

# Sodom, Laodicea, and Pride

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When I mentioned the word "Sodom," I think with most of us a certain picture comes to mind—evil, disobedience, reprobate behavior. And we just have a certain picture when I say the word "Sodom." And in the minds of, I think, most church members, Sodom is the epitome of evil and sin. It's the poster child for anything that's evil and wrong with society.

Now notice what Christ said about Sodom in Matthew chapter 10. We're going to read verses 14 and 15. Because Christ is giving us a warning and was giving the people a warning in His day, but the words apply to us today because God's Word is a living Word as we all know. Matthew 10 verse 14, remember He sent the disciples out two by two and He's giving them instruction. And He says:

**Matthew 10:14.** *And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when [you] depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.*

15) *[Truly] I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. (KJV)*

And we see here that Christ is basically setting a standard and Sodom is the standard of evil by which other cities were judged, by which we will be judged. But it was a standard of evil and just horrible sins.

Now what is it about Sodom that would cause Christ to use it as a measuring stick for evil behavior? Let's ask that question. This is all by way of introduction to the subject we'll get to. But why would Christ bring up Sodom as a litmus test or a measuring stick for evil?

Let's go to Genesis chapter 13 and verse 13 because we know that Sodom was exceedingly wicked and this verse tells us that. I'll read it out of the New King James, Genesis 13 and verse 13. Notice what it says.

**Genesis 13:13.** *But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful (KJV)*

But notice what it says.

**Genesis 13:13b.** *against the [Eternal]. (NKJ)*

Meaning: against God's ways, against God's commandments, against God's wishes. They were exceedingly wicked and sinful.

Now let's jump to Genesis 19 and the familiar account where the two angels came to Lot. And Lot took them in and he made unleavened bread for them, came into his house. And we're going to pick up the account in verse 4 where they were attempting to go to bed, go to sleep. Genesis 19 verse 4:

**Genesis 19:4.** *But before they [referring to Lot and his family and the two angels] lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round [about], both old and young, (KJV)*

Notice that! Age didn't make any difference!

**Genesis 19:4b.** *all the people from every quarter:  
5) And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to [you] this night? bring them out unto us, [as the King James says:] that we may know them. (KJV)*

The New International puts it more plainly and says: "We may have sex with them." Men with men. They were assuming the two visitors were men. So we know that Sodom had wickedness that was the standard of wickedness for that day and time. And Christ referred to that.

But we have to ask the question: What was the cause of the wickedness? Have you ever thought about that? What was the cause of them being so wicked? If we understand the cause, then maybe we can avoid that in our lives. This is all again by way of introduction.

Let's go to Ezekiel chapter 16 and we're going to read verses 49 and 50 to find the answer. Ezekiel chapter 16 beginning in verse 49; the Bible answers the Bible. We have to put all the Scriptures as we learned in the very beginning years ago, decades ago. Ezekiel 16 verse 49:

**Ezekiel 16:49.** *Behold, this was the iniquity of [your] sister Sodom, (KJV)*

What is the first thing that is mentioned?

**Ezekiel 16:49b.** *pride, (KJV)*

Pride!

Then it says:

**Ezekiel 16:49 continued.** *fullness of bread, (KJV)*

Meaning they didn't want for food.

**Ezekiel 16:49 continued.** *and abundance of idleness (KJV)*

Meaning they didn't have to work too hard. They were pretty prosperous. They weren't worrying where the next bite of food was or they weren't worrying about finding shelter.

**Ezekiel 16:49 continued.** *abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and [the] needy. (KJV)*

They had what they wanted but they didn't care about other people.

But notice verse 50.

**Ezekiel 16:50.** *And they were haughty, (KJV)*

The Hebrew word for *haughty* means "proud" "or arrogant." It's being stated again.

**Ezekiel 16:50.** *And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw [fit]. (KJV)*

So we see here in these two verses that the iniquity of Sodom was primarily pride and haughtiness as a form of pride. Now let's understand that! Pride, haughtiness, material ease fostered sexual perversion in that area. Pride and haughtiness in that they knew better than God. They weren't going to obey God. They were going to find out for themselves what they should be doing. And then the leisure time and an easy life fostered sexual experimentation and then, off they went to the races.

So does pride and haughtiness and plenty of leisure time and a relatively easy life bring anything to mind about today in western society? It should.

Now let's look at a prophecy of modern-day Israel—again by way of introduction. Let's look at Ezekiel chapter 7. We were in 16. Let's go back to chapter 7. We're going to read the first two verses and then verses 9 and 10. Now let's understand, Mr. Armstrong taught us—God revealed it to him—that there is a duality of prophecy. There is an early fulfillment and a later fulfillment. When we read this, keep this in mind. Ezekiel 7:1:

**Ezekiel 7:1.** *Moreover the word of the [Eternal] came unto me, saying, 2) Also, [you] son of man, thus [says] the Lord GOD unto the land of Israel; (KJV)*

Physical Israel back then, spiritual Israel today! Notice what He says!

**Ezekiel 7:2b.** *An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land. (KJV)*

"The end" is what is being referred to today. This is the end of man's six-thousand-year reign on this earth.

Jumping to verse 9:

**Ezekiel 7:9.** *[My] eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense [you] according to [your] ways and [your] abominations that are in the [middle] of [you]; (KJV)*

In other words, we reap what we sow. That hasn't changed.

**Ezekiel 7:9b.** *and [you] shall know that I am the [Eternal] that [smites]. (KJV)*

The world is going to know that. God's Church will know that.

Verse 10:

**Ezekiel 7:10.** *Behold the day, behold, it is come [the day is come]: the morning is gone forth; the rod [has] blossomed, pride [has] budded. (KJV)*

That is a prophecy for Israel today! Now we see that the main sin of Sodom, the genesis of their sin was pride and haughtiness. We see a prophecy for ancient Israel and modern-day Israel and modern spiritual Israel that pride has budded.

Pride in that people know better than God. Pride certainly in modern day Israel that they believe the Bible is a myth. Man has the solutions. Man knows better than God. God's ways are old fashioned. God's ways are out of touch with the modern world. We see that all around us. So let's understand that this prophecy is just dead on accurate! Pride! And pride has budded!

Now, we've looked at Sodom. We've looked at modern day Israel, but what about the Church? What about the Church? Let's go to Revelation 3, a very familiar Scripture, but let's approach it from the idea of pride. Revelation 3, we're going to read verse 14 and then verse 17. Verse 14 says:

**Revelation 3:14.** *Unto the angel of the church [at Laodicea] write; (KJV)*

Understanding the subject and the context:

**Revelation 3:14b.** *These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; (KJV)*

Verse 17:

**Revelation 3:17.** *Because [you say], (KJV)*

Now notice this!

**Revelation 3:17b.** *I am rich, (KJV)*

Now does that sound like a prideful statement? Of course, it does!

**Revelation 3:17 continued.** *and increased with goods, (KJV)*

Does that sound like a prideful statement? Does that sound like something that would be applicable to Sodom also? And that's applicable today?

***Revelation 3:17 continued. and have need of nothing; (KJV)***

Is that a prideful statement? "I don't need God. I don't need anybody. I don't need anybody to tell me what to do. I'm going to do what I want to do." That is the attitude of the Laodicean Church and behind it all is pride! Just like in modern day Israel, just like in ancient Israel, and just like in Sodom.

And the remedy for that we find in verse 16.

***Revelation 3:16b. I will spew [you] out of my mouth. (KJV)***

Just as God did with Sodom and just as God did with ancient Israel. And what He is going to do to modern Israel and He will do it with spiritual Israel, those who will not come out of the Laodicean attitude. Let's understand that. Modern day Israel, the Laodicean Era of the Church, and Sodom were all inflicted and infected with the same sin and that is pride!

And it is something that we all had better pay most careful attention to so that we do not fall into that trap. So the title of the sermon is *Sodom, Laodicea, and Pride*. We're going to investigate this subject of pride. I hope we all look at it and I'm speaking to myself more than anybody. We look into so that we don't follow in their footsteps. So that we don't make the mistakes that Sodom did; that countries, that modern day Israel is making today; and we don't become infected with what is infecting the Church today.

So we're going to examine Seven Points about Pride. The first one, let's define what we're talking about. The First Point is:

*1. What is the definition of pride?*

If you look at the Hebrew, in taking several Hebrew words, but the main one is Strong's 1347. And it means "exultation", meaning to exalt the self, to uplift the self. It can mean *majesty*. In other words: people saying, "Well look at me!" And you might say the majesty of a king or the majesty of a president or whatever. And it's involved in that kind of majesty on a human level.

And it can mean *arrogance*, where we think of ourselves better than we ought to think. We think of ourselves as being above others. We think of ourselves as being better than others.

The Webster's Dictionary of 1828 has a very a very interesting definition.

And I use that because it doesn't get us quite half-way back to the King James Version of the Bible. But some of the definitions in Webster's are very interesting and very revealing. And it's interesting also that the 1828 version of Webster's with almost every definition has a Scriptural reference. Can you imagine that

today? Publishing a modern dictionary with a reference to validate the definition coming from the Bible? It shows you how far we've gone!

Webster's of 1828 says:

*... an unreasonable conceit of one's own superiority and talents; or in beauty, unreasonable conceit in beauty; or wealth or accomplishments or rank or elevation in office, which manifests itself in lofty airs,*

We're going to see God hates a prideful look.

*... lofty airs, distance,*

Meaning: I'm not going to get too close to you because I'm better than you. I don't want to get myself dirty by getting close to you.

*... reserve,*

Meaning: I'm too good to give you a hug. Or I'm too good to get close to you or let you into my life.

*... and often in contempt of others,*

Judging others, looking down on others, condemning others!

So a definition of pride is looking to the self and elevating the self in relation to our fellowman and, as we're going to see, even in relation to God, elevating ourselves in relation to God. So let's understand what pride is.

Now that leads us quickly into the Second Point. We want to establish the fact that:

*II. Pride is an essential part of Satan's nature and an essential part of human nature.*

It is something we all have. It is something Satan has. We're going to see what happened to Satan. And we want to avoid having that same fate.

Now let's go to Isaiah 14 and verse 14, one Scripture. We could spend the rest of the sermon on this. We won't. But let's understand that pride is part of Satan's character. Isaiah 14 and verse 14. As we know, Satan tried to take over God's throne. He tried to attack God's throne and he failed. But notice in verse 14 of Isaiah 14, he says, his attitude is:

***Isaiah 14:14.*** *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. (KJV)*

Or some commentaries say, "I will be the Most High. I will become the Most High." Setting himself up on a level with God or even in superiority to God, that was his attitude. And so let's understand that because when Satan broadcasts to

us, he broadcasts that attitude of pride. And we have to be very careful about listening to what comes into our head and making sure it syncs with God's Word.

Now, as I also said, pride is part of man's nature, human nature. Let's go to Daniel chapter 4. We'll read verses 29 through 32 and look at a time when Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon, but notice his attitude; notice his pride! Daniel 4 beginning in verse 29:

**Daniel 4:29.** *At the end of twelve months he [referring to Nebuchadnezzar] walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. 30) The king [spoke], and said, [Isn't] this great Babylon [Look at this great Babylon!], (KJV)*

But notice where he goes with this!

**Daniel 4:30b.** *that I have built (KJV)*

"Oh, this was all due to me. This was all due to my efforts, my wisdom, my intelligence, and my power."

**Daniel 4:30b.** *I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, (KJV)*

No other power! No other credit. "I deserve all credit for this Kingdom, this city."

**Daniel 4:30 continued.** *and for the honor of my majesty? (KJV)*

"I am so wonderful! I am so high! I am to be worshipped!" he says. But notice verse 31:

**Daniel 4:31.** *While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to [you] it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from [you]. 32) And they shall drive [you] from men, and [your] dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make [you] to eat [the] grass as [an ox], and seven times [seven years will] pass over [you], (KJV)*

Notice the message. Notice the object of his punishment!

**Daniel 4:32b.** *until [you] know that the most High [rules] in the kingdom of men, and [gives] it to whomsoever he will. (KJV)*

It's God's doing! It's not a man's doing.

But yet notice the basic core attitude of human nature—"Look at me! Look at what I can do! Look at my power. Look at my majesty and look at my might!"

Now Christ emphasized that very early on in His ministry. Let's go to Mark chapter 7 and we're going to read verses 21 and 22. Christ knew that and He's warning the people and warning us today that we have to be very careful about a

prideful attitude. Mark 7 verse 21, Christ gets right to the core of the matter! He says:

**Mark 7:21.** *For from within, out of the heart of men, (KJV)*

Meaning: our essential being.

**Mark 7:21b.** *[proceeds] evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22) Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, [and He says,] foolishness: (KJV)*

So we very clearly Christ is telling us that part of the heart of a man or a woman, part of our human nature, is pride. We won't turn there, but we know the familiar Scripture in 1 John 2:16.

**1 John 2:16.** *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, (KJV)*

But what was the third one?

**1 John 2:16b.** *the pride of life, (KJV)*

The New International quotes that "the pride of life" by saying:

**1 John 2:16.** *the boasting of what he has and [what he] does (NIV)*

"The pride of life", "the boasting of" what a man has or a woman or what he or she does. It is part of our human nature and we have got to fight it. And we have got to overcome it.

And I can tell you from personal experience, the minute I think I've got a lid on it, it comes popping right back up! It's like an old bed and bed springs. One of them pops up and you fix it and shove it down and another one pops up. And it just keeps popping up because it's part of our nature! We have to be very careful.

Now why is it so dangerous? That leads us to the Third Point—very dangerous, pride.

*III. Pride blinds and deceives.*

Pride, there's something about pride that causes us to be blinded to it. We don't see it in ourselves. Or it deceives us. We have to be very, very careful about pride.

Let's go to Ezekiel chapter 28. Look again back to Satan. One Scripture, Ezekiel 28 and verse 17, notice how it blinded Satan! Ezekiel 28 verse 17, Satan is condemned here in this Scripture. Notice what it says:

**Ezekiel 28:17.** *[Your] heart was lifted up (KJV)*



Again to be aggrandized, to be elevated.

**Ezekiel 28:17b.** *because of [your] beauty, (KJV)*

Remember what we read in Webster's 1828 Dictionary.

**Ezekiel 28:17 continued.** *[you have] corrupted [your] wisdom by reason of [your] brightness: (KJV)*

So because of pride, it corrupted whatever wisdom Satan had. And because he yielded to pride, then his wisdom went away. Any kind of godly wisdom went away!

And so, there's a lesson for us there. That if we yield to pride, we run the risk of having any godly wisdom go away. We're deceived, thinking we're doing the right thing when we're really not, and we're blinded by pride. We need to understand that.

We can say, "Well, I don't have pride." Well, how do we know we're not deceived? Because a deceived person doesn't know they're deceived. So we have to be very careful when we say, "I don't have any pride," because just like Satan, it can deceive us.

Let's go to Obadiah. We don't often go there. One chapter, we're going to look at verse 3. (Right before the Book of Jonah—Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah.) Obadiah verse 3. It's talking to Edom, but we want to establish a principle here. Notice what it says:

**Obadiah 1:3.** *The pride of [your] heart (KJV)*

Now that's referring to Edom in verse 1, but it's a principle that applies to all of us.

**Obadiah 1:3.** *The pride of [your] heart [has] deceived [you], (KJV)*

And we have to be very careful that the pride of our heart doesn't deceive us.

**Obadiah 1:3b.** *[you] that [dwell] in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; (KJV)*

He's drawing an analogy of living up on a high mountain. And you're looking down on everybody. He says:

**Obadiah 1:3 continued.** *that [says] in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? (KJV)*

That's exactly what Satan said! "Who's better than me? Who can conquer me? I'm going to show God! I'll go conquer Him!" We have to be very careful that the pride of our heart does not deceive us.

Now let's go to a warning in 1 Timothy chapter 3. We're going to read the first verse and then the beginning of the second verse and then we will jump to verse 6. 1 Timothy 3 verse 1, this is talking about somebody desiring the office of an elder, or it says here a "bishop" which the Greek word means "an overseer."

**1 Timothy 3:1.** *This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop [an overseer], he [desires] a good work. (KJV)*

You have to be careful though that you don't desire it for the wrong reasons!  
Verse 2:

**1 Timothy 3:2.** *A bishop then must (KJV)*

And he gives various qualifications, but we'll jump down to verse 6.

**1 Timothy 3:6.** *[A bishop must not be] a novice, (KJV)*

The Greek means "one who is newly come to the faith."

**1 Timothy 3:6b.** *lest being lifted up with pride he [falls] into the condemnation of [Satan]. (KJV)*

So let's understand that if we, in this case, somebody who is not seasoned, hasn't been around a long time, all of a sudden gets elevated too soon. It means that they can be subjected to pride. And then you fall into the hands of Satan because he is the author—he is the father—of pride.

That's what Neil mentioned in the sermonette earlier. That that's why the king had to sit down and write out the laws, "lest his heart be" what? "Lifted up" with pride! Same thing!

Now the Greek word for pride is Strong's 5187. And it "means to be puffed up with haughtiness." Or it means—and notice this—"to blind with pride or conceit!" To blind with pride or conceit! Another definition is to be clouded. When you're clouded, either in your mind or as a pilot you're flying through clouds, you don't know where you are! You can't see. You have no vision! You can be deceived. You can be misled, if you're in clouds and have no vision. So let's understand the Greek definition is to blind with pride or conceit or to be clouded.

Now remember, we read earlier Revelation 3 and verse 17, the Laodicean Era? It says, "You are poor." What the next word? "You are blind and you're naked." So, let's understand that one of the big problems of the Laodicean Era is blindness due to pride. And we cannot allow ourselves to fall into that.

The thing we have to recognize, under this heading of "Pride Blinds and Deceives Us", is if we're blind or we're deceived, we're still held accountable for our sins! God doesn't say, "Well, he was deceived so I'm just going to wipe away all his sins." That doesn't work. "Well, she was blind and so those sins aren't held accountable to her." That is not true! It's just not true.

Let's go to Psalm 19 and verse 12. Psalm 19 and verse 12 and see that. David knew that he was blinded. Particularly in the issue with Bathsheba, he walked into that. He was a blind man! He wasn't as close to God as he should have been.

Neil mentioned that in the sermonette. We go through ups and downs in our Christian life. As we get closer to the end time, we cannot allow ourselves to go through one of those dips. We can't allow ourselves to let down.

And David said in Psalm 19 verse 12, he says:

***Psalm 19:12. Who can understand his errors? (KJV)***

Well, obviously God does! Notice!

***Psalm 19:12b. cleanse [You] me from secret faults. (KJV)***

Or, secret sins. Now that means, "God, please!" Why would David want to be cleansed if he wasn't held accountable? If he wasn't responsible, he wouldn't need to be cleansed. But he's saying, "I want You, God, to cleanse me from the sins I'm blind to or the sins I don't see."

Let's jump to Psalm 90 and verse 8. There are several other Scriptures. We're just going to cover two here. Psalm 90 and verse 8, David is saying:

***Psalm 90:8. [You have] set our iniquities before [You], (KJV)***

Meaning: Our sins are just plain to God. We can't hide a thing from God! God knows every thought, every motive, every deed that we do.

***Psalm 90:8. [You have] set our iniquities before [You], our secret sins in the light of [Your] countenance. (KJV)***

Meaning: God sees every secret thing we do. Things we do in our minds that nobody else knows about—thoughts, pictures, actions. God sees the sins we do in private where no other people are around. He is totally aware of all of that. And so let's understand that God holds us accountable for our sins whether we see them or not, whether other people see them or not doesn't change God's Law. We are still accountable.

That's why we're admonished—we won't turn there—in 1 Corinthians 11 verse 28, "Let a man [or a woman] examine himself [or herself]." We have to! We shouldn't do it just before Passover. We should do it all the time! We should do it all the time because God holds us accountable, and we cannot allow the sin of pride to blind us and deceive us.

Now if we are not careful and allow that to happen, we fall into another trap which leads us to the Fourth Point.

#### *IV. Pride hardens us.*

It hardens our conscience. It hardens our heart. And this something that is very dangerous.

You remember how many times—we won't turn there—in Exodus 7, 8, and 9—Moses went to Pharaoh; pronounced a plague; in the middle of the plague, Pharaoh, his heart was softened and "Yeah, we'll let the Israelites go"; and then the plague was removed. And then, what happened every time? Pharaoh's heart became hard! And he wouldn't let them go. He wouldn't be obedient to God because of his pride. He knew better. "God was no God. Who is this Moses? We've got Egypt. Look at my kingdom! Look at my chariots! Look at my horsemen! Who are they to tell me what to do?" And his pride became hardened.

Now let's go back. We looked at the example of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4 earlier. Let's go to chapter 5 of Daniel and look at verse 20. This is the same thing that caused Nebuchadnezzar to say, "Look what I've done! Look at my kingdom! Look at my power! Look at my might! Look at my majesty! Daniel 5 and verse 20, referring to Nebuchadnezzar:

***Daniel 5:20.*** *But when his [referring to Nebuchadnezzar's] heart was lifted up, (KJV)*

But notice this!

***Daniel 5:20b.*** *his mind hardened with pride,*

Just like Pharaoh!

***Daniel 5:20b.*** *his mind hardened with pride,* *he was deposed from his kingly throne [which we read about], and they took his glory from him: (KJV)*

The Hebrew word for *hardened* is Strong's 8631, and it means "to grow arrogant."

"I know better. I am better. Look at me. Exalt me. Worship me. Kneel before me!" That's exactly what happened to Nebuchadnezzar. It's what happened to Pharaoh. And we have to be very careful that it doesn't happen to us as it has happened to Satan.

You see those hardened with pride can't admit they're wrong. Their pride will not allow them to admit they're wrong. Now how can you repent of a sin, if you don't admit you have sin? Or you don't see a sin? That's where the deceptiveness of pride is so hard, so difficult. Those hardened with pride cannot admit they are wrong.

Let's go to 1 Timothy 4 and we're going to read the first two verses. This is a prophecy for us today. Let's understand this! This is the reality of what we have

to deal with. 1 Timothy 4 and the first two verses, I'll read it out of the NIV. It says:

**1 Timothy 4:1.** *The Spirit clearly says that in [the latter] times (NIV)*

Now we are far more in the latter times that when Paul wrote to Timothy 2,000 years ago—a little less.

**1 Timothy 4:1.** *The Spirit clearly says that in [the latter] times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. (NIV)*

We see that all the time. We know this is true. Verse 2:

**1 Timothy 4:2.** *Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences [their conscience has] been seared as with a hot iron. (NIV)*

Their conscience is seared.

If you've ever had a burn on your skin, you know what I'm talking about. Once it heals up, a deep burn, you can sit there with a pin and poke your skin and you don't have any feeling there. It has been seared. All the nerve endings are dead.

You don't feel a thing. And that's the analogy that Paul is drawing to Timothy. The conscience is the same thing. It doesn't feel a thing. The conscience of these people that he's referring to here is not working because they are blind to their sins. And if you're blind to your sins, then you can't admit you've done anything wrong. Therefore, you can't repent or won't repent. And then your conscience begins to stop working. And over time, the conscience becomes seared. Meaning it dies! It no longer whispers to you or talks to you saying, "You shouldn't have said that! You should have done this!" because we become blind with pride. And the fruits are very painful. They hurt.

Let's go back to Daniel chapter 5. We were in verse 20. Let's look at verse 21 and see what happened to Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel 5 verse 21, now this is something that physically happened to Nebuchadnezzar. We don't want it to spiritually happen to us!

**Daniel 5:21.** *And he [Nebuchadnezzar] was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild [donkeys]: they fed him with grass like [an ox], and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; (KJV)*

This is all now for seven years!

**Daniel 5:21b.** *till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he [appoints] over it whomsoever he will. (KJV)*

He lived like an animal for seven years. He was driven into the wilderness. We don't want that to happen to us. We don't want to have to go through the tribulation. We don't want to be driven into the wilderness of this world. And what Neil, again, mentioned in the sermonette—just going out into the world, because we will be destroyed. Look what happened to Haman in the Book of Esther and we talked about that a few weeks ago. Look at his end because of his pride. "Look at me! I'm number two. I'm the only the guy invited to the party with party with the king!" And on and on and on! Look what happened to Haman.

Let's go to—we're in chapter 5 and verse 21. Let's go back to chapter 4 and verse 37. Nebuchadnezzar learned his lesson. But, man! What a painful experience it was! It says:

***Daniel 4:37.*** *Now I Nebuchadnezzar [because of what I've been through] praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are [true], and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.* (KJV)

If we allow ourselves to walk in pride, we are going to fall down and it's going to be very painful, very hurtful. It will hurt others. It will hurt ourselves. And we don't want to go there.

So the Fourth Point is that:

*IV. Pride hardens us.*

The Fifth Point, something that is very important to all of us in the Pacific Church of God, very important to God's people all around the earth is that:

*V. Pride is the cause of strife and dissension.*

We have to be very careful about that. Let's go to Proverbs 13 and verse 10. The Bible is very clear. When upset comes, contentions come, strife comes, at the root of it there's one thing. That is pride! Proverbs 13 verse 10, we are told:

***Proverbs 13:10.*** *Only by pride [comes] contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.* (KJV)

We have to be very careful in our interrelations with each other, within our families, within the Church, in our relations with other groups that we cannot ever allow pride to intervene. We cannot look down on other people. We cannot look down on other groups. We can't look down on other congregations because it will lead to strife and contention.

Let's understand! Pride, you see, is all selfishness and self-centeredness. Pride looks inward whereas God's spirit, God's way looks outward. God says we have to do the opposite and not look inward! Not be selfish or self-centered. Let's go to Philippians 2 and verse 3, I'll read it out of the New King James because the

King James is a little clumsy in the translation. Philippians 2 and verse 3, now if pride is the genesis or the cause of contention, notice what we're told!

***Philippians 2:3.*** *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, (KJV)*

Now understand that one of the definitions of pride is conceit. But what is the opposite?

***Philippians 2:3b.*** *but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself [or herself]. (NKJ)*

We have to not look down on other people. We have to esteem them better than ourselves. Now if we see somebody sinning let's say, or somebody off going in a wrong direction, we could look down in judgment and say, "Well, I'd never do that! Oh, I'm too good for that! I would never do that!" And then we can begin to point fingers.

But let's understand, as Neil mentioned in the sermonette, he went through a period of time that he wasn't behaving himself very well. I've done the same thing. Each one of you has done the same thing. But did God reject us? Did God blast us from existence with a lightening bolt? Did God just fry us right then? No, of course not! He was very patient, very gentle, very kind, led us by the hand through this sad time—this dip in our spiritual life—and brought us out the other end.

Now when we look down on somebody else, what are we saying? "Oh, I'm better than you are. I wouldn't do that!" Well, but we've done just the same or worse, but God has been patient with us. So, when we somebody in our view going astray, we need to pray for them and we need to be patient and kind and gentle with them just as God is with us.

If we want God to be gentle with us, we need to be gentle with other people. If we don't want God to judge us harshly, then we can't judge others harshly. So let's understand that! And so we have to esteem others better than ourselves and that is one of the things that is just the opposite of pride.

Let's go to Psalm 31 and we're going to read verses 19 and 20. Pride causes strife and contention. We have to be aware of that and be on guard against it. Psalm 31 verse 19, David says:

***Psalm 31:19.*** *Oh how great is [your] goodness, which [You have] laid up for them that fear [You, honor You, reverence You]; which [You have] wrought for them that trust [You] (KJV)*

Look to God! Not to men.

***Psalm 31:19b.*** *that trust [You] before the sons of men! (KJV)*

Verse 20:

**Psalm 31:20.** *[You shall] hide [those who fear You and trust You; You shall hide them] in the secret of [Your] presence from the pride of man: (KJV)*

If we are close to God, we look to God, then that will shield us from the pride of men.

Now I've heard— We all know that we should pray "God's will be done." And some people at the end of prayers, you know—I've done it in the past. I don't do it anymore. But years ago, you know I'd say, "Well, God this is what I want." But then kind of through grit teeth and through lowering your breath so to speak, you say "But Your will be done." No, what I've learned in the past, by suffering in the past, is that I want God's will first, now always, forevermore! I don't want my will because my will will fail! It will just crash and burn! And what you want is God's will to be done in every facet of our lives, in the Church's life, in our family life! That God's will be done!

And it says, "If you fear God, if you trust in God, then it will hide us from the pride of men", which is from Satan, that can creep in.

**Psalm 31:10b.** *[You shall] keep them secretly in [the] pavilion from the strife of tongues. (KJV)*

Pride and strife go hand in hand. That's why sometimes—you never like to do this as a minister or as an elder—but sometime the only solution with somebody that is filled with pride and will not change is in Proverbs 22 and verse 10. Let's go there. Sometimes you just hate to do this, but you have to because people are blinded by their pride and they don't see it. Proverbs 22 and verse 10, it says:

**Proverbs 22:10.** *Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; (KJV)*

So being a scorner and contentious shall go out.

**Proverbs 22:10b.** *yea, strife and reproach shall cease. (KJV)*

So if you cast out the scorner, strife will cease. Now the Hebrew word for scorner means "to talk arrogantly" or we could say talk pridefully. And we're told here that pride causes division and upset, strife, contention.

And sometimes if you go to somebody and you talk to them about it and you plead with them to see the sin or to see the conduct and to turn from it and they don't, ultimately you've just got to cut the knot. And say, "You're just a walking disaster! Everywhere you go there's fighting, trouble, contention, problems. And so we've asked you very patiently over a period of time not to do that. You've refused. So, I'm sorry. You're just not welcome anymore until you change."



And we don't want that ultimately to happen to us with God because in the end of the day, the prideful are going to be cast out. They'll be cast into the Lake of Fire. And that leads us to the Sixth Point.

*VI. Pride will keep us out of the Kingdom of God.*

And we want to be in the Kingdom of God with all our being. And so, we, by definition, have to understand that if we have pride, we're not going to be there. God is not going to allow a prideful person in His Kingdom. That's why He cast Satan out. He's not going to have that for an eternity!

God hates pride. Let's go to Proverbs chapter 6 and we're going to read verse 16 and the beginning of verse 17. God hates pride. Proverbs 6 and verse 16, this is a Hebrew idiom that emphasizes a point because it will say one number and then add one more to it and that's for extra emphasis. Proverbs 6 verse 16:

***Proverbs 6:16.*** *These six things [does] the LORD hate: (KJV)*

Then it says:

***Proverbs 6:16b.*** *[Yes], seven are an abomination unto him: (KJV)*

What is the first one? Pride!

***Proverbs 6:17.*** *A proud look, (KJV)*

It goes on to say:

***Proverbs 6:17b.*** *a lying tongue, (KJV)*

But a proud look is something that God hates. And what I'm saying is, in order to be the Bride of Christ, we have to have the character of Christ. And we can't have something in our character that God hates. Why would Christ marry somebody who has the characteristic that He hates? So what He's doing is giving us time to get rid of the things that He hates, which the primary one is pride. We cannot have pride.

Look forward then to chapter 8 and verse 13. Again the very first thing that is mentioned is pride! Proverbs 8 verse 13:

***Proverbs 8:13.*** *The fear of the [Eternal] is to hate evil: (KJV)*

What is the first evil that is mentioned?

***Proverbs 8:13b.*** *pride, and [arrogance], (KJV)*

Pride and arrogance! That's the first thing that we must get rid of if we're going to hate evil. It doesn't talk about Sabbath-keeping. It doesn't talk about the very first thing is doing this or doing that. He says, "You've got to get rid of pride because that is the core of contention and rebelliousness." That is what got

Satan cast out from the throne of God and that is what will keep us away from the Kingdom of God! We must hate that. And we must get rid of pride.

Look at chapter 16 and verse 18. If we don't, this is what will happen to us as it happened to Satan, as it happened to Nebuchadnezzar. Proverbs 16 and verse 18, it says:

***Proverbs 16:18. Pride [goes] before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. (KJV)***

The thing is that we don't want that destruction to be in the Lake of Fire. And if we have pride, the destruction for us is not to the tribulation coming on the world. It's going to be in the Lake of Fire. And we do not want that to happen to us.

So the Sixth Point is that:

*VI. Pride will keep us out of the Kingdom of God.*

We can't allow that to happen!

That leads us to the Seventh and Final Point. We have to ask, "Okay. Then what's the solution?" How do we overcome pride? How do we change?

The fact is that in my observation is that pride prevents God's spirit from working in us. If we allow ourselves to become prideful, then God's spirit will diminish in us and will stop working in us.

I've seen that with people. They started off humble. They started off close to God; they read; they studied, they prayed; they meditated. They were very close to God. And then for some reason they were elevated to an office or a position or whatever. And then over time, things changed—over years, sometimes over decades. And things change from the humble person that was looking to God and staying close to God into "Look at me! The rules apply to you. They don't apply to me! Look at my greatness. Look at what I'm doing. Look at what I'm responsible for. Look at my position. Look at where I've come to—what I've become."

Pride can prevent God's spirit from working because pride is selfish, incoming, and taking. Now if we want to get rid of that, we have to go the opposite direction. Like we say, "If the world's going in this direction, probably we should do a 180 and look back and look at the other direction. And that's probably where we ought to be going."

Well, if pride has infected the Laodicean Era of God's Church, then what is the antidote for pride? What is the opposite of pride? Because, remember what is one of the major fruits of God's spirit? Galatians 5 verse 23, we won't turn there. You know what it is. It is a spirit of meekness—a spirit of meekness.

Remember we talked about Saul a few weeks ago? And he was told by the prophet; he said, "When you were little in your own eyes, you did such and such,

which was good," implying that you're not little in your own eyes anymore. So, that one of the fruits of God's spirit is meekness.

Remember—and we won't—well, let's turn there. Luke 14, we'll begin in verse 7. Let's look at the parable that Christ gave us when He noticed that at a wedding ceremony, a wedding feast, those with a haughty, prideful spirit chose the upper rooms. And He noticed that and He had something to say about it. Luke 14 verse 7:

**Luke 14:7.** *And he put forth a parable to those [who] were bidden [who were invited to the wedding ceremony and the wedding feast], when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; (KJV)*

Now why would somebody choose out the chief room? Because they thought of themselves as being worthy of the chief room! They thought of themselves in their mind that "This is where I belong." And so they go and take the chief room.

**Luke 14:7b.** *[He said] unto them, 8) When [you are] bidden of any to a wedding, [He says, Don't] sit down in the highest room; lest a more honorable man than [you] be [invited] of him; 9) And he that [invited you] and him [this other man more honorable] come [to you] and say, Give this [room] place [or give this place and this room to this man]; and [then you have to go to a lower] room. (KJV)*

Take a lower seat, we would say. Verse 10:

**Luke 14:10.** *But when [you are] bidden, go and sit in the lowest room; that when [the person] that [invited you come and], he [says, No! No, no, come here I want you to go up to this other room]: then [you shall] have worship in the presence of them that sit at [a meal] with [you]. (KJV)*

Verse 11, this is the message.

**Luke 14:11.** *For whosoever [exalts] himself shall be abased; (KJV)*

As Nebuchadnezzar was, as Satan was!

**Luke 14:11b.** *and he that [humbles] himself shall be exalted. (KJV)*

Not necessarily—in this analogy, yes, in the presence of men. But for God's people today, we're never going to be exalted in this life. We're never going to be the high and mighty in this life. 1 Corinthians 1:26: God calls the meek of the world. The only way we're going to be exalted, is we'll be exalted by God and Christ in Their Kingdom, but never in this life. And if we look to be exalted in this life, shame on us! Because we're not going to get it unless we leave the Church and then have a different motive and have a different spirit in us. And then, yeah, maybe we'll get a position somewhere, but that'll be the end of that.

The question we have to ask ourselves: Am I willing to take the lowest room or the lowest seat and be content with it? Or do I have to strive to be something

better in the sense that "I want more recognition. I want more power. I want this title or that title"? Are we willing to take the lowest position and just be happy with it? This is where God wants me. This is where I can serve God's people. I don't need this or that or something else. Because Christ has said in Matthew 23 verse 11—we won't turn there—He says:

***Matthew 23:11. But he that is greatest among you (KJV)***

What did He say?

***Matthew 23:11b. [let him] be your (KJV)***

What?

***Matthew 23:11 continued. [your] servant. (KJV)***

Let him be your servant! Not to be exalted.

We lost this in the days of Worldwide. The ministry was there to be exalted. The ministry was there to be served. Guys came out of the "West Point" of the Church and then strutted in—kids that were in their early twenties—to be exalted. Some people were made evangelists in their twenties and lost the concept that they're there to serve not to be served! They're there not to have the church home or the paid church car or to be catered to. They're there to be a living sacrifice for God's people. We lost that.

And I believe that's one of the reasons Worldwide had to be dismantled because it had so infected the Church and the ministry about this whole area of pride. The Church became very, very prideful. And the only way God could deal with it is dismantle it. The only way He's going to deal with the world, as we know, He's got to dismantle the world. You can't fix something that's rotten to the core! You've got to tear it all apart and start new.

You see pride prevents humility from growing in us. And humility is necessary for us to be in the Kingdom. Humility is necessary for us to work together as God's people in absolute harmony and unity.

If we're willing to take the lowest seat, if we're willing to take the lowest room, then we won't come in conflict with other people because we'll say, "Well, you know let's do what you want." Or "You need this. Let's let you have that." And so we don't take for the self.

Look at 1 Peter 5 and verse 6, the last Scripture under Point Number Seven. 1 Peter 5 and verse 6, this is Peter's admonishment to the entire Church back then and to the Church today. We will never be exalted in this life. Let's get used to it. 1 Peter 5 and verse 6, he says:

***1 Peter 5:6. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, (KJV)***

We have to get down on our knees, flat on our face, and say, "God, whatever you want me to do, I'll do. Whatever direction You want me to go, I'll go. I don't care what I want. I don't care where I go or what I do. Just tell me what You want. I am Your slave. I am Your servant. I will do whatever You want me to do." Now if we have that attitude, then everybody's going to be in harmony and unity because we're seeking not our will but God's will! We're seeking to be like Christ.

And we've got all of God's people scattered around in here. And we've got the liberals and the conservatives and the Republicans and the Democrats and all that. God's people down here, the young and the old, the weak and the strong. And we're all here. And here's Christ. And so what we what we need to do and what we should do is grow into the image of Jesus Christ a new man and a new woman.

And by definition, if Christ is here and we're scattered left or right down here, we all become closer and closer and closer to be like Jesus Christ. Therefore, the differences between us become smaller and smaller and smaller as we become like Jesus Christ. And then, therefore, any dissensions or turmoil or upsets are minimized because guess what? We're all thinking like Jesus Christ. We're all coming closer to be in His image. And we think like Him and we act like Him. And we put away pride and put on humility. So we must cultivate humility in every facet of our life. That is the solution to pride.

Now let's wrap this up. Let's conclude.

Now we quoted Matthew 11:24 in the very beginning where Christ said, "It's going to be more tolerable for Sodom than it is going to be for some of you." Now we don't want to be in that category because Sodom was incinerated—absolutely incinerated! And we know that we will be incinerated if we don't become like Jesus Christ.

We are in the end of days. Remember the prophecy from Ezekiel? It says, "The day it is come. Pride has budded." We are in that day! And the Laodicean Era, we are told that pride fills the Laodicean Era. "I need nothing. I am rich. I am increased with goods." And so the environment that we're in is filled with pride on a national basis, on a community basis, over the television, over movies, over books. Everything that comes into our mind, there is pride! And I hate to say it, but there has been pride in God's Church—entirely too much of it in God's Church!

And so we have to go the other direction because pride deceives. It blinds us. It causes strife and turmoil and contention. And we do not want to go there!

The solution we find in one final Scripture in Proverbs 29 and verse 23. Let's go there. This is what we need to strive for every day of our life. Proverbs 29 and verse 23—two true phrases! First, Proverbs 29 verse 23, we are told:

***Proverbs 29:23. A man's [or a woman's] pride shall bring him low: (KJV)***

We've seen examples of that—Satan, Nebuchadnezzar, Pharaoh, and so on.

***Proverbs 29:23b. but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit. (KJV)***

Honor that comes from God, honor that comes from Jesus Christ, honor that comes from having the mind of Christ and having humility!

And so let's make sure that the latter part of this Scripture applies to us and not the former part of this Scripture. So let's all put pride away from our existence, our thoughts, our words, our motives. And let's put on the antidote of pride, the opposite of pride. And that is humility.