



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Vol. 32 Issue 601

Feb. 08, 2013

Worship Music

[Love Comes Down-
Kerrie Roberts](#)

[This Love Doesn't Run-
Kerrie Roberts](#)

[Angel By Your Side-
Francesca Battistelli](#)

Prayer

Lord, I know that Your Spirit has the very answer I need for any situation I may confront in life. When He speaks to my heart, it places a razor-sharp sword in my hands that I can use against my spiritual enemies. Help me keep a sensitive ear to the Holy Spirit so I can recognize those moments when He is trying to give me a "rhema" that will put the devil on the run. I ask for Your wisdom, knowledge, intelligence, and understanding. Refresh Your mercy and compassion in me, and give me peace in Jesus' name. Amen....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

“ Seeking The Lord”

Charles Stanley

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1 SYRIA AND Israel continued without war for three years. 2 In the third year Jehoshaphat king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. 3 And [Ahab] king of Israel said to his servants, Do you know that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we keep silence and do not take it from the king of Syria? 4 And [Ahab] said to Jehoshaphat, Will you go with me to Ramoth-gilead to battle? Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses. 5 But Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, Inquire first, I pray you, for the word of the Lord today. 6 Then [Ahab] king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about 400 men, and said to them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I hold back? And they said, Go up, for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king. 7 Jehoshaphat said, Is there not another prophet of the Lord here whom we may ask? 8 [Ahab] king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him, for he never prophesies good for me, but evil. Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say that. 9 Then [Ahab] king of Israel told an officer, Bring quickly Micaiah son of Imlah. 10 Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were sitting in [royal] robes [or armor], each on his throne in an open place [on a threshing floor] at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. 11 And Zedekiah son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron and said, Thus says the Lord: With these you shall push the Syrians until they are destroyed. 12 And all the prophets agreed, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead and prosper, for the Lord will deliver it into the king's hand. 13 The messenger who went to call Micaiah said to him, Behold now, the prophets unanimously declare good to the king. Let your answer, I pray you, be like theirs, and say what is good. 14 But Micaiah said, As the Lord lives, I will speak what the Lord says to me. 15 So he came to the king. King [Ahab] said, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we hold back? And he answered, Go and prosper, for the Lord will deliver it into the king's hand. 16 And the king said to him, How many times must I charge you to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord? 17 And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills as sheep that have no shepherd, and the Lord said, These have no master. Let them return every man to his house in peace. 18 Then the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell you that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil? 19 And Micaiah said, Hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left. 20 And the Lord said, Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? One said this way, another said that way. 21 Then there came forth a spirit [of whom I am about to tell] and stood before the Lord and said, I will entice him. 22 The Lord said to him, By what means? And he said, I will go forth and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets. [The Lord] said, You shall entice him and succeed also. Go forth and do it. 23 So the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets; and the Lord has spoken evil concerning you. 24 But Zedekiah son of Chenaanah went near and struck Micaiah on the cheek and said, Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak to you? 25 Micaiah said, Behold, you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide yourself. 26 [Ahab] king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, carry him back to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son, 27 And say, The king says, Put this fellow in prison and feed him with bread and water of affliction until I come in peace. 28 Micaiah said, If you return at all in peace, the Lord has not spoken by me. He [added], Hear, O people, every one of you! 29 So [Ahab] king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead. 30 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself and enter the battle, but you put on your [royal] clothing. And the king of Israel disguised himself and went into the battle. 31 But the king of Syria had commanded the thirty-two captains of his chariots, Fight neither with small nor great, but only with [Ahab] king of Israel. 32 And when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. They turned to fight against him, but Jehoshaphat cried out. 33 And when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him. 34 But a certain man drew a bow at a venture and smote [Ahab] the king of Israel between the joints of the armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, Turn around and carry me out of the army, for I am wounded. 35 The battle increased that day, and [Ahab] the king was propped up in his chariot facing the Syrians, and at nightfall he died. And the blood of his wound flowed onto the floor of the chariot. 36 And there went a cry throughout the army about sundown, saying, Every man to his city and his own country, 37 For the king is dead! And [Ahab] was brought to Samaria, where they buried him. 38 And they washed [his] chariot by the pool of Samaria, where the harlots bathed, and the dogs licked up his blood, as the Lord had predicted. 39 The rest of Ahab's acts, all he did, the ivory palace and all the cities he built, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? 40 So Ahab slept with his fathers. Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead. 41 Jehoshaphat son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. 42 Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother was Azubah daughter of Shilhi. 43 He walked in all the ways or customs of Asa his father, never swerving from it, doing right in the sight of the Lord. However, the [idolatrous] high places were not taken away; for the people still sacrificed and burned incense in the high places. 44 And Jehoshaphat made peace with Israel's king. 45 The rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, his might that he showed and how he warred, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? 46 And the remnant of the sodomites (the male cult prostitutes) who remained in the days of his father Asa, [Jehoshaphat] expelled from the country. 47 There was no king in Edom; a deputy was acting king. 48 Jehoshaphat ordered ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold, but they did not go, for the ships were wrecked at Ezion-geber. 49 When Ahaziah son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with your servants in the ships, Jehoshaphat refused. 50 Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers and was buried with them in the city of David his father [forefather]. And Jehoram his son reigned in his stead. 51 Ahaziah son of Ahab began his two-year reign over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah. 52 He did evil in the sight of the Lord and walked in the ways of his father [Ahab] and of his mother [Jezebel] and of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who made Israel sin. 53 He served Baal and worshiped him and provoked the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger in all the ways his father had done.

Chapter 22: Chuck Smith

So they went for three years without war between Syria and Israel. And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat who was the king of the southern tribes Judah, he came up to visit Ahab. And the king of Israel [that would be Ahab] said to his servants, Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria? So he said to Jehoshaphat, Will you go with me to battle at Ramothgilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king, I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses are as your horses. So Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, Let's inquire of the Lord and see if we're to go to battle. So the king of Israel gathered his prophets together, and he said unto them, Shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king. So Jehoshaphat said, Is there [the king from Judah said] you have any other

prophet that we can ask (1Ki 21:26-29; 22:1-7)?

So he said there is this one guy Micaiah but that guy never gives me a decent prophecy. He's always saying something evil. And he said, "Oh, don't say that. Let's call him in and see what he has to say." In the meantime this one prophet Zedekiah made some iron horns and he put them on his head and he went running around with these iron horns on his head and he said,

Thus saith the LORD, With these shall you push the Syrians, until you have consumed them. And all the prophets said, Go up to Ramothgilead, and prosper: the LORD is going to deliver it in the king's hands. So the messenger who went over to get Micaiah spake unto him, said (1Ki 22:11-13),

Now look, all of the guys have given him good prophecies so come on in and say something good. Don't lay a heavy one on him, you know.

So he said, "the prophet answered, he said,"

As the LORD lives, [I'm only going to tell him and I can only tell him what the LORD tells me to tell him. And] what the Lord says, that's what I'm going to speak. So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramothgilead or shall we forbear (1Ki 22:14-15)?

And no doubt he answered him in a very sardonic, sarcastic way so that Ahab realized that the guy was, you know, just he probably said just, Go, and prosper: for the LORD is going to deliver it into the hand of the king (1Ki 22:15).

And he said it in such a way that he knew that the guy wasn't sincere.

And he said, How many times have I told you don't tell me anything that is not true in the name of the LORD (1Ki 22:16)?

He said, "All right. You want to know the truth."

I saw all of Israel scattered on the hills, like sheep that have no shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace (1Ki 22:17).

In other words, he's prophesying the death of Ahab, "the shepherd over the people. The people are all scattered over the hills because their shepherd has been destroyed."

And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, Didn't I tell you that this guy gave me a bad one (1Ki 22:18)?

He never says anything good.

And the prophet Micaiah went on to say, Hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and the host of heaven was standing by him on his right hand, on his left. And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he might fall, be killed at Ramothgilead? And one suggested this and another suggested another thing. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, How? And he said, [I will go forth, and be a lying spirit in his mouth and in the mouth of all.] I will go forth and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all of his prophets. And he said, That will work. Go ahead (1Ki 22:19-22).

Very interesting thing. Micaiah's vision of heaven. "I saw the throne of God, all of the host standing around God." God said, "How we going to get Ahab over there to Ramothgilead that he might fall there?" And the angels were suggesting different things until one spirit came up and said, "I've got an idea."

"What is it?"

"Well, I'll be a lying spirit in the mouth of all of his prophets."

The Lord said, "That will work. Go ahead."

Why would God commission a lying spirit? It doesn't seem, you know, quite foil. Something that we don't often consider is that in a sense, Satan is a servant of God. He is serving God's purposes. That is why God has allowed him to exist. That's why God has allowed him freedom. He is acting in the sphere of his own free will, but yet the controls are ultimately held by God. We have made a tragic mistake in our thinking processes as we think of Satan as an opposite of God. Satan is not an opposite of God.

God is an eternal, omnipotent, self-existent being, whereas Satan is a created being and is in the rank of angels. So if you're looking for an opposite of Satan, you'd have to look at maybe Michael, one of the archangels. There you would have opposites. But in no way is he an opposite of God. No way does he rank even near God. He is existing under the total sphere of God, and though he is opposed to God, he is not an opposite of God in any sense of being an opposite to God Who is God, the eternal, omnipotent God.

Satan is definitely limited in his understanding, in his abilities, in his powers. They are limited by God. God says you can go so far, no further. Satan complained to God the fact of his limitations in the case of Job. "You put a hedge around that guy. I can't get to him." And he was complaining that God had put limitations on what he could do. So Satan is only allowed liberty within a limited spoke. God

puts the limitations on him, but he does serve purposes of God. Thus, God can use and often does use Satan or his emissaries to fulfill God's purposes. Here is the case where God uses a lying spirit to fulfill His purpose.

He comes and the false prophets give to Ahab these lies, encourage him to go against Ramothgilead. So Ahab then ordered the true prophet Micaiah, said, "Put him in prison until I return in peace."

And he said, "If you return at all, then I'm not a prophet of God."

So they headed for Ramothgilead. Jehoshaphat the king from Judah was going with Ahab. And as they were getting to Ramothgilead against the Syrians, Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Hey, you take my chariot and all. I'm going to put on just a common garb. I want to get into the battle."

And so he took off his king's robes in order that he might just really get into the battle himself. He was just sort of thirsty for a little excitement. And so he left his chariot, the king's chariot, got in another chariot and so that he could get into the thick of the battle.

And in the meantime, the Syrian commander said to his fellows, "Now look, all we want is the king. So let's concentrate and get hold of Ahab. And if we kill him, then, you know, the rest of the people will be so demoralized that that's all we have to do."

So they saw Jehoshaphat sitting in Ahab's chariot with Ahab's robe on. And so they figured it was Ahab so they started to pursue the one chariot until Jehoshaphat started going on the lamb, you know. And these guys were chasing him because they weren't really concentrating on the battle, just on the one guy. That's all they wanted. And when they finally got up to him, they realized that it wasn't Ahab, that it was Jehoshaphat.

But, and of course, this is an interesting scripture.

A certain man drew a bow at a venture (1Ki 22:34).

In other words, he just, you know, let go, let fly an arrow in the direction of their enemy. And actually the arrow hit Ahab.

and he turned to the driver of his chariot and he said, Turn and carry me out of the battle; because I am wounded. And the battle increased that day: and the king was propped up in the chariot against the Syrians, but he died at the evening time: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. And there went a proclamation throughout all of the host about the time the sun was setting, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country. So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according to the word of the LORD which he spake. Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, all that he did, the ivory house that he had made, all of the cities which he built, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel (1Ki 22:34-39).

Interestingly enough, in the city of Megiddo, which is one of the cities that Ahab had rebuilt, actually at Megiddo there are about twenty different levels of cities that had been built over cities. It's been the battleground of many ancient battles. And so when a city was destroyed, then they just built a new city on top. And they have dug down in one cut there, the archaeologists, and there are about twenty different civilizations or different levels of the city.

Now in the level that dates to Ahab's time, next to the temple of Baal, the ruins of the temple of Baal that Ahab built, they found several hundred jars with the skeletons of babies that had been sacrificed by their parents to Baal worship. This is what Jezebel and Ahab had introduced to the people. And the archaeologists uncovered next to the ruins of the temple of Baal built in Megiddo by Ahab these jars with these skeletons of babies sacrificed to this god Baal. We understand from this why God wanted this horrible religious system to be utterly wiped out, because it did involve the sacrifice, the human sacrifice of their own babies unto their worship of their god.

So we come to the close of Ahab, and his son Ahaziah reigned in his place. Now Jehoshaphat and now shift gears. You remember last week we told you we had two kingdoms, the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom. So meanwhile, back in the ranch, back in the southern kingdom. Now we spent a lot of time up in the north, not because of Ahab but because of Elijah. Really he became the central character of the story. And so a lot of print is given to Ahab only because of the fact that Elijah was a prominent character during this particular period of their history.

But back in the southern kingdom where the descendants of David are on the throne,

Jehoshaphat who was the son of Asa [who was a good king for the most part] began to reign over Judah in the fourth year that Ahab was reigning in Israel (1Ki 22:41).

So they were co-regents for quite a period of time.

Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he began to reign; he reigned for twenty-five years. And he walked in all of the ways of Asa his father [who I said was a fairly good king]; he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the LORD: nevertheless the high places [for pagan worship] were not taken away; for the people offered burnt incense yet there in the high places. And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel (1Ki 22:42-44).

You remember he had come up and was invited by Ahab to go in battle against Ramothgilead. So there was an alliance between the two kings.

Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, the wars and so forth, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the king of Judah (1Ki 22:45).

So we will get that story when we get into Chronicles because we do have the chronicles of the kings of Judah, though we do not have the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land. And there was then no king in Edom: but a deputy (1Ki 22:46-47).

That is, in the area south of the Dead Sea and on the far bank, there is no king, only a governor over the land.

Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken up [no doubt in the storm] at Eziongeber. And so Ahaziah the son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with your servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not. And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead. Now Ahaziah who was the son of Ahab [back up in the north] began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, and he reigned for two years. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, he walked in the ways of his father Ahab, and in the ways of his mother [that wicked Jezebel]: And he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger Jehovah, the God of Israel, according to all that his father had done (1Ki 22:48-53).

May the good hand of our Lord be upon you to lead and to guide you in His way that you might walk in His love. That you might be filled with His Spirit and that you might discover what is God's plan for your life, that which God would have for you this week. And may the Lord speak to you and may you be very sensitive so you begin to understand the voice of the Lord. That you might be led by the Spirit of God. God bless you. May He watch over you and keep you in His love.

(Through The Bible Series C-2000; Chuck Smith; 1979-1986; Commentaries Through The Bible)

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO GRACE

A Clear Commentary on the Book of Romans

by Chuck Smith; 2. God's Justice

There is no break in Paul's writing between Chapters 1 and 2, and he continues in the next verse, Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things (2:1). We may judge someone else's sins, but so often we're guilty of the very same act.

Watching television and movies can be dangerous. Often a person receives vicarious pleasure from watching the violence and corruption on the screen. He wouldn't think of doing such things himself, but when he sees them portrayed on a screen he drinks it all in. He's as guilty as the people he's watching, because he's mentally indulging in the same practices.

But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things (2:2). God's judgment will be according to truth, because He'll judge not only men's actions but the motives that prompted the actions.

Many times after committing a crime, a man will make up an excuse to justify what he's done. As he gives you his explanation, he sounds like he really is innocent. However, he made up the story after the fact to justify himself and avoid punishment.

God told Ezekiel, "Dig a hole through the wall, go in, and take a look around the house of Israel." Ezekiel went in and saw many filthy pictures, detestable animals, and idols upon the walls. The Lord said, "You're seeing the insides of the minds of men" (Ezekiel 8:8-12).

Some day you may stand before God in heaven saying, "I didn't intend to cause any harm." He could say, "Let's review the thoughts that were in your mind at that moment." The Bible says, "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13b). You can't hide from God. He knows the secret motives of your heart, and His judgment will be according to the absolute truth.

Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? (2:4). Men so often mistake the patience of God as a weakness or, worse yet, as approval. A man says, "If there is a God in heaven, let Him strike me dead!" He shakes his fist at God. When he isn't struck dead, he says, "I told you. There is no God." How foolish! A person may be lulled into believing that God doesn't care or that He even approves of his sins, because God's judgment isn't immediate. By misinterpreting the patience of God as "getting by with it," a man shows despite toward the goodness of God and fools himself.

The goodness of God leads a man to repentance. So many times a preacher tries to get a sinner to repent by shaking him over hell and emphasizing the wrath of God. In reality, knowing how much he deserves the judgment and wrath of God, yet realizing the goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering of God, causes a man to repent.

The day of judgment will come and all secrets will be revealed. But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God (2:5). That's why I pray, "Remember not the sins of my youth" (Psalm 25:7a). That's why David prayed, "Have mercy upon me, O God... according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions" (Psalm 51:1). As a sinner David didn't say, "Have justice on me, O God."

God will render to every man according to his deeds (2:6). By continuing to sin, a person is damming up a huge reservoir of judgment that will finally burst and carry him off in the torrent. To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, God will reward with eternal life. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile (2:7-10).

For there is no respect of persons with God (2:11). In this particular dispensation God deals equally with all men, Jews and Gentiles. If you're following Christ, He'll bless and reward you. If you harden your heart against Him by following your own path, then God will judge you regardless of whether you're a Jew or a Gentile. Your nationality won't make the day of judgment any easier for you, because God doesn't show any favoritism.

For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law (2:12). Those who have never heard about Jesus Christ will be judged according to the knowledge that they have had. If they didn't have the Law of Moses, they'll be judged apart from the Law.

(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another) (2:13-15).

God has given each person a basic sense of right and wrong. This standard is written upon the tablet of his heart, and his thoughts are either accusing or excusing him. What will God judge? The secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel (2:16).

Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? (2:17-23).

Paul was addressing himself to the Jews who had the Law of Moses and were boasting in it. "We have the Law and know the things that are right. We're a light to those in darkness and a guide to the blind." The Jews stood as the moral and spiritual teachers of the world.

But Paul said, "Wait a minute! You teach that a man shouldn't steal, but do you covet your neighbor's goods? You teach that a man shouldn't commit adultery, but do you think about it yourself? You teach that a man shouldn't worship idols, but do you secretly worship idols in your heart?"

Paul was pointing out that the true intent of the Law is to govern and judge the attitudes of men more than their actions. This is the very thing that Jesus pointed out in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:17-18). Using five examples, He showed how the Law was being misinterpreted by the scribes and Pharisees and what God meant when He gave it. In each case, the scribes were applying the Law to a man's actions when God was judging his attitudes. The whole purpose of the Law was voided by their misinterpretation.

By applying the Law only to actions, the scribes felt very self-righteous. However, the Law's purpose was to make the whole world guilty before God by revealing sin and, thus, drive men to the grace of God in Jesus Christ. By misunderstanding the intent of the Law, the reaction of the scribes in their smugness and self-righteousness was exactly the opposite of what God intended.

As a result, the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision (2:24-25). The Jews were trusting in the Mosaic ritual of circumcision for their salvation, but their disobedience of the spirit of the Law invalidated the ritual.

It's wrong to trust in a ritual such as baptism for salvation. Unfortunately, the so-called salvation of many people is based on the water sprinkled on their heads as infants. These people don't even remember the event, but they have a certificate that proves it happened. Such a religious ritual is meaningless in terms of salvation. Our relationship with God is totally dependent upon a living, active faith in Jesus Christ.

You may say, "When I was baptized, they put me all the way under. None of that sprinkling for me!" If you're not walking according to God's will, you can't trust in the ritual, even if you were baptized in the deepest ocean. Your heart determines your salvation, and your present life can invalidate the meaning of any ritual you may have experienced.

Paul says that the benefit of circumcision is removed by disobedience to the Law of God. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? (2:25-26). The crucial issue isn't ritual but obedience to God.

Personally, I don't agree with any denomination claiming that a person cannot be saved until he is baptized. Does baptism save? No. The work of God in a man's heart is what counts. Salvation rests upon the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God (2:27-29).

Circumcision was intended to signify a people who would deny their flesh and live after the Spirit. The significance of the rite could be totally negated by a man if he continued to live after the flesh. Likewise, baptism symbolizes the death of the old nature and the new life of the Spirit. The proof of this work of God is in a person's life, not in the ritual.

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 549-553)

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