

Message #53 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

"Let's Talk About Lightning"

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to talk about lightning. Lightning is an interesting phenomena. However, it can be seen as a blessing, or a curse, depending on each person's relationship to it. If you happen to watch lightning from a distance, it can be exceptionally beautiful. I once had an experience with lightning while driving where I was in the center of a storm system which was circular in form, and was several miles in diameter. My particular location was separate from the storm, although it completely surrounded me, kind of like being in the eye of a tornado. This happened to be one of the most spectacular lightning storms I have ever witnessed, and it was at night, which made it even more brilliant. As I drove on the interstate, the lightning flashed unceasingly, first maybe to my left, and then maybe to my right or in front of me, and maybe multiple places all around me at the same time. I could also see it flash in my rearview mirror. During this time there was never a moment when there were no bursts of light. It was absolutely the most spectacular sight I have ever witnessed in my life. The experience lasted for approximately half an hour, and then the storm slowed in its intensity. I was very disappointed when it stopped, for I had been enjoying it very much.

However, if this storm had taken place in my younger days, I would have been horrified beyond belief. I used to be afraid of lightning to some extent, until God showed me that he controlled it, and that I didn't need to fear it anymore as long as I had a healthy fear for God himself. He showed me he controlled the lightning, so therefore, if the lightning struck me, it was only because he allowed it to strike me. So from that time on, I no longer feared it, but have always enjoyed watching it. No, I hadn't been paranoid about it, but I had always watched it with a certain amount of the fearful respect. Fear of lightning is not so unusual for people, and I had

some fear of it too. The problem was not that there was a great chance of lightning striking me, but that if it did, it probably wasn't something that I would walk away from. It's kind of like jumping from an airplane and your parachute doesn't open. Not too many people walk away from that either.

Of course, there are stories about people being struck by lightning and living through it, maybe just having third degree burns or something. I knew of an instance where lightning struck at a swimming beach, and several people got burns, some of them quite severe. It was a well documented event, and received news coverage in both the newspapers and on television. In this case the lightning hit and traveled along on top of the ground in the form of little balls of fire. This form of lightning is not a completely unusual occurrence, and I've heard of this happening on occasion. But in this particular case, I happened to know some of the people who were present when the lightning struck. One of them told me about it, and explained to me that it happened so fast that no one could do anything about it. This person said that many people, both adults and children, were jumping up and down because the bottoms of their feet were being burned. Both grownups and children were screaming, and they could see the little balls of fire rolling across the beach. I was told that there were several of these balls of fire, and the electrical energy all around was burning some of the people, but not touching others, even though they were in the same vicinity as those who were being burned.

It's interesting that the fire of lightning can burn one person and yet leave another person standing next to them completely unscathed. When it comes to lightning, nobody controls it but God. Or, maybe I should rephrase that. When it comes to lightning in its pure form, when it strikes from the heavens above, no man can control it. Only God controls the path of lightning. But although the path of lightning is under God's control, man also has some control over it. Since the days of Benjamin Franklin, man has been able to harness this fire from the heavens and redirect the electrical force of it into tools used for man's quest in science and technology. In fact, if this fire of the heavens had not been harnessed by man, you wouldn't be able to listen to the sound of my voice on your radio today. You wouldn't be able to flip the light switch on when you came into a dark room, and you wouldn't be able to warm up your leftovers in the microwave oven. In fact, just think about all the things that have come into existence just because this fire of the heavens was tamed by mankind.

Of course, many of these things are wonderful inventions, but on the other hand, not all that is powered by electricity is wonderful. Yes, there are many modern conveniences which make life easier, but there are also many inventions which have been a severe hindrance to the safety of men's souls. Stop and think a moment about what this fire from heaven has meant for the children of today who tune in non-stop to television, movies, and rock music from the time they are a year old until they reach adulthood. Think for a moment what yet looms on the horizon of science and technology, which has only been made possible by the harnessing of electricity. Sure, some of the inventions which have sprung out of this scientific effort seem to be beneficial, but much of the use of electricity only has purpose in allowing man to get more things from the world than they used to get in the days of the horse and buggy.

I guess the bottom line concerning the pros and cons of electricity can best be assessed by realizing that electricity has created a world class society, and that this world class society has brought all the people of the world much closer together. And, this has resulted in a united world effort to establish the glory of man. Prior to this last century, this had not happened in all the history of the world since the days of the Tower of Babel. In those days, according to the book of Genesis, God had come down to see the tower which the people of earth were building, and to assess the situation.

What God saw was an industrious nation of people. He saw technology beginning to grow. Even though we might not consider the technology of that age to be very significant, God said it was significant. He said that after what he had seen, he knew that man would be able to accomplish anything that he could conceive of in his mind. Therefore, God confused the language of the people and caused them to be scattered throughout the earth. Personally, I believe God knew what he was doing.

But why? What did God see that was so wrong? Here was a people who, like I said, were industrious. They were working on building tall buildings. They had begun to burn the bricks of clay so that they would be more firm, and thus be able to support more weight for a higher structure. After all, isn't that pretty much the same thing that we are doing in this present age? Isn't that what science and technology is all about? But, God did find the situation to be displeasing to him. The people were not being industrious in order to find more ways to glorify God, but were striving to exalt their own existence, and were intent on making a name for themselves. They wanted to use their own might and power to exalt themselves up to the heights of heaven rather than to be scattered throughout the earth. They wanted to be somebody, in themselves, instead of wanting to live for God and to glorify him.

Now, I know Christians desire to be pleasing to God, at least real Christians do. However, I believe many Christians never realize that the world today is very similar to the days of the Tower of Babel. Of course, we do hear Christians quote the verse in Matthew 24:37, which reads, "But as it was in the days of Noah, so will it also be in the coming of the Son of man." Yes, Christians understand that at the end of time wickedness will once again be at its strongest point. And yes, every Christian does recognize that the world is full of evil in this present day. But I don't think that Christians fully recognize just what is behind all this evil. They seem to understand that Satan is the power behind every evil deed, but they don't seem to be able to recognize how he does it, or, that he might even be doing it to them. It seems that most Christians just think that Satan somehow has the power to make people act wickedly whenever he wants to. But that's not true. That old saying of, "The devil made me do it," is not really accurate. Sure, the devil does tempt, but he can't force people to serve him. He has to accomplish that by being deceptive. It is by deception that he has power over us, and deception is not possible without the twisting of truth.

Now, Satan knows that Christians will try to resist any kind of evil. However, he also knows that no Christian can resist evil if they are unable to recognize that something is evil, so he has to be very deceptive and bring things to us that we will not easily recognize as evil until it's too late.

But, notice this. The chief way Satan lures people into his sea of destruction is by offering them the things of this world which bring fleshly stimulation. Humans have been saddled with bodies of flesh, therefore, the animal nature is very strong. Throughout Earth's history, man's desire for things which stimulate their flesh has been great. However, in this current end-time age, the people of Earth have been given the ability to saturate their lives with an abundance of earthly delights which have never before been equaled in all the ages past. And, surprisingly for most people, lightning has been the major factor in providing humans with an overabundance of worldly things which appeal to the flesh nature, and at the same time inhibits the spirit nature of God.

Here, think of this. The electrical energy of lightning is a force that empowers all scientific and technological advancement. Because of this, it enables the people of Earth to create an ever increasing market of earthly goods which appeal to man's beast nature, his carnal nature. The desire for more things which stimulate the carnal appetites of mankind are a major avenue of Satan's deception in these end times, and without lightning, most of the things of this world, which cater to man's fleshly nature, would not exist. In fact, if it wasn't for lightning, humans would still be in the horse and buggy days.

But in these end times, Satan has been able to work through the human nature of mankind and cause the harnessing of electricity, and its power has been put to use by the people of Earth, and they have once again become united in their attempt to exalt themselves, just like the people did at the Tower of Babel. Only this time, the tower is not made of bricks of clay and bituminous slime, but by electrical circuits, industrial machinery, bio-technology, medicine, and even cloning.

In Revelation 13, we get some insight into this aspect of Satan's end-time deception by paying particular attention to verse thirteen. Let's read it. It says, "And he does great wonders, so that he makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men." Although this verse indicates that the second beast does great signs and wonders, it is only this one specific miracle that is mentioned. This is because the pulling of fire down from heaven is the central concept which describes the power of this second beast. The Bible is explaining to us that the pulling of fire down from heaven is the central core of Satan's attempt to deceive the people of earth in these last days.

If you've been able to hear past broadcasts of this program, you would have heard me describe the two beasts of Revelation 13, as the animal nature. The first beast in this chapter represents the beast nature which rose up in Satan, and the second beast of Revelation 13, represents the animal nature which was passed on by Satan to the population of earth. The second beast of Revelation is the beast nature, or we might say, the carnal nature, that represents the opposition to the spirit nature of God. It is the human nature, and it desires things of this world rather than the things of God. God's nature is righteousness, and righteousness is based on love that is unselfishly given. But the animal nature is not based in righteousness, but in selfishness.

This is why Satan can so successfully tempt humans to wallow in the muck and mire of earthly desires. And it is this specific desire for earthly things that Satan relies on. Therefore, he has

used this as a motivational tool for mankind, encouraging them to exploit their selfish animal nature until they have finally, in these last days, accomplished the feat of pulling fire down from heaven. Satan has been able, through this carnal desire of man, to bring about a successful pursuit of scientific knowledge. And mankind's technological progress has far surpassed the pathetically juvenile attempts which were made at the building of the Tower of Babel.

But you might ask what this has to do with these last days. And you might also say to me, "Randy, are you saying that electricity is evil and that we should go back to the horse and buggy days?" Well, the answer to that is an absolute, "No." We don't need to look at this tool of Satan as evil in itself, but we should look at it and begin to realize that this tool of Satan is potentially harmful, and not think that everything the world invents is a direct blessing from God. It is important to understand that God never intended his people to wallow in the muck and mire of fleshly stimulation, but rather to worship God in spirit.

The Bible very plainly tells us that flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God. Yes, we ourselves will be saved, but we will not be taking our bodies of flesh with us. We will have to have new bodies which are not subject to the carnal nature. When we come to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, we have what the Bible describes as a born-again experience. This new birth is necessary, for if we never become focused on the spirit man, and if we never cease to seek the stimulations for the flesh, we will never see the face of God and live. It is only through the process of being reborn as a spirit man that we have the promise of eternal life with God. Satan is attempting to destroy everything which is connected with the spirit nature of God, and is trying with all his might to instill in mankind the desire to cleave to the things of this world and to deny God. The fire of heaven, harnessed by mankind and used to create merchandise for Satan's marketplace, is a terrifically deceptive tool because it enables mankind to reach the lofty heights of selfishness and greed, and the desire for self empowerment.

But if mankind, and especially Christians, think they can focus their attention on things of this world instead of focusing on the things of God, they should think again. Sure, electricity may have its benefits, but without being aware of its destructive possibilities, a person can easily be led astray and fall into the abyss. It is all too easy to float downstream in life instead of paddling upstream. It is all too easy to take all that is offered to you in this world instead of being content with such things as God gives. And here is another interesting thing. Many Christians think that God wants us to have an abundance of all things. But that's not true. He only wants you to have an abundance of things which give glory to him. When it comes to the things of this world, he wants you to control yourself and only take that which meets your realistic needs.

Romans 8:13, tells us that we are not to live after the manner of the flesh, for if we do, it will cause our eventual death. It also tells us in this same verse that if by the Holy Spirit of God you put to death the works of our human bodies, then we will live. Satan knows this verse very well, and realizes that in order to cause our eternal death, he must find a way to get us to choose to exalt the flesh instead of exalting God. The harnessing of lightning, the fire of the heavens, was a monumental step in the devil's purpose on Earth.

I'd like you to listen to the words of 2 Thessalonians 2:7-9, which says, "For the mystery of iniquity already works: only he who now restrains will restrain until he is taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders."

Here, again, the Bible points to the working of Satan with signs and lying wonders. And it also tells us that Satan's power to bring about these signs and lying wonders will be hindered until it is time to reveal that wicked thing. That time has come. The hindrance has been removed, and Satan has been allowed to go beyond his previous limitations. Haven't you always wondered why the world stayed at the oxcart and wagon days for thousands of years and suddenly the earth was filled with an abundance of knowledge? Some people think this is just coincidence, and others think that it is just man's normal development and that he is finally reaching a state of maturity. But it is not coincidence, and it is not just a normal state of affairs. What it is, is the removal of all hindrances to the working of Satan in order that God might reveal the deception of Satan and the evilness of the animal nature which is so opposed to the spirit nature of God.

Now, the physical difference between humans and animals is that humans stand upright. But the spiritual difference between humans and animals is that animals act instinctively, but humans make choices based on good powers of reason. At least, they should. For Christians, the difference is that they choose to worship God instead of living according to their beast nature. It is the carnal nature that is animalistic, for it is brutish. It has no ability to reason, and cannot comprehend the glory of God.

It is mankind's animal nature which has driven us to harness the fire of the heavens. Without the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, we would never have discovered electricity. We would never have discovered that this powerful electrical force would also enable us to have more things to stimulate the flesh than ever existed in the history of the world. Without being driven by this lustful desire, we would never have learned to create for ourselves things in which we could place our trust instead of placing our trust in God. God doesn't need banks, or automobiles, or supermarkets, or hospitals in order to meet the needs of his people. Nor does he need a whole industry of entertainments from Hollywood in order to bring us joy. And because of this, you can be certain that there is coming a day, and coming soon, when Satan's marketplace will be empty of his merchandise. And, at that time, if you're still looking for baubles and trinkets, you will not find yourself purified by God's fire, but consumed by it.