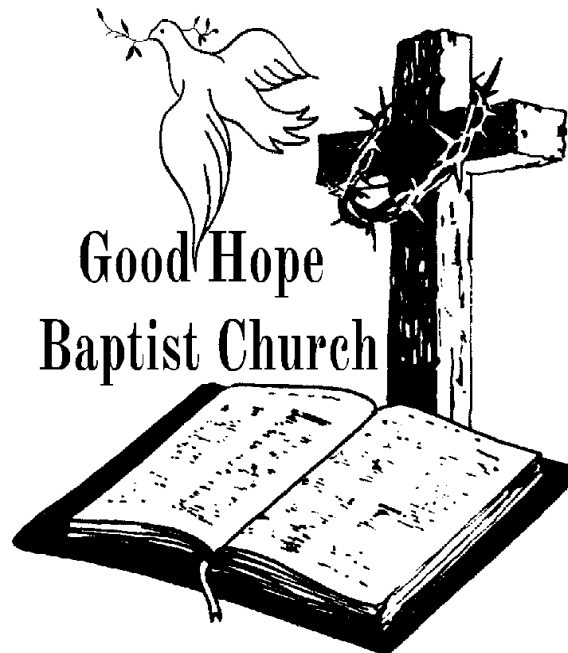


Perishing People or a Righteous Recovery

Proverbs 29:19, Psalms 11:3



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FOCAL Read Responsively Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

Psalms 11:3 If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

Today we're going to be looking at two different texts. The first text - a statement of fact - is in the Book of Proverbs - and will be our introduction to the sermon. Then we'll head to Psalms 11 to answer the question, "**If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?**"

Proverbs 29:18 has been misquoted and misapplied by many preachers over the years. When the congregation starts to grow and the pastor feels it is time for a building project he preaches "**where there is no vision, the people perish**". When the congregation gets locked and stagnant and pastor wants to get them moving he preaches "**where there is no vision, the people perish**". When the pastor is trying to *vision cast* and sell his congregation on a new program he preaches "**where there is no vision, the people perish**". Now I want to be clear I am not casting rocks at these men of God. I believe they were sincere when they preached the text. However sincerity does not make something truthful.

Proverbs 29:18 has nothing at all to do with property, programs, or a purpose driven agenda. This text deals with **prophecy - the Bible itself**.

When you read the Scripture in context you quickly see that it is dealing with the Bible, and whether people are applying the Bible to their lives or not. Read it with me ...

FOCAL Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish BUT he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

We often ignore the little words of Scripture when we read the Bible, but we shouldn't. That little word "**but**" is a **conjunction**, a word that joins two parts of a sentence.

These are not two separate statements, but one sentence with a warning and a promise. To depart from God's Word - His revelation to us - will always bring destruction.

Where there is no vision (revelation, Word from God) the people perish. How do we avoid this? **BUT he that keeps (obeys) the Law (God's written and revealed Word) is happy.**

The Lord sits before the nations a way that leads to peace and prosperity, and says "**If you neglect this way, you will instead perish**". America is perishing. It is perishing because it has stepped away from *doing* the Word of God, and instead is *doing* whatever. **Evangelist Franklin Graham** remarked on how our nation has degraded from the way of Christ. He said:

"The spirit of anti-Christ is everywhere. ... in our government today, you can't pray to Jesus in many public meetings. You can pray to God or a god. You can mention Buddha or the name of Muhammad -- but you can't pray to Jesus Christ." (January 20, 2011, Newsmax)

"Where there is no revelation - no Word from God - the people perish." Many Americans call themselves Christians but they have rejected the authority of the Word of God. There are many who *know* what the Scripture says, but refuse to *do* what the Scripture says. We are called to **keep the Law - to follow God's revealed Word** if we want to be happy.

ILLUSTRATE There is a difference between *knowing* the Word and *doing* the Word. You can know that the speed limit is 55 miles per hour. You know that you're supposed to keep this law - to drive no more than 55 miles per hour. If you go instead 65 miles per hour you may get a ticket. You are penalized because you did not *do* the Law.

Genesis 1:27 God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

When God made Adam and Eve He made them perfect. Man was designed for woman, and woman for man. They were created in His image. God set parameters in the Garden. **"Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth. Do not eat of the forbidden tree. Heed the authority of My Word - follow My vision"**. For a time Adam and Eve did as God commanded.

While our first parents followed God's revealed Word, they were blessed. It was only when they rejected His vision - His revelation - that they found themselves outside of Eden looking in. **Where there is no revelation - no Word of God - the people perish.**

Just a few verses above our current text we read:

Proverbs 29:16 When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth: but the righteous shall see their fall.

The wicked are multiplied in America. Because of that, transgression has increased.

a Sexual sin has increased. Homosexuality is considered quite common place, and is aggressively pushed on the nation's media outlets. This lifestyle is not only forbidden by the Word of God, but it is also against common sense and nature. As **Dr. Mike Adams** said, **"If everyone lived faithfully in same-sex marriage it would result in the end of the human race itself"**.

Promiscuity also abounds in our nation. God designed us to be in one man/ one woman marriages. Because many have departed from God's standard disease is rampant.

b Abortion has increased. Promiscuous couples also have to contend with unwanted pregnancies, which has led to the rise of the **abortion industry**. In a recent

article for his "On The Right" column, **J. Russell Capps** stated:

"The Centers for Disease Control reports that there were 1,212,000 abortions in the United States (in 2010). This includes North Carolina in which 30,596 babies were robbed of their chance for life ... Mother Teresa, a short time before she died, in a face to face meeting with former President Bill Clinton, advised him that abortion is the evil that will destroy America ..."

Abortion is destroying America from two different directions: **It kills potential, and cheapens life.**

Why are terrible diseases like Alzheimer's, Cancer, Parkinson's (to name a few) still so common in our world today? Could it be that as a nation we inadvertently aborted the people who would have discovered the cures for these diseases? Who knows how many brilliant doctors, scientists, and engineers have been sacrificed on the abortion's altar? Only God knows. We will will never know.

Life is also cheapened. The wholesale murder of babies has made the nation callous to life. Medical Missionary **Albert Schweitzer** once said:

"Ethics is nothing other than Reverence for Life. Reverence for Life affords me my fundamental principle of morality, namely, that good consists in maintaining, assisting and enhancing life, and to

destroy, to harm or to hinder life is evil."

We have lost reverence for life in America because we have no reverence for the Creator of life. **Where there is no revelation - where the Word of God is rejected - the people perish. BUT** (praise God for the "buts" of Scripture!) **he that keeps the Law, the Word of God, is happy.**

We are on a slippery slope as a nation. How can we get off this slope and get back on stable footing? The Bible is very plain that the solution lies in the righteous - those who are born again by faith in Jesus Christ.

If The Foundations Be Destroyed (And They Are) What Can The Righteous Do?

Focal **Psalms 11:3** **If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?**

I think we can agree that the foundations are destroyed. So what's the solution? **What can the righteous do?** Psalm 11 gives us our answer.

1. I Will Not Compromise God's Word, But Will Cling To Him No Matter What

Context **Psalms 11:1 ... In the LORD put I my trust:**
how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?

In the early Church - about 140 AD - a man by the name of **Marcion** came up with a "new doctrine". Marcion

read the Old Testament passages and compared them with the New Testament Apostolic writings - particularly those of the Apostle Paul. **Marcion concluded that the God of the Old Testament was inconsistent, jealous, wrathful, genocidal, and said that the world He made was defective. Because of that Marcion rejected the Old Testament and all of the New Testament except the Pauline Writings as Scriptural.** Since Marcion was quite wealthy he used his money to finance his new cult.

Marcionism is alive and well today. Those who push Marcionism teach us that we should ignore the Old Testament, and for that matter ignore any part of the Scripture which does not promote the concept that "God is love".

The Marcionite believes that **"God is Love"**, but rejects any other concept of God. The Marcionite picks and chooses which revelation from God's Word he will accept as authoritative.

The world calls on the Christian to compromise his faith, to reject Scripture which does not meet its criteria - we must not do it. **I must not compromise God's Word.** God has given us a revelation, a Word from Him, and all of it - ALL OF IT - is authoritative. **Pastor J. C. Ryle** said:

"Beware of manufacturing a god of your own: A god who is all mercy but not just, A god who is all love but not holy, A god who has a heaven for everybody but a hell for none. Such a god is an idol of your own. The hands of your own fancy and sentimentality have

made him. He is not the God of the Bible."

I must not compromise the Word of God. **In the LORD - the Eternal Yahweh - I will put my trust.** What has caused our nation to slide to where it is today? Because Christians who should have known better have compromised God's Word.

Illustrate Several years ago I sat talking "politics" with someone I dearly love. This man is a Christian. He loves the Lord. As we talked on an upcoming election this man shocked me. He said, **"I'm going to vote for so and so"**. I asked, **"How can you do that? This man is a firm believer in abortion, and in particular *partial birth abortion*".** You know what his response was? **"That may be, but I think he will be able to turn this economy around."**

The reason we are flailing as a nation, the reason that **the foundations are destroyed**, is because Christians who should have known better have compromised with the world. Listen Beloved:

Every time the army of the Lord compromises and takes a step backwards, the devil takes a step forward.

King David was told,

Context Psalms 11:1-2 ... **Flee as a bird to your mountain? 2 For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.**

"Run away little bird, run away. You go hide in your mountain, for the big bad wicked are going to shoot at you - and they will do it secretly". The world does not care if we come to this building every Sunday. The world doesn't care if we have preaching Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night.

The world doesn't care if we stay in our own little world, but keep our opinions to ourselves. **Run away little bird to your mountain. Hide, hide, for the bogey man is coming!"** What was David's response? **"In the LORD put I my trust"!**

Illustrate We must put our trust in God, and God alone. We must revere and follow His Word - and not count on fallible humans. A father sat down to read a fairy tale to his child, saying **"Once Upon A Time"**. The little girl asked, **"Daddy? Do all fairy tales begin with 'Once upon a time'?"** He replied, **"No, a whole series of fairy tales begins with 'If elected I promise...'"**

Too often we have compromised God's Word in the devil's world - and have paid the price for it. If we as God's children will cling to and follow His Word to us, then we will be protected.

One of the greatest Books in the Bible that is rarely read is the Book of Acts. Throughout this Book we see how God looked after His people as long as they obeyed His Word. One of my favorite texts is found in **Acts 27**. The Apostle Paul was under Roman guard and headed toward Caesar to be judged. At one point the Apostle told his captors:

Acts 27:10 ... **Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.**

Yet the crew headed on. What happened? The ship did hit a bad storm that lasted three days. At the end of that time when it seemed as if all was lost Paul stood up and proclaimed:

Acts 27:22-25 ... now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. 23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, 24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. 25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

Paul stood up in the midst of these unbelievers and **shared the vision - the revelation - that God gave to him.** Even so we who are believers must stand up and declare that we have a Word from God. God keeps His Word.

That wasn't the end of the story. The ship eventually was driven against some rocks, and the crew decided it was time to get out of the ship. They let the lifeboat down when Paul once more stood up and said:

Acts 27:31 Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

God had told Paul "Stay in the boat. No matter how it looks, stay in the boat." We as believers need to quit looking at things from our own perspective and do it God's way. If Paul had compromised and got in the lifeboat, he and all that were with him would have drowned. You must **stay in the boat**, obeying the Word of God.

Paul said of himself, (verse 23) **"I belong to God, and I serve God"**. Because he was obedient, those with him were saved. If he had compromised they would have all died.

David did not compromise, Paul did not compromise, and neither did the first converts in the early Church. Only the righteous can restore the foundations to this country. **John MacArthur** writes in his book *Slave*:

"to be a Christian, in the true sense of the term, is to be a wholehearted follower of Jesus Christ. As the Lord Himself said in John 10:27, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me". The name suggests much more than a superficial association with Christ. Rather, it demands a deep affection for Him, allegiance to Him, and submission to His Word. "You are My friends if you do what I command you,"

2. I Will Not Misrepresent Who God Is

Many who profess to be Christians misrepresent Who God is. Perhaps they do this innocently, not knowing the

whole counsel of God. Some knowingly follow Marcionism. But Beloved, we need to be careful to not misrepresent our Lord. Look once more to Psalm 11:

Context Psalms 11:4 **The LORD is in his holy temple,...**

There is a lot of preaching in the world today that says "**God is Love**". Well, God is love! That is a major aspect of His character. The Bible tells us:

1 John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

God is Love. I will not dispute that. That wonderful and well known Scripture tells us:

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

God so loved the world that He GAVE His only Begotten Son. God displayed His love for us all when He sent Jesus Christ to this earth.

God is love, and this loving God **gave us His Son?**
What did He give His Son for? Look what the Prophets saw.

Isaiah 53:6-7 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his

mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

God so loved us that He gave His Son over to pay the penalty for our sin.

Isaiah 53:5 {Jesus} was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Jesus Christ was given by the Father to stand in our place. Look at Him. Look at Him! Beaten bloody by Roman guards. The Prophet saw:

Isaiah 52:14 ... His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness ^(NIV)

Hanging on that Cross of Calvary, if you had any respect for life it would hurt you to see Him there. See the Blood streaming down. See the flesh hanging in tatters. Now, as the sun is eclipsed by the moon - and an unnatural darkness comes over the face of the earth - hear Him cry out "**My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?**"

God is love, and because He is love He gave us Christ to be our Savior. But God is also HOLY - without sin - and beating and the Blood and the suffering He went through shows us how He regards sin.

Context Psalms 11:4 **The LORD is in his holy temple,...**

God is not just LOVE, but He is also HOLY. He despises sin. Sin is that which draws away from His Word. God is holy. When the Prophet Isaiah looked into Heaven and saw God he saw angels flying about the Throne saying "**Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts**". The Prophet said:

Isaiah 6:5 ... Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

God is holy. Look further in Psalm 11:

Psalms 11:5-7 The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth. 6 Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup. 7 For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.

The righteous Lord loveth righteousness. He does not condone wickedness. Those who are not righteous shall not get into His Heaven. **Upon the wicked He rains snares, fire and brimstone, a horrible tempest - that is their portion.**

God is love, but if any man or woman leave this life without the Gospel of Christ, they shall not find God

to be a God Who is love. God gave Jesus Christ to be the payment for our sins. Whosoever believes on Him is *born again*, changed to where they no longer want to wallow in sin.

God calls every person into **fellowship with His Son. (1 Corinthians 1:9)**. We are called to believe on Him Who paid for our sins. The God Who is Holy punished His Son in our place. We have but one hope of salvation, and that is by **repenting and coming to the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior**. C.H. Spurgeon preached:

"though I have preached my Master's gospel with perpetual industry, and have sought to honor him, yet I have no more hope of heaven apart from the merits of Christ than the greatest criminal that is banished from his country for his crimes; and that poor wretch who was till lately under sentence of death for many murders, would have as good a hope of entering into eternal life as the best among you were it not for this precious doctrine-that is to say, she would have no hope, and you would have no hope either, for we are all alike shut up under condemnation; good or bad, righteous or unrighteous, we are all alike condemned under the law of God, and there would be no more hope for one than for another if this doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ were not true. We are all in this one boat together-I mean as many of us as have believed; the weakest cannot sink unless the ship goes down, and the strongest cannot float unless the ship should bear them."

God is holy, and hates sin. The only way that a person can be righteous is to come to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and let His sacrifice be applied to your account. You MUST REPENT - own up to your sinfulness.

Illustrate A little boy knocked on a neighbor's door, and said **"I think my baseball is in your garage. Could I have it back?"** The neighbor went out to the garage and sure enough, there was a baseball. There was also a broken window. He asked the boy, **"How do you suppose that ball got in here?"** The little boy looked at the ball and the broken window and said, **"Wow! I must have thrown it right through that hole!"**

We need to understand - and tell others - that God is holy. This holy God has offered us salvation in Jesus Christ - but we must repent! When you do that the Holy Spirit of God enters your life - and the revelation of God - God's Holy Word - begins to matter in your life.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



