

Proverbs 22-10-19b

We're ready now to resume our study. We are attempting to understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. So we are seeking to follow the guidance in Proverbs, which is to receive the words from scripture.

And over and over again, we see the emphasis on what God has communicated. He does not communicate mystically. He does not communicate impulsively or through some unnatural form of revelation.

It is through words. I think this is why John tells us in his first chapter of the gospel that in the beginning was the word. The word was with God.

The word was God. The word became flesh and dwelt among us. I've often asked myself because I want to be teachable.

I want to listen to the very things we are seeing from scripture tonight. And if I need to revise my understanding of the centrality and the importance of instruction from God's word, does it need to be balanced? Does it need to be, you know, other things brought along with it? But I can't help but ask myself sometimes our scriptures that emphasize the importance of God's communication of truth, propositional truth, doctrines, principles, promises. It's so emphasized in scripture.

And there is the movement afoot today that wants to take another part of God's character and of God's manifestation of himself to us, which is love. Herein is love. Greater love hath no man.

We love because he first loved us and so on. Love is a very important component, but we've been seeing in recent weeks, beginning especially in Malachi, where God condemned the Levites for partial truth, partiality in the law, and a partial truth is as old as the first lie in the garden. We've seen it many times.

So what would happen if we tried to make this thing work, that it's all about the love? Love is the means. Love is the motive. Love is the opportunity.

So does it say, in the beginning was the love. The love was with God. The love was God.

Love became flesh and dwelt among us so that we could behold the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and love. Love is inspired by God and love is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. Be diligent to show yourself approved unto God, rightly expressing love.

So many foundational central imperatives and statutes from God center on his word. Does it say God has magnified his love above his name? You cannot help but see in scripture from beginning to end that Old Testament and new, it is communication, it is

information, it is knowledge, it is wisdom. Received in humility, willingness to repent, to change our minds when we are rebuked and corrected.

Whom the Lord loveth, what does he do? Whom the Lord loveth, he embraces, and bringeth on high to dwell in his presence forevermore. What does God do to those he loves? He corrects them, he chastens us. Whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth, he chasteneth, and he scourges every son whom he receives.

Doesn't say he loves every son that he receives, he spans us when we need it, he purges us where we need it. So as we continue now in our coverage of the fear of the Lord as it is revealed in scripture, we find in Deuteronomy chapter 17 that the king of Israel was commanded not to move among those who would love him and he could love them in return, he is to go to the book, get the book from the priests and write your own copy. Why doesn't he have the priests write him a copy? Why does he have to make his own copy? If the priests write one down and hand it to him, could he skip parts of it? Could he have a partial truth? But if they hand him the book and he's got to copy every word of it to make his own copy complete, he can't skip any of it.

If he skips it, it's not complete. It would be a partial truth. He has to write it for himself and after he's written it, he's got to keep it with him and he's got to read it and he's got to heed it, implement it, follow it.

Our next observation here is from Job. I find it so interesting that in our Deuteronomy chapter 10, we had these two interruptions of the description and the outworking of the fear of the Lord, where God stops to talk about his own character and his own accomplishments. Then there's another exhortation, therefore, this is what you should do.

Then there is another description of God and then there's another therefore. We saw that in Deuteronomy 10. Same thing happens in the book of Job.

We'll see it here in a moment. But I first want to turn to Job chapter one, verse one. If just turn backward past Psalms to Job, get back to chapter one.

One of the reasons Job is so critically important to our understanding of the fear of the Lord is found in this verse. Job 1.1, there was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. That man was blameless and upright.

How? One who feared the Lord, feared God and shunned evil. Skip down to verse eight. The Lord said to Satan, have you considered my servant Job? There is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who does what? Fears God and shuns evil.

Look at chapter two, verse three. After many disasters had befallen him and Satan's back up in the heavenly realms talking to the Lord. The Lord said to Satan, have you considered my servant Job? There is still none like him on the earth, a blameless and

upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil.

Three times in the space of these verses, the fear of God is connected to shunning evil. It is a choice. We either embrace evil and depart from God or we fear God and we shun evil.

Not a lot of gray here. Not a lot of some of the time or partial interest, partial obedience. He fears God and he shuns evil.

You can turn back to Proverbs and go to Proverbs chapter eight, verse 13. I can read this to you if you wanna keep your finger in Job because we'll be back there in a minute. Proverbs 8, 13.

I wisdom dwell with prudence and find out knowledge and discretion. That's the preceding verse. I wisdom dwell with prudence and I find out knowledge and discretion.

The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. Ah, this is helpful. We've seen many other attributes, walking in his ways, loving God, serving him with all of our heart and all of our soul, keeping his commandments, keeping his statutes, circumcising our hearts, no longer being stiff-necked, loving the stranger, that's in Deuteronomy 10, 19, fearing the Lord, serving him, holding fast and swearing by him in verse 20 of Deuteronomy 10.

But here, the fear of the Lord is to shun evil. If evil is getting into the periphery, if evil is insinuating itself, ambiguating itself into our life, into our conversation, into our entertainment, into our thinking, we've got to shun it. Remember what shunning was back in the days of the Puritans? Puritan community, a very close Plymouth Brethren-type fellowship.

But if somebody was found to be practicing evil, habitually drunk, habitually involved in some other form of sin as defined by the community, hopefully also defined in Scripture, they would just give that person the cold shoulder. They would shun them. No invitations, no concourse, no trading of goods for services or vice versa, no bartering, no purchasing.

You just shun them. You exclude them. They're outside the camp like a leper.

Shun. So wouldn't it be great if we could do that with evil? Evil rears his head. Outside the camp you go.

You're not gonna be in my dwelling. It's like the Feast of Unleavened Bread. All the leaven is thrown out.

Not a particle of it to be found in my dwelling. No expression, no tolerance of evil permitted. So the fear of the Lord is to hate evil.

Also to hate pride and arrogance and the evil way. The perverse mouth I hate. What is a

perverse mouth? Well, it's certainly not apples of gold in pictures of silver, is it? Speaking perverse things, things contrary to Scripture, contrary to statutes, contrary to commandments, gossip, maligning, bitterness, vindictiveness, character assassination.

All of these come under the heading of judging. Someone has done something I personally find offensive and I'm going to penalize them. I will assassinate their reputation.

I will diminish the respect or the good opinion that someone might have. And I will exact this price for their misbehavior that I perceive with my standard of righteousness. I will judge.

Judging is inflicting a penalty on someone for a real or perceived wrong. I hate the perverse mouth. Notice the opposite in verse 14 of Proverbs 8. Counsel is mine and sound wisdom.

I am understanding. I have strength. By me, kings reign and rulers decree justice.

By me, princes rule and nobles, all the judges of the earth. What is the promise to us if we are overcomers? What's one of those wonderful overcomer promises? You have been faithful in a few things. I will make you ruler over many things.

We will rule and reign with Christ. If we are faithful, we will reign with him. To him who overcomes, I will grant to sit with me on my throne.

How could we possibly hope to do that without dismal catastrophic failure unless we have the fear of the Lord? Unless we have this wisdom and divine counsel by which kings reign and rulers decree justice, princes rule and nobles, all the judges of the earth. I love those who love me. Here's the role of love.

To love wisdom, to love justice, to love the word of God, because it reveals God himself. We could not know anything other than generalities. His eternal power and Godhead are revealed in nature.

Romans 1, those who suppress that truth in unrighteousness are condemned because what may be known of God is manifest in creation. His eternal power and his sovereignty, his Godhood are revealed in creation. But to truly come to love God, not just to recognize that he is God, comes through this wisdom.

I love those who love me and those who seek me diligently will find me. So how do we obtain the fear of the Lord? How do we find the knowledge of God? Remember verse four of Proverbs chapter two, "If you seek me as silver and search for me as for hid treasures." You've got the bug. All other priorities fade into the background.

I have got to get this treasure. Used to be a program years ago when we had cable down

in Dallas about these treasure hunters. And they've had several programs since.

There's some Hickory Peninsula or Oak Island, where they're digging around thinking there's treasure and they find a button and go crazy for about a week. And it's got to be here now. Look, we found a button.

That was my impression of the show. I didn't really watch it. But one thing about it, I don't know how many seasons they had of that.

It was two or three, I think. And these guys just refused to give up. They believed there was treasure somewhere on this patch of ground.

And was it really an island? It looked to me like they didn't have much trouble getting there. I thought maybe it was just a little protrusion of land separated the other side of a swamp, maybe. Whatever it was, these guys had the bug.

You've seen guys that would go into the Sierra Nevada, go into the mountains looking for gold or this lost gold mine. Maybe it wasn't completely tapped out. The Alaska gold rush, California gold rush.

Guys would sell everything they owned, get a pan and a shovel. The settlers made all the money, but these guys would go out there because there's got to be treasure. I need it beyond all things.

Abandon everything and everybody. If you seek it as silver, do we really have that level of motivation? To be what we are supposed to be first so that we can do what God would have us do. The being comes before the doing.

Got to learn how to be a Marine before you can go be a Marine. You've got to learn how to be a sailor before you can go out and operate a boat or a ship, perform your functions. You have to learn before we do.

So, departing from evil, shunning evil. We saw that this was Job's characteristic in Job 28, verse 28. There is an expression of this.

Job 28, 28. To man, God says, behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. It's the beginning of wisdom.

It is wisdom. It culminates in wisdom and understanding. And what is the specific characteristic associated with the wisdom of the fear of the Lord? To depart from evil is understanding.

You begin with knowledge, you pursue wisdom, and you culminate with understanding. But you can't get to the understanding without shunning and departing from evil. This is not just the positive pursuit of knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, but it is the shunning, the separation from, the purging out of the old leaven, evil, shun it, purge it,

identify it, and get rid of it.

Separate from it. Contact with it defiles. Its presence corrupts and halts our progress and moves us backward.

It is possible, as it says in Hebrews, that at such time as we ought to be teachers, another very interesting passage you can contrast with the love hermeneutic, you know, love your neighbor and love your enemy and love God and it's all good. That's not what the author of Hebrews says. He says by this time, he doesn't say by this time you ought to be loving everybody supremely and sacrificially.

He says by this time you ought to be teachers. And he doesn't say, but you have need that someone just love you unconditionally so that you can heal up and get better. You have need that someone teach you again the first principles of the doctrine of Christ.

The remedy for immaturity, the remedy for running afoul of God's commandments and his statutes is not love. It is instruction. It is not the love of God, it is the word of God that is alive and powerful, that cuts to the quick and exposes the thoughts and intents of our heart.

It is the word of God that is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness, not love. Triad of Christian virtues, how many times have we reviewed it? What is the means? What is the means of the Christian life? What's one of those three? You got a 33% chance of being right, even if you guess. What is the means of living the Christian life? Is the means love? No.

Is the means hope? No. We walk by faith. Without faith, it is impossible to please him.

The just shall live by his faith. Faith is the means. Okay, let me turn the question around the other way.

What is hope? Hope is the motivation. We're motivated by hope. Paul says, if you don't have a future hope, we're of all men most miserable.

Eat, drink and be merry, tomorrow we die. If Christ is not raised, if the dead are not raised and Christ is not raised, we are of all men most miserable. There's no future.

We live in hope of the glory of God, not just hope of the resurrection, but hope of glory. Christ in you is not the love perfected, is it? What does Paul say Christ in you is? I labor like a woman who's pregnant until Christ be formed in you because Christ in you is the hope. It's the motivation.

Christ in you, hopefully one day, Christ will come for you and present you to the father and you will rule and reign with Christ and partake of the hidden manna, have the white stone and the new name, be a pillar in the temple with God's name written on you. It's

hope. This is the motivation that we can be found faultless in his presence with exceeding joy.

Remember those beautiful doxologies? Hope is the motivation, so what is love? Love, we've got means and we've got motive and as a good seminary student, the last one's gonna begin with an M. Faith is the means, hope is the motivation and love is the measure. The old devotional song is not wrong. They will know we are Christians by our love.

Jesus said, by this shall all men know that you are my disciples, that you love the world, that you love society, that you love the downtrodden and the oppressed. How shall all men know that we are his disciples? That you love one another. What's the difference in one another and the world? I'm asking, what's the difference in one another and the whole world? Believers, those who are blood bought, those who have claimed the Lord Jesus Christ as their savior by love.

I just loved him so much, he had to save me. By faith, without faith it is impossible to please God. Hebrews 11, six, he that comes to God must love his fellow man and love God.

It's not what it says. Must believe that he is, he is the creator, he is the possessor of the highest heavens, the earth and all that in them is. Must believe that he is and believe that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

Belief defines one another. We are believers, we are brothers in Christ. He is the firstborn among many brethren.

It is not our altruistic charitable love distributed indiscriminately to anybody that shows up at the soup kitchen line and is willing to endure a short excursus on the Bible and then get their bowl of soup. It is our love for one another. There are conditions.

I saw a cringeworthy quote from somebody a few days ago saying that Jesus was indiscriminate in his love and that he partied with prostitutes. He hung out with sinners and partied with prostitutes and we should go and do likewise is the implication. Jesus spent time with what kind of prostitutes? Did he go to the brothel and party? What prostitutes did Jesus speak with and accept those who came to him in repentance, looking for cleansing from their sin, looking for a new and better way? They came to him.

There's no scripture anywhere that says that Jesus went to the bawdy house looking for prostitutes that he could party with. It's heinous. And to say that Jesus loved the sinners and spent all his, Jesus loved repentant sinners.

Jesus accepted into his presence those who came to him looking for deliverance. God says, Old Testament and new, you will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. You are looking for deliverance, looking for salvation, looking for life.

So this is what fear of the Lord proclaims. It is recognition that there is life, peace, and righteousness only in God. He is the source.

He is the author. He is the finisher. And we come in humility.

Humility has to come. Submit yourselves under the mighty hand of God in humility, why? So that he may exalt you in due time. I'm going to finish our review of the fear of the Lord next time because I want to excuse.

I want to cover something because it is prevalent in the modern day, in the postmodern day, even more so. There is a great hue and cry in some circles about consumer Christianity, that people are going to church because they want to be entertained. They want to be lifted up, wafted to an emotional high by a worship team.

And of course, if you are only going to church for an emotional experience or for a catharsis, the way the Greeks would go to a tragedy so that they could watch the adventures of someone on the stage and feel that their soul had somehow been cleansed, obviously you're in trouble if you're going and assembling for the wrong reasons. However, as with so many things, if you associate going to church for what you can get with evil and then say you shouldn't go to church for what you can get, you shouldn't be a consumer Christian or partake of consumer Christianity, we need to pause and look for balance. So let me ask you, this is another pop quiz question.

What do you think of consumer Christianity? Or put another way, should you in any way, shape or form go to church for what you can get out of it? My answer is yes, absolutely. In our Sunday morning study, we are at that portion of Matthew 26 where the red ink picks up and says, take, eat, this is my body. Take, eat.

You go to the gospel of John, there's quite a lengthy chapter where Jesus says, I am the bread that comes down from heaven. You need to eat this bread. You need to consume the passages of scripture that talk about, they'll famously quote Hebrews, forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the habit of some is, but encourage one another to love and good works.

And of course that is true. But you can also look at Ephesians chapter four and the body and the constituent parts and that which every joint supplies, connects the body and makes the body function and blesses the body. All of the parts work together.

But here's the thing. If you are going to go to church and as someone dear to me and of my long-term acquaintance has said, give, give, give, and never take. Where do you get what you are giving? Put another way, what do you have that you did not receive? How can you go and edify and bless and give if you have not first received? How can you operate in honor if you did not first operate in humility? Even the Lord Jesus himself in his first advent comes in humility.

What does he say in the take my yoke upon you passage? Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. He doesn't say take my love upon you and love one another. Take my yoke and learn.

Why? For I am meek and lowly. This is the Lord Jesus Christ. I am meek and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls under my yoke.

Oddly enough, if you in humility accept the yoke of learning, you will find peace, you will find rest. And we're gonna see next time when we conclude our study of the fear of the Lord, that one of the benefits and one of the outworkings of it is life and peace over and over again in scripture. These two things are associated with the fear of the Lord as results and as blessings that come with.

But we want to be careful when people condemn consumer Christianity and you say, well, I've just got to go down there and I need to contribute a song or I need to give an exhortation to somebody. I need to be putting something out there or to bless somebody. We go to fellowship looking for what will edify.

What does edify mean? What is an edifice? It's a building, right? If you're gonna build a building, you're just gonna go down there and dream one into existence, will one into existence. You better bring some boards. You better bring some fasteners.

Better bring something for a foundation, right? Edifying, you've got to bring the materials so that you've got something to build with. What do you have that you did not receive? The author of Hebrews says, you have need of milk. The mature subsist on solid food.

What is milk and solid food? Is this everybody's coming down with a jug of milk and everybody's coming down with a plate of steaks? Solid food is taken in by the mature. Milk is taken in by the immature, but it is intake. It is internalized, it is digested and you get it in fellowship.

You get it in the assembly. You get it through instruction in righteousness. So I think there's a caution that needs to be attached, a warning label that needs to be attached to these knee-jerk condemnations of consumer Christianity.

Certainly there is such a thing. If you're going for the entertainment, the light show, the music, to be wowed and then look into the mirror and straightaway forget what you saw, as James puts it, obviously not right. But there's a sense in which we need to be consumer Christians.

The second thing I want to point out is the current growing and strident emphasis on kingdom, kingdom now. We're kingdom people. Jesus is king.

We're gonna live by the Sermon on the Mount because it's the prescription for kingdom living and so on. Turn with me quickly and this is where we're gonna close to Jeremiah

chapter 29. Right after Isaiah, Jeremiah chapter 29.

And when you get there, the immediately preceding context, you know the days of Jeremiah. The northern kingdom is gone. Jeremiah's in the southern kingdom.

You've got your last few kings, King Jeconiah and so on. And they are about to be taken out by Babylon. So the first incursion has already happened.

Remember there were three waves of captivity. In 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar's armies come in and scoop out the cream of the crop. This is when Daniel and Hananiah and Azariah and Mishael are taken to Babylon.

First wave, 605 BC. About seven or eight years later, in 597, the second wave occurs. More people are taken, more damage is done.

And more pressure is put on these people to submit and not be rebellious. They refuse, they try to rebel, they try to recruit some allies. And then in 586, give or take a year, Nebuchadnezzar comes and Jerusalem is destroyed.

The temple is knocked down, et cetera. You remember this, right? 605, 597, 586 is how it goes. In the midst of these incursions, the first one has already taken place.

Jeremiah is prophesying. And you can read the context. I only have time to talk about chapter 29.

So there are prophets. God told Jeremiah, make a leather yoke and put it on yourself. And tell people, tell the emissaries from these other lands.

You have to go back to 27 for this. God says to Jeremiah, make for yourselves bonds and yokes and put them on your neck. This is 27 too.

Send them to the King of Edom, the King of Moab, the King of the Ammonites, the King of Tyre and the King of Sidon by the hand of the messengers who come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah, King of Judah. They've already, all of these kingdoms have been dominated by Babylon. They're about to be taken over and made exiles and so on.

God says, submit to Babylon. This is the yoke. Verse four of chapter 27.

Command them to say to their masters. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, thus you shall say to your masters, I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are on the grounds by my great power and by my outstretched arm. And I've given it to whomever seems proper to me.

I made it. Remember this in Deuteronomy chapter 10? Remembered in Job? God says, where were you when I made everything? It all belongs to me. I am in the highest heaven.

Everything in the heaven and the earth is mine. God often starts a message by asserting his sovereignty, his lordship. Now, verse six, Jeremiah 27.

I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, my servant, and the beast of the field, I have also given him to serve him. So all nations shall serve him and his son and his grandson until the time of his land comes. Then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them.

There is a time for God's king and God's kingdom and sovereignty and autonomy. And there's a time in the councils of God when he submits his people to some other king, an outside king. God has a purpose in it.

God says, Nebuchadnezzar is serving me in taking over the land of Judah and Edom and Moab and Ammon and Tyre and Sidon. I have given these nations into his hand. It suits my purpose.

Who is the God of this world? Has he been deposed as the God of this world? Has Satan been deposed or is he still the God of this world blinding the minds of those who believe not? He is still the God of this world. He has not been deposed. He's not been overthrown.

He's not been bound. He's not in the bottomless pit. Who has God designated to be ruler of this world? Why does the Holy Spirit come and convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment? Sin and righteousness, what does God, what does Jesus say about judgment? Holy Spirit's gonna convince of judgment because the ruler of this world stands condemned.

He doesn't say the former ruler of this world. He is the current ruler. It is God's will that we face the challenges and learn the lessons in humility under the hostile rule of the God of this world.

How can Satan offer Jesus the kingdoms of the world except that they belong to him and they serve him? All these I will give you if you'll bow down and worship me because they are his to give. He is Nebuchadnezzar. He is the head of gold.

That whole statue is gonna tumble. But for the time being, God is using Satan for his own purposes. So when you get to 29 of Jeremiah, God has Jeremiah deliver a letter in verse four.

"Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, "to all who were carried away captive, "whom I have caused to be carried away "from Jerusalem to Babylon." Jews could argue all day long. It can't be God's will that we be subject and be oppressed and be carried away captive by this pagan, godless king of Babylon who thinks of himself as a deity. That can't be right.

We should be in the land. Hananiah, the false prophet, when you read the preceding chapter, he takes Jeremiah's yoke that was made at God's command and breaks it and says, "'Even so, the yoke of Babylon will be broken.'" And Hananiah and the other prophets were preaching kingdom now. Kingdom of God.

No, no, this is not the time when a foreign king is going to oppress and control and dominate and make us subservient. We don't accept it. We don't believe it.

We're God's people. God's in his heaven. And so they took the yoke that Jeremiah made at God's behest and Hananiah breaks it.

And Jeremiah says, "'Okay, fine.' But then God has him deliver this letter." So God says in verse four, "'To all of those who were carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon,' verse five, "'build houses and dwell in them, plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and daughters and take wives for your sons. Give your daughters to the husbands so that they may bear sons and daughters that you may be increased there and not diminish.

Live as normal a life as possible under this hostile foreign rule. Live a godly life in the area that you can control. You can't change out the king and you should not resist.

You should not rebel. Seek peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captives and pray to the Lord for it. In its peace, you will have peace.

For thus says the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, do not let your prophets and diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. They prophesy falsely to you in my name. I have not sent them,' says the Lord.

Thus says the Lord, after 70 years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform my good word toward you and cause you to return to this place." Long story short, there is a time for the kingdom and it is a time of God's choosing. There's a time of living outside the kingdom, whether it is in Egypt or in Babylon, it is a time of God's choosing. It is a circumstance that is a part of the plan, purposes and providence of God.

And to try to change God's timing, Jesus always presents his kingdom as future. It is something to inherit. It is something to prepare for.

It is something to be ready to function in, but it is not kingdom now. He is not on his throne. He is seated at the right hand of the father until his enemies are made his footstool.

Yet 70 years, then God says, I will bring you back to this land. But you are not to agitate and try to hurry up that schedule. And those who are trying to preach, teach and practice kingdom now, I tell you even weeping, they are just as false a prophet as

Hananiah was in Jeremiah's day.

To say that we can enter into the kingdom, we can certainly enter into kingdom thinking, kingdom training, kingdom anticipation, but do not confuse the hope of the future with the necessary faith to function now. I've mentioned before, and I think it's a very interesting point that faith is not an issue in the millennial kingdom. If there is salvation as children grow to maturity, they will not be saved by faith.

Why? Hebrews 11, one, what is faith? Faith is the substance of things hoped for and evidence of things not seen. Jesus and the sons of David resurrected are on the throne. There are visible church-age saints.

There are visible angels, perhaps. There's nothing hidden. It's all open and available to view.

And the issue will be the decision to accept deliverance and eternal life on God's terms or not, in the same way that it was a decision for Satan in eternity past, in the same way that it was a decision for Adam and Eve in the garden. There's no faith issue in the garden because you see the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. He speaks.

He assigns them tasks. They have fellowship with God. There's no issue of faith.

There is an issue of obedience, not faith. In the millennial kingdom, the Lord Jesus Christ is gonna be ruling with a rod of iron. It's not a matter of, do you trust him? It's, will you obey him? Do you accept his rule? Do you humble yourself under the mighty hand of God to be exalted in due time? But the notion that we should believe that the kingdom is here and that King Jesus is ruling over his kingdom subjects and we are kingdom people doing kingdom things is to make the same mistake that Hananiah and the other prophets and those who followed them made in the early days of the Babylonian incursion and the Babylonian captivity.

God has a purpose in sending his people to Babylon and having them function for 70 years under hostile authority. He has a purpose in it. And to try to obviate that purpose by bringing the kingdom back in too soon is what this letter that Jeremiah delivers in chapter 29 is all about.

It's really fascinating. Start at chapter 27 and read these chapters and it illuminates the flawed thinking that characterizes kingdom now, King Jesus thinking in our present day. We are to learn the fear of the Lord now so that we can function in the future kingdoms, the kingdom of the son and the kingdom of the father.

More about this next time. We have much more to see and find application in with regard to the fear of the Lord next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for the clarity that it brings, the light that it shines on our path. We pray that your Holy Spirit will give us personal insight and understanding in terms of application of these truths in the immediate circumstances we face, in the priorities and the goals and the values we embrace and pursue. We pray that in all things, your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, our savior will be glorified and we pray it in his name, amen.