

When A Manpleaser Has To Face God

Scripture Text:

Psalm 30:1-12 KJV <A Psalm *and* Song *at* the dedication of the house of David.> I will extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me. (2) O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. (3) O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. (4) Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. (5) For his anger *endureth but* a moment; in his favour *is* life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning. (6) And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. (7) LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, *and* I was troubled. (8) I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication. (9) What profit *is there* in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth? (10) Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper. (11) Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; (12) To the end that *my* glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

Message:

The words in this Psalm are realized in an example form when we read Acts 12.

- The chapter where Herod had killed James and saw that it pleased the people.
- So, he set out to continue gaining popularity with the people by

apprehending Peter, and to plan to kill him as well.

In this chapter we see contrasts between Herod's decline and the work of God's increase.

- So many times I have seen contrasts between two bible situations.
- Rahab the harlot and Achan of Israel, for example.
- Rahab hid two spies in her house's roof, and this reputed harlot had a better heart and came to God while the Israelite Achan hid the wedge of gold and Babylonish garment in his tent floor, and died by judgment of God.
- When you look at the details of the stories involved, you see a contrast showing the wrong road to take and the correct road to take.

And this story also encourages you to continue doing God's will in the face of opposition, for the Lord will be with you and avenge you of any adversaries you might acquire while doing His will!

The devil always tries to intimidate.

Many Christians succumb to this intimidation and back off after they tried to forge ahead in God with greater dedication only to see persecution or other troubles start as a result.

- God's word shows that troubles will come when we dedicate to God in a greater measure.
- But it informs us, through examples, that God deals with those who bring us trouble, and encourages thereby to KEEP ON DEDICATING TO GOD.
- But without knowing this, ignorance of the Word causes people to obey the devil and back off, only to lose their dedication.

Watch how God intervened when trouble arose for Peter. WHEN A MANPLEASER HAS TO FACE GOD

Act 12:1-3 KJV Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. (2) And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. (3) And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

The interesting thing about this is that Peter's arrest and imprisonment occurred the same time the feast of unleavened bread occurred.

- It was a week's feast.
- This was the same time of year when Jesus was in the grave!
- During the feast of unleavened bread.

Mat 26:2 KJV Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

Mat 26:18-20 KJV And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples. (19) And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover. (20) Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

The last supper occurred the night of Passover and the next day Jesus was crucified.

Lev 23:5-6 KJV In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S Passover. (6) And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.

So He was buried during the feast of unleavened bread.

This gives us a message.

- When we go through trials, we are identifying with Christ's death.

2Co 4:11-12 KJV For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (12) So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

Just as Christ's death led to His resurrection Life, when we suffer persecution, Paul said we are delivered up to a death of sorts as well.

2Co 1:5 KJV For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

Act 12:4 KJV And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

EASTER is the worst translation anyone could have made out of this Greek word here.

- The Greek actually is PASSOVER.
- So, after Passover was over, Herod was going to bring Peter out to the people for his abuse and mockery and probable death.
- He wanted to please the people.

Let me stop and say that the entire problem we face with persecution is the fear of not pleasing the people.

- But we are distinctly told in scripture that we need to disregard the fear of man and instead fear God and do His will.

Gal 1:10 KJV For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

We simply need to disregard any desire to please men, because that will

directly conflict with pleasing God.

- If we do not please God, then we are lost and bound for a devil's hell.

People who fear man need to stop and consider who man is in comparison to God.

Be like Jesus:

Mat 22:16 KJV And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.

Eph 6:6 KJV Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

Jam 4:4 KJV Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

It was after Passover that Jesus resurrected!

Act 12:5-7 KJV Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. (6) And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. (7) And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

The church began to pray for Peter.

Notice we read that it was the same night when Peter was ready to be

taken by Herod, telling us a few days passed, an angel came to the prison to set Peter free from the prison.

Act 12:8-11 KJV And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. (9) And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. (10) When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. (11) And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

Peter did not even believe what was happening!

- He thought he saw a vision!
- Like a dream, since he had been sleeping when the angel came to him.

I like the last phrase.

- God delivered him from the hand of Herod AND THE EXPECTATION OF THE PEOPLE
- Too many people are bound by the expectations of the people!
- That is why they are men pleasers.
- They cannot serve God because they are bound to people's expectations.
- Since living for the Lord does not line up with people's expectations, they backslide and give in and totally disregard God.
- WE NEED TO DISREGARD THE EXPECTATIONS OF PEOPLE!

Of course, this meant that Peter was expected to be taken before them and killed at their wishes.

- But we can apply that to what we need to disregard in the sense of fear of others and the world, amongst whom our own family members may be displeased with our Christianity.

Hold on, and God will deliver you!

- But let me pause and say you may not be delivered from the problem, and may even suffer for your faith, but OVERALL you will be delivered in your heart and not fear to stand for Jesus!

Peter stood for the Lord, endured the imprisonment, and went to a certain place.

- The very home where the church prayed for him.

Act 12:12 KJV **And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.**

And we find that the very people who prayed for Peter's rescue did not believe their prayers could come to pass, since when they were told Peter was there at their door knocking, they said the girl who saw him was mad.

Act 12:13-16 KJV **And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. (14) And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. (15) And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. (16) But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished.**

We are told to believe what we pray for will come to pass.

- But these folks obviously did not, although they sincerely prayed.
- However, these people were standing in the midst of persecution and would not back down.
- So God gives us grace!

But notice Peter WENT SOMEWHERE... to the very place where people prayed.

- Now, he did not know they were praying there.
- People just decided to start praying once they heard Peter was incarcerated.
- Keep this in mind.

Act 12:17 KJV But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

Once there he caught their attention and in the midst of all their joy, he told them to SPREAD THE WORD AROUND!

Meanwhile...

Act 12:18-19 KJV Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. (19) And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and there abode.

Back at the prison.

- When daytime arose, the soldiers were flipping out.
- Herod looked for Peter and examined the keepers or guards.
- That means he made an investigation and heard their words about what happened.

- And he commanded that they should die, since they let a man go who was supposed to die.
- But then we read he left Judaea, packed up all his belongings and moved out of the country to Caesarea!
- He left the place where he was gaining popularity and was pleasing the people.
- BUT YOU CANNOT RUN FROM GOD.

This tells us something.

- Herod obviously knew something very odd happened.
- He would have heard the two soldiers who slept on either side of Peter, when Peter was in chains, tell him about how they woke up after Peter was gone, without having even HEARD Peter leave.
- They were stationed there at his sides so this very thing could not occur.
- And they also chained him in both his hands!
- There were 4 Quaternions of soldiers... 16 men altogether.
- He was inside the prison two wards deep!

So it seems obvious that HEROD KNEW A MIRACLE OCCURRED!

- But instead of giving his heart to God, he covered it up!
- He made a show of investigating the soldiers to make the public think it was their fault, and not a miracle at all.
- And he moved because HE FEARED GOD!

He began a persecution against the church.

- He sought to vex certain members of the church who were well-known believers.
- But when he saw the miracle working power of God directly defy him, and set Peter free, he became scared and STOPPED THE PERSECUTION!
- Not only that, but he high-tailed it out of Judaea altogether to get

away from this God of vengeance!

- BUT YOU CANNOT RUN FROM GOD!

While in Caesarea, we are told that the nearby people of Tyre and Sidon displeased Herod.

- Their supplies and food came from Herod's country.
- And the word DISPLEASED actually implies he thought of going to war with them.
- So they knew they had to get on his good side and befriended the very man who tended to his personal sleeping quarters and tried to make things right.

But God found him and struck him to death.

Act 12:20-23 KJV And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country. (21) And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. (22) And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. (23) And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

He knew God was real, for he ran for fear from Judaea after persecuting the church and killing James and then imprisoning Peter, then seeing God intervene when the church prayed!

- And knowing God was real, he accepted the praise of people who called him a god!

Rom 1:18-19 KJV For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; (19) Because that which may be known of God is

manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

Rom 1:21 KJV Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Rom 1:24 KJV Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

Herod did not give God glory when he realized that God truly was with the Christians and working against him.

- So he was taken down until he was finally killed.
- It was as though God waited to see his reaction to the people's cry that he was like a god, when all they really did it for was to appease him from fighting them and cutting off their supplies.
- But when Herod accepted the praise and did not give glory to God, God had the angel smite him and he soon died from worms within his stomach.

Antiochus Epiphanes:

"But the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, smote him with an invisible and incurable plague; for a pain in the bowels that was remediless came upon him, and sore torments of the inner parts, So that the worms rose up out of the body of this wicked man, and whiles he lived in sorrow and pain, his flesh fell away, and the filthiness of his smell was noisome to all his army." (2 Maccabees 9:5-9)

Josephus says of Herod that he "did neither rebuke them the people nor reject their impious flattery. A severe pain arose in his belly, and began in a most violent manner. And when he was quite worn out by the pain in his belly for five days, he departed this life, in the 54th year of his age, and the 7th year of his reign." (Josephus, Antiq., book 17, chapter 6, section 5)

Such was a vile and repulsive way to die in absolute humiliation for a man who claimed to be God, proving he was the furthest thing from God.

Then we read:

Act 12:24 KJV **But the word of God grew and multiplied.**

As though we are intended to make a contrast with the death of this tyrant and the increase of the Church!

Notice the pattern:

Peter is imprisoned when Jesus was in the grave due to the hate towards Him and rejection by Israel, His own people.

- An angel of the Lord smites Peter and released him.

Act 12:7 KJV **And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.**

And angel of the Lord smote Herod and slew him.

Act 12:7 KJV **And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.**

Peter believes it is not actually happening and that he is in a vision, comes to realize it was real and went to the very place where they prayed for him, and the people there disbelieved.

- There is a problem with reality and what actually happened with both Peter and the people.
- Even to the extent that Rhoda could not even open the door for

excitement.

Herod goes to the very prison from which Peter escaped.

- And there is also an issue with reality.
- He puts on a show of investigating the soldiers, and slays the guards to make it appear that Peter escaped due to the guards' incompetence.
- He did all this to QUIETEN THE NEWS OF THE TRUTH!
- He knows the reality of it all that a genuine miracle occurred, and so he flees the region and lives in Caesarea.
- He knows it was God and refused to give glory to God, even to the extent of accepting praise as God later on, when if any man should give praise to God it would be this man to whom God showed Himself real.

Peter, on the other hand, finds the reality that it was not a vision, and gives so much glory to God that he not only refused to give in to the expectations and persecution of the people and stood strong, but he also TOLD THE PRAYER MEETING TO BROADCAST THE NEWS TO JAMES AND TO THE OTHERS!

Notice the LIE formulated about Peter's escape by the slaying of Guards to make it appear it was their sloppy duty that let Peter go, all of this occurred AFTER the Passover feast was over.

Mat 28:2-4 KJV And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. (3) His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: (4) And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

Mat 28:11-15 KJV Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. (12) And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, (13)

Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. (14) And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. (15) So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

The same God that gave a miracle to the Son of God in resurrection, gave a miracle to Peter.

- And though the rejecters of Christ went further into depths of depravity by covering up an obvious miracle, Jerusalem and Rome both came to an end some time later.

At about the same time, years before when Jesus resurrected, we read that soldiers were bribed to not report seeing the angel, and falling down as though they died.

- People knowing the truth of a miracle and instead of being converted and giving their hearts to God, they silenced the truth they knew.

And we read Peter then left for another place.

- Probably to escape the city and it's persecution.
- Herod also left Judaea for Caesarea.
- But for different reasons!
- Peter wanted to continue preaching and broadcasting the truth, while Herod started to stop the preaching by the church through persecution, and then set to twist the picture of the miracle into incompetence of soldiers, and ran from God to Caesarea.

But while Herod's life went further and further downward until a vile and abhorrently detestable death of being eaten by worms, THE WORD OF GOD GREW AND MULTIPLIED!

DO NOT BE INTIMIDATED BY SATAN'S ATTACKS.

Stephen was murdered in Acts 7.

But...

Act 8:1-4 KJV And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. (2) And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. (3) As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. (4) Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

THE WORD of God was said to GROW AND MULTIPLY.

Joh 12:23-24 KJV And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. (24) Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

He is glorified in part by being multiplied!

- LIKE A SEED, scattering people who are so far away from hiding the truth of God that they are like SEEDS OF THE VERY WORD ITSELF, will only cause the WORD TO SPREAD.

Someone here is tempted to back off due to troubles arising from your faith.

- HOLD ON.
- DO NOT LET SATAN INTIMIDATE YOU!
- God will avenge you and deal with Satan until the devil hopes he should never have done what he did to you.

And church, the thing that brought all of this power of God in dealing with troublemakers was PRAYER.

Act 12:5 KJV Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

PRAYER WITHOUT CEASING!

Never deny truth God shows you.

- You will severely regret it one day.
- Stand for God.
- And those who stand will be avenged and God's WORD will go on in greater measures than ever before!

Pastor Larson laboured in Colombia, South America, and his wife died, and he preached his own wife's funeral.

- They told him to come home to North America, since it was too much for him to endure, but he could not back down and continued to work there.
- It is as though SACRIFICE was seen by God and was so blessed that Colombia later had a revival that shook the country with Bill Drost.

Consider suffering your persecutions to be like a SACRIFICE.

2Co 4:10-14 KJV Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. (11) For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (12) So then death worketh in us, but life in you. (13) We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; (14) Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.

Do not be intimidated.

- God will come through.
- Your sacrifice will catch God's attention, and people will be led to pray for you, and GOD'S WORD WILL BE INCREASED AS A RESULT OF YOUR SACRIFICE of pleasing men in favour of pleasing God!