



OHBC MEMORY VERSE

WEEK #29

THIS WEEK'S VERSE: JOEL 2:11

"And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?"

Why Joel 2:11?

Because of what it teaches us about our Lord, His "Day," and our future!

The scene described in Joel 2:11 is in heaven. We, the Bride of Christ (Rev. 19:7, 21:9) will have been ushered into the presence of our Bridegroom via the Rapture, to see the Lord Jesus Christ face to face, the One that all of our redeemed life we have loved, having not seen (II Pet. 1:8)! For seven years we will have been experiencing in heaven Rev. 4 and 5 verse by verse, while Rev. 6 (the Tribulation Period) has been unfolding on the earth. We will have already come through the Judgment Seat of Christ having received our eternal rewards, and will then don the wedding garments we prepared for ourselves by and through the life we lived on the earth during the "espousal" period (II Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7-8). (Note: The "espousal" period is from the Day of our salvation to the Rapture)

It is just then that Joel 2:11 will be fulfilled: "And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army..." That "army" is us, the Bride of Christ! It is those whom John saw following the Lord Jesus Christ out of heaven on white horses at His second coming that he referred to as "the armies which were in heaven" (Rev. 19:14). Joel lets us know that on the glorious day of Christ's second coming, He will gather us together and "the LORD shall utter his voice" declaring to us that the time has come to set things right on the earth (i.e. "the times of restitution of all things" Acts 3:21)!

"For his camp is very great..." When Jude referred to this "camp" (the "army" just mentioned in the previous phrase), he quoted the preaching of Enoch (the seventh from Adam), saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands (also translated "innumerable multitude" and "innumerable company") of his saints." This "army," this "camp," these "saints," this "innumerable multitude" is comprised of every born again man and woman from every generation through the entire Church Age! No wonder Joel said, "His camp is very great"!

"For he is strong that executeth his word..." Throughout the entire Laodicean Period (the seventh and final period of church history, from approximately 1901 to the Rapture, outlined in Rev. 3:14-22) there have been "scoffers, walking after their own lusts [had been] saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II Pet. 3:3-4). Peter also lets us know in that same passage that their "scoffing" will include the accusation that the Lord is "slack concerning his promise" to return to execute judgment (II Pet. 3:9). Joel reminds us in Joel 2:11, as Peter does in II Peter 3:10, that the Lord is "strong" (incredibly strong!), and will "execute" the promise of "his word"! Peter lets us know that the only reason he will not have executed it before this time is the simple and glorious fact that not only is the Lord "strong," but He is "longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9)!

"For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible (awesome)"... This is the day to which every other day in history and every page of Scripture has been pointing! God calls it "His day" (i.e. "the day of the LORD"). We refer to it as the Second Coming of Christ. It is the 1000 year "day" (the Millennium) foreshadowed in Genesis 2:1-3, and described in Revelation 20:1-6. In describing just how "great and very terrible" that day will be, Joel said in the previous verse, "The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble; the sun and the moon shall be dark, the stars shall withdraw their shining" (Joel 2:10). Joel concludes: "And who shall abide it?" And the answer to the question is very simple and emphatically no one who is without Christ! Paul said that everyone in that day who does not know God, and has not obeyed the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory his power" (II Thess. 1:8-9). This is not the Jesus (II Cor. 11:4) that people in Laodicea like to talk about or hear about, but it is the Jesus the people living in the Laodicean Period will have "revealed" to them (II Thess. 1:7) at the second coming!

May we, as stewards of God's gospel (I Thess. 2:4) in the last days of the Laodicean Period, heed the words of Paul in Romans 13:11-14: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

DAY 141

TODAY'S READING: PROVERBS 9-12

OVERVIEW:

Wisdom's invitation; the contrast between the righteous and the wicked; the contrast between the upright and the wicked.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

One of the most incredible qualities of the Bible is its ability to transcend time and culture. Though it is thousands of years old, its relevancy and application to today is nothing short of supernatural.

Because of the way the Book of Proverbs was designed by the Holy Spirit, declaring truth based on comparison, and cause and effect, the Book of Proverbs is one of the easiest Books in the entire Bible to make applicable to those of us living in the 21st century.

As we begin in chapter 9 today, just as we saw in chapter 8, wisdom is personified as a woman (i.e. "Wisdom hath built HER house" – 9:1). In chapter 9, the WISE "woman" is contrasted with the FOOLISH "woman."

Both extend an invitation to the "simple," who is identified in verse 4 as one that lacketh or "wanteth understanding." They have similar invitations, but very different motives.

Note in verse 1 that "she (wisdom) hath hewn out her seven pillars." These seven pillars are the seven manifestations of the Holy Spirit referred to in Rev. 4:5 (also Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 5:6) as the "seven Spirits of God." They are specifically identified in Isaiah 11:2 as:

1. The spirit of the Lord
2. The spirit of wisdom
3. The spirit of understanding
4. The spirit of counsel
5. The spirit of might
6. The spirit of knowledge
7. The spirit of the fear of the Lord.

The invitation that is extended to the "simple" by both of the "women" (the "WISE" vs. 1 and the "FOOLISH" vs. 13) is to a "feast." Wisdom offers a feast of "bread" and "wine" in verse 5 (the elements, coincidentally enough, of communion – I Cor. 10:16). The feast offered by the foolish woman is described in verse 17 – "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant," and ends up being a stinky pile of worms where the fire is not quenched! (See Ex. 16:20 and Isa. 66:24).

In verses 9 and 10 of chapter 9 is a key truth in the Book of Proverbs. To "increase in learning" we must possess the "fear of the Lord," and have the "knowledge of the holy" (i.e. Holy God, Holy Word, Holy Spirit, Holiest of Holies, Holy Place, Most Holy Place, etc.) Anyone who does not acquire this "knowledge" will be unable to make sense out of life and will be unable to know life's purpose, and will be forced to come up with his own meaning and purpose which will be "foolish" and completely irrational to the mind of the Lord.

This truth, if kept in focus as we read the Proverbs will reveal how far apart the Wise Man and the Foolish Man really are. This insight will indicate clearly what we are free to say to these individuals and those we are instructed not to answer at all (Col. 4:6). Note in Matt. 27:11-14, Jesus would not answer the accusations of the chief priest and elders, Pilate marveled, because it was an inner strength that he did not possess.

Look at Proverbs 26:4-5, where there appears to be a contradiction regarding who we should answer. First, verse 4, answer not a fool according to his folly, or you will become like him. Next, verse 5, answer

a fool according to his folly, or he will become wise in his own conceit. So which is it? Am I supposed to answer or not? The key is the difference between the two fools.

The first fool is a committed fool. He is already “wise in his own conceit.” He has accepted that wrong is right, and teaches others to believe the same. To answer this type of fool, will further equip him in his folly. He is argumentative and will twist your words to defeat immature Christians, or twist your words to convince a simple fool that what you say is wrong.

The second fool, is a simple fool. As indicated above, he is reachable and teachable. He is looking for a role model. He is a perfect candidate for those in gangs to initiate into their criminal involvement on one hand (1:10-19), or on the other, he is a perfect candidate for those who know the Lord Jesus Christ to reach with the gospel of salvation, introducing him to the ultimate Role Model, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (I John 2:6).

As you continue your study, be aware of the vast contrast between these two types of people. It will challenge you to do as we are instructed in I Peter 3:15. “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As ONE who hates lying – Prov. 12:22. “He that sat upon the throne said... all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” (Rev. 21:5,8)

DAY 142

TODAY’S READING: PROVERBS 13-16

OVERVIEW:

The contrast of the upright and the wicked.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we begin today, perhaps you will find it beneficial to understand the “big picture” of Proverbs. The Book can be broken down into three divisions (II Tim. 2:15). These divisions can be identified by the three times Solomon identifies himself as the author of Proverbs.

- Division One – Proverbs 1-9
- Division Two – Proverbs 10-24
- Division Three – Proverbs 25-31

As we find ourselves in today’s reading in that second “division” (Prov. 10-24), there are actually 375 actual Proverbs connected in one of three types of “couplets”:

1. CONTRASTIVE (The “couplet” in these Proverbs is normally identified by the word “BUT”.) The intent is to catch your attention and present a truth by the compact presentation of some striking contrast, as in “The lips of the righteous feed many: BUT fools die for want of wisdom” (Prov. 10:21).
2. COMPLETIVE (The “couplet” in these Proverbs is normally identified by the word “AND”.) The second line of the Proverb agrees with the first, and often adds to it, as in “In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: AND his children shall have a place of refuge” (Prov. 14:26).
3. COMPARATIVE (The “couplet” in these Proverbs is normally identified by the word “THAN”.) The focus in these Proverbs is often to what actually is the more excellent of the two, as in “Better is a little with righteousness, THAN great revenues with right” (Prov. 16:8).

Chapter 13 begins, “A wise son heareth his father’s instruction...” Remember Solomon’s son was, Rehoboam. He had hoped, like any father, that his son would receive instruction. Solomon longed for his own son to be “BRANDED” by:

1. Proper living (13:2, 3)
2. Honesty (13:5)
3. His legacy (13:22)
4. The Word of God (13:13,14)
5. The desire to acquire knowledge (13:15,16)
6. Love (13:24)

There are those times in Proverbs when a verse or a word seems to stand out more than others; vs. 13 in chapter 13 is such a verse. “Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: But he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded”. This chapter has much to say about listening more than talking, “A man shall eat good by the by the fruit of his mouth” (vs. 2); “He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life” (vs. 3). If this son had been a good listener in verse 1, he would experience none of the negativity mentioned in the rest of the chapter. If we would follow the admonition of verse 20, it alone would change the course of destiny: “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”

Women are given good advice in the first verse of chapter fourteen. When her choice is to take matters into her own hands she has fallen for the tempter’s bait, much like Eve in the first confrontation with the god of all evil. He still starts with a question, “hath God said, Ye shall not”— (remember, “Don’t answer a fool according to his folly”!) If you don’t know what God hath said on any given subject, that will be the area of temptation. See Matt. 4; the example of Jesus. His response was, “It is written”... then He quoted the Word of God. Verses 12 and 15 of this chapter would be great verses to hide in your heart! Good advice for all of us to heed is found in 15:1. Oh, how much we could improve our daily situations with a “soft answer”. The all-seeing eye of God (vs. 3), should be motivation enough. How can anyone train themselves to answer softly in such a stressed environment? The answer is closer than you may think! Look at first the verse in the next chapter for the answer! If you are quick to answer, especially in anger, you might consider the first three verses in chapter 16, and commit them to memory.

CHRIST IS REVEALED

As the ONE Who punishes the proud – Prov. 16:5. (Luke 14:11)

As the FRIEND that sticks closer than a brother – Prov. 18:24. (John 15:14-15; Heb. 13:5)

DAY 143

TODAY’S READING: PROVERBS 17-20

OVERVIEW:

The contrast between goodness and evil; warnings and instructions about life.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we have seen all the way through the 365 Days of Pursuit, the Bible is filled with practical insights for living. That is especially true of the Book of Proverbs, for it is really nothing more than a collection of God’s complex and diverse statements of truth about life, compared or contrasted with that which is not true. As was suggested in the “Introduction To Proverbs” on Day 139, this collection is to be read slowly, reflecting on the content, and often! Again, as mentioned, one of the best ways to establish this routine is to read the chapter each day that corresponds with the day’s date. If you’ll simply add a chapter of Proverbs a day to your regular Bible study each year, do you realize that in the next 20 years, you will have made your way through the Book of Proverbs 240 times?! Before you know it, the contrasts and parallels will become recorded on the hard drive of your mind, providing you wisdom moment by moment as the Holy Spirit guides you to walk in the way with the wise (Prov. 13:20).

I’m with Solomon in verse one in today’s reading (chapter 17)! I’d rather have my family all intact, living in peace (quietness) in a shack with just enough food to get us by, than to live in a fat house, able to eat whatever we please, but have it all in the midst of strife in our relationships with each other! (See also Prov. 21:9) Many American Christians in pursuit of the “things on earth,” (Col. 3:1-2), got what they wanted, but lost what they had. Be careful. Be wise!

The second half of verse 6 in chapter 17 packs such a wallop that I can’t just pass over it, but there’s not enough space to really nail the unbelievable implications of this simple truth: “The glory of children are their fathers.” That’s not something you teach your children, it’s just something that is! Because of that truth, more than our culture, environment, and education; more than circumstances of life or socioeconomic level; even more than our MOTHER; nothing humanly has had, or will ever have a more profound influence and impact on who we are, what we are, and what we do than our fathers. Whether he was present or absent; whether he was living or dead; whether we knew him very well or didn’t know him at all; whether we loved him, hated him, or somewhere in-betweened him; whether we like to admit it or not, the fact is – all of us we’re greatly affected and deeply impacted by him. Whether you are a son or daughter, a mother, or a father, and whether you are old or young, the biblical information regarding fathers is something every person needs to understand.

If you have like to talk a lot, verse 27 of chapter 17 might be a great verse to memorize. This verse has spawned quite a few catch phrases and quips through the years, such as:

- “Blessed is the man who, having nothing to say, refuses to give evidence of it.”
- “Silence is a hard argument to refute”
- “He can never speak well who cannot hold his peace.”
- “As a man grows older and wiser, he talks less but says more.”

Chapter 18 and verse 1 is key. It lets us know that to arrive at wisdom, we must possess a “desire” that is so intense, that we are willing to “separate” ourselves from anything and everything that would interfere with that pursuit! If you need a reason to continue on in our 365 Days of Pursuit, (I hope you don’t!), this verse (18:1) is a great one!

The “fool” on the other hand (in 18:2), has only one pursuit: “That his heart may discover itself.” If you were to ask him, “What is the biggest problem in our world, ignorance or apathy?”, his response would no doubt be, “I don’t know and I don’t care!” How many “fools” (God’s identification, not mine) have LOST themselves in the midst of FINDING themselves! Allowing your “heart” to “discover itself” is an invitation to disaster! We have been instructed to “keep (guard) your heart with all diligence” (Prov. 4:23). Without that guardianship of our hearts, the “issues of life” (Prov. 4:23) coming out of it will destroy us!

Verse 8 of chapter 18 is extremely graphic: “The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.” If you’ve ever been on the receiving end of them, you understand just how perfect that description is. The talebearer, in effect, is a murderer. He slays a persons reputation and/or character with a sword that Psalm 57:4 and 64:3 identifies as the tongue.

There are many hearts that are bleeding today because they have been stabbed by someone’s tongue. You can’t help it happening to you, but you most certainly can help it happening BY you! Once again, it’s a heart issue. Jesus said in Matt. 12:34, “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” As always, the heart of the matter is the matter of the heart. Keep (guard) yours today!

CHRIST IS REVEALED

As THE KING Who sits on the throne of judgment – Prov. 20:8. (John 5:22)

DAY 144

TODAY’S READING: PROVERBS 21-24

OVERVIEW:

Warnings and instructions about life.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

In the “Introduction to Proverbs,” we talked about the inspirational/devotional application of the kings’ instruction to his son (1:1) in the Book of Proverbs lining up with the years of his life. In light of that, it is interesting to note the instruction and warnings that are given in chapters 21-24. During these “years,” so to speak:

- His heart is to be “in the hand of the Lord: (21:1).
- He is cautioned about women.
“It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house” (21:9).
“It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman” (21:19).
- He is warned about how wealth is vanity and easily lost, and that having a “good name” (possessing character and integrity), makes you more “wealthy” than riches. “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold. The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all” (22:1-2). “Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.” (23:5)
- He is admonished to learn the value of humility, and the fear of the Lord. (The two go hand in hand. The only way to really see yourself for who you really are, is to see the Lord for who He really is!) “By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life” (22:4). (I love Andrew Murray’s definition of humility: “Humility is not thinking meanly of ourselves; it is not thinking of ourselves at all.” Until we “fear the Lord,” we will continue to be preoccupied with thoughts about self.)

- He is instructed about training his children. “Train up a child in the way he should go: when he is old, he will not depart from it” (22:6). “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him” (22:15). “Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell” (23:13-14).
- He is cautioned about his finances, and the dangers associated with debt. “The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender” (Prov. 22:7). “Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts. If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?” (Prov. 22:26-27). “Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men” (22:29). “Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom” (23:4).
- He is warned about the friends he makes and the company he keeps. “Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease” (22:10). “Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go. Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul” (22:24-25).
- He is warned about losing sight of his roots. “Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set” (22:28). “Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless” (23:10).
- He is cautioned about being envious. “Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long” (23:17). “Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them. For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief” (24:1-2).
- He is admonished concerning alcohol. “Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way. Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags” (23:19-21). “Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright” (23:29-31).
- He is instructed about how to have a home that is built by the Lord and filled with satisfaction. “Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches (i.e. the things money can’t buy)” (24:3-4).
- He is encouraged to seek wise counsel from more than one person when making important decisions. “For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety” (24:6).
- He is admonished to learn how to work hard. “I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man” (24:30- 34).

CHRIST IS REVEALED

As HE THAT IS PURE, WHOSE WORK IS RIGHT – Prov. 21:86 (John 4:34; 17:4).

DAY 145

TODAY’S READING: PROVERBS 25-28

OVERVIEW:

Similitudes and instructions; warnings and instructions.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

This is the third and final section of the Book of Proverbs (chapters 25-31), as we saw that God neatly “divides” (II Tim. 2:15) into three sections for us by the three times He inspired Solomon to pen the words, “The proverbs of Solomon.” The first three chapters in today’s reading (chapters 25-27) are different in structure than we have seen thus far. They are different in that they are in groups of verses on the same topic, often referred to as epigrams (a brief, clever, pointed remark or observation typically marked by an antithesis). The last chapter in today’s reading (chapter 28) goes back to the comparative, complete, or contrastive couplets proverbs. (There will be 55 in all in this section through chapter 29.)

The first part of chapter 25 refers to kings.

1. Kings like to “search out a matter.” (vs. 2)
2. A king’s heart is “unsearchable.” (vs. 3)
3. Kings’ thrones are established by righteousness. (vs. 5)
4. Kings reject people who praise themselves. (vs. 6)
5. Kings have no patience with pushy people. (vs. 7)

The second part of chapter 25 is sort of a “hobo stew” mix of information concerning communication, relationships, and attitudes (attitudes such as pride, strife, impatience, argumentation, generosity, and backbiting).

In chapter 26:3-12, Solomon gives us a discourse concerning fools.

1. The fool requires the rod of correction. (vs. 1-3)
2. The “committed” fool will conform you to himself if you converse with him, so don’t! (vs. 4)
3. The “simple” fool can be turned from becoming like the “committed” fool, so, answer his questions. Give him wise counsel. (vs. 5)
4. The fool is unable to express a proverb clearly. (vs. 7)
5. The fool, given honor, is dangerous to himself and others. (vs. 8)
6. The parable in a fool’s mouth is as a wound (i.e. he’ll hurt you with it). (vs. 9)
7. Any reward a fool receives comes from the God of all creation. (vs. 10)
8. The fool always returns to his folly. (vs. 11)
9. There is more hope for a fool, than for a self-proclaimed wise man. (vs. 12)

In the next four verses, 26:13-16, Solomon gives us a discourse concerning sluggards.

1. The sluggard gives exaggerated reasons for not leaving the house. (vs. 13)
2. The sluggard has restless sleep. (vs. 14)
3. The sluggard doesn’t even like to exert the energy to feed himself. (vs. 15)
4. The sluggard is very skilled in creating ways to avoid work. (vs. 16)

The final two chapters in today’s reading (chapter 27-28) should be read in a way that allows one to ponder the powerful truth in each verse. In so doing it will almost record itself in our memory with little effort. Consider these examples...

- “Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips” (27:2).
- “Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied” (27:20).
- “Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds” (27:20).
- “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.” (28:9)
- “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (28:13).

Allow these and other verses to become your meditation; they will be the promptings our Lord will use to lead you in the way today.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As the ONE WHO REWARDS THOSE WHO REPAY EVIL WITH GOOD – Prov. 25:21-22. (If your enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Rom. 12:20)