

Unpopular Bible Doctrines #5: God Hardens Unbelievers; Must Love God More

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Unpopular Bible Doctrines

By Larry Wessels

Bible Text: Luke 14:26-35; Joshua 5:13-15

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Christian Answers of Austin, Texas

9009 Martha's Drive

Austin, TX 78717

Website: www.biblequery.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/christiananswers

Greetings! And welcome to Christian answers! I'm Larry Wessels director of Christian Answers, and thank you for being with us today. Today we are doing a very special series of programs on Bible Doctrines that are deemed to be unpopular. Now, joining me in this unpopular Bible Doctrines series is my very special guest and director of Pilgrim Publications, Bob L. Ross. Bob great to have you, brother.

Bob Ross: Thank, you Larry.

Larry Wessels: Bob L. Ross is one of the world's leading publishers of the works of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the famous Prince of Preachers from the nineteenth century. Now, Bob, for our audience could you tell us a little bit about Charles Haddon Spurgeon and some of the works you have there with you.

Bob Ross: Well, Larry, probably most of the people listening to this program might be acquainted with Spurgeon, because they would have an interest in Christian things, and Spurgeon has been around a long time. Our interest in Spurgeon, of course, is in his sermons and works that were published in the 1800's, reprinting those and making them available. They're on the internet now more and more. They're being added to the internet, even many of his books, and of course they're on CD rom, and in many ways they're getting used in the world. And one of the ways is this book here that we just recently did, not too long ago anyway, it's Spanish sermons, Spurgeon in Spanish. And there is a website now, a gentleman in Mexico City, a good friend of ours, is translating and putting Spurgeon sermons on the internet in Spanish. And this is one of the first books that has been done. Thirty-six sermons by Spurgeon on the Gospel and this is the Spanish language edition of it. So, we're trying to get Spurgeon known, not only to the English speaking world of our generation, but to other languages and in the United States where we have a great population of Spanish speaking people. We think this book will make a great contribution to helping spread the Gospel.

And then we have another book, and this is an unusual book. A gentleman read through the entire three thousand five hundred and sixty-three sermons, I think, of Spurgeon's sermons, it took him about seven years to do it, and he collected these quotations. Over

five thousand, illustrations, and quotations from Spurgeon on a variety of subjects. A lot of times people say, "I wonder what Spurgeon thought of that. I wonder what his idea was about this particular thing." Well, you can go in here, and he's got an index. He's got all the quotations referenced. Sometimes, you pick up a book of quotations of Spurgeon, and they're not referenced. You don't know where it came from. It could have come from John Doe, and you'd never know, but this man has it all referenced for you. You can find it in the context of the sermons themselves and trace it down if you want to read it in context to see if that indeed was what it sounded like when he read the excerpt. So, it's called "Exploring the Mind and Heart of the Prince of Preachers, C. H. Spurgeon" put together by Carey Allen. Carey J. Allen, a Baptist pastor from up in Illinois. And this is one of our latest publications here that we are helping. We didn't actually publish this one but we're helping to distribute this book. So, that's a little bit of information about Spurgeon.

Larry Wessels: Alright, Bob and for our audience, anyone that is interested in more on this subject, particularly the works and sermons of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, just call or write our ministry. You'll see those phone numbers, and our address will be popping up at the end of the program. So feel free to call or write. Also, if you'd like to get on our free newsletter mailing list, you can call or write to our ministry Christian Answers, and you will receive a free subscription to the Christian Answers newsletter whenever it comes out. So that is there for you for the asking basically. Well, with that, we will begin our program.

Alright Bob, we are ready to look at another unpopular Bible doctrine. It seems like there is no end to these unpopular Bible doctrines. Maybe this is one of the reasons so few people read the Bible. They don't want to see what's in it, but we will now pick up with unpopular Bible doctrine number thirty. Number thirty here. And we've got a long way to go. As viewers can see at home on their screen, unpopular Bible doctrine number thirty states, "God hardens people's hearts so that they will not believe what is true or right. This includes allowing false religions to be set up as well." And if we look at the Bible passages there, you can see on your chart at home, we've got John 12:37-43 where John quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 about God hardening their hearts, blinding their minds so they won't see, lest they be healed. You can also see Joshua 11:20, Isaiah 63:17, Exodus 4:21, Exodus 7:3, 13, 11:10, that's where God hardens Pharaoh's heart. Romans 9:17-18, II Thessalonians 2:9-12, etc. God allows men to have false religions, but they will be judged by God in wrath for it in the end. And you get the concept of that along these lines in Joshua 24:15.

John 12:37-43. "But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest

they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

Joshua 11:20. "For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that He might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses."

Isaiah 63:17. "O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance."

Exodus 11:10. "And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land."

Romans 9:17-18. "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth."

Joshua 24:15. This verse shows that the Lord allows false religion and worship. "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Now, Bob, when all is said, what are your comments along these lines?

Bob Ross: Well, Larry, the matter of God hardening and that particular concept is clearly taught in the Bible. Now, what a lot of people maybe plow the handle and think about when you say that God hardens, or something of that sort, they think, "Oh, He's a terrible God. He just makes people hard, and He just delights in doing something bad to them." That's not exactly how it works. Remember in the Old Testament, Larry, when God sent Moses before Pharaoh. Actually, in a sense, it was a mercy for God to send Moses there and to make the request that the Israelites go free, because if Pharaoh had acted in accord with that, Pharaoh would have been living after the Israelites left the country. But you see, when Moses went before Pharaoh and said, "God wants His people to be delivered," well, first of all, Pharaoh didn't believe in their God. So in affect to Pharaoh, this was Moses challenging Pharaoh's sovereignty and so it angered Pharaoh. And what did this tend to do? It tended to harden Pharaoh against Moses.

Well, of course, God being omniscient knew this beforehand for that matter. But God always does things decently and in order. So he sent the messenger to, Moses, to Pharaoh and said, "I want my people to be delivered." This enflamed Pharaoh. This pumped up the anger of his heart, and so he refused, and as a consequence, in the book of Exodus when the record is there, the hardening was not like God says, "Ok Pharaoh, I'm going to pound on your heart here and make it real hard," and all this. Means were

involved, in other words, there were influences. There were causes. That's the way it's been all the way down through the years.

When Jesus came and He spoke to the scribes and the Pharisees, actually Jesus used the Word of God which they claimed to believe. I mean, they claimed to be scholars in these very Scriptures, but then when Jesus was dealing with them on one occasion, in John 12 for example, He had done miracles before them, and they believed not on Him "that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him." So, Jesus was actually using the Word of God, but these people had been so distortive of the Word of God and so rejecting of it that when He gave them the Word, it had the tendency of blinding and hardening them, because they were not submissive to that very Word in any respect and so God is not without means when this hardening process, this blinding process takes place in men. There's a text in Thessalonians, I think it is.

Larry Wessels: II Thessalonians. I think you're thinking of II Thessalonians 2:9-12 and I was going to read, it by the way.

Bob Ross: Well, read it.

Larry Wessels: I'll read it and let you comment. But it says, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders," verse 10, "and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." And here's the reason, "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." Now, the reason is that they don't want the truth. They don't love the truth. "That they might be saved." So, what happens? Verse 11, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." So there you have the reason why God does this.

Bob Ross: A lot of people just do not realize how much responsibility there is upon hearing the truth. When you hear the Word of God, when you hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ, you have a tremendous responsibility immediately placed upon you to accept that, to believe that, to act in accord with it. And when you don't, what does it say? "They received not the love of the truth." And so God, in dealing with them, eventually gives them over to a reprobate, or a rejected mind. In other words, their mind is reprobate in that they keep on rejecting God. Every time they get a warning, they turn it back. Every time they get an expression of the love of God, or someone witnessing to them, or preaching to them, or they hear a Gospel song, they turn it off. They turn it off. And they just keep hardening and hardening, and this is the process by which men are hardened to the truth. It's not that God just deliberately isolated them over here and hardened them without something causing that situation. And so, people that are hearing the truth, they

have a tremendous responsibility that comes upon them to accept that truth, to believe that truth, to follow that truth.

A lot of times, you'll go to church, and you hear the Gospel, and the preacher gives an invitation, and he warns you, he urges you to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior. Well, at that moment in time right there, for example, you're supposed to accept Jesus Christ, and bow to Him, and confess Him, and acknowledge Him. Or here is a witness out here witnessing to you, and he says, "Will you accept this Gospel? Will you accept Jesus Christ? Will you acknowledge Him?" "Well, no, I'm not going to do that." And Larry goes over and knocks on the door of Madalyn Murray O'Hair in affect, going to say to Madalyn Murray O'Hair, "Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Will you accept Him as such?" "You Christian nut! Get out of here!" Well, what happens? She hardened and you see what happened to here. I mean, not everyone that comes to an end like that on earth, but I guarantee you, in due course of time, they will be destroyed, because of their rejection of truth. It's very heavy. It's very much a responsibility to act in accord with what you heart to be the truth.

Larry Wessels: Well, with what you're saying, Bob, it brought to mind I Timothy 4:1-2 which says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." Now, we've got a lot of apostasy out there, in fact, a lot of atheists used to claim to be Christians, and then they depart from the faith for one reason or another. But I'm really tying into the hardening you were talking about, and that's in verse 2. "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." So, you actually take their conscience which knows there's a God, which knows there's a moral law of the moral lawgiver, God, and they don't want it. They turn away from it. So, as you're saying, God starts to say, "OK, you don't want the truth? Well, I'm going to turn you over to that reprobate mind. I'm going to turn you over to the things that are unseemly," as Romans 1 and Romans 2 talk about and that is part of the judgment of God.

Bob Ross: Larry, your ministry over the years, and I've known you now since about what, 1991, along in there? You have exposed a lot of aberrant religions and religious leaders, but do you realize that if you were to trace the background of those people who started those movements, the leaders, for example, that at one time they were probably exposed to evangelical Christian orthodox truth, and they turned from that, and they perverted that, and they distorted that.

Larry Wessels: It happens over and over again. Over and over again. you can think of Jim Jones where in Ghana he started like that. Then you take Reverend Moon from the Unification Church.

Bob Ross: You take the Campbellites that we dealt with a lot here. They were part of evangelical Presbyterianism.

Larry Wessels: Thomas and Alexander Campbell.

Bob Ross: Yep. And then you have the Seventh Day Adventists, Mormonism, and all the rest of them. At one time, most of those movements there, the Hard Shell Movement, for example, was in with the Baptists, the regular Baptists.

Larry Wessels: Well, Jehovah's Witnesses with Charles Taze Russell. He was studying with the Presbyterians.

Bob Ross: Yeah, well what happened? This very thing happened that you were reading there. They were departing from the truth, departing from the Word of God.

Larry Wessels: Exactly.

Bob Ross: And this is this hardening thing that happens with people who turn from the truth. they get a hard heart.

Larry Wessels: Even Mohammed was exposed to Christian teachings.

Bob Ross: Right.

Larry Wessels: And he perverted the truth and turned from it.

Bob Ross: Right.

Larry Wessels: In fact, when he first got his revelation that he was being talked to by some kind of spirit that was not only, you know, this is god talking to you, he at first thought that it was a demon trying to deceive him, but then he let his wife talk him into thinking it was an angel, it was the angel Gabriel. And the next thing you know, you've got Islam, and you've got over a billion people believing this thing when here even Mohammed back in the beginning had been exposed, not in the real way of being able to read the Bible, because it wasn't in Arabic back then, but still, you look at all of these religions, especially religions that claim to have some kind of Biblical truth. It always goes back to what you were saying, Bob. They are departing from the truth, and then perverting that truth that they have been exposed to. And then of course, God then, since they won't believe the truth, submit to the truth, turns them over and allows to be set in their evil and pernicious ways and false religion and, of course, they will be condemned for that on the last day.

Bob Ross: You know, Peter uses an expression which I have often wondered about, meditated about, thought about, tried to expand in my mind the application of it. He refers to the writings of Paul, and we know that Paul wrote several of the books of the Bible, some of the major doctrinal expositions of the Bible, such as the book of Romans, the book of Hebrews, and so on. And Peter said, "Brother Paul, according to the wisdom given unto Him, has written unto as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood." Now, you talked about unpopular religious doctrines.

Larry Wessels: Unpopular Bible Doctrines.

Bob Ross: I mean, when you start going through Paul, so many of the things that Paul taught, just into Romans, the first three chapters, the total depravity of man. Now, how popular is that today? If you got on national television, and you started talking about, "We want to describe for you the true nature of man," and you started to expound on that, just on what Paul taught there, people would be flipping there channels. They wouldn't want to hear about all that.

Larry Wessels: It goes back to what Jesus said, men love darkness.

Bob Ross: But that's not the end of the verse. Here's where I wanted to go: "Hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest." W-r-e-s-t, not r-e-s-t. W-r-e-s-t. That's the word for wrestling. That's where wrestling comes from. And you know what they do when they wrestle: they twist arms, and they twist legs, and they body slam, and they do all kinds of things. That's the picture that Peter is drawing here of these people, how they handle the Scripture. They wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, not just Paul.

Larry Wessels: That's right.

Bob Ross: But they do it to the other Scriptures unto their own destruction. And when you look out at the world today, just immediately around you, and you see all the wresting, and all the twisting, and all the, I call it fancy twistings and turnings, that go on in handling the Word of God, it is just amazing how these people who do not understand the things of God come up with some of the fantastic ideas, and concepts, and doctrinal teachings, and practices, but you notice the problem here? Unlearned and unstable.

Larry Wessels: That's right.

Bob Ross: Unlearned and unstable. And when you start tracing these cults down, I guarantee you that's where it all goes back to, unlearned and unstable, and they have wrested the Scriptures to their own destruction. So that's how this hardness comes about.

Larry Wessels: That's right.

Bob Ross: It's through the perversion and the rejection of the Word of God.

Larry Wessels: So, with that said, we can see why, when we look around a world landscape, and men really, as Jesus said, and I mentioned a moment before, said, "Men love darkness rather than the light." So, the truth of God is here for all to see. It's verified by history, archeology, over two thousand fulfilled Bible prophecies, making it a supernatural book from front to back. It's got everything going for it. You could want eyewitness testimony, testimony from people who were against Christ. Like you look in the Jewish Talmud, and they're calling Jesus the bastard son of Mary and a Roman soldier, but that proves that Jesus existed right there when the enemies are verifying that

He lived and walked the earth. Everything is verified in the Scripture, but yet people take what God has given us, twist it, turn it, wrestle it away, and try to run from it, and what we have is a degeneration into all these lies. And the reason you have so many false religions everywhere is God lets it happen! God's letting this happen as part of His judgment against people who will not submit to His truth, will not bow the knee to Jesus Christ. So, He turns them over to that reprobate mind, hardens their heart, and they're going to pay the price at the end of eternity

So, anyway, with that said, let's go on to our next unpopular Bible doctrine. And believe me, we've got plenty to go through. But now we will go to unpopular Bible doctrine number thirty-one which says, "God is to be loved more than that of family, loved ones, or anything else." And as you can see it on the chart, Luke 14:26-35, Mark 12:30, Exodus 20:3, Matthew 10:37-39, and Luke 18:29-30.

Luke 14:26-35. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Mark 12:30. "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."

Exodus 20:3. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Matthew 10:37-39. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

Luke 18:29-30. "And He said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

Larry Wessels: And I don't know how many times, Bob, I've heard people, and particularly mothers I guess, when I'm out preaching or something and they would say,

"You need to put family first. Family first! You need to spend more time with your kids. You need to spend more time with your wife," or all this stuff. "You shouldn't spend so much time doing religious things. Family first!" And I say, "No, you've got it all wrong. It's God first. God's first and then family."

Now, we know in Ephesians 5, you know, husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church, and you're worse than a heretic if you don't take care of your family. We understand all of that. I love my wife. I love my kids, but I love God more than anything. So, God is number one. God has to be the top priority in each and everybody's life. So, you can't put your kid over God. You can't make your family more important than God. God has to be number one. And these Scriptures bear it out. What do you have to say along these lines Bob?

Bob Ross: Well, when Jesus was a youngster, there was a time when His mother and father came to Him, and He had been separated from them, and they were concerned, and He made this statement, He said, "I must be about my Father's business." And Jesus was obedient to His parents, no question about that, but at that point He did make a point that we are to be about our Father's business. Now, unfortunately, in some situations we have where there does come a point of contest between whether or not someone is going to follow God or follow maybe parents, or someone else that is putting that pressure on them in some way to keep them from following God. There are a whole lot of factors there and maybe sometimes we don't understand what's going on, but if a person is honest about that situation, and they're just not using God as an excuse for some other problem they may be having with a husband, or a wife, or whatever. You are to put God first, but let's be careful when we put God first that it's not an escape hatch of avoiding responsibility that we have to someone else.

Now, Larry, I'm thinking of a situation here now where there are people that, I can't even give you the complete details of things, but the point is this: this person is using God as an excuse for his irresponsibility. In other words, he's not being responsible to do what he ought to do, and it's like a Scripture that we read on one occasion where that they took from the parents and gave it to God, and when there was objection to it, they said, "Oh, well this belongs to the Lord so we'll give it to the Lord. They don't need it over here. It shouldn't be given to them, because it's for God." And there are people that are sometimes doing that kind of thing, that they are taking away something and giving it to God, so called, and they say, "Well, I'm doing that because it's the Lord's. They shouldn't have it," and all of this.

So there is a sense in which people will avoid responsibility for doing what's right with a husband, or a wife, or children, or even their job. I know a man lost his job one time. He had a pretty good job, a mechanic, and he lost his job, and I said, "What happened?" He said, "Well, I got fired." I said, "Well, why?" He said, "Well, I was witnessing on the job, and the boss didn't like it." And he said, "The boss said if I couldn't quit doing that I'd have to quit my job, give up my job. So," he said, "I gave up my job." And I said, "You shouldn't have done that." I said, "That wasn't being obedient to God." I said, "You took a job to earn money, and out of that money you were going to give a gift for God, a

donation to the church you belong to." I said, "But when you took that job, you agreed that you were going to work for a certain amount of money, a certain amount of hours, a certain amount of days, and you, in effect, made a contract that you were going to do that. And," I said, "instead of doing that, you went in there, and under false pretenses, you were using your boss's time to work for God, according to you. So here you have misrepresented the whole thing from the beginning." I said, "If you were going to use your time full time to do the work of God, then you ought to have applied to God for a job somewhere on the mission field, somewhere out in the ministry, that wouldn't have taken up this time that you would have to work, do secular work." I said, "You did wrong!" He said, "Oh, but I was following God, because God comes first. God is the head of everything, and He comes before my job." And I said, "Well, you then are admitting that you signed a contract to work for a man to do this, but in the back of your head you were dishonest. You are admitting that. You were actually saying, 'I'm going to sign this, but I'm going to really work for God while I'm here.'" And it kind of struck him, and he began to realize that.

Larry Wessels: Yeah, and it seems that the bottom line of what you're saying is that it's the wrong motives in this putting God first when actually they're violating the Word of God...

Bob Ross: Right.

Larry Wessels: ...because the Word of God, like when you brought that up, it brought to mind II Thessalonians 3:10. "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." But then there are other Scriptures that say, "Ye shall work under your master as unto the Lord." So, like you say, when you're on a job, you should work for your employer. Do the job you're being paid to do and that's what the Lord would expect you to do, not to, as Bob was saying, sit there and burn your employer's time with witnessing. There's a time...remember what Ecclesiastes says, "There's a time and a place for everything. There's a time to live, and a time to die, a time for peace, and a time for war." Stuff like that. Well, there's a time to witness, and there's a time to do your work the way you're supposed to be doing your work. And so, what the bottom line to everything you were saying is: don't have the wrong motives. God is number one, but you can take that out of context and use it as an excuse.

Bob Ross: You know, Larry, the greatest excuse or, as psychologists might say, defense mechanism in the world is God. If God told you to do something, if you can say, "Well, God ordered me to do this. God commissioned me to do this." Then who can argue with the righteousness of that cause? Wouldn't that justify everything? That if God told me to do something, then this would be complete justification for it. And you will find that a lot of mentally deranged people will blame God, or give God credit, for what they do, as if He...you read the newspaper. All the time people will say, "Well, God told me to do it." We had that some time ago, just recently, a man claiming that God told him to do it. And there are these guys over there that are using themselves as suicide bombers in different places, and they're doing that in the name of God. I remember a case I read in the newspaper one time, a man shot another one. I believe it happened in Detroit. And he

shot this fellow, and he was wearing a red suit and when his trial came up, he said, "Well, God showed me that I should get a gun, and when I see this man in a red suit to kill him." And I assume he thought that was the devil. Red suit. So, he goes out here, gets his rifle, and he sees a man with a red suit, and he shoots him dead, because God told him to do it.

So, this is a thing that we are confronted with, and sometimes it's not that serious, but we have situations where the people are saying, "Well, I've got to spend time in prayer, and Bible study, and going to this meeting, going to that meeting," and the dishes don't get done. The children don't get taken care of. The job doesn't get done to earn a living. The yard doesn't get mowed. The car doesn't get taken care of, and all these things. Why? "Well, I'm serving God. I'm doing what God wants me to do."

Larry Wessels: Another theological cop out.

Bob Ross: So, God becomes a defense mechanism with a lot of people.

Larry Wessels: Just to cover up really what are sinful actions. But with that said, let's now go on to our next unpopular doctrine which is, and this one ought to really turn some heads of all these pacifists we have in the world that don't like military service. They think any kind of war is bad, and any kind of military service is bad, and we're supposed to be pacifists all the time. In fact, Jehovah's Witnesses are conscientious objectors thinking that you can't be in the military. In fact, I think that in World War II Hitler had a lot of Jehovah's Witnesses killed along with the Jews, because they wouldn't serve in the military. But anyway, you get a lot of these groups that say, "The Bible doesn't say you're supposed to be in the military. The Bible doesn't condone war, or any of this stuff." Well, our next unpopular doctrine, doctrine number thirty-two, is "God," and you can see it on the chart there, "God is a God of war."

Now, we look through the Scriptures. You can see them on the chart. Joshua 5:13-15. Here you have the Lord appearing as the Captain of the Hosts before Joshua right before they had to go into battle. Revelation 19:11-21, Jesus coming to bring judgment on the earth. Judges 6-7. That's where Gideon is called by the Lord to rise up against the Midianites. Exodus 15:3. They're singing praises to God, and they're actually saying, "The Lord is a warrior." Exodus 17:16. Joshua 8, where God calls for the destruction of Ai. II Samuel 5:17-25. That's where God delivers the Philistines into David's hands. I Chronicles 5:22. The war was of God. I Chronicles 14:8-17. I Chronicles 18-20. All of that is war mainly instigated where God is actively participating. Deuteronomy 20:1-20. God through Moses gives you the laws of warfare. Joshua 10:10-11 God sends hailstones to destroy the Ammonites so God actually actively participates in helping Joshua win a battle. Joshua 10:13-14, the sun stands still. God fights for Israel, the Scripture says. Numbers 31, God sends Israelites to war with the Midianites. These are just a few examples of many more that could be quoted here.

Joshua 5:13-15. "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our

adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."

Exodus 15:3. "The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is His name."

I Chronicles 5:22. "For there fell down many slain, because the war was of God. And they dwelt in their steads until the captivity."

Joshua 10:13-14. "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel."

Deuteronomy 20:1, 4, 12-13, 16-18. "When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. For the Lord your God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee: That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the Lord your God."

Revelation 19:11-16. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon Him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords."

Bob, what comments can you make about God being actually someone who is active in war?

Bob Ross: Well, a lot of those Scriptures there, I didn't notice maybe if it was every single one of them, but they are in the Old Testament where God and Israel had a very workable relationship.

Larry Wessels: Well, I did mention Revelation 19.

Bob Ross: Ok. Had a very close relationship so that there was, you might say, more of a union of church and state in those days, than since New Testament times. The Lord was certainly a man of war, and He utilized the armies of Israel to, well, we can go all the way back, of course, to the deliverance from Egypt, and when they got out of Egypt, they went into the land of Canaan, crossed the river Jordan, and smote the various "ites" that were in power in those lands there: the Philistines, and the Canaanites, and the Gergashites, and the Hivites, and the Hittites, and all the different ones that they had to battle there. And the Lord was with them, not only in a providential way, but even angels sometimes got their hands involved in the war that was going on. And God did some marvelous things. Samson killing all those Philistines with the jaw bone of an ass. And just some amazing stories of how God fought on behalf of Israel.

Now, today, with the situation that we live in where we have governments that are established in the world, various nations under kings, under presidents, under prime ministers, or whatever, kings, and queens, and prime ministers. We have a little different set up, in a way, than Israel had in the Old Testament there, because we have a God now who is, you might say, multi-national. In the Old Testament it is just one nation. He just fought for Israel. But now, here we have going back say, the United States and Great Britain, at one time the colonies fought against Britain, and both of them claiming to believe in God. Now, there you have a very delicate situation. I remember when I was in Washington on an occasion, reading a statement that's in the stone there on the Lincoln Monument where Lincoln made some remark about during the Civil War, "We both pray to the same God." And I thought how terrible. You hear of people sometimes from the same family fighting against one another and praying to God. So, we have a little bit more of a hard time reconciling sometimes fighting against people that are fellow believers. And yet, God has ordained governments, and sometimes those governments struggle and compete with one another in ways that involve war.

Larry Wessels: Well, like you said, God sets up governments, and He casts them down and in His providence He can destroy a government or a country at His leisure. All we know is the bottom line from this unpopular doctrine is: God is actively involved in war.

Bob Ross: The basic thing that we need to remember as Christians is that governments are ordained of God. Now Romans 13 beginning in verse 1 on, I'll not take time to read it, but our responsibility is to be in subjection to the higher powers. And of course, these governments generally are elected by people, and so we, in a sense, have put them into this power, and so whoever resists the power, resists the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive unto themselves damnation, which means, not eternal damnation, but a punishment, a judgment, from the government. So, we ought to be supporters of our government, and when we are pressed to the point of going to war, when that has to be done, and that's the only alternative in dealing with a situation with some other country, then we have to do that. We have to support that, because that's the ultimate way that God has in judging and determining on this earth right and wrong. He says, "He's a minister of

God to thee for good." And so, we are not to resist. "If thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for He beareth not the sword in vain."

Now, Hitler for example. Hitler was a great rebeller against the things of God. And here's the United States. The United States is a government. Great Britain is a government. And we united together, and as ministers of God, we did not bear the sword in vain. We put Hitler down. The same way that happened in Iraq with Saddam Hussein. As time goes on, there will be these evil men that will rise up and it will necessitate war, because that's the only alternative that we have. They will not listen to reason. They will not listen to some way of adjustment of the situation to relieve what they're doing that's evil. And so, war is the only way to cleanse the earth of this situation.

Larry Wessels: In fact, you get that at the end of the book like I mentioned. Revelation 19. I have a Scripture reference here in II Thessalonians 1 starting in verse 7 that says, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." So, God has determined and ordained war at the end of time to put down the anti-Christ, false prophet. War is going to be the way that all of this wraps up at the end and that's determined by God clearly from the Scriptures.

Bob Ross: Someone has said, "War is hell," and that's what it turns out to be for the wicked, because they get what they deserve, death and hell as it were.

Larry Wessels: Well, with that said, the next unpopular doctrine ties right in with this which I've already mentioned. "Military service is acceptable with God." This is doctrine number thirty-three. "Military service is acceptable with God." And we look at our Scripture references. You can see in Genesis 14 cross referenced with Hebrews 7:1-3 that Abraham was a warrior. He went out and saved Lot from the kidnapers, and, in fact, he was even blessed for the slaughter of the kings there, Hebrews 7, by Melchizedek. We find in Deuteronomy 3 about Moses going out, doing military service for God, and destroying those evil nations that God wanted put out of the way. You look at the book of Joshua, almost the whole book. God tells Joshua to go into the land and wipe out the Amalekites, the Canaanites, the Moabites, and all the other "ites." You look at I Chronicles and also I and II Samuel, and you read the life of David from fighting Goliath to fighting the Philistines and all of the other battles and wars that he was involved in. Judges 6, Gideon. Judges 14-16, Samson as you mentioned before. You've got Judges 4. You've got Deborah and Barak. Acts 10, you've got the Roman centurion, Cornelius, who God sent Peter to to preach the Gospel. There was nothing said to Cornelius about him giving up his military service. As you go on to the mighty men of David in I Chronicles 11:10-47 and II Samuel 23:8-39. These men aren't condemned. The mighty men of war and battle are not condemned in the holy war to God for being soldiers for David. You find that Paul uses soldiering as an example for the Christian's struggle with the world, the flesh, and the devil. You find this in II Timothy 2:3-4 and in Ephesians 6:10-17. Jesus Himself commends the use of weapons in Luke 22:36 and 28.

Hebrews 7:1. "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him." So here we have Abraham being blessed after military service.

Luke 22:36, 38. "Then said he," this is speaking of Jesus, "unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And He said unto them, It is enough."

Well, that's it for our program today. Thank you again for joining us in this series of unpopular Bible doctrines. We'll be back again for our next program, so join us for that. In the meantime, I'm Larry Wessels with Christian Answers. Bob L. Ross. Bob, thanks for being with us. I enjoy your publications. And we'll see you next time. And remember, Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, except by me," Jesus says. So, through Jesus Christ is the way of salvation unto the eternal God. Thank you so much. God bless you all.