

God's Answers To Seven Discouraging Observations

Exodus 23:27-33

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 2-17-2013

Introduction

Last week Kathy and I attended an amazing think-tank-kind-of-a-conference in Escondido, California. And you can listen to at least some of the lectures online if you are interested. They are extremely well researched. I don't think there was a dud lecture in the whole conference. I especially liked Joe Boot's lecture. He's a guy from Canada who shares our worldview. In fact, that was one of the things that I liked best about the conference – connecting with organizations that we can partner with. So thank you very much for your prayers. I think the connections alone were worth the trip.

But anyway, these researchers were showing that things are much worse in America than I had even realized. The invasion of the occult is everywhere. The stated purpose of the GLBT community to drive us into the closet appears to be closer to becoming reality than I had realized. There are a lot of government officials who are just itching to push this agenda upon us. The imposition of Oneism into the schools is moving at a rapid pace. The agendas flowing from DC, State Capitols, the National Education Association, the United Nations, the American Psychological Association, the Environmental Movement, and so many other organizations are becoming more and more clear, more and more widely embraced, and are certainly becoming much more powerful.

And at the end of day one, many of the attendees were extremely discouraged. You could literally see some heads hanging. I wasn't discouraged because I was interpreting these facts within a Reconstructionist worldview. But at least some of these presenters very much reminded me of the ten spies who went into the land of Canaan and brought back an accurate report of how bad things were, but they brought it in a way that discouraged Israel from even trying to take over Canaan. Discouragement can take the wind out of our sails. So I came away from that conference feeling wonderfully resourced with the incredible research (on the one hand), but on the other hand feeling bad for people who might hear that news without the faith of a Joshua or a Caleb. It could undo them. And it reminded me afresh that the crying need of today is not more accurate information about how terrible things are, but grounding people in worldview and in the promises of

© Copyright 2013 by Phillip G. Kayser. Permission is granted to individuals to download, print, or distribute this sermon on paper or electronically, provided that each reprint bears this copyright notice, current address, and telephone number, and provided that all such reproductions are distributed without charge. They may not be sold or issued in book form, CD-ROM form, or microfiche without prior permission. All rights reserved.

Phillip G. Kayser • Dominion Covenant Church • 307.N 41st Ave. Omaha, NE 68131 • 402.934.3300

Scriptures. I think that is what it is going to take to raise up a generation of Joshuas and Calebs who believe that with God's help we are able to take on the giants in the land. We can take on the giants that are facing our families. Some of you are facing discouraging things in your personal lives. So I want to bring a word of encouragement. But I don't want to do it in a Pollyanna way, because there really *are* a lot of bad things happening out there.

So I thought of this passage. I don't think there is a better passage to preach this Sunday. I've looked at this passage in the past, but because of my experiences this past week, I have done a total rewrite of everything. And I hope that it is a fresh message that will energize you. I want to look at seven incredibly discouraging observations that the ten spies brought and that really parallel the discouraging things that are going on in America, and at the same time show God's seven encouraging responses to those seven observations.

I. **Observation 1- Humanism seems invincible. God's reply: Don't worry about it - humanism is always self-defeating and self-destructive. (v. 27)**

A. How God changes the equation

The first discouraging observation that the spies made was that the enemy seemed invincible. The task of Israel seemed impossible. They were to go in and conquer the land of Canaan; to subdue the giants and to build cities. They were to resist and overcome the incredible evil that was pervasive in Canaan. They were to burn the pornographic library cities and were to replace them with a Christian civilization. In effect they had the same mandate that Paul gives to us – to tear down strongholds and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity and obedience to Jesus. But the problem for that first generation of Israelites was that they had not been adequately trained in warfare. They didn't have horses and chariots and equipment to besiege cities. Let me read from Numbers the first observation of the spies. They said, “**...the people who dwell in the land are strong;** [And boy, I heard that a lot this week. And that message was absolutely true. There was nothing wrong with that part of the report. “The people who dwell in the land are strong;”] **the cities are fortified and very large...** [that's true] **We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we...** [that's true] **There we saw the giants...** [that's true] **and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.**” And that's

where they made their mistake – they were only looking at the situation with human eyes. They were accurately looking at it from human eyes, but God wanted them to look at the situation from the perspective of *His* promises and *His* power. Look at Exodus 23:27. This is God’s first response. God says, **“I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you.”** When you bring God into the equation, something remarkable happens – God’s people begin to do the impossible. In fact, another weird thing happened - the Canaanites had the same fear of the invincibility of God’s people that God’s people had of the invincibility of the Canaanites. It’s weird when you see those statements put side by side. Listen to one Canaanite’s observation of what all of the Canaanites were feeling. It’s the testimony of Rahab the harlot when the spies came to visit her. She said, **“I know that Yahweh has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you...etc., etc., etc.”** You’ve heard the expression that one person with God is a majority. And actually, the one person is irrelevant. *God* is a majority. But the element of truth is that we don’t need to worry about our minority status *if God is with us and if we are with God*. And Satan knows this.

B. Why humanism is self-defeating

1. Psychologically (“I will send My fear before you”)

And so let me begin by outlining from this verse three reasons why humanism is self-defeating, and why we ought to be encouraged. The first reason is that they were not psychologically able to handle Israel. God makes sure that they don’t have the psychological ground needed for long-term victory. (Now, many evangelicals don’t either, but let’s look first at the humanists.) God says, **“I will send My fear before you.”** Now it’s true that humanism can be very cocky and self-confident when there is no real confrontation, but when a Cain sees the full-orbed faith of an Abel, he feels threatened. When the leaders of Babylon saw the wisdom of Daniel, they felt threatened and tried to get him thrown to the lions. And you might think, “Why in the world would they be afraid of this tiny minority?” But those pagans knew something that many evangelicals today don’t know – that the tiny minority of Jews in Persia were transforming and taking over Persia. And God was sending His fear before Daniel, Shadrack, Meshech, and Abednego.

And this inability to psychologically cope with the threat of a vibrant Christianity has been true all down through history. You see it in the books written by Daniel Dennett, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens, all of whom say the same thing – that Christianity is a threat. That may surprise you, but they think of you as a threat.

When Saul saw the integrity and consistent Christianity of David, he felt threatened. Several hundred years later, when Saul of Tarsus saw the bold advancement of the New Testament church, he felt unbelievably threatened and did everything he could to destroy the church. Why?! These Christians were so kind and so peaceful! Why would Saul feel threatened? And I believe in each case it was largely because of the demons driving those people. Those demons knew exactly what was going on. It didn't matter how much Christians protested to Rome that they were loyal citizens (which they were), Rome felt threatened by Christianity and did everything it could to destroy the church. And Revelation 12 lets us in on a little secret of what was going on inside these Roman officials. It says that it was Satan and his demons that were driving that Roman persecution. And that was true of even local magistrates. Revelation 2:10 says to the believers in Smyrna that Satan was about to throw some of them in prison. Satan was working through those local magistrates. So, as a result, Roman magistrates intuitively recognized that Christianity was in bold competition with them; they recognized that Christ called for total conquest; He claimed all authority in heaven and on earth; He demanded total submission from citizens and kings alike. And they felt threatened. They did not have the confidence that they could compete in a free market. In fact, only Christianity can compete in a truly free market. Other religious positions have always opted for monopolies and for state power to force their views on citizens. This is true of the Messianic School System in America, Environmentalism, the GLBT movement, or any of the other messed up ideologies that are being imposed upon us. They inevitably have to use government to force the competition out. And that's the thing that blew me away at this conference – the realization of how much government force is beginning to coalesce behind these gross Oneist ideologies that hate the Creator/creature distinction.

I mean, think about it. Why is the National Education Association scared to death of homeschoolers and Christian schools? We are no threat, are we? We are a tiny minority. Why do they want to force all citizens to join a government school? Why can't they compete like everybody else has to? Why are they so desperate to get the state to impose a uniform curriculum on everyone? Because they know that they cannot compete in a

free market.

Think about it this way: Do you think government schools could compete if they made a parent write a check for all the costs for their children at the beginning of every school year? No way. They wouldn't do it. In fact, I encourage you to start asking that question of Christians who supposedly send their children to be "missionaries" in the school system. I don't think it has anything to do with being missionaries – I think it all boils down to money. If there was no 'free' education and you had to pick between government education for your children, private school education, or homeschooling, which would you pick? Ask them to consider the quality of the education, the teacher/student ratio, and the economic cost. And let me give you a clue on the cost. The average cost per pupil in Nebraska was \$10,649 back in 2010 (with some of the school districts being as high as \$27,000 per pupil in Nebraska – but let's take the lower rounded figure of \$11,000).¹ Contrast that with the average of all private schools in Nebraska (including the expensive ones) at \$6600 or \$4500 less per student.² And then contrast that with the average cost of homeschooling at \$600 per pupil.³ So that's your choice - \$11,000 for each one of your children to be educated for one year (so that would have been \$55,000 a year for my kids and \$99,000 a year for the Dykstras), versus \$6600 for private schools per student, versus \$600 per student for homeschooling. Which would you choose? I don't know of any Christian that would send their children to be "missionaries" into the government schools if they had to pay out of pocket \$11,000 for each of their children. They sure aren't getting the kind of quality education you would hope that \$11,000 would buy. And here's the point: if all schools had to compete on an even playing field in the free market, the government schools would close down overnight - guaranteed. And the National teachers union knows it. And that is why they are desperate to shut down all competition using government force. That's one form of that fear. They fear us.

What about other countries? On Wednesday I read a lead article by a Swedish politician who is pushing for children to be taken away from Christian parents if they refused to send their kids to government schools. Take the kids away. Why? She feared that Christianity would undermine their idea of the perfect state. So even though Christians are a minority in

¹ <http://www.education.ne.gov/fos/SchoolFinance/AFR/Downloads/0910/PPC0910.pdf>

² <http://www.platteinstitute.org/blog/detail/comparing-public-and-private-schools-omaha>

See also <http://www.omaha.com/article/20130213/NEWS/702139841/1016>

³ <http://www.pros-and-cons-of-homeschooling.com/cost-of-homeschooling.html>

that country, they are obviously seen as a threat.

The India Times thinks that Christianity is a threat to all the peoples of India. The article that I read this past week said that Christianity is going to take over and change everything. And in case the readers thought it was hyperbole, the article listed many tribes in Africa that have been destroyed (we would say converted, and healed, and blessed) by Christianity. But they were in effect saying, “Warning! This is what is going to happen to India if we don’t get rid of all Christians.” It is a fear that they have of a tiny minority in India, and they can’t compete in the free market, so they want to use force to get rid of Christians. They fear that minority. And we look at ourselves and say, “Really? You’ve got to be kidding.” But there is something to fear – it is the power of God unto salvation that transforms entire societies. We’ve seen it over and over again in the last 2000 years. Satan knows it. And it is time that Christians begin to realize that when we once again embrace a vibrant Christianity by faith, God will send His fear before us and there will be a good reason - God has ordained victory. That’s encouraging.

2. Intellectually (“I will cause confusion”)

The next phrase gives the second reason why all humanism is self-defeating. It says, “**I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come.**” And there are various ways this confusion can come. I have mentioned before that at the tower of Babel God used language to undo their conspiracy, and God continues to use language and nationality differences to destroy the efforts of the United Nations to impose a one-world government. Praise God! If the United Nations can’t even handle little countries like Iran and Israel, do you think they are a threat to the Great Commission? No way. Every time they try to get together, God sends confusion. It’s an amazing thing.

Now with some of the speakers this past week you would get the impression that this neo paganism is a united force to be contended with. And it is true that they are united in casting off the bonds of Christ. But that’s about the only thing they are united on. When the facts come up against them, there is incredible confusion on how best to handle the embarrassing facts. You see it in the Global Warming movement. You see it in politics, where the agendas of one politician get in the way of another one. How many times have politicians been frustrated, because they don’t know the way out of a fix that they have gotten themselves into? Or it can simply be the confusion of their world and life view. The amazing contradictions in these various Oneist philosophies are temporarily overlooked as they seek to

use the government to cast off the last vestiges of a Christian society. But you can count on non-Christian thought having major problems at one point or another simply because the farther from the God of truth that a person gets, the less his system looks true; the fuller it is filled with logical fallacies, and the more irreconcilable problems crop up. God can send confusion. And He has.

3. Confidence (“and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you”)

The last phrase in this verse says, “**and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you.**” Humanism is self-defeating in terms of its inability to stand up to a vibrant Christianity. Now, can they stand up to the *wimped out Christianity* that has become so pervasive? Yes they can. In fact, this neopaganism has infected the church very badly. We have laid down the spiritual weapons that God has given to us and have begun to use the weapons of the world. No wonder the church in America is losing.

But let me give you an encouraging word picture that I got from Peter Hammond. Do you remember how the Hutus used the media in Rwanda to demonize guns? They were doing the same thing that the liberals are doing in America, and they were using the United Nations to do it. They managed to pass laws to confiscate all weapons. And the moment the United Nations soldiers rounded up the last weapons, the Hutus started massacring the Tutsis, while the United Nations looked on and did nothing. I hate that organization. In fact, the Belgian contingent was disgusted by it. They had warned the United Nations leadership that they had information of the planned massacre, and the United Nations told them to stand down. When you lay down your weapons, you are inviting attack from those who hate you. We have thousands of years of history that can document that fact. But here’s where the word picture gets to the point. Peter Hammond said that when the Tutsis managed to find a few old rifles and started firing back, the Hutus fled despite the fact that the Hutus had rocket launchers, grenade launchers and all kinds of weapons.

And I thought, “Wow! What a great picture of what has happened in the spiritual arena.” The government schools, psychology, media, and other humanistic experts have managed to get the Christians to lay down their spiritual weapons. The Christians have laid down the incredibly powerful weapon of the Old Testament law and they have said that they are not going to use it any more. They have laid down the spiritually *nuclear* weapons of the imprecatory Psalms. They have said that that’s not loving. They have laid down the five solas of the Reformation. They have laid down their

spiritual weapons, and what has happened? Exactly what you would expect *would* happen. The spiritual Hutus have taken over. We are in deep trouble. They are going after everyone who holds to the old American values and they want to drive us into the closet. Sorry, it ain't going to happen with me.

And the point is that if we would once again pick up the whole Word of God, pick up the five solas, pick up the imprecatory psalms, and begin to apply the marvelous Gospel of Jesus to all of life (including business and politics – and yes the Gospel *does* apply to all of life), and if we would once again pick up our spiritual weapons against the demonic, we would see the same results that Christianity has seen in every age of faithfulness to God. Why was the Corinthian church struggling? Because it was using carnal weapons just like the modern church is using. And Paul pleading with them, Paul said, **“Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...”** And in that chapter he was begging them to pick up their spiritual weapons and start using them. We don't need psychology, we need the Word of God, and he told the Corinthians “not to think beyond what is written” (1 Cor. 4:6). We don't need the power of government for Christianity to win. In fact, the Bible calls for an almost libertarian very limited form of government with the free competition of ideas. And when the church has stood true to the Word, country after country has fallen to the Gospel. If you don't believe that this verse has application to the church, read George Grant's book, *Third Time Around*. I can send you a free copy of it. It is filled with story after story of tiny minorities changing pro-abortion and other humanistic laws and turning nations upside down. Rome was no match for Christianity. And one by one the various regions of the known world gave up the fight and announced that they were Christian nations. It can happen again. When you look at history you will see that it is only when the church lacks faith, has a grasshopper theology, puts down its spiritual weapons, and refuses the discomfort of fighting, that humanism can stand strong.

II. Observation 2 – It seems like everything is against us and even nature is stacked against the church. God's reply: It is actually providence that is arrayed against humanism and for His kingdom (v. 28)

Now, we are going to have to move more quickly on the other points.

But they are all great points. The second discouraging observation that the spies gave to Israel was that everything was against them; that even nature was against them. They believed the inverse of Romans 8:28. They believed in Murphy's laws. They said, **“The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants...”** They were acting like scientists rather than theologians, and from their observations they were noticing that this was not such a friendly land to be moving to. “We’re not sure that we like it.” But if they had looked at the same facts through Biblical worldview eyes, they would have been encouraged. Let me read their true statement again, and I want you to notice why it should have been encouraging. They said, **“The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants...”** Who were the inhabitants? Canaanites. God’s providence was causing the land to devour the Canaanites. How exciting! But they thought, “If the land devours the Canaanites, it’s not fit for us either.” That’s to misinterpret God’s providence in nature.

Take a look at verse 28. God says that His providence in *nature itself* is arrayed against humanism. I mean, talk about encouraging! It’s not everything ganging up against Israel. It is everything ganging up against the humanists. In verse 28 God says, **“And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you.”** Hornets! The very hornets that the spies were nervous of were going to be used by God to advance His purposes. That’s amazing! God used bugs to promote His kingdom.

What did Squanto find when he came back to his tribe? He found that this incredibly fierce tribe (who probably would have killed all the Pilgrims) had been wiped out by some as yet unidentified plague. Squanto’s survival and the tribe’s decimation were not man’s doing, but God’s doing, and it guaranteed the success of the early settlers. There are literally thousands of stories of God’s enemies being dealt with by nature, while sparing God’s kingdom. For example, Rushdoony has given historical analysis of when and where earthquakes, plagues, diseases, weather patterns, and other disasters have struck. I call this God’s providence against humanism because it focuses upon the way that God’s natural laws are really not natural at all. They are divine laws that always serve His purposes. Meditate on Deuteronomy 28 sometime and you will see that diseases, earthquakes, weather patterns, plagues, economic laws, mildew, boils, and many other things that follow so-called “natural laws” are actually used by God to keep humanism in check. I have seen modern Christians scoff at Deuteronomy 28. They have a hard time believing it is true. They question it. I don’t.

Now we need to keep this point in balance with point IV - God's perfect timing. It doesn't happen all at once or necessarily right when we would expect it. And Christians can suffer right along with the pagans sometimes, and so it takes a bit of historical distance to sometimes see God's hand. But there can be no question about the fact that Providence fights against humanism. I don't think that I have to explain how God's laws of nature guarantee that homosexuals won't live very long on average. They are killing each other off with their own lifestyle. I don't need to explain why our promiscuous culture has such a high rate of infertility. In fact, this past Monday I read a fascinating article that shows that our government is beginning to worry that for the first time America's birth rate has plunged below the replacement level. There is increasing sterility with increasing VD, and this is true all across Europe as well. I don't need to explain why economic policies of self-absorbed cultures eventual benefit only those who follow Biblical economic law. The spending in DC cannot escape God's economic laws any more than a man who jumps off a cliff will escape God's laws of gravity and other laws of physics that He has put in place. The further from God's blueprints that humanists go, the more God's laws of nature will fight against them and frustrate them. And that should be encouraging.

Does that mean that we abandon people when they are afflicted by AIDS? No. Does it mean that we do not have compassion upon those hit by earthquakes? No. The Black Plague was a judgment by God, but Christians were at the forefront of ministering to those thus afflicted, and hundreds of thousands came to Christ through such ministry. And down through history many disasters have torn huge gaping holes into Satan's kingdom, and led multitudes to Christ. Do not be afraid of those Providences. Do not panic when you see God's judgments on America. See it as an opportunity to minister. We can be thankful that God's providence conspires together with His grace to promote the Great Commission. Amen?

III. Observation 3 – The pagans sure seem like they are dominating culture. God's response: Pagans are tools in God's hand to benefit the kingdom and glorify His name. (v. 29)

But the third discouraging observation given by the spies was that God had allowed the pagans to totally dominate the culture. In Numbers 13 they complained that the land was dominated by Amalekites, Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites and Canaanites. And God's answer to such an idea is

that we can be thankful for that because these unbelievers were important to God's kingdom purposes. And they are thinking, "Huh? Didn't you say we should conquer them?" Yes, but look at verse 29. It says, "**I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest [and I want emphasize this word "lest." "Lest"] the land become desolate and the beast of the field become too numerous for you.**" He was saying that it's a good thing that those Canaanites were in the land. Yes they were evil, but if it hadn't been for their houses, technology, irrigation systems, vineyards, pasturelands, and systematic dealing with pests, and other advances, the job would have been much more difficult for Israel. It's easy to skip over that verse and move on to the one about driving them out. But it is much better to inherit a well-cultivated land than a land teeming with man-eating beasts and overgrown with weeds and brush. Some Christians want to set the clock back four hundred years and live off the land like the early Pilgrim and Puritan settlers. Not me. They had a tough time of it. I'm glad for my iPad; I'm glad for air conditioning, running water, sewer systems, and other conveniences. And I liked Juliana's speech at PHF on how Steve Jobs was an unwitting missionary of God. And in the past I have talked about how God used Roman roads, language, coinage, court system, and other technologies to advance the Gospel. They were trying to advance their own evil empire, but God used their own technology to convert Rome. And that ought to be encouraging to us.

Is there a lot of bad stuff on the web that discouraging? Yes, there is. But don't buy into the political policy of so many evangelicals that is asking the government to heavily control it. The same Internet can be used to evangelize other countries and to undermine the philosophies of bestial empires. In fact, if the government controls the Internet, we will not longer be able to compete in a free market or on an even playing field. Let's not be Luddites who destroy technology.

Some people call God's help of the Canaanites, common grace. Let me comment on that a bit. It's probably better to refer to it as Christ-centered providence than common grace. There are too many theological problems with common grace movement. They are all too ready to embrace evolution, psychology, and other humanistic wisdom in the name of common grace. That is to absolutely misuse the concept. Technically, the Bible says that grace is for the elect alone. But God causes all providence to work together for the good of the elect and for the glory of God's kingdom. We don't have time to delve into this whole controversy between the Protestant are formed Church and the Christian Reformed Church. I tend to side with the PRC, but because of their amillennialism, they tend to miss out on seed of truth (and

its *only* a seed) in the common grace idea. But it's probably better to just avoid the term altogether and to refer to these things as Christ-centered providences.

IV. Observation 4 – Dominion is too much work and way to slow. God's response: Until we embrace his plan of "little by little" we will not succeed long term. (v. 30)

The fourth discouraging observation of the spies was that dominion was too much work and would take way too long. And you will find Christians today who are discouraged by how long it is taking, and consequently tend to have short term thinking, short term economics, short term political strategies – and they basically mess everything up. God wants us to strategize for the long haul. And the next verse in our passage (verse 30) indicates that gradualism is actually on our side and we do not need to get impatient. We can be thankful that God has a perfect timetable. Verse 30 says, "**Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.**" In other words, when you are ready. But until that time it is "little by little." Christians are always looking for an easy solution. We want instant sanctification. Sorry, it isn't going to happen. There are all kinds of books out there that promise you a roadmap to immediate success, or seven secrets to spiritual victory. But the Bible says that sanctification is a lifelong growth process. So don't be discouraged if you don't become holy instantaneously like the Perfectionists claim that you can. You can't.

But there are many other applications. Christians today are so present oriented that they become snared in get-rich-quick schemes, and they get on the bandwagon of horrible political candidates, and they want instant knowledge; instant conquest; instant kingdom. And God rarely works that way. Sometimes there are sudden shifts, but even those sudden shifts usually go on the tail of long, difficult work by God's faithful remnant. God has chosen to use the gradual progress method – little by little. We call it compounded growth over time when we apply this principle to economics. And if you are persistent in all of your little by little projects it does eventually grow faster and faster. But until you give up the hope of getting rich overnight, you are probably not going to save and invest the way you should. And until you give up the hope that a great president will turn America around, you are probably not going to have the perseverance needed to develop long-term success in politics. Thankfully some people are taking Joel McDurmon's book seriously, and they are starting this little by little process of taking over this country a county a time. Current Christian

incrementalism is not the “little by little” advance that God is talking about. It’s the opposite. It is compromising in the hopes that we can make an eventual breakthrough at the Federal level. Until you give up the hope that the pastor can say something great that will instantly turn your marriage around, you are keeping yourself from the success that can only come from the hard work of the “little by little” strategy. Until you give up hope in a diet plan that will magically evaporate the fat and you will forever be beautiful, you won’t have what it takes to engage in the self-discipline needed to enjoy life without being ruled by life. I mean, you could go on and on. This is a verse that you must accept if you are to embrace the things necessary for long-term success in America. God's principle of kingdom success is one of the laws of harvest - compounded growth over time.

V. Observation 5 – The people really need different boundaries (“the mountain country is not enough for us...”) and we can’t take the valley (“all the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron...”). God’s response: The specific boundaries I have given in the Word are for your good. (v. 31)

The fifth discouraging observation of the spies can be given negatively or positively. Before we look at God’s answer in verse 31, let me quote the observation that was made by the children of Joseph. “**But the children of Joseph said, “The mountain country is not enough for us; and all the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both those who are of Beth Shean and its towns and those who are of the Valley of Jezreel.”** (Joshua 17:16) Let me interpret that for you. God had given them a very specific boundary. And they didn’t like that boundary. They said that the people in the valley were too tough to take on because they had chariots of iron. So they weren’t interested in that. And they weren’t thrilled with sticking to the mountain because it was too small for them. So lack of faith made them not enter into certain boundaries and lack of contentment made them want to abandon other parts of their boundaries. And verse 31 of our passage gives God’s principle: “**And I will set your bounds from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the desert to the River. For I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you.**” What did those boundaries mean for Israel?

A. Limitation

It meant first of all that God was setting limits on what they could do. Israel was supposed to go so far and no further. In Deuteronomy chapters 2-3 God specifically forbade Israel from conquering certain nations. For example, He said **“when you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession.”** So the boundaries were limiting what dominion they could take. Even unfallen Adam and Eve needed a boundary that put him in his place as a creature and not a god. Remember? that was his temptation - to become like God. Well, as a boundary to show that they were creatures, God said that they could eat of every fruit tree except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That was a boundary. And the Creator/creature distinction mandates boundaries. When we break God’s laws, we are breaking boundaries. Pagan Oneism is breaking God’s boundaries on many levels. Apparently the LGBT community has gone way beyond homosexuality into androgyny. They want to erase every distinction until there is a radical unity. Socialism does the same thing. So does modern educational theory.

And the church is powerless against the pagan fight against boundaries because the church itself has rejected God’s boundaries. How can we make the world jealous of the Gospel when we are not transformed by the Gospel? How can we make the world jealous of the law when we refuse to implement it? The Bible says that is when the Christian nations begin applying all of God’s Biblical blueprints that God has promised to bless those nations so richly that other nations will become jealous and desire God’s law.

B. Protection

And that brings up the second purpose for those boundaries – protection. God had only given Israel sufficient grace to conquer, maintain and defend a certain territory. How many people don’t do anything well because they are trying to do too much. Knowing your calling protects you because your calling is a boundary. You don’t take on a bazillion tasks outside your calling. One of the expressions that came from the title of a book is “pushing the margins.” Margins are the white space on a page that keeps a page from getting too crowded. Well, using that as an illustration, the book says that some of us take on so many tasks that our page is very crowded. We have no margin, and the least little new pressure that comes is disastrous to us because we can’t fit anything more in. We are trying to

push our creaturely boundaries. We cut into our sleep, and find that when we throw off our creaturely limits we are miserable. God gave you creaturely limits like the amount of sleep that you need on purpose – to keep you from trying to play God and to protect you. He forced the Israelites to take vacations because he wanted to protect them with those boundaries. Well, the same is true for many areas of family, church and state.

C. Challenge

But thirdly, and I think primarily, boundaries are also a challenge. It was a challenge for all of these tribes to occupy all of their boundaries. Remember what happened in Numbers 32? There was the temptation for Israel to conquer less than what God had called it to conquer. And God said, “No way. I will be displeased with you if you do not strive for these boundaries.” You know, every time a new difficulty would come along from the Canaanites, Israel was tempted to settle for less territory than God had called them to take.

Well, I see the church doing the same thing, and so we need that challenge as well. What are the boundaries God has given in the Great Commission? God has called us to do far more than what the church is striving for. There are very few mission agencies with a nation-discipling emphasis. They don’t believe in the wide-ranging boundaries God has called us to and so they are willing to let the Canaanites, the Jebusites and all the other ites to call the shots. But no square inch of planet earth should be out from under the feet of Jesus. That’s a challenge isn’t it? And so boundaries keep us from taking on less than we should. They challenge our faith.

VI. Observation 6 – Statistics seem to show that we will never succeed if we don’t compromise and make alliances with unbelievers. God’s response: Any embracing of our culture’s idolatry will guarantee the church’s impotence. (v. 32)

The sixth discouraging observation of the early Israelites was that success is impossible unless we make peace with the Canaanites. And the Israelites were constantly trying to make alliances and covenants in order to survive. And God said, “No.” Now this is not a contradiction of principle III. Principle III says that God uses the technologies of humanists to advance His cause, but we are never to compromise with the humanistic worldview or values. Verse 32 says, “**You shall make no covenant with them, nor**

with their gods.”

I don't have time to get into this point in detail, but I will recommend a book. Some of you have tried to slog your way through it. I know it is a tough read. It's written at a College level of reading. But Herbert Schlossberg's book, *Idols For Destruction*, is an amazing book that documents the six main idols of our age, then the consequences of holding on to those idols, and then how Christianity can make a difference if we will once again be Biblical and live by faith. Unfortunately, the church of Jesus Christ has for the most part embraced the very idols that are destroying this nation. And so I thought I would give you a Cliff Notes rundown on the nature of these idols that Christians have covenanted with. I've never done this before, but I think it will be worthwhile. Let me summarize the main chapters.

The first form of idolatry that he deals with are the idols of history. And thankfully PHF is teaching us how to avoid this idolatry. Any of the forms of historical determinism, whether that is Marxist communism, Freudian psychology, Global Warming, evolution, etc. have certain features that are similar. Any views of history that leave God and His Providence out of the history as being irrelevant also have certain telltale features. And too many Christian books on history are idolatrous because they leave God out of the equation. The entire Obama administration is the perfect exemplification of the idols of history that he talks about. And it is a Oneist view of history to the core. But once you read the book you will realize that Obama is simply a more consistent form of what almost all politicians have been pursuing in DC. They refuse to allow God to bring norms from outside of history. "Thy kingdom come" for them does not mean the kingdom of heaven. Some have a Marxist view of historical progress. But all of these views of history reject providence, dominion, law, or any values that are transcendent. When you dig into it, it is horrifying. It is casting off the bonds of Christ. It is rebellion.

The second form of idolatry encompasses all of the idols of humanity, where man is the measure of all things. The Humanist Manifesto II said, no deity will save us, we must save ourselves. And that has been what America has been about. That is what the United Nations is about. That is what so much science is about. And if you systematically study how America has redefined the concepts of love, freedom, equality, guilt, poverty, generosity, what constitutes a victim, life, death, the state, etc., you will not only see that America is a rankly idolatrous nation, but so is the church, whether evangelical or non-evangelical.

The third section of his book is labeled the Idols of Mammon. And in that chapter he deals with how radically idolatrous Keynesianism is. The

whole economic system stinks to high heaven, and Christians have that idolatrous filth all over them. Inflation - which pastors are willing to preach against it as theft? Redistribution of wealth - how many Christians are accomplices of government theft because they take state handouts? Medicare (and if the book had been written now, he would have included Obamacare), Foodstamps, rent controls, bailouts, and numerous problems in our society are very cogently tied to idolatry. But he also takes on the insatiable envy, false pursuits of social justice of the general population. It's an amazing chapter.

Then there are the idols of nature. I won't get into all the ways that science, sociology, and other departments idolatry creation by refusing to allow God's Word to define it. What is a fact? If you even define a simple thing like a fact apart from God's revelation, you are messing with the edges of idolatry. If you look at how our world defines that, you can see why the public is so easily manipulated. The ecological movement has divinized nature and in the process it has dehumanized man. It turns everything upside down, and in order to save nature many of these theorists want to depopulate mankind. Spirituality has been defined in occultic ways while pretending to be simply studying nature. One quote that I think summarizes nicely the problems with modern paganism is this (and this is on page 175):

Materialism and pantheism, whatever their differences, share immanence, the identification of ultimacy with the creation. They must therefore end up deterministic, fatalistic, and pessimistic, or else cover up their logical conclusions with mystification. (p. 175)

Then he deals with the idols of power. If God is removed from the public sphere, automatically the state begins to act with the attributes of God. Isn't that true? The state is trying to control all things, know all things, plan all things, teach all things, judge all things, reward all things, protect all things, care for all things, solve all things. If you ever get a chance to listen to Joseph Boot's fabulous lecture last week, he documents this very thing. It's just an amazing lecture. But let me give you a quote from Schlossberg's book that I think captures this idolatry rather well. And as I read it, I think you will see that it isn't just pagans who embrace this idolatry. Christians have covenanted with the idols of power. The Evangelical solution to every political problem seems to be to get the Federal Government to do something. Intuitively the Federal Government is their Messiah. Evangelical politics is often idolatrous to the core. Anyway, Schlossberg says,

The paternal state not only feeds its children, but nurtures, educates, comforts and disciplines them, providing all they need for their security. This appears to be a mildly insulting way to treat adults, but it is really a great crime because it

transforms the state from being a gift of God, given to protect us against violence, into an idol. It supplies us with all blessings and we look to it for all our needs. Once we sink to that level, as Lewis says, there is no point in telling state officials to mind their own business. 'Our whole lives are their business.' (p. 184)

Of course, the family always suffers when it bows to the idols of power. Both children and the aged are offered up to Molech. Freedoms are taken away. The jurisdictions of family and church begin to vaporize. And though the state may at first appear to be benevolent, it is indistinguishable philosophically from the worst forms of totalitarianism. On page 222 he says,

Social democracy [that would be America, Canada, Britain, etc.] cannot be distinguished formally from totalitarianism, since it does not recognize in principle, any limit to the purview of state supervision.

I mean, if Christians could see what they are doing when they make covenants with the Canaanites, I doubt they would do it. The negative implications of our compromises are enormous. No wonder God says in the last verse that they will be a snare to us.

And then lastly, Schlossberg deals with idols of religion. Everything that is done in Washington DC is religious in nature, but it does not flow from the God of the Bible, so automatically it becomes Oneist. And the negative implications of this are enormous as well. And the failure of the church at large has been a failure to preach against the idols of our day. The church has done the opposite of what Moses commanded in verses 32 and 33. I love Schlossberg's statement on page 254. He says,

In a society in which idolatry runs rampant, a church that is not iconoclastic is a travesty. [To be iconoclastic means to tear down idols.] If it is not against the idols it is with them.

Brothers and sisters – being nice in a time of rampant apostasy is being unfaithful to Christ. Join me in passionately resisting not only the idolatry of our nation, but far more importantly, the idolatry of the church. Join me in praying for Reformation. The church has made a covenant with the nations on almost every level described in that book, and it is no wonder that the church is powerless. God does not bless an idolatrous church; He disciplines her; Matthew 5 says that He puts the church under the feet (under the boot) of humanism when the church refuses to be salty - trampled underfoot of men. And I suspect that we will be facing persecution and the attempt of the idolatrous Oneism of our generation to increasingly seek to marginalize us and even to drive us into the closet. But I urge you to never go into the closet. Instead, be part of a growing minority all across this nation that is

repenting and seeking to lift up the glory of Christ in the public arena. Don't retreat; don't panic; don't give up. Be like Joshua and Caleb, who took on new mountains and new territories even in their old age.

VII. Observation 7 – “We are not able.” God’s response: It is true that you are not able on your own, but you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. (v. 31-33)

Of course, that brings us to the last discouraging observation made by the ten spies. They said, “**we are not able to go up against the people...**” etc. We are as grasshoppers in their sight. We are not able. And their focus was on their own abilities - as if our calling is achieved by our own abilities! It is not. There isn't anything in the Sermon on the Mount that you can do without the supernatural power of Almighty God doing it through you. And if you have His supernatural power, why are you discouraged? It is precisely our weakness that gives God glory when He manifests His strength. Yes, God uses us. But *He* uses us, is the key point. It's “**not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord.**” And in verse 31 God promised, “**I will deliver...**” And this shows that the battle does not go to the proud and the self-sufficient, but to the humble - to those who walk humbly with their God. But walk and fight we must. The *whole* verse says, “**I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you.**” And you might think, “We don't have a similar promise.” On the contrary, we have far greater promises in the New Covenant. Listen to these from 1 John:

1John 4:4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

He's saying that to little children. You don't have to be brilliant, or great, or rich, or well connected to make a difference in America. He says that even little children of that day were overcoming the world. And they were. Because of faith, the church of the first three centuries took over towns, then cities, and finally the empire itself. 1 John 5:4 says,

1John 5:4 For whoever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

Why faith? Because faith reaches for the supernatural resources of heaven and brings them to earth. Faith prays, “Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Faith is not staggered by the thought that God's will can be done as pervasively on earth as it is being done in heaven. And notice that the promise to every born again believer who lives by faith.

1John 5:5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

That's all of you. Amazing. Jesus said, “**the meek shall inherit the**

earth.” But notice that he didn’t say that it would happen automatically. It is the *meek* who will succeed in the Great Commission’s mandate that the nations be Christianized. And what is meekness? Meekness is strength in submission. It is used of a saddle-trained horse in the Greek language. It is used of a tamed stallion. The horse has strength, but it is all used for the master. And God’s answer to those who say, “I can’t do it” is “Of course you can’t.” Without Christ you can do nothing. It’s pride that says both “I can” and “I can’t.” But just as God took Moses’ eyes off of himself and his own inadequacies, God takes the eyes of the church off of themselves and places their eyes upon Jesus. The meek *shall* inherit the earth. **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”** Can you say that?

Conclusion

It’s not the bigness of your calling that should frighten you, but your propensity to abandon Christ and to trust in self. That’s the scary thing. Verse 33 says, **“For if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.”** I mean, that could be written across this entire generation in America. The church has done things the world’s way, and the world has become a snare to us. That’s the thing that made the first generation of Israelites largely a failure.

And so my admonition to you today is to not be discouraged by the reports of the ten spies. Use their accurate information to know the enemy (that’s OK), but be confident that if God is for you, there is no one who can successfully be against you. Let your hearts be stirred up to expect great things from God and to attempt great things for Him. And may He receive the glory. Amen.

Children of God, I charge you to transfer your trust in creation and to put your trust in God's all sufficiency so that as you pursue your individual callings before the Lord you will expect great things from Him and attempt great things for Him.

God's Answers To Seven Discouraging Observations

Exodus 23:27-33

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 2-17-2013

Introduction

- I. Observation 1- Humanism seems invincible. God's reply: Don't worry about it - humanism is always self-defeating and self-destructive. (v. 27)
 - A. How God changes the equation
 - B. Why humanism is self-defeating
 1. Psychologically ("I will send My fear before you")
 2. Intellectually ("I will cause confusion")
 3. Confidence ("and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you")
- II. Observation 2 – It seems like everything is against us and even nature is stacked against the church. God's reply: It is actually providence that is arrayed against humanism and for His kingdom (v. 28)
- III. Observation 3 – The pagans sure seem like they are dominating culture. God's response: Pagans are tools in God's hand to benefit the kingdom and glorify His name. (v. 29)
- IV. Observation 4 – Dominion is too much work and way to slow. God's response: Until we embrace his plan of "little by little" we will not succeed long term. (v. 30)
- V. Observation 5 – The people really need different boundaries ("the mountain country is not enough for us...") and we can't take the valley ("all the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron..."). God's response: The specific boundaries I have given in the Word are for your good. (v. 31)
 - A. Limitation
 - B. Protection
 - C. Challenge
- VI. Observation 6 – Statistics seem to show that we will never succeed if we don't compromise and make alliances with unbelievers. God's response: Any embracing of our culture's idolatry will guarantee the church's impotence. (v. 32)
- VII. Observation 7 – "We are not able." God's response: It is true that you are not able on your own, but you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. (v. 31-33)

Conclusion

