

The Weakness of God in the Flood - Ruben Olschewsky

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So my presentation to you tonight on the program was called Thoughts on the Flood. We've written quite a bit on this subject. And it's not that I want to reinvent the wheel or anything like that. I actually have a trajectory I want to go with. The flood presents a really beautiful way of actually seeing where I'm going. And so I've slightly changed the topic, which is The Flood in the Weakness of God, because that's really where I want to aim to. I've been sharing some of these thoughts with Pastor Adrian over the last week or two and just a lot of things that are moving me at the moment as we're moving closer to our understanding of the character of God, and more light just keeps coming in; just little corners and it's just filling out this picture and it's in my reflections on the picture that looms before us. It's moving me in ways that I know that theology and theory in itself wouldn't. This is adding a dimension for me that I just really felt impressed to want to share with you. So before we begin, let us pray.

Beloved father, I thank you for the privilege that it is to fellowship with my brethren here this evening and also with my brethren online. I thank you, by your grace, that you bring us together with every means available. And as we have reflected many times on the things that are being shared and not just your earnest desire Father, for we have no concept just how desperately you want people to know who you really are. And as you are revealing that light through so many different channels and so many colors are coming to fill this picture I just gave you thanks and praise and honor for the wonderful work you are doing and so many of our brethren. Thank you for protecting us here today and throughout this Lockdown. Father, I thank you that you preserved us here, that we were undisturbed, that we had a peaceful fellowship. I thank you for the spirit of peace that you pour upon us without measure. And Father, I desire and delight, along with my brethren here and online, to take the full measure of that. So help us, please, Father now, I pray especially for me as I share my thoughts this evening Father, I ask that you give me clarity and that the thoughts that you have granted me father that I may convey them to my brethren in peace and with joy, and that they may receive them to study them and confirm that they are so. For these things, I give you thanks in the precious name of your beloved Son, Yeshua. Amen.

I'm certain that everyone here can relate to a circumstance where you have been accused of something of which you are not guilty. And you may also well remember how you reacted to that accusation. And it may not have been favorable, the reaction. Because there's something that reacts inside of us, there's something that we respond to when someone says something about us that's not right. We don't like it. And the sense of injustice, when instantly there is a reaction, even if we try and keep a lid on it, we react. There's a sense of injustice.

And it is overwhelms me in thinking about this whole topic of the character of God, that our father has been maligned, falsely accused for thousands of years. And more than that, by those who claim to be a part of His family. And He has borne it, and He has borne it, and He has borne it. And I believe it's creating an environment, where we actually have added to the picture incorrectly about His character, and I want to expand this a bit further.

So before we go too much further, I'd like you to open your Bibles. We're starting in Genesis Chapter six because I want to be looking at the flood and my thoughts on it. Actually, I have led you astray, but we're staying in Genesis. I want to begin with one of the verse before I start. When we're looking at the flood in Genesis six, we're looking at something that is already starting to show manifestations, a seed that is borne - fruit.

The flood is something that's not just an isolated event that is just welled up, an arbitrary event that's come taken over and then we just move on. Something occurred in the lead up to the event of the flood. And I just want to reiterate that point here in Genesis, chapter three in verse 17th. And you recall that once Adam had taken the time to accuse God of having given him a faulty wife and they went through the whole process, God then speaks to the serpent and to the woman, and then He finally speaks to Adam. And it says in verse 17 of chapter three "and unto Adam, He said. Because you have harkened onto the voice of your wife and has eaten the tree of which I command thee saying, thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake". And then it goes on to say, "in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of my life". The KJV expresses, "cursed is the ground for thy sake".

If you read an ancient Hebrew mechanical translation, it will say 'on account of you', the Bible in basic English will say to you 'on your account'. And the contemporary English version translates it as 'because of what you did'.

It's directly causal. So the curse is not coming, I'm bringing a curse, I'm cursing the Earth because of you, the earth is manifesting a curse, and I think we're all quite familiar with that principle. The earth is manifesting a curse, because of something that you did. And I find it interesting that as you look at it, it then says "in sorrow, shalt thou eat of it all the days of your life". My mind's begun thinking about this part of the verse. It would seem that God knew that in one generation, this faulty understanding about the character of God would not be resolved. Adam would continue to eat in sorrow and reap the curse of the Earth for the entirety of his life.

Then it says "thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee and thou shalt eat the herb in the field". So we know that the thorns and thistles are a result of that curse. It's a visible manifestation of what's coming out of the earth. God never created thorns and thistles to begin with, and we've heard a number of different views about how these thorns and thistles manifest itself. I'm more focused on the fact that the thorns and the thistles are a visible manifestation of the curse that was being revealed in the earth. And the reason why that curse was being revealed in the earth, is identified first up, is because God identifies that He was speaking. I had told you not to eat, which means I gave you my voice. And if your ears have been opened, you would have heard, but He says to them because you hearkened or 'shama' you had your ears open to your wife instead of Me, this has taken place. So, I'm understanding that, and I'm sure you agree that that suggests Adam chose and a new god.

And as a result of choosing a new god, as Pastor Adrian expressed this morning in his expressions on the channel of Blessing and the Divine Pattern, Eve could not give Adam what God could. And because the natural laws that are operating in the earth as a result of creation. They came from God. God set the natural laws in the earth. He put man together and he gave man dominion over the Earth, and so the reflection of what's taking place in the earth is based on Adam's relationship to God, which now that it's broken. Now that something is happening between the relationship of Adam to God, the Earth is manifesting that visibly. I don't think this is necessarily new thought.

So with this in mind, I want to come to Genesis Chapter six, verse one, and it says, "and it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth and daughters were born into them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all they chose". There are two things here that we need to acknowledge in verse

two, one is that the sons of God; are those descendants of Adam who continue to keep the one true God as their one true God, and would thereby be referred to as the sons of God? And are the daughters of men were those who followed in Cain's line? And what caused the sons of God to look upon the daughters of men was that they were fair. And there's a fare bit in this, and it says that 'they took them wives', and oftentimes we think of this simply as plural to plural. But what this is actually talking about is polygamy.

They took them multiple wives, so they added to the sin, it was not just that they took wives of those who were not obeying or being in a relationship with God, they took them multiple wives. And to add to the curse, to add to the issues, these were not wives that were submitted to God.

Who raises the children? The wives. What does this say about the sons of God to take those kind of wives? What's the motivation to take a woman who is not submitted to God? Lust, rebellion? The focus is upon what we see and the fact that they didn't just take one wife, but multiple wives suggests that lust had a very strong component to play in it. And then verse three says, "and the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for he also is flesh". Did he stop at some point being something and became flesh? What's the inference here? Because he is flesh, carnal. And Romans eight seven, it says, "To be carnally minded is enmity against God". My spirit shall not always dwell with mankind, for he is no longer a spiritual being. He seeks after the flesh, and that's being very evident from the verse that precedes it; is the men, the supposedly sons of God are seeking out women that are not interested in God and not just one wife, but multiple.

And He says, 'my spirit shall not always strive with man'. When I was younger, this line was presented to me as that God would have a point at which it's enough. I'm going to cut it off, 120 years I'll give you. But I believe there is a deeper significance to this. Why is it that God's saying 'My spirit shall not strive with men forever'? I don't believe it's a threat. In verse four, it says there were giants in the Earth in those days. Does someone got their Strongs Concordance? Do we know what that word is, 'nephily'? Have you got any explanations from your Strongs or ancient Hebrew to suggest what that could possibly mean?

audience Tyrants and bullies.

And that makes perfect sense. Tyrannical, violent, aggressive. Men of the flesh. Brought up in homes where the father and the act of conception has

expressed his desire, his lust as the imprint upon the character of the child. And so they are raised, with no focus upon godly things, because the mums that were raising them weren't interested in God. And they manifested those characters.

"When the sons of God came in until the daughters of men and they bare children unto them and the same became mighty men, which were of old men of renown. And God saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth. And that every imagination of the thoughts in his heart was only evil continually". That's quite a progression, isn't it? And it says "that it repented the Lord, that He had made man on the Earth and it grieved Him at His heart". We can understand this concept.

Grieved Him in His heart, that the man with whom He had created to be so in tune with His character, so in tune with His desire and His love would choose another path, must have cut Him to the core. And it says in verse seven "and the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the Earth". And this is the next part that really intrigues me, both man and beast and creeping thing and fowls of the air for it repenteth Me that I have made them". Now I can understand that if the thoughts of men, are wicked upon the earth and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is continuously evil, that it would repent God to have brought them forth in the sense that it grieved Him. It's like, how could this happen? How could this take place? What's the context, though, of then destroying the beast, the creeping things, the fowls of the air when there's no mention anywhere in the gospel of the salvation of animals? Did they sin? So when He says, 'I will destroy man whom I've created from the face of the Earth, both men and beast', we've got to look deeper into this story. "And it repenteth Me that I have made them". I believe that 'them', is looking back at the subject of men, and not man and animal. It's simply a repetition of what verse six is saying, because otherwise in my reading of the scriptures, I can't reconcile the idea that God would be grieved that He made animals when they had no complicit part in the sin.

audience They would have been just as affected as the plants were.

Yes, yes. Why would God's spirit not continue to strive with man?

audience For they vexed His holy spirit.

Yes, and He was turned to be there to be their enemy because they were His. I want you just back up and notice, that the first thing that's introduced as the demise in the lead up to the flood is actually bad relationships. And we read exactly the same thing that brought the curse upon the Earth, is bad relationships. Because man listened to Eve his wife, over God, he upset the divine pattern order. He turned the channel of blessing upon its head and the curse was the result. And then we read the magnification of that in Genesis six, as we start up we recognize that man was looking for something else which Pastor Adrian spoke about this morning, 'Zoe', the idea of looking for something in the woman that she was never designed for. This begins the process that grieves the spirit of God such that He cannot remain with men. And not because He turns away, and not because He abandons you at some point, but because this process begins a process of moral deterioration which will ultimately bring mankind to reject the spirit of God completely. And one hundred and twenty years, interestingly enough, seems to coincide with what we read about 'visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation', because depending on what you call a generation, whether it be 30 or 40 years, will tie into your three or four generations. This has a direct impact upon further degradation.

I want to read something to you from Patriarchs and Prophets. I'm tying this together with the first number of verses in Genesis Chapter six, and I'm reading to you from Patriarchs and Prophets, page 91, paragraph three. It says "Polygamy had been early introduced contrary to the divine arrangement at the beginning. The Lord gave to Adam one wife". You see the polygamy component, this is telling us how to understand what we're reading.

"The law gave to Adam one wife showing his order in that respect. But after the fall, men chose to follow their own sinful desires and as the result, crime and wretchedness rapidly increased". Why? Because there is no more certain way to deface the moral image in man of God than to mess with the marital relationship. This is one of the reasons why Satan worked so incredibly hard at destroying homes.

audience On the word 'took', that they took them wives of all. You take that principle to the Latin (BC), I came. I saw. I took.

Yeah. So that's the establishment of a principle because it doesn't remain just in the relational context. It ends up expanding out through the generations into multiple facets. So it's not limited in the marriage. If I want something and

it appeals to me, I take it. So it broadens out. This sin just continues to broaden out with every generation. "And as the result, crime and wretchedness rapidly increased neither the marriage relationship nor the rights of property, were respected". Are you seeing the expansion? If you come, you see, you appreciate and you simply take - it doesn't stop there in the relational component, because then when you see that someone else has got a nicer car, you just take it or whatever they have. "Whoever coveted the wives or the positions of his neighbor took them by force". So now we're adding aggression and violence to the picture. "And men exulted in their deeds of violence", we're seeing a market change in the moral image in men.

It's one thing to exercise violence. It's another thing to begin to become so desensitized that you actually enjoy the act of violence and then share with others about the awesome things you've done. Men exulted in their deeds of violence, and I don't need to expand this out here for the sake of our audience, but you can imagine as one man breaks up, another relationship takes for himself what he wants and then shares his whole adventure with his friends.

audience Just a thought Reuben, Mark 7:21, "from within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adultery, fornication, murders". And then it says "theft, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness".

And what's really interesting is that that text is associated with a question about washing your hands. The issue there is about 'you guys don't wash your hands and Jesus saying it doesn't defile you'. He's talking to the deeper issue. What is in man and comes out is what is ultimately defiling him. Then notice this, the next line. So "Men exulted in the deeds of violence" and then it says "and they delighted in destroying the life of animals". "And the use of flesh for food rendered them still more cruel and bloodthirsty until they came to regard human life with astonishing indifference". Are you seeing this progression? One paragraph!

"The world was in its infancy, yet iniquity had become so deep and widespread" now get this, "that God could no longer bear with it". How do you read? And I want you to hold onto this thought, that God in the lineup that we've read and 'God could no longer bear with it', the easy reading of this is simply like I've had enough! That's it!

And we've all experienced the consequence of those thoughts in our home. Most of us have grown up in families or in homes where an authority figure comes to the point we can't bear anymore and you get to feel the strap or whatever it is that they choose to have nearby or whatever the situation is, but an act of violence ensues because he simply can't bear with it anymore. But the context is different. Because you've irritated him to the point where he can't control his temper and then the normal relaxed mum or dad alters their character and becomes a superhero, and you bear the marks of it afterwards.

So we've seen a demise, a progression, a sinful progression that God explained would cause His spirit no longer to dwell with man because he was carnal, fleshly, no longer spiritual in his relationship. When we come to Leviticus 18, and I find this chapter so incredibly deep and has so much for us, I'd like to start reading from verse three. I don't want to read the whole chapter. I don't think that'll be necessary. Verse three for me is of significance. It says "after the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall you walk in their ordinances". So what comes after this? Whatever you're going to read after this in this chapter, isn't that telling us that this is what was taking place in Egypt and Canaan and all these other places? We have the sin of incest, which takes up quite a large portion. Verse 19 to 23 shows a marked deterioration in morality, and we don't need to go into the details, you have them there before you.

God says "defile not yourselves", verse 24, "defile not ye yourselves in any of these things". How many? All these - the nations are defiled. How many? All of them. That's a big statement, don't you think? "Which I casteth out before you". And as Tony shared today, in the right understanding of the character of God, this is written in the active to be understood at a deeper level. And then it says in verse twenty five "and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it and the land itself vomits out, the inhabitants thereof".

How does that take place? The destroying of families; and somehow in the destruction of families and in the ever increasing subsequent generations, the addition of more and more violence, the taking of things, not just someone else's wife, but the property and then the senseless destruction of animals for the sense of satisfying your own lust of appetite. Brings men to a place that is no longer safe and then it says "the land itself vomiteth out the

inhabitants". I did a search on this. Found the results were really quite surprising. I use the LXX, brought this text up and I took that word 'vomiteth out' and I went into the New Testament, it's only found in two places. The first place is in Hebrews, chapter three, verse 10, and the second place is in Hebrews Chapter three, verse 17. I just want to quickly go there to read that so that we have the context of what it means that the land vomiteth out, the inhabitants thereof. Hebrews three, verse 10, it says, "wherefore I was 'grieved', (that's the word) with that generation, and said They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways". And Hebrews, chapter three, verse 17, the same word is used again, "but with whom was He 'grieved' 40 years? Was it not with them that had sinned whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?" What are we talking about here in this experience? Going back into the wilderness because of unbelief. They experienced the consequences of their own choices.

The land is not just arbitrarily violent, vomiting out people, animals or what not. There is an experience of grief associated here. It's telling us that there is something far deeper that's occurring where man is having an impact upon the Earth, just as we read in the beginning in Genesis, chapter three, verse 17. And the question is, how does men impact the Earth, to cause the earth to vomit out the inhabitants? We have some really beautiful statements that come under the topic of atmosphere. We're not unfamiliar with this, and I'll bring up a statement for you, which you have heard a number of times, but I do want to share these for the sake of having them in the presentation. This is from Testimony volume five, page 111. Paragraph one says, "The influence of every man's thoughts and actions surrounds him like an invisible atmosphere which is unconsciously breathed in by all who come in contact with him. This atmosphere is frequently charged with poisonous influences, and when these are inhaled, moral degeneracy is the sure result".

One individual affecting others around about him, Have you ever experienced that in your life?

audience Yes.

It's normal. What I always find interesting is, where's the receptor for that? I mean, we identify touch, pressure, pain receptors where's the atmosphere receptor?

audience Emotions?

There's so much more to this picture, someone can come into the room, be a real negative mindset or a state of mind, and you feel it. This has an impact directly on those who are influenced by you. The same way that it can be evidenced in many studies that when men have a certain frame of mind; in a lustful state around women, they can actually influence how those women will dress. That's pretty profound.

audience I thought it was the other way around!

The woman is ultimately just responding to the thoughts in the mind.

audience Invisible, visible, (source - channel).

As I shared with you the other night, every action has its seed in a thought. And most individuals act as a result of the thoughts that have been inherited, nurtured or the environments that they've been influenced by. This is one of the main reasons why when you see the explanation that Sister White gives about the ministry that Enoch had, what did Enoch do? He lived outside of town. He came into town to mingle with the people, dialog with them, gain a relationship or build a relationship and then take them back out. Take them out of the environment than they were in to begin a process of helping them in that environment to actually heal - new thoughts, healthier thoughts. This impact is not just related to each other. This impact of atmosphere of our thoughts actually also impacts animals. And I know that for myself, because I love animals, and up until the last number of years, I had Max with me who most of you know. And it would be like he could read my mind. If you weren't feeling well, his behavior changed. The thoughts that I was having, he would respond to. And Eddie, I know that with your dog, it was very similar. You had a very close relationship and depending on what you're going through, your dog would behave a certain way.

You're familiar with this book, Dominion of the Earth. On the back I want to read you a statement. She says, "Under the curse of sin, all nature was to witness to man of the character and the results of rebellion against God". I'll read that again, "under the curse of sin, all nature was to witness to man of the character and results of rebellion against God. When God made man, he made him to rule over the earth and all living creatures". And not rule with force and dominion, but rule in the sense that He placed man at the height of the gradient on Earth so that he could bless all those that were under him. And all of them could receive of his blessings the same way that Adam was

given the privilege of naming them all. You name something because it's yours or it's under your authority, that's the context. You name your children. "So long as Adam remained loyal to heaven, all nature was in subjection unto him. But when he rebelled against the divine law, the inferior creatures were in rebellion against his rule, and thus the Lord in his great mercy, would show men the sacredness of His law and lead them by their own experience to see the danger of setting it aside, even in the slightest degree".

So as man is in subject or in subjection to God, God was going to bless mankind and that blessing, you remember when we read the Desire of Ages pages page twenty one point two, the circuit of beneficence? So it flows out from God to man, to the animals. And everyone in that chain doesn't take like the Dead Sea. It's not an Eros principle. Freely you have received, freely you continue to give. Why? Because the model that is before you and that example is Christ himself. That example is one who is submitted to the Father, receives all things and continues to give - holds nothing back.

So that's the example for mankind. And mankind follows the example in a pure relationship with God and continues to pass it on to everyone else who is subject unto him: wife, children and the rest of the earth that was made under his dominion. The moment man upsets that channel, and interrupts that blessing, does he have inherent blessing? No, no. So as soon as man curses God, he inherently can only pass on what he has, which is the lack of blessing. And what do you have when you don't have blessing? A curse. And that's what he gives to the animals. That's the atmosphere.

Do you believe your blessed when you are not in a relationship with someone that you really acknowledge has given you so much? Let me ask it a different way. Think about your home experience, and I don't know what your home experience has been like, but if you have a good relationship with one of your parents. And you acknowledge them to be kind, gentle, forgiving. Someone who doesn't deserve to be disrespected by you, and you disrespect them. Do you have peace? No you don't. And in that mindset, you can't say everything's fine. Because that's the experience of Satan; to step out of the channel of blessing. You cannot say I'm still the same as I was before, and we've spoken about this at many levels. No longer having the confirmation that you are a son fully blessed with nothing held back, you have to change your whole value system. So whatever you have, you're passing on to those under you, whatever you have, whatever you're carrying with you, beams out

from you because we're two things. We're a receiver and we're a transmitter.

We are influenced by those around about us and we influence others. And this is why for me, this is so significant, as I spoke to you guys about this the other night when I spoke about the fact that God has no negative evil thoughts, he is a transmitter of only good things. When we disconnect ourselves from that, we become a transmitter of something completely different and we influence the environment that is around about us.

This brings me to something that I want to just reiterate from Genesis three 18, and I'll just quickly go back there and it says that "thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee", and thorns and thistles are more than just something to look at. I believe that they have a symbolic function as well. How many of you enjoyed walking barefoot last year here at Widgee? Who loved it? (laughter) Anyone loved it? This year, you did enjoy it this year, didn't you? Yes. Did you enjoy it last year or you didn't bother? Anyone with any sense last year would not have walked here barefoot across the property, because when you walk with thongs across, you got the other side and you realized that you'd actually resurfaced your thongs! So, thorns and thistles don't just give you a visible feedback, they don't feel nice, do they? They actually hurt! So there is a deeper application for thorns and thistles, which are speaking about something that's coming back to men. Why is nature responding and highlighting to mankind that this is hurting now? Is someone else experiencing pain?

audience Yes, and it's the crown of thorns.

So it's a mirror showing man about what his broken relationship to God is actually doing to God at a very minute level. And I want to take this point to say where we are right now, so that we're not just projecting our thoughts towards that antediluvian mob - because they're bad, we got a long way to go to get there. Because Jesus says, 'as it was in the days of Noah, so it shall be at the end' and we can't even be close. It's all pretty relaxed. I want to share some stats with you. So far this year, the statistics are that we have in excess in the United States, a quarter of a million suicides. This year, so far domestic violence, six per hour women are dying. And the UN report online that I was checking out was saying those figures are grossly misjudged because of covid-19; it's not able to highlight what's taking place because of the closed doors, closed access and so forth. Six women every hour worldwide are losing their

life as a result of domestic violence. And we're just talking about the life of the women that are involved. We're not talking about the events that brought that life bringing to an end, nor the children that were there present to watch it or whatever the circumstance was. But if we understand the context of our Father's relationship to mankind, God doesn't just have a relationship with victims. He actually also has a relationship with perpetrators. So while you as a victim are only experiencing what's coming towards you, God has to feel both sides. He feels the grief of what's taking place, but He is grieved by what's taking place by the person who was active in the work of force. Ten point five million abortions so far this year. Ten point five million abortions this year... so far. That's a lot of violence.

And every one of those lives which our Father was nurturing, He had to say goodbye to because He didn't end the life - we did. He's carrying that. He's carrying every one of those experiences, and for me, one of the things that are really significant is that up until probably the last year or so, I've been actively working on cattle stations. And I've watched, I've seen that trait. I see the animals, I see the fear in them. I've been to the abattoirs. To satisfy the needs that man has to eat flesh - and please don't think that I'm attacking anyone who's still eating flesh, that's not my that's not my focus. My focus here is what is taking place to satisfy a man's desire at the cost of another life. And the figures to me were absolutely astounding.

This is the animal kill clock for the United States. This year, it's sitting at 13 billion, 700 million animals so far. This includes the following group: chickens, turkeys, cattle, pigs, ducks, sheep, fish, shellfish, and I have a little sub-note; one next to the fish and shellfish because I talk about buying fish, because when you take a catch a fish, there's a certain proportion that you're not going to use on the market. So you just flick them. It's not accounting for the loss of those lives. Every one of those losses are a life that are intimately connected to our heavenly Father. I'm not trying to give a global image, what I'm trying to do is look at there is something wrong in our mind as man, that we're not actually connecting with and I have to suggest to you that we can't because if we were to delve into these thoughts or if we were to focus on them for too long, it will be overwhelming. We haven't spoken about the trafficking, These are the Australian figures so far this year. 1.2 billion. In fact, when you look at the per capita, Australia and New Zealand are way above the United States in the consumption of meat. Although our population is vastly smaller per capita, our consumption of meat or the death 'per head'

required to satisfy our requirements for meat is far higher than the United States.

audience I wear a leather belt and shoes, are we suggesting to stop wearing these?

What I'm suggesting is that we simply look into a picture, because I'm not looking to start a discussion on what we should stop. I think that's a personal application, if that's fair. But what I think is interesting is that in order to satisfy man's requirements, others are having to suffer. And the level of suffering to satisfy a man's requirements is fairly exponential at the present stage. Because I don't think it takes 10 billion animals to make leather shoes or belts.

audience The animal could actually die of old age and then it could be used for leather, right?

If you look at the actual global figures for annual, there is quite a few sites that have given information that they're looking at approximately around 84 billion animals per year globally. Australia and America are not your primary producers of beef. They pretty high, but they're not your primary producers, you have China and South Africa or Africa are also quite large producers. I know that Africa produced far more cattle for the Asian market than Australia ever will. And China is producing it's own. I'm not sure if it's in a test tube or wherever, but they're definitely producing their own. I'm just hoping for, that we're not going to lose context with this. I'm not speaking to the consumption of meat or what shoes you're wearing or whatever. I'm talking about the impact of man's demise upon the Earth, because every one of these life forms, and like Lester said God made a covering for Adam and Eve, but that covering for Adam and Eve come at an extreme cost. Because it was not God's will to cover man in the hide of an animal, but in the righteousness of Christ, because that's what he lost and he replaced it with the hide of an animal, which was to symbolize Christ.

audience What if you connect that with Gen 9:5, "Surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of every man".

And I think it's after the flood that He then says, and 'I will put the fear of you into all the beasts of the field'.

audience All that blood has to do something catastrophic to the earth!

This is my point when He says 'the blood of your brother crieth unto to Me from the earth'. And I'm simply looking at the idea of the little teeny picture that I've looked at, which is essentially looking at cattle. And I've watched them in line, and those animals are in fear, absolute fear. My understanding is that they are also putting out - they're also transmitting. All that's going into the earth. All that it's affecting... And the thing is, every one of those animals is connected with our heavenly Father, and I'm not trying to do a Greenpeace talk here. I'm simply talking about the fact that the level of involvement that our Father has with every life form is a tender relationship. God is not a multiplexer. God is not a power plug that you simply get multiple power chords and stick it, and He just keeps giving life. No God's intention with every life form is an intimate relationship of life and relationship. He's not just a power station.

audience Quoting Desire of Ages: 'not a sigh is breathed, not a pain is felt, not a grief pierces the soul but vibrates to the heart of the Father's heart'. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father knowing.

I'm sharing these thoughts because when we look at the story of the flood. We're looking at a story where man continues to deteriorate and deteriorate morally until some point, that something cracks and then all hell breaks loose. And as I was a child, what was taught to me was that God did it. Mankind's naughty, He had to put it into the naughtiness. And so you've got to stop men from getting worse and worse and worse. He just sort of reset the clock and start again. And then, you know, now it's only a hundred and twenty years or, you know, ultimately bring it down the life cycle down so that men could have a chance or whatever the explanation was. But the very clear message that I got as a young person growing up in Christianity was that at some point God made a decision and then He just ended everything. And the thoughts that I'm having about the flood, as we've already written and shared many viewpoints about the flood, is that something took place. And some threshold was met. And our connection to this point was in Job 22:15, "hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden, which were cut down out of time (or prematurely), whose foundation was overflown with a flood: which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for

them?" What's he going to do? "Though He filled their houses with good: but the council of the wicket is far from me". They said to God, 'depart from us'. When the life giver gets told to go away. Does God just abandon his children? When we tell Him to leave us alone, does He just go? Fair enough, then you're on your own. 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock', God is pleading for any opportunity to reach a heart. And man has to physically shut Him out. Man closes the door on God, and this brings us to the experience of the cross.

And so I'd like you to come with me to Matthew 27:29, and it says "when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head and a reed in His right hand and they bowed the knee before Him and mocked him saying, Hail king of the Jews! And they spit on Him and took the reed and smote Him on the head". Is this just a historical account that we are seeing here? What's the significance of the crown of thorns with Genesis 3:17? The curse upon the earth; thorns and thistles would it bring forth. And where was Christ wearing that thorny crown? Upon His head. It has deep significance. It's even more significant that those who were given authority over Him would strike Him with that, which was considered His scepter upon the head, driving that thorny crown deeper into His skull and mocking Him. This is the Son of the ruler of the universe, taking a pounding from mankind.

audience 'Depart from us'.

What can the Almighty do? Christ takes this beating and it says in verse thirty one, "and after they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him and put His own raiment on Him and led Him away to crucify Him. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, and him they compelled to bare His cross. Mark and Luke explain exactly the same sequence. Simon gets dragged in to actually carry the cross of Christ. I'd like you to come to the book of John, Chapter 19 and verse 15, we're not told here about the crown of thorns. "But they cried out Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him. And Pilate said unto them Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar". We have chosen a new God. "Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led Him away. And He, baring His cross, went forth into a place called the place of the skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha". We're told in the Gospel of John that Jesus carried the cross, the other three tell us that it was Simon of Cyrene. This is all we're told in the biblical account about what

actually took place. But I want to add some light from the Spirit of Prophecy, which I'm sure that all of you are very familiar with, but I think it's pertinent.

audience I found this in Sons and Daughters of God. After quoting a verse in Matthew, it says "the Savior's burden was too heavy for Him in His weak and suffering condition". Sons and daughters of God page 249.2.

In Early Writings it says, 'three times Christ collapsed under the cross'. I want to take you to another reference, which is in Desire of Ages page 741 and I want to read from there. And the reason why I want to read to this is because I think there's a lot of significance in this particular statement. "That He might sanctify the people with his own blood, Christ suffered without the gate. For transgression of the law of God, Adam and Eve were banished from Eden. Christ, our substitute was to suffer without the boundaries of Jerusalem. He died outside the gate with felons and murders were executed. Full of significance are the words, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law being made and curse for us. A vast multitude follow Jesus from the judgment hall to Calvary. The news of His condemnation had spread throughout Jerusalem and people of all classes and all ranks flocked towards the place of crucifixion. The priests and rulers have been bound by a promise not to molest Christ's followers if He himself were delivered to them". Otherwise, they would have destroyed them too. "And the disciples and believers from the city and the surrounding region joined the throng that followed the Savior. As Jesus passed the gate of Pilate's court, the cross, which had been prepared for Barabbas, was laid upon His bruised and bleeding shoulders". Where was it laid? Upon His shoulders, so He was bearing a crown of thorns upon His head, representing the pain and the suffering that He was grieved within His mind or in His heart. Upon his shoulders, he would bear this cross. "Two companions of Barabbas were to suffer death at the same time with Jesus, and upon them also crosses were placed. The Savior's burden was too heavy for Him in His weak and suffering condition. Since the Passover supper with His disciples, He had taken neither food nor drink. He had agonized in the Garden of Gethsemane in conflict with satanic agencies. He had endured the anguish of the betrayal and had seen His disciples forsake Him and flee. He had been taken to Annas, and then to Caiaphas and then to Pilate. From Pilate He had been sent to Herod and then sent again to Pilate. From insult to renewed insult, from mockery to mockery, twice tortured by the scourge, - all that night there had been scene after scene of a character to try the soul of man to the uttermost. Christ had not failed. He had spoken no word, but that tended to glorify God. All

through the disgraceful farce of a trial, He had borne Himself with firmness and dignity. But when after the second scourging, the cross was laid upon Him, human nature could bear no more. He fell fainting beneath the burden". Was Christ just a man?

What do we understand by the nature of Christ? The mystery of Christ, fully God, fully man? "The crowd that followed the Savior saw His weak and staggering steps". The Son of God falls under the burdens, notice this. "They see His weak and staggering steps, but they manifest no compassion. They taunted and reviled Him because He could not carry the heavy cross". Their taunts are upon Christ because He is showing what? Weakness. A real man could carry his own cross, the other two thieves could. A real man wouldn't fall under the weight of the cross. "Again the burden was laid upon Him, and again He fell fainting to the ground. His persecutors saw that it was impossible for Him to carry His burden farther. They were puzzled to find anyone who would bear the humiliating load". No one wants to carry a cross. No one wants to be seen as weak. The principle is that God bore that weight. And He couldn't carry it anymore, and He collapsed under the weight.

audience It's interesting in this is Desire of Ages quote here it says "that again the burden was laid upon Him. And again, He fell Fainting". It's almost like there was one time at the flood, and there's another time at the world.

Yes, He couldn't hold it. What I found really interesting here is that man looks upon Christ, and what does he call himself, the Son of God? What do you envision when you look at the Son of God? Power. The Son of the almighty God, who can create anything, do anything, control everything, and as we've discussed previously, knows everything. Bears all things. And because we are so accustomed to simply coming and offering our sacrifice and then going off to do the same thing again and coming back and offering our sacrifice, what we actually begin to see in God is a punching bag. This untouchable God, a God who can't be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, not in that sense. One who you can continue to load up and it makes no difference. If all that Christ manifested there, was that humanity simply fell under the load - we're missing the point. And I will give you an explanation for this. This is from my beloved brother, Adam. When we think that it was purely restricted, to the nature of man that fell under the cross, we're missing the point. Sister White makes the following statement and thank you, Adam, for bringing this one to light. This is from Desire of Ages

page 389, paragraph four. "So fully was Jesus surrendered to the will of God, that the Father alone appeared in His life". As the cross is laid upon Christ; Christ is the representative of the Father, the Father is bearing this cross. And the Father in Christ collapses under the weight of the cross. The thorns represent the emotional and heart pain that Jesus Christ is experiencing as a result of the curse of mankind. Added to this is the physical weight of mankind that he imposes upon Him.

What is the cross? It's a tree, isn't it? Do we have any representations between mankind and a tree? Yes, 'I see man as trees'. Psalms chapter 1 verse 3, 'as a tree planted by the waters'. Christ is bearing humanity upon His shoulders. But it's not just any sort of humanity because this tree, which represents (or the cross), which represents a tree, is a tree cut off from the roots. It's no longer connected to a life source. It's a dead tree. And He's carrying it, and He's bearing it. And He's finding it difficult to bear. And as He collapses under the load that we have placed upon Him, we look on him and we laugh because He's weak. Because He can't hack it. And I find this really interesting and not just interesting as in wow, but it overwhelms me because I think to myself, where I work or have worked. There's a really common saying, if someone, particularly a male, complains about something, it's too hard, it's too heavy; what you offered is a teaspoon of cement. Harden up! Because the perception is and this perception is not just arbitrary, this perception comes just the same as the violence does from a view of God - harden up! Don't be so touchy feely. Don't be so emotionally weak, because the God we serve is untouchable. He will take pounding after pounding after pounding, and you can't touch Him. And what the cross actually shows is that that's not true. And what the flood is showing us that this is not true. Because what took place at the cross is that God was carrying mankind, the grief in His heart and in His mind from the sins that he's committed, the weight as creation groans and travails under the sins of men upon His shoulders, and He couldn't bear it anymore. Remember what we read in Genesis Chapter six? 'My spirit shall not always strive with man'.

Let me come back to this quote quickly. "The world was in its infancy, yet iniquity had come so deep and widespread that God could bear no longer with it". God could no longer bear under the weight. And not that He shrugged it off, He collapsed under the load. How does creation hold together? Through Christ. Through His powerful word, which is the outworking of the thoughts of the Father, which are always positive towards mankind. In the grief of the flood, there was not one negative thought as He

collapses under the load and satanic agencies who just assumed that everything just continues to operate were left to experience as the elements around them start to go out of control. And we're told in the Spirit of Prophecy, that Satan feared for his very existence, having no concept of what he'd actually done through mankind. These are all evidences to us. The inability of God to keep carrying. Are you okay with that kind of God? A weak God?

audience Stronger than man.

"Adam beheld in God, a tyrant through the lies that Satan taught him through the woman. By holding, Adam became a tyrant in offering up the woman. In truth, man had killed the Son of God". Is that not true - in choosing a new God? At the flood, we read the following. Genesis 6:12, "God looked upon the earth and behold, it was corrupt for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth". Have you ever read this, and read that this means man had corrupted his own way upon the Earth? If you read the Hebrew here, 'his' is not connected to any direct subject in that text. Man had corrupted God's way in the earth. Let me read it to you again. "And God looked upon the Earth and behold it was corrupt for all flesh had corrupted His way upon the earth". And what is His way? Christ! 'I am the way the truth and the life', and that word corrupted, what does it mean? Destroy. Man had destroyed Christ in the earth and Christ was being crushed under the weight. Pastor Adrian has just shared the verse before in I Corinthians 1:25, "because the foolishness of God is wiser than men. And the weakness of God is stronger than men". What is the weakness of God? What do we see as weak it God, that He can't carry it - forever? And continue to carry it? You recall that when Jesus spoke quite frankly, to His followers in John chapter six, and it offended them. When we are called to manifest Christ, we're not going to be called to manifest Christ with weapons. With manifesting violence, sorting things out the man's way. There's many challenging experiences ahead of us as we consider the proclamation of this message in a way that will be seen by this world as weak. Satan exulted at the cross, thinking he had won. Because he destroyed the Son of God, yet actually destroyed his kingdom in the process. 'The weakness of God is stronger and the strength of men'.

I want to read another text for you in Corinthians, it's in 2 Corinthians, Chapter 12, to add to this in a slightly different dimension to bring our thoughts to their close. 2Corinthians, Chapter 12, and I want to start reading in verse seven. Paul says, "And lest I should be exalted above measure

through the abundance of the revelations it was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I have sought the Lord thrice, (three times) that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness". And now natural reading of this text, we recognize that it is the strength of God that is manifest through the weak vessel of Paul. But in a deeper layer, God's strength is made fully revealed in His weakness. It is the weakness of God that reveals His strength. Because the basis of the accusation upon the government of God is that God is not self-sacrificing. Because in this world, self-sacrificing is seen as weak. Look after yourself. And the idea of being a doormat fills many of us with fear. When we read the Sermon on the Mount and we see the extent to which Christ challenges us to give of ourselves. I know for myself many times when I've read the Sermon on the Mount, I thought, well, there's a limit here. You don't want to be a doormat. I mean, you can't give away everything. God has. The point is, God gave everything. He held nothing back! And we think that's stupid!

audience It can be seen as reckless.

We think that's foolish. And we come into a deeper understanding of how God manifests His strength in weakness. Like Paul in verse 10, we say we take pleasure in infirmities, we take pleasure in having our weaknesses manifested, because by this, will God's strength of character and the strength of His kingdom be manifest. We're being called into a whole new value system. God's kingdom doesn't operate on the way that we have always understood, and with every step and every ray of light that is coming towards us, we're being introduced or being invited into a deeper experience of what it means to float in that river.

I stand here today as a man. And I know that one thing I don't like to do is give up control. I like to be in control. In fact, I'm a control freak. I like to have everything working exactly the way I've laid my plan out for today. And I struggle with the idea that I get to the end of my day, if I haven't accomplished everything on that list, and that's why most of the time in my working life, I wouldn't stop working till probably 1:00 am in the morning. Because my focus was not my health or anything like that, it was that list. Because that's what I determined that day, that I would do and anything less than that would be weak.

God is asking us to sacrifice at a different level. To stand in a group of people; be reviled, be spoken evil of. Have you experienced that? For the truth? Not in the sense that you made yourself the victim, but to stand in a group of people to be maligned, have no opportunity to respond or given the opportunity you don't take the upper hand, and be seen as weak a fool. This is the invitation that God is giving each and every one of us. For His sake to be considered weak, feeble, nothing. Praying that these thoughts will offer you something of a blessing. The context for me of this. Is that I'm seeing a more and more tender side to my heavenly Father. I'm seeing a more vulnerable component to His character with every time I'm turning these pages and seeing more and more and more. And it's not reviling, it's not revolting to me to see Him that way. It's actually drawing me. Because in His weakness, I see an incredible desire towards His creation. I see an unlimited supply of love and willingness to suffer for the sake of those who have chosen to walk another direction. And to be willing to be counted as nothing and weak and disgusting for that sake. This is what I want to continue to have before my face, because this is what I'm praying and I believe that He is going to bring about as a transformation in my character and in yours.

Let's close in prayer. Beloved father, how long have You bore with insult? The violence in humanity You carried, despite the wickedness that You suffer under. And the curse upon this earth, that You carry on a daily basis. This man rises up against a man, takes advantage of one another, You bear the lot. To add to the shame, Father, we look upon this image and we walk away in disgust. Because it doesn't match the superhero God that we've always believed we served. And I ask for forgiveness Father, for this false view of Your character. I ask for forgiveness. For this resisting has made of me a tyrant. A cold hearted individual. Meaning all the diagnostic components of Laodicea, and I along with my brethren, I long for a transformation, Father and I pray that as we continue to behold nearer and nearer this beautiful image of Your character, that will bring about changes in our hearts and in our interactions with one another, and that in seeing the things that You have suffered, and seeing the strength of Your kingdom and the weakness that You've manifested - that it will change our experience, as others will look upon us and consider us weak. And we'll joyfully received these taunts, these accusations, knowing that You have bore far greater than we ever could. Father, I pray for a blessing now as we go to our tents to rest for the night. And I pray that Your blessings may continue to flow upon each and every child here, as we continue to feast together. Father, and truly it has been a feast. And we give You thanks in the precious name of Your Son, Yeshua.

Pastor Adrian Ebens at the Podium

Well, what we have heard tonight is coming to the culmination of what we've been learning about our beautiful Father. We thought for some time about Zachariah Chapter 12, where it says 'they'll look upon Him, whom they have pierced now mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son'. And for those of us that have had children and have seen those children walk down paths that we know will hurt them. And you know what you feel inside and the weight that you carry. And the difficulty that you face, you can begin to understand what our father is experiencing and so as we are breaking through this omnipotent myth and we see our Father as He really is it's just... I can start to see it now, like we're nearly to the summit, that we have such a capacity to affect our Father. And the reality is that we know this because of what we experienced with our children and how much we yearn for our children and we just pray for them or our parents or whoever it is. And we we just want them to be there. And sometimes we cry so much we can't bear it anymore. And for some of us, I don't know about you, but there's one thing that happened in my life. I just I passed out. I just couldn't I couldn't carry it. And I think about this is what my Father feels. This is what He feels in heaven because of the weight of the sins that He carries. And so I just pray that we will stay in that place and just think about our Father and just tell Him how sorry we are, and that we've been lied to. And we believe those lies because it's easy to keep sinning when you believe the lies, that it doesn't hurt Him. It doesn't affect Him because He's omnipotent, He's impassable, He doesn't feel and all those sort of lies. But to see that our Father truly gets to the point where He can't carry it and He passes out with the weight, He just can't do it anymore. And this places such a different picture in our minds, doesn't it? Of the responsibility that is upon us to listen to His voice and to bring this suffering to an end. So, I just believe that this message can really start to transform us.

It's not like we don't know any of this, any of us being in a relationship where it's been torn apart, you know what it feels like. And our Father feels exactly the same. And so I pray that our Father will speak to you and maybe there's someone else that wants to share and... I just want to stay in this moment, maybe you want to go to bed, but I just want to stay in this moment and just think about our Father and say sorry to our Father for not not realizing how much we hurt Him. And how much He's caused to suffer.

So the filling up with the cup of iniquity is the point where God just can't carry it anymore. He just can't do it. Because as Tony said, He's not made of steel. I distinctly remember having a discussion with quite a number of prominent Adventist people dealing with the fact of being disfellowship from the Seventh Day Adventist Church and what trauma that really was that I went through in that process of being cut off from the church that I'd been raised in, and it was my whole life, this church was my whole life and the books that I've written and the intensity of emotion that I felt. And then to be told by that prominent leader, obviously, your mind is affected by your emotional instability. But personally, I know that I have feelings. And, you know, what do you say? What can you say? Yeah, I'm emotionally unstable because I was rejected by my family, my church family. I'm guilty of being emotionally unstable now because of that.

It was humiliating to Peter that when he stood up and cut off that guy's ear and Jesus just releases himself and heals the guy. And it's like I've just risked my life for You and You've just missed the thing up - like I'm done!

Ruben One that would allow Himself to be taken, shatters any image of victory through war. And the idea of your sin experience, the moment you come face to face with someone who is as weak as our suffering Savior, one, a God who collapses under the weight of infirmity or iniquity makes it difficult to suppress the feeling of guilt. And so we have to make Him (*inaudible dialog*) because then we could just keep going. The idea that God is untouchable suppresses the sense of guilt of sin, and allows you to continue going on sinning. So to behold Christ 'as He is', I was thinking of the statements from John Chapter seven, and it said, in verse 37, "In the last day, in the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come on to me and drink. And he that believeth on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly, shall flow rivers of living water". And then it says in the caption verse 39, "but this spake he of the Spirit, which they had believe on Him should receive for the Holy Ghost was not yet; because Jesus was not yet glorified". Once we see Jesus as He really is, then the spirit will flow.

Adrian To the point of view, we can't help but show His weakness because of the weight that He's carrying. He's got no choice except He has to collapse. And I think the most telling thought about this is that in Christ, as Ruben expressed; in Christ, we are seeing the Father collapse under the weight of that cross, and that's so confronting. Yeah, suffering with son.

Adrian And as Tony read the quote this morning, that's the wrath of God, which is defined as He hid His face. He just couldn't. He couldn't anymore. He just couldn't do it. He turned aside because He just couldn't carry anymore and is and everything goes down. I just want to tell our father how amazing we think He is, and just to confess that sin of ignorance, that we didn't realize how vulnerable like He's showing us, and we don't really see how vulnerable He really is and that this is His strength, this is His strength to be that vulnerable and to keep absorbing that and to keep taking it.

Adrian And just, you know, when you think of Satan himself, the guilt that he carries because he knows that he's pounded away on his Father's face until he's knocked Him out cold. I mean, how do you cope with that, knowing that the Father had never done anything to him, has never done any bad to him. And in his anger, he beats the daylights out of Him until He can't walk anymore. It's like, how do you reconcile that in your mind? How do you deal with that? It's like no wonder he'll to be crushed under the weight of his own guilt.

Ruben A really important point because all of the domestic violence comes from a belief that the source is beating on the weaker vessel. And in the reality of the gospel, it's the wife beating the living daylights out of her husband. And beating him to a pulp. Because that's what's happening, we're His bride, and we've beaten Him to the ground. And anyone looking upon a man, who gets beaten up by his wife, what do they think? Weak, pathetic; profound image.

Adrian Not only does God forgive us for killing His Son, but He forgives us for causing Him to pass out. He doesn't hold it against us.

Adrian Father in heaven. How beautiful you are. We're so sorry, for our hardened hearts. So sorry for the lies that we've believed willingly in order that we can continue to sin. Now all that is stripped away, and we just thank you, Lord Jesus, in Your falling under the weight of the cross that You revealed the Father. And the tremendous weight that You carry and we just think of the cross that You bore today, we think of the agony that You feel and Father, we just believe that if You brought us to this place to understand these things, that You will lighten the Earth with this glory and that Your weakness will be made strong, Your strength is made perfect in Your weakness, and that our weakness in reflection of that will lighten the earth with the glory as we look upon You. Father, may these thoughts stay with us

while we think about Your suffering and Your agony. And Lord, we believe that in this light, in seeing these things, that sin will become hateful to us and that we will be sealed in the knowledge of Your great love for us. We know this as we go to rest and we rest in Your arms, but we hold You tight believing that You forgive us and that we can manifest Your character. We thank you in Jesus.