

Principalities and Powers, Islam and Christendom, Part 1

By Bob Vincent

Bible Text: Matthew 12:43-45; Daniel 10

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Turn with me, if you will to the gospel of Matthew chapter 12 – page 1516 if you're using the Bibles in the pews.

By the way, tonight's service will not be our study of basic Bible doctrine. It will be an opportunity for you to ask questions about what I say today because what I say today is going to be very controversial and some of you may disagree with it. You come and ask questions, you will end up agreeing with it.

Matthew 12:43: "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it." And that was said a little bit tongue-in-cheek. "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits." Notice those next words. They are very, very important: "more wicked than itself." Those are very important words: "more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation."

I want to put these two passages of Scripture together with you for a moment in a broad sense and then I want to move to the practical application of the biblical teaching with you in terms of the West and Islam.

We learn in this parable that Jesus tells, which I like to call the parable of the haunted house, that nature doesn't like a vacuum, that where there's a vacuum something is going to rush in. The parable of the haunted house is really a picture of an individual who had a demonic problem. He had a demonic stronghold. What is a demon?

As I have wrestled with what the Scripture teaches, I believe that it's safe to say that a demon is a fallen angel. That is, all things have been created by God, but God did not create evil. Demons were angels who joined with a powerful archangel in rebellion against God and fell from their first estate. Some of those spirits – and this would be a whole other study to go into why there are different kinds in different places – some of those spirits ended up being bound in a place called, in Greek, τετραρος. And they are bound now.

And others of those spirits are loose and are in the world and they operate on the minds of people. In other words, your thinking and my thinking – not just of heathen people who don't know God and not just of demon-possessed people who are wild and crazy – but your thinking and my thinking is susceptible to demonic influence. Demon spirits, fallen angels are spiritual beings and they can manipulate how you see reality.

I'm not talking about hallucinations, here, though they can do that. I'm talking about putting desires in your mind. You need to remember this. Not every time you feel like doing something is it you who's feeling like doing it. It's a very important truth. There are a lot of things you feel like doing that, it isn't really you who is desiring to do that. It's a foreign influence manipulating you.

Now, I want to illustrate it in a practical way in the sense of a purely secular way. And it's the clothes you wear. The fact that people change the width of their lapels and the width of their ties and colors which are acceptable and not acceptable is a profound illustration of the fact that we adopt desires that are not strictly based on our sense of reason and our perception of the world. But those things are influenced by people who want to create within us a restlessness and a discontent so that we will take our plastic and go to the mall and spend money we don't have to buy what we don't need because we believe that our wide lapel suit or our narrow lapel suit or our wide tie or our narrow tie looks funny. And so we run up the credit card.

And you have to understand that there is a deliberate conspiracy on the part of people to separate you from your money. I didn't say those were evil people. I'm simply saying that merchants discovered a good long while ago that if they could get you to reject your perfectly decent clothes because they weren't in style, they could get you to buy a whole lot more clothes and they could get you to spend a whole lot more money for them.

So, is it a conspiracy? Sure it is. And when I speak of it as a conspiracy, I'm not talking about some underground *sub rosa* thing that nobody knows about. I'm talking about something that's as plain as the nose on all our faces. We're influenced by forces external to us to want certain things. That's absolutely true.

I'm saying to you that among the forces that condition to want certain things, believe certain things, desire certain things and to be unhappy with other things are some supernatural forces. And those supernatural forces are called, in Scripture, evil spirits or demons.

Now, there's a profound truth in Matthew 12 and Jesus says that a man has a demon cast out of him but that man remains spiritually empty. And since nature doesn't like a vacuum what happens is that spirit that left that man goes wandering looking for a home, just like the boll weevil. You remember the song about the boll weevil, looking for a home, looking for a home. Well, demons they're looking for a home, looking for a home. Don't you end up being the home for a demon spirit.

And so what happens is that demon spirit that's been cast out wanders through the wilderness, the waterless places, seeking rest and finding none because spirits want to have a body, because they express things and feel things and sense things when they can attach themselves somehow or other to flesh and blood whether it's an animal body or a human body. That's what Scripture teaches. Read the gospels. You'll come to that conclusion. Anyone who reads the gospels – the four gospels – will come to understand that's exactly what Jesus teaches, what I've just set forth.

Now, what's interesting is that Jesus says that spirit returns to that man and finds his house in three conditions. It's been cleaned out and therefore is empty. It's been swept out and it's been put in order. And the Greek word that's used there is the verb form of the word from which we get the word cosmos. And the idea in Greek philosophy of the cosmos is an ordered system. And so this house has become cleaned out of demons, cleaned up morally and put in order. But it's spiritually empty.

And so that spirit decides to return. But Jesus says in this parable he returns with what? Seven other spirits. And there are two Greek words for other. One is *αλλος* which is another of the same kind. And the other word for other *ετερος* means another of a different kind. Can't press that distinction absolutely, but it's there.

So he takes along with him seven other spirits of a different kind – *ετερος* – more what? More wicked than himself. That means there are some relatively nice demons. Really, there are. I mean if you're going to have to have demons in your life, make sure they're nice demons and not really mean, raunchy demons. You'd rather have a demon that gives you religious goose bumps than you would to have a demon that makes you want to go out and slit people's throat and become a serial killer.

You want to understand how that works, read the interviews that were done with Ted Bundy before he was executed. Something came over him. Most of the time Ted Bundy was a nice, charming guy. He was very bright and very charming. He's the kind of guy, if he moved in next door to you you'd want to have him in your home and play bridge with him and have him over for a meal and really get to know him and maybe have your sister go out with him.

And that's the kind of guy he was. But then Ted Bundy described something as coming over him. What is that? That's a demon spirit. Does that mean that Ted Bundy wasn't responsible for his conduct? No, indeed. We're responsible for what we do even though we may experience extenuating circumstances.

So there are different kinds of spirits and some are more wicked than others. Now, if we turn back to Daniel for a moment with that background....

Oh, by the way, one last thought. This is a parable in the gospel of Matthew. He's not talking about an actual case with an actual man. If you notice the last line in this parable, look at what he says. In this last sentence, after he talks about more wicked, then he gets down to the bottom of page 1506 and he says, "The final condition of that man is worse

than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation.” He’s speaking about the people of his day and the culture of his day. And he’s saying that the nations that had known God and followed God and tried to follow the Scriptures but had experienced the spiritual emptiness in turning aside from God’s way, they were going to be turned over to other things and their civilization was going to become a disastrous civilization because he’s saying this not of an individual. He’s using an analogy between an individual who experiences an exorcism, but not a filling of the Spirit. And he says, “It’s going to be like this for the audience I’m speaking to.” Jesus was speaking to an audience of religious people who took the Bible seriously in the first century.

Now, with that in mind, with that background in mind let’s go back to Daniel 10 and pick it up at verse 12 – page 1390. Notice his words here. And I’ve preached on this before, but I’m going to have a different application to it than I’ve had before. “Then he continued, ‘Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them.’”

Now, what you’ve got to look back on is what we read at the opening of the sermon. And what we discovered is that Daniel prayed and fasted and sought God’s face for what? Twenty-one days, three entire weeks. And we understand that Daniel did not receive the answer to his prayers on day one or day two or week one or week two. He didn’t receive the answer to his prayers until three weeks had gone by. And what we need to understand here is the explanation that’s given by this archangel who comes to him. And he explains it. He tells Daniel in that verse 12. He says what? He says in that second sentence of verse 12: “Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them.”

I want you to know. God answered that prayer on day one. God sent the answer on day one. But the answer was not received by Daniel until three weeks later and there’s a clear explanation in the text as to why that was so. Look at the next sentence, verse 13: “But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days.”

You understand something here: that spiritual forces of wickedness can hinder the advancement of the kingdom of God.

Now, some of you will question that because you believe in the sovereignty of God in a Muslim sense of that word instead of in a Christian sense. In a Muslim understanding of the sovereignty of God, God is sovereign period. But in a Christian and biblical understanding of the sovereignty of God, God not only ordains the end result, but he ordains the means to that end. And therefore you and I must pray. Therefore you and I must witness. Therefore you and I must labor in God’s vineyard to see God’s will be done on earth. And there’s a bit of a mystery here, but I want you to understand the Bible clearly teaches predestination. But it teaches predestination in a way that’s different from Mohammed’s understanding of predestination.

In Mohammed's understanding of predestination there's a capricious, unknowing God who arbitrarily simply decrees whatever comes to pass – period. And so the response to that can be a kind of a *que sera sera* attitude. “Well, the will of God is going to be done so it makes no difference whether I wear a seatbelt or fly in an airplane or drive my car 100 miles per hour on the way from Mecca to Riyadh. It makes no difference because God is God. God is sovereign. Allah has ordained whatever comes to pass – period. That's not a biblical or Christian view of the sovereignty of God or predestination.

A biblical and Christian view of predestination focuses on our responsibility, on what we are supposed to do. We must believe God. We must pray to God. And we must put God's principles into practice in our lives in order to see God's will be done even though God's will will be done. And that's where the rub comes in and that's the mystery. And there is a certain sense of paradox here, or a kind of a sense of antimony here that the sovereignty of God with human responsibility. Both things are true just as Jesus is fully God and fully human.

Now, it's interesting. I've been teaching on free will on Sunday night. And I had thought about tonight – but I'll have to put it off for a week – I was going to teach on the fact that God does not have free will in an absolute sense.

What do you think I mean when I say that God does not have free will in an absolute sense? I mean that God never acts contrary to his own nature. God can't sin. God does not have the freedom to sin. God can't lie. He doesn't have the freedom to lie. God cannot tempt you with sin. He doesn't have the freedom to do that. God cannot be tempted with sin. God does not have the freedom of will to be tempted by sin. The Bible does not teach that God has absolute freedom of will. God acts in accordance with his own nature. And part of that is – one other Scripture before we get to the meat of this thing. Holding your hand at Daniel go over to Mark chapter six and look at verse five – page 1561. We're talking about Jesus in verse four. “Jesus said to them, ‘Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor.’” Notice the words in verse five. “He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith.”

Because God does not have absolute free will, Jesus could not do many significant miracles there. He only laid his hands on a few sick people because God doesn't have absolute freedom of will. God acts in accordance with his own holy nature. Now, I'm not speaking of something above God. I'm speaking of God himself. And in God's own holy nature, he cannot sin and will not sin. And in his holy nature and in his own sovereignty God has chosen, oftentimes, to limit himself in response to human faith even though human faith, itself, is a gift of God.

Quick illustration: Some years ago in the often time experience of my life of being in financial crisis, I was really hurting. And I had read in the Bible the week before, “In that year Isaac sowed and reaped in the land one hundred fold.” And I knew that I needed a lot of money. In fact, I needed pretty much exactly a certain amount of money. And I wrote out a check, it was a tithe on what I made, which I get paid twice a month. And so

my tithe, based on the first half of the month, was \$110, a tithe on what I made. I rounded it out to the highest dollar. So I wrote a check for \$110. I put it in the collection plate and I had the faith. I've never had the faith before. I've never had it since. I had the faith when I put it in the plate. I said, "Lord, I'm asking you in the name and authority of Jesus that you will give me a 100%...that you will give me a 100 fold," – that's not 100%. This is far more than that. This is a 10,000%, "That you will give me a 100 fold return on this investment in your kingdom."

And, you know, I don't believe in tithing. I've told you that many times. 'Cause I think we need to give by faith and we need to give only as much as we can give with cheerfulness and never give out of legalistic bondage. But I do believe that it normally is the case that God blesses us financially as we give to him.

So here's what happened. I wrote out a check for one hundred and ten bucks. I said, "Lord, I'm laying hold of this promise." I prayed with faith. I never had that faith before. I never have had that faith since. And I continued to pray. And six weeks later I opened up an envelope and in there was a stock certificate for Wachovia Bank, for 200 shares of Wachovia bank stock. This was in 1996 and I was really hurting. I got on the internet and I checked how much Wachovia Bank stock closed out at Friday evening from the stock exchange, 'cause I got the check when I got home from an out of town trip I had to take. And how much did Wachovia bank stock close out for that day? Fifty-five dollars a share. And how many shares of stock did I get? Two hundred shares. And you do the math. It's pretty simple. You don't have to be a genius. Fifty-five times two is a hundred and ten times a hundred. It was exactly, to the penny, a hundred fold.

And I'm going to tell you something. I would have not gotten that stock if I had not exercised the faith that God gave me to believe and claim a promise. God's the one that gave me...I wish I could... Listen. I mean, I would invite you all to my beautiful mansion in Hawaii and the one in Aspen, Colorado and the one outside of Paris as I purchased both the Louvre as a place to keep my art and Versailles as a place to live when I was over there sampling cuisine flying on my personal Lear jet if I could have the faith to believe that every day. I mean, I'd just keep getting a hundred fold return. I'd be a quadzillionaire. Bill Gates would be coming to me, asking to borrow money.

I mean, since 1996 if I could keep doing that... But I can't do it because God gives faith. But I have to exercise that faith God gave me. And it was God's will to give me \$11,000 because I needed it. I needed it. You try to raise five kids on a preacher's salary. God gave it to me. God...whenever I need money God just takes care of it.

One time I needed to get my mother in a nursing home because there was a family crisis going on. And my late brother was going to take my mother away from my daddy. And I needed a vacancy that afternoon. I got on my knees. I said, "God, there are no vacancies over at that nursing home." This was Sunday. "If somebody is ready to go I'm asking you to take their life this afternoon."

I got a phone call a couple of hours later. They had a vacancy. Somebody died.

You think that's right to do? I'd do it. God is sovereign. He can create. He can destroy. He gives life. He takes life. God is sovereign. We need to take the Word of God seriously and understand that the power of life and death is in the tongue. And when we pray with faith, with humility before God, looking to the righteousness of Christ and not our own, God does extraordinary things.

But what I want you to understand is, having said all of that, with a Christian understanding of faith and the sovereignty of God, we have to understand the real limitations that come to the advancement of the kingdom because of the forces of darkness. And that's exactly what we have in Daniel chapter 10, looking back there now.

Daniel chapter 10, verse 13 – page 1390: “But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days.” The reason that Daniel's prayer was not received, even though it was answered by a sovereign God three weeks before. The reason it wasn't received by Daniel was because of supernatural, demonic opposition to that.

Notice he speaks there of a prince. Who is that? Well, there are different kinds of demons. There are the low life demons, the kinds that come on a guy like Ted Bundy. I was going to say Ted Kennedy, but I caught myself. Erase that. Don't put that on the internet. No, no. They'll come after me if he wins. That was a joke.

There are the whole life kinds that come on a somebody like a Ted Bundy. And then there are demons spirits that are over territories. And what we have in the book of Daniel is a demon spirit that's over a significant territory. Notice, he's called “the prince of Persia.” He is an evil spirit. He's opposed to the things of God. He's very powerful. He's been successful in holding in check an archangel of God. Wow. That's incredible.

And notice that he would have not been able to receive; Daniel would have never gotten the answer to prayer that God himself answered and sent three weeks before except for one thing: Look at the next sentence, the last sentence of verse 13 of Daniel 10: “Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.”

Who are we talking about here? We're talking about the archangel Gabriel; Gabriel, the archangel of God. His name in Hebrew means, “God is my hero.” Gabriel is being held in check by a demon spirit called the Prince of Persia. And he would have continued to have been held in check and Daniel would never have received the answer to his prayer that God himself had sent from his throne sovereignly if he hadn't had help from Michael, another one of the archangels. And Michael's name in Hebrew means, “Who is like God.”

But he receives angelic reinforcements.

I'm going to submit to you a piece of speculation but I believe it's consistent with the whole of the Word of God and it explains why we have to be persistent in prayer.

Have you ever wondered why God who tells us he's our Father and wants to give good gifts to us tells us to pray and keep on praying and tells us that when we pray we need to be like somebody who had out of town guests show up in the middle of the night and he didn't have food to set before them and so what he does is he goes next door and knocks on his neighbor's door and says, "I need some help?" And the neighbor ignores him because the neighbor's in bed asleep with his wife and the children are there. And many times they brought the animals in the house, kind of like modern Americans bring dogs and cats in the house. And so he's being ignored. And so he keeps knocking. He still doesn't get an answer. So finally he knocks until finally the guy opens up the shutters and says, "What's the matter?"

Kind of like, you know, I answer the phone at two in the morning, "Who's dead?" And, 'cause don't call me unless somebody is dead at two o'clock in the morning. Unless you've got a terrific crisis.

But anyhow, he opens the shutter and says, "What's the matter?"

And he says, "Look. I've have out of town guests. I don't have any food to set before them. Do you have something you could give me?"

And the guy says, "Look. My wife's in bed. My kids are asleep. Please go away and leave me alone." And he shuts the shutters to get back in bed and he hears it.

Well, finally by that time the baby starts to cry and I hope I didn't wake one up with that. But the baby begins to cry and the rooster begins to crow and everything else. And the guy finally, "Man, ain't going to get no sleep." And he was from that part of the country. "I ain't going to get no sleep." And he goes and he gets all the stuff. He gets the bread and some cheese and some milk and some other things. He says, "Here."

And Jesus said, "When you pray, you pray that way. That's the way you ought to pray. You pray with importunity."

What does that word mean; importunity – King James Version – importunity? It means that your willing, even if people laugh at you and think you're an idiot and a fool, you're going to make such a pest of yourself that you get what you want.

Listen. There are places in this country that you and I wouldn't dare walk into no matter how well off we were. But if your baby were dying and you knew the only way to help your baby was to go through this particular gate... I mean a guarded community or whatever, you'd find a way to jump the fence and get around to that person's back door to get the help for your baby. You'd do that even if they put you in jail, even if they thought you were an idiot or a fool. You'd do that.

And Jesus said, "When you pray, that's how you got to pray – with importunity, with a willingness to have no shame."

“Have you no shame? “

“Not when it comes to the life of my baby, sir.”

“Have you no shame?”

“Not when it comes to the life of my baby.”

Shamelessness...that’s impertunity. Pray and keep on praying. Why do we have to pray that way if God our Father loves us, delights to give us good gifts? Because there are supernatural forces of wickedness in operation in the world that hinder God’s response to our prayers.

Now, you notice here, this force is called the spirit of Persia or the king of Persia or the prince of Persia, rather, in verse 13. Now I want you to jump over to Daniel, chapter 10, verse 20 – page 1390: “So he said, ‘Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come.’”

Now, I want you to think about it for a moment. If you know a little bit of the sketch of the history of Israel, you know that Israel or Judah was taken into captivity by the Babylonians in the year 586 BC. I’ve been on the road for about two weeks. My brain’s not working well – 586 BC. And you know that Babylon fell to what empire? The Empire of the Medes and Persians. So they were under the rule of the Persians for a couple of centuries until around 331 BC when Alexander the Great led the armies of Greece and Macedonia and defeated the Persians. And then God’s people came under the rulership of the Greeks.

And so, what is being explained to us in Daniel 10 is a very important truth. You want to understand history? You cannot understand history without having a conspiratorial view of history. This isn’t some far right or far left weirdo stuff that I’m about to say. I’m saying that you can’t understand history, really and truly, without having a conspiratorial view. But where does the conspiracy come from? It comes from Hell. There really is a conspiracy against us. And that conspiracy is not a group of people necessarily called the Bildaburgers, the Council on Foreign Relations or Trilateral Commission. I’m not denying the existence of those people and I’m not denying the fact that they may intervene in all kinds of things. But I’m simply saying the heart of the conspiracy is in Hell. And behind world events, if you pull the curtain back – because that’s what an apocalypse is. It pulls the curtain back. You begin to understand that there are spiritual forces at work that shape world history.

The Jewish people were under the authority of the Persians because the prince of Persia, a demonic chieftain, was able to rise up over the chieftain who was over Babylon. And the Babylonians prince began to recede and decline as the Persian prince began to rise in his

ascendancy of control over world affairs. But his ascendancy only lasted a couple of hundred years and then rose another spirit; the spirit of Hellenism.

You know, it's funny how we speak of these things philosophically with a secular thing. You know, like psychology speaks about people's personal demons. "Well, she's dealing with the demons of her life."

What they really mean is something secular, but in reality there is a reality to that that people do have demons in their lives, real supernatural forces.

And so when we speak about the spirit of an age what we're talking about is a demonic spirit. And so the prince of Persia begins to wane and the prince of Greece begins to wax. And that's why the Jewish people came under the control of the Greeks. And it was not a good situation. Of all the spirits that the Jewish people were under, the Persians were the best because they practiced tolerance. The Greeks practiced a profound intolerance because they wedded their relation in a profound way with their culture. And the Greeks were Hell bent on turning all their captured people into Greeks. They forced people to not dedicate their children to God. They forbade them to circumcise their children. They encouraged the Greek games.

And one of the great Hellenistic rulers who is a prototype of the antichrist, Antiochus Epiphanies, offers a pig on the high altar of the Lord in Jerusalem in the temple. And that's kind of what set off what later became known as Chanukah.

The point is that world history is governed by spirits. Not in an absolute way, God is still sovereign. Not in an absolute way, the Church rules with Christ through our prayers. But nevertheless, world events can only be really understood when we take into account these things.

Now, I want you to listen to me very carefully for the next fifteen minutes. I want to apply this to our current circumstance. Before I do I want to pray and I want to ask God to guide me in what I share with you as I try to interpret Daniel 10 in the world in which we happen to find ourselves in 2004.

Lord, I pray that you will give me to be succinct, concise, compelling and convincing as I share this which is clearly seen in the signs of the times and that you will give us all open hearts and open minds to evaluate these things through prayer and the study of Scripture. In Jesus' name. Amen.

We have seen a certain ruling spirit that has exercised tremendous authority over the world for good, but it's not necessarily a Christian spirit. What we find is that the spirit of the empire that succeeded that of Greece is that of Rome. And that Roman spirit never ceased. The Bible teaches clearly that the fourth empire of Daniel would never come to an end until Jesus returned again. It's an interesting thought.

So the spirit of Rome continues on to the end of the world. But the spirit of Rome becomes significantly modified as Christianity begins to influence the Roman Empire. And so what you have is something that we call Christendom.

Let's make no mistake about it. Christendom is imperfect. It isn't Christianity. Christendom is the influence of Christianity, of the Scriptures, imperfectly, but nevertheless in a very significant way on the Roman Empire.

So where does the Roman Empire go? The Roman Empire is the entirety of Europe. At one time it was much of the Middle East, or at least the western Asia, not central Asia; and North Africa. And it came to be North and South America. That's Rome. The Roman Empire expands through history into the entirety of Europe, western Asia, northern Africa, North America and South America. That's what we call the West, in a sense, at one time. That's Roman civilization influenced imperfectly by Christianity.

And so it rose and it influenced the world. And, in spite of the evil that it's done, it's done much good. And just as the Persians, under the Persians the Jewish people fared far better than they did under the Greeks because the Persians allowed freedom of religion to a degree for the Jewish people and they were able to worship their God according to the precepts of Scripture and propagate their religion according to the precepts of their religion. But they were not allowed to do that under Greece. So we understand that under the spirit of what we call Christendom, by and large, often times, the Church has fared fairly well; particularly in terms of the British expression of western civilization as it's been experienced in North America as over against South of America. Freedom of religion, limited government; those are concepts that come out of that.

But I want to share with you three things that I see that indicate to me that the West is dying; not the death of the Church. The Church will never die. But of Christendom as we have known it in history; three things: pessimism, relativism and globalism. Those three things are the death throws of the West.

Pessimism: You want to know the leading indicator of pessimism in the West? The birth rate. People have fewer children today than they had a generation ago, fewer children a generation ago than the generation before that and go on back. My mom and dad – my Dad was born in 1906 – had two children. My mother's parents had seven children. My father's parents had five children. And you can go back. My great grandfather on my father's side had 12 children by one wife. You see a declining birth rate.

Now, I'm not condemning birth control and don't go out here saying that I said it was a sin to use birth control. All I'm saying is that small families are an indication of pessimism. Ponder it.

Europe is not replacing itself. What is the only country that's replacing its own population by natural propagation of the species? Anyone want to venture a guess? It starts with an "A" Albania. That is correct. Albania is not historically a country that's

part of Christendom, at least not for some hundreds of years. The ruling spirit in Albania is the spirit of what? Islam. Crushed under Marxism, but not put away. Pessimism.

The next indication of the death of the West is the embracing of relativism. And by that I mean immorality among other things. You can look at it. It's insane to me to think that we are at a point in our history in the United States of following what just happened in Canada and that is discussing the idea that marriage should be between two men, two women. That's insanity. And it's an absolute scrapping of western tradition.

Every candidate who runs is pro-family. But what do they mean by that? Do they mean a man marrying a woman and having children? No. They may mean two men living together or two women or three women or a *ménage a trois* living together. Traditional family, scrapped.

Rapid rise in the divorce rate. Now, I'm not wanting anybody here who has been divorced and remarried, if you've dealt with those things in your past, fine. God forgives and God puts it behind us. But I'm telling you that the escalation of divorce has destroyed the social fabric of America. I'm not laying guilt you. I'm simply saying it's a fact that the escalation of divorce, the epidemic, the pandemic of divorce in American society is absolutely unraveling the fabric of society. Make no mistake about it: Children are always radically affected by divorce, always. I'm not labeling guilt. I deserve to go to Hell. So do you. Confess your sins. Believe God's forgiven you and walk in the victory.

But I'm talking about the impact on our society. Relativism.

Let me name one other thing to you and this is very telling. When I went to school I was taught in the public school system of South Carolina that America was a Christian nation. And I was taught to regard our nation and its early leaders in very heroic terms. Perhaps that's false to a degree. But I want to illustrate a basic point. As part of our relativism, we have now accentuated the faults and failures of our historical figures that have given us western civilization, have given us this country. And we have begun to whitewash and minimize the faults of other civilizations.

Let me tell you something: It is popular today to demonize Christopher Columbus. It's popular today to demonize Hernando Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico. They are bad people, bad people – Columbus and Cortez – bad people.

Well, let me tell you something. You have to put things in their context. I'll take Hernando Cortez any day over the Aztecs because Hernando Cortez wouldn't eat you. You might be a slave, but he'll not eat you. And I don't know about you, but I'd rather be a slave than to know that my right leg might be on somebody's dinner table tomorrow.

Let me tell you about Aztec religion. And I've been to the center of Aztec civilization. I've climbed up the pyramids. You know what they do on the top of those pyramids.

They took people, they picked them up and they impaled them on a sharp stone and they ate the heart and they skinned them and the priest would wear the skin. That's the Aztecs.

You don't hear that. And it's not politically correct to say that anymore because part of the relativism that our civilization has fallen into is to denigrate everyone associated, even loosely, with Christianity and elevate everyone who is not a Christian.

So Hernando Cortez is like a demon from Hell. And these beautiful, wonderful Aztecs, "Hah. He destroyed their wonderful civilization." That's a lie from Hell. Hernando Cortez may not have been a real Christian. I don't know who is a real Christian and who is not. I'm only worried about me being a real Christian and I know I am because I fled to Jesus for the cleansing of the power. I've been washed in the blood and I know I'm saved. But it's not my place to say who is saved and not in history.

Martin Luther, in my view, is the greatest single figure in the history of the modern world in terms of giving us the United States of America. Without Martin Luther there would have been no United States of America. But he was not a perfect man.

Luther made the same mistake that Richard Milhous Nixon made. You remember that Nixon always had the tape recorder running? They recorded all of his conversations including idle conversations. Nixon made some extremely anti-Semitic remarks one day in the oval office and Billy Graham was there with him and chimed in. And Billy Graham was agreeing, "Yeah, the Jews run the country. And, yes, through Hollywood they're destroying our civilization." Billy Graham said that. And it's on tape. Wow.

Well, Luther made the same mistake. The difference was there weren't tape recorders around in the 16th century. But Luther became such a popular figure that he always had houseguests. And they would sit around and Luther did drink beer. Now, I know that that bothers some people. And probably if Luther had not drunk that beer he would have probably not said some of these things. But what happened is, they'd be sitting around and eating some wiener schnitzel and sauerkraut and guzzling some good German beer and they were at the dinner table and he had maybe 20 guys at the table and two or three guys were writing down everything Luther says – his table talks.

Now, I've read the table talks. And he jokes about passing gas and other things. I mean, you know, it's off color. You know, just like you are at times.

And so anyhow, all this is recorded. And so what people do is...I remember when I went twice to the Holocaust museum in Washington, DC. They're citing Martin Luther as the cause of the Holocaust. That is a lie. That's an absolute lie from Hell. Luther's not the cause of the Holocaust. Anybody who says that is either an ignorant fool or a liar. That's just plain and simple. When Luther expressed his anti-Semitism he was wrong. But you know what? The entirety of Europe said the same thing in Luther's day. He was wrong. He was a man of his times.

Am I excusing his sin? No. I'm saying his only hope is my only hope which is Jesus Christ and his righteousness. I'm simply saying that we live in a time when all the heroes are cast down.

Thomas Jefferson and George Washington both had slaves. And so we look at them and we say, "Well, they were slave holders."

They were.

"Well, therefore their thinking is wrong."

Well, let me tell you: The thinking of Washington and Madison and Jefferson is absolutely ensconced into the very warp and woof of our U.S. Constitution. But one of the reasons why our constitution is being turned into putty by federal judges – what do I mean by that? I mean, look. The only honest judge is the judge who will strictly interpret the constitution in light of its historical origins. If a judge doesn't do that he's a liar. He's a cheat. The constitution is clear. You read any document in light of its historical origin and the intent of the authors.

But we are filled with courts with federal judges who don't do that. And so they make it say what they want it to say. Kind of like Humpty Dumpty in *Through the Looking Glass*, you know. Humpty Dumpty with Alice and so on. That's part of *Alice in Wonderland*. And he said, "Words say what I mean them to say." And that's the way federal judges approach the U.S. Constitution so often. They turn it into putty.

"Well, it doesn't mean that to me."

Just complete relativism.

So where am I going? As I look at the death of the West I see not only pessimism, but I see a relativism that what? That denigrates our heroes, that exalts the heroes of our enemies until everything is absolutely equal, that destroys the nuclear basic traditional family, that embraces all kinds of perversion as if it's natural and it's the right thing to do.

You know, "I can't help myself."

Well, you are born with a sinful nature, that's true.

And then the third issue in the decline of the West is globalism. We seem to be Hell bent on having an empire as a nation. We want a global economy because it fuels our own economy. And the trouble is that puts us at risk as a nation. And I won't go into all of that because I want to move to Islam very quickly. Bear with me five minutes.

Islam is not a religion of peace. Anyone who tells you that, including George Bush, is either ignorant or lying. George Bush, at that point in addressing the American people,

he made up his own mind and I think he probably is a Christian, but for compelling reasons – that he believes either in ignorance or in deliberate lying – says Islam is a religion of peace. It is not a religion of peace.

What does Islam mean?

Someone says, “Well, it sounds like Salaam,” you know, like Shalom in Hebrew and Salaam in Arabic, peace.

Well, salami sounds that way, too. Brian Falcone pointed out one time when I was teaching on Islam. “It sounds like Salami.”

What does Islam mean? It means submission. It means submission, dominance.

You need to understand that the spirit of Islam is to dominate you, to dominate you, to make you submit. And you need to understand that there are no such things as non-fundamentalist Muslims.

Give me an example of a non-fundamentalist Muslim. There are five fundamentals to Islam. If you don't hold to all five pillars of Islam you are not a Muslim – period. Now, that doesn't mean that all Muslims are terrorists. And I'm not saying they are. But you need to understand something: that while Christianity has, at times, done brutal things to people in the name of Christ, whenever that happened they were acting contrary to the spirit of the founder, Jesus Christ, and contrary to the clear cut teaching of the New Testament which never arms believers with a sword, only with prayer and proclamation.

But when a Muslim cuts off somebody's head in order to advance Islam he is acting in accordance with the spirit of the prophet Mohammed. You understand that Mohammed left Mecca in 522 and went to Medina and won the city and then in 530 he returned with an army to Mecca and forced the people at Mecca to become Muslims. How did he force them to do it? By reason? By prayer? No. By a sword.

You either submit – remember, Islam means what? Submit. Does it mean peace?

George Bush either lied or was deceived. It is not a religion of peace. It is a religion of submission. You will submit.

And let me tell you this. It is a lie to say that people are never forced to become Muslims. It is true that Islam grants to Christianity and Judaism, in certain places, a measure of religious tolerance. Now, I'm going to continue this tonight and I want to urge you to come out. But I know a lot of you won't and that grieves my heart because I see America as sliding on the slippery slope to complete destruction. We trust our enemies.

I want you to understand that the spirit of the West is declining and the spirit of Islam is in ascendancy. It is getting stronger by the day. And I want you to understand that

among the most intolerant nations on the face of this earth is Saudi Arabia. You need to understand that. I want you to understand that Saddam Hussein was not a militant Muslim, contrary to what you might believe. I want you to understand that the Christian Church fared better under Saddam Hussein than it does today in Iraq. That's a fact.

May God strike me dead if I'm telling you a lie. Christianity fared better under Saddam Hussein than it does in Iraq today. And if, as I see what's going to come that Iraq is either going to be balkanized or Iraq is going to come under the rule of the Shiites, then Christianity will not fare well at all. It will come under the same kind of hurt, trouble and misery that it's come under in Iran because the spirit of Shiite Islam is like the spirit of Suni Islam.

Saddam Hussein was a terrible man and he was a ruthless dictator. But let me ask you a question: Outside of Turkey and the modern state of Israel, name me one nation in the Middle East that is not run by a tyrant who is a blood thirsty, crush people down, despot. Name me one. Saudi Arabia? Democracy? Jordan? Democracy? Syria? Democracy?

No, it's not a democracy. And I can illustrate that – and I will tonight – by the experience of a young man by the name of Abdul. Kuwait is a country that is ruled by a wealthy elite that utterly disregards the welfare of all other people including all other Muslims.

Saddam Hussein was a horrible man, but no worse than many of the other people. We have stirred up a hornet's nest and we are in big trouble. And I'm going to continue it tonight and I'm urging you to pray because I'm telling you the truth. And I'm staking my reputation and over 29 years as your pastor on the line by what I'm saying because you need to be warned.

America is in far worse trouble than either Mr. Bush or Mr. Kerry are telling you. We are in deep, deep trouble. And the only hope of this country is to cry out that the sovereign God who hears the cries of his people, will respond and bind the spirit of Islam because, let me tell you: Close with this thought and pick it up tonight. In dealing with militant Islam, or what we call Islamicism is like dealing with a hydra. Do you know Greek mythology? What do you know about the hydra? You cut off one head or bring it down to Walt Disney and you remember *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* with Mickey Mouse and every time, you know, it just keep multiplying mops and buckets of water. You cut off one head of one terrorist, two more take his place. You cut off their heads, four take their place. You cut off their heads, 16 take their place. You cut off their place, 32 take their place; 64, 128, 516 and so on. That's what you're dealing with.

Why? Because our way of thinking doesn't apply in the Middle East. What's common sense to you is insanity to them and what's common sense to them is the thinking of a lunatic to us.

You need to understand why they're suicide bombers and what we're up against. We're up against a shift in the ruling spirits, a shift away from the spirit of Christendom and a shift towards the spirit of Islam. And the hour is very late.

Let us pray.

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