

Gospel Preaching, October 23-29

THE VICTORIOUS CHRIST: THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Sermon Series by Ron Halbrook
(Evangelist, Hebron Lane Church of Christ, Shepherdsville, KY)

Monday 7 PM: **Introduction to the Book of Revelation (1:1-20)**

Tuesday 7 PM: **Addresses to 7 Churches (2:1 - 3:22)**

Wednesday 7 PM: **7 Seals Opened (4:1 - 8:1)**

Thursday 7 PM: **7 Trumpets Sound (8:2 - 11:19)**

Friday 7 PM: **2 Beasts, and 7 Bowls of Wrath (12:1 - 16:21)**

Saturday 7 PM: **The Harlot Judged (17:1 - 19:21)**

Sunday Class 10 AM: **The Saints' Victory (20:1 - 22:5)**

Sunday Worship 11 AM: **A Call to Faithfulness (22:6-21)**

Sunday Worship 3 PM: **When Is the 1,000 Year Reign of Christ?**

Question-&-Answer period after each lesson.

“NOW I KNOW THAT THOU FEAREST GOD”

Ron Halbrook

When God called upon Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Abraham's faith was severely tested, greatly strengthened, and openly demonstrated. The faith of Abraham was tested in two ways throughout his lifetime. God tested his faith in a way designed to strengthen it. Satan tested his faith in a way designed to destroy it. Our faith is tested in the same two ways today.

GOD'S COMMAND OR CHALLENGE: A MAJOR TURNING POINT. The commands and challenges given by God are always designed to purify and strengthen our faith, and to draw us closer to Him. There are times when God's command or challenge marks a major turning point in our lives, demonstrating both to Him and to ourselves our unswerving commitment to serve Him and our firm fidelity to this commitment. When God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, it was such a watershed occasion.

Fidelity in common daily duties reflects the follow-up decisions or follow-through steps resulting from such momentous occasions. This experience includes fulfilling the smallest or most common duties of each day: being kind and patient with a mate, being honest in making a living even in minor details, and treating other people with courtesy and respect.

Abraham is introduced from the first as a man of obedient faith in God. When God told him to leave his homeland and to journey to an unspecified promised land,

“Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him” (Gen. 12:1-4). God promised to form a great nation from Abraham's seed, but when he had no children after several years he proposed to adopt his servant Eliezer. God rejected this plan and renewed His promise to Abraham. *“And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness”* (Gen. 15:6). When he still had no son years later, he had Ishmael by his wife's slave, but God rejected this substitution and eventually gave Abraham and Sarah a son, Isaac (Gen. 16; 21). Abraham demonstrated that he lived by obedient faith when at God's command he *“offered Isaac his son upon the altar”* (Jas. 2:21-23).

ABRAHAM'S OBEDIENT FAITH: OFFER HIS ONLY SON TO GOD. God commanded Abraham to take *“thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest”* and sacrifice him on a mountain which God would identify in the region of Moriah (Gen. 22:1-2). Without delay, early the next morning Abraham made all necessary preparations and started his journey with Isaac. On the third day God identified the mountain in the distance, and Abraham left his servants behind and took Isaac and the wood necessary for an offering on the last lonely leg of the journey. Isaac innocently asked where was the lamb which was to be offered, and his father answered, *“My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering”* (Gen. 22:8). He would explain shortly that Isaac was the lamb, but he rationalized that God would raise his son from the dead (Heb. 11:19).

Isaac was a young man who shared his father's faith. When Abraham told him he would be the lamb, he did not deny or

defy the divine plan but submitted, lying upon the wood atop the altar. At the last moment, as Abraham readied the knife to strike his son, the angel of the Lord called out and stopped him, explaining, *“For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me”* (Gen. 22:12). This test proved that *“God was Abraham's dearest treasure; God's will, his chief concern”* (H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, II: 628).

By God's providence, in a nearby thicket a lamb was entangled which Abraham offered *“for a burnt offering in the stead of his son”* (Gen. 22:13). Then he named this mount Jehovah-jireh, *“The Lord Will Provide”* (Gen. 22:14, NIV). Abraham's obedient faith demonstrated that he *“could resign Isaac and yet cling to the promise”* of God (Thomas Whitelaw, *Genesis*: 286 in *The Pulpit Commentary*, I). Therefore, God repeated and confirmed with an oath what He had promised in Genesis 12:1-3, that He would give Abraham a chosen land, make of him a chosen nation, and *“in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”* When God said this was done *“because thou hast obeyed my voice,”* this is equivalent to the earlier statement, *“And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness”* (Gen. 22:18; 15:6; Jas. 2:21-23).

Abraham served God by obedient faith, trusting that God provides all our needs as we submit ourselves to His will. He was determined to obey God at all costs and he named the mount of sacrifice to commemorate God's providential power in fulfilling His own purposes in our lives as we serve Him. *“This was a much to say, When men come to*

a particular test that God imposes, God helps them in His gracious providence according to their needs” (Leupold, 631).

TURNING POINTS IN OUR LIFE OF OBEDIENT FAITH.

God sets before us today commands and challenges which will mark major turning points in our lives. As we make the right choices, we learn to live by obedient faith. Our faith grows through such experiences. Learning to trust in God’s providence, we continue on the path of daily service to God as a result of the watershed decisions which set us in the right direction. If we turn in the wrong direction at crucial crossroads of life, our faith gradually fails us and our daily course takes us further and further away from God.

As we stand at crucial crossroads and major turning points, our choices and conduct demonstrate a life of reverential fear of God, or a failure of our faith in God. God does not accept professed faith without obedience, or outward obedience devoid of genuine trust in Him. God is looking for true, genuine, obedient faith in His word, in His Son, and in His promises. The Bible records that Abraham’s faith was imputed to him for righteousness because the very same principle applies to us also (Rom. 4:23-25).

FEAR GOD: OBEY THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. God knows that we fear Him when we obey the gospel of Christ. Our sins demonstrate unbelief, selfishness, and rejection of God. Our sins insult and assault God. They challenge His rule in the moral order of the universe. They are an utter abomination to His holiness and justice. No wonder the Bible says, “*Your iniquities have separated between you and your God*” (Is.

59:2). Our sins declare war on God and make us enemies of God.

The mercy of God provided a sacrifice for our sins as the basis of atonement or reconciliation. “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*” (Jn. 3:16). God offered His Son, His only begotten Son, the Son whom He loved, as a perfect sacrifice on a mountain in the region of Moriah. The Lamb of God willingly submitted to the divine plan and laid down His life for our sins.

Peter confronted the people on the Day of Pentecost with the fact that they “*by wicked hands*” had crucified the Savior (Acts 2:23). He presented evidence proving that Jesus Christ was risen from the grave and ascended to heaven as “*both Lord and Christ*” (Acts 2:36). Many of them cried out, “*What shall we do?*” Peter commanded them, “*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.*” Repent, turn around, make a momentous change! About three thousand people submitted their lives to Christ in baptism (Acts 2:37-41). This was a major turning point in their lives and they would never be the same again.

We too face a crossroads decision in life: Will we obey or reject our Savior?

FEAR GOD: YIELD OUR TALENTS TO HIM. As we become conscious of our talents and opportunities in life, we yield them to God or deny them from God’s use. Some common men learn to do uncommon things in serving God, and some highly talented men waste their lives in selfish sinful pursuits.

When Jesus began to choose men to train His apostles, He did not walk the halls of a university graduate school, but He walked the shores of the Sea of Galilee and called four fishermen from their smelly nets: Peter, Andrew, James, and John. The words describing their decisions are concise, but the implications for their future lives speak volumes: “*they straightway left their nets, and followed him,*” “*they immediately left the ship..., and followed him*” (Mt. 4:18-22). Not fully knowing their talents or potential, they simply yielded themselves to the Master Teacher and left the rest to God.

Saul of Tarsus was trained by the best Jewish scholars of his day including the renowned Rabbi Gamaliel, grandson of Hillel the Elder (Acts 22:3). Saul’s future in rabbinic Judaism could not have been brighter. Once he learned the truth of the gospel of Christ, he obeyed it. This once champion of anti-Christ zealotry now yielded every fiber of his being to proclaiming Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world (Acts 9:20-22). He counted all his attainments, honors, and prospects as a leader of rabbinic Judaism “*but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him*” and to “*share in the fellowship of his sufferings*” (Phil. 3:7-11). As he yielded his great talents to Christ, he became in the eyes of many people the scum of the earth “*and the offscouring of all things*” (1 Cor. 4:11-13).

Timothy grew up at the feet of a godly mother and grandmother who gave their maternal abilities to the task of teaching this young man “*from a child*” God’s word (2 Tim. 3:15). These women made decisions not recorded which were momentous to the spread of the gospel. Paul, who

baptized Timothy, saw the potential in this young man and took him as a travel companion to train him as an evangelist (Acts 16:1-3). Timothy was later reminded not to neglect his talents, *“the gift that is in thee,”* and his opportunities to serve in this great work (1 Tim. 4:12-16). His unrecorded decision steered him in the direction of constant growth, labor, and sacrifice for the cause of Christ. Years later as Paul finished his work, he urged Timothy to do likewise and receive the *“crown of righteousness”* (2 Tim. 4:1-8).

Through the gospel Christ is calling all of us to yield our talents to His service. He needs godly parents and grandparents devoted to teaching their children God’s word. He needs men and women to teach Bible classes in local churches. He needs men to serve as elders and deacons, and godly wives to hold up their hands. He needs men who will lead songs, lead prayers, and lead at the Lord’s table.

He needs people to scatter the precious seed of His kingdom in a thousand places as our lives come into contact with other people. He needs evangelists to preach among saints and sinners, in local churches and in faraway places. He needs saints to confront sin among His people, to lift up the weary and encourage the discouraged, and *“to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction”* (Jas. 1:27). He needs young and old to shine as lights in a world of sin (Mt. 5:14-16).

We today face crucial decisions about the use of our talents: Will we give them to God or waste them in selfish sinful conduct?

FEAR GOD: SET PROPER PRIORITIES. Even before Isaac was born, God saw Abraham’s

character, *“that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment”* (Gen. 18:19). This character was shown from the moment God told him to leave his homeland and relatives to go to *“a land that I will show thee...”* So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him” (Gen. 12:1-4). The command to sacrifice Isaac was a new and difficult test, but Abraham had set proper priorities long years before which prepared him to meet this new test successfully by faith in God.

Though Lot maintained his own personal righteousness, he did not have the same priorities as Abraham. When the two men parted ways, the Bible simply says Abraham set his tents at Hebron *“and built there an altar unto the Lord,”* whereas Lot was attracted to the lush lands of Sodom and Gomorah. *“But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly”* (Gen. 13:10-18). Lot did not prosper by dishonesty, but his love of prosperity exposed his family to corrupt influences which had disastrous effects on their lives: His daughters married unbelievers, his wife could not bear to leave Sodom, and his daughters connived to get Lot drunk in order to practice incest (Gen. 19:12-14, 26, 30-38).

Setting proper priorities means God must be first above material prosperity, carnal pleasures, and even family members. Yes, we have material needs, but Christ taught, *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”* (Mt. 6:33). Yes, we may rightfully enjoy the blessings and pleasures God provides in this life, but first we must love the Lord with every

fiber of our being and love our neighbor as ourselves (Mt. 22:37-39). Yes, we must love our families, but when family members resist the truth our love for Christ must be strong than our love for them (Mt. 10:36-37).

Other than our decision to obey the gospel, the decision which has the greatest impact on our priorities is the selection of a mate. If we marry a faithful Christian, our mate will constantly reinforce our determination to have a Christian home and to make God first in every way. If we marry a person who is not a faithful Christian, try as we may we will struggle constantly in an effort to keep our priorities straight. Even a good moral mate who is not a Christian will have standards, desires, and habits contrary to God’s word which will influence the family circle, putting the Christian under pressure to yield again and again.

Such decisions as selecting a job and a place to live impact our priorities. Will our decision allow or deny us time to spend with our family? Will our choice accommodate or prevent faithful attendance at worship? Is the community, workplace, or school so exceedingly wicked that it is almost inevitable that it will affect our faith or other family members?

If we truly make the Lord first, this decision transforms our lives from a carnal to a spiritual focus so that we can live in the world without conforming to it (Rom. 12:1-2). This is how we resist and defeat Satan when tempted to drink, gamble, curse, dance, lie, steal, or dress immodestly. If God is first in our home, we will not tolerate such conduct in our teenage children but will lead them in paths of righteousness. When they ask about attending

dances including the prom, the answer will be a firm, "No," and we will help them find proper alternatives.

As Jesus said, "*Ye cannot serve God and mammon,*" even so we cannot serve God and sports (Mt. 6:24). God cannot be a "close second" to sports. If God is first in our homes, we will not allow our children to participate in sports to the extent that they cannot prepare lessons for Bible classes, or that they will miss worship services for sports events. When our teenagers insist on wearing immodest dress for sports, the answer must be, "No," and we will consult the coach to permit proper dress or take them out of the activity. If God is first in our homes, cheerleading with its immodest dress and vulgar dance routines will be out of the question.

When churches hold regular services and gospel meetings, God knows which families are led by men of Abraham's faith and which are led by men of Lot's false sense of priority. Lot and his children are often at the ball game "and couldn't make it" to worship God. There are playoff games and tournaments on the lush fields of Sodom and we do not want our kids "to miss out."

We make decisions about our priorities which mark major turning points in our lives: Will we make God first in every way or will our love for material things, carnal pleasures, or even family members encroach on our commitment to God?

"NOW I KNOW THAT THOU FEAREST GOD." Like Abraham we face commands and challenges given by God which test our faith in Him. These tests are designed by God to strengthen and fortify our faith, and to make us better servants to Him. The command

to sacrifice Isaac was such a test. Abraham's response was immediate. He put his trust in God and prepared to offer his son, his only son, whom he loved. Then God said, "*Now I know that thou fearest God.*"

God Himself demonstrated such great love for us when He gave His only begotten Son to die on the cross for our sins.

How do we respond when our faith and love for God are tested? Can He say of each of us, "*Now I know that thou fearest God*"?

WHY I WILL BE AT THE MEETING EVERY SINGLE NIGHT

Nicolas Edwards

If the Lord wills, I have purposed in my heart to be at our upcoming gospel meeting every single time the doors are open. Here's why:

TO FULFILL COMMAND.

The Hebrew writer penned, "*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching*" (Heb. 10:25).

TO PUT FIRST THINGS

FIRST. The Lord said, "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you*" (Mt. 6:33). Paul wrote, "*seek those things which are above*" and "*set your affection on things above*" (Col. 3:1-2). The Lord said, "*But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*" (Mt. 6:20-21). What do you put first?

I LOVE THE LAW. Psalm

119:97 says, "*O how love I thy law!*" Do you love the law? Do you desire the word more than fine gold (Ps. 19:10)? Suppose we started offering gold at the services, free of charge. Would you be there? We ought to value the word more than that! Those who aren't faithful in their attendance are expressing they do not love the law! I will be at the gospel meeting, every time the word is preached, because I love the Law.

FOR MY BRETHREN. It is our responsibility to love one another (Jn. 13:34), prefer one another (Rom. 12:10), admonish one another (Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16), greet one another (1 Cor. 16:20), edify one another (1 thess. 5:11), exhort one another (Heb. 3:13), and consider one another (Heb. 10:24). I cannot do these things by forsaking the assembling! We ought to desire to come together and be among God's family. There is no other place I would rather be than in the house of God (1 Tim. 3:15)!

TO GROW. It is our responsibility to grow (2 Pet. 3:18). That's why we must "*as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby*" (1 Pet. 2:2). We are to "*hunger and thirst after righteousness*" (Mt. 5:6). Job is a good example as he said, "*I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food*" (Job. 23:12). If you esteem God's words more than your necessary food, then you will not miss a single night to be fed!

TO BE EDIFIED. To be edified is to be built up or strengthened. Edification is a work of the church (Eph. 4:11-12, 16). Edification takes place through the word (Acts 20:32). I want to be present every time the word is preached

that I may be strengthened!

TO SET A GOOD

EXAMPLE. Paul told Timothy, *"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity"* (1 Tim. 4:12). Suppose every member attended like you attend. Would every member be present? Would no one be present? Would it be questionable or certain?

If the Lord wills, I hope to see you every night!

day approaching" (Heb. 10:25), we have provided in the space below a complete list of all the good excuses that may be offered for not being at every service when the saints come together.

ALL THE GOOD EXCUSES FOR NOT BEING AT EVERY SERVICE

John Edwards

Since the Bible teaches, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"* (Mt. 6:33) and *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the*

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Assembling Times:

Sunday @ 10:00 a.m. & 3:00 p.m.
Wednesday @ 7:00 p.m.

Come be with us!



***We Speak Where the
Bible Speaks.***

***We Are Silent Where the
Bible Is Silent.***

***We Do Bible Things in
Bible Ways.***

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