This is your land. You're going to be the nation of Israel, but I'm not going to give you an inheritance in it.

Not even enough to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, he promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him. So this is, this is interesting.

I don't know if you've thought about this before. The nation of Israel was blessed. King David, Solomon, the 12 tribes, Israel, but Abraham had no inheritance.

The land he was at, not even what his shoe was touching, was his inheritance. And I thought of this for this practical application on this point. There's no immediate reward sometimes.

Sometimes there's no immediate reward. We have to reprogram our thinking, because we're used to, I did it, now God give me. And you need to get to the point where God is your reward.

Obedying God, that's your reward. Lord, if you, if you, if you keep me in a rental home on the side of town I don't really prefer, and I don't have a lot, you are my reward. I don't need inheritance.

I don't need all these things. And on this issue of inheritance, I actually wrote it this morning as I was going through this, be careful what you leave people, because inheritance can ruin them unless they're ready. The biblical process is hard work, then inheritance.

Hard work, then you give things. If we give people things too early or too much, it will ruin them. You have to have hard work and to appreciate what has been given to you.

Numbers 18:20, the Lord said to Aaron, and this is the Levitical priesthood, started with Aaron, you will have no inheritance in their land, nor will you have any share among them. I am your share and your inheritance among the Israelites. So Abraham started out many, many, many years later, Moses, and then the priesthood, and God, when he was dividing the land for all the tribes, he told the tribe of Levi, the priesthood, you won't get anything.

I'm your inheritance. Isn't that interesting? They didn't get land, they got God. Now, if you're a grammar student, you might be saying, Shane, that's not right.

I don't care. They didn't get land, they got God. God was their inheritance.

And one way to test our faith is to see what we are willing to give up. That's a sure way to test your faith. What are you willing to give up? Relationships, habits, addictions, certain things that God wants us to give up so he can lead us better.

And I've noticed in my life, talking to a lot of people, it's those little things that hinder the way that God's calling us. It's those little things that God wants us to, because those little things that we want to hold on to cloud our vision, and we get stuck. What are they? Stuck on stupid.

Have you heard that before? I'm just stuck, I can't get, I can't get going in the right direction, and we're stuck on these things. One of the study Bibles I was reading offers these five points on how the enemy, the flesh, and the world divert us from God's will. So if you're wanting to follow God's will, watch out for these five.

Doubt, and he used all these on Abraham. If we had time, we could bring it through. Doubt makes you question God and his goodness.

So the enemy will bring in doubt. Have you ever experienced doubt? Don't leave me hanging up here by myself, because I have quite a bit. So what happens when I have doubt, it makes me question God and his goodness.

And this happened, Abraham, they were doubting, God said you will have a son, and he was old, and his wife was old. They're like, this is not happening. This is not happening.

So his wife said, why don't you meet my handmaiden and have a child through her? They were that desperate. We're doubting what God said, so we're going to take a separate way, and they birth Ishmael. Many of you know, a lot of the struggles in the Middle East are tied with Ishmael and the right seed, the wrong seed and the right seed that came from Abraham.

Muslims call Abraham their father, and this is where the divide came from. Ishmael was not of God's will. It was not the promise that God offered and gave.

So doubt came in, it caused Abraham to wander. Discouragement. What does discouragement do? It makes you look at your problems rather than God.

And the scripture that talks about taking your thoughts captive is so powerful. You have to meditate on that, because you have to take your thoughts captive. If you don't take your thoughts captive, guess what they'll do to you? They'll take you captive.

So that's why discouragement, and I'm getting so discouraged because I'm looking at my problems. Here's the wonderful thing about God's sovereignty. You don't look at your problems, you look at God.

If the problems come, you say, you got this. It's not my fault, you got this, the money, God, your bills are due. God, you're not coming through.

God, your church is, you know, it's failing or whatever it is. God, you have this, and you don't let discouragement sidetrack you. Now, of course, I'm preaching to myself.

All of us struggle with these things, but it's a good reminder. Don't let doubt, don't let discouragement come in. What about diversion? He makes the wrong things seem attractive so that we want them more than the right things.

The enemy will make the wrong thing look attractive, so he diverts you. I've seen so many people, even from this church, they actually don't come very much because of this. But Shane, I've got this wonderful job opportunity.

I'm going to make a lot more money. Okay, never make a decision on that alone, ever. What? You lost your mind.

No, I haven't. Seek ye first the kingdom of God. What does God want you to do? You don't seek, okay, I'll make more money.

Big deal if you ruin your family, and you can't go to church, and you're never at home. What's the point of this? So he'll bring diversions, and people say, but look at this door that God opened. I say, how do you know Satan didn't open that door? Have you ever thought about that? How do you know Satan didn't open the door? David wandering on your roof? Oh, there's Bathsheba taking a bath.

God must have opened this door. What is it? What are the chances of this? And see the games we play? So be very careful because the enemy can divert. People are probably going, oh, so what do I do now? It's simple.

You trust God. You say, Lord, and you look, you use wisdom. This is going to take me away from you.

I'm not going to have as much time with you. There goes my quiet time. There goes church every other weekend.

My family, but in 10 years, will be financially secure. In 10 years, will be financially secure. Then it's worth it.

No, it's not because you just ruined your family. So you have to look at these things very carefully and use wisdom. Then number four, the enemy uses defeat.

Makes you feel like a failure so that you don't even try. Have you felt that way before? Makes you feel like a failure so you don't even try. This is actually towards the end of my sermon, but I want to talk about it right now.

This is a big deal because the enemy will use defeat. Most people say, I'm not worthy now. God can't use me.

Shane, look at what I've done. Just came across something this week. A friend of mine, his son has a felon, a felony.

I know a lot of felons actually. I'm writing to one in prison right now, two actually, Victorville and RGD Correctional Facility in San Diego. I went and visited him.

People are surprised. I say, you know what, we're all felons. The difference is we just didn't get caught.

Come on. Please, drunk driving three times, you're a felon. Okay, well, what about 150 times? Just didn't get caught.

So we have to be gracious in some of these areas. My point is this person is feeling so defeated. I was reminded of another friend of mine who has a felony.

This is different. He just got hired on recently as a worship leader at his church because he gave his testimony. He told people as he was giving his testimony, this is incredible.

I had to text him. Are you kidding me? He got a felony for road rage. Ran, used his vehicle as a weapon and hit a car.

This girl was in it. They arrested him. Felon now, can't get a job.

The girl's mom was in the audience where he was giving his testimony. Now the girl and her mom want to help him get the felon removed from his record. God, hello.

And he's now leading worship at a church. Come on, guys. But what does God want to do? You're nothing.

You'll never get a job. You'll never mount anything. That's right.

I better head to the liquor store and pick up that 12-pack and then what happens the next day? Oh, I'll never mount anything. I better go again to that liquor store. I'll never mount.

See how he keeps you in that cycle of defeat. God says, just give your defeat to me. If I can create a universe, clearly I can reposition you.

I don't care if you have a felony. Sometimes it's better that you have that because you'll stay humble. That's your thorn.

And God will use that humility. Humility is very important. It's funny.

Some of you know, I'll talk more about, I'm going to debate an atheist at the college. And people are asking, what credentials do you have? I mean, who are you? Where's your doctorate degree? I'm like, I don't come with a PhD or a doctorate. I'll come simply with the word of God.

That's all you need. But God keeps that humble. But see, he keeps that humble because I know God, if you don't do something, this is not going to work good.

This is not going to work good. I'm relying on you every step of the way. And as I was praying on all, because that whole topic, 10 hours and you don't even scratch the tip of the iceberg.

How do you debate God in 30 minutes? Please. And I said, what are some good topics? And they said, they finally chose and we agreed on, does science confirm the Bible? That's up my alley. I can deal with that one.

But you start wanting to debate quantum physics, I'm just going to have to bow out gracefully and do that. But he keeps us humble. And I was nervous going into this, but knowing God's in it.

So a felony, a problem. There's a half dozen people right now, where their life is on spiral because of all these of the medications now that are, I have a hurt knee. Okay, here's some Oxycontin for a month.

Here's some Vicodin. Here's some Xan, you're feeling, you know, here's the given all this stuff. And people are there in the cycle of defeat, wanting God, defeat, wanting God, and they're caught in this cycle of defeat.

But here's the wonderful thing about defeat. You say, God, I'm defeated. I need you to strengthen me.

And God will take that and rebuild and restore. I've seen people, they've lost their kids for the rest of their life and get them back within a year. What happened? God, they didn't keep drinking.

That's why they're going to keep losing them. You see defeat, the enemy will use defeat. I feel it sometimes.

I felt it in the past. God, I can't, I can't measure up. How, what, I can't, and why not then you make excuses to do things you shouldn't be doing.

So don't get caught up in this area of defeat. And what he did for those people I just talked about, he can do for you. One of the felons I'm writing about, writing to in San Diego, he was actually given three strikes, a life sentence, a life sentence.

And God pulled him out four years ago and began walking down a very bad trail based on everything I just said and ended up back where he's at. But God can use that. So just give it to him.

Don't, don't let defeat knock you down. Let it humble you. It's good to say, okay, Lord, I'm defeated.

I'm in a humble state. Now you can exalt me. Now you can promote me because I'm, I'm humble before you.

The fifth, fifth thing, I didn't mean for all these to turn into a sermon themselves, but they sure did. The enemy will use delay. Oh, ooh, delay.

You know what delay is, right? Okay, God, I know you're going to do this tomorrow. Oh, goodness, I know. I can't wait for tomorrow.

And then we look and it's March 15th, not tomorrow. And it's not happening. This is not happening like I thought.

Now it's not March. Now it's summertime. This is not, and delay, forget it, forget it.

Remember the liquor store story? That's what they do. Run here or run there or get back into a relationship they shouldn't or they, the delay is not deny. When God delays something, he's not denying it.

It's sometimes for our growth. So that's how the enemy will use these areas like he was using them in Abraham's. And if we had time, I could break you through, break down all these.

Delay. Abraham was waiting on a child. Didn't happen the next month, did it? Many of you know years and years and years until he finally had that child.

And I've noticed when God tells you something, it usually is a while because, okay, are you going to still trust me? Are you going to still follow me? You can't just put one minute on the microwave, can you, Shane? No, you can't. This is going to take a couple weeks or a couple years. Verse six, but God spoke in this way.

What way was that? Well, let's go back. Abraham had no child. So God promised to give him, him as the possessions and give his descendants after him, he would give them the land.

Then God spoke in this way that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land and they would bring them into bondage and oppress them 400 years. Can you imagine this? God says, okay, Abraham, here's my will for you. I'm going to take you out of your land.

You're going to be a great and mighty nation, but by the way, you're going into bondage for 400 years in Egypt. Remember where they're, you know the story, right? Moses, Egypt, we're going to get through that a little bit. But God said, you're going to go in bondage by this nation.

So I'm wondering how is this God's will? How is that God's will? But God foretold this to encourage his people. And the nation to whom they will be in bondage, I will judge, God said. So God is going to judge Egypt.

And after that, they shall come out and serve me in this place. The hard thing about this sermon is that right there could have been my whole sermon and talking about how God sometimes uses not bondage necessarily where we get into self-inflicted bondage, but where God will use things that will pressure cook us and out of the furnace of affliction. You read that in the Bible.

God will bring us into this hardship so we can become who we are. Without that hardship, you're not going to become a solid Christian. A solid Christian is not a wimpy Christian.

They've been through, they've been through a lot. And it's usually, you'll see those people who make a lot of money, go to church now and then and call themselves a Christian. They aren't, they're about this deep spiritually.

They put the little sign of the fish on the car, right? They'll put Facebook stuff. But as soon as the pressure comes, I'm out of here. I'm out of the pressure cooker.

But God uses that pressure. Verse 8, then he gave him, which is Abraham, the covenant of circumcision. I don't like that covenant, but he did give it to Abraham.

If you don't know what it is, ask your parents later. So he gave Abraham the covenant. It's in the Bible.

I have to read it. The covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day and Isaac begot Jacob and Jacob begot the 12 patriarchs.

The 12 tribes of Israel, you know, Levi and Simeon, Issachar and Dan and Nephilim, all these 12 tribes came out of Abraham. God called his people. Now why mention circumcision here? Well, that was, Stephen is reminding them that that was the mark of their covenant relationship with God.

When the people were circumcised as their covenant relationship with God. That's why you'll read throughout the Old Testament when God would say, circumcise your heart. And that's what I want to say this morning to some of you.

Circumcise your heart. That means remove the things from your heart that are preventing you from fully giving your life to the Lord. Circumcise your heart.

Rent your garments. I'm sorry, rent your heart, not your garments. Take the things off your heart that are preventing you from turning to God.

And circumcision is painful. Ask a little eight-year-old baby, a day-old baby, something on this eight days as well. Thousands of years ago, oh gosh, I don't want to say exactly.

3,500 years ago, I don't know when, don't take me on that, but this was written a long time ago when this happened with Abraham. Do you know they still circumcise babies on the, hmm, does science confirm the Bible? There's one of about a thousand I've got for you. Think about that.

Eight day, why do we do it now? They found that this is the time when the blood is, well, I'll leave it to the physicians, but it's the best time to do it because the blood actually heals and repairs and restores the health of what just took place in the baby. Being careful here, right? But that's eight day. And that's what's interesting.

I mean, the Bible does, can you imagine if the Bible said, you know, the earth is flat and we find out it's round, like, oh, how embarrassing. Why do we even believe this? And the earth, there's really no sun. It's kind of a reflection off the water from the lights and stuff.

And we find out there's a sun. Oh, how embarrassing. Oh God.

But see, everything in here, I mean, the gravitational pull, the seasons, how water is picked up in the ocean and brought over the clouds and the process, the air has weight. I mean, the Bible is full. The science confirms the Bible in so many different areas.

It's unbelievable. So anyway, back to this area, the New Testament sign is no longer circumcision. That was an Old Testament covenant.

The New Testament sign is, do you know of a believer? Baptism. So under the New Covenant, there's a lot of covenants actually. There's the covenant with Adam.

They call it the Adamic covenant. There's a covenant with, we're reading here in Abraham, there was a Noah, noadic covenant that I will not flood the earth again. You see the rainbow, right? That was a covenant of God.

There's a Palestine covenant. Uh-oh, the nation of Israel, the land that they're in right now, is really their land. Goes back a long time ago.

God made a covenant with his people. And a base, okay, there we go. And the covenant is, God says, I will do this if you do this.

I will do this if you do this. God's making a covenant. Now some of his covenants are conditional based on if you do this, I will do this.

That's why in Christianity, there's a school of thought that's called covenant theology that says the church has actually replaced the nation of Israel. The church is now the nation of Israel. Israel has been replaced.

Covenant theology, why? Because God said, if you do this, I will have you dwell in the land. But you did not do this. So that's why a group, a segment of Christianity believe that the covenant theology, that God, that they broke that covenant.

They were not allowed to remain in the land. There's a lot more to it. That's a whole sermon in there.

But that's what the covenant are about. Or people can read in the Bible that I will bless Israel and I will keep her. She's the apple of my eye.

And you look at scriptures on so many different sides. But the point is, covenant relationship with God is God says, if you do this, I'll do this. Now often though, God would say, I'm going to do this regardless.

I'm going to bring a Savior. I'm going to bring salvation. I'm going to renew my people.

I'm going to restore my land. God's going to do it. And he makes a covenant with his people.

That's why marriage is not a contract. It's a covenant between two people. And then you go before God and you make this covenant before God.

And you're held to that. That's why, at least with this church, we don't promote no-fault divorce. We see divorces in certain areas with adultery and different things.

If we had time, we could break it down. But we don't agree with no-fault divorce. We see it's a covenant before God.

And we have to be careful in this area when we make a covenant. Verse 9, and the patriarchs, the 12 tribes of Israel, became envious and they sold Joseph into Egypt. So now they're fast forwarding.

You have Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Jacob gives birth to 12 children. One of those is Joseph, highly favored.

And now Joseph, because he's highly favored of the father, the brothers become envious. And what do they do? They sell him into slavery. How is this God's will? How is that God's will? Joseph being sold into slavery.

But God was with him and delivered him out of all of his troubles and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And he made him governor over Egypt and all of his house. So he went from the prison to the palace because he trusted in God's sovereignty.

And this is where I was going to talk to you about the felonies, but I already did, so I can cross that off my list. But trust in God's sovereignty. And I want to, I'm not, I'm not going to keep going on here too much, but you, I want you to leave here trusting in God's sovereignty, because I think that's where many of us get sidetracked.

We think God's running around in heaven, kind of forgot about us, or I don't know what I'm going to do in that situation. Okay, Lord, I got to, if you just trust in his sovereignty, you just trust in his sovereignty. Yeah, you might lose a child.

You might lose your health. You might lose your job. You might lose your home.

But you're trusting in God's sovereignty. You're trusting his, he, that's a foundation that will never let you down. That's the solid foundation.

And when we start to make God something he's not, that's when we start to get mad at God. And studying for this debate, I've realized that most atheists were considering God at a certain point, but now they're angry at him. They're mad at God.

Do you know who Christopher Hitchens is, or was? A militant atheist who wrote books against God. An article stood out this week I was going through and reading different things. It said, it said, deathbed conversion, never.

Christopher Hitchens was defiant until his last breath and proud of it. And his son wrote this, I spent my father's final weeks and days at his bedside and watched him draw his final breath and die, and I can assure you that there was no hint of any sort of conversion. In fact, we barely spoke about religion at all except for joint expressions of frustrations at the God-botherers who made the rounds in the ICU and other units where people were dying so they could pray upon them, to be prayed upon by vulturous Christians.

Back what I said earlier, you stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart, you always resist the Holy Spirit. Are you resisting the Holy Spirit in any way? Even if you don't know God, if you've been playing church, if you've had religion, if you don't know why you're here and you've been resisting God, don't end up like this man. I've been doing a lot of hospital visits, I've got a funeral Saturday, I've got another one coming up of a lady who's got a few days, I met with her yesterday at Palmdale Hospital.

Actually, her name is Paula. Friends of the family for years. And I was driving, I wonder why do people call a pastor, you know, when they're close to death, and people are probably, well, shame, duh, they're ready to die.

And I want to say, you know what though, they should have called for a pastor 30, 40 years ago. Why not give your life completely to God now? It's almost like, oh, okay, all the fun's over. I've got a week left, I guess so.

Now, I don't want to burst anybody's bubble, I'm going to try to be careful here, but there's statistics on bedside death conversions that are not very good. What I mean by that is people pray and then somehow they miraculously come back, they don't follow God very often. And I pondered that all week, why is that? Because a lot of times, okay, I don't want to go to hell.

See, it's not about not wanting to go about it to hell, necessarily. Yeah, that's a great benefit. The whole point of conversion and the gospel is to say, God, humbly, I'm a sinner.

And without your gracious gift of salvation, I will spend eternity separated from you in hell. God, I need you. I'm giving my life to you, I'm repenting.

That person he saves. But the person that says, oh yeah, I don't want to go to hell, I'll try it out, what I've got to lose, they'll find out very quickly that that's not a sincere commitment. And it's sad because we are so stubborn and prideful that it often takes our deathbed before we'll finally give in.

I see people, okay, finally, okay, okay, all right, God, you got me. I guess I'll have to do it. Like, that's a bad plan.

And these people I go to, I don't mind. It's a very difficult thing. If you've ever seen a lot of people in the state, it's very, very draining emotionally.

I feel like I ran eight miles sometimes. But why didn't we talk 20 years ago? Why don't we talk 10 years ago? Let me tell you about the abundant life that you can have now, to be filled with God's spirit now, to know where you're going now, to have peace and assurance now, to have comfort now, to have direction now. God is an ever-present help in time of need.

See, God's will is simple, very simple. A child can grasp it, but it's not easy. Because the human heart and our pride and arrogance wants to push away everything that God wants to give us.

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