

## Identity Wars Series

### No. 4 – Ham and the Rise of Worthlessness

So tonight we look at the subject of 'Ham and the Rise of Worthlessness.' Now, that does not have anything to do with pork on the stock exchange but it does have very much to do with identity and its effect on us.

Let's just bow our heads and we'll say a prayer before we begin.

Our Father in heaven, we're just so thankful that we can come into Your presence and Lord, based on what we said last time, we know that every good and perfect gift comes from You. So Lord, I know that if anything good is said this weekend, it would be because of You. I pray for freedom of speech, to speak the things that You have shown me, the wonderful things that You have opened to me in Scripture. Allow me to share them this weekend that Your Name will be glorified and that we will be blessed as we open Your Word. We just thank You and we praise You in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Just as I said, I just want to recap where we have been or where we were a month ago. It doesn't seem like a month, it only seems like last week. But it was a month ago.

If we look at the series of presentations, we looked at a number of things. The first thing was God's kingdom. The things that we noted about God's kingdom is that God is the source of life, something that all of us reasonably understand. But the impact of that truth is so profound, it should affect every area of our life. God is the source of life. And it says in Acts 17:25, that God gives to all life and breath and all things. All things. We looked at the fact that God not only gives us breath but He gives us inspiration. He gives us will. He gives us ability to do things. He gives us love. And we talked about the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace. He gives us these things.

And to put this into practical terms.

I talked about the fact that one morning, my son comes running into my room when before I'm awake. I like to wait, particularly in winter mornings, I like to wait until the sun comes up a little bit before I get out of bed because it's too cold for me. Some of you are nodding going, "Amen, brother. That's the way to do it." Anyway, he jumped on to my bed and he threw his arms around me and he said, "Daddy, I love you." Now, we could pass that off as something that's just very nice. But if you go into the fact that God is the source of all things, it is God Himself that came to my son and said to him, "I want you to tell your father, My son, that he's loved." And so He puts that thought in my son's mind and my son, with his will, he embraces that thought and he comes and he performs that for me. Something beautiful. So that not only am I able to see that my son loves me but also that God has reminded me that He loves me, because God is the source of everything. A beautiful thought.

I was reminded of that the other day. I was walking along and I was listening to the birds as they were singing in the sun, reasonably early in the morning, the light and the sun, beautiful. And I saw a mother swinging her child on the swing and I was reminded once again, there's God, touching that mother, touching that child as they enjoy each other's company. God has inspired this moment. Whether or not they acknowledge Him, He still inspires that moment for every soul that opens themselves to do right, to express goodness, is allowing God to work in them whether they recognize it or not.

As I've said to some, God makes His rain to fall on the just and the unjust. Do we restrict that to simply physical rain? Isn't the rain a symbol of the Holy Spirit? His Spirit reaches out to the just but it also reaches out to the unjust. Obviously, they can't receive as much because they haven't given their lives to God. But He still pours out His spirit on those people. I hear many people say to me, "I don't understand. I have these friends and they're such nice people, and yet they don't believe in God, they

don't profess any religion, and yet they seem so nice. Well, that's easy when you understand that God is the source of all life. They're responding to Him even though they don't realize it. And maybe one day, they will realize it and turn to Him. And if they're responding in this way, there's a good chance they will turn to Him. And that is something that is wonderful.

So God is the source of life. As a consequence of this, if God is the source of life and everything comes from Him, therefore – deduction - we can only have life through a relationship with God. We can only have life through a relationship with God. We have to have that life through Him. In Psalms 104:27 and 28, basically tells us (I won't go into now) that all of creation wait upon God and He pours out His benefits upon us.

We have life through a relationship. And if we have life through a relationship, then relationship becomes very important, doesn't it? It becomes very important.

Point Number Three that we looked at last time was our relationship with God is the basis of our identity and value. If our life comes from God and we are in a relationship with Him, if He is the origin, then our worth, our value, identity, everything is connected to Him. And we see this reflected in the fact, even within an earthly ...our families, a child that has been part of an artificial insemination program, finds out later on as they get older that the father actually was not the father that he is now living with. And then this desire within that person for many to find "Who was my biological father? Who was he? Who was I originated from?" And because we are originated from God, everything that we are is bound up in Him - our identity, where we come from, and our value is all connected to Him. And we spent a lot of time looking at that.

Matthew 6:9. It says, "Our Father which art in heaven." We had to pray 'Our Father.' Luke 12:6:7. We looked at the fact that says, "Are not two sparrows sold for five copper coins yet not one of them is forgotten before God. But you are of more value. The very hair on your head are all numbered rather. You're of more value than many sparrows."

And Psalms 40:5, it tells us that God is thinking about us all the time.

And Jeremiah 31:3 says, "I've loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore, with loving kindness, I have drawn you." All these things connect us with God and give us a sense that we belong to Him and our value comes from Him. Just the fact as we described, just the fact that right now, if you were to think about the fact that right now, that God is thinking about you. He has plans for you. He loves you. He's preparing a home for you. He has dreams and desires for you. When you hear those words, what does it do? Does it make you feel important? Does it make you feel special? I hope so. Because it's true. It's true. And that's why our value comes from God.

So that was Number Three.

We looked at the fact briefly and we're going to go into this a little bit more. I touched on this but we're going to dig more into this tomorrow afternoon when we talk about 'Identity and the Commandments.' But we touched on this basically saying that this relationship, identity, is guarded by the Ten Commandments. Its the commandments that protect our relationship with God. It reminds us who God is, and who we are, and how we negotiate the relationship. I'm going to go into that in a lot more detail.

And when we start to look at things in this way, we see that the commandments serve a very different function in God's kingdom than they do in Satan's kingdom. Satan's quite happy for you to believe in the Ten Commandments. He doesn't have any problem with that as long as we believe it the way he wants us to believe it. But in God's kingdom, the commandments are a protection, a guard of that relationship. If God is our life source and we only have life through a relationship with Him, then we need something to protect that relationship, don't we? Or we're dead. We're finished. And that's what

the Ten Commandments are. They are there to protect our relationship with God. Is it any wonder that the psalmist says, "Oh, how I love Thy Law; it is my meditation day and night. I delight in Your Law."

Have you ever pondered how David could have an emotional connection with the Law of God? Isn't it just ten words? That is there constantly reminding us of our evil and our wickedness? Well, if that's the way you see it, then you have a very shortened view. Certainly the law does that but it is much more. And we will look at that.

Because God's kingdom is based on relationships, His kingdom focuses on the unseen rather than the seen. And we're going to really expand that concept tomorrow night when we look at Elijah, the visible, and the invisible. And simply saying at this point that two people that have a relationship, you can see that two people have a connection, but you can't actually see the relationship. We don't know. Everyone in this room has different relationships with different people. But I can't see the quality of that relationship. I don't know how good the relationship. I don't know how bad the relationship is. I don't know where the problems are and where the strengths are because you can't see it. And because God's kingdom is based on relationships, it's based on the unseen rather than the seen. And the implications of that for us in our relationships with each other and our worship of God, have profound ramifications. And we're going to have a bit of a look at that. Oh, there's some texts that we have on that.

2 Corinthians 4:18 While we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are unseen, because the things that are seen are temporal but the things that are unseen are eternal. In Hebrews 11:1, it says, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, and etc. And of course, Exodus 20:4 is the second commandment, it says, "You shall not make unto you any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in and above the earth, beneath," etcetera, etcetera. And we will come back to that tomorrow night.

So then we looked at 'Identity Lost.' God is the source of life and if this is the most foundational principle that we will ever need to understand, then isn't this the place where Satan will attack? That God is the source of life? That everything comes from Him? And that's what He does. In Genesis 3:1-5, he says, "You will not surely die. You can disconnect your relationship from God and you will live on." Satan attacks at the very foundational principle that you and I need to understand if we want to live on forever. And that is that God is the source of life and we only have life through a relationship. But Satan says, "No. You can have your own life source. You don't need a relationship with God and you'll be okay." And so he introduces the concept of the power within. "You are autonomous. You don't need God." This is the most destructive principle. And we live out these principles everyday. Every time we feel worthless, every time we feel discouraged, every time we feel life is too hard, we are living out this principle. The power within. We can go more into this a little bit later.

And we did touch on this a fair bit, of course, before. And that's where Satan attacks. By embracing Satan's lie, Adam and Eve lost their identity, their value, the family relational model was broken, of husband and wife. The order of the family was broken. And entered into the cycle of worthlessness. (Genesis 3:16-19) You will remember, those of you that were here last time we talked about the cycle of worthlessness. And I'll look at that a bit on ... I think I've got this next actually. There it is.

The problem with believing that you have life in yourself is that when you do something, then you were the one that originated it. You were the one that created it. Therefore, you are the one worth of the exultation, the praise, for doing such a thing.

And so, if you are in a situation where you're disconnected in your relationship from God, then you need recognition. You need value. You need people to tell you. And so you need to achieve. And so when you have self-power, value-by-achievement focus, if you do well, you become proud. You did poorly, you experience failure. And this is the way that most people in this world experience life - a

cycle of roller coaster between pride and depression. Pride and depression. Round and round and round until either you find Christ or you end your life. Or you take substances to block out the pain. That's the way it is in this life.

'Imprisoned by False Identity.' Once Adam and Eve disconnected themselves from God, they entered the cycle. And all of us with them have entered this cycle. As the Bible says, "When we are born, we go astray from the womb." We enter into to this cycle. We desire to be first. Any child growing up, the desire is to be last. When you're looking through the school album and you know that your picture's in there somewhere, what do you look for first? Or is it just me? We are self-absorbed. Self-interested. And this we have received from our father, Adam. And other forefathers along the way which have embellished, increased, intensified, and then passed it on to us. This desire for recognition.

And you see it everywhere. You see it in many places. The desire for power. The desire for recognition is what drives most people. And this is the cycle of worthlessness. The problem with living within this cycle is you never truly can have relationships that can last because you have to be better than other people and in control of other people to feel worth. But when you have to control other people and be better than other people, your relationships suffer. Does that make sense?

That's what happens in the cycle of worthlessness. And of course, I look at the fact of Genesis 3:10-12 that we were imprisoned in this system because when God comes to Adam and He says, "Did you eat from the tree?" Now that he has a system of belief that his value is determined upon his performance and God is now challenging his performance, he cannot acknowledge that he's done wrong. And so he blames everybody else. "This woman, whom you gave to me, she gave me the fruit and I ate and it's not my fault. It's your fault and her fault but not my fault."

Do we see that spirit manifested today? All evidence of the cycle of worthlessness. Denial. Going into denial. And this is the system that Jesus came to release us from. This cycle of pride and depression built on a system of self-powered belief, going back to Satan who taught us that "You will not surely die." That is the poison from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. That is the intoxication of the wine of Babylon as we looked at. That is what makes us drunk. That is what causes us to forget who we are and who we belong to. And it makes us do crazy things.

All right.

Number Three. We also looked at the fact that Adam and Eve only lived on or continued to live because Christ became the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8) Many people interpret the text where God says, "In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die," they say, "Dying, you shall die." Not true. Because that would infer that man has a life source within himself that not even God can kill and it takes Him a few hundred years or now 80 years to wipe him out. Not true. We only have life from God. From the very moment that Adam and Eve sinned, Jesus stepped in and said, "I pledge My life for theirs."

And so your heart and my heart beats stamped with the cross of Jesus Christ. That is the only reason we have life. Before it comes directly out of the throne of God straight to us, but now it comes through Christ, through the cross, and we live because of what Christ has done for us. And that's good news, isn't it? Nothing without the cross. The food you eat is stamped with the cross of Christ because the life source that produces that food comes from Christ Himself. Everything within the creation comes from Christ. And I thank God for that life. We should thank God for that life everyday. Everyday you wake up, everyday that your eyes are open and you see the sun rise and you can see life through the birds and the animals. And even around you, everything teeming with life. We can thank God for life that's come from Him.

And so Adam and Eve lived on because they needed time to reconsider the suicide they had just enacted. They were dead but yet they were alive. They had no life of their own. They're living by the life of Christ. Yet they did not fully realize and most of us don't realize that this is the case.

Number Four. To reclaim a sense of identity and value, the human race embraced a performance and achievement-based system. (Genesis 10:8-10) And we're going to explore this in depth. It says that Nimrod was a mighty hunter before, or against the Lord. And he built this city and he took this city and he did this. He became known because he was a mighty hunter and that he was this and he was this, and he was this. We often have that even with our situation. When someone comes to speak, they get up, and then you get this long list of all the things they've done and all the things they've achieved and all the wonderful things they've done, as a reason as to why you should listen to them. That's just all rubbish. There's only one reason why you would listen to a person. That's because you believe that the Holy Spirit speaks through them. Who cares about their degree? Who cares about how many things they've done, how many evangelistic programs they run? They mean nothing. What's important is that you understand that God is speaking through a person. If God is speaking through a person, you listen. You can forget all the degrees. As a friend of mine said to me once, that he's heard an evangelist say, "I've plenty of degrees in my thermometer. We don't need any more than that."

So we moved to a performance-based system. And you'll remember we looked last time how that performance in the world, nationality. Remember I told you how that Dutch men are the smartest, most intelligent, most good-looking people on the face of the planet. Did I hear an amen out there? Value by nationality. And I know each of you with your nationalities would beg to differ. Education. Value by education. That's something that's very much part of the world. Value by wealth. Value by who you're connected to. "I had lunch with John Howard yesterday." Name-dropping. It makes you feel important that you are associating with important people. And other things. But in the church, do we find the same thing happening within the church? Do we have labels within the church? Are you valuable because you're conservative or because you are liberal-minded? Does that make you valuable? What about education or power or position? Are you valuable because you're an elder? Or because you're a song leader? Or something like this? We see the same things happen in the church. And we know that these things are important to us because things can get really ugly in the nominating committee when things go wrong. If it wasn't important to us, things would not go wrong in the nominating committee. We'd all just love one another and wouldn't worry about it. That's important to us because there's value. "I'm climbing up every day, going from deacon to elder. I'm now pastor. I've pastored two churches. So I'm doing better than most of you." What did Paul say? "I consider this but dung, that I may win Christ."

But this is the system that we embraced and we're all affected by it. We talked about the fact that we attempted everyday to turn stones into bread. "If you're a child of God, prove it." And that's something that we need to escape from. There's an intoxicating power to that temptation. "If you are a child of God, prove it. Do something. Be eloquent in your prayer. Give more money to the church. Do Bible studies. Do this. Get up an hour earlier." I've said this to people. When someone comes to me and says, "I'm struggling in my relationship with God. Maybe I need to get up an hour earlier and I know that will fix it." And I said, "No, it won't. You need to believe that Christ is the Son of God and that you are His child. You need to become a son rather than servant. And then you can get up an hour earlier and I think you'll find it a lot better. You need to get the things in perspective."

All right. We look to the factor, the two kingdoms, the comparison of the two kingdoms. The government of God is a family-based government. Satan's government is state-territorial system. He did not originate us so he can just draw a line around in a big circle and say, "You're in my paddock. You belong to me. You do what I tell you." Because he's not our father. Thank God for that.

Currency. The currency of heaven is based on character. Currency of Satan's kingdom is based on assets. He who has the most toys wins.

Citizenship in God's kingdom is based on the fact that you're son or daughter of God. Where in Satan's kingdom, it's based on your performance or achievement.

Value in God's kingdom is based on your relationship to God. Satan's kingdom is based on your personal achievement.

And all of us have been tested on these issues. Everyday. Where is your value? What makes you valuable? I'm reminded of this everyday and again we look at this when we look at 'Identity and the Commandments' because it says, "Great peace have they which love Thy Law and nothing will offend them." Why? Because they know where they get their value. They get their value from Christ and Christ alone and nothing will offend them.

If you're offended by other people and what they do to you, then you are still eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. You're still intoxicated by the poison which says that another person standing in my way and preventing me from achieving what I want to achieve, or they're not allowing me to control and they've given me a sense of worth by the fact that I can control them. "Great peace have they which loved They Law." And nothing -zero - nothing will offend them. That take haunts me because I do sometimes still get worked up. And then God says, you remember that verse? Nothing, Adrian, nothing will offend them. "I'm offended, Lord. So I'm still under the influence of this tree. This poison is still in my system. I need to go into rehab and get detoxed from this stuff." All right.

'Identity Regained.' Again, we've covered a lot last time and just bear with me as we go through. So we looked at the fact that the kingdom of God and the source of life. And then identity lost and how we got stuck in this worthless cycle. And then Jesus comes to reclaim us.

Point Number One, Jesus becomes a second Adam by becoming a human. He's the new representative from earth. (1 Corinthians 15:45) The fact that Jesus became the second Adam means so much to us. If we could only understand what that means. "For unto us, a child is given. Unto us a son is born." "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." He became one of us. Not for 33 years but forever. He's one of us and He is our elder brother. That in itself is just, sends tingles up and down my spine that the Creator of the universe is like me! He knows my temptations. He knows my trials. He took my humanity upon Himself and He overcame the worthlessness and the pride that I experienced. So I've no excuse to feel those things or believe in those things. As it says in 1 Corinthians 15:45, "The first Adam was a living soul but the second Adam was a quickening spirit."

Jesus models a perfect relationship with His Father and makes this available to us as our representative. (John 17) It's a beautiful statement. It had Jesus model that relationship. And some people I know over the years, I've found that many people struggle to understand concepts about the God head or the Trinity. I think one of the most beautiful things about God is that even though Christ is identical with the Father, that He places Himself in the position of submission to teach you and I what it means to be submissive. How can God tell us to submit when He doesn't show us how? But God shows us how through His Son. And Jesus submits to the Father. He has nothing to lose. He did not grasp for godhood as it says in Philippians 2. He willingly gave that away because He was safe in the relationship with His Father. And I just wish we could understand that concept, that Jesus is His Son voluntarily, to teach you and I what it means to submit and yet feel like you have lost nothing.

There's identical parallels there also in terms of, as we talked about the role of husband and wife. Wife, same, identical to the husband. But she should feel no difficulty in submitting to her husband, to teach to the children what it means to submit to authority and leadership. Ramifications to that are huge. And again, we're going to look at that in a bit more detail.

I'm getting off-track. All right. Number Three. Jesus reclaims our identity and value at the baptism through the blessing, "This is My beloved Son in whom I'm well-pleased." (Matthew 3:17) In my study

in reflection, this is at the very heart of reclaiming the human family to God, to hear those words, "You are My beloved son. You are My beloved daughter. In whom I'm well-pleased."

We cannot understand the cross. We cannot understand what Christ has done for us until we hear those words. "You are My beloved child in whom I'm well-pleased." If somebody who was my enemy brought me an expensive gift, I would challenge their intention. "Why do you offer me this gift? Is it a bobby trap? Is it a time bomb? Are you trying to control me? Are you trying to manipulate me?" But once I hear the words, "You are My beloved child, in whom I'm well-pleased." And then I look at the cross. Then I understand what that means and we have Jesus wanting to reclaim me. But until then, He's still my enemy. Because it says in Romans 8:7, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Not subject to the Law of God, neither they can it be.

And so this is the critical phase of breaking that cycle of worthlessness. That blessing. "You are My beloved child in whom I'm well-pleased." And God spoke those words to you and I through Christ, the second Adam, the head of the human family. As God spoke those words to Christ, those words were for you and I. 'Desire of Ages,' pages 113, 116, You read it there. "The words which were spoken to Christ were for us." "You are My beloved child in whom I'm well-pleased."

Jesus overcomes humanity's false identity by overcoming the temptations in the wilderness. Many people believe that what Jesus did in the wilderness was to overcome appetite and overcome presumption and overcome these other things or the worship issue, and that was the central issue. No. Those things were the medium. Those things were the access point at which the devil comes to us. But the issue of identity: "If you are the Son of God, then do something. Perform. Achieve." And Christ said, "No. My Father has spoken from heaven. I'm His beloved child, 'in whom I'm well-pleased.'" When Satan comes to you and he says, "Oh, you're child of God, are you? Did you read your Bible this morning? Did you pray this morning? I see you're a bit light on, in this area today. You're not a child of God." And we fall into that trap. We believe that rubbish. What makes us a child of God is a simple statement of faith. That we are His children whom He loves. And once we begin to believe that, we might actually want to study the Bible. It might actually be interesting to us. But until then, it's something that we must do to appease God, to appease His wrath. "If I don't study my Bible, I'm going to go ahead and have a motorbike accident or a car accident, because I want God to look after me." What kind of a picture of God is that? And yet how many people believe that. We think God is against us but He's not.

So He overcame in the wilderness. And as I read to you that statement, 'Confrontation,' page 63. Ellen White writes. "The conflict with Christ in the wilderness lays the foundation of the plan of salvation and gives to fallen man the key whereby he in Christ's name may overcome." That statement revolutionized my thinking as to what the plan of salvation was all about. What Jesus did in the wilderness was critical to His work on the cross. It's we claiming of a sense of who we are. He's rejecting Satan's attacks on "If you are the Son of God..." He repulsed Satan on that issue. And once again, we are told, His victory is ours. You don't even have to try and resist Satan on believing that you're child of God. Christ has already done that for you. You simply need to hang on to Him and believe that He loves you. That's your battle. Could God love someone like you? Could He love you? This was what it means to overcome. "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with Me on My throne." What do we overcome? The fact that we are unworthy of His grace and His goodness and yet He's still willing to give it to us. That's what we must overcome. And when we overcome that, all the fullness of the Gospel, all the fruit of the Spirit is ours, everything is ours because we are inheritors of His grace, heirs of the kingdom as it says in the Book of Romans.

All right. Point Number Five. Our identity and value are reclaimed through accepting Jesus' work in His life and death to forgive us and to make us accepted in the beloved. We are reconnected through His blessing. Through His blessing. "This is My beloved Child, in whom I'm well-pleased." Ephesians 1:6 of course, 1 John 3:1, "Behold what manner of love." And John the disciple, the beloved, I believe he understood this principle so clearly when he said in John 1:12, "To as many as received Him, to

them gave He the authority to become" what? "Children of God." 1 John 3:1, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God." This is what John could see. This is the truth. This is the miracle. That we are His children and we are reconnected, no longer having to listen to Satan's accusations against us. What does it say in Romans 8? It says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Who is He that accuses, yea, that is Christ, that has died, yes, is risen from the grave.

All right. So identity is regained through what Christ did in the wilderness as well as on the cross. That's the point that I want to bring out there. And the blessing plays a central role in that reconnection that we have with God.

The blessing breaks the cycle. We looked at the fact that the blessing returns us to God's Kingdom. Matthew 18:1-4 says, this is the disciples, and again I'm trying to move quickly through this. "The disciples said, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of God?'" What did Jesus say? "Unless you become as little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." And He took the children, and another part where they were asking similar questions, He took the children up into His arms and He blessed them showing this is what it means to be part of God's kingdom.

Galatians 4:7, 8 says, "Wherefore, God has sent forth His Spirit into our hearts whereby we cry, 'Abba, Father.' Therefore we are no longer His servant but a son." But a son. The blessing through what Christ received. This is ours. Christ received from the Father the blessing, "You are My beloved Son..." By becoming Christ's we inherit that blessing. That is the spiritual riches that Paul talks about that we shall possess. "You are My beloved Child whom I love." Can we say that there's anything else in this life that we could desire to possess than this blessing? To know that God says, "You are My child and I love you." What would you pay to receive that blessing? What would you give to have that? Is anything worth more than that? Can't be. This is the pearl of great price. We should sell all what we have to possess this. "This is My beloved son. This is My beloved daughter. In whom I'm well-pleased." That's all I want to know. That my life is pleasing to God.

I wish that I can say as Christ that Satan has come and he has found nothing in me. That's the witness that I want. And we are to say, like Paul, "I wish that you could be as I am." Is that boasting? No, that's a man beside himself with joy at the fullness of God's grace. "I wish you could be as I am, to understand the fullness of the Gospel.

Number Two. Family Roles. And this is, and we spent a bit of time on this. Family Roles, critical to Blessing Preservation. If the blessing plays an important part in reconnecting us with God, then the family plays an important role. And we looked at the text in Genesis 12:3. And I've got it right here where it said, "God said to Abraham, 'I will bless those who bless you and I will curse him who curses you. And in you, all the families of the earth will be blessed.'" It doesn't say 'individuals.'" It says 'families.' Family will play a critical role in the preservation of the blessing. And of course, we know through Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the patriarchs, they passed on to their children the blessing. A blessing, of course, which Esau and Jacob misunderstood. They got into a performance understanding of that blessing and they fought for it. And Jacob was even willing to deceive his brother for it, not understanding its significance. But the passing on of that blessing so that we could hear, "You are my beloved child, in whom I'm well-pleased."

'Adventist Home.' page 15 says, "The security or the prosperity of the nation, of the community of the church, depends upon home influences." If the home is not right, the church will not be right. If the home is not right, the nation will not be right. And this is my major thrust. What point is it for us to evangelize this community if we don't even know how to order our families and live the Gospel in our own families? What are we doing other than to bring people out of their misery into our misery? And what are we doing there? Putting a yoke of bondage upon people. If we bring it into a context of the advent faith without understanding these principles, we put a yoke of bondage on them. We make



them twice-fold the sons of hell than ourselves when we do that. And we don't want to do that. I don't want to do that. We need to understand the family.

It says here that "Through you, all the families of the earth will be blessed." Family will play a critical role in this blessing. We look at the fact that leadership, the role of the husband in leadership, number One, to appreciate his wife, to express that with words, not just bring home the paycheck. The blessing for his children. The role of the father. Ephesians 5:25. Proverbs 17:6. "The glory of children is their father."

The thing that we have lost in our culture today is that men have lost the understanding of what it means to be a priest and to be the head of his home. This, above everything else, we should be studying and seeking to understand. This is what we should be teaching to the next generation of young men. To be a father and to be a husband, there is no higher calling than this. To bless your children and to express appreciation to your wife. There's no higher calling than this. No job, no salary, nothing more important than this. If you want to preserve the order of heaven within the family context.

It says in reference to the role of the wife that "Her desire would be towards her husband." And we talked about the fact that a woman's ability to communicate or express her feelings is better than that typically of a male, and she's able to express her feelings better and that she will pass on to the next generation important principles on expressing feelings of intimacy, of desire for communication, essential for the binding together of the human family. That's a blessing that the mother will pass on. And in her role of submission, she will teach her children to respect authority and respect the role of the husband and the father. If she rises up against her husband, if she considers her husband to be inadequate, if she thinks that she knows better than he does, she's destroying her children. She's cutting off the blessing and she is making it very, very hard for the Gospel to get through to her children.

That's a sobering statement. As I was saying to Edward on the way down, you read Titus. I'm not going to spend a lot of time talking about this but read Titus 2 where it says, "That the older women should teach the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children." And then it says, "That the word of God be not blasphemed." How does blasphemy associate itself with that relationship? Blasphemy? To blaspheme the Word of God by not loving your husband and loving your children? Those are serious statements.

And of course, there's a flip side to that in terms of the husband needing to understand his role and to appreciate his wife and not make her lot hard and to learn to express his feelings on love and care and concern for her. When he doesn't do that, it makes it very, very hard. And we know that many of you experienced that. But what I want to say is that we need to re-examine the roles that God has laid down, not to be sucked into the way the world operates and the world thinks, as to what it means to engage in marriage or in relationships.

Equality in the Bible is something far different from what the world teaches us that equality is. We think equality means equality of power, equality of money, equality of intellect. How far is that from what the Bible teaches us? Equality means something completely different in biblical terms. And that's what we need to study out.

We looked at 1 Corinthians 11:3, the channel of blessing. The Father is the head of Christ. Christ is the head of man who is the head of the woman over the children. And through that line, where everyone is secure in their relationship, God's love is poured out. His life source is poured out through that channel. And when rebellion begins to occur, we begin to break that channel of blessing and curse and darkness come upon our families and our nation and our church and not in that order.

Role identity of the husband and wife is critical to protecting the blessing. And I spoke to you last time about the fact that I've been praying and asking God, "How do we enact this?" And each Friday night, our family would kneel, and my sons will come and they will kneel before me and I'll place my hands upon them and I will tell them that "You are special and you are important and you are the next generation to carry this Gospel to the world, and that you are dearly loved by your mother and your father."

There's no greater thing that I can do in life than to do that.

Again, as I was saying to Edward on the way down, we know that Jesus is coming soon. But I've never given a thought to what my family would be like in 300 years from now. What legacy do I leave for my family, my posterity? I think of my children but do we think far enough ahead about the influence of what we do now? It could turn nations around. It could turn nations upside-down by what we do now. Things to ponder about.

And the last thing that we looked at is the fact that the current environment is hostile to family roles. And we need to protect our families against this hostility toward the family.

The blessing of the father is the centre of the Elijah Message. (Malachi 4:6) As I sometimes like to say, many of these things you already understand but what makes them powerful is to understand them in their right context, to tell fathers to love their children, and children love their fathers, is something that we understand. But when you say that to do that is the heart and centre of the Elijah Message, that's power. This is what we're all about. If you study our history as a people, we are told that we are the ones that proclaim the Elijah Message. What if at the heart of the Elijah Message we see fathers turning to the hearts of their children and children to their fathers and that this is at the very heart of what we are doing? That's power. That tells us something. And really, as I look at our church, 50 years ago, many ministers never saw their children and children never saw their fathers because they were out doing the work of God. How blind can we be in our understanding of these things? There was no greater role for a minister or any man than to impart a blessing to the next generation. That is one of the greatest things that we can do. And the sooner we can regain a sense of that, the better we'll be as a church and as a nation.

The Elijah Message. We'll look at that again tomorrow night.

Okay. That's our introduction. Are you tired? We won't take too long. Take a few deep breaths. I just needed to cover that and I got a little bit carried away. I have to blame my brother. He sang so beautifully I got carried away.

Ham and the Rise of Worthlessness. It's important that we lay this foundation regarding the family. I'm bringing out this point here that "By embracing Satan's lie, Adam and Eve lost their identity, their value, their family relational model, and entered into the cycle of worthlessness." (Genesis 3:16-19)

I now want to explore this worthlessness. When this cycle is not broken, what develops? What happens when this cycle is not broken, when a person does not come to an understanding of the Gospel? This is what we want to explore.

Genesis 9:20-25. Something very interesting. It says, "And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent." One of the things I want to do when I get to heaven is have a talk to Noah and say, "Please explain. Why did you get drunk and how come you were uncovered?" We won't go there. I'm, the mind boggles. But the thing that is interesting of course is that Adam and Eve, when they fell, what did they fall on? What was the medium? Appetite. We have the fall. God wipes the slate clean. And this is after the flood. And we see Noah. What happens? He falls. On what issue? Appetite. Satan's very cunning. Very cunning. He gets Noah. Noah creates a difficult situation here. But let's read on. It says, "And Ham,

the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away and they did not see their father's nakedness." What does that tell you about the level of reverence and respect that these two men had for their father? They treated him like a king. Does that tell us something today? What society are we building? If boys come in today and see their father, "Ha! Look at Dad! He's wasted himself. He's drunk. Silly old fellow." When we say those words, we are destroying our blessing.

Our fathers are the most powerful instruments that God can use to bless us if we have things set up the right way. And of course, for those that don't have fathers in that context, God says, "I will be your father and I'll bless you directly." Thank God for that. For those that are unable to have fathers like that. But it was never intended to be that a boy or a girl never had a father. God never intended it to be that way. But He says, "I'll be a father to the fatherless."

And so we see the reverence that Shem and Japheth manifest. They treat their father like a king just as Sarah, as it says in 1 Peter 3, that she says, when she referred to Abraham, she called him, what does it say? "Lord." "Kyrios." "Sir." Sir? Sarah calls her husband 'sir?' What does this woman understand that we don't understand? That in treating her husband with such respect, she's teaching her children such respect and she's securing for her children the blessing that she so much wants for her children. Wisdom. Wisdom in these words.

We see here that he then turns and says in verse 24, this is interesting, "So Noah awoke from his wine and he knew what his youngest son had done to him." That's interesting. Then he said, "Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants he shall be." Is this just an old man getting angry because he got caught out? Is this what is going on? He pronounces his curse! What on earth is going on here?

The thing that I wish to point out to you here is that Noah, obviously, when he was drunk, he was asleep. And without getting too detailed, it says, "When Noah awoke, he knew what his younger son had done to him." Ham had done something to his father that was very grotesque. Sexually-deviant. And he had broken his relationship with his father in a way that would reap consequences on succeeding generations. One act would reap misery and destruction for millions of people. By this one act.

I want to read you a statement from 'Patriarchs and Prophets,' page 117. What does it say there? "The unnatural crime of Ham," what does that suggest to you? Unnatural crime. Walking in and seeing your father and go, "Ooopps!" That's an unnatural crime? This man was vile in what he did to his father. Now it says here, "...declared that filial reverence had long before been cast from his soul, and it revealed the impiety and the vileness of his character." Ham, obviously in some way, interfered with his father. It's not something that we would really like to think about. But it's important to understand this. It says, "These evil characteristics were perpetuated in Canaan and his posterity, whose continued guilt called upon them the judgments of God." One act. Obviously, it was building up to this one act. But it says, 'filial reverence.' What does that mean? What's filial mean? From the word 'filos,' brotherly love. Tender affection between father and son. It says here, in inspiration it says, that by this act, he revealed that the connection between himself and his father was broken. And once it was broken, Ham now did not have the blessing of his father. "The glory of the children is their father." The glory was lost to Ham. And he now would have a curse pronounced upon him, similar to that of Cain. What did it say of Cain when he slew his brother? It says that he would be a vagabond and a wanderer. The word vagabond in the Hebrew means "one who staggers and shakes."

Uncertain. And in pronouncing this curse upon Ham, he was merely stating the reality of what Ham had done to himself. There was no venom. There was no anger in Noah's words. He was saying in effect, "My son, you have destroyed yourself and your posterity by what you have done. A servant of servants you will be." And certainly we can see in reference to the emotional needs of Ham's children,

the insecurity, their worthlessness would increase and increase and they would indeed become a servant.

In a political sense, we know it says in Verse 26, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem and may Canaan be his servant." We know that in recent centuries, that the sons of Ham which occupied the nations of Africa and Syria and Babylon and Egypt, that many of these were taken and used to serve as slaves to the European nations and to the Americas. And so we see it fulfilled in that political sense. But I believe there's a deeper fulfillment in the insecurity and the worthlessness that was manifested in this line of people.

Startling things that we see here. Let's move on.

Here's the curse. The curse. He said, "Cursed be Canaan. He shall be a servant of servants to his brothers." This curse has perpetuated. As we come down to Genesis 10, Ham had a number of sons. It says in Genesis 10:6, "The sons of Ham were Cush, Misraim, Put, and Canaan." Do you think what Ham did to his father would have had any impact on Cush? The rebellion and the rejection, the filial reverence that is torn away from Ham? Since that was torn away, could he pass it on to his son? No, he can't pass it on now. Not unless he comes back to God and makes a confession and reconnects. But he can't pass on what he doesn't have. And so his son learns to rebel against his father. And then the son of Cush, in Verse 7, "The sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah," well, a lot of list there, isn't it? I won't read all those. And in Verse 8, it says, "Cush begot Nimrod. He began to be a mighty one on the earth."

Why did Nimrod become, feel the need to become a mighty one on the earth? Because inside he felt worthless. He felt nothing. And he needed to feel powerful. And here is the point that we wish to make. That when a child does not receive that blessing, "You are My beloved son, you are My beloved daughter, in whom I'm well-pleased," you plant the seed within that child to desire, conquest, and kingdom, and to rule. Does that make sense? Either to rule or to allow yourself to be ruled and violated and controlled and dominated by somebody else because you're worth nothing. You either allow your worthlessness to manifest itself by being controlled or to control, to kill or to be killed. Does that make sense? This is what we see in the curse of Ham.

So we see in Verse 10, it says, "In the beginning of his kingdom." What a minute? Kingdom? What does a kingdom represent? Power. Throne. Dominion. Nimrod had his own kingdom? Nimrod had so lost his connection with God that he wanted to set up his own kingdom. He fully embraced the lie, "You shall not surely die." I'll show you a statement in a minute from Josephus that reflects that. And he built his own kingdom by his own might and his own power. It says, the beginning of his kingdom was what? Babel. Babylon. Babylon is important because it has a big impact on the Book of Revelation. Babylon is built upon, well, let's have a look at what Babylon is built upon.

There's my artist's impression of Nimrod. Interesting-looking fellow. The mighty hunter. The first thing we see that Babylon, and this is the first city that he built. The first thing that we see that Babylon is built upon is hardened family relations. We see Ham performing a vile act against his father. And this strange, debauched sexuality is passed on through the generations. So much so that Nimrod decided that his mother was good-looking and he married her. Now that's sick, isn't it? Some reports, we don't have enough, a lot of information on this but some reports suggest that Nimrod actually killed his father and married his mother. That's even more sick. Not a very happy home for Nimrod.

But this is the man. Hardened family relationships where relationships are only as useful as they can be useful to be used for your own purpose and design. Hardened family relationships.

Number Two; Insecure, worthless, confused identity. He didn't know who he was. Ham, his grandfather, had broken that connection. And that curse is now being passed on at least to the third

and fourth generations as it says in the Book of Exodus. Unless one of them would decide to hang on to God and break that curse, for which, they did not. Insecurity, worthlessness, confused identity, rebelliousness, the desire to start your own kingdom, the desperate need to be worshipped, to be appreciated, and to rule.

As I've often said there's, one sure-fire way to know that a person is insecure, and that is when they feel the need to control other people. Do we feel the need to control other people? Do we get upset when other people don't see things our way? Of course all of us know what we need to do. Everyone of us here knows how to fix the Adventist Church. Just nobody else can see it. Rebelliousness. And finally, controlling. As I said, value by power and performance. These are the spiritual foundations upon which the city of Babylon is built. There are deep implications in this. Hardened family relations, insecurity, worthlessness, rebelliousness, and a controlling spirit with a desire for value by power and performance. And I didn't talk about this last time. When you see these points, do we see some other things in our families? Some points to ponder.

The point that we need to make here is that broken family relationships can turn into despotic ruling nations. This is where the connect occurs. What Ham did in Genesis 9 has a direct connection to the beasts that rise from the sea in Revelation 13. These beasts are controlled by their desire for worship and need for acceptance with people, their insecurity which causes them to want to dominate and control people. These beasts come from hardened family relations, insecurity, and worthlessness, and a desire to control. And that should really, really tell us something. That's where the connect is. The Book of Revelation is full of families that have gone wrong and have never broken the cycle of worthlessness. That's all those beasts are. And if we can understand them in that light, Revelation I think really starts to come alive.

Is it an accident that the church of the Dark Ages forbid their priests to marry? Is that an accident? That's not an accident. Is it an accident that the epitome of Christianity within the church of the Dark Ages is not to present the representation of a father blessing his son? But a Madonna and child. Is that an accident? No, it's not. These things have deep and significant meaning because they strip away the blessing that God would give through Abraham, "Through you, all the nations or all the families of the earth will be blessed." Let's not forget this point. We ourselves could be creating without realizing it, individuals in the next generation, two or three generations down, that if given the opportunity, could become despotic, ruling, dominating individuals. Is that what we want to create? And do we see those things manifested now? Some of us may feel we've experienced that in the board room or the nominating committee. I want you to note this and we've just got a few more things before we finish.

Worthlessness rises. You know the stuff, that light stuff always floats to the top? Have you always wondered why in many organizations the boss always seems to be a complete idiot? Well, there are reasons for that. In some cases, it may be you rather than him. But in some cases, people who desire power will always reach for the top and feel like once they get to the top, that they have arrived. But their character is useless. Look at the world leaders through history. Were they very savoury, bedtime reading type individuals? They're debauched, horrid individuals. They float to the top. They grasp for the top because once they get there, they go, "Now, I've arrived. Now I'm valuable." Is not this great Babylon which I have built by the might of my power for the glory of my majesty? Is it not what many rulers have said?

Says here, this is in Daniel 4:17, where Nebuchadnezzar had a dream about the cutting down of the tree. It says, "This matter is by decree of the watchers and the demand by the word of the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men." It's good to know that even though these families that have never broken the cycle of worthlessness and they develop these kingdoms, it says God is still in control. God is still in control. He, in the kingdom of men. "And giveth it to whomsoever He will." And then it says something interesting. "And He setteth up over it the basest of men."

What does that mean? The basest of men? A number of versions of the Bible try and interpret this to say the lowest of the humblest of men. That's not what it's saying. Not in this context. This is a context of God will send them a strong delusion that they should believe a lie or an evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul. That's the context of this verse. That if you want to understand how this system works, I'll show you how it works. I'm going to allow you to have the most despotic individuals to rule over you and to see how stupid it is to live this way. He will set up over these kingdoms the basest of men, the most vile characters.

That's what we see in many of our societies today. That's what we see in reference to the world elite, the international bankers. These vile elite. If you understand what some of these individuals are doing, their promiscuity and their strange sexuality, things like Bohemian Grove and other secret societies. Skull and Bones. That these world leaders are involved in. It's all connected to this. God sets over this world, the basest of men, that we can see that this doesn't work. That's why when we get to heaven, sin will not rise again a second time because we have to come face to face with the fact of what happens when we allow the cycle of worthlessness to play itself out.

Wouldn't it just be easy for all of us just to believe God and go home? Oh, but no, no. We have to learn the hard way. Sad.

This is a statement that I want to bring out before. "The heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation, is the household. The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences." That's the statement that I want you to remember. Adventist Home, page 15.

We can forget about all our evangelistic programs until we get this issue sorted out. Don't even bother. We have to address this issue otherwise we're not preaching the Elijah Message. We're not preaching the Commandments. We're not preaching the Three Angels' Messages. Unless we get this issue right.

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Malachi 4:5,6) What is that curse? "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." That curse I believe is the curse of Ham. When filial reverence between father and son, father and daughter, is pulled apart, there is no hope but for despotic ruling, beasts and nations, to rule over us, to drive us into a tyranny of government as we are seeing right now happening in America and other western nations. A tyranny. A war on terrorism. It is a front for something for something very different to bring us all into one system, to be controlled, and for a few small individuals to get their jollies out of controlling all of us. That's what it's about. That's the curse that's coming upon this world.

But Elijah, in the last days, will say, "No, we'll turn the hearts of the fathers to their children. We will produce a group of individuals and families that will not bow down to your image nor worship your gods. And we will follow God and His kingdom."

And so the challenge for us tonight is do you want to live according to God's kingdom? Do you want to follow His principles? Do you want to be husbands and wives, mothers and fathers that are according to the Bible? Not according to what the world tells us. Not according to what the world says is equality. But what the Bible says will preserve our families and keep the next generation. That's what I want to leave with you tonight.

Let's bow our heads. Our Father in heaven, Lord, we looked at a lot of things and I just pray that in our minds will be stirred up, that we will open our Bibles, get down on our knees, and we will say, "God, teach us what really is the message of Seventh-day Adventists. Have we understood it? Have we grasped its depth or have we had a surface understanding of this message? What does it mean to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus? What does it mean for Babylon to fall? These are

the things we must connect to our understanding of the family. Lord, I pray for each of us here that we will study. That we will pray. That we will seek to understand these things. And we thank You, in Jesus' Name."

CA.