

Weaving the Word

Fire and Sword

Part 81 – November 12, 2017

Welcome to where we're learning to keep our first love burning!



Do you seek to understand or assume to know?

Welcome to Apprenticeship Training 2.0, as Jesus is finishing preparing His boys to go out on their own and rightly represent Him. **We left off on a story of a wicked manager who** abuses and refuses to feed His master's household, and **ends up sliced and diced**. And, *that* had to raise some eyebrows.



Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. **I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.** [What sword? God's Word. The Sword of His mouth used to strike the enemies of truth. (Heb 4:12; Rev 19:13-15)] **I have come to bring fire on the earth,** [like the flaming sword used to guard the garden (Gen 3:24)] **and how I wish it were already kindled!** [How? As tongues of fire at the first baptism of the Spirit (Acts 1:5, 2:1-4)] **But I have a baptism to undergo,** [a work to complete before the Sword of the Spirit can come (Eph 6:17)] and how distressed I am until it is completed! – Mat 10:34; Luke 12:49-50 NIV



Didn't the angels proclaim peace on earth when He was born?

Not quite. What they actually said was:

"Glory to God in the highest, and **on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.**" – Luke 2:14 NIV

There's a *qualifier!* And Jeremiah, a *true* prophet, warns of *false* prophets who proclaim peace on whom His favor *doesn't* rest.

Who will listen to me? **Their ears are closed so they cannot hear.** [Why?] **The word of the Lord is offensive to them;** [Why?] **they find no pleasure in it.** [Oh. So, *that's* why] ... **prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit.** [Guiding and instructing from tradition and assumption and imagination] **They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious.** [Using the Word of God as a Band-Aid or tonic] **"Peace, peace,"** they say, when **there is no peace.** – Jeremiah 6:10b-14 NIV

You ever treat God's Word this way? It's easy to do. You know, hang a framed Scripture on the wall and think we're good to go. But, **He died to give us the Sword of His Spirit to do battle!**

When we first come to Christ, we pursue Him with passion and curiosity and determination. His Word is a lamp to our feet on the path we run. (Ps 119:105) But, that first love is often forsaken.

[So, Jesus warns us to] Repent and do the things you did at first. ... [Or] I will come to you and remove your lampstand ... – Revelation 2:4-5 NIV

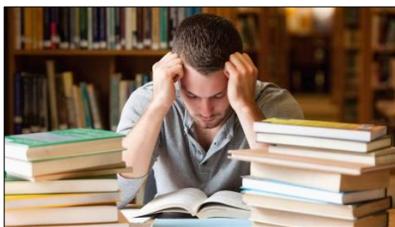
And, we'll be left with tradition, assumption, and imagination.

[Jeremiah later adds] ... Since they have rejected the **word of the Lord, what kind of wisdom do they have?** [Someone else's word] ... **prophets and priests alike, all practice [this type of] deceit.** They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. "Peace, peace," they say, when there is no peace. – Jeremiah 8:7-11 NIV

Truth is, **we learn a few verses and overlook our vast illiteracy.** And, we can't dress *that* with tradition, assumption, or imagination. So, **we say, "Peace, peace" when the battle is far from over.**

[Jesus continues to raise eyebrows] Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but **division.** [Remember how He told the religious rulers that "**a house divided against itself can't stand.**" (Mk 3:25) Turns out, that's a battle strategy!] **For I have come to turn a man against his father, From now on** there will be **five in one family divided** against each other, **three against two** [the three are united as one] and **two against three.** [The two are also united as one] They **will be divided, father against son** and son against father, **mother against daughter** and daughter against mother, **mother-in-law against daughter-in-law** and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law. **a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.** – Mt 10:35-36; Lk 12:49-53 NIV

Now, is it just me, or does this seem oddly specific? Why "**five in one family**"? Why "**two against three**"? Why these particular titles? Why "**from now on**"? We could *assume* these are just random examples; but, **you know what assume does: it makes us practice deceit and forfeit peace.** Jesus said He speaks in a way so those on the outside may remain blind and deaf to God's Word. (Mt 13:10-16) **Are you content on the outside? Or, should we roll up our sleeves and try to solve this thing?!**



Did you notice the riddle of the fighting five? There are six: father against son, mother against daughter, and mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, which means: *one* of 'em has *two titles.* And, *that's* our first clue! Either the daughter is also a daughter-in-law, or the mother is also a mother-in-law.



Do you know the story of the harlot sisters? *Too bad.* **Jesus speaks fluent Old Testament. And, He doesn't translate it.** That's why His disciples seldom comprehended His meaning. **His style forces us to engage God's Word to grasp His meaning.** You don't need to scrutinize Scripture like a theologian. I'm just talking about getting to know the stories like a child.

For instance, Ezekiel tells God's story of the Two Horrible Harlot Sisters.

Son of man, there were two women, daughters of the same mother. They became prostitutes in Egypt ... The older was named **Oholah**, [*Her own tent*] and her sister was **Oholibah** [*The tent is in her*]. ... **Oholah is Samaria**, [*She's got her own tent*] and **Oholibah is Jerusalem** [*The tent is in her*]. [After leaving Egypt God's chosen people eventually divided into two nations, two religions, two temples; both claiming to be true, yet both practicing deceit] ... I will direct my jealous anger against **you** [*the harlot-sisters*] ... those of you who are left will **fall by the sword** ... and those of you who are left will **be consumed by fire**. – Ezekiel 23:2-5, 25 NIV



The woman at the well asked Jesus who was right.

[Jesus declared] You **Samaritans** worship **what you do not know**; [*they had their own tent*] **we worship what we do know**, for salvation is from the Jews. [*Though most of the religious rulers weren't in the tent*] Yet a time is coming and **has now come** when the **true worshipers** will worship the Father in **spirit and truth** ... [*Fire and Sword!*] – John 4:21-23 NIV

Singing's good. Serving's good. Giving's good. But, **we got'a be sharpening our Sword by seeking the Lord with the lamp of His Word**. When the Samaritans rejected Jesus, James and John said, "**Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?**" (Lk 9:51-56) You see, they misunderstood the meaning of the fire due to ignorance of the Word. Just as Peter misunderstood the *sword* and cut off an ear! (Jn 18:10) And *that's* a wound you can't *bandage*. I'm talking about ignorance of God's Word ... *not the ear*. Thankfully, Jesus heals both.

Jesus' statement about the fighting five is truly oddly-specific because He's quoting the prophet Micah, which means His words are very intentional. This is His way, His voice, His language. This is how He directs our steps. **If we don't know the stories we can't speak His language.**

Micah depicts the harlot sisters as two matriarchs in one family.

... all [Samaria's] pay as a **harlot** shall be burned with the **fire** ... For her **wounds are incurable**. ... against **this family** I am devising disaster ... **My people have risen up as an enemy** [*So, God himself is in this fighting family*] ... the **prophets** who make my people stray; who **chant "Peace"** ... but who prepare war ... truly I am full of **power** by the **Spirit** ... **Jerusalem** shall become heaps of ruins ... – Micah 1:7, 9; 2:3, 8, 3:5, 8, 12; 5:10 NKJ

Do not trust a neighbor; put no confidence in a friend. [*Because, everyone assumes to speak on behalf of God when they're actually speaking tradition, assumption, and imagination*] ... For **a son dishonors his father, a daughter rises up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law — a man's enemies are the members of his own household.** [*And Jesus tells us He figured out that it's two against three. This is how we're given the mind of Christ; question is: do you use it?*] But as for me, **I watch in hope for the Lord, I wait for God my Savior; [If we watched the Word and waited for answers as religiously as our favorite movies or TV shows, we'd hear Jesus' words and think, "I wonder why He's quoting Micah," like if He said, "I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore," we'd wonder why He's quoting the Wizard of Oz]** my God will hear me. [*Because I learn to speak His language as I seek to understand Him*] – Micah 7:5-8 NIV

The harlot sisters, Jerusalem and Samaria, are the matriarchs of this family. So, it's the daughter who holds the two titles. And God's people become His enemy when He becomes the Son of Man. **If we knew Zechariah's tiny book, as well as we know Harry Potter, we'd know that he portrays God's people as Jesus' enemy-father.**

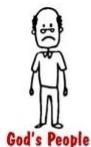
They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. ... each clan by itself, with their wives ... – Zechariah 12:10 NIV

So, the son is God-the-Son, Jesus, the Son of Man, making the man, the father of the fighting five, God's own chosen people. Now, if one harlot sister has a daughter, married to the man's Son, the other harlot-matriarch would legally be her mother-in-law. And, **if we knew Micah's 5-page book as well as *The Lord of the Rings*, we'd know that one of these old birds has a daughter!**

... **kingship** will come to the **Daughter of Jerusalem**. [We got our mother and daughter!] ... Marshal your troops, O **city of troops**, [Old Jerusalem's daughter is a city] **for a siege is laid against us**. [And, it's three against two] They will strike Israel's **ruler** on the cheek ... one who will be **ruler** over Israel ... [But] He will stand and **shepherd** his flock ... And **he** will **be** their **peace**. – Micah 4:8, 5:1-5 NIV

And, John (who wanted to call down fire) later saw the wedding.

I saw the Holy City, the **new Jerusalem**, [i.e. *Teaching of peace*] ... prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. [Know who she's wearing? You! "*Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.*" (*Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints*)."] (Rev 19:8)] – Revelation 21:2 NIV



God's People



Jerusalem



Samaria

So, there you go. The father is God's people. The son is Jesus. The mother and mother-in-law are Jerusalem and Samaria, and the daughter/daughter-in-law is the New Jerusalem.



Jesus



New Jerusalem

The Son of Man was pitted against His own people. And, the *New Teaching of Peace* took on the two, old, deceitful ones.

Okay, so ... **what do we get out of doing all that?**

An obedient heart. The favor of the Savior. And, true Peace.

A chance to come inside and listen to His language.

First love is about becoming familiar with the Lord's voice.

Do you need to kindle the fire of your desire for the Sword?

I hope you don't settle for Band-Aids and peace-peace.