

Man's Nature, to Sting; God's Nature, to Save!

I. INTRO:

- A. **Story:** How does a worm get inside an apple? Perhaps you think the worm burrows in from the outside. **No**, scientists have discovered that **the worm comes from inside**. **But** how does he get in there? **Simple!** An insect lays an egg in the apple blossom. Sometime later, the worm hatches in the heart of the apple, then eats his way out. **Sin**, like the worm, begins in the **heart** and works out through a person's **thoughts, words, and actions**.
- B. **Sin**...we never outgrow it! :(
1. **Nobody**...no matter how old, how wise, how respected...*is immune to sin*.
 2. Job32:9 Msg **The experts have no corner on wisdom; getting old doesn't guarantee good sense.** And so the story goes w/David.

II. A STUBBORN HEART!¹ (1-9)

- A. **First**, we need to grapple with **God** moving David to number the people, *then* punishing for it? **Then**, in 1 Chron.21:1 it claims **Satan** move David to do it. (He could say, "the Devil made me do it!") **Then**, realizing **David** choose to do it against the better judgment of his generals. **Oh & then**, this is ultimately **God's judgement** on Israel (not David).
- B. **Are these Contradictory?** **Or**, is this **Concurrence at work?** [concurrence=(Lt.)running together]
- C. God's **sovereignty & providence** is seen in His control of *men & events*. [**Lets start w/Dan 4:35**]
1. **He does according to His will among the host of heaven & among the inhabitants of the earth; & none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"**
 2. **William Blaikie** said the intertwining of events is like, "**a web** of many threads, woven w/marvelous skill; **a network** composed of all kinds of materials, great & small, **but** so arranged that the very smallest of them is as essential as the largest to the completeness of the fabric."
- D. Providence teaches: God is continually involved with all created things in such a way that He (1) keeps them existing & maintaining the properties with which he created them (2) cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do; and (3) directs them to fulfill his purposes. **Or**, **Preservation, Concurrence & Government**.
1. **Preservation** - Providence includes God's work of **sustaining** His creation.
 2. **Concurrence** - We are creatures w/a will of our own. We make things happen. **Yet** the causal power we exert is **secondary**. God's sovereign providence stands over & above our actions.
 - a) He works out **His will** through the actions of **human wills**, w/o violating the freedom of those human wills.

¹ Outline Headings taken from Warren Wiersbe, With The Word.

3. **Government** - He rules His creation w/absolute **sovereignty & authority**.
 - a) The earth is **His ball**, & He can take it & go home when He wants!
 - b) He governs everything that *comes to pass*; from the greatest to the least.
 - c) He makes the **rain** to fall & the **sun** to shine. He raises up **kingdoms** & brings them down. He numbers the **hairs** on our heads & the **days** of our life.
- E. So, we know God *cannot* tempt anyone; **but** He is often described as doing what He permits to be done. Satan was Davids counsellor/instigator here...not the Lord.
1. **We weave together than: David's pride, the Lord's anger w/Israel, Satan's hatefulness...all 3 played a role in the decision.**
 2. **Did you know** that throughout the whole OT there are only 4 instances where **Satan** is **named specifically & seen openly** at work.
 - a) Tempting **Eve** in garden in Gen.3; attacking **Job** in Job 1,2; & when he accused **Joshua the priest** in Zech.3; And, here.
 3. **Joab** & others tried their best to dissuade David. **How often we rush to our destruction in spite of *warning voices*, which God raises up to stay us.**
- F. There was nothing wrong with David taking a census. Censuses are mentioned in the Bible.
1. God commanded **a flat tax** to be paid with the census in **Ex.30:11-16** for the upkeep of the Tabernacle.
 2. The **Book of Numbers** is named after the counting of the Israelite population in Num.1-4 & then a 2nd census again in Num.26.
 3. The Gospel of Luke records **Jesus** being born during a census in Luke 2.
 - a) There was nothing wrong with David taking a census...*It was **WHY** he did!*
 - b) **What made it a *sinful census*? Pride & self-sufficiency.** To see how big his army was^(v9)
 - (1) The king wanted to magnify his own achievements **rather than glorify God.**
 - (2) Prov.16:5 **Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; Though they join forces, none will go unpunished.**
 - c) **Where do you deal with **pride**?**
 - (1) With **politicians** its how large your **constituency** is.
With **pastors** its how large your **church** is.
With **business owners** its how large your **company** is.
With **some** its how large your **Facebook or Twitter fan base** is.
 - (2) May we remember ***we have nothing that we have not received***; & it is ours only in the sense of **stewardship**, to be used for our Lord.
 4. Sometimes God's greatest judgment is to **let us have our own way!** (Experience that?)

III. **A SMITTEN HEART! (10-14)**

- A. (10) David's heart *condemned him* - or *attacked* & *struck* him. Same words David used for killing the **lion**, the **bear** & **Goliath**.
- B. At least 6x's in Scripture we find David confessing, "*I have sinned.*"
1. When he confessed his sins of adultery & murder he said, "I have sinned."
 2. When he confessed his sins of #ing the people he said, "I have sinned greatly."
 - a) David saw the enormity of what he had done.
 - b) His sin w/Bathsheba took the lives of 4 people (+ Uriah); this sin took 70,000 lives.
 - c) **One** was a yielding to the lust afternoon of laziness; **the other** a willful at of rebellion against God. Motivated by pride. "*Pride is **the ground** in which all the other sins grow & **the parent** from which all the other sins come.*" (William Barclay)
 3. Once again he gave David **9 months** time to repent(vs.8)...but he refused to yield.
 - a) 9 months, long enough for the **pregnancy of sin** to give birth to **death**...James 1:13
Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.
 4. But here in vs.10 he repents, & is **forgiven**, but still had the *consequences* of sin.
 - a) The mark of a person after God's heart is *not perfection* but a **sensitivity to sin** & a willingness to seek restoration with God, even it means facing His judgment!
- C. (12,13) Why did God offer him 3 choices?
1. Maybe because his sin was a **deliberate choice** on David's part, so God allowed him to make **another choice** & name the punishment.
 2. God didn't pull 3 punishments out of His hat; these were named in Deut.28 in God's Covenant w/Israel [**Famine** vs.23,24; **Military defeat** vs.25,26; **Pestilence** vs.27,28]
 3. Also, read Ex.30:12 regarding *census + plague*.
- D. (14) He wisely chose *the 3rd option*, for even under judgment, a person is safest **within** the hand of God.

IV. A SUFFERING HEART! (15-17)

- A. The plague started the next morning & went for the appointed 3 days. [*His terrible swift sword*]
1. The judgement ended at **Jerusalem**, just as Joab & his men had done(8).
- B. (16) **Araunah**(or *Ornan*) the **Jebusite**.
1. Jebusites were the original inhabitants of Jerusalem. Gentiles.
- C. Why did God have him sheath his weapon?
1. Because between the angel & the sinners was an altar, & on the altar a sacrifice.
 2. 1 Chron.21:26,27 **And David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on the Lord; and He answered him from**

heaven by fire on the altar of burnt offering. So the Lord commanded the angel, and he returned his sword to its sheath. His holy wrath was appeased.

a) A humble prayer spoken; a fire-ball is released from heaven(the wrath of God); it consumes not the **sinner**, but the **sacrifice**.

(1) Justice served. Angel sheathes its sword. Sinners are set free.

b) At the threshing-floor the Lord relents, or *alters His procedure* when we *alter our behavior!* [He will cease threshing!]

(1) His **judgement** is swift & terrible, but equally swift was His **mercy!**

V. A SACRIFICING HEART! (18-25)

A. **Gad** shows up again, this time with a message of Hope.

B. This was no ordinary piece of property!

1. This was the site where God's judgment & mercy met!

2. This was none other than **Mount Moriah!** What happened there?

a) [#1] This was the place where **Abraham** had put his son **Isaac** on the altar.

(1) Gen.22:2 Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of **Moriah**, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.

b) [#2] This will be the place where **Solomon** puts the **Temple**, where the altar will be.

(1) 2 Chron.3 Now Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

(a) David's 2 greatest sins were: "his adultery w/Bathsheba" & "his numbering of the people".

i) But out of the 2 great sins...**God built a temple!** [Oh, sweet Grace!]

ii) Bathsheba gave birth to Solomon & God chose him to succeed David on the throne. And on the property that David purchased, he would erect an altar.

iii) What David did is certainly not an excuse for sin, **because** David paid dearly for committing those sins. **However**, knowing what **God** did for David does encourage us to **seek His face & trust His grace** when we have obeyed Him.

(1) Once again, "*where sin abounded, grace abounded much more!*"

(2) What a merciful God we serve!

(b) Well **Mount Moriah** was not only where God promised a Provision for a Person Ab/Isaac(ram in thicket); & also a Provision for a People at Temple site(many sacrifices); **but also** a Provision for All Peoples, Jesus on Calvary.

c) [#3] This will be the place where **Jesus** dies on the **Cross**, the final sacrifice.

(1) A **topographic map** shows that Mount Moriah is **not a single peak**, but **an elongated ridge**.

(a) The **ridge** heads **Northeast**, just outside the present Damascus Gate of the Old City. **The place of the crucifixion of Jesus was at the summit of Mt. Moriah.**

d) **Mount Moriah**, 1st a Provision for a **Person** w/a ram;

Then, a Provision for a **People** at the Temple site w/many lambs;

And finally, a Provision for **All Peoples**, w/the Lamb of God.

(1) **The site where God's judgment & mercy met!**

(2) A site where **many** would come to find **mercy...hope...& salvation**.

3. On Calvary, Justice was served. The altar was the Cross. The sacrifice was Christ. The death Angel sheathed his sword. Sinners were set free.

a) Rom.5:8,9 **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.**

C. **Sin...we never outgrow it!** :(**But we can at least...**

1. **Be accountable** (to live an **unaccountable life** is to invite danger)

2. **Remember Sins Consequences** (keep the **70,000 graves** fresh in your mind)

3. **Take God Seriously** (failing to do so is to **deny His Lordship** in our lives)

D. **Man's nature is to sting**, but **God's nature is to save!**

1. **Watch video clip.** [The Old Man & the Scorpion; 1:35]²

a) **Only a fool would risk his life for the sake of an ugly, evil creature.**

Don't you know you could kill yourself trying to save that ungrateful scorpion?

b) **Just because it is the scorpion's nature to sting**, that does not change my nature to **save**.

2. **Well**, God wasn't a **fool**; but instead has this **Crazy Love** for **us evil creatures**.

a) **And**, He did have his Son killed on your behalf.

b) **No matter how ugly** your sin has been;

No matter how evil of a **creature** you've been;

No matter how ungrateful you've shown yourself;

His nature is still to **SAVE!**

E. **Want to deal with that worm in your apple? It comes from the inside!**

² On Youtube. An adaptation of Henri Nouwen's fable, as re-told by Brennan Manning in, The Signature of Jesus.