

He will destroy them

by William MacDonald

Transcript

“He will destroy them...so that you may drive them out and destroy them.” (Deut. 9:3 NASB)

In all of God’s dealings with mankind, there is a curious merging of the divine and the human.

Take the Bible, for example. There is the divine Author, and there are human authors, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

As far as salvation is concerned, it is of the Lord from start to finish. There is nothing a man can do to earn or deserve it. And yet he must receive it by faith. God clearly elects individuals to salvation, but they must enter in at the strait gate. And so Paul writes to Titus of “the faith of God’s elect (Tit. 1:1).

From the divine standpoint, we are “kept by the power of God.” Yet there is also the human side—“through faith” (1 Pet. 1:5). “Kept by the power of God through faith.”

Only God can make me holy. Yet He will not make me holy without my cooperation. I must add to my faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love (2 Pet. 1:5-7). I must put on the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:13-18). I must put off the old man and put on the new man (Eph. 4:22-24). I must walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16).

You find the merging of the divine and the human in the whole area of Christian ministry. Paul plants, Apollos waters, but God gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:6).

When we come to leadership in the local church, we learn that only God can make a man an elder. Paul reminded the Ephesian elders that it was the Holy Spirit who had made them overseers (Acts 20:28). Yet a man’s own will is involved. He must desire to exercise oversight (1 Tim. 3:1 JND).

Finally, in the text with which we began, we see that it is God who destroys our enemies, but we must drive them out and destroy them (Deut. 9:3 NASB).

In order to be balanced Christians, we must recognize this merging of the divine and human. We must pray as if everything depended on God but work as if everything depended on us. Or to borrow the wartime exhortation, “Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition.” As someone suggested, we must pray for a good harvest but keep on hoeing.

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