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THE TOWER OF BABEL

(episode 033)

theme: God will fulfill His plans even when men disobey Him **scripture:** Genesis 11 **quote:** “Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do

it.” Isaiah 46:11b **summary:** Nit Whitley reports from the site of a building project that proposes to reach to the heavens. What has become known as the Tower of Babel was undertaken by men who wished to make a name for themselves and did not want to be scattered throughout the earth. Both of these desires were in violation of God’s command.

First of all, God will not share His glory with anyone. No one is equal to God. He alone deserves to be worshiped. Secondly, the desire of these men not to be scattered is a direct violation of what God commanded Noah and his sons to do after the flood.

Fortunately, God’s plan does not require the obedience of men to carry it out. God, by causing all the men working on the tower to speak in different languages, caused His plan and purpose to come about. Since the men could no longer talk to one another the work on the tower stopped. And, for the same reason, they moved away from each other, just as God desired.

MOSES & PHARAOH

(episode 036)

theme: God has authority over all men. **scripture:** Exodus 7-12 **quote:** “The Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind.” Daniel 4:17 **summary:** Nit Whitley is accompanied by his cousin Dim as he interviews Moses. God’s people, the Israelites, are slaves in Egypt. God has just sent Moses, whom He has chosen to lead His people, to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, with the command that Pharaoh let God’s people go so. But Pharaoh doesn’t want to lose the services of his Israelite slaves so he refuses. God threatens judgment upon Egypt, but Pharaoh, who doesn’t fear God, ignores the threats. The result is: the land of Egypt suffers under the hand of God.

Pharaoh does not believe in God nor does he serve Him. But this doesn’t mean Pharaoh is free to disobey or disregard God. God is the ruler over all mankind. Every nation, every person is subject to Him. No amount of belief or disbelief excuses one or another of us.

Pharaoh would learn the hard way that we have an obligation to honor and obey God. Let’s not be like him. Let’s recognize God’s authority over our lives and obey Him willingly.

JOB

(episode 038)

theme: Job understood that his life and his possessions were at God’s disposal, to use

as He sees fit. **scripture:** Job 1:21; 2:10; 42 **quote:** “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Job 1:21b **summary:** Job is the mystery guest on the popular game show “What’s My Life?”

Host

E. Buzz Backs allows his celebrity panelists to ask Job questions to see if they can identify who he is.

Job was a righteous man who lived many years ago. He was also wealthy. God tested Job by allowing everything he had to be taken from him. Then He allowed him to be afflicted with boils and sores on his body. Through his answers to the celebrity panelist’s questions Job reveals that in spite of all the tragedies that befell him he did not curse God, but understood and acknowledged God’s goodness and justice and that he is God’s creation, and God is free to do with him as He pleases.

When tragedy or hardship comes to us we may be tempted to question God’s goodness and love, wondering why He has allowed these things to happen to us. We may never even be tempted to curse Him and turn our backs on Him. The truth is, hard times do come to God’s people. We may never understand the reasons why they do, but we can trust in God’s love, mercy, grace and wisdom. If we dedicate to live our lives for His glory, we can say as Job did, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.”

THE ANOINTING OF DAVID

(episode 046)

theme: God looks at our heart. **scripture:** I Samuel 16 **quote:** “God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the

Lord looks at the heart.” I Samuel 16:7b **summary:** Samuel the Prophet has been sent by God to a man named Jesse. God has chosen one of Jesse’s sons to succeed Saul as the King of Israel, and Samuel is to go to Jesse’s home and anoint the new King. Jesse has eight sons. He brings the first one, Eliab, to Samuel. Eliab is a tall man, and Samuel looks him and thinks that this must be God’s anointed. But God tells Samuel “No.” Eliab may have had the physical characteristics that one might expect in a King, but God reminds Samuel that He doesn’t see as a man sees. Men tend to look at the outward appearance of someone, but God looks at the heart.

Jesse brings his eldest seven sons to Samuel and each one is rejected. Samuel asks Jesse if these are all his children. Jesse answers that he has one son left, the youngest, who is out tending the sheep. Samuel calls for David, and when he sees him God tells him to “Arise, anoint him; for this is he.”

It’s easy, and even natural, for us to make judgements about people by how they look. People who are tall or good-looking may impress us over people who are more plain looking. But this is not a good determination of how good or spiritual they are. God is not interested in people who look good, He’s interested in people who’s hearts belong to Him. Those who are humble before Him and desire to serve Him above all else.

Our outward appearance neither qualifies us nor disqualifies us to be used by God. God is looking for our heart.

THREE MEN IN A FIERY FURNACE

(episode 047)

theme: Our first allegiance is always to God. **scripture:** Daniel 3 **quote:** “Let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or

worship the golden image that you have set up.” Daniel 3:18 **summary:** Cowboy Bob relates the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to the Rodeo Round-Up Gang. They were three young Israelite men who worshiped God living in Babylon. One day the King of Babylon set up a golden image and ordered everyone to worship it. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego refused because by worshiping this golden image they would be breaking the First Commandment. When the King found this out, he was furious and ordered that the three young men be brought to him. He gave

them one last chance to bow before his idol, and if they didn't. he said he would throw them into a fiery furnace.

Not hesitating, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego informed the King that God was able to deliver them out of the fiery furnace, but even if He didn't, they would not serve his god or bow to his image. The King was furious and ordered the furnace be heated up seven times hotter than it normally was and to throw Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in. The three young men survived the furnace. They were not burned up. They didn't even smell of smoke.

We may never find ourselves in a life or death situation like Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego did, but every day we are likely to be faced with situations that call for us to take a stand for righteousness. A call for us to go against what is popular or safe and take a stand for God. Sometimes obeying God will be inconvenient, or make us an object of ridicule by those around us, or maybe even dangerous. In those cases we must remember that our first allegiance is always to God. Remember Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego while you're going through your fiery furnace.

JOSEPH & GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

(episode 050)

theme: God uses every situation in our lives for our good. **scripture:** Genesis 37-41 **quote:** "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good." Genesis 50:20a **summary:** Nit Whitley finds himself in a prison cell in Egypt. He is talking with Joseph, the son of Jacob. Joseph was a fine young man, his father's favorite son. But his jealous brothers sold him into slavery. Joseph didn't let this bad situation keep him from serving God and trusting in Him. Joseph was bought by a prominent Egyptian. One day, his master's wife accused him of something he didn't do, and he ended up being thrown into prison. Again, this has not kept Joseph from remaining faithful to God. Joseph would eventually be released from prison and be elevated to the highest position in the whole country second only to Pharaoh himself.

It was while he was in this position that Joseph would be able to save the lives of his father and the brothers who had hated him so much. Joseph brought his father, his brothers and their families to live with him in Egypt, saving them from a terrible famine. After their father died, Joseph's brothers feared that Joseph would now have revenge on them for what they did. But Joseph, displaying wisdom and a great confidence in God's sovereignty, told them "Do not be afraid...you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good."

Joseph understood that God is ruler of all things and He controls all things. He purposely uses these things to work out His plan for our lives. What Joseph experienced was hard, but it prepared him for the great work God had planned for Him. Joseph understood that and trusted in God. Let's not look at the troubles or trials in our lives as detriments, but as opportunities for us, provided by God, to give Him glory and to prepare for the things God has for us to do.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR & PRIDE

(episode 057)

theme: If we are proud, God has ways of making us humble. **scripture:** Daniel 4 **quote:** "He is able to humble those who walk in pride." Daniel 4:37b **summary:** Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon. They were the most powerful nation on the earth at that time, and Nebuchadnezzar, as king, was the most powerful man on the earth at that time. But God sits over every king of the earth, and no earthly kingdom, nor any combination of earthly kingdoms, has power enough to match His. Nebuchadnezzar was about to learn that this was true.

It isn't hard to imagine that being in the position that he was caused Nebuchadnezzar to become quite proud of himself. One day he was walking on the roof of his royal palace and reflecting on his great kingdom, on the wonderful palace he had built, and how they came into being by his power and for the glory of his majesty. And that's when it happened. While the word was in the king's mouth a voice came from heaven saying, "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared, sovereignty has been removed from you, and you will be driven away from people, and you will live with the

beasts of the field. You will eat grass like a cow. This will last for seven years until you recognize that God, the Most High, is ruler over all mankind, and gives power and authority to whoever He wishes.”

Nebuchadnezzar instantly became and did just as it was said. At the end of the seven years, he raised his eyes toward heaven and he became sane again, and he blessed God and praised and honored Him who lives forever.

God still rules over the kingdoms of men today. It may not always look like He does, but then we don't know His full purpose and plan. He also still has ways of humbling those who are proud. He may not be as extreme as He was with Nebuchadnezzar, but He can easily bring something to pass that will knock us down to size. He doesn't do it to be mean or spiteful to us, but rather to help us. It is in our best interest to remember that He is God and that He rules over the kingdoms of men.

ABRAHAM & THE PROMISES OF GOD

(episode 059)

theme: God can be trusted to do what He has promised. **scripture:** Genesis 17,18 **quote:** “Then he [Abraham] believed in the Lord; and it was reckoned to him as

righteousness.” Genesis 15:6 **summary:** Nit Whitley travels back in time to interview Abraham, who has been called the “Father of the Faith.” Abraham was given many promises by God. Some would not be fulfilled in his lifetime. Most were simply amazing.

Abraham was an old man when God promised to give him a son. In the eyes of man such a promise was near-impossible. But Abraham believed what he was told. He trusted that God would do everything He had promised. As we know today, God did give Abraham a son, Isaac. And it was through Isaac that God brought about the nation of Israel. From the nation of Israel God would raise up a redeemer, one who would save men from their sins. That redeemer, of course, was Jesus, and through Jesus God would fulfill another promise He made to Abraham. That all the families of the earth would be blessed through him.

Another promise God made to Abraham was to make him the father of a great nation. Those of us today who believe in God and have received salvation through the blood of Jesus are counted as sons of Abraham. This, even though we may not be physically descended from him. Through Abraham God didn't necessarily establish a bloodline as much as He did a faith-line. We are sons and daughters of Abraham if we, like him, have taken God at His word, putting our confidence and hope in Him for our salvation, and trusting in the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

God's promises are real, and they are to all those who put their trust in Him.

NOAH & GOD'S PROVISION

(episode 062)

theme: God will never leave us. **scripture:** Genesis 6-8; Hebrews 13:5 **quote:** “O will never leave you, now will I ever forsake you.” Hebrews 13:5b **summary:** For this report, roving reporter Nit Whitley travels back in time to speak with Noah. Noah had been warned by God of a great flood that would cover the entire earth. God was sending this flood because the men of the earth had grown so wicked. But Noah was a righteous man. He believed in and obeyed God.

God knew Noah and his faithfulness to Him, so His warning came with a plan of escape from the flood. Noah was given explicit instructions to build an ark that would serve as the means to save him, his wife, his three sons and their wives, as well as representatives of the animals of the earth.

God has given numerous promises to never leave us, nor forsake us. He has promised to be with us through the darkest hours of our lives. Soldiers like Joshua were encouraged to know that they would not be going into battle alone, but that God would be with them. The early disciples, when taken before kings and priests, took courage in knowing that the Holy Spirit would guide their tongues in giving an account of themselves.

God's promise to never leave nor forsake us was not just true during Bible times, but it remains true today. Jesus told us that He would be with us always, even to the end of the age.

MOSES & GOOD TRADES

(episode 064)

theme: It's better to have God's riches than those of the world. **scripture:** Hebrews 11:24-27 **quote:** "[Moses chose] to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin." Hebrews 11:25 **summary:** No one will deny that sin can be pleasurable. That is one of the reasons it's so hard for us to resist it. But that pleasure doesn't last forever - sometimes it lasts for an incredibly short time. The pleasures that God offers, however, although not always immediately obvious, will last a long time.

Nit Whitley's report today takes him to Moses, a man who had to make a choice between which pleasure to enjoy.

Moses was an Israelite living in Egypt. Although the Israelite people were slaves in Egypt, and most of them lived horrible lives, Moses, through an act of God, was living in the home of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, as one of his sons. He could live out his days in luxury and privilege. But God had other ideas. He chose Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and into the Land of Canaan - the Promised Land.

Moses had a choice to make. Leading the Israelites would not be an easy task. He would, first of all, have to confront Pharaoh about God's command, knowing that Pharaoh would probably not want to obey. This would put him at odds with a powerful man he now enjoyed the favor of.

Then, in leading the people, Moses would have to live with them in the desert. This instead of living in a palace as he now did.

The job of leading the Israelites would involve incredible responsibility and much heartache.

So why did Moses choose to turn his back on luxury and favor for a life of hardship and discomfort? It was because Moses saw that there was more value in serving God. The pleasures and riches of Egypt would only last a short time - with no guarantee that they would not quickly vanish. While the riches of God would last through eternity. His eyes were set on a higher sphere. His reward would be eternal.

We today are faced with the same decision Moses was. Perhaps not to the same degree, but every day we are tempted to turn aside from obedience to God for the short-lived pleasures of sin. It may help us, in that time of temptation, to remember Moses, and to make sure we make good trades.

JOSHUA & THE BATTLE OF JERICHO

(episode 074)

theme: God sometimes uses the foolish things of this world to reveal His power. **scripture:** Joshua 6 **quote:** "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong." I

Corinthians 1:27 **summary:** The battle plan God had given Joshua to capture the city of Jericho hardly seemed like a good one. The Israelites were to march around the city for six days. On the seventh day they were to march around it seven times in silence. After the seventh time the priests were to blow trumpets, and at the sound of those trumpets all the people were to shout. When this happened God told Joshua that the walls of the city would fall down. As absurd as this plan seemed to be, Joshua trusted God and led the people as he was instructed. The plan worked just as God said it would. The victory was complete.

God many times takes things that seem foolish to us to bring about victory. Many things in God's word seem to be contrary to the way we think they should be. For example, Jesus said that if someone wished to become great he needed to be a servant (Matthew 20:26). Increase comes through scattering (Proverbs 11:24; Ecclesiastes 11:1).

Perhaps the greatest example of this is the crucifixion of Jesus. What would look like a great defeat - Jesus dying on the cross - was actually the means to a great victory. Sin and death were conquered, and eternal life for men secured, by Jesus' sacrifice.

Let us emulate Joshua's example and trust God when we are faced with doing something according to His will that goes contrary to our wisdom.

SAMSON

theme: Self-control can keep us from much misery. **scripture:** Judges 13-16 **quote:** “Like a city that is broken into and without walls is a man who has no control

over his spirit.” Proverbs 25:28 **summary:** Cowboy Bob uses the story of Samson as an illustration of the importance of self-control to the Rodeo Round-up Gang. Samson was a judge in Israel, who was known for his physical strength. Unfortunately he was weak when it came to controlling his emotions. Throughout his life he allowed his emotions to run him. It caused him to do and say things he never should have done. Many of his decisions were based on how he felt rather than on God’s will.

Emotions are a good thing. But we must control them and not let them control us. Being controlled by emotions can cause us to act in ways that are harmful to ourselves and others. We can repent afterwards, but many times the damage has already been done.

Samson’s story is not a particularly happy one, but one that we can use as a good reminder to practice self-control. Don’t let your emotions control you. They are a good servant, but a lousy master.