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Sermon Notes

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The Eternally Glorious Backward Look, Week 5

The Grand Plan, The Control of Tyrants, Spiritual Warfare, Heroes, Providences, Obscure People and Movements

The Premise: In heaven, God will reveal his mighty works in history to his redeemed, to the praise of his own glory and for the wonder and joy of his people.

I. The Grand Plan Revealed at Last

A. The Existence of God's Overarching Plan... from Before Time Began

1. The Gospel Planned Before the Beginning of Time

*Ephesians 1:4-6 For he chose us in [Christ] **before the creation of the world** to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.*

1 Corinthians 2:7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory

*2 Timothy 1:9-10 [God] has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus **before time began.** ¹⁰ This has now been made evident through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus*

*Titus 1:2-3 in the hope of eternal life that God, who cannot lie, promised **before time began,** ³ and has in His own time revealed His message in the proclamation that I was entrusted with*

2. The Plan and the Hand

*Isaiah 14:26-27 **This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations.** ²⁷ For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?*

Ephesians 1:11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will

3. The plan extends to the smallest and greatest details of history

Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

B. The Linear View of History

Revelation 22:13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

God planned a sequence of events... first this, then that, then the other

The entire sequence is more complex than we can possibly imagine

C. The Complexity of Providence

Romans 11:33-34 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ³⁴ "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"

When Paul asserts that God's paths are "beyond tracing out," he uses a fascinating Greek word that pictures a tracker, like one who follows a trail—a hunter, following the trail of an animal; a detective, following the trail of a fugitive; a bloodhound, pursuing a quarry. He's saying God's ways are ULTIMATELY UNTRACKABLE

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: ² a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, ³ a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, ⁴ a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, ⁵ a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, ⁶ a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, ⁷ a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, ⁸ a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

History is vastly complex... even a single day of history is beyond our ability to comprehend.

1. The tapestry illustration

2. The watch illustration
3. The Apollo 11 illustration
 - a. Saturn V rocket, heaviest rocket in history
 - b. What was launched: five different vehicles in a series of stages
 - c. 5.5 million separate parts
 - d. 400,000 scientists, engineers, technicians
 - e. One mission: to put a man on the moon, and bring him back safely to the earth
 - f. 195 hour mission with seven distinct phases
4. This mission: vastly more complex!!

Revelation 7:9-10 *After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."*

Revelation 7:13 *Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes-- who are they, and where did they come from?"*

D. J.I. Packer's "York Signal Box Error"... Finally Answered

1. *Knowing God*: "God's Wisdom and Ours"
2. Argues against us having a full comprehension of the details of providence in this world
3. He uses an illustration of the "York Signal Box Error"

"If you stand at the end of a platform on York station, you can watch a constant succession of engine and train movements...But you will only be able to form a very rough and general idea of the overall plan in terms of which all these movements are being determined...If, however, you are privileged enough to be taken by one of the high-ups into the magnificent electrical signal box...you will see...the entire track layout for five miles on either side of the station, with little glow worm lights moving or stationary on the different tracks to show the signalmen at a glance where every engine and train is. At once you will be able to look at the whole situation through the eyes of the men who control it: you will see from the diagram why it was that this train had to be signaled to a halt, and that

one diverted from its normal running line, and that one parked temporarily in a siding. The why and the wherefore of all these movements becomes plain, once you can see the overall position.

Now, the mistake that is commonly made is to suppose that this is an illustration of what God does when He bestows wisdom: to suppose, in other words, that the gift of wisdom consists in a deepened insight into the providential meaning and purpose of events going on around us, an ability to see why God has done what He has done in a particular case, and what He is going to do next.

People feel that if they were really walking close to God, so that He could impart wisdom to them freely, then they would, so to speak, find themselves in the signal-box; they would discern the real purpose of everything that happened to them, and it would be clear to them at every moment how God was making all things work together for good. Such people spend much time poring over the book of providence, wondering why God should have allowed this or that to take place, whether they should take it as a sign to stop doing one thing and start doing another, or what they should deduce from it. If they end up baffled, they put it down to their own lack of spirituality."

Final statement:

"Thus the effect of His gift of wisdom is to make us more humble, more joyful, more godly, more quick-sighted as to His will, more resolute in the doing of it and less troubled (not less sensitive, but less bewildered) than we were at the dark and painful things of which our life in this fallen world is full. The New Testament tells us that the fruit of wisdom is Christlikeness – peace, and humility, and love (Jas. 3:17) – and the root of it is faith in Christ (1 Cor. 3:18; cf. 1 Tim. 3:15) as the manifested wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24; 30). ...

Let us see to it, then, that our own quest for wisdom takes the form of a quest for these things, and that we do not frustrate the wise purpose of God by neglecting faith and faithfulness in order to pursue a kind of knowledge which **in this world** it is not given to us to have.

My question: WHAT ABOUT IN THE NEXT WORLD? What about in heaven? Will God take us into the signal box of the universe to show us in retrospect all that he decided to do in history for the good of his elect people? To show us the details of providence??

E. My 15-Foot Wall Chart

1. Full title: *The Wall Chart of World History: From Earliest Times to the Present*

2. Professor Edward Hull, M.A., L.L.D., F.R.S.
3. Published 1988 by Dorset Press
4. 15 feet long, in 14 panels, from Adam and Eve to (among others) Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and Deng Xiaoping of China
5. The chart is made up of colored streams... like a river breaking in to separate smaller rivers, some of which reconnect
6. One panel goes from 13th century through 17th century AD
 - a. On the extreme left of the panel (the year 1300) there are 25 streams: from top to bottom—Scotland, England, France, Austria, Bohemia, Germany, Hungary, Prussia, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Castile, Aragon, Sicily, Naples, Papal Rome, Greek Empire, Ottoman Empire (Turkey), Egypt, Persia, Tartary, China
 - b. The individual streams are broken into their respective heads of state. Choosing Russia, the names are (among others) Basil III, Ivan III, Ivan IV (“the Terrible”), Michael, Alexis, Peter (“the Great”)
 - c. The number of heads of state on this panel: approximately 382. (Very difficult to count them accurately)
 - d. This panel does not cover: Japan, Mongolia, southeast Asia, half of India’s history in this time, Africa, South America, Central America, or North America... at all.
 - e. This chart mentions significant events and leaders who were not heads of state... but certainly not exhaustively
7. Basic point: the complexity of human history is mind-boggling... God’s paths are “beyond tracing out”, and we “cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end

F. Christ’s Commitment to Tell Us Everything

John 15:15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Like God with Abraham:

Genesis 18:17 Then the LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?”

G. Aspects of the Plan

1. God's sovereign control over all nations and world history

Deuteronomy 32:8 *When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel.*

Deuteronomy 2:19-23 *When you come to the Ammonites, do not harass them or provoke them to war, for I will not give you possession of any land belonging to the Ammonites. I have given it as a possession to the descendants of Lot." ²⁰ (That too was considered a land of the Rephaites, who used to live there; but the Ammonites called them Zamzummities. ²¹ They were a people strong and numerous, and as tall as the Anakites. The LORD destroyed them from before the Ammonites, who drove them out and settled in their place. ²² The LORD had done the same for the descendants of Esau, who lived in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites from before them. They drove them out and have lived in their place to this day. ²³ And as for the Avvites who lived in villages as far as Gaza, the Caphtorites coming out from Caphtor destroyed them and settled in their place.)*

Acts 17:26 *From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.*

2. God's control over the rise and fall of massive world empires

Psalms 75:6-7 *No one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt a man. ⁷ But it is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another.*

3. God puts kings in place and decides how long they will rule

Exodus 9:16 [God said to Pharaoh] *But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.*

4. God's control over kings and their decisions

Proverbs 21:1 *The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.*

5. Whether that king knows God or not

Isaiah 45:1-7 *"This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: ² I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. ³ I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name. ⁴ For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my*

chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, though you do not acknowledge me. ⁵ I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, ⁶ so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. ⁷ I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things.

6. Rise and fall of empires

- a. Daniel 2: Nebuchadnezzar's statue
- b. Daniel 7: Four beasts from the sea
- c. The Lesson... Daniel 4: God's sovereign rule

Daniel 4:17 the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.

All the days of every human being are measured out ahead of time:

Psalm 139:16 All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

7. The point of God's sovereign control: his glory in the salvation of the elect

Acts 17:27 God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

8. The spread of the gospel "From Jerusalem to the Ends of the Earth"

Luke 24:46-47 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Isaiah 66:19 "I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations-- to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations.

- a. Every era of church history will be recounted
- b. The lessons and heroes/heroines from each era will be heard, studied, praised... to the praise of God's glory
- c. The early church era... from the Apostles, through the gradual spiritual conquest of the Roman Empire

- d. The spread of the gospel among the barbarian tribes in Europe
 - e. The movement of the gospel east toward India (by Thomas)
 - f. Slowly, gradually, the light of Christ spread in every generation
 - g. God does not pursue geography by people... GPS locations are not so important as the unconverted elect
9. Each of the multitude of the redeemed from every nation on earth will have been redeemed in their own way... called from their own nation, language, and people to cross over from death to life through faith in Christ

Richard Baxter: "God breaketh not all men alike."

The elect will get redeemed one at a time by the hearing of the gospel of Jesus Christ with faith. But who the evangelist (or series of evangelists) will be is varied.

Mothers and fathers will lead a huge percentage to Christ

Brothers and sisters will lead many to Christ

Extended family members will lead many to Christ

Tribal/community leaders will lead many to Christ

Traveling evangelists, cross-cultural missionaries, pastors, Bible teachers will lead many to Christ

Remote media, including printed materials, telegraph, telephone, radio, television, internet will have played a role in leading many to Christ

Beyond all of this, God will be controlling the matrix of unfolding current events:

Wars and rumors of wars will play a role:

Illustration:

In 1536, John Calvin, a 27-year old scholar from France, was moving from the persecution in his homeland to find a quiet place for study. But current events intervened. While he was traveling to Strasbourg to find his quiet retreat, a war between Charles V (Holy Roman Emperor, from Spain) and Francis I (of France) resulted in troop movements that blocked the road to that city. So he had to take a detour through Geneva, Switzerland. There, William Farel heard he was in his city and went to persuade him to stay in Geneva to aid in the reformation there. Calvin wanted to get to a quiet

place and rest, but Farel, burning with zeal, shouted, "May God curse your rest if you do not help with this work!" Calvin was afraid of God's curse and began his life's work as a reformer in that city.

John Piper:

"In retrospect one has to marvel at the providence of God that he should so arrange armies to position his pastors where he would!"

10. In heaven, the details of how God controlled the events of human history to guarantee the salvation of every single elect person will be a magnificent story to tell

II. God's Final Laugh Over Tyrants

A. Psalm 2

Psalm 2:1-9 Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? ² The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. ³ "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters." ⁴ The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. ⁵ Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, ⁶ "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill." ⁷ I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. ⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. ⁹ You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

Acts 4:25-28 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.' ²⁷ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

B. God's Laughter = His Power to Deal Even More Subtly Than They Do

1. God laughs at the wicked... it is a laugh of derision that they think they can oppose him
2. God's laughter also is in the way he twists the plans of the wicked back on themselves

Psalm 18:25-26 To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, ²⁶ to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd.

“Shrewd” = tricky, twisted... almost devious

Job 5:13 He catches the wise in their craftiness, and the schemes of the wily are swept away.

Proverbs 26:27 If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it; if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him.

3. Like Haman, who plotted to destroy Mordecai and all the Jewish people; he specifically planned to hang Mordecai on a gallows he had built in his yard

Esther 7:9 Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, "A gallows seventy-five feet high stands by Haman's house. He had it made for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king." The king said, "Hang him on it!"

C. Judgment Over Tyrants

Isaiah 14:9-11 The grave below is all astir to meet you at your coming; it rouses the spirits of the departed to greet you-- all those who were leaders in the world; it makes them rise from their thrones-- all those who were kings over the nations.¹⁰ They will all respond, they will say to you, "You also have become weak, as we are; you have become like us." ¹¹ All your pomp has been brought down to the grave, along with the noise of your harps; maggots are spread out beneath you and worms cover you.

D. Examples from History

1. The systematic persecution of Christians by various Roman Emperors resulted in an explosion of Christianity across the entire empire. For this reason, Tertullian said, “The blood of martyrs is seed.” The public conversion of the emperor Constantine to Christianity in the year AD 312 marked a clear display of the progress of Christianity amongst the nobility and the military of Rome
2. Voltaire’s defamation of Christianity... and God’s final word
 - a. Voltaire (1694-1778) was a French Enlightenment philosopher, satirist, and playwright
 - b. Voltaire’s hatred of Christianity

“The Bible. That is what fools have written, what imbeciles commend, what rogues teach and young children are made to learn by heart” (Voltaire, *Philosophical Dictionary*, 1764).

“We are living in the twilight of Christianity” (*Philosophical Dictionary*).

In a 1767 letter to Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, he wrote: "Christianity is the most ridiculous, the most absurd, and bloody religion that has ever infected the world...My one regret in dying is that I cannot aid you in this noble enterprise of extirpating the world of this infamous superstition."

Voltaire ended every letter to friends with "Ecrasez l'infame" (crush the infamy – the Christian religion).

In his pamphlet, *The Sermon on the Fifty* (1762) he attacked viciously the Old Testament, biblical miracles, biblical contradictions, the Jewish religion, the Christian God, the virgin birth and Christ's death on the cross.

Of the Four Gospels he wrote, "What folly, what misery, what puerile and odious things they contain [and the Bible is filled] with contradictions, follies, and horrors

Voltaire's prediction concerning the Bible

"One hundred years from my day, there will not be a Bible on earth except one that is looked upon by an antiquarian curiosity-seeker." (1776)

c. God laughs last

In August 1836, only fifty-eight years after Voltaire's death, Rev. William Acworth of the British and Foreign Bible Society saw with his own eyes Voltaire's former residence in Geneva, Switzerland, *Les Delices*, being used as a "repository for Bibles and Religious tracts." The house at this time was occupied by Colonel Henri Tronchin (1794-1865), who served as the president of the Evangelical Society of Geneva from 1834-39.

Acworth's Statement: "I went through Geneva, and was much refreshed by meeting the Committee of the Evangelical Society, with whose proceedings and objects I was so much gratified, that I wrote to this Society to make a liberal grant of 10,000 copies of the French Scriptures to promote the objects of that Society. Our committee have only granted 5,000; but I have no doubt they will, err long, send the other 5,000. Before I left Geneva, my friend observed. "Probably you will like to see the house where Voltaire lived, and where he wrote his plays." Prompted by the spirit of curiosity, so characteristic of an Englishman, to visit the house of the celebrated infidel, I was about to put on my hat to walk into the county, when he said, "It is not necessary you should put on your hat" and he introduced me over the threshold of one room to another, and said, "tis the room where Voltaire's play were acted for the amusement to himself and his friend." And what was my gratification in observing that that room had been converted into sort of Repository for Bibles and Religious Tracts. Oh! my Christ Friends, that the spirit of infidelity had been there, to witness the results of other vaticinations [acts of prophesying] respecting the downfall of Christianity!"

<https://bellatorchristi.com/2019/03/18/voltaires-prediction-home-and-the-bible-society-truth-or-myth/>

Final mocking by God:

Over 100 million Bibles are printed/downloaded worldwide *every single year*.

The Bible Society estimated that between 1815 and 1975, over 2.5 billion copies of the Bible were published.

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

3. Mao and Christianity in China

Mao Zedong, the leader of Communist China, was fiercely opposed to Christianity. He carried out a long program of violence against Christians, imprisoning them, and killing many. As the number of Christians kept going down because he was killing so many, he decided to stop killing and to try to humiliate Christians and debase the very idea of Christianity itself. He noted that Christians gain strength from being together, so he scattered Christians all over China. Furthermore, the communist party gave humiliating jobs to these scattered Christians, like garbage collectors, who went house to house every day collecting garbage and talking to people about Jesus. My missions professor, Christy Wilson, said "The Chinese government became the largest missions sending agency in the twentieth century!"

4. Cuban doctors in Iran

Just heard this at last week's missionary meeting in Amsterdam. American missionaries can in no way gain access to Iran, which is fiercely Islamic. But for some reason the communist government of Cuba has a strong relationship with the Islamic government of Iran. And Iran has asked Cuba to send doctors to care for their people. As it turns out, there is an amazing revival going on right now in Cuba, and evangelical Cuban doctors are lining up to go care for the people of Iran... and seek to lead them to Christ!

So... the communist government is paying for the evangelization of the Islamic people of Iran!

Psalm 2:4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

III. Hero Stories and Amazing Providences

A. The "Great Assembly"

Psalm 40:9-10 I proclaim righteousness in the great assembly; I do not seal my lips, as you know, O LORD. ¹⁰ I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and salvation. I do not conceal your love and your truth from the great assembly.

B. Hero Stories

1. Hebrews 11: the "Hall of Faith"

Hebrews 11:32-40 And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, ³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. ³⁵ Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. ³⁶ Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. ³⁷ They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated-- ³⁸ the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. ³⁹ ¶ These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. ⁴⁰ God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

2. Martyrs and their Great Rewards: *Foxe's Book of Martyrs, Jesus Freaks, Extreme Devotion*

Matthew 5:11-12 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Revelation 6:9-11 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰ They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" ¹¹ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

[During the terrifying reign of the Beast from the Sea] *Revelation 14:12-13 This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus. ¹³ Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."*

3. "I Will Give You a Great Name"

2 Samuel 7:8-9 "Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. ⁹ I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth.

4. The Mighty Men (and Women) Listed... and Known

2 Samuel 23:8 These are the names of David's mighty men: Josheb-Basshebeth, a Tahkemonite, was chief of the Three; he raised his spear against eight hundred men, whom he killed in one encounter.

2 Samuel 23:9-10 Next to him was Eleazar son of Dodai the Ahohite. As one of the three mighty men, he was with David when they taunted the Philistines gathered at Pas Dammim for battle. Then the men of Israel retreated, ¹⁰ but he stood his ground and struck down the Philistines till his hand grew tired and froze to the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day. The troops returned to Eleazar, but only to strip the dead.

C. Looking at the Wounds and Scars

Pilgrim's Progress, Part II:

The death of Mr. Valiant-for-Truth:

After this it was noised abroad that Mr. VALIANT-FOR-TRUTH was taken with a summons ... and had this for a token that the summons was true, that his pitcher was broken at the fountain.

When he understood it, he called for his friends, and told them of it. Then said he,

"I am going to my Father's; and though with great difficulty I have gotten here, yet now I do not regret all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. **My sword** I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage; and **my courage and skill** to him that can get it. **My marks and scars** I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought his battles who now will be my Rewarder."

Amy Carmichael's Poem

Hast Thou No Scar

by Amy Carmichael

Hast thou no scar?
 No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?
 I hear thee sung as mighty in the land,
 I hear them hail thy bright ascendant star,
 Hast thou no scar?
 Hast thou no wound?
 Yet, I was wounded by the archers, spent.
 Leaned me against the tree to die, and rent
 By ravening beasts that compassed me, I swooned:
 Hast thou no wound?
 No wound? No scar?
 Yet as the Master shall the servant be,
 And pierced are the feet that follow Me;
 But thine are whole. Can he have followed far
 Who has no wound nor scar?

“Lord of the Rings”: Theoden, King of Rohan, is dying on the battlefield in front of Minas Tirith after fighting with great courage and valor. His final words:

“I go to my fathers... in whose mighty company I shall not now feel ashamed.”

Heavenly memory involves no shame for any of God's servants... but that doesn't mean that we will not know and honor those who sacrificed so much for the Kingdom of God. Honor will be in proportion to the level of sacrifice.

D. My Favorite Hero Stories from Church History

1. Felicitas: 165 AD; boldly said to the Roman prefect prosecuting her for being a Christian: “While I live, I shall defeat you. And if you kill me, I shall defeat you even more.”

2. Columba: 565 AD; missionary to Scotland, camped outside the gates of the fortress of Brude, the terrifying King of the Picts in the Scottish highlands, and boldly refused to leave until he could witness to him... he led him to Christ
3. Boniface: 723 AD; with amazing boldness, chopped down a sacred oak in Thuringia and preached the gospel to the German people listening to him there
4. Olaf Tryggvason (b. 963-d. 1000): Viking warrior, heard of a Christian hermit who could predict the future; the hermit prophesied to Olaf, "You will become a famous king and work famous deeds. You will bring man men to the true faith and baptism, and in so doing benefit both yourself and may other. And lest you doubt my answer, let this be a token: when you come to your ships you shall encounter a traitor band, and you will yourself receive a mortal wound and be borne on your shield to the ship. But you will recover from this wound within seven days and be baptized soon thereafter." It all happened as the man predicted; Olaf eventually became king of Norway and led many to faith in Christ
- 5.

E. Amazing Providences

Adoniram Judson (1788-1805), raised in a godly family with a faithful pastor as a father; went to Brown University in Providence, RI, and met a worldly free-thinker named Jacob Eames. This fellow student corrupted Adoniram's faith and led him to embrace loose theology and morals. Years later, after graduating from college, Judson was drifting in life; sought to become an actor, but no one would hire him. Rode on his horse to visit a relative; spent the night in an Inn. In another room, a man was crying out in bitter agony and pain all night long. Finally he became quiet. In the morning, Adoniram went to pay his bill and leave. He asked the innkeeper about the wretched man who had cried out all night. He said that, unfortunately, the man had died. When Judson asked his name, the innkeeper said "Jacob Eames."

Judson's reaction:

"That hell should open in that country inn and snatch Jacob Eames, his dearest friend and guide, from the next bed - this could not, simply could not, be pure coincidence."

Judson was converted soon after.

IV. The History of the Spiritual Realms Unveiled

A. The Invisible World Around Us

Mark 1:10 *As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.*

Revelation 4:1 *After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven.*

B. What Daniel 10 Teaches Us

Daniel 10:4-10 *On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, ⁵ I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. ⁶ His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. ⁷ I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. ⁸ So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. ⁹ Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground. ¹⁰ ¶ A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees.*

Daniel 10:12-14 *"Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. ¹³ But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."*

C. Heavenly Warfare Unveiled

D. The "Hedge of Protection" Unveiled

Job 1:9-10 *"Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. ¹⁰ "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land.*

1 Corinthians 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

E. "Power Encounters" Unveiled

Martin Luther and the devils of Worms:

"Unless I am restrained by force or the emperor rescinds his invitation, I will enter Worms under the banner of Christ against all the gates of hell."

[To a friend warning him not to go to Worms] "Were there as many devils in Worms as there are roof-tiles, I would go on"

John Paton, missionary to the New Hebrides; spent a whole night hiding in a tree while bloodthirsty cannibals hunted him:

"I climbed into the tree, and was left there alone in the bush. The hours I spent there live all before me as if it were but of yesterday. I heard the frequent discharge of muskets, and the yells of the savages. Yet I sat there among the branches, as safe in the arms of Jesus! Never, in all my sorrows did my Lord draw nearer to me, and speak more soothingly to my soul, than when the moonlight flickered among these chestnut leaves, and the night air played on my throbbing brow, as I told all my heart to Jesus. Alone, yet not alone! If it be to glorify my God, I will not grudge to spend many nights alone in such a tree, to feel again my Saviour's spiritual presence, to enjoy His consoling fellowship."

Brother Andrew, smuggling Bibles into Communist Romania:

He could only hope the border guards were moving swiftly and not paying much attention, which might allow him to pass through undetected. But just as he was hoping this, Brother Andrew saw the guards stop the car at the front of the line. He watched, in anticipation, as the vehicle's owners were forced to take out all of the car's contents and spread them on the ground for inspection. Each car that followed received the same treatment, with the fourth car's inspection lasting the longest. The guard took a full hour to sift through it, including removing hubcaps, taking the engine apart, and even removing the seats.

"Dear Lord," Brother Andrew remembers praying, "What am I going to do?"

As he prayed, a bold idea came to Brother Andrew. "I know that no amount of cleverness on my part can get me through this border search. Dare I ask for a miracle? Let me take some of the Bibles out and leave them in the open where they will be seen."

Putting the Bibles out in the open would truly be depending on God, rather than his own intelligence, he thought. So when the guards ushered Andrew forward, he did just this. "I handed him my papers and started to get out. But his knee was against the door, holding it closed."

And then, the almost unbelievable happened.

The guard looked at Brother Andrew's passport and abruptly waved him on. "Surely thirty seconds had not passed," he remembers.

Brother Andrew started the engine and began pulling away, all the while wondering if he was supposed to pull over so the car could be taken apart and examined. "I coasted forward, my foot poised above the brake. Nothing happened. I looked out the rear mirror. The guard was waving the next car to a stop, indicating to the driver that he had to get out."

God had cleared the way for Brother Andrew to smuggle the Bible to Christians who had no access to God's Word.

F. Satan's Defeats in Every Generation Reviewed

Revelation 12:7-9 *And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸ But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon was hurled down-- that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.*

Luke 10:17-18 *The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." ¹⁸ He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.*

James 4:7 *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

V. Obscure People, Movements, and Moments

A. Most of God's Works Have Never Been Recorded

John 20:30 *Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.*

John 21:25 *Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.*

B. Most of God's People are Obscure and Average

1 Chronicles 7:13-16 *The sons of Naphtali: Jahziel, Guni, Jezer and Shillem--the descendants of Bilhah. ¹⁴ The descendants of Manasseh: Asriel was his descendant through his Aramean concubine. She gave birth to Makir the father of Gilead. ¹⁵ Makir took a wife from among the Huppites and Shuppites. His sister's name was Maacah. Another descendant was named Zelophehad, who had only daughters. ¹⁶ Makir's wife Maacah gave birth to a son and named him Peresh. His brother was named Sheresh, and his sons were Ulam and Rakem.*

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 *Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to*

*shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸
He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things-- and the things
that are not-- to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before
him.*

C. Speculation is All We Have

Perhaps a whole missionary movement happened in the middle ages in which the gospel spread to some unreached part of the world; some of the people came to Christ; that Christian community grew and flourished for a century or two... completely unrecorded by historians. Then something wiped them out. The story will be told in heaven

Or an obscure woman who cared for plague victims during the Black Death in Europe in 1350... she risked her life for infected dying people, then died herself of the disease. Honored in heaven!!

D. Heaven's Backward Look Will Reveal Everything