

“IF” Statements in the Bible II

Fred R. Coulter—August 28, 2010

As we began last week with the first ‘IF’ sermon in Gen. 4:7, let’s begin there again today, because this verse tells us the whole basis of the Bible, and the whole basis of anyone approaching God, a relationship with God.

Cain’s offering was not satisfied, but he thought he was going to do it from the goodness of his heart, rather than according to the instructions of God. And then Abel, we know, gave an offering according to the way God instructed it to be and God accepted his, but didn’t accept Cain’s. Cain really got angry over that. So God told him here Genesis 4:7: “**IF** you do well, shall you not be accepted?... [This shows us, yes, we can be accepted of God. *Yes, we can do the things that please Him.*] (But then He says): ...But **IF** you do not do well, sin lies at the door....” And sin is what? *Transgression of the law!* So meaning that *he did not do according to the instructions of God.*

Now why does this become so important, because a lot of people feel that, ‘If I have a thought in my heart and that’s what I want to do, God has to accept it.’ Well, what if it’s something that’s contrary to God’s instruction and you still feel good about it? Is God obligated to accept it? *No!* Why? *Because if any man tells God what to do, then man becomes God,* and God becomes the servant. So it doesn’t work that way.

“...sin lies at the door.... [here’s another thing]: ...Its desire *is* for you... [Sin is always there to come after you] ...but you must rule over it!” (v 7). In other words, this is the same thing that is throughout the whole Bible. You must control yourself, and you must control yourself according to the laws and commandments of God. So there it is right there in the first part of the Bible.

I want to cover something right along that line. Remember how Moses bargained with God to save the children of Israel. And isn’t that interesting. He did not ask for himself—did he? He asked to have his name taken out of the book of life if God would not forgive the people. We’re going to Genesis 18, because we’re going to see something else here. It’s the same way Abraham bargained with God. Isn’t that something? We know from the context that it was the Lord and two angels with Him. Now how does the Lord appear to a human being when we saw that God told Moses, ‘You can’t see My face and live.’ He appears to a human being as a human being, because we’re made in the image of God. And that’s why God made us in His image, so that He could appear to us in circumstances like

this. And then later Jesus could be God manifested in the flesh, born of the virgin Mary.

So here let’s see what this tells us. Genesis 18:17: “And the LORD said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do, Since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his house after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD... [Notice how much of this also is New Testament doctrine. Jesus said, ‘I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life’—right? *The way of the Lord is defined how? By His commandments!*] ...to do justice and judgment, that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which He has spoken of him.’ And the LORD said, ‘Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous’” (vs 17-20).

Now, we’re going to see sin according to God. We can’t hear it in the same way, but come back to Romans 8 and let’s see what it says about the whole world under the burden of sin—and the world *is* under the burden of sin. I know just driving up trying to catch the news to see what was going on and coming back, there was murder, there was war, there was all of these things going on. Just think of all the sin that’s going on all the time. This also shows us the purpose of why God has called us and that is, under Christ, to save the world and save humanity.

Romans 8:19: “For the earnest expectation of the creation itself is awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God... [When will that take place? *The resurrection!*] ...because the creation was subjected to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who subjected *it* in hope, In order that the creation itself might be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (vs 19-21). So think about that!

Next time you watch the news and you just get kind of overwhelmed with it all, sometimes it’s that way. God has called us to with Christ save the world and change these things. Think about that the next time you get all angry at the politicians and what they do. Jonathan and I were talking on the way up and he said, ‘These people are ignorant.’ I said, ‘Well, no, they just don’t understand and they don’t have the facts.’ He says, ‘Well, they’re ignorant.’ That’s true. So I had to admit he was right, they were ignorant.

Verse 22: “For we know that all the creation is groaning together and travailing together until now. And not only *that*, but even we ourselves, who

have the firstfruits of the Spirit, also groan within ourselves awaiting the sonship... [which is at the resurrection] ...the redemption of our bodies” (vs 22-23). Now that’s going to be a spectacular event when that occurs.

Let’s see how God expressed this, because God knows everything. He has angels here that know what’s going on. He has the seven Spirits of God, which are active on the earth, He says, Genesis 18:20: “And the LORD said, ‘Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great... [All the sin, all the things going on.] ...and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it... [That’s an interesting way to put it, isn’t it? Is it really as bad as I’m hearing.] ...the cry of it, which has come to Me. And if not, I will know.’ And the men turned their faces away from there, and went toward Sodom. But Abraham still stood before the LORD” (vs 20-22). So the angels went on ahead and here’s Abraham and the Lord.

“And Abraham drew near... [notice how he approached God] ...‘Will You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Perhaps... [Now perhaps is not an ‘if’, but it is equivalent to the same.] ...Perhaps there are fifty righteous within the city. Will You also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from You to act in this manner... [He appealed to God and appealed to the character of God.] ...Far be it from You to act in this manner, to kill the righteous with the wicked. And far be it from You that the righteous should be as the wicked. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?’” (vs 23-25).

Notice how he bargained with God. He did it in a way that shows he knew God. Not coming to God and say, ‘Oh, God, if I could win the lotto, just think how much I’ll tithe to you.’ Verse 26: “And the LORD said, ‘If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.’ And Abraham answered and said, ‘Behold now, I have taken upon myself to speak to the LORD... [Notice how humble, but bold, he is.] ...I who am but dust and ashes. Perhaps there will be five lacking from the fifty righteous. Will You destroy all the city for lack of five?’ And He said, ‘If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy *it*. And he spoke to Him yet again, and said, ‘Perhaps there shall be forty found there.’ ...” (vs 26-29). He knows where Lot is and he knows the predicament that Lot is in, so he’s trying to spare Lot. That’s really what he’s thinking of here.

“...And He said, ‘I will not do *it* for forty’s sake.’ And he said, ‘Oh let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak. Perhaps there shall be thirty found there.’ And He said, ‘I will not do *it* if I find thirty there.’ And he said, ‘Lo now, I have taken upon

myself to speak to the LORD.... [You talk about persistence!] ...Perhaps there shall be twenty found there.’ And He said, ‘I will not destroy *it* for twenty’s sake.’ And he said, ‘Oh do not let the LORD be angry, and I will speak only once more.... [‘Just once more, please, Lord.’] ...Perhaps *only* ten shall be found there.’ And He said, ‘I will not destroy *it* for ten’s sake.’ And the LORD went His way as soon as He had left off talking with Abraham. And Abraham returned to his place” (vs 29-33).

Genesis 19:1: “And there came two angels to Sodom at evening. And Lot sat in the gate of Sodom. And Lot rose up to meet them when he saw *them*. And he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. And said, ‘Behold now, my lords, please turn in to your servant’s house and stay all night, and wash your feet, and *you shall* rise up early and go your way.’ And they said, ‘No, but we will stay in the street’” (vs 1-2). Isn’t it interesting, at night is when most of the activities take place—right?

“But he urgently pressed upon them, and they turned in to him and entered into his house. And he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both old and young, all the people from every quarter.... [I wonder what the message was that went out? ‘Oh, we saw these two really good looking strong men.’] ...And they called to Lot, and said to him, ‘Where are the men who came in to you this night? Bring them out to us, that we may know them’.... [that ‘we may have sex with them’] ...And Lot went out the door to them, and shut the door after him. And he said, ‘I pray you, brethren, do not act so wickedly! Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known a man. I pray you, let me bring them out to you, and you do to them as you see fit.... [Well, they didn’t want a woman. That’s probably why he said, ‘Well, I’ve got two daughters,’ because he knew they wouldn’t take him up on it.] ...But do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shadow of my roof’” (vs 3-8).

“And they said, ‘Stand back!’ And they said, ‘This one came in to sojourn, and *must* he now play the judge? Now we will deal worse with you than with them.’ And they pressed hard upon the man Lot, and came near to breaking *down* the door. But the men put out their hands... [the angels who looked like men] ...put out their hands and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut the door. And they smote the men that *were* at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves to find the door. And the men said to Lot, ‘Have you anyone here besides yourself? Bring your sons-in-law, and your sons, and your daughters, and anyone *else you have* in the city,

bring *them* out of this place” (vs 9-12). Isn’t it interesting? People live in circumstances and they get used to it and they get used to the benefits and they just let the rest of the things go. Not everyone in the city and the surrounding cities were homosexuals.

“...For we will destroy this place, because great is the cry of it before the face of the LORD. And the LORD has sent us to destroy it.’ And Lot went out and spoke with his sons-in-law, who married his daughters, and said, ‘Get up and get out of this place, for the LORD will destroy this city.’ But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be jesting. And when the morning dawned, then the angels hurried Lot, saying, ‘Rise up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city’” (vs 13-15). So the only ones that there were, were Lot, his wife, and his two daughters—four. And you know what happened. They escaped, the angels took them out, Lot said, ‘Oh, I can’t go to the mountains. Let me go to this little city over here.’ They said, ‘Go.’ And then fire and brimstone rained down from heaven and consumed Sodom and Gomorrah and all the cities around it.

Now, I don’t know if you’ve ever seen the special put out by Ron Wyatt, quite an interesting video. He found exactly where Sodom is. It’s down south of the Dead Sea. You come down there south of the Dead Sea and you can look along—that look like cliffs, but if you look carefully you can see those were buildings and they were just incinerated, the rocks. And on the ground are small to large balls of sulfur and it’s really powerful sulfur. He showed how they took just a small one, put it on a spoon, lit it with a match, and it burned a hole right through the spoon. So that’s where Sodom and Gomorrah is today, burned up.

Let’s see what God tells us in bargaining with Him. Let’s come to Isaiah, the first chapter, and here we’re going to see some very interesting things indeed. Now the first part of it talks about how evil and how absolutely corrupt all the people of Israel are and Jerusalem in particular.

Nations reach this point where they’re really in bad shape. Isaiah 1:9: “Except the LORD of hosts had left us a very small remnant, we would have been as Sodom; we would have become like Gomorrah.... [We just read what happened to them. God always has a remnant. The only remnant that He had in Sodom was Lot, his wife, and she didn’t believe. She turned around to look at what was happening when she was told not to look, and she turned into a pillar of salt.] (So here’s a prophetic message for the nation today): ...Hear the Word of the LORD, rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of our God, people of Gomorrah” (vs 9-10). Isn’t that

interesting, the way out of sin is what? *The Word of the Lord and the Law of God!* Here they were, very religious. They had the temple. They had the sacrifices. They had everything there the way that God had said they needed to do it, but did they do it that way? *No!* They ended up becoming very pagan right at the temple, astonishing as that may be. It’s like today, people wonder what has happened to Christianity. It’s just falling apart wherever you look. Well, because they’re not doing things according to God’s way.

Isaiah 66:1; this will tie in with what we’re reading in Isa. 1: “Thus says the LORD, ‘The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then *is* the house that you build for Me? And where *is* the place of My rest?... [Yet, He commanded them to build the temple. So, even if you build a house or a temple for God—what do you use to do it?] ...For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,’ says the LORD.... [So what is God more interested in than anything else with people? Comes right back to Gen. 4:7. What is your approach to God?] ...‘But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word’” (vs 1-2).

‘**IF** you do well, you shall be accepted’—correct? ‘**IF** you do not well, sin lies at the door.’ Now we see the same thing right here. We come to do a sacrifice even though God says bring an ox, and even though that God says do this, and you bring it, but you don’t do it the way that God said, and you don’t do it with a repentant heart, here is how it is toward God.

Verse 3: “‘He who kills an ox *is as if* he killed a man; he who sacrifices a lamb *is as if* he broke a dog’s neck; he who offers a grain offering *is as if* he offered swine’s blood; he who burns incense *is as if* he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations.’” Rather than God’s way.

And we’re going to see here a little later, right back in chapter one, even though they had the Sabbath, and even though they had the Holy Days, they weren’t worshiping God, because their hearts were far away from Him. What happens when that takes place? What happens when people have a society or even individuals that lives on lies and nothing is real? *God chooses those delusions and punishing them.*

Verse 4: “‘I also will choose their delusions, and I will bring their fears upon them because when I called, no one answered... [God always gives a warning.] ...when I spoke, they did not hear. But they did evil before My eyes and chose *that* in which I did not delight.’”

Now let's come back here to Isa. 1 again and let's see how He brings correction to them. It's just like today, what do we have in front of us today? *We have the whole Word of God*—right? How many people in the history of the world have had the whole Word of God? Wasn't even available to the general public after the apostles died—just Apostle John in 100_{A.D.}—until 1526 when William Tyndale did the New Testament.

Yes, Luther started, but Luther though he was first, he ended up being much like Jeroboam and went back into Baalism again. In 1537 and I have a copy of it, it's the Thomas Matthew Bible, which is really William Tyndale's. 'T' is for Tyndale. Matthew is an 'M' which is really an upside down 'W.' So it was William Tyndale's. 1537. And there by the order of King Henry VIII, whose wife Anne Boleyn gave him William Tyndale's, *Obedience of the Christian Man*. When he got done reading that he said, 'I don't need the pope anymore. Bam! Going to cut it all off.' So what William Tyndale did was inspire through his writings, through the Word of God, men to move and to do what they should do when God wanted them to do it.

Now then we have the whole Bible. We have many. I don't know how many you have in your house, I don't want to count those in our house; we've got too many. But King Henry VIII ordered that every church in England would have a Bible, and it was a big one. I've got a facsimile of it, big one. It was to be in the church available to anyone who came in. If one came in who did not know how to read, the church was to provide a reader so they could hear the Word of God.

Now think of this today, living in the end times, we have all the Word of God. We have all the understanding that God has given us. We have all these things now and what do people do? If you watch Glenn Beck, he even said—he even pulled out a Bible and held it on his program. And he said, 'I know many of you have this, but have you read it? Have you taken it off your shelf and read it?' *No!* Well, think of it now. How then have we been approaching God in Christianity of this world? 'We'll do it our way, Lord. We'll go to church on Sunday and we like our Christmas, and we like our Easter, New Years and all of this and so we're going to keep that, but we're so good we're going to do it in Your name.' Well, *that's the way of Cain!* Because not only does God want you to do it His way, He wants you to do it with a right attitude.

So He says, Isaiah 1:11: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?... [If you're not doing it in the right way, according as God has said, what is the purpose in it?] ...I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and

I do not delight in *the blood of bulls*, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When you come to appear before Me, who has required this at your hand, to trample My courts?" (vs 11-12). They were doing the same thing that Cain was, only this time right at the temple of God. Cain was doing it right at the entrance door to the Garden of Eden. See the parallel?

Verse 13: "Bring no more vain sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me... [Yet, He commanded it, didn't He? Why? *Because their hearts were on their sins, not on God's way.*] ...new moon and Sabbath, the calling of assemblies; I cannot endure iniquity along with the solemn assembly!.... [they desecrated the Sabbath] ...Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates... [We find in Jer. 7 that it got so bad...] ...Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me; I am weary to bear *them*.... [Think of that today of all of the things that the world calls Christian that they put Christ's name on. Like every year they say, 'Oh, let's put Christ back into Christmas.' Well, the truth is He was never there.] ...And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood" (vs 13-15).

Now come to Jeremiah 7; let's see exactly the same thing. This was in a time about 200-years later. Through the various kings they had opportunities to do well, and very few of them really did well. As a matter of fact, none of the kings of the ten northern tribes of Israel actually did what God wanted, not a one of them. And He gave them 230-years before He sent them off into captivity. Can you imagine that? *God's love and patience!* Two hundred and thirty-two years to change, but they didn't change.

Jeremiah was a priest, called to be a prophet of God. Jeremiah 7:1: "The Word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 'Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this Word, and say, "Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah, who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD.'" Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Amend your ways and your doings... [*Call to repentance!* Just exactly as God told Cain, '**IF** you do well, you will be accepted'—right?] ...Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Do not trust in lying words, saying, "The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD *are these*"' (vs 1-4). The physical building of the temple of the Lord is meaningless without a true worshipful heart and repentant attitude toward God.

"For **IF** you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; **IF** you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor; **IF** you

do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your hurt.... [So it does make a difference—doesn't it? When you serve the true God you get blessings. When you serve other gods for a while you get benefits that Satan gives, because there's pleasure in sin for a season. Then the penalties of God start coming upon you. So He said, **IF** you would do that.] ...Then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, forever and ever” (vs 5-7).

Now here we are in the same condition in America today that they were back then, v 8: “Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit.”

- that is true in *government*
- that is true in *religion*
- that is true in *economics*

—all three.

“Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know... [And they were doing it right there in the temple area and doing it in the name of the Lord. Does that sound familiar? *Yes, indeed!*] ...And then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, “We are delivered to do all these abominations”?.... [In other words same thing as Cain. ‘Oh, we can do this. God will accept it.’ *God says no He won't!*] ...Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it,” says the LORD” (vs 9-11).

Now come back to Isa. 1 and let's see what God says. Same message. What I want you to see in all of this, in the *'ifs'* that we are covering here is that it is the same proposition all the way through and that there is a unity of Scripture, Old Testament and New Testament which then tells us the will of God.

Isaiah 1:16, so He says: “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil.... [In other words, *repent!* Repentance means to cease doing evil. Then what do you have to do when you cease doing evil?] ...Learn to do good; seek judgment, reprove the oppressor. Judge the orphan; plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together,” says the LORD.... [You can come to God like Abraham did. You can come to God like Moses did.] ...‘Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow... [God will forgive] ...though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool. **IF**... [Now it took us a long time to get to the next ‘if’—didn't it? But there it is.] ...**IF** you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.... [Now

it's the same way with the Church. If we are willing and obedient, we'll receive eternal life. We're going to inherit the kingdom of God—correct? Does this not sound almost identical to Gen. 4:7? ‘**IF** you do well, shall you not be accepted?’] ...**IF** you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;’ But **IF**... [there we go] ...you refuse and rebel... [continue to rebel] ...you shall be devoured *with the sword;*’ for the mouth of the LORD has spoken *it*” (vs 16-20).

Now let's look at one other thing; let's come to Jeremiah 18; we'll see this applies to nations, this applies to individuals, same principle. When God looks at a nation, He looks at the collective percentage of those who are doing enough righteousness that God will not bring a penalty on them, compared to the percentage of those who are sinning and the real grievous sinners, and those who are determined to do things that are evil, planning to do evil, conniving to do evil. He weighs all of that in the balance.

Jeremiah 18:1: “The Word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ‘Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words’.... [object lesson] ...Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he was working at his wheel.... [Spinning it with his feet and making a vessel.] ...And the vessel that he made of clay was ruined in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make *it*” (vs 1-4). Just take the clay and if you messed up doing it, he's turning the wheel and he got his thumb jammed in there and it messed it up, so he just smashed it all down, put it on the wheel and start again.

“Then the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘O house of Israel, can I not do with you *even* as this potter?’.... [From the house of Israel is all the ten tribes of Israel.] ...‘Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hands, *so are* you in My hand, O house of Israel” (vs 5-6). Now what we're doing, we're getting God's perspective on the earth. Now we saw God's perspective concerning Sodom and Gomorrah—didn't we? And God was just in what He did.

So He says: “Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hands, *so are* you in My hand, O house of Israel. If at any time I shall speak... [So God is in control—correct?] ...concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck it up and to pull it down, and to destroy it... [Because God is in charge of the nations. Now what I want you to do is think about history, war, rise of nations, collapse of nations, and in every case it has to do with the degree of evil or the degree of righteousness.] ...**IF** that nation, against whom I have spoken, will turn from their evil... [Same message as given to Cain—

is that not correct? *Yes!*] ...I will repent of the evil that I thought to do to them” (vs 6-8). So God can change His mind.

Did He change His mind concerning the children of Israel when Moses pleaded with Him? *Yes!* Was He willing to change His mind when Abraham bargained with Him? *Yes!* So then He said He would repent of it. We have only one example of that taking place—don’t we? *Book of Jonah, city of Nineveh.*

“And if at any time I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build it and to plant it; **IF it does evil in My sight, that it not obey My voice then** I will repent of the good with which I said I would do them good” (vs 9-10). So then God said, ‘All right, you go tell Jerusalem I’m forming evil against you. What are you going to do?’

- yes, we can bargain with God
- yes, God is just

but *we have to come to God on His terms.*

(go to the next track)

Let’s come to 2-Kings 19_[corrected]. We talked about bargaining with God, but it’s also a matter of

- *reasoning* with God
- *pleading* with God
- *repenting* to God

Now this is very interesting here because it’s another lesson for us. God delivered the children of Judah from the Assyrians and King Sennacherib.

2-Kings 19:34, God says: “For I will defend this city, to save it for My own sake and for My servant David’s sake.’ And it came to pass that night, the angel of the LORD went out and struck a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. Now when they arose early in the morning... [That is the people of Judah and the armies to go out there, because obviously the dead men can’t arise in the morning.] ...behold, they were all dead bodies” (vs 34-35).

Now after a miraculous deliverance like that, notice what happened to King Hezekiah, it’s a good lesson. I study these things to remind myself, ‘Don’t do what they did after God has blessed you.’ In your old age, don’t assume things, just because of your age.

2-Kings 20:1: “In those days Hezekiah was sick to death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him and said to him... [Now this ties right in with what we were talking about in the book of Isa. earlier.] ...‘Thus says the LORD, “Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live”.... [What did Hezekiah do? No one wants to hear that—right? How’d you like someone to come in your house, walk in your house, point to you and say,

‘You’re going to die, you’re not going to live.>] ...And he turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying, ‘O LORD, I pray, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before You in truth and with a sincere heart, and have done good in Your sight.’ And Hezekiah wept with a great weeping” (vs 1-3). Now God heard that.

“And it came to pass, before Isaiah had *even* gone out into the middle of the court, the word of the LORD came to him saying, ‘Return again and tell Hezekiah the prince of My people, “Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father, ‘I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD. And I will add fifteen years to your days. And I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria. And I will defend this city for My own sake, and for My servant David’s sake.’”’ And Isaiah said, ‘Take a lump of figs.’ And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered. And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, ‘What *shall be* the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day?’ And Isaiah said, ‘This *will be* the sign from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing which He has spoken. Shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?’” (vs 4-9). That is, on the sun dial of Ahaz.

“And Hezekiah answered, ‘It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees. No, but let the shadow go backward ten degrees.’ And Isaiah the prophet cried to the LORD. And He brought the shadow ten degrees backward by which it had gone down on the sundial of Ahaz” (vs 10-11). So he was healed. Now notice what he did. He got carried away with himself and didn’t do what was right. Got all lifted up in pride and vanity. Now Hezekiah was used of God to write many of the Proverbs, to help canonize the Bible to a certain point, so let’s see what happened to him.

“At that time Berodach-Baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. And Hezekiah welcomed them, and showed them all the house of his precious things... [All the treasure that God had given to the kings of Judah.] ...the silver and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and the house of his armor, and all that was found in his treasures. There was nothing in his house nor in all his dominion which Hezekiah did not show them” (vs 12-13). Now what would you do if someone showed you all of that and you had your armies back in Babylon that really didn’t have too much to do? ‘Let’s get this one day.’

Verse 14: “And Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and said to him, ‘What did these men say? And from where did they come to you?’ And

Hezekiah said, ‘They have come from a far country, from Babylon.’ And he said, ‘What have they seen in your house?’ And Hezekiah answered, ‘They have seen all that *is* in my house. There is nothing among my treasurers which I have not shown to them.’.... [not very smart] ...And Isaiah said to Hezekiah, ‘Hear the word of the LORD. “Behold, the days come when all that *is* in your house, and which your fathers have laid up in store until today, shall be carried into Babylon. Nothing shall be left,” says the LORD, “And of your sons which shall issue from you, which you shall beget, they shall be taken away. And they shall be officers in the palace of the king of Babylon.”’ And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, ‘Good *is* the word of the LORD which you have spoken.’ And he said, ‘*Is it not good* if peace and truth are *at least* in my days?’” (vs 14-19).

He wasn’t thinking of anybody but himself at this point—right? He said, ‘Oh, well, this is good. It’s not going to happen in my days.’ Well, Hezekiah died and they buried him. Who succeeded him? *The worst king of Judah*—Manasseh. So you see, and what happened to him? *He reigned for 55 years*. I used to say think of Bill Clinton for 55-years, but now I can say think of Obama for 55-years. And that may give you an idea of what it was like. And where they had all kinds of paganism right there at the temple area of God.

As bad as Manasseh was, after he was carried off in captivity he repented and God brought him back and put him as a vassal king of Babylon on the throne in Jerusalem. So there you have *wherever there’s repentance, God will honor it*. But when you are granted reprieve, when God acknowledges your repentance and gives you a blessing and helps you, *don’t get lifted up and carried away*. Because vanity always is a balloon and all you need is just a little pin. POP! And it’s gone! So always keep that in mind. I have a wonderful wife who keeps me well aware of those things, so that vanity does not enter in. Yes, very good.

So when you reason with God, or bargain with God, and He blesses you, He forgives you, don’t get all lifted up and high and mighty because then you’re going to bring problems upon yourself. Let’s come back here and see several more ‘ifs’ that we’re going to cover in the book of Deuteronomy. I’ve already done some Church at Home on Deut. 28, so we won’t get to there.

Deuteronomy 6 is really quite a very instructive chapter, because they had just had the Ten Commandments reiterated to them again by Moses. They were getting ready to go into the ‘promised land.’ And after wandering in the desert for forty years all of those who went into the ‘promised land’ were the oldest, except Joshua and Caleb were 60-years-old. Now there were some

younger, because of the sin of the people of not wanting to go into the ‘promised land’ when God told them to go. Then He said, ‘All right, you’re going to wander for an additional total of forty years.’

So now, Moses just read to them the Ten Commandments and he explains what their attitude toward God should be. Deuteronomy 6:1: “Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God commanded to teach you so that you might do *them* in the land where you go to possess it, That you might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you, and your son, and your son’s son, all the days of your life, and so that your days may be prolonged” (vs 1-2). Isn’t that what everyone wants?

- they want *peace*
- they want *prosperity*
- they want *long life*

—and it comes from God, doesn’t come from the government. So then he gives the basis of everything that he wanted them to do:

Verse 3: “‘Hear therefore, O Israel, and be diligent to *observe* it... [Human nature, just like we saw with Hezekiah, after a blessing comes from God, people tend to get contemptuous and lackadaisical, or if we could put it in the terms of the churches, Laodicean, take it for granted.] ...Hear therefore, O Israel, and be diligent to *observe* it, so that it may be well with you...”

Let’s understand one thing very, very important. ***God wants to bless you!*** We saw that God will bless any person to the degree that they come to God, likewise with nations. If they turn from God, what’s going to happen? God is going to correct them and punish them, individuals or nations. So He’s saying, ‘We want it to be well with you. I want you to enjoy the land. I have specially prepared it for you.

“...that it may be well with you, and that you may greatly multiply, as the LORD God of our fathers has promised you, in the land that flows with milk and honey.... [Not like it is today, half desert.] ...Hear, O Israel. Our one God is the LORD, the LORD. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart.... [The hardest thing to do is to pass it on to the next generation. That’s the hardest thing, always is. We will see that was one of the problems of the children of Israel.] ...And you shall diligently teach them to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall bind

them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes” (vs 3-8).

Then he said, “...write them upon posts of your house and on your gates. And it shall be when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to give you great and goodly cities which you did not build” (vs 9-10). Move into a country already set up. Isn't that something? Think how spectacular that was after living in tents for forty years.

Now come down here to v 17: “You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. And you shall do *that which is* right and good in the sight of the LORD... [Doesn't that sound like Gen. 4:7? *Yes, indeed!*] ...that it may be well with you, and so that you may go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to cast out all your enemies from before you as the LORD has spoken. When your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What are the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?’ Then you shall say to your son, ‘We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. And the LORD showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh and upon all his household, before our eyes. And He brought us out from there so that He might bring us in to give us the land which He swore to our fathers” (vs 17-23).

Here we’re going to come to another *if*, v 24: “And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes—to fear the LORD our God for our good always... [Satan wants us to believe that God gives these things because He hates us, or as a curse, which it’s not.] ...for our good always so that He might preserve us alive, as *it is* today. And it shall be righteousness for us **IF**... [There it is, the *‘if’* clause.] ...we observe to do all these commandments, before the LORD our God as He has commanded us” (vs 24-25)—IF!

Deuteronomy 7:12 talks about the same thing: “And it shall come to pass, **IF** you hearken to these judgments to keep and practice them, then the LORD your God shall keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers. And He will love you and bless you and multiply you... [Isn't that what you want? Want God to love you, bless you, multiply you?] ...He will also bless the fruit of your womb, and the fruit of your land, your grain, and your wine, and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the flocks of your sheep, in the land which He swore to your fathers to give you. You shall be blessed above all people.... [Doesn't that sound like this nation and this age? There comes

some responsibilities with it.] (Notice what else will happen): ...There shall not be male or female barren among you or among your livestock” (vs 12-14).

Now I remember a man; he owned a dairy farm. We went out to visit him, I think it was about our second visit, that was up in Weiser, Idaho. He asked me, ‘What do you think about artificial insemination?’ Because that’s how they do most cows, artificial insemination. I said, ‘Well, I think you would be better off doing it the natural way, get a real live bull.’ *Okay!* So he got a real live bull. Guess what happened when it came calving time? Half of his cows had twins, double portion—right?

I think it must be about another year later, Dolores was with me, he says, ‘Come on out. I want to show you my bull.’ He had him in the barn, because bulls gets kind of feisty. If you think testosterone is tough in wrestlers and men, testosterone in bulls is really mighty. So anyway, we go out in the barn and he opens this door, it was a high door and here is this giant head, I kid you not, about as broad as my arms. The bull looked out at us and we kind of jumped back. But he says, ‘See, that’s the blessing of God.’ Just exactly as God said, so God did it.

Now let’s come over here to Deuteronomy 8; this is also *‘if’* and *‘then.’* And it’s good to remember these things. I think that we learned a lesson and we all learn lessons when someone dies and when someone goes through troubles and difficulties. God helps us to build character in those tough times.

For the gentleman that we just buried, that’s what happened in his life. He suffered greatly, but he came to love God and to love his family even more, because of what he went through. And he died in peace. So here’s a lesson. Here’s what we need to remember, and this is what Hezekiah had forgotten after God healed him.

Deuteronomy 8:1: “All the commandments which I command you this day shall you be diligent to observe *and to* do that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers.... [And it’s good to remember back so that in the future you won’t forget.] ...And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness in order to humble you, to prove you, to know what is in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not” (vs 1-2). That’s the whole reason why we go through everything. God wants to know, what’s our heart. That’s what He wanted to know with Cain. That’s what He wanted to know with Hezekiah. And what happened to Hezekiah?

“And He humbled you and allowed you to hunger, and then He fed you with manna which you did not know, neither did your fathers know *it*, so that He might make you know... [The whole very purpose of life, right here, which goes right back to what? Gen. 4:7.] ...that He might make you know that man does not live by bread alone; but by every *word* that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live.’.... [So that He may **ble^ss you, watch over you, love you**, etc.] (Then He reminded them): ...Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.... [Imagine that, clothes didn’t wear out in forty years. There was no department store down there around the local cactus corner.] ...And you shall consider in your heart that as a man chastens his son, *so* the LORD your God chastens you.... [We may be corrected; for what purpose? *So we can learn and we can repent and we can have a relationship with God.*] ...And you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God to walk in His ways and to fear Him. For the LORD your God brings you into a good land...” (vs 3-7).

And every time I think of this, I think of what they have at Disneyland. You go in there and there a 360-degree screen, many cameras, and many screens, and it shows crossing the United States and the plains and the mountains and the valleys and the lakes and the cities. And every time I read this Scripture, I think of it, because God really has done it here.

“For the LORD your God brings you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey, A land in which you shall eat bread without scarceness.... [Have any of us been hungry lately from lack of food? *No!* So this is for us today.] ...You shall not lack any *thing* in it.... [What’s the problem with Laodiceans? We’re ‘rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.’] ...*It is* a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you may dig copper” (vs 7-9). So we can mine, we can drill for oil. God created oil for the very purpose of what we’re using it for.

Verse 10, here’s the key: “**When**... [And that’s almost like an ‘*if*.’] ...you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.... [Always thankful to God, never become complacent. Never become contemptuous toward God, because that’s what happened with Hezekiah.] (And He gives a warning then): **...Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes** which I command you today” (vs 10-11).

Because when everything is going good, when you have lots of food and there’s no hunger, when you have plenty of everything that you need. And today we’ve got it with all kinds of gadgets and remote controls, hand-held devices, televisions, and refrigerators. Stop and think for just a minute, what would you do without electricity? Just one item, electricity. The world would stop, our civilization would come to an end—right? Well, can God take it away? *He could, very well, yeah!*

Verse 12: “Lest *when* you have eaten are full and have built goodly houses and lived in *them*... [Drive anywhere, look at the neighborhoods, look at the houses. I was shocked when I went to Australia and New Zealand and Canada, looks just like the U.S. Houses just a little different, but it’s all the same.] ...And *when* your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied” (vs 12-13). *Plenty of everything!* That’s what Hezekiah had. He walked in there and saw all that treasure and said, ‘Look at what I got. Man, I gotta show this to these guys.’

Verse 14. And I’ve thought about it in translating it here. “Then you become haughty of heart...” Or as the margin has, *exalting of self*. Remember what happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. One day he was standing up there and he was looking at Babylon and he said, ‘Oh, look at this great Babylon *that my hand* has made.’ And the prophecy came upon him. Bam! For seven years. That’s what it means, exalting of self. What is it that we have in the end time? ‘In the latter days perilous times shall come.’ What is the first cause of perilous times? ‘Men shall be lovers of self, instead of lovers of God.’

“...you become haughty of heart, and you forget the LORD your god Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage. Who led you through the great and terrible wilderness *with* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where *there was* not water, Who brought forth water for you out of the rock of flint, Who fed you in the wilderness with manna which your fathers did not know, so that He might humble you and that He might prove you to do you good in your latter end” (vs 14-16). That’s the purpose of every trial and difficulty that comes. God want to prove us and test us and see what we do.

- Do we really love Him?
- Do we really believe Him?
- Do we really cling to Him?

“But you shall remember the LORD your God, for *it is* He Who gives you power to get wealth... [That’s why God was so angry at Hezekiah for showing all the wealth, because God gave it to them.] ...so that

He may confirm His covenant which He has sworn to your fathers as it is this *very* day. And it shall be **IF** you do at all forget the LORD your God and walk after other gods serving them and worshiping them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish—*yes, perish*. As the nations whom the LORD destroys before your face, so you shall perish because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God” (vs 18-20).

There are powerful messages for us with the ‘*if*’ clause, and there are many other verses that come along with it. Everyone likes to remember the ‘*if*’ clause that have blessings and forget the ‘*if*’ clause that if you don’t do what God says, then penalties are going to come. And they forget that God is no respecter of persons, doesn’t matter who you are, rich or poor, important or unimportant. As the Bible says, great or small. ***God is no respecter of person***. God says, ‘Better is a wise child than a foolish king,’ to show that there is no respecter of persons.

We’ll look at some more ‘*if*’ clauses. The Bible is filled with them. We haven’t even gotten to the New Testament, yet. There are a lot of them in the New Testament, and we’ll see what God has to say to us with those and see what we can learn from the ‘*if*’ clauses.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Genesis 4:7
- 2) Genesis 18:17-20
- 3) Romans 8:19-23
- 4) Genesis 18:20-33
- 5) Genesis 19:1-15
- 6) Isaiah 1:9-10
- 7) Isaiah 66:1-4
- 8) Isaiah 1:11-15
- 9) Jeremiah 7:1-11
- 10) Isaiah 1:16-20
- 11) Jeremiah 18:1-10
- 12) 2-Kings 19:34-35
- 13) 2-Kings 20:1-19
- 14) Deuteronomy 6:1-10, 17-25
- 15) Deuteronomy 7:12-14
- 16) Deuteronomy 8:1-16, 18-20

Scriptures referenced, not quoted: Deuteronomy 28

Also referenced: Book:

The Obedience of the Christian Man by William Tyndale

FRC:lp
 Transcribed: 09-07-10
 Formatted: bo—9-8-10