

Audio Transcript of Sermon

May 29, 2021

Oppression

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. When we study the Bible, we see that one of the evils that permeates civilization, including sometimes the very religious, is oppression. Oppression is thought of in slightly different ways, including prolonged cruel or unjust treatment or control. Some view mental pressure or distress as oppression. When committed by a public servant paid with tax dollars, oppression can be viewed and in some localities be charged as a criminal act. Today, we will look at oppression and see how this permeated ancient Israel during its decline, and how when Jesus came to earth, one of the reasons was to free the oppressed.

Oppression goes back to Satan the devil, who seeks to enslave us to the evil ways that stand in rebellion to the truth that is God. In religious circles, sometimes those who stand to fight Satan, especially religious leaders, who were once oppressed become the oppressors. Whether oppression occurs through physical, mental, or spiritual means, oppression is not an act for us to take. God rules in righteousness, and we live our life with a knowledge of righteousness that frequently comes up short of that mark.

David wrote of oppression as he was the victim of oppression through Saul. Living a life and being oppressed, David still found occasion to praise God, knowing that even when life was challenging, God had David's back. David also knew that the royal houses of nations were subject to the frailty of the human condition and that only God's throne would be established forever, making God the only righteous judge. David understood that in addition to God's righteousness and God's throne enduring forever, that God was also a refuge, a place of safety, not only in times of trouble, but for the oppressed at any time. Psalm nine verse one.

Psalm 9:1-9

1. I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.

2. I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.

- 3. When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence.**
- 4. For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right.**
- 5. Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.**
- 6. O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them.**
- 7. But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment.**
- 8. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.**
- 9. The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.**

When Jesus was beginning His earthly ministry, one of the first things He did was to come to His hometown of Nazareth and go to the synagogue on the Sabbath to read from the scriptures. On this Sabbath, Jesus was given a scroll of the Book of Isaiah and began to read where it was written that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him to preach the gospel to the poor, brokenhearted, enslaved and imprisoned, to heal people both physically and spiritually, to free people from oppression, and to help people understand the Kingdom of God. When Jesus read this short passage he sat down and all eyes were on Him. Luke four verse sixteen.

Luke 4:16-20

- 16. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.**
- 17. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,**
- 18. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,**
- 19. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.**
- 20. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.**

The passage that Jesus read was from a later part of the Book of Isaiah. Isaiah chapter sixty-one verse one.

Isaiah 61:1-2

- 1. The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;**
- 2. To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;**

When we look at the prophetic books of the Old Testament, we see themes of punishment for sins and pleas from God for the people to repent. Without carefully looking at these books the casual observer might conclude that the people had blatantly rejected all aspects of God and were being punished for that total rejection. When we read these books, we begin to see the people had a form of religion. A foreigner passing through the land might consider that with all of the religious practices, the people were religious. Yet, when we read these books we see their religion was observed more for show rather than personal impact on the lives of others and their own life.

In Isaiah God describes the people of Israel as being morally corrupt like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah which God had destroyed. Isaiah shows that it is possible for a morally corrupt people to worship God, and for God to reject their worship of Him. During the time of Isaiah, the nation of Israel had devolved from the nation that knew God had delivered them from Egypt to a nation that was focused on things other than God. Isaiah shows that during this time the people still held to their religious traditions of sacrifice and offerings, and God shared this brought him no pleasure. Isaiah one verse ten.

Isaiah 1:10-17

- 10. Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.**
- 11. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.**

During this time the people still frequented the temple. They went to the temple when they were expected to go the temple, and yet this troubled God because the people were living a life not focused on God. These people had every appearance of faith and religion. They prayed frequently in private, in public, and during religious ceremonies. Their prayers were not pleasing to God. Verse twelve.

12. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

13. Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

14. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.

15. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

Their fault was not in going to the temple or praying. Their fault was in what else they were doing. In addition to practicing their religion, they also practiced evil and the type of evil they did is highlighted for us. The people considered the law rather than justice. Their faith became a tool of oppression and isolated the most vulnerable in society, those without parents and widows. God shows through Isaiah the people should have done differently. Verse sixteen.

16. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

17. Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

When we look at what the problem was with ancient Israel, we may think that today we have it much better because as Christians we have hope in eternal life through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the grace, forgiveness of sin, that is part of our faith today. How would God look at a Christian today who oppresses the most vulnerable in society? If a Christian day in and day out oppresses people, would forgiveness be given? Paul shows us in writing to the Romans what our attitude to sin should be. As Christians even though we are

forgiven of sins, that does not give us a license to sin. As Christians, we have no license to oppress. Romans six verse one.

Romans 6:1-4

- 1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?**
- 2. God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?**
- 3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?**
- 4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**

In other prophetic writings of the Old Testament, we see oppression as a recurring theme. In Malachi we read of the messenger that is sent before the return of Jesus, and what sins are mentioned at this time? Adultery, lying, and people who oppress employees, widows, orphans, and foreigners. Adultery and lying are mentioned in the ten commandments. Oppression is not and it is something that God hates. Malachi three verse one.

Malachi 3:1-5

- 1. Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.**
- 2. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:**
- 3. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.**
- 4. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.**
- 5. And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.**

In Zechariah, we see words of executing true judgment, mercy and compassion linked to not oppressing marginalized people like widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor. In reading Zechariah we may think that these were words were written to address circumstances only of that time. Consider today that in my county, The United States of America, we have senior citizens who lose their home by escalating property taxes, that the first living arrangement for adults who as children were orphans taken care of by government agencies is mostly homelessness. In my country we have established an immigration practice that has placed many immigrants in legal limbo while providing a cheaper source of labor. The system that supports the poor mostly keeps the poor impoverished, and this is through a nation that typically considers itself to be a Christian nation founded on the Bible. If God did not have mercy on ancient Israel, and if Paul tells us that we should not sin that grace may abound, why would we expect a different action from God today when what we do is very similar to what was done then? Zechariah seven verse eight.

Zechariah 7:8-14

8. And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying,

9. Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother:

10. And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.

11. But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.

12. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.

13. Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts:

14. But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate.

Within the church, are we guilty of oppression? Who is given the better places in the church, whether that be where a person sits during church or prominence within the church through offices like deacon and elder? Do we consider wealth and the accoutrements of wealth, or do we consider that what is important is not

personal wealth and the appearance of success but a richness of faith? James two verse one.

James 2:1-9

- 1. My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.**
- 2. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;**
- 3. And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:**
- 4. Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?**
- 5. Harken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?**
- 6. But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?**
- 7. Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?**
- 8. If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:**
- 9. But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.**

Isaiah writes of different types of oppression. Oppression ultimately ends in an act and begins with thought that is either orally stated, or written down. In our laws, in our written communication, we can do nothing to oppress others. Any type of logic could be used to justify reasons why there is a need to take action against the poor and the defenseless. God will remember later what we approve now. Isaiah ten verse one.

Isaiah 10:1-4

- 1. Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed;**
- 2. To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!**

3. And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?

4. Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

Proverbs contrasts mercy with oppression. It is when we oppress the poor we dishonor God. Proverbs fourteen verse thirty-one.

Proverbs 14:31

31. He that oppreseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.

In an Old Testament vision of the New Jerusalem, a vision similar to what is found in the Book of Revelation is described. Also described for us in Isaiah is an understanding that this New Jerusalem is established in righteousness and will be far from oppression. Isaiah fifty-four verse eleven.

Isaiah 54:11-17

11. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.

12. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.

13. And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

14. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.

15. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.

16. Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy.

17. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.

When we ask for God's blessing for ourselves and others we recognize forgiveness of sins and the healing power of God's mercy. We also acknowledge it is God who executes righteousness and judgment for all who are oppressed. We cannot oppress others and expect to receive God's blessing. Psalm one hundred three verse one.

Psalm 103:1-6

- 1. Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.**
- 2. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:**
- 3. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;**
- 4. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;**
- 5. Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.**
- 6. The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.**

Jeremiah writes of another style of oppression, where evil is called good. All oppression comes from Satan the devil who is the father of oppression. Jeremiah writes of people who lay in wait to entrap people through deceit. These people outwardly look successful and yet these people are successful because they gloss over the wickedness of people who come with status and ignore the needs of orphans. These people have a form of religion and the priests and followers feel blessed in this religion, albeit, it is a religion based on falsehoods. Jeremiah five verse twenty-six.

Jeremiah 5:26-31

- 26. For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men.**
- 27. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich.**
- 28. They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge.**
- 29. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?**
- 30. A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land;**

31. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?

When wages are not paid as agreed, the result is oppression. People who work count on their wages, and when wages are withheld the worker and the worker's family suffers. God has no mercy on anyone, including rich, powerful people, who withhold wages. Jeremiah twenty-two verse thirteen.

Jeremiah 22:13-19

13. Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work;

14. That saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion.

15. Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him?

16. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the LORD.

17. But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it.

18. Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory!

19. He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

The prophet Amos writes of people who oppress the poor and crush the needy while living the good life. When society becomes a place where poor and needy are preyed on, prey with an 'e', God will bring that society to nothing. Amos four verse one.

Amos 4:1-3

1. Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink.

2. The Lord GOD hath sworn by his holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks.

3. And ye shall go out at the breaches, every cow at that which is before her; and ye shall cast them into the palace, saith the LORD.

In his writings, Ezekiel writes of oppression along with idolatry. We should never consider that idolatry drives oppression, because evil drives both idolatry and oppression. Oppression and idolatry are both results of evil. With Ezekiel, the foreigner, orphan, and widow were oppressed. Ezekiel twenty-two verse one.

Ezekiel 22:1-8

- 1. Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,**
- 2. Now, thou son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the bloody city? yea, thou shalt shew her all her abominations.**
- 3. Then say thou, Thus saith the Lord GOD, The city sheddeth blood in the midst of it, that her time may come, and maketh idols against herself to defile herself.**
- 4. Thou art become guilty in thy blood that thou hast shed; and hast defiled thyself in thine idols which thou hast made; and thou hast caused thy days to draw near, and art come even unto thy years: therefore have I made thee a reproach unto the heathen, and a mocking to all countries.**
- 5. Those that be near, and those that be far from thee, shall mock thee, which art infamous and much vexed.**
- 6. Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood.**
- 7. In thee have they set light by father and mother: in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow.**

Ezekiel writes in verse eight that the people despised the holy things and profaned the sabbaths. Other prophets show that there was a form and ritual in keeping these days that God found dishonorable, and likely the same was happening with Ezekiel's account. As Christians who keep the Sabbath and Holy Days, we need to be mindful it is possible to have lots of knowledge about God's way of life and still oppress. When we oppress we dishonor God and also profane the Sabbath and Holy Days. Verse eight.

8. Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths.

In a land where the people are forgetting about God, oppression becomes legalized robbery as it hurts the poor and needy, as well as the foreigner. When the lines between that which is holy and that which is profane become blurred, we are on the edge of destruction. Ezekiel twenty-two verse twenty-three.

Ezekiel 22:23-29

23. And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

24. Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation.

25. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof.

26. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

27. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain.

28. And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken.

29. The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.

Oppression is so insidious that it often comes from people who choose to obey God. For instance during the Old Testament, there was a year of release, a time when debt was forgiven. God pointed out that if a person purposefully withheld assistance to a person right before this time, they would be sinning because they would be withholding assistance from a person in need. Because the year of release is no longer observed, we could easily gloss over this passage, or we can use it as an example of how we make a decision to oppress because we want to obey a provision of God's law. Deuteronomy fifteen verse seven.

Deuteronomy 15:7-12

7. If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother:

8. But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.

9. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee.

10. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.

11. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

12. And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee.

In Deuteronomy we also read of the pronouncement of curses on people who oppress people with disabilities, foreigners, orphans, and widows. Deuteronomy twenty-seven verse eighteen.

Deuteronomy 27:18-19

18. Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen.

19. Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen.

We trace our faith in Jesus Christ through Abraham and the children of Israel who were enslaved in Egypt. Because our faith is tied to a group of foreigners in the land of Egypt, we cannot oppress foreigners in our country, nor can we cause grief for widows and orphans. God will hear and defend them. Exodus twenty-two verse twenty-one.

Exodus 22:21-27

- 21. Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.**
- 22. Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child.**
- 23. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry;**
- 24. And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.**
- 25. If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury.**
- 26. If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down:**
- 27. For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious.**

David writes in the Book of Psalms and shows how God judges His people. Christians today are the people of God. Through David, we are told to defend the poor and orphans and do justice for the afflicted and needy, helping them escape that which is evil and the people who practice evil. When we do this we are the children of God. Psalm eighty-two verse one.

Psalm 82:1-8

- 1. God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.**
- 2. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.**
- 3. Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.**
- 4. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.**
- 5. They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.**
- 6. I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.**
- 7. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.**
- 8. Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.**

When we oppress people, we not only dishonor them, we dishonor God because we are all made in the image and after the likeness of God. Each day that we live God is perfecting that image and likeness in each of us, much like an artist will pour their heart and soul into artwork. As each of us yields ourself to God, we

allow God to work within us so that we might become perfect. We ourselves as imperfect people, cannot bring perfection to ourselves. Through oppression we express an attitude that others are not worthy of God's perfection. In life, we are to honor all people, including those who are typically oppressed. Among all people is the brotherhood, people who are called now of God, and these people are to be closer to us. First Peter two verse thirteen.

1 Peter 2:13-17

13. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

14. Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

15. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

16. As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

17. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

In life as we honor all people, we will encounter people down and out on their luck. How we respond to these poor people will determine whether we will have a blessing or a curse in our future. When we help the needy we will have a blessing. Proverbs twenty-eight verse twenty-five.

Proverbs 28:25-27

25. He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat.

26. He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

27. He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

Most of us are familiar with the final words of the first chapter of the Book of James. We are advised to be mindful of the words we use and reminded of pure and undefiled religion, to visit the orphans and widows and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. One of the many evils facing this world is oppression. James chapter one verse twenty-six.

James 1:26-27

26. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

27. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

As we praise God in our life it is because we know we can trust God who made the world we know, who helps people who are oppressed, needy, imprisoned, who have disabilities, foreigners, orphans, and widows. God shows His might by strengthening these people and weakening the wicked. Psalm one hundred forty-six verse one.

Psalm 146:1-10

1. Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul.

2. While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.

3. Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

4. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

5. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God:

6. Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever:

7. Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners:

8. The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous:

9. The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

10. The LORD shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD.

This Psalm ends similarly to the Book of Revelation showing that God will reign forever, and if we want to be in the Kingdom of God, we cannot oppress others and must defend those who are oppressed.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.