THOUGHTS OF AUGUST, 2010

1. More on disciples:

Disciples make disci*p*les. Non-disciples make non-disciples. Halfway disciples make halfway disciples. Birds make birds. The Ford plant makes Fords.

Disciples cannot help themselves; they must make disciples. Non-disciples cannot help themselves; they make non-disciples. Birds cannot help themselves; they make birds. Ford plants cannot help themselves; they are equipped to produce only Fords.

We are what we are; thus we produce what we are. We bring forth our own kind. It’s been that way from the beginning [Gen. 1]. It’s a spiritually established process. We cannot fake it. We cannot force otherwise. Our fruit shows what we are and those who eat of it are nourished accordingly. That’s the message of Matthew 7:15-20, which concerns the relationship of good-fruit bearing now in this life to our future in the soon-coming kingdom of heaven on earth [the Millennium]. At that time our present earth-life fruitfulness will determine whether we will or will not reign with Jesus [which has nothing to do with the eternality of our salvation].

1. Me-centeredness is natural until the Lord or until someone/something else bigger than I am [in my own eyes] comes my way. If I am thirsty, I will drink at the well of living water. If we are not thirsty, neither I nor the horses will drink.

If I am the big man of the universe I am not thirsty for the gospel life/kingdom living. In that state of soul, the only things that will make me change my behavior is pressure, cajoling, begging, guilt-trips or some sort of reward. Me-centeredness is natural until the Lord becomes our life. The ministry is powerless until then.

Actually, that may be the problem – that the ministry is powerless. Until then, good words like John 17:10 are held in reserve.

1. The key to life is in believing that our heavenly Father sent Jesus, His Son. In John 17, the Lord is quoted 4 times as saying that. See verses 8, 21, 23, and 25. As believers, we have been given the grace to know that is true. If [meaning “since”] that is true for us, others will be helped to believe it too when they see that our lives are vastly different from those who do not believe.
2. I am told that “Abba, Father” not only means “Daddy, Father” but also “MY Father,” such as would be spoken by an orphaned street urchin when adopted into a fine family. It is an expression of adoration, an exclamation of delight, an utterance from the fulfillment of one’s grandest expectations.

With that understanding, see if you can get a better grasp on what was going on in Elisha in 2 Kings 2;12.

1. What is that “strange fire” all about in the lives of Nadab and Abihu? See Lev. 10:1; Num. 3:4, 26:61. As it would apply to us today it may be any sort of cheerleading in the church, whipping up the spirit [yes, no capital “S” there], or any other flesh efforts to accomplish something the Holy Spirit would ordinarily do but is not doing. I hear lots of, “Let’s get excited over this revival [or whatever program].” We cannot manufacture the fire of the Holy Spirit. Plus, it’s difficult to get excited over something that does not excite you.
2. It’s amazing what the Lord can use to get a word to us. In Joshua 6:12 His instructions to Joshua were to put the fighting men out in front of the religious leaders as they circled Jericho. When I read that, the Lord said, “Get real first, then your blowing and religious stuff will not be only blowing and religious stuff.”
3. If you are interested in an Old Testament reference to “once saved, always saved,” read Jeremiah 31:35-37. Those 3 verses pack a punch. The Lord had chosen Israel to be His people although they were nothings. There were many nations that would have seemed to be better choices, but His choices have nothing to do with ourselves [Deut. 7:6-8; Eph. 2:8-10].
4. Where is the gospel to be lived, spoken and seen the most? Answer: In the workplace, not simply in the church house. The field is the world [Matt. 5:13]. That does not mean that wherever we go the world will always see Christ in us. The Light of the world was rejected, and so will we be rejected [John 1:10]. Jesus prayed that we would not separate from the world, but that the world would be cleaned out of us [John 17:14-16]. We must get dirty, but not to worry. Our wise, loving, perceptive, compassionate brothers will be God’s cleansers [John 13:12-17].
5. We are still meeting with local leaders to promote kingdom principles. Every month their number increases. They are God’s choices as leaders during this time. All of them know that, but all of them [and us] can always do with truthful encouragement.
6. Those who go first, or those who stand out above the rest, or anyone who is a leader is in the position of having to take the enemy’s shots for the others. Parents do that for their kids all the time. John the Baptist did for Jesus, the Jews did [and do] for Christians, and Eliezer did for Isaac.

And the Jews are still providing cover for Christians, even after 2,000 years. The Jews are looked upon as the scum of the world; as the people who are causing all of the world’s trouble – not only in the Near East but in Europe, for centuries. I think that the Lord has made them a decoy to protect His bride, the church.

Those who take shots for us are due our gratitude. Pray for and support Israel.

1. Once the Russian communists had taken over after a bloody civil war against the tsar, they turned their attention to purging the nation of the millions who did not want communism. It took a few years, but eventually the army beat the population into submission.

Then they had a problem. They knew that an army that had soaked its uniforms in the blood of its own people would be incapable of fighting against outside enemies. None of the soldiers would have reason to defend their homeland while serving under those brutal generals. Their solution was to purge the army of its leaders and to put new “clean and popular” leaders into place.

It worked. Although the initial brutality had met its limits, deception finished the job. Actually, it was much of a joint process all the way.

Here in America, even the current Russian diplomats are concerned about the “growing totalitarian bent of the Obama government.” Among many examples, Obama, in his National Security Strategy document, has ordered federal police to begin targeting Americans who oppose him, warning of individuals who have been “captivated by extremist ideology or causes.”

This thought is not to simply blame Obama. Our slide towards totalitarianism and away from freedom did not start with him. It is the nature of governments to gather power to themselves – no matter the political party or the individuals, and it has been going on big-time in America for generations. It takes great insight and character for our state governors to resist the destruction of freedom.

1. For those who are medically minded, whether professionals or not, it has been shown that every episode of depression increases the chance of dementia by 13%. That lends strength to the strategy of keeping depressed patients on their medications long-term, especially if they have a relapse after first discontinuance.

By the way; depression is reported to be an immune system reaction.

1. The first time Jesus came, He found God’s people filled with unbelief. Instead of setting up His kingdom He died in order to obtain grace for them and the rest of the world. At one point, while talking about His second coming, He asked a question of the religious leaders [Pharisees], which I will paraphrase: “When I come back next time, will I find faithfulness among My people? I have not found it this time [Luke 18:8].” He also told them: “I’m going to take My kingdom away from you and give it to another people who will do a better job with it.” That’s Matthew 21:43 and, again, that’s my paraphrase.
2. The charge that autism is caused by immunizations has been disproven 100%.
3. In America we have 36,000 new HIV positive persons per year, and the number per year is increasing. If there will ever be a vaccine for AIDS, it will be years from now. There is none on the horizon, at all. We do have a number of medications that usually control the disease, but do not cure.
4. When righteousness, truth and reason are lost, it is no surprise that the following reasons begin to make sense:
5. “If they don’t like it, they can turn off the T-V.” Purveyors of smut on T-V
6. “All I do is satisfy a demand.” All Capone
7. “If we don’t teach them to do it safely, they will do it unsafely.” Educators re: sex education
8. Time is short. Don’t waste time. Our mortality rate is hovering somewhere around 100%.
9. The Holy Spirit is a Helper, not a doer. We are the doers. He will lead us into speaking the truth; we must do the speaking.
10. We are in the hands of God, for better or for worse. Of course, it is always for better because even His “worse” actions are designed for His glory and our eternal betterment. His chastisements do not seem either good or beneficial at the time, but the yielded child will benefit from every action of our wise and loving Father.

Have you noticed that the Gulf of Mexico BP oil disaster occurred one day after president Obama treated the Prime Minister of Israel disrespectfully and arrogantly? Or, that Hurricane Katrina struck immediately after the United States pressured Israel to give up the Gaza strip? Even the amount of land involved was virtually equal.

There is an invisible Hand that guides the actions of nations, men, and nature.

1. The greatest miracle may be the prayer life of a saint in which there are no miracles.
2. If you have an organization that has outreach as its purpose, and there is little or no outreach, what is the solution? Actually, the correct question should be; “what is the problem?” But the question usually put forward, when the organization is a church, is, “what is the solution?”

So, when the solution is worked on instead of the problem, you see efforts to promote more outreach. You have more sermons and other efforts designed to promote reaching out, such as teachings on why we should reach out more, urgings to reach out, programs on how to reach out, and a sharpening of our focus on reaching out. A big dose of guilt for not reaching out is thought to be helpful.

All of that is based on promoting more of our purpose, not on getting us into better shape, desire, flow to reach out. That is beating a tired old horse to get him to run faster and further. Soon, we find ourselves beating a dead horse.

When the church sees its purpose as the problem, instead of seeing its paucity of Spirit, it beats on that dying horse. It needs to repent of having left its first love [Jesus} and pray for grace to return.

1. Character is of foremost importance in the kingdom – before our anointed-ness. Without character, tragedies can happen that might have been avoided. However, power in the kingdom is not based on character; it is based on faith. Those were anointed believers in Matthew 7:15-27.

The thing that draws us away from character development into things of faith-power is often the instant gratification offered at almost every turn. Power is instantly gratifying, isn’t it! We are attracted to the power gifts of the Spirit, and the acclaim that comes with them. Yet, the kingdom is not about power; it is about character. Obviously, it’s best when the two grow together.

Gifts without fruit eventually lead to disaster. On the other hand, fruit without gifts [character without power] can lead to frustration.

1. While talking to a spiritually responsible, full-time Christian brother who is never-the-less imperfect at times, it occurred to me to tell him that he should remember to mop up his spills. His life is like one who carries two very full glasses of water, which requires that he walk more carefully than do those whose glasses are half full. Occasionally he spills some water.

His spills should be mopped up quickly [spiritual sensitivity, convictability, repentance, confession to God and (properly) to involved man, restitution], more quickly than others’ spills. He should not only mop up quickly, but as one to whom the Lord has given full glasses, he needs to walk more carefully.

All of that “logic” seemed to have spiritual significance when I first thought of it.

1. Lawrence of Rome was put in charge of caring for the poor and administering Church goods when Sixtus became Bishop of Rome in 257 A.D. Emperor Valerian persecuted the Christians and had Sixtus beheaded on August 6th, 258 A.D. Lawrence was ordered to hand over the church’s wealth to the Roman prefect.

Lawrence asked for 3 days to do so. When the 3 days were up, he stood before the Roman prefect with the treasures – stretching his arm out over the poor, the blind and crippled and suffering, saying: “These are the precious treasure of the church; these are the treasure indeed, in whom the faith of Christ reigneth, in whom Jesus Christ has His mansion-place. What more precious jewels can Christ have, than those in whom He hath promised to dwell?”

He was whipped and punched and clubbed and pinched with hot tongs and finally roasted to death on a grid-iron. He and Sixtus yet live, but they have traded places.

1. A group of committed Christians, both church ordained and church non-ordained leaders, provided a list of observations of that which they could see the Lord doing at this time in Corpus Christi. One pastor was commissioned to condense that list, which is as follows,
2. Three fresh revelations: Is. 43:18

1. A Fresh Revelation: The Father is clarifying kingdom events by opening our eyes to His recently- spoken prophetic word. The true plan for His kingdom is a Church network [meaning much more than local church congregations], a strong, unified body, truly loving one another, and set apart for the purpose of revealing Jesus Christ to this lost generation. Eph. 4:14-16

His strategy is for His body to be alive and influential in every part of the world, church and the marketplace [business, educational, governmental, etc.].

2. An Increasing: Worldwide increase of catastrophic events, producing a perfect storm, which is two-fold in purpose: 1) to increase the believer’s desire to be sober, vigilantly seeking Him, and living a holy life, and 2) to show the unbeliever His sovereign power. Matt. 24:6-8 (that perfect storm).

He is increasing our influence and giving us a divine strategy of how He wants to enlarge our tents in spite of the storm.

3. A Positioning: He is drawing us as with a hook to a place where we can see His ways and priorities so that we may experience kingdom results. He is gathering us together so that we might stand and face this perfect storm together without fear.

B. Directives in light of the perfect storm: 1) Be still [Ps. 46:10-11] and 2) Wait [Is. 40:31]:

1. Personal Preparation: Set yourself apart unto the Father, spending quality time with Him as true worshipers just because He is God. Seek to understand the Father’s times and seasons and your place in the body of Christ. It is not the time to “tell Him what to do” but to seek to know what He is doing. Listen until you know and are able to articulate what He is doing.

2. What We Are Seeing: Accept that each of us is important to the Father’s plan but that He can use only those who submit to His strategy. What He is doing is much bigger than human limits; they are supernatural and eternal.

3. The Acts of the Believer: This flow requires that we be sold out and faithful to Him, humbly serving each other, traveling lightly, believing His word and not our circumstances, and remembering that the spiritual always defies the circumstantial. Shepherd the flock and speak of what He is doing. Don’t whine about circumstances.

26. “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.” – Proverb 14:34. Although America has never been perfect, over the years we have done many basic things righteously in the sight of God. Thus He fulfilled His word and exalted us. Humiliation, darkness and confusion came when we departed from that path. The remedy is national repentance.

Guess what! There is a hint of good news for us. The trend toward our repentance is shown, for example, by what types of books are being purchased across America. We are again buying books on our early history, the founding fathers, and documents like the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. There is strong evidence that we have a greater yearning than ever for understanding our foundations, as well as our national destiny and purpose.

Will this be our “Great Awakening?” Even though we are in the midst of a moral crisis now, there is evidence that the Lord is pouring out His grace and that America is not going to lie down and go away. Rather, we will rise and stand.

1. Alexander Solzhenitsyn pointed out that even biology teaches us that perpetual well-being is not good for any living thing. It is the challenges that make us strong. We are being strengthened for two purposes: 1) to survive, and 2) to be prepared for an even more important future.

For example, let’s apply ourselves to an overview of our recent history. The Great Depression of the early 1900s was not only about the stock market and business crash. It was not only about the worst drought in America’s history. No. Even though it must have looked to many like God and man had conspired to destroy America, it did not destroy us. Instead, it prepared us for a great purpose. It fashioned a generation of such character, resilience and resolve that we were able to stand against the spiritual and earthly evils of World War II.

After that victory we built the strongest, most prosperous nation in history. Yet, that was not simply for our benefit, because that prosperity was necessary to wear down another ultimate form of tyranny – Communism. It was the economic strength of America and the West that brought down the Iron Curtain.

Yet another “yet.” We are at war with another evil – self-imposed superficiality, enabled by a thick veil of political correctness and moral relativism, designed to choke out truth and clarity. We will not defeat an enemy that we will not see or understand. That is the reason for the veil. But, there is an awakening. Truth and clarity are breaking through. It is showing a contrast so clearly that [perhaps] we will not be easily fooled again.

Personally, the greatest relief and encouragement to me is that people are beginning to discover the truth. They are applying that “new-found virtue” to all areas of life. In Corpus Christi the Superintendent of Public Schools has initiated a Civility Summit, and the Chief of Police has begun a Faith Based Initiative in order to bring kingdom principles back into the city. We have lost a lot of confidence in government at all levels, but it seems that we have learned a lesson – stick with the truth even when a lie appears to be of personal benefit. We are tired of arrogance and condescending ways by the government, businessmen, the religious, and even our selves.

So, a time of opportunity is at hand and we are awakening to it. The Spirit of Truth is serious about what He is doing. We, including the church, can get in step with Him. We are here at this time for His purposes.

1. Humility is a powerful force. By itself it will lead us into personal righteousness [faithfulness and right actions]=[trusting and obeying] and into quality relationships.
2. “It’s kinda fun to do the impossible.” – Walt Disney

I’ll adapt that to, “It’s exciting to see the Lord doing the impossible, to be in on it ahead of time, and to be His necessary body and soul. He is (a) spirit; we are body and soul, with Him living within us. He picks out certain bodies and souls to place Himself within, then works to lead us into faithful obedience.

1. The other night Nancy and I were in a meeting that became a bore to me, so I started reading my Bible. After a while, I leaned over to Nancy and said; “I see you.” She asked, “What do you mean?” I told her, “I see you in Song of Solomon 4:9-10,” and handed my Bible to her. The rest of the story is too good to put into print.

Guys, call your wives. Tell them “I see you.” She will ask you what you mean. Tell her that you were reading in the Bible and saw her. Then read her those verses.

If it’s not true for you, don’t do it. If it is true -- happy trails.

1. If you conservatives need any support from the Lord for your political stance [which you shouldn’t] just pull out your Bible and read Ecclesiastes 10:2.
2. Our life’s battles are for special purposes. Let me point out one of them.

Spoils are the good results that are gathered after a successful battle [called a victory]. No battle; no spoils. Spoils are obtained only by victors after battle. Battles are often “expensive.” We get hurt, they cost us in many ways, we miss out on life’s picnics, etc. But, the spoils are necessary for building and repairing God’s house [O. T. ark and temple; N. T. saint or church]. See 1 Chronicles 26:27 and Genesis 14:11-16, 20.

1. I consider it important that we do not develop “A Vision for Corpus Christi.” God has His own purpose in that which He is doing here. He has clearly spoken it, in our language, and has published it fairly widely. Anyone who does not know His purpose and plan for Corpus Christi can be informed “today” by simply asking.

As said in Thought No. 29, God is a Spirit without a body, so He has chosen bodies and souls [called humans] in whom He has come to abide to implement His plans, not for us to devise them for Him. All that we would do along the line of “Developing a Vision,” needs to follow upon that which He has said.

Potential obstacles to our implementing His plan are; 1) intentional self-will, 2) our habits and traditions, 3) lack of desire and availability, 4) unbelief that the Lord has spoken to us in this matter, 5) the idea that Scripture is the limit of God’s plan for speaking to us, and 6) fragmentation of our love, brotherhood, unity, and functionality.

It’s O. K. to desire more or other than the Lord’s purpose in Corpus Christi, but we are here to do only His will – not additional good things. Jesus set that example for us – Matt. 26:39. He could have done many good things, including abolishing poverty and disease and driving out the Romans, but He did not. We do and will have our hands full acting responsibly in that to which He has already applied our bodies and souls.

1. Double negatives always make a positive, but double positives never make a negative. When a grammar teacher said that to her class, a smart-aleck student in the back of the room said, “Yeah, right!”
2. Do you worry sometimes if you are in danger of becoming a Christian fanatic, going too far or too fast with whatever the Lord has put in your heart to do? If you don’t, you are not going very far very fast. We will never know how far or how fast we have been called to until we have gone too far or too fast. I think the Lord delights in His occasional, “Slow down.”
3. Try giving someone some grace today. If they are off track, tell them [if you mean it] that the Lord is with them and is working 24/7 to set them on the right track – that the Hound of heaven has not and will never forsake them.
4. I’m going to tell you the story of Abraham’s early-documented years with the Lord. You will probably recall all of it without going to the Scriptures, but just in case, here are the four basic scriptures – Genesis 11:26 - 12:9, 20:12; Acts 7:1-4; and Hebrews 11:8. While you read the story, notice that I have held to Scripture, to known social traditions of Abraham’s time, and to honest license.

“Abraham’s father was Terah; his brothers were Nahor and Haran. Lot was Haran’s son, so Lot was Abraham’s nephew. Haran died in their homeland, which was Ur of the Chaldeans, Mesopotamia, the land of the Chaldeans.

Abraham and his brother, Nahor, married there at home. Abraham married his half-sister, Sarah. So there was the happy family of God-fearers, three generations of them, living among idol worshipers. We will see that they were a close family unit that related to one another in good, patriarchal order.

Terah knew or strongly felt that the Lord wanted them to move to the land of the Canaanites, but had not acted on it. When Abraham told him what the Lord had said [leave your country and your relatives, including your father and anyone of his descendents] and go where I will show you, Terah saw this as a confirmation of his longtime desire and leading. So, Terah, being the patriarch, took his son, Abraham, his grandson, Lot, and his daughter, Sarah and headed for the land of the Canaanites.

Note that Abraham did not take his father and the others, but that it was Terah, the patriarch, who took everyone. That put Abraham in several tough spots in which, to his credit, he trusted God. The tough spots: 1) Abraham had no idea in which direction he was to leave home, 2) his father was in charge of whom to take along and where to go, 3) his father was taking them to a certain destination which could have been in the wrong direction, 4) Abraham was leaving his country but certainly not leaving his relatives, and 5) his father was in charge. Abraham had to decide whether to break-up with the family or to disobey God. He decided to maintain God’s established order in the family and to trust God Himself to do something that would free him to obey all of God’s commands.

Off they went, toward Canaan. Then God acted. They got as far as Haran [a place of the same name as Abraham’s deceased brother] and settled there. They did not only stop there for a while, but settled/dwelt there until Terah died. I have no good idea how long they dwelt there, but probably for years [3 to 30??].

For the first time in this account, the Holy Spirit tells us what He had told Abraham back in Ur. That’s in Genesis 12:1-3. Now, for the first time, Abraham was able to do what the Lord had told him to do. When he left Haran, Abraham did not take Lot with him, but Lot went with him. That’s important, being the same type of situation as when Abraham left Ur -- he had not taken his Father with him, but his father had taken Abraham, et. al. As a result of Lot’s decision to go on with Abraham, Abraham did then take Lot with him, but Scripture indicates that Lot decided that matter by choice and that Abraham acted responsibly toward Lot, Abraham being the new patriarch.

There was something else that Abraham took with him from Haran besides his relatives – “.. all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, ..” Abraham was prospering through inheritance, good character, sweat, and God’s grace in innumerable ways.

Where to go? Well, his father had headed them toward Canaan so Abraham continued in that direction. When they arrived, they noticed that there were a lot of dangerous folks there. If they showed signs of settling down [in someone else’s land] they were in danger. They kept moving, until at one place the Lord confirmed to Abraham that he was in the land of promise. In fact, he kept moving until he was all the way out of the land into the Deep South – the Negev. Perhaps he was simply surveying God’s land- gift, but I think it was healthier for Abraham to keep moving than it was to claim residency, and he knew it. He continued southward until he was at the edge of the wilderness, in less desirable but less inhabited land.”

That’s the story. What I want you to see and think about is that Abraham trusted the Lord to get him out of a situation in which he himself would have had to act unrighteously if he was to immediately obey God’s command. We are instructed to obey God, not man [Acts 4:18-20, 31], when there is a conflict, but that is an entirely different situation than Abraham’s in regards to his faithful father and his dependent nephew, Lot.

1. Check this out about yourself first, then with your observation of others; it has been said that “Christians would rather die than think.” I’m not sure that that is a peculiarly Christian characteristic, but we are not exempt from it.
2. The truth is not always to be spoken, even when it is in love. The time may not be ripe, such as the person may not be able to bear it [John 16:12].
3. Intractable problems may indicate a lack of courageous leadership. Christians should not look at the world’s problems with either despair or condemnation. We are and have solutions to those problems. Some don’t want our solutions, but in some way they should be offered. In fact, our solutions should be show-cased in our lives so others will have more than good words to go by. That can be costly but it’s part of the Master’s design.
4. A husband will never have the wife he wants until he dies to himself. A wife will never have the husband she wants until he dies to himself.
5. Here is an opinion; and you know that I am always reluctant to express my opinion. If you feel lonesome or abandoned, it is probably God’s plan. It may also be because of your own withdrawal. It is seldom due to others.
6. The Lord is raising up leaders who are not intimidated by others, who pray, who will go on the attack when necessary [Joshua 11:7], and will remain united under stress. Joshua, David and Jesus are good examples of that sort of leadership. The odds are considered, but only in regards to the countermeasures to be used.
7. The following was prepared for local use.

FELLOW CORPUS CHRISTIANS; ARE WE FINALLY TIRED OF THE WILDERNESS?

ARE WE READY TO COME OUT OF THE WILDERNESS, TO CROSS THE JORDAN? TO CROSS THE JORDAN IS NOT TO ENTER HEAVEN [THERE ARE NO BATTLES IN HEAVEN] BUT TO ENTER INTO GOD’S REST HERE ON EARTH, WHERE WE LIVE BY HIS PROMISES AND POWER.

JOSHUA WILL SHOW US THE WAY:

1. CH. 6 – JERICHO – AN IMMEDIATE TASTE OF THE FUTURE, OF OUR POSSIBILITIES.
2. CH. 7, 8 – AI – THIS WILL HAPPEN AMONG US: PERSONAL, INDEPENDENT ACTION AND GREED.
3. CH. 9 – GIBEON – DEPENDED UPON WHO THEY WERE [IDENTITY OF SONS OF THE LIVING GOD] AND ACCUMULATED EXPERIENCE [WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE], INSTEAD OF INTIMACY WITH THE LORD AND STAYING IN COMMUNICATION WITH HIM.
4. CH. 10:1-28 – FIVE KINGS RE: GIBEON – TEACHINGTHE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING COVENANT UNDER ADVERSE AND EMBARRASING CIRCUMSTANCES VS. BREAKING COVENANT BASED UPON OTHERS’ DECEPTIONS AND SELF-PURPOSES. CPR. THE LORD’S ONE-SIDED MAKING AND KEEPING OF COVENANT WITH US. ONCE WE COVENANT, IT IS UNBREAKABLE [UNLESS THAT IS WRITTEN INTO THE COVENANT]. CPR. THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT OF RELATIONSHIPS [UNBREAKABLE] WITH THE MOSAIC COVENANT OF PERFORMANCE [BREAKABLE BUT RESTORABLE].
5. CH. 10:29-43 – FIVE KINGS OF SOUTHERN PALESTINE – GREAT VICTORIES FOLLOWED ISRAEL’S GREAT VICTORY OVER THE TEMPTATION TO BREAK COVENANT WITH THE GIBEONITES.
6. CH. 11 – MANY KINGS – THE ENEMY SAW THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL -- THEIR END WAS NEAR. CPR. THE EVIL SPIRITS IN SWINE OF SAMARIA.
7. V. 4 – LIMITLESS EVIL, DESIGNED AT LEAST TO DISTURB ISRAEL’S REST AND OBEDIENCE.
8. V. 5 – UNITED EVIL WAS NOT A FACTOR IN ISRAEL’S ULTIMATE VICTORY.
9. V. 6 – THERE’S NOTHING LIKE GETTING GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE VICTORY PARADE AND OCCUPATION BEFORE THE BATTLE STARTS. NOTE: DON’T USE THE ENEMIES’ METHODS [HORSES AND CHARIOTS].
10. V. 7-9 – ATTACK, SUDDENLY! THAT’S OUR ATTITUDE AND METHOD, WHICH IS VARIABLE. EPHESIANS 6 DESCRIBES OUR EQUIPMENT, NOT OUR ATTITUDE OR METHOD.

QUESTION: DO WE HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IT COST JOSHUA AND ISRAEL [INDIVIDUALLY AND CORPORATELY] TO COME TO THIS PLACE IN GOD? ARE WE THERE? ARE WE READY TO PAY THAT COST? OR, ARE OUR FAMILIES [CONGREGATIONS], OUR TRIBES [DENOMINATIONS], AND OUR “ME” MORE IMPORTANT? ALL ISRAEL [AT LEAST THOSE WHO MADE IT THROUGH THE WILDERNESS] HAD COMITTED TO AND LEARNED TO PAY THE PRICE OF FAITHFULNESS [OBEDIENCE, CORPORATE UNITY, TRUST].

1. V. 10 – OBEDIENCE.
2. V. 16-19 – MOP-UP.
3. V. -- 20 – GOD REVEALED [AGAIN] HIS REASON FOR OUR MANY AND STRONG OPPOSITIONS.
4. V. 21-22 – AND HE SAVED OUR DESSERT FOR LAST.
5. V. 23 – THEY HAD PEACE BECAUSE THEY HAD LEARNED TO LIVE AND FIGHT AT REST.
6. When you come to the end of your rope, you will find there a Knot. Hang on to that Knot. He is there for that purpose.
7. The truth is truly more remarkable than fiction. Yesterday I read the following on the back of a septic service pumping truck: “A flush is better than a full house.” If you don’t mind, I’ll not try to spiritualize that.
8. He is coming soon.