



# **A QUESTION OF CHARACTER**

**LESSON 12**

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# WORD FOR THE JOURNEY

- **James 1:21-22** Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

- Doers: *poietai*: a performer; especially a poet

- Hearers: *akroatai*: those who listen without participation

- **LEARNING GOAL FOR THIS CLASS:**

Learning to hear God and respond to Him in such a way that His purposes can be fulfilled in us

**THERE ARE THINGS THAT, IN OUR HUMANITY,  
WE DON'T REALLY WANT TO RELEASE TO GOD**

# GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY REVEALED

- **Proverbs 21:1** The king's heart is *like* channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.
- **2 Chronicles 20:5-9** Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD before the new court, and he said, "O LORD, the God of our fathers, are You not God in the heavens? And are You not ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Your hand so that no one can stand against You. Did You not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? They have lived in it, and have built You a sanctuary there for Your name, saying, 'Should evil come upon us, the sword, or judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before You (for Your name is in this house) and cry to You in our distress, and You will hear and deliver *us*.'

# TOTALLY AMAZING

- **Exodus 3:20-22** "So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go. I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be that when you go, you will not go empty-handed. But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians."
- **Exodus 12:33-36** The Egyptians urged the people, to send them out of the land in haste, for they said, "We will all be dead." So the people took their dough before it was leavened, *with* their kneading bowls bound up in the clothes on their shoulders. Now the sons of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, for they had requested from the Egyptians articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and the LORD had given the people favor in the

# WHAT GOD KNOWS/DOES...

- **Isaiah 44:28** *"It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' And of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.'"*
- **Isaiah 45:1-4** Thus says the LORD to Cyrus His anointed, whom I have taken by the right hand, to subdue nations before him and to loose the loins of kings; to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: "I will go before you and make the rough places smooth; I will shatter the doors of bronze and cut through their iron bars. I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden wealth of secret places, So that you may know that it is I, The LORD, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name. For the sake of Jacob My servant, and Israel My chosen *one*, I have also called you by your name; I have given you a title of honor **though you have not known Me**



# WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED

- **Cyrus**, a Persian, conquered Babylon with barely a fight
- **Nabonidus**, the Babylonian king, was in Saudi Arabia worshipping the moon god at Tayma for several years
- His son, **Belshazzar**, was reigning in his place
- **Ezra 1:1-3** Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying: Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem.'

# STELE FROM 2000 BC



# THE CYRUS CYLINDER



The Cyrus Cylinder makes it clear that Cyrus was not a worshiper of the Jewish God; He was Zoroastrian and worshiped Ahuramazda

- Question: was Cyrus aware of the fact that God was in charge of what was happening?
- Were the Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites aware?
- Were the people of Egypt aware of the fact that God was in control of their gifts to the Israelites?
- When we watch the news, are we seeing God's hand?



# HOW DOES GOD LEAD?

- **Matthew 2:13-15** Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him." So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. He remained there until the death of Herod. *This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON."*
- **Acts 4:29-31** "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and *began* to speak the word of God with boldness.

# SOVEREIGN OVER LEADERS?

- **Romans 13:1-2** Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.
  - There-fore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.
- Authority: *exousia*: governing domain; given to ruler by someone else; rules of operation by the one granting
- Established: *tasso*: appointed or designated
- **1 Timothy 2:1-4** First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to

# NOT ONLY WHO, BUT WHEN AND HOW

- **Isaiah 40:23-25** He *it is* who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. Scarcely have they been planted, scarcely have they been sown, scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, but He merely blows on them, and they wither, and the storm carries them away like stubble. To whom then will you liken Me That I would be *his* equal?" says the Holy One.
- **Proverbs 21:31** The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but victory belongs to the LORD.
- **Judges 7:2** The LORD said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands, for Israel would become boastful, saying, 'My own power has delivered me.'
- **1 Samuel 14:13-14** Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, with his armor bearer behind him; and they fell before Jonathan, and his armor bearer put some to death after him. That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armor

# WHERE IS YOUR TRUST?

- **Psalms 20:7** Some *boast* in chariots and some in horses, but we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God.
- **Jeremiah 14:22** Are there any among the idols of the nations who give rain? Or can the heavens grant showers? Is it not You, O LORD our God? Therefore we hope in You, For You are the one who has done all these things.
- **Psalms 147:3-8** He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them. Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite. The LORD supports the afflicted; He brings down the wicked to the ground. Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; Sing praises to our God on the lyre, Who covers the heavens with clouds, Who provides rain for the earth, Who makes grass to grow on the mountains.

# KNOW GOD – KNOW HIS WORD

- **Isaiah 45:5-7** "I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, the One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.
- Forming: *yatsar*: shaping, making
- Creating: *bara*: producing
- Causing: *asah*: bringing about, accomplishing
- Calamity: *ra*: distress, misery
- Egyptians in the Red Sea: miracle for Israel; calamity for Egypt
- Jericho: miracle for Israel; calamity for those in Jericho