

# Messages from the Wilderness 12 - Standing Between the Living and the Dead

## 1. The Plague.

In Numbers 16, starting in vs. 41, the people had *just* witnessed Korah, Abiram, and Dathan swallowed up in the earth and the burning of their 250 followers. It was literally the day before, and now the people murmured against Moses and Aaron because Korah and company had been killed.

Num 16:41-50 But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD.

Vs. 41 presents an issue I speak to *soooooo* very regularly. In the face of all the complications and problems of life, lessons fade away so very quickly. One of the problems that we constantly are faced with while we are here in our wilderness wanderings is trying to discern God's will. So many times this is hard. However, other times we fight like the dickens against God's *obvious* will. We know what God wants us to do or what He wants us to believe, but we resist God. The terrible thing is that too many times we "win" in our resistance to God. It is not a good thing to win. When you are at odds with God you *want* to lose that argument. There is something about the earth opening up and fire coming down from heaven that should have been a clue that God was displeased.

It is no wonder that God appeared and proclaimed the judgment of a plague against the people.

42And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared.

43And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation.

44And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

45Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces.

## 2. The Priest.

Although it was Moses' leadership which had been basically challenged originally, it is Aaron who has the primary role in the next scene. Moses called for Aaron to make atonement for

the people.

46And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun.

The reason for Aaron being charged with this responsibility is because he is a type of Christ.

We refer to *types* in the Bible when we talk about how something represents something else. If something is a type of Christ, then it is something that figuratively represents Christ. There are a great number of types of Christ in the Old Testament, which is exactly what we should expect. Types in the Old Testament can seem so arbitrary until you start to connect the dots. The prophecies are the branches that form the structure of the proof of God, The Christ, and The Word, and the types are the foliage and and blooms and scent that perfect the beauty of the fullness of the revealed Word. For example, the Passover lamb was a type that figuratively represented Christ. The lamb that was used could not have any blemish, because Jesus had no blemish of sin. The lamb was not to have its bones broken because Jesus on the cross had no bone broken. The blood of the lamb spared the life of the firstborn in each house. The blood of Jesus was shed to preserve our life as we share in the resurrection of the One Who was born first in resurrection from among the dead. As the lamb was slain at Passover, Jesus was slain at Passover.

The high priesthood of Aaron presented not only here in Numbers but also in other places, was also a type of Christ.

- There was only one at a time who could serve as the high priest.

1Tim 2:5 For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

- The high priest only could enter into the second compartment of the tabernacle, the holy of holies, one time each year with the blood sacrifice on the day of atonement

Heb 9:6-7 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service *of God*.

7But into the second *went* the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people:

Heb 9:11-14 But Christ being

come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

12Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

13For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

14How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

- Neither king nor prophet could exercise the role of atonement for the people.

This is why Aaron and not Moses would be chosen to deliver the people from this plague. Moses was the shepherd, but Aaron was priest. As the priest, he was the mediator for Israel's sin before God. Moses was not chosen to go among the people, only Aaron. God had rebuked Aaron for wanting to be placed alongside Moses in authority a couple of chapters ago, but now Moses, who was no simple Levite as the brother of Aaron, could not take part in the work of the high priest. Aaron was the most appropriate one because God had chosen him to be the priest of Israel. As the high priest, he was a type of Jesus Christ, our high priest, making sacrifice for sin.

### 3. Between the living and the dead.

47And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people.

48And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed.

49Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah.

50And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the plague was stayed.

What now is particularly important about this Scripture portion is found in vs. 48. In the atonement, Aaron stood between the living and the dead and the plague was stayed. What a powerful statement! Between the living and the dead. What a beautiful picture of Jesus Christ! Between the living and the dead.

When Jesus was crucified He was hanged between the living and the dead. There were two thieves on either side who were condemned to die on their own cross, but one confessed Christ on one side and had eternal life, the other on the other side continued to rail against Christ and had eternal death.

When Jesus Christ was raised up on the cross He hanged between the living and the dead. He hanged between heaven above filled with the living and hell below filled with the dead.

When the rich man called out to Abraham to send Lazarus to touch his tongue with a drop of water, Abraham had to rebuke him.

Luke 16:26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence.

The rich man had missed his opportunity in this life to repent and become a child of God. Between the rich man and Lazarus there was a great gulf, a great divide, that could not be crossed. However, for us who are here now, Jesus makes all the difference between eternal life in the presence of God and eternal death in a Godless hell. There is a great gulf fixed between the living and the dead, but Jesus is the One Who was sent to stand in the gap. Jesus on the cross made all the difference between the living and the dead. Jesus is the one who cared for our soul.

Ps 142:4-5 I looked on *my* right hand, and beheld, but *there was* no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.

5I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou *art* my refuge *and* my portion in the land of the living.

One of my favorite commentators, Ben Shapiro, interviewed John MacArthur.<sup>1</sup> He found a lot of common ground with MacArthur and then asked about what MacArthur felt was the difference between Judaism and Christianity. MacArthur explained to him that it was Jesus and laid out for him Isaiah 53 and Zechariah 14.

Dennis Prager, another of my favorite commentators, is a very religious Jew, and yet the one thing he misses is the Christ. He identifies so much that Judaism teaches that we would agree with, yet he misses the Christ.<sup>2</sup>

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I

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<https://www.facebook.com/officialbenshapiro/videos/193076574969488/>, esp. at the 48 min. mark.

2

<https://www.creators.com/read/dennis-prager/12/19/what-is-judaism>

am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

There are so many issues of concern that we face day to day. Some of them rise to a critical level. However, at the root of all the problems in the world today lies the question, "What will you do with, Jesus, the Christ?"

Jesus was lifted between heaven and hell, between the living and the dead.

John 3:14-16 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 12:32-33 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.

33This he said, signifying what death he should die.

It was only by His work on the cross that we have passed from death unto life.

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Heb 10:10-14 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

11And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Gal 3:13-14 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree:  
14That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

1Pet 3:18 For Christ also hath

once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

Col 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.

Isa 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

Col 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

1Cor 15:22-26 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

23But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

24Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

25For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

26The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.

#### 4. We are in Jesus.

Jesus came to stand between the living and the dead and I want you to know that you have that same calling. We are in Jesus and represent Him. The name Christian stuck because it means little Christ, or like Christ.

- We are in Christ.

Col 1:27-28 To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:  
28Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

- We have the mind of Christ.

Phil 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal

with God:

7But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

- We have the ministry of Christ.

2Cor 2:15-17 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

16To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?

17For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

Preaching this in 2020, we are confronted all around us with violence. We must be careful to recognize our ministry. The violence we are witnessing is a symptom of the sinful nature of man. Ezekiel identified this starting in ch. 22:

Ezek 22:29-30 The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.

30And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.

Ezek 33:2-6 Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman:

3If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people;

4Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.

5He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.

6But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take *any* person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

Ezek 3:17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

The kind of repentance we need is not to be pressed into an anti-American agenda of those who use false guilt. The kind of repentance that America needs is not a false one forced by fear of looters and arsonists. The kind of repentance that America needs is to turn our hearts to God and to live in righteousness. To whatever degree we achieve *that* there will be peace.

For many people, *you* are the one standing between life and death.

Isa 6:8-12 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me. 9And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

10Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

11Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

12And the LORD have removed men far away, and *there be* a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

Is anyone familiar with an Ed Kimball? Did he lead a significant life? Maybe not as we measure things on earth, but in heaven, incredibly significant. He was a Sunday School teacher, who in 1858 led a Boston shoe clerk to give his life to Christ. The clerk, Dwight L. Moody, became an evangelist. In England in 1879, he awakened evangelistic zeal in the heart of Frederick B. Meyer, pastor of a small church. F. B. Meyer, preaching to an American college campus, brought to Christ a student named J. Wilbur Chapman. Chapman, engaged in YMCA work, employed a former baseball player, Billy Sunday, to do evangelistic work. Billy Sunday held a revival in Charlotte, N.C. A group of local men were so enthusiastic afterward that they planned another evangelistic campaign, bringing Mordecai Hamm to town to preach. During Hamm's revival, a young man named Billy Graham heard the Gospel



and yielded his life to Christ.<sup>3</sup>

Whatever might be said about Graham in his later years, he preached powerful Gospel messages in his earlier days and the world has been greatly influenced by him for Christ.

I would be happy to aspire to be an Ed Kimball as much as to be some famous evangelist, just as long as I could stand with Christ between the living and the dead.

## 5. We are the revival.

Sometimes I walk in another world. There is the world that appears in which we live and move and have our being. Then there is a world that exists on a higher plane. Now, don't get me wrong, I am not getting all spacey with some strange music playing in the background. If I say I see a different world it does not mean that I am claiming to be a mystic. What I mean is that there are many times when we talk with people about the Gospel or even to young Christians and we must be careful to remember that they might think that we are having a casual conversation, but we must see the warfare that is being fought for their soul. The world in which we as Christians live is the world of God's truth that makes a world of difference between the world of God's everlasting kingdom and the world of eternal Hell.

As they say, the more you know the more you realize how much you don't know. The more you know about God the more you confirm that His greatness is so infinite that you just have to fall down and worship before Him. *That* is the world the lost and the immature need to open their blind eyes and their deaf ears to.

You are an ambassador for Christ:

2Cor 5:18-21 And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

I am one of thousands of emissaries that God has sent to America, not to tell you that you will lead the way to

changing America, but that you will be led to *be* changed. I am part of a nationwide crew who is calling the world to repentance...and then that you become an emissary of God to deliver the same message.

Our prayer for the millions in the churches of America is that they hear the message, that the emissaries are not just lone voices crying in the wilderness. Don't feel bad if revival doesn't come according to some preconceived idea of how it should look. Revival can't be forced. The only thing you can be sure of in revival is whether *you* are revived. Be concerned about yourself. *You* be revived. As one author pointed out:

The Welsh Revival, which took place from 1904 to 1905, was the largest Christian revival in Wales during the twentieth century. This mighty move of God was so dynamic, it triggered revivals in several other countries. [There is a very interesting account] from the great Welsh Revival. The story begins with a man who took his family and traveled by train to experience what God was doing in Wales. He stepped off the train and saw a policeman standing nearby. Approaching the policeman, he asked to be pointed in the direction of Moriah Chapel, where the revival services were being held. Instead of pointing him to the chapel, the policeman simply tapped his chest and said, "Sir, the revival is in here!"<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> From *Rebuilding the Altar* By Pat Schatzline, Karen Schatzline