

# Rebellious Children and Old Testament Penalties, 1

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*Scandalous Texts*

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**Bible Text:** 2 Kings 2:23-25; Deuteronomy 21:18-23  
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Deuteronomy 21, beginning at verse 18, and that is on page 306 as we continue this study on scandalous texts. If this one doesn't trip you up, I don't know what will.

18 If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, 19 his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. 20 They shall say to the elders, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a profligate [or glutton] and a drunkard.' 21 Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid.

The Word of the Lord. ["Thanks be to God."]

*Lord, help me as I attempt to unpack two passages of Scripture that we find deeply troubling. May I be faithful as a teacher of your Word, to teach the Word, to hold back nothing that is profitable, and always to interpret Scripture in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ, as we pray in his name for help. Amen.*

Well, I want you to turn with me now to another passage of Scripture, and that is 2 Kings 2. 2 Kings 2, page 572 and this is very much in line with what we just read. Verse 23, 2 Kings 2:23.

23 From there Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, some youths came out of the town and jeered at

him. ‘Go on up, you baldhead!’ they said. ‘Go on up, you baldhead!’ 24 He turned around, looked at them and called down a curse on them in the name of the LORD. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths. 25 And he went on to Mount Carmel and from there returned to Samaria.

Now those two passages really dovetail with one another, and we need to look at the background.

First of all, the passage in Kings is this, Elijah, who was the teacher or master of Elisha, has been taken up to heaven, and he was told that if he could see when Elijah was taken up to heaven, that he would receive a double portion of the power of the Spirit of God (2 Kings 2:9-14). And he did. He saw it. And Elijah was literally, without ever dying, caught up to heaven in a chariot of fire. That means that the angels of God came, and what Elisha saw was a literal chariot made out of fire, but it didn’t harm Elijah. Elijah was removed.

Elijah had served the Lord earnestly against Baal worship or Ba’al (בַּעַל, bā’al). Baal was a nature god and Baal’s worship was very sensual, it involved the shedding of blood, it involved sacrifice, it involved gross immorality, and so Elijah battled with the prophets of Baal. God had cursed the northern kingdom of Israel because the northern kingdom of Israel had abandoned the worship of the true God and under the influence of Ahab and his wife Jezebel—and you can see in her name, Ba’al (Jezebel’s name actually means “Where is the prince?” זְבוּל + אֵי, or, “z’bhul designates the realm of the gods, as it does at Ugarit” (J. Gamberoni in Botterweck, G. Johannes, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, eds. (2006) *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Revised; (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), Vol. 4, p. 31)

They began to worship the Ba’als, the Baalim (בְּעָלִים, be’alim), in other words, the local gods of fertility and nature. And then there comes this great event on Mount Carmel, and you recall that event, it’s one of the great stories in the Bible, that Elijah meets King Ahab and the prophets of Baal, and it’s amazing to hear the story because he says the God who answers with fire is the true God (1 Kings 18:24).

And so, he encourages the prophets of Baal to do all of their shenanigans, and they go and they do this, and they do that. They’ve got an altar to Baal. There’s an altar to the Lord. And so, what happens is the prophets of Baal

become increasingly desperate and so they're going to try to excite Baal. What will excite Baal? What will make him move into action? It's the shedding of human blood, and so they begin to lash themselves and cut themselves and great gaping wounds and the blood is flowing everywhere as they go into a frenzy (1 Kings 18:28).

And you know Elijah was so polite. He said, "You know, yell louder. Maybe he's gone, maybe he's this, maybe he's in the bathroom," actually the way you could translate the Hebrew text (1 Kings 18:27, *siyg*, שִׁיג). He's mocking them, and he mocks them because it is a nature religion that they are seeking Baal to relieve Israel of three and a half years of no rain and therefore incredible famine.

So, what happens? What happens is, Elijah steps up, and he tells them, "Pour water all over the sacrifice," and he calls on the name of the Lord very simply, and suddenly fire comes out of the sky, and it burns up the sacrifice, it licks up the water, it even consumes the stones, and it's amazing (1 Kings 18:34-38). And then Elijah gives his command, "Wipe out the prophets of Baal." And they were killed, the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:40).

And then Elijah goes up, and he's looking, and suddenly he sees a cloud coming out over the Mediterranean Sea and the Lord speaks to him and says, "Better get out of here fast." So, he starts running, and he runs amazingly fast, supernaturally, outrunning the chariot of Ahab, who's making a mad dash back home (1 Kings 18:41-46).

And then word comes to Elijah, and I've always been comforted by this. You know, the Bible says that when anybody's sick, we should call for the elders of the church, and they should anoint that person with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will heal the sick. And then it says, Elijah was a man of like passions as we are and he prayed earnestly it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for the space of three and a half years, and then he prayed again, and the heavens brought forth rain (James 5:13-18).

Jezebel sends word, "May the gods do so to me and more so if by this time tomorrow you're still alive" (1 Kings 19:2). What did he do? He tucked his tail and ran away. Instead of that supernatural running in the strength and power of the Lord, he is terrified. Now you know what that says to me? It says to me that inconsistent people, people like me, people like you, people who can be up today and down tomorrow, people who are full of God one day and then hear a discouraging word and seize on it the next day, that God hears our prayers.

So, as Elijah meets the Lord down in Mount Sinai, which is in the Sinai Peninsula, when he meets him there, he says to the Lord, “I’ve had enough. I’ve had enough” (1 Kings 19:4). And so, God commissions him to do certain things and one of which was to anoint Elisha, his servant (1 Kings 19:16).

And so, Elisha has now returned from the Jordan River where he has seen Elijah the prophet taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire, and he’s returning back, and so he deals with all these things in a kind of a reverse parallel to Elijah’s leaving. He encounters people. And he heals, for example, in verse 19, he heals water that had been poisoned (2 Kings 2:19).

And then, here’s what happens, he’s coming up, and 42 kids come out to mock him. “Go up! Go up!” Are they echoing what happened to Elijah the prophet when he went up to heaven? I don’t know.

“Go up, you baldhead!” What about that? Is there some kind of special thing there? I don’t know. He probably did have a bald head. But they’re mocking him, they’re ridiculing him, and these are young children as well as teens and going up.

In fact, the word that’s used there is used in one place to speak of Joseph at the age of 17 (נָאָר, *nā’ar*, Genesis 37:2). So, this is not little, tiny kids. But I want you to see something here:

Children who are out of control are dangerous. Make no mistake about it. If we look at what’s going on in cities in our country, you find a lot of young men who are completely out of control. They don’t have a father to put a hand on them and to restrain them and contrary to the former governor of the state of Arkansas’s wife, it doesn’t take a village to raise a child, it takes a mother and a father to raise a child. That’s because a child needs both the feminine and masculine, and many times that role falls to grandparents.

And so, here’s the deal, you’ve got 42 boys, they’re coming out of a city famous for the worship of the false Canaanite god Baal (Bethel is the site of the one of Jeroboam’s golden calves, taken over by Ahab and Jezebel, 1 Kings 12:28-29; 16:29ff.), and they’re mocking him, they’re ridiculing him, they’re making fun of him. Now he turns, and he says something to them. What does he say? He called down a curse on them in the name of the LORD.

Do you know that the power of life and death is in the tongue? Sometime read Proverbs 18:21. The power of life and death is in the tongue (“The

tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit” (Proverbs 18:21, *Cf.* <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=7123111272720>).

Do you realize that your tongue is powerful? Do you realize that you can control the destiny of people with your tongue? Think about it. Think about it in parenting. Think about the words that you say to your children as you’re raising them.

When you say really negative things that are not true, and you’re just venting, you’re putting a big mess on their heads because kids tend to live up to the expectations of what’s said about them. But this is more than that.

This is something that’s supernatural. Have you ever called down a curse on someone’s head? I have, and I’ve seen the effect of it very powerfully, and sometimes I regret having cursed that person. But I did. You can curse people in the name of the Lord, and it will come true **if you’re acting in accordance with the will of God** because when we speak a word from God, **from God, it has a powerful impact.**

So, we need to see that here. Elisha has called down a curse on these boys. Why? Because if we look back at what we read in Deuteronomy 21 and verse 23, one of the reasons why a rebellious son who will not obey his parents, who will not mind, who in spite of the warnings of his parents over and over and over again, we’re told there that he has to be brought by his father and his mother to the elders of the gate of the town and they say over him in Deuteronomy 21 and verse 20,

“This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a profligate or a glutton and a drunkard.”

Then it says in verse 21, “Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid.” Strong words.

What does this have to do with you and me today? Well, I’d like us to look at a couple of passages of Scripture in light of that and would you turn with me to 2 Corinthians 3. 2 Corinthians 3. What do we do with these things? Does America need to return to the civil law of Israel and start killing kids that are rebellious? What do you think? Should we go into neighborhoods where kids are out of control and just mow them down? What do you do with this because this is God’s Word?

Well, let’s look at 2 Corinthians 3 and let’s look at some things here beginning at verse 3 where Paul says, page 1,797, “You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the

Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.” What is he contrasting here? He’s contrasting the Old Testament with the New Testament.

Notice how he describes the Old Testament. The Old Testament is written in ink, and it’s written on tablets of stone. There’s no getting around what he’s talking about here.

He’s talking about the Old Testament. He’s talking particularly about the Torah, the law of God, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

He’s talking about passages like Deuteronomy 21:18-23, and then he goes down and verse 6 Paul says, page 1,797, “He has made us competent as ministers of a New Covenant,” taking the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel and expanding on them and telling believers we are under a New Covenant, we’re not under the Old Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25ff.). He says, “not of the letter but of the Spirit,” he says, “For the letter kills, the Spirit gives life.” The letter kills. What’s he saying? He’s saying that the Old Testament is marked by death, externalism, and rules that are hard to follow.

Now read on down. “Now,” he says in verse 7, “if the ministry that brought death,” what is the Old Testament? It’s a ministry that brings death. Think about Elisha the prophet, cursing these boys, and 42 of them get mauled by she-bears. Wow!

And then you remember how, when he’s passing through Samaria, and two of his disciples, when he’s not being accepted there, he’s being rejected, two of his disciples say (to the Lord Jesus), “Lord, you want us to call down fire?” And he said, “You don’t know what spirit you are of.” (Luke 9:54-55; Cf. 2 Kings 1:9-12) Wow!

So, he says, “the ministry that brought death”, verse 7, “which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory,” and then he goes on down, he talks about it being a fading glory and he says, “the ministry of the Spirit.” So, the ministry on stones is a fading glory. He takes the example of Moses who went in the presence of God and his face glowed and then the glory would go away (2 Corinthians 3:13-16; Exodus 34:33-35).

Then he says in verse 9, “If the ministry that condemns.” How would you describe the Old Testament?

“You’re wrong. You’re wrong. You’re wrong. You’re condemned. You’re condemned. You’re condemned. You’re all going to go to hell.” That’s the

message of the Old Testament, you're going to go to hell (Of course, Old Testament believers were saved the same way as New Testament believers, Romans 4; Galatians 3:1-9, 22-29; 4:21-31).

“The ministry that condemns man is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!” You see, the commandments of God, because of the sinfulness of human nature, were powerless to change people (Romans 8:3). You can put up laws all day long, and they'll never change people. Put up a sign out across the street on Robeson Road at Texarkana Community College that says, “Do not walk on the grass,” and what are people tempted to do? They're tempted to walk on the grass. The law, even God's law, is powerless to change human nature. That's the point.

And it says here, he says, the ministry that brings righteousness is what? It's the New Testament. It's the coming of the Spirit of God, who was purchased by the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. The Holy Spirit came. He changes people from the inside out. Real righteousness is not external conformity to rules. Real righteousness is a Holy Spirit-wrought, inward desire to please God and that doesn't happen apart from the Spirit of God (Romans 8:10-11). So, he says, “If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!”

And then he goes on and says in verse 10, “For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory.” And he says, “And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!”

So what we see here is this: Paul teaches us clearly and unambiguously that the Old Covenant, the law, the Torah, the Ten Commandments do not have the power to bring about real righteousness, because real righteousness has to flow from within by a renewed heart; till someone has been born again, all it is, are rules and regulations that we chafe against, that we don't like, that bother us (Romans 8:7-8). And so, I want to give us some examples of this. Some of this I will just refer to it and we won't turn to, but for example, in Numbers 15, beginning at verse 32 and going through 35, there's a man who picks up sticks on the Sabbath day. What do you do with a man out there picking up sticks? He was to be executed (‘Then the LORD said to Moses, “The man must die. The whole assembly must stone him outside the camp.” So the assembly took him outside the camp and stoned him to death, as the LORD commanded Moses.’ Number 15:35-36). The ministry that brings condemnation and death is marked by judgments and death.

And then we want to look at another passage of Scripture and that's this, 1 Corinthians 5. So, turn back to the left. 1 Corinthians 5. We've got something very striking here. 1 Corinthians 5 and beginning at verse 1. He says on page 1,776,

“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife.” A man has his father's wife. This is his stepmother—been married to his father.

Now hold your hand there, and I want to read you, we'll go back to Leviticus 20. Leviticus 20 and so if you would like to turn left, Leviticus 20, and we'll come to verse 10. Leviticus 20:10. This is the law of God. This is the law of Israel. These are the penalties for the nation of Israel for breaking the law. Leviticus 20 and looking at verse 10, that's page 186,

“If a man commits adultery with another man's wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.”

Look at verse 11, “If a man sleeps with his father's wife, he has dishonored his father. Both the man and the woman must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.”

I want you to let that sink in for a moment. That is the law of God. That is the law engraved on stones. That is the law that condemns. That is the law that kills. What is the penalty for adultery? Death by stoning. What is the penalty for sleeping with your father's wife? This is not your mother, but your father's wife, what is the penalty? It's the same penalty.

Now going back to 1 Corinthians 5, what do we do? Page 1,776. What is it in terms of how the church is to deal with this problem? Remember that the church is the new Israel (Galatians 6:14-16). The church is the nation of Israel as a born-again people of God (Romans 2:28-29; 4:10-25). The church is the seed of Abraham because the church is in Christ (Galatians 3:16, 29). And so, what is the penalty here? Look, page 1,776, and he says, “I've already passed judgment even though I'm not there with you.” Look at verse 4, top of the page, 1,776,

“When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan.”

Pretty rough, right? When someone is put out of the church, he's outside the ark, as in Noah's ark, he's in a place of danger and trouble. Notice what he says because this is interesting. Instead of stoning this guy to death, instead

of putting him to death, instead of putting to death his stepmother, he says, look at the next clause there in verse 5, “so that the sinful nature may be destroyed, and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.”

I want you to see there’s a huge difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament when it comes to God’s law. God’s law is designed to condemn and kill with no remedy. The New Covenant is designed to redeem. The purpose of putting the man out of the church is to allow Satan to have at him, and if Satan has at this man, this man will come to a brokenness in his life where he says, “O God, I can’t take this anymore! Please help me!” And he returns.

And I’ve told this story before. The man that was more influential than anyone else in my becoming a Christian was my high school Sunday school teacher, a medical doctor. And after I became a believer, he disciplined me and my mother and I used to go to his Thursday night Bible study when I was a senior in high school. And then something happened to the man.

What happened is the man had an affair with his nurse. He divorced his wife, later married his nurse, and he was disciplined by the church he was a founding elder in, because he had been an elder in the large church, and then he helped to start a smaller church. And I prayed for him for years when I realized that. And so, what happened to him? In the course of time, God broke my dear friend, and he brought him to a point of brokenness and saying, “I need help.”

So, notice again, “So that the sinful nature may be destroyed, and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.” Let that sink in. Church discipline is for the purpose of getting people into heaven. Church discipline is for the purpose of getting people to turn from their evil ways.

Now let’s go back to 2 Corinthians where we were. 2 Corinthians 2 and look at what he says there in verse 5, page 1,796. This is 2 Corinthians. (It’s probably 4 Corinthians, because there was a letter before 1 Corinthians, and there was a letter that we don’t have that was between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. So, this is probably 4 Corinthians, but anyhow.) It’s 2 Corinthians 2:5.

“If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent—not to put it too severely.”

Look at verse 6. What’s he referring to? In 2 Corinthians 2 and verse 6, he’s referring to what they did in 1 Corinthians 5. This man that had committed

death penalty offenses, adultery and incest, this man has been punished. Now notice what he says, verse 6.

“The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.”

You see, the whole focus of the New Testament, as over against the Old Testament, is healing, forgiveness, and restoration. It’s the ministry of righteousness, as over against the ministry of condemnation and death.

What Paul asked them to do in 1 Corinthians 5, they did, and the result was, the man got broken. The man came back humbly, seeking forgiveness. And my friend, that medical doctor, one day showed up in the church that he had helped to found and waited till the end of the service, and then he came forward and asked if he could address the congregation.

And do you know what he did? Standing down front, he addressed that congregation where he had once been an elder, that he had helped to found, and he said, “I want to ask your forgiveness.” He said, “I sinned against God, and I sinned against you all, and my wife and I have been restored, and we are members” (he joined a Baptist church), “and we are members of such and such Baptist church, and we wanted to ask your forgiveness.” And of course, they granted him that forgiveness.

And so, the deal is this, the deal is the purpose of church discipline is restoration, healing, forgiveness, and full fellowship; whereas, the purpose of the Old Testament is, “We’ll get you. “I’m going to get you, and you’re going to die. We’re going to stone you to death.” Just like that guy picking up sticks on the Sabbath day. It’s death versus life. And so, you see what he says here in verse 7, 2 Corinthians 2:7.

“Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.”

And see, that’s what’s important. Then he says,

The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes. (2 Corinthians 2:8-11)

I remember getting into our argument one day in my former denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America, and a friend of mine from college days, who had been an assistant pastor in the town where I finished college, Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina, had fallen into serious sin. He was a minister of the gospel, and his presbytery excommunicated him. Not only did they depose him; they excommunicated him. So, I went up to a minister who was the founding minister of the church I served in Alexandria, and I said,

“Why did you excommunicate him? He repented.”

“Well, that’s a filthy sin. It just really needs to be...”

I said, “You’re wrong. You’re out of line, and your presbytery is in sin.”

He took great umbrage at that. But I’ll tell you this, as God is my witness, I will condemn any church that goes beyond the bounds of Scripture and puts somebody who’s repentant out of the church. And for the case of a minister, even though he fell into a dreadful, dreadful sexual sin, to excommunicate him from the body of Christ is outrageous and wicked, and that presbytery, which was in western North Carolina, was guilty of egregious sin against that man.

Who needs the Lord’s Supper? Who needs fellowship? Who needs to be in the body of Christ? Those who’ve fallen into terrible sins need to be restored. Even if a man is a minister—doesn’t mean he needs to be back in the pulpit, but it means that he should be restored to fellowship the moment that he repents. There’s no place under God’s heaven for a church to kick a man out and refuse to accept him back in. That’s wicked and evil.

I had a good friend who got in big trouble in Alexandria—ended up in the front page of the local paper. He had procured the services of a prostitute and was caught in the act by the police. He repented of it. And I read about it, and I had his number, and I called him. He didn’t answer the phone.

I said, “If you need anything, you may remember me, Bob Vincent, if you need anything, Sandy and I are here for you.” Why? Because I love sinners!

Why do I love sinners? Because Jesus is in my heart, and Jesus loves sinners. He wants to restore sinners. And the man told me later, he said, “You’re the only one to call me.”

And he said, “One day I saw the pastor I had served under, and it was several years later, and I went over to shake his hand and he said, ‘I’m not going to shake your hand!’”

It happened to be a Baptist church. Good Baptist churches, bad Baptist churches. And that pastor refused to shake the hand of this man after years had passed.

There are a whole lot of preachers going to be in hell. If I judge people for the things I do and sit in condemnation of them and won't forgive. When I won't forgive, I'll never be forgiven. And it's the job of the church to forgive and you see it there so clearly and he says forgive him, verse 11, 2 Corinthians 2:11, "In order that Satan might not outwit us, for we're not unaware of his schemes."

Now I want you to turn with me to another passage of Scripture briefly, to the gospel of John, John 8, and this is what's so important to understand, and that is this: The law, the Torah, the Ten Commandments cannot save you; they're an external standard of righteousness that you do not have the power to overcome, but what you need is the power of the Holy Spirit—the New Covenant.

So, we find here on page 1,661, Jesus says something rather remarkable, and I have clever friends who work around this because people don't want to believe that Jesus really forgives people. And this is the story of the woman taken in adultery, page 1,661. And so, they question Jesus. They say, "We caught this woman."

Where's the man? You can test a lot of things by how people deal with women. "We caught this woman. We've been commanded in the law."

Verse 3,

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?' They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'If any one of you is without sin...'

Now, clever people have twisted those words. That word is a unique Greek word. It means actually, literally, to be without sin (ἀναμάρτητος, *anamártētos*, "**without sin**, *i.e.* not having sinned," *BDAG*, p. 67).

There was only one person there that day who was without sin. There was only one person that day in John 8 who had never sinned, and that was the

Lord Jesus Christ. All those other men had sinned. And he doesn't ask here for two or three credible witnesses, two or three righteous men in the sense that they were good men (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15). He's asking for somebody who is without sin. That's what the Greek word means.

“If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.’ Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.”

What did he write? There's a lot of speculation. He probably wrote about the sins of the men that were there. He might have even written a name with his finger. And there's the old guy, he was an old rabbi, and he knew about it because he had his mistress on the side.

As Jesus is writing, what do we read? Verse 9, “At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left.” Why? Because he's without sin.

And look at what he says. “With the woman still standing there, Jesus straightened up and asked her, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’ ‘No one, sir,’ she said. ‘Then neither do I condemn you,’ Jesus declared. ‘Go now and leave your life of sin.’”

That's the New Testament. That's the New Covenant. Praise God Almighty I'm under the New Covenant. I'm not under the Old Covenant, a ministry of condemnation, death, stoning. “Let's get them! Let's kill them! Let's wipe them out!”

So where do we go with this, with these rebellious kids? Well, I'll tell you this, there's only one thing I know to do in the New Covenant with all these things, and that is to get on our face before God and plead with God. Plead with God. Cry out to God.

Our cities are being destroyed. Our communities are being destroyed. Our school system is being destroyed. Everywhere I look, people are being wiped out and destroyed, and young men, dangerous young men roaming the streets. I can tell you this, law and order candidates aren't going to change it. Liberal candidates aren't going to change it. The only thing that's going to change this country is for “My people,” that is those that love the Lord Jesus Christ, to get down on their knees before God and to cry out and say, “Lord, Lord, Lord, we're in terrible trouble here! Lord, have mercy on us!” (Cf. 2 Chronicles 7:14)

You know the only thing you can do for a rebellious child? When they're really rebellious, the kind of child that you see in Deuteronomy, what can you do? I know one thing only, and that's to pray. Pray with tears.

God takes our tears, and he puts them in a bottle (Psalm 56:8). When you cry out to God for your children, for your grandchildren, for your great-grandchildren, God hears.

He doesn't answer those prayers right away, but he will answer them. Never give up, never quit, never abandon it.

God loves to save people, and that's the beautiful thing about the New Covenant. No longer do we bring the child out to the elders of the city, and they stone him to death.

We bring that child out before God and get other people in the church, "Join with me, pray for this grandson. Join with me, pray for my daughter. Join with me, pray for my great-grandchild. Pray that they will have a heart change." Because this is the beautiful thing about the New Covenant.

The beautiful thing about the New Covenant is God delights to change hearts. God delights to pour out his Holy Spirit on rebellious rebels. And I'll just leave you with this one last question. What about you? Were you a rebellious person? I look at my teenage years, drunkenness, blasphemy, and many other things, and how God rescued me in the strangest way, and God will rescue your children, your grandchildren, your great-grandchildren.

If you will humble yourself before the Lord, if you will pray and seek God's face, he will hear from heaven. He will hear and answer your prayers. He will. You might not live to see it, but he will do it. Never give up. Never give up because you are New Testament believers. You are New Covenant believers—not under the law that condemns, stones, and wipes out people without hope, but under the New Covenant that brings life and redemption.

May we pray.

*Lord, may we never give up. on our children and grandchildren, that we would never give up on spouses or parents or others, Lord, neighbors, Lord, who are living in gross wickedness, Lord, because you've given us something far more powerful than stones, and that is that stone cut without hands of the book of Daniel (Daniel 2:34, 44-45), even the Rock of Ages, our Lord Jesus Christ, who stands at your right hand pleading for you as we plead for those we care about, that you would redeem them, that you would save them, that you would change their hearts. For Jesus' sake we pray. Amen.*