



Psalms 17-20

Psalm 17-20
Tape #7172
By Chuck Smith

Psalm 17, a prayer of David. This is a prayer thought to be offered to the Lord at a time when he was being pursued by Saul. From the style of the psalm, it would seem to be one of David's earlier psalms. In the earlier psalms, David was asking the Lord to bless him for his righteousness' sake. Now in David's early life, he had a tremendous faith in God. You remember the stories of his exploits because of his faith in God. Killing of the lion, the killing of the bear, his willingness to go out against Goliath because of his trust in the Lord. And that early trust in the Lord was manifested by his response to Goliath when he said, Am I a dog that you would send a child out to fight me and he said to David, Go home before I cut you up and feed you to the birds.

And David expressing that kind of faith and confidence that he had in God said, You come against me with a sword and with a spear. But I come against you in the name of the living God that you have defiled. And I will cut you up and your whole army and feed you to the birds. He had that kind of confidence in God (1 Samuel 17).

He was very respectful of God's anointed. Though he had every reason to turn on Saul, and even opportunity to do so, to take vengeance upon Saul who had been pursuing him without a cause, David did not lift a hand against Saul because he recognized that God's hand of anointing was upon him. God had anointed him to be the king over Israel and he refused to touch the anointed of God even though the anointed had long left Saul, David would not put his hand against him.

And so in David's early actions, he had done very commendably, very righteously. In the earlier psalms, he is prone to ask God to look upon his righteousness and to bless him and all because of his righteousness. In the later years, after David had slipped and fallen a few times, no longer was he asking God to remember him for his righteousness' sake but he was asking God to deal with him according to God's mercy. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.

The whole tone of David changed as the years went by and as he experienced his own fall into sin and the realization of his need for the mercy of God. So the fact that in the psalm, David in pleading his cause, his righteousness, indicates that it is one of the earlier psalms of David. And so he starts the psalm with pretty much that.

Hear the right, O LORD [and I'm right], attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips (17:1).

There's not a double talk. There's not deception.

Let my sentence come forth from Your presence; let your eyes behold the things that are equal (17:2).

Lord, I'm looking for equality here. He had been innocent as far as Saul was concerned. Saul was accusing him of trying to destroy him but David, and there were those that were against David and feeding on this obsession of Saul. And they were saying that David was lying in wait for him and feeding on this obsession but David was innocent of that and so he said,

You have proved my heart; You have visited me in the night; You have tried me, and You will find nothing (17:3)

Lord, I'm innocent. Innocent in regards to Saul and that is true.

I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. Concerning the works of men, by the word of Your lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer (17:3,4).

Through the word of God, the word that came from God, David had kept himself from the path of the destroyer. "Thy word, David said, have I hid in my heart, O Lord, that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11). And David here is attributing his stand for righteousness because of the fact that the word of God was hid away in his heart. "By Thy words I've kept myself from the path of the destroyer."

God's word is our power against temptation. It is so important that we be fortified inwardly by the word of God. When Jesus faced the temptation of Satan, He responded to every temptation by the word. It is written, Jesus said. And He quoted the word to Satan as His defense. "The word is alive and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12), and is referred to as the "sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17). And believing that the greatest defense is a good offense. That word of God within our hearts is a tremendous defense for us against the power, the subtleties of the enemy.

And so, "by the word of Your lips I have been kept from the path of the destroyer."

Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not (17:5).

Here is the petition of David. It is a prayer of David and the prayer begins by asking God to give a correct equal judgment in the case. "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not."

For I have called upon thee, for You will hear, O God: incline Your ear to hear my speech (17:6).

So the praying to God for an audience that God will listen.

Show thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them that put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them (17:7).

Here really, I love this. How that God will save by His right hand those that put their trust in Him. I have found something very interesting in my own life. And that is, if I seek to defend myself from the accusations and false charges that are made, if I go out and try to defend myself, God will let me do it. He'll let me defend myself. And I found I'm not capable of defending myself. I've also discovered if I will commit my defense to the Lord, He will defend me. The Lord is my defender and my shield. And so David is saying much the same here. "You save by Your right hand those that will put their trust in You from those that rise up against them."

Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of Your wings (17:8),

In the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy, this psalm of Moses and no doubt, David had memorized this psalm of Moses, most of the young Jewish boys had, it was a song that was a traditional Jewish song. In the tenth and eleventh verses, in the last portion of verse ten, Deuteronomy 32, he speaks about how "God led him about [that is, Jacob], as the apple of His eye." As just something special in the eye of God. And then he said, "As the eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, and taketh them, and beareth them on her wings: So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him" (Deuteronomy 32:10-12).

And so, "keep me as the apple of your eye, hide me under the shadow of Your wings."

From the wicked that oppress me (17:9),

Hide me from the wicked who would oppress me.

from my deadly enemies, who encircle me (17:9).

Many times as David was fleeing from Saul, he was trapped. They had him. And yet the Lord delivered him.

They are enclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly. They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth; Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places (17:10-12).

These guys are ready to pounce on me. They're setting ambushes for me wherever I go.

Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword: From men which are thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life (17:13,14),

How true that is. The men of the world who have their portion in this life. There are people who have made their whole investment in this life. They are looking to draw from this life all that they can. Their portion is in this life. Our portion is in the Lord.

they are full of children, and they leave their substance to their babes. As for me (17:14,15),

In contrast to those whose portion is in this life. "As for me,"

I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, in thy likeness (17:15).

So David speaks of the hope that he has of eternal life. Of God's kingdom. I will be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness. John said, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, it doesn't yet appear what we're

going to be: but we know that, when He appears, we will be like Him; we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2). “And I will be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness.”

Man was made originally in the image of God. God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And God created man in His image. But through sin, man fell from that likeness of God, from the image of God. And man has fallen so far from the image of God that it is difficult in this state and stage of history to even understand what the purposes of God were in creation of man. And we are sort of out to sea as far as difficulty in knowing just what God’s purposes were for man when He created him because in looking around at men, it is hard to see the purposes of God. And we hear a lot of people saying, But why would God create man for the sorrow and the pain and all of these things? If He were a God of love.

If we want to see the purposes of God, of course we must look at Jesus Christ. He said, Here is the One I am well pleased with. God received Him up into glory. His witness to the world of the righteousness of Christ, being that which God would receive. The purpose of God sending His Son Jesus Christ was to restore lost man back into the image of God. And as I believe in Jesus Christ and as I yield my life to the influences of the Holy Spirit, day by day the Spirit is working in me conforming me into the image of Christ once again. So that God’s work of restoration. Paul said, “We all, with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed from glory to glory even into the same image, according to His Spirit that is working in us” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Paul speaks of the purpose of the church in Ephesians 4. “As the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, the building up or the edifying of the body of Christ: until we all come into that fully matured Christian, unto the measure of the stature of the image of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12,13). God is as an artist working in your life. Many times as an artist is at work and as he is doing the forming, chiseling out here and there, and taking and forming that piece of shapeless marble, there are many times as you look at the progress of the work and you wonder, Just what in the world could ever come out of that?

Sometimes we look at our own lives and we wonder, What in the world can ever come out of this and that? But as God works, our lives begin to take shape as He forms us into His own image once again. If you want to know what you’re going to look like, what you’re going to be like, just look at Jesus Christ. We should be like Him. We shall see Him as He is. That’s God’s ultimate goal in my life. That’s the purpose of the work of the Spirit in my life is to conform me into the image of Christ.

David said, “I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness.” I join with David in that. I will be satisfied in that glorious day when I awake in His likeness.

The eighteenth psalm is another,

Psalm of David, the servant of the LORD, who spoke unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said (18:1),

And thus we get the introduction into the psalm written probably by David as a little preface to this psalm giving you the occasion of his writing of it. Saul had been pursuing David, seeking to destroy David. Many ambushes were set against David and there were times when David had felt that he had had it. He thought, Man, this is it. And he had really despaired of escaping and yet God delivered him. God provided the way of escape. And so this is one of those experiences when Saul had him trapped, he thought it was over and God delivered him and delivered him in a very unusual way. A combined tremendous storm and an earthquake. And through the storm and the earthquake, those that had set themselves against David were totally discomfited and David escaped out of their hands. There came the floods and so he describes this deliverance of God. And he attributes the deliverance to the hand of God because he realized that he was trapped. He had had it. But yet the Lord delivered him. So I will love the Lord.

I will love thee, O LORD, my strength (18:1).

Notice what he attributes to God as far as defense and strength.

For the LORD is my rock (18:2),

The rock is always looked upon as a symbol of strength. Hard as a rock. The rock of defense. The word rock here in the Hebrew is *cela* and it is often used for the rock city of Petra. The Lord is my *cela*, my rock.

and He is my fortress, He’s my deliverer; He’s my God, He’s my strength, He’s my buckler, He’s the horn of my salvation (18:2),

The horn was always again used as a symbol of strength. And then He is,
my high tower (18:2).

The high tower was also always looked upon as that position of strength and advantage over the enemy. And he sees the Lord as being all of these things to him.

How important that we also learn to view the Lord as these things to us. What is the Lord to you? Many times we think our strength is in ourselves. Our defense is in our feet. I can run fast. But the Lord is my rock. He's my fortress. He 's my deliverer. He's my strength. He's my buckler. He's the horn of my salvation. He's my high tower.

David had just seen the mighty hand of God in delivering him from the hand of the enemy and he recognizes God in the deliverance. And thus he declares,

I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: and so shall I be saved from mine enemies (18:3).

Saved from my enemies, not by my wisdom, not by my abilities but by the Lord who is my strength, my rock, my fortress.

The sorrows of death had encircled me (18:4),

David thought he had had it. He figured it was over.

the floods of ungodly men made me afraid (18:4).

The troops of Saul had poured in. They had surrounded him. Did look like there was absolutely no way out.

The sorrows of hell encircled me: for I was in the trap of death (18:5).

They had trapped him. Caught in the ambush. He could see no way out.

In my distress I called upon the LORD, I cried unto my God: and He heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears (18:6).

And then he describes how God came to his assistance.

The earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was angry (18:7).

There came this severe earthquake over a prolonged period of time. And with the earthquake and the fissures opening up, there were actually volcanic type of eruptions.

There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet (18:8,9).

And so this storm moved in and the heavens became dark and as the clouds when it really starts to pour, it looks like the clouds just sort of descend and you can't see more than a block or so because of the heavy downpour as the clouds just move down and dump its rain. "The heavens bowed, came down: darkness under His feet."

And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly (18:10):

Cherub, one of the great angels.

he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. Then the channels of waters were seen (18:10-15),

Over there in that land, it's land that is prone to flash floods. They have all of these wadies that in a few moments can become raging torrents of water. Especially down in the area where David had been fleeing from Saul, the area of the wilderness near Engedi. And I have seen there in Engedi where there would be flash floods that would just come pouring down those wadies and you won't even. The sun may be shining but up in the hills up above in Hebron, it would be raining these tremendous storms and these wadies just fill with water, the torrents come pouring through.

And so David said, "Then the channels of waters were seen,"

and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my

strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me (18:15-17).

David's glorious deliverance by God in this supernatural way but his recognition of God in it.

I think that because God often uses what we look upon as natural events, that we're prone to cast off as coincidence many times that work of God and that help of God. Like the little kid who was up on the barn roof playing and suddenly he lost his grip and he began to slide down the barn roof and he was tumbling and he cried out, O God, help me. God, save me. And about that time his pants got caught in the nail and he came to a ripping stop and he turned and said, Never mind, God, the nail stopped me. We often are that way. We cry upon the Lord in our distress, in our trouble, the Lord delivers in a natural way. We say, Never mind, Lord, the rain turned back. And they were distracted by this or that or the other. We fail to see the hand of the Lord and give proper credit and glory to God for His help.

"My enemies were too strong for me."

They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place (18:18,19);

He had been hemmed up in this valley, had been trapped. And the Lord brought him out into the wide open spaces where he could escape easily from the enemies.

he delivered me, because he delighted in me. The LORD rewarded me (18:19,20)

Again this is one of David's earlier psalms before he became king, before his fall. And so "the Lord rewarded me,"

according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD (18:20,21),

In the 119th psalm, that is a psalm that is devoted to the word of the Lord, he speaks in that psalm of the ways of the Lord in several locations and it is actually the ways that God has declared. So "I have kept the ways of the Lord,"

and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all of his judgments (18:21,22)

Again a reference to the written law of God. "All of his judgments,"

were before me, and I did not put away his statutes [the rules that God established I did not put them] from me (18:22).

So the ways of the Lord, the judgments of the Lord, the statutes of the Lord.

I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity. Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight (18:23,24).

As I say, this is David's earlier experience. He changes his tune quite dramatically after experiencing his own personal fall. David said,

With the merciful (18:25)

And David had been merciful to Saul. He had the opportunity to slay him. He had the motive to slay him. He had the encouragement to slay him. But he would not touch him, he was merciful and he said, "With the merciful,"

You will show yourself merciful; with the upright You will show yourself upright (18:25);

Jesus in the sermon on the mount said, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7). David said that here. "With the merciful, Thou will show Thyself merciful."

With the pure You will show Yourself pure; [but on the other side of the coin] with the froward You will show Yourself froward. For You will save the afflicted people; but You will bring down those with the haughty looks. For You will light my candle: the LORD my God will lighten my darkness. [And I love this.] For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall (18:26-29).

David is a hero of mine. If there were another time of history that I would like to have lived, I would have liked to have lived in the time of David and been one of those guys that was around David. I like to have run with David. I would like to have run through the troops with David. I like to have leaped over the wall. The guy was a guy of action and he appeals to me. He's my kind of guy really. I really think that it would be exciting to be around this guy David who had such trust in the Lord. He was daring, he was ready to go for it, challenge anybody, the giant or anybody else. And then when Saul had pursued him, David was

there on the hillside and they were hiding, and they saw Saul and the troops coming in—they were in pursuit of David, they're closing in on him—and they watched these guys, it was evening and they watched them as they all bedded down, and after they all got bedded down, David turned around and said, Hey, which one of you guys would like to go down with me into the camp of Saul? I can go right down to where these guys had all gone to sleep. The guys who were trying to kill me.

I would like to have been there. I'll go with you, David. Let's go and venture on. And so here he is, "For by thee, O Lord, I have run through the troops." Here were the guys running and he charged through the troops, leaping over wall.

As for God, his way is perfect (18:30):

The law of the Lord is perfect and the way equated to the ways that God has set forth in His word.

the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler (18:30)

Going back to the first part of the psalm,

to all of those who trust in him (18:30).

The armament.

For who is God save Jehovah? who is a rock save our God? It is God that girds me with strength, and makes my way complete. He makes my feet like hinds' feet [or like deer feet], and He sets me upon the high places (18:31-33).

Or the goats' feet. Engedi is a place that has a lot of ibex. These ibex are interesting to watch. As a general rule, when we go to Engedi we see the ibex on the hillside. Beautiful animals with these long horns. They go right up the side of these cliffs. You can't believe the way they can go right up of a cliff. You see them standing. You wonder, How in the world did they get to that perch? And so David is saying, You make my feet like these ibex's, and You set me on my high places. God is my strength, my fortress, my buckler, my shield.

And then David said. People have a little trouble with this. I don't but some people do.

He teaches my hands to war, so that the bow of steel is broken in my arms (18:34).

We are in a battle and people don't seem to realize that. But our battle is not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and the spirit forces in high places. But if you don't realize that we are in a real spiritual battle, then you're at a disadvantage because the enemy can just come at you from all different directions. You think, Oh my, what calamities befall me. Oh my! Oh my! all the way through and you don't have any defenses. You're not prepared. You need to know that the enemy is out to destroy you. You're in a strong conflict. The flesh versus the spirit. And the enemy is seeking to draw you after the flesh and God is seeking to draw you after the Spirit. This spiritual battle rages around us.

"The Lord has taught my hands to war." The weapons of our warfare though are not carnal but they are mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of the enemy. And so through prayer and all God has given to us, those weapons by which we can have victory in the spiritual conflict.

Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation (18:35):

So the Lord is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, my strength, my buckler, the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and now the shield of thy salvation.

and thy right hand holds me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great (18:35).

That's quite a phrase there. "Thy gentleness hath made me great." I think the real picture of strength is in not the flying arrow but in the steady bow. The capacity to destroy but yet not doing it. There is real strength. Anybody can fly off and let fly. But real strength is having the capacity to destroy the enemy and not moving against him. And so the gentleness that is there. "Thy gentleness has made me great."

Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, my feet did not slip. I have pursued mine enemies, I've overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed. I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet. For You have girded me with your strength unto battle: You have subdued under me those that rose up against me. You have also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me. They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto Jehovah, but he did not answer them. Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets. For You have delivered me from the strivings of the people; You have made me the head of the

heathen: a people whom I have not known shall serve me (18:36-43).

David speaks about the victories that God gave to him over the enemies of the Lord.

As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me. The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places. For the LORD liveth (18:44-46);

All through the psalm, he has used the rock as a symbol of the Lord and of the Lord's strength. "The Lord liveth;"

and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted (18:46).

Again going back into Deuteronomy chapter thirty-two, this song of Moses of which David had alluded earlier in the apple of the eye and all, in that psalm of Moses, verse four, "He is the rock, His work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." And then in verse fifteen, "Jeshurun had forsaken God which had made him, he lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." And then in verse eighteen, "Of the Rock that begat thee thou art not mindful, you have forgotten God who formed thee" (Deuteronomy 32:4,15,18).

In Daniel as he was interpreting the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, who saw in his dream prophetically the kingdoms that would govern over the world, ending with the federation of ten kings that would be rising out of the former Roman empire and it says, During the days of these kings, the ten toes of this vision, as he was watching it. This image that represented world governing empires, as he was watching the image, there came a rock not cut with hands and it struck the image in its feet so that the whole image crumbled and the rock began to grow into a mountain that covered the whole earth. And in the interpreting of this dream, "During the days of those ten kings shall the Lord of heaven come and establish a kingdom, that shall never end" (Daniel 2:44). God's kingdom filling the earth.

And so that symbol of the rock. It's carried through in the scripture. Their rock is not as our rock. Talking about the defense or the strength of the heathen. They are trusting in things that will not hold them up. So "the Lord liveth, blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted."

It is God that avenges me, and He has subdued the people under me. He has delivered me from my enemies: yes, He lifted me up above those that rise up against me: and He has delivered me from the violent man. Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name (18:47-49).

My response to God. He delivered me. He set me free. He gave the enemies into my hands and as the result, I will give thanks to the Lord and I will sing praises unto His name.

Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and showeth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore (18:50).

Here is David, though he is not yet anointed king, Saul is still pursuing him. Samuel has already visited him and anointed him as the king. Saul's still on the throne but David is the anointed king. And he recognizes that. He knows that. And so great deliverance has God given to His king. He had rejected Saul from being king. David was now God's king and He shows mercy to His anointed. Unto David and to David's seed for evermore.

Seed singular. For that seed that David is referring to, of course, is Jesus Christ. Even as with Abraham, "Through his seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 22:18). "Seed singular, as of one; not seeds plural, As of many, for that seed is Christ" (Galatians 3:16). And to his seed, David's seed, for evermore, the mercies of God.

In chapter nineteen, David declares how that God has revealed Himself to man in nature. Paul the apostle sort of picks this up in Romans chapter one. Again declaring that those things which can be known of God are clearly revealed in His creation. God has revealed Himself through creation. Creation can tell us many things about God. Looking around at the universe in a rational way can reveal much truth concerning God. The problem with man is that he is, for the most part, observing nature irrationally.

The heavens declare the glory of God (19:1);

That is, they are speaking to us of the glory of God. When you look up into that night sky, you see the stars, you see the planets, you see the moon. If you will listen, they will declare to you the glory of God. The immensity of God. The tremendous power of God in bringing them into existence in establishing them in

their orbits. They speak to you of the tremendous might and the power of the eternal, infinite God.

and the firmament [the earth around us] shows his handiwork [or the work of His fingers]. Day after day they are speaking to us, and night after night they are revealing knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard (19:1-3).

The voice of nature is a universal language. So that you can go to any place on the earth, any cultural group of people and there is that belief naturally in a supernatural being. It is true that their belief systems are all messed up. There are some that worship the stars. There are some that worship the moon. There are some that worship nature. In Africa, there's a lot of worship of nature. But that's because man looks at nature irrationally. It is not rational to look at the tree and observe its capacity of bringing forth fruit with the seed in the fruit that has the genetic code to reproduce that tree and bring forth similar fruit. Marvelous.

To look at the pine tree, to see its capacity to produce a cone and then within that cone, place all of these little seeds that have the genetic code to reproduce that pine tree. But as that cone begins to get dry and open up that it might distribute those seeds. For if they remained clustered in the cone, it would never reproduce itself. So it dries and as it dries, it opens and as it opens, those little seeds may drop out. But if they drop straight under the tree, they'll never have a chance to grow because the shade of that tree will keep them from getting enough sunshine and the tree drawing the strength and all from the soil, they won't be able to grow. So they need to spread out. And so God designed this little fin on that seed so that when the cones open out and that little seed is released, that fin causes it to spin like a helicopter and it spins out far enough away from the pine tree so that when it lands, it can take root and grow and develop into a new pine tree. All of these, people say, My, that's God. And they sit there and they worship the tree. And that's irrational.

The rational way to observe this is to see it and to marvel at its design and to be in awe and wonder at the glory of design and then worship the God who with such wisdom designed it so. You see, men stop short. And as Paul said, "They worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever more" (Romans 1:25). And that has been man's mistake is stopping short and worshipping the creation rather than the Creator.

As you look around the world in which we live today, you see that men still stop short. And so many people are involved in the worship of material things. Man-made things. And sometimes God-made things. But in the material, they don't take the next step back and worship the God who created all of these things or gave wisdom to man to create these things. So "they worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator."

As he tells about God speaking, he said,

Their line is gone out through all the earth, their words to the end of the world (19:4).

Universally, God has spoken to man and there is that universal belief in the existence of God because of nature.

In them He has set a tent for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices as a strong man to run a race (19:4,5).

Everyday the sun makes its race through the sky.

His going forth is from the end of the heavens, and his circuit [or his revolution, the orbit of the sun] to the ends of it: and there is nothing that is hid from the heat thereof (19:6).

But because man did not properly hear the voice of God in nature, began to stop short and worship creation rather than the Creator. It was necessary that God speak more specifically to man to reveal Himself and His will. Nature does tell us that there are certain things that are natural and there are things that are unnatural. That's the story of nature.

Paul calls upon the witness of nature for certain things. He says, "Does not even nature itself tell you that it's a shame if a man has long hair? It's a glory to a woman to have long hair" (1 Corinthians 11:14,15). Beautiful. Exciting. But for a man to have long hair down past his waist, that's a shame. Doesn't nature itself teach you that that's a shame? It's unnatural for a man to have long hair like that. No, it doesn't say it's a sin. Just says nature tells you it's a shame. So you see a guy going down the street with hair down past his waist. You say, What a shame. Nature tells you that. Of course on the other end of the spectrum, shame not to have any hair, too. Whenever I get out my comb and look in the mirror, I say, What a shame. Nothing to comb.

Nature teaches us by our very biological make-up. Nature teaches us that sexual relationships are

designed for a man and a woman. And for a man to seek to have sexual relationships with another man is unnatural. We weren't created that way. And so sexual unions between women and women and men and men are unnatural. Just nature itself teaches you that. But man has come to the place of rejecting nature. And they have turned to unnatural things. There are a lot of things that nature would teach us if we would just observe and be observant of nature. But because man twisted the voice, God spoke then through His law.

The law of the LORD is perfect (19:7),

The word law there in the Hebrew is torah. So we realize that in referring to the law of the Lord, the torah, He's referring to the first five books in our Bible, the book of Moses, Pentateuch. And of these first five books, the torah, which is so highly respected and revered by the Jews. David says of it, It is perfect.

it converts the soul (19:7):

The soul that is in darkness it brings into the light. It brings life from death. It's perfect. It converts the soul.

the testimony of the LORD is sure (19:7),

The testimony is the witness of God and it is the witness of God that is in the law. So many times God would say, I testify to you this day. I declare to you. If you will do this, then I will do this. But if you do that, then this is what I will do. And God established His testimonies, His witness with men these certain consequences of our activities. If they are evil, the consequential evil that shall come. If they are good, the consequential blessings that will come out of our obedience to His laws, to His statutes, to His commandments. And so God's testimony and God's witness concerning His laws.

The statutes or the rules, the commandments which God established, they are right, rejoicing the heart (19:8):

Notice the progression here, "the law, the Torah, converts the soul." And so first of all, there is the conversion. Secondly, "the testimonies of the Lord make wise the simple." Once you've been converted, then God begins to instruct you and give you wisdom. It makes wise the simple. And then the next, "The statutes of the Lord rejoice the heart." As you begin to walk in the path of the Lord, the rejoicing within your heart. The commandment, and of course we have those ten commandments but this is more encompassing than that, God gave His commandments throughout the Torah.

the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes (19:8).

Causes me to see how God would have me to live. What God would have me to do.

The fear or the reverence of the LORD is pure, clean, it endures for ever (19:9):

Today the world in which we live is so irreverent. People seem to take delight and pleasure in speaking irreverently of God or of Jesus Christ. If you profess your faith in Jesus Christ, there are many who will just mock you. They will ridicule you. Horrible irreverence for God. And the movie industry has done a lot to promote that irreverence, as well as the television industry. A lot of these sitcoms are so totally irreverent. Deliberately so, designed to be so. Designed to make fun of the person who would dare to believe in God or trust in God. The political cartoonists, the newspapers, the liberal press is so totally irreverent. "Fear of the Lord is clean, reverence of God is clean, it endures for ever." "He that doeth the will of God shall abide forever" (1 John 2:17).

the judgments of the LORD are true (19:9).

This is the awesome thing.

they're righteous altogether (19:9).

And God has declared His judgments that will come if we disregard His commands. If we turn our backs upon Him. If we go in our own path away from Him, God has declared the tragedy that will befall us. And "the judgments of the Lord are true," you can be sure that your sins will find you out and that the judgment of God will be righteous. This is something that Satan seems to constantly challenge and that is, How can God judge in righteousness? And so many times when they see the effects of man's sin, they then endeavor to blame God for the consequences of the very things that God warned you would happen.

If you were on the Empire State building and a guy was climbing over the fence, and standing on the ledge and going to jump and you say, Man, don't jump. You'll kill yourself. Don't jump. That's a long way down, man. You'll break every bone in your body. Climb back over here. Don't jump. If he goes ahead and

jumps, and say at the bottom he survives for just long enough to utter a few words, and you get on the elevator and you rush down to the bottom and you see his broken, bloody body and he looks at you and he says, How dirty and rotten of you to allow me to have all this pain and all this hurt! Man, I hurt. I hate you. Wait a minute, man. I only told you the consequences of what would happen if you did what you did. You did it in spite of what I said.

This is the same thing that we have with God. God has warned us that certain actions or activities are going to bring certain consequences. Man goes ahead and does it. And then in the midst of his pain he says, I don't know why God would allow this to happen to me. And here God was warning you all the time. And you get angry with God now because what He said would happen has happened and now you're mad at Him because He said it was going to happen.

God knew the inevitable consequence of that kind of activity. And "the law of the Lord is perfect. The testimonies of the Lord are sure, and the judgments of the Lord are true." And what God has said will happen will indeed happen. You can't escape it.

But on the other hand, it is totally wrong then to blame God for these adverse consequences. When all He was trying to do is warn you that this kind of action is going to bring this kind of result. You're going to reap this.

Now concerning homosexuality. Paul the apostle in Romans chapter one talks about how that men "did not glorify God as God, neither were they thankful; even though they knew God. They would not glorify Him as God, neither were thankful; and thus they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened. And professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. Because they changed the glory of an incorruptible God."

Again I think of, here is this incorruptible holy, pure, righteous, powerful God and here are these puny little men down here thinking it's funny and smart and clever to blaspheme and to bring His name into disrepute. They "changed the glory of this incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man." They tried to make God like themselves. Lustful and all. "And to birds, the fourfooted beasts, and the creeping things.

"Therefore God gave them up to this uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, that they might dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Because they changed the truth of God into a lie, and they worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. So be it. For this cause God gave them up to their vile affections: for even women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly" (Romans 1:21-27).

Talk about unseemly. This business of feasting, this business of water sports, this business of scathing and rimming, talk about unseemly. God's given them up to these vile, horrible things. But what will be the result? "Receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which is fitting or right for what they are doing" (Romans 1:27).

And so we see that through these practices, a person's immunal system is broken down because the male sperm becomes a foreign protein in the body. And when a person has multiple sexual encounters in a single night, as they often do--ten or twelve partners in one night, night after night, many of them testifying to over a hundred different partners over a few months' time--the introduction of all of these foreign protein into their body breaks down their immunal system because the immunal system sets up anti-bodies to fight against the foreign protein. But the immunal system gets overworked. It breaks down and then it cannot build up the anti-bodies properly to fight against the other sexually transmitted diseases, viruses and bacteria. Thus we have the AIDS, the invasion of a virus into the body that actually attacks the immunal system itself. They've overworked the immune system and so what does God do? He allows this virus which was always there but the body had a strong enough immunal system to throw it off.

But now the virus that attacks this weakened immune system and they receive in their own bodies the recompense for these unnatural things which is mete or which is deserving. "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." The law, the commandments, the statutes are,

More to be desired are they than gold (19:10),

They're valuable.

yea, than much fine gold: they're sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. For by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward (19:10,11).

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But whose delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law does he meditate day and night. For he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that will bring forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does will prosper" (Psalm 1:1-3). "The law of the Lord is just and righteous altogether." And in keeping of it, there is great reward. And so David's prayer, his question first.

Who can understand his errors? cleanse me from secret sins (19:12).

In the 139th psalm, David said, "Thou has searched me, O Lord, and known me. You know my downsittings and my uprisings, you understand my thoughts in their origins. Such knowledge is too great for me; I cannot attain it" (Psalm 139:1,2,6). David said I really don't know myself.

God said through Jeremiah, "The heart is deceitful, and desperately wicked: who can know it? But God said, I the Lord do search the hearts" (Jeremiah 17:9,10). David says, Lord, you know my heart. You search me, You know me. And he ends that psalm by praying, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me: And see if there be some way of wickedness in me" (Psalm 139:23,24).

Here David is much, Lord, keep me from those secret sins. From those sins I'm not even aware of. I may be doing something that is pleasing to God. I'm not aware of it. God, keep me from it. But even more,

Keep me from presumptuous sins (19:13);

There are some sins that are just presumptuous. They are deliberate. They are open rebellion against the law of the Lord. So "keep me from those presumptuous sins."

let them not have dominion over me (19:13):

It is interesting, you get into presumptuous sin and it takes a hold and gets a grip on your life. To get involved in looking at pornographic material is a presumptuous sin and what it will do is get dominion over you. It will get a power on your life. It will get a hold on you and it will trap you and it will hold you. To get involved in drugs is a presumptuous sin and when you get involved in drugs, it soon has dominion over you. That's the effect of presumptuous sin. It gets a power, a hold upon your life. And so, "keep me from these presumptuous sins that they won't have dominion over me."

then shall I be upright, and I'll be innocent from the great transgression (19:13).

And then this prayer of David and how I love it. And surely it ought to be the prayer of all of our hearts. In fact, let's just read it together and make it our prayer as we read it.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer (19:14).

May that always be our prayer. "Let the words of my mouth be pure" because it is the fear of the Lord that is pure. Let the words of my mouth be pure. "Let the meditation of my heart be pure," that I not be fantasizing on things that are against God's law. That I not even think on these things. That I not allow my mind to, as Jesus said, "You've heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, if you look upon a woman and lust after her in your heart" (Matthew 5:28); the meditation of my mind, my heart, Lord, let it be acceptable in Your sight. Don't even let me dwell on those things in my mind, in my heart. Keep me pure, purify my heart, O God. My mind, my mouth. Let it be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord. "Let it be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."

Twentieth psalm is a short, short little psalm and it is really a psalm in which David sort of expresses his desires towards a friend in the beginning of the psalm. I want you to read this next week and think of me when you read it. Just sort of, For Chuck, Lord.

The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee (20:1);

So I'm thinking of you now as I'm reading this. This is addressed, as far as I'm concerned, for you. May "the Lord defend you in the day of trouble. May the name of the God of Jacob defend you. May the Lord hear you in the day of trouble. May His name defend" you and may He,

Send you help from the sanctuary, and strengthen you out of Zion; May He remember all of Your

offerings, and accept your sacrifices; May He grant you according to your own heart, and may He fulfil all your counsel (20:2-4).

David then responds,

We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: may the LORD fulfil all your prayers. Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed (20:5,6);

He had been delivered by God.

he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand. There are some who trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of Jehovah our God (20:6,7).

Those that trust in chariots and horses,

They are brought down and fallen: but we have risen, and we stand up straight. Save, O LORD: let the king hear us when we call (20:8,9).

Who are you trusting in tonight for the strength of the United States? Some trust in F-14s, tanks, SDI, but we will trust in the Lord. The name of Jehovah our God. They are brought down but we rise and stand up. May the Lord hear us when we call.