

Audio Transcript of Sermon
February 5, 2022
Striving for Spiritual Mastery

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Recently, we have considered our victory, our spiritual victory, and looked at the role of Jesus Christ and God the Father in our spiritual victory. With every victory comes a contest, a game, a struggle, or a conflict whether small or large. In the absence of some type of contest, game, struggle, or conflict there can be no victory because there is nothing to win. It makes no difference if what we are engaged in is large or small, victory is best achieved with a strategy, and to achieve our spiritual victory, to achieve spiritual mastery, we have to use spiritual strategies.

There are several accounts of strategies being used by God's people in the Bible, and one of the people who presented and implemented a strategy saved not only the nation he was living in, but many from surrounding nations as well. His success even changed the DNA of the children of Israel. Joseph was the favorite son of Jacob which must have irritated his brothers because they devised a plan to sell him into slavery. If you have grown up with a brother or sister, you probably experienced sibling rivalry to some degree. Chances are you never sold your sibling into slavery even if you wanted to.

Joseph found himself in Egypt even finding himself imprisoned after a false claim of sexual assault. While in prison, he had a chance encounter with servants of Pharaoh and interpreted a dream for them. Later when Pharaoh had a dream in need of interpreting, the cup-bearer remembered Joseph, and Joseph was summoned to Pharaoh to interpret a dream. We will pick up the account in Genesis forty-one verse twenty-five.

Genesis 41:25-52

25. And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do.

26. The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one.

27. And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine.

28. This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh.

29. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt:

30. And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land;

31. And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous.

32. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

Being able to interpret a dream is really cool, and meaningless if nothing is done with that awareness. Imagine if you had a dream where you dreamed of six numbers, a bonus number and a calendar date, and you interpreted this dream to mean God was giving you the winning lotto numbers for a certain date. If you took no action on that dream and its interpretation, you wouldn't be able to win the lotto, and on the calendar date when those numbers would be drawn imagine how you might feel. If you wanted to act on that dream, you would have to develop a simple strategy by which you could obtain a lottery ticket with those numbers.

In giving that lottery example on implementing a strategy, I don't make recommendations for or against playing a lottery and I remind everyone listening that the odds are not favorable to win any lottery. Some look at lotteries as an additional self-imposed tax on people who do not understand math.

Getting back to the story of Joseph, Joseph not only interpreted the dream, he provided a strategy to Pharaoh for Pharaoh to consider. Joseph told Pharaoh to appoint a wise and discreet person who would directly represent Pharaoh and have access to the entire country to set aside a large part of the harvest during the time of great plenty so that there would be enough food to survive the famine. We don't have exact differences in the amount of crops that was harvested. We do know that one-fifth of the harvest during the time of great

plenty was set aside, which implies that the harvest during the time of great plenty was at least five times a typical harvest.

Most of us if given a bumper crop of 500% or saw our paycheck multiply by five times would probably have a wild and long-termed celebration. Joseph knew better. Joseph explained that the food would have to be gathered up during multiple and successive incredible harvest seasons and safely stored in cities so that people would have enough food for the years of famine which would soon arise. What Pharaoh was being asked to do was the Egyptian version of building Noah's ark. To the average person and to the politically astute, it would seem stupid to set aside food during a time of incredible, a never-before-seen, time of plenty. Discretion was important as the politically astute could have used the knowledge to undermine and weaken Pharaoh. Pharaoh was unable to find a person to implement this strategy, and decided to give this responsibility to Joseph. Verse thirty-three.

33. Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt.

34. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.

35. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities.

36. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

37. And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.

38. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?

39. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art:

40. Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

Pharaoh declared before Joseph and all who were there with them that Joseph would represent Pharaoh and to signify this had Joseph dressed in all of the royal clothes and jewelry. In Egypt no action would be taken by anyone without

Joseph's consent. Joseph was given a wife, Asenath, who was the daughter of an Egyptian priest. Joseph then spent the next seven years making sure one-fifth of the harvest was gathered and safely stored and right before the famine came, Joseph's wife bore him two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Later these two sons would be considered tribes of Israel and given land in the promised land, tribes with Egyptian DNA. Verse forty-one.

41. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

42. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

43. And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.

44. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

45. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-phaera priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

46. And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

47. And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.

48. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same.

49. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number.

50. And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-phaera priest of On bare unto him.

51. And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

52. And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

At the very core of the strategies we use must be the understanding that without the blessing of God, what we do will only be temporary. Only with the blessing of God can we begin to dwell in the land of eternity. Solomon wrote that unless God

builds the house, it is a waste of time for us to work to build the house, that unless God protects His people, human-devised protections will break down. The very life we live is temporary and full of frustration, and we should take delight in the blessing that is our children. Psalm one hundred twenty-seven verse one.

Psalm 127:1-5

- 1. Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.**
- 2. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.**
- 3. Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward.**
- 4. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.**
- 5. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.**

When people cannot envision the end result, people often abandon hope. When people cannot envision the Kingdom of God, they abandon faith. Those who keep the law, who can envision the Kingdom of God, remain in the faith and are happy. And those who can envision the end result, whether it be the Kingdom of God or any other desired objective often see some type of strategy of how it will work out. Proverbs twenty-nine verse eighteen.

Proverbs 29:18

- 18. Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.**

During the end time there will be many who will provide a strategy of how to make it from where we are now to salvation with God, and many of these will be false prophets. Imagine what would have happened to Egypt and the world immediately around Egypt if Pharaoh would have listened to a person who gave him a false interpretation of his dream. A similar tragedy can happen to us today if we allow ourselves to listen to false prophets, and Jeremiah gives us an overall test we can use to determine if somebody is a false prophet. Jeremiah writes that false prophets tell people that God will allow them to live in peace, that they can do whatever they want to do, because no harm will come to them. In other words, Jeremiah tells us that false prophets deceive through flattery and tell

people to do what they want instead of what God would have them do, that all is well. Jeremiah twenty-three verse eleven.

Jeremiah 23:11-20

11. For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord.

12. Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the Lord .

13. And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err.

14. I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.

15. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets; Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land.

16. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Harken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord .

17. They say still unto them that despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.

18. For who hath stood in the counsel of the Lord, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it?

19. Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked.

20. The anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.

What Jeremiah writes about will happen in the latter days. Think about it. We live in a time that we consider to be the latter days. We live in a time where people routinely disregard what is taught in the Bible with people believing they can do what they want to do because God knows their heart. Doing what we want to do because God knows our heart is not the strategy that we need to use. Instead we

are to seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness knowing that our needs will be met by God. Matthew six verse twenty-five.

Matthew 6:25-34

25. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26. Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27. Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28. And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29. And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31. Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32. For after all these things do the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

In writing to the Colossians, Paul writes that if we expect to have salvation through Jesus Christ, we should do what Jesus Christ would expect of us knowing that Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God, and we should consider this first and instead of things on earth. Here on earth we are to subdue that human nature that is part of every one of us. We are to conquer it and not be conquered by it. Conquering our human nature is not a one and done type of deal. Conquering our human nature is a lifetime event, a battle that we will always be engaged in as long as we are human. Paul tells us to be watchful of thoughts of mind and action that can tell us our human nature is winning including sexual sins. But we also have to watch out for attitudes like anger and malice,

blasphemy, and filthy communication. If you have ever met a person who is negative, where things are always bad no matter what, you have met somebody with unresolved anger, and they are trying to impose their unresolved anger that is spiraling into bitterness to justify their own anger.

We know when the Spirit of God is controlling our life when we start to see we are merciful, kind, humble, meek, patient, tolerant, able to forgive, doing all in love acknowledging what we do is done because of Jesus Christ and giving thanks to God. Because none of us is perfect we should not look at this list as an indictment of condemnation for ourselves, but as checklist, an evaluation, to see where we are on the human nature to spiritual nature continuum. We look at ourselves not another person. Colossians three verse one.

Colossians 3:1-17

- 1. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.**
- 2. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.**
- 3. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.**
- 4. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.**
- 5. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:**
- 6. For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:**
- 7. In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.**
- 8. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.**
- 9. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;**
- 10. And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:**
- 11. Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.**
- 12. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;**

- 13. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.**
- 14. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.**
- 15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.**
- 16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.**
- 17. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.**

It is when we walk after the Holy Spirit and not after the flesh that there is no condemnation for those who are of Jesus Christ, called of God the Father. Paul also adds that if we have the Holy Spirit, we are in the spirit. We should be seeing the fruit of the Holy Spirit grow and grow in our lives and the works of the flesh withering away. This process does not happen in an instance. It is a lifetime commitment. Romans eight verse one.

Romans 8:1-17

- 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**
- 2. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.**
- 3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:**
- 4. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**
- 5. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.**
- 6. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.**
- 7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.**
- 8. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.**
- 9. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.**

- 10. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.**
- 11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.**
- 12. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.**
- 13. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.**
- 14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.**
- 15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.**
- 16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:**
- 17. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.**

In writing to Timothy, a person who had the responsibility to preach the word and to work with a congregation, Paul reminded him to strive for spiritual mastery and avoid the pitfalls of this world. A person who strives for something has not yet achieved it. Striving for spiritual mastery is something we will do our entire lives. To those who preach, Paul warned about using words to strive. It is possible to use debate, rhetoric, philosophy, and teaching in a manner that creates no positive change for the person who hears the message. Those who hear a message must be able to do something productive with that message, they must be able to use that information in their own lives as they strive for spiritual mastery, or the message is meaningless. Timothy was told to study the Bible so he could rightly divide the word of truth, so that he could show he was approved before God. We all have to do the same. Second Timothy two verse one.

2 Timothy 2:1-15

- 1. Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.**
- 2. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.**
- 3. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.**
- 4. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.**

- 5. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.**
- 6. The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.**
- 7. Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.**
- 8. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:**
- 9. Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.**
- 10. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.**
- 11. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:**
- 12. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:**
- 13. If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.**
- 14. Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.**
- 15. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**

To the Ephesians, Paul wrote that they needed to not be like the gentiles who walked after their own ideas, but that they needed to walk as they were led by the Holy Spirit, that they put on a new man, that they strive for spiritual mastery not giving place to the devil, living a life where they have no unresolved anger. Ephesians four verse seventeen.

Ephesians 4:17-32

- 17. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,**
- 18. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:**
- 19. Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.**
- 20. But ye have not so learned Christ;**
- 21. If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:**

- 22. That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;**
- 23. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;**
- 24. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.**
- 25. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.**
- 26. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:**
- 27. Neither give place to the devil.**
- 28. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.**
- 29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.**
- 30. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.**
- 31. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:**
- 32. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**

James wrote that we could not have friendship with this world. The works of the flesh cannot be our friend. The works of the flesh must be our enemy as we strive for spiritual mastery. We resist this world not because of people in this world but because this world is where the works of the flesh is on full display. The works of the flesh, the act of being just a human is something this world understands, and it accepts being human without any need for change. We need to focus on the fruit of the Holy Spirit. James four verse one.

James 4:1-10

- 1. From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?**
- 2. Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.**
- 3. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.**

4. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

5. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

6. But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

9. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

10. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

James tells us to not be a friend of this world. He didn't tell us to wage war on this world. It's not our place. Our place right now is to be focused on our own spiritual mastery. The Bible shows Jesus on His return will wage war and the saints will join him at that future time. For now, we must be subject to the governing authorities, naturally when they do not contradict what we are told to do in the Bible. Even though we might not agree with every last law or ordinance, these are written so that life will be better, as best as a person can understand. We are to pay our taxes. We are to distinguish those who are in power with honor, even when we disagree with them, as is a right given to many in the majority of countries around the world. Romans thirteen verse one.

Romans 13:1-7

1. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

2. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

3. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

4. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

- 5. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.**
- 6. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.**
- 7. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.**

We cannot use our view as being called by God to make life difficult for others or God will see us as hypocritical. Making life difficult for others can occur inside or outside of the church. To God it makes no difference. God brought the Assyrians against His hypocritical nation. How would God handle His church if it were the Hypocritical Church of God? Isaiah ten verse one.

Isaiah 10:1-11

- 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.**
- 5. O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.**
- 6. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.**
- 7. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.**
- 8. For he saith, Are not my princes altogether kings?**
- 9. Is not Calno as Carchemish? is not Hamath as Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus?**
- 10. As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria;**

11. Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?

In life for those who have the Holy Spirit, we strive for spiritual mastery knowing that this will be a lifetime process. We know as we mature in the faith we will see the works of the flesh wither and die as the fruit of the Holy Spirit grows bigger and matures. Just like the old testament is full of examples of people who used strategies, like Joseph, to get through situations of life during their time, we must use spiritual strategies to get through our life so we will achieve spiritual mastery. One important strategy we must remember is we cannot be friends with this world, which is all about the works of the flesh. We must stay grounded in the faith, seeking first the Kingdom of God and God's righteous.

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.