

10. 5 Last Days Commands-Part 10

Be Brave

a message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(3-8-26)

Find this week's sermon audio and video message [HERE](#).

For those who are new, we have been looking at the subject of how as Christians we are soldiers of Jesus Christ and fighting in a war—a war that's taking place in the last days (the time just prior to Jesus' return).

The question we've been dealing with is—are we doing what the Word commands for those living in the last days?

Today, we are continuing our series, “**Five Last Day's Commands**”—or “*Five Commands to Christians Living in the Last Days*”—which comes out of:

1 Corinthians 16:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. ¹⁴ Let all *that you do* be done with love.

This morning, we find ourselves looking at the third command in this series where Paul tells us as Christians to—**“Be brave.”**

III. Be Brave

Now listen, the bravery of the world is different from biblical bravery—“*How so?*”

Someone has pointed out that,

“The bravery of the world is a “grit-your-teeth bravery” born of self-made courage, pretending you're not afraid. Whereas biblical bravery is based on the promises of God and His strength in a given situation.”

A. Bravery is a command, not a personality trait

Over and over in Scripture, God speaks this word to His people—

Joshua 1:9 (NLT)

⁹ This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Notice something important: God doesn't say, “*Joshua, if you feel confident today, go forward*”—rather He says, “*Have I not commanded you—go forward?!*”

Biblical bravery is the kind that shows up when fear is real, the future is unclear, but God says, “*I command you to go forward for I am with you!*”—and you obey.

**As someone has pointed out—
“*God's commandments are God's enablements.*”**

Or in other words, God never commands us to do something as His people without giving us the strength and power to obey that command—if you will step out in faith (Peter on the Sea of Galilee).

Most Christians don't realize that this is so much a quality of God's people, and so much a mark of their relationship with Him, that to not have bravery/courage is listed as one of the qualities of unbelievers and one of the things they will be condemned to hell for when they stand before Him on the Day of Judgment—

Revelation 21:8 (NLT)

⁸ "But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the immoral, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars—their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

Biblical bravery is not about temperament (emotions)—some of the bravest people in Scripture were terrified to obey God's call to ministry—

- Moses said, "I can't speak."
- Gideon said, "I'm the weakest."
- Jeremiah said, "I'm only a youth."
- The disciples locked themselves in a room "for fear."

Yet God's response was the same every time—"I will be with you."

B. Biblical bravery isn't the absence of fear—it's the control of fear.

Biblical bravery is obedience in the presence of fear—remembering that *'the battle belongs to the Lord.'*

This was something a little shepherd boy named David said to the giant Philistine warrior named Goliath just before he (David) ran toward him in battle:

"And everyone assembled here will know that the Lord rescues his people, but not with sword and spear. This is the Lord's battle, and he will give you to us!" (1 Samuel 17:47)

As one pastor said—

"Faith doesn't wait for fear to leave before it moves forward—it moves forward in obedience to God's command and trusts that God will provide the courage!"

Biblical bravery (courage) is based on one important truth—"We can have bravery in any situation because I know that God is with me!"

Or as Martin Luther put it, "One plus God is a majority!"

Even though Paul had all Christians in view when he commanded us to "**be brave**" in 1 Corinthians 16:13—I believe he had Christian men in mind primarily.

The command to '**be brave**' comes from a Greek word that basically and most often speaks of '*male courage*', which is why the King James translates it: "*Quit ye like men*"—which doesn't mean '*give up*' but "act like men."

For men of God living in these last days, it's important that we understand that courage isn't an *option*—it's a command from God! Simply knowing that can be the difference between victory and defeat, and between standing strong or running scared.

Let me stop here and ask a simple question—*“What has happened to men in our society?”*

Listen, I don’t believe that the feminized ‘soy boys’ passing as men today are *all* the result of being put down by “AWFUL’s” (*affluent white female urban liberals*) shaming them into thinking that all displays of masculinity are toxic and therefore should be avoided—something else is going on.

Author Richard Fugate in his book: *“What the Bible Says About ... Being a Man”*, shares from history what has happened to men in our country:

“There were very few major changes in society for the first 200 years of America’s agrarian (living off the land) history. Prior to about 1840, families were self-sufficient—growing or making almost everything they consumed. The average family had seven children who were an integral part of the family economy and who were schooled at home.

Then, the Industrial Revolution totally changed American life from 1840 to 1940 A.D. The family unit became restructured during this period. Fathers left the homestead to work in the city and the men/father influence in society began to decrease. Most home functions (growing food, making clothes, building furniture, training the children) had to be abandoned. It was during this time that women/mothers, instead of men/fathers, gradually became the moral leaders of home, family, school, Church, and social reform.

These factors led to a lack of masculine training of little boys in America. From about 1950 on, boys have virtually been brought up in a women-dominated environment.

Between World War II and the prosperity of the 50s, fathers were often absent from the home and therefore unable to influence their boys properly. Little boys were surrounded by women caregivers almost all the time. They had mothers at home, female teachers at school, and even women Sunday school teachers in most cases. (At school the janitor, the coach, and possibly the principals might still have been men, but women filled over 90 percent of the teaching positions). Fathers were all but absent from home and, consequently, did not show their boys much about being real men. In fact, fathers were also deserting their daughters from experiencing an example of Biblical manhood and not encouraging them to pursue Biblical womanhood.

This behavioral conditioning away from masculinity has been disastrous for the past three generations of male adults graduating into society. Nobody seemed to realize that when the aggression is completely trained out (and/or shamed out) of a boy, it can produce a man who will not fight to provide for or protect his wife or family.

Fugate illustrates this in how men treated women and children when the Titanic sank on the 15th of April 1912 compared with similar life and death situations today—

He said, *“There was an unwritten code of the sea which said “women and children first.”* It is the natural code that a man operating by Biblical standards will always follow...A large number of male passengers [on the Titanic] were Christians and those men knew well the passage, *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* (John 15:13). Knowing they had a place reserved in Heaven, they had no need to grasp onto their physical lives. Because of their sacrifice, approximately 75% of the women were saved while only 20% of the men survived.

Do you think men today would make the same sacrifices?

In 1987 a ferry sank in the Philippines killing over 4000 people—mostly women and children. The majority of the survivors this time were men.

Similarly, when the ferry, Estonia sank in the Baltic Sea, most of its survivors were also men. When the male survivors were questioned why they had not helped the women and children, they were quoted as saying: *“Hey, its survival of the fittest,” “It was every man for himself,” “If women want, equality so much—they’ve got it!”*...

Fugate goes on to say, *“If our nation is to return to a period of greatness, men will have to accept the role of protector over those who are weak and needy. If the family is to again be strong, husbands and fathers will have to exercise their strength and leadership for the protection of their wives and children. In other words, we will need Biblical men who are willing to sacrifice their lives for their families.”*

Again, when it comes to bravery, the good news is—God never commands bravery without promising His presence:

- *To Joshua as he was about to lead his people into the Promised Land against the Canaanites*
- *To David who faced Goliath*
- *To Esther who could have been put to death for going into the king's presence on behalf of her people uninvited*
- *To the early church that took the gospel into a hostile culture under threat of prison and death*

None of these were brave because they believed in *themselves*—they were brave because they believed in Almighty God being with them.

When the Bible says, “*Do not fear*”—it’s always followed by the statement or sentiment:

- *“For I am with you.”*
- *“For the Lord goes before you.”*
- *“Perfect love casts out fear.”*

Christian courage is not self-confidence—it’s God-confidence.

Let me come at this from a different perspective...

The opposite of bravery is fear—human fear that paralyzes a person into inaction causing them to act as cowards. Fear is a tool of the devil— *“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”* (2 Timothy 1:7)

Fear is a very powerful weapon the enemy tries to use against the people of God.

One Christian counselor said,
“Fear is the most crippling human emotion. It paralyzes soldiers in the mist of battle and keeps Christians from sharing the lifesaving message of the gospel with those who are lost.”

In the Scriptures there are places that admonish us to fear some things—and even extol fear as a virtue:

Proverbs 9:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ "The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom...

Isaiah 66:2 (NKJV)

² ..."But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word. [fears to disobey Me]

But in contrast there are over 300 places in the Bible where we are commanded by God, as His people, not to fear certain things.

For example, we are not to fear *man* or *crises* or the *uncertainty of the future*—or even *death!* (Matt. 10:28)

Fear robs us of our peace and our joy—because it robs us of our faith!

What causes us to fear?

We become fearful when we lose the awareness of God’s presence in our lives—and when that happens we take our eyes off of God and focus on the size of the problem in front of us. (Peter on the Sea of Galilee, etc.) Therefore, the cure for fear is to remember that God is with us as His people—

Hebrews 13:5b (NKJV)

⁵ ...For He Himself has said, "*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*"

Isaiah 41:10, 13 (NLT)

¹⁰ Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand...¹³ For I hold you by your right hand— I, the Lord your God. And I say to you, ‘Don’t be afraid. I am here to help you.

And so, simply put, the cure for *fear* is faith (putting our trust in the Lord)—or as the psalmist put it:

Psalms 56:11 (NLT2)

¹¹ I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me?

Psalms 56:3 (NLT2)

³ But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you.

Fear and faith are mutually exclusive, in other words, you can’t walk in faith while at the same time live in fear. This goes for whatever circumstance we find ourselves in—

Psalms 46:1-3 (NKJV)

¹ God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; ³ Though its waters roar and be troubled, Though the mountains shake with its swelling.

Habakkuk 3:17-18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls-- ¹⁸ Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

In the days ahead our faith might be tested in ways we wouldn’t have thought possible a few weeks ago.

That said, the devil might try to come at us *“like a flood”* to overwhelm us with fear and uncertainty about the future.

Jesus did say that prior to His return, *“people’s hearts would be failing them from fear of those things coming upon the earth.”* (Luke 21:26)

I don’t have to tell any of you—that 9 days ago we (America), along with Israel, attacked Iran. Now depending on who you listen to—it was either justified or the result of an evil man’s ego run amok.

I’m not here to defend President Trump—but for the record I support him in this battle for a number of reasons that I won’t get into here. But as a pastor, people have asked me could this be the battle the Bible prophesied about in Ezekiel 38?

The answer to that is ‘no’—although it’s possible it’s a precursor to that battle.

One of the problems that many Christians have is to quickly fall into speculation which results in hasty conclusions with regard to current events and then claim they are the fulfillment of Bible end-times prophecies.

We saw this back in WWII where Christians believed that Hitler was the Antichrist, Mussolini was the False Prophet and that WWII was the Battle of Armageddon!

More recently, many Christians jumped to the conclusion that the Russian invasion of Ukraine was the fulfillment of end-times prophecy.

One author commenting on this said,

“In recent days, videos have popped up all over the Internet, on social media, on the websites of Evangelical Christian ministries and on Christian media outlets, citing passages from Ezekiel 38 and claiming that the end times are here.

Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) founder Pat Robertson, 91, made an unusual and unexpected appearance on the network’s 700 Club program to talk about why he believes the Russian-Ukraine war might fit into biblical end times prophecy. In the nearly 18-minute video, Robertson repeatedly quotes Ezekiel 38 and claims that “God is getting ready to do something amazing that will be the fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

Robertson’s video followed posts by Pastor Greg Laurie of Harvest Christian Fellowship and Evangelical author Joel Rosenberg, who both likewise cited Ezekiel 38 and hinted that what the world is seeing today could be a precursor to the “battle of Gog and Magog” referenced in the Bible.”

I don’t see it that way—and I definitely don’t believe what’s going on in Iran is the fulfillment of Ezekiel 38—although it might be a fulfillment of Jeremiah 49:

Jeremiah 49:34–39 (NKJV)

³⁴ The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam [*Persia/Iran*]...

³⁵ “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Behold, I will break the bow [*the weaponry*] of Elam, the foremost of their might.

³⁶ Against Elam I will bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, And scatter them toward all those winds; There shall be no nations where the outcasts of Elam will not go. ³⁷ For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies And before those who seek their life. I will bring disaster upon them, My fierce anger,’ says the Lord; ‘And I will send the sword after them Until I have consumed them. ³⁸ I will set My throne in Elam [*America?*], And will destroy from there the king and the princes,’ says the Lord. ³⁹ ‘But it shall come to pass in the latter days: I will bring back the captives of Elam,’ says the Lord.”

Even if the prophecy spelled out in Jeremiah 49 is being fulfilled as we speak, I still don’t believe it’s the fulfillment of Ezekiel 38—although it could definitely be laying the groundwork for that battle.

Ezekiel 38:1–6 (NKJV)

¹ Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ² “Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, ³ and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I *am* against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. ⁴ I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company *with* bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. ⁵ Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them *with* shield and helmet; ⁶ Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah *from* the far north and all its troops—many people *are* with you...”

Ezekiel 38:1-6 prophesies the nations that will at some point come together to attack Israel: Russia, Persia (Iran), Ethiopia, Libya (Libya is in north Africa west of Egypt; and Ethiopia is south of Egypt), Gomer (Eastern Germany, and the Slavic countries), Togarmah (Turkey and Armenia).

The Bible predicts that this battle will take place in the “**latter years**” or the ‘*last days*’—

Ezekiel 38:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸After many days [After the regathering of Israel prophesied in chap. 37] you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely. ⁹You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you."

Prophecy expert and Bible scholar Hal Lindsey tells us what he believes will take place before Jesus will return to establish His Kingdom—

"What is most important is that all this is setting up Ezekiel's 2600-year-old prophecy in Ezekiel chapter 38. Persia, or modern Iran, is listed a chief among the Muslim nations Russia will lead into an all-out assault against Israel. This is predicted to be the first battle of the war of Armageddon.

The one nation that does not seem to be listed is Syria. I believe this is because as a result of actions it is now taking against Israel, Isaiah's prophecy about Damascus in the last days is going to be soon fulfilled.

Twenty-seven hundred years ago, Isaiah warned,

Isaiah 17:1 (NKJV)

¹"Behold, Damascus will cease from *being* a city, And it will be a ruinous heap.

To establish the time of this event, look at these factors.

First, Damascus is one of the oldest continuously populated cities on earth. It has never been totally destroyed – yet.

Second, it is in a context of events that lead up to the catastrophes that precede the Lord Jesus' Second Coming... Syria and the tribal name of its forefathers are not mentioned in the Russian led Muslim Confederacy...(in Ezekiel 38).

All of this leads me to believe that Damascus will be destroyed before the Tribulation begins. I believe that Damascus is about to so threaten Israel's existence by either launching or furnishing bio-chemical weapons or radioactive dirty bombs, that Israel will nuke them.

Israel has sworn that it will implement the Samson-Option against any nation that attacks them with any form of weapons of mass destruction. That means a thermonuclear strike—this may soon happen to Syria.

For students of Bible prophecy (especially those living in America), the strange thing about this is that—if we are as close to these events taking place as we think we are—the ‘elephant’ in the room is—where is America in these end-times prophecies?

Why isn't America clearly mentioned in Bible prophecy—after all we are the world's superpower?

Also, America is Israel's greatest friend and ally—so where are we in the scenario presented in Ezekiel 38 which lists the nations that will come against Israel?

Again, in Ezekiel 38 the Holy Spirit lists the nations of Russia, Iran, Northern Africa, and a confederation of Muslim nations that all come together to attack Israel—but why isn't America mentioned as coming to Israel's defense against these nations that attack her?

Let me give you a few possibilities as to why we don't see America listed in the Ezekiel battle against Israel:

1. *A nuclear attack against us that so devastates us that we are too weak and incapable of coming to Israel's defense.*

Putin's crazy enough to send a nuclear missile or missiles our way from one of his nuclear submarines parked off the coast of Washington D.C. if he feels threatened enough by all the weaponry we are sending to Ukraine to use in their war against Russia (we are now in a proxy-war with Russia but that could soon escalate into a hot-war).

2. *A nuclear missile detonated over the Eastern Seaboard that creates an EMP (Electro-Magnetic Pulse).*

This missile could also be launched from one of Russia's submarines off our East coast.

This would fry all the circuitry of everything that uses circuitry to operate (all utilities: water, gas, electricity would be affected)—not to mention all business, banking, defense and communication systems, etc.) immediately plunging that part of the country back into the 1800's.

3. *A manufactured virus many times more deadly than COVID-19.*

This virus would create a pandemic that could spread quickly and wipe out tens of millions of people (like the Spanish Flu of 1918).

4. *One or more small tactical nukes (a.k.a. - 'suitcase nukes')*

One or more of these nukes could have been smuggled into America by unvetted Iranians (or other enemies like the Chinese or Russians) that entered into America via Joe Biden's open border policy.

These could have then been given to Islamic ' sleeper cells ' positioned in one or more of our major cities and at a set time be detonated reducing those cities to rubble and causing such internal chaos that America will be too busy trying to piece itself back together let alone try to help anyone else.

I'm mean if 19 Muslims flying 2 planes into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center could do as much damage to our country as happened on 9/11, 2001—what kind of damage would one or more suitcase nukes do if they were detonated in one or more of our major cities?

If any one of those scenarios plays out it would be the end of America as the world's superpower—in fact, it would decimate America and leave it a fallen, destroyed shell of a country rendering it inconsequential on the world stage.

And with America out of the way—the enemies of Israel (some of whom are mentioned in Ezekiel 38) would then be emboldened to attack them (fulfilling Ezekiel 38 and 39)—at which time God will rise up and fight for Israel and destroy them. (Ezekiel 38:18-23)

With the world struggling to survive in the aftermath of a nuclear war it will quickly decide that the nations of the world need to come together in a one-world global government with a single leader (we know him as the Antichrist)—leading to the events spoken of in Revelation 6-19.

There's one more possible scenario for why America isn't mentioned in Ezekiel 38:

5. *The Rapture of the Church*

This is the one I'm voting for, where God brings a great awakening to America that saves so many people that when the rapture happens so many people are taken that America is left empty!

So, what do we do when we find ourselves in difficult and even frightening situations?

We should look up, and we should remember that God is in control!

Therefore Church—

- Be brave—not because you are without fear—but because God is with you.
- Be brave—not because the road is easy—but because the Lord goes before you.
- Be brave—not in your own power—but in the name of Jesus Christ.

So whatever God is calling you to do—step forward in faith and **Be Brave!**

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

Catch this weeks' audio, video, study and sermon notes [HERE](#).