

THE LORD'S RAZOR

Isaiah 7:20

INTRODUCTION:

The Bible is the boldest book ever written. Sometimes the symbols and the imagery seems reckless. It is startling. And at other times, it seems like gentle dew or a dove, or the daybreak. And then again it is like lightning, or an earthquake. And it uses the word as in our text, (a sharp razor).

The keen bladed instrument has advanced in usefulness with the ages.

First we see the razor is a useful instrument. In Bible times the beard remained uncut in certain seasons, except in certain seasons of mourning and humiliation. But the razor was used as a suggested symbol.

Even down until this day, the razor is an important instrument in most households.

One thing about a razor is (to be effective) it must be sharp. I read somewhere in a book, a man who studied (tomb stones) found one with an inscription like this: "He fought a good fight but his razor was dull."

The Psalmist 52:2 spoke of the (tongue) as a sharp razor. In the matter of gossip.

David says of Doeg, thy tongue is a sharp razor working deceitfully.

That was clear that the man's tongue was a deadly weapon. I read the story of a man who told of an experience when he was 8 years old. He was playing beside

an open window. While a neighbor confided to his mother, about a serious problem concerning another person. When the visitor was gone, the mother realized that he had over-heard everything. She said to him, if Mrs. Brown had left her purse here just now, would you give it to someone else. Why of course not, the boy replied. Well, she left something more precious than that, the story she told could hurt many people and cause much unhappiness. It still belongs to her and we shall not pass it on to anyone. Do you understand. He said, I did. And I have remembered ever since that a bit of careless gossip is not mine to distribute.

(Letourneau) who has now passed on to be with the Lord, once made this remark about his earth moving equipment. "We used to make a scraper known as Model G. One day someone asked our salesman what the "G" stood for. The man who was pretty quick immediately replied -- the "G" stand for gossip. Because like a tale bearer, this machine moves a lot of dirt and moves it fast.

So the Christian tongue must be guarded.

Our text today talks about a weapon. And (Judea) needed to have some of its prosperity cut off.

And God sends against it three Syrian kings. Sennacherib, Esrahaddon, and Nebuchadnezzar.

Three (sharp invasions) to cut down the glory of Judea, are compared to so many sweeps of a razor across the land.

This is called a (hired razor) because God took the kings of Syria - with whom he had no sympathy to do the work. And he paid them off with spoils, lands, and palaces. These hired kings executed like a razor. They trimmed away.

Like Samson, when Delilah shaved off his hair - he was naked and powerless. This text of ours tells us that he shaved the head, the feet, and the beard. That is the entire land was shaved with a razor of judgement.

Second, men try to use the Lord's razor.

Now if God's judgements are razors - we had better be careful how we use them on other people. These are weapons that ought to be put away.

Where no one by accident may touch them or the hands of children may not reach them. The instruments must be carefully handled or not handled at all. People recklessly handle the judgements of God. If a man meets a misfortune in his business, how many people cry out. That is the judgement of God upon him. I thought he would get cut down and what a clean sweep of everything. His city house, his country house, his cars, his boats. All his resources thrown down. And good for him. Now, at that point, we ought to stop. We ought to not freely use the judgements of God because they are razors.

Let me illustrate. Some of the most wicked business men succeed and they live and die in prosperity. And some of the most honest and conscientious are driven into bankruptcy. Now this is unfortunate. But some of those who carry their heads erect and are as humble as a child may be defeated. You cannot tell by a man's looks. Perhaps his business was not all that it ought to be. There may have been two sides to the story. And perhaps the business misfortune was not a punishment for him. God may love him far more than he loves you, who can pay dollar for dollar. Or have a credit rating of A-1. Whom the Lord loveth he giveth \$400,000 and lets him die on silk pillows - No That is not what the Scripture says. The Scripture says whom the Lord loveth, he chasenth.

So you better keep your hands off the Lord's razor. Unless you cut and wound

somebody that does not deserve it. If you really want to use the razor, then you can shave off some of the pride in your own heart.

When people are unfortunate, have an unfortunate experience - some people say, well, I told you so. They are getting punished. It serves them right. That is their due dessert.

But the note in the other man's eye may be so large and give you a lot of trouble. And there is a beam that obscures all your view as a Pharisee. And you take the razor of divine judgement and (sharpen it on the hone) and you go to work on men. And we ought to be careful how we use the Lord's razor on somebody else.

You remember like the servant of King William Rufus who was out hunting. He shot the wrong one. You remember he shot at a deer but the arrow glanced against a tree, and killed the king.

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And the same thing maybe true with a sharp razor. The intimate friends of Richard, the lion, who in the War of the Crusades was captured and (imprisoned) But none of his friends knew where. So his loyal friends went around to each of the prisons and strong holds and sung at each window a song that Richard had taught him in earlier days. One day, before a jail, where he suspected his king might be - he sung two lines of the song and immediately (King Richard) responded from his cell, with the other two. And so his where abouts was discovered and immediately a successful movement was made for his liberty. So, let us, go up and down the world with the music that will bring hope to hearts that are unfortunate and those that are in trouble and let us liberate men. There are some people however who have felt that they have no faults or virtues. But it is hard to have flowers without some weeds. And you know how it is along the fence - the weeds will grow. The honeysuckle will spread. But out here, you might have a beautiful field of wheat growing. But the

Lord will work out things cause he has a razor to judge with.

The Apostles Creed talks about the death and the resurrection of Jesus. And says from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. The idea of Jesus coming as a judge is deeply rooted in the theology and the worship of a church.

As God sent his razor of judgement against Judah, we are fully justified in believing that he is still able to judge.

Peter says in a sermon that Jesus is the one ordained by God to be judged of the (living and the dead) Acts 10:42. Cornelius.

Now Paul uses the exact phrase, Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead. The Lord of righteous judge - is the one that Paul looks too. The judge is standing at the doors. James 5:9. We learn that the belief in Jesus as judge was elementary and basic. And that this teaching was insisted on in the Gospels. The idea of judgement was part of religion. Long before the New Testament. The Old Testament, God shall judge those of the earth. The whole heavens declare this. And the New Testament does not forget the idea of God as judge.

We are told that his razor will judge human transactions and decide who is right and who is wrong. Gideon calls upon the Lord - the judge to decide between the people of Israel.

It is God who allots to each man his rewards.

God's judgement falls upon the oppressor, the arrogant, and those who are proud.

Since God is the God of the earth, his judgements go in ever widening circles.

Paul says that we shall all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, to receive the rewards or punishments for the things done in the body. 2 Cor.5:10.

In the fourth Gospel, the idea that God has committed the task of judgement is John 5:22. He has given the Son authority to execute judgement.

### III. THE PRECISION OF GOD'S RAZOR

This text of ours tells us that this razor is not going to fail. It is not going to slip and it is not going to miss. It is going to cut as God deals every inch in the right direction.

Now people talk about things in the world as though God is going to make a lot of allowances. And everything is going to work out alright.

That reminds me of a student in college who was getting low grades and he feared he was going to fail. But finally he said, well, never mind - everything is going to work out alright. And he kept talking this way until he got his final examination and he failed the test, he failed the course, and finally he failed out of school. But he had an idea that the judgement would never come to him and he could do just about as he pleased.

There are people in marriage who feel the same way. Here is a woman who is having trouble and somebody says to her, well, everything is going to work out alright. Now don't you cry about that. Everything is going to come out right. But the woman's husband finally moves out of the apartment - and not into another one but in with another woman, that he has been seeing all along. So there is another misinterpretation, about the way things result.

I read of an accountant who had a conversation with an owner of a small business. He told the owner that the financial policies were irresponsible. And that he surely would go broke if he did not change. The owner did not want to face the hard facts that the accountant had judged his books. He says, everything is going to work out all right. The accountant was an officer of the bank. The small business failed and the bank had to run the business for awhile until the loan was repaid. The bank ceased to manage business and the owner took it over and the business died.

You see, judgement comes with precision.

It probably was the way people talked about Hitler in Germany, in 1939. They feared the consequences but they said we'll be patriotic. And they thought everything was going to work out all right in Germany. But the cities were bombed and they had to pay dearly in the loss of property and in the loss of life.

Now this is the way that people look at the judgement of God. They say, his razor will never cut into my way of life. I'll be able to do just like I please.

Like back in 1933 the case of prohibition - the people who controlled the press and wrote the books, and governed the country - they did not believe that prohibition would bring any evil. That they could not see the evils of alcohol. They looked upon it as an innocent past-time.

Now there are people who thought that that would just work out all right. They would use it for taxes and they did not know that every day there are millions of dollars worth of damage done to people and to property because of the booze problem. But everything is working out all right - you see, it is the way you see things.

Now the Bible is not so foolish as we are about things like that. And greed, and

poverty, despair, disease, and death. Think of the energy crisis. This is sweeping across Europe and America. And there are some people who perhaps feel that they will be successful against this. And yet God may have something to do with this. And in his mercy this may be some way of trying to protect us. To get us ready for the razor of judgement.

He may have done as much as he can for us. In warning us.

And how important it is for us to be able to see when God speaks to us.

In the Book of Ecc. 10:10 if the iron is blunt and one does not wet the edge, he must put forth more strength but wisdom helps one to succeed. How true. He says if the axe is dull, the man must put forth more strokes to cut through the log. And that is necessary, whether an axe, a knife, or a razor.

But when the judgement of God is clear, then we should be able to understand. It has been perhaps 70 years ago in Chicago, a preacher, Frank Gunsaulus - a powerful preacher. He was preaching one day on the subject ("Youth Today") He went after that subject, he pleaded for an opportunity to be given for young men to realize their ability. He said, what is money. We have the money. He says a million dollars would found an institution, here, that would train able young men by the hundreds. To be industrial leaders in the future.

In his audience was Phillip D. Armour the giant of the meat packing industry. He was there in his frocked coat and he lifted his face to listen to this common sense by the preacher. With his eyes glowing and enthusiasm and his interest - he met the preacher after the service and said, what would you do if you had a million dollars. I'd establish that institution right now, was the answer. The million dollars is yours, said Armour. If I'd been preaching, my faith would probably be so weak



I'd have fainted dead away, right on the spot.

Mr. Armour gave that million dollars - and he added more millions in later years. For that sermon had cut through his heart. And the institute - the Armour Institute of Technology is one of the world's greatest scientific schools was started and had merged with (Illinois Institute of Technology.)

When the razor of God's judgement comes, men need to respond.

William Booth heard a sermon in the chapel in England - he walked out of that chapel and founded the Salvation Army.

Grenfell went with a group of medical students to hear Moody preach. And that one sermon sent him out to Labrador as the God-given missionary.

Now the individuals who have responded to sermons are endless. And when the preacher's axe is sharp it will cut through.

It is said that one preacher in New York, spent one hour in preparation for every minute that he spoke. A great Sockman says that he averaged 14 hours per sermon a week. And on and on, an unforgettable picture, those trying to share, that God's razor is sharp when it cuts.

And it may be that in this energy, God's judgement may be saying something to us.

This new daylight saving time may strike some people wrong. Now the clock may be 1, 2, or 3 - but I'll tell you God's clock is always right. And when it is one - it strikes one. And when it is twelve, it strikes twelve. And the second hand is

just as accurate as the minute hand.

God's razor has shaved nations. Now we do not have to stick in the Bible to see what God has done. We come to this land of ours with one sharp sweep - he swept across Judea. Down went their pride and their power.

In 1861, God shaved this nation. He had allowed it to go on. There was Sabbath desecration, there was oppression, there was blasphemy, impurity, and all sorts of evils.

The ~~South~~ had its evils, and the ~~North, East, and West~~, its evils. We had been warned again and again but we have not heeded. At length, the ~~civil~~ war cut from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf - from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The pride of the land was cut. Heroes on both sides went down. And the Lord's razor shaved down this country. In 1862, it crossed the land. In 1863-64 The sharp instrument was encased and then put away.

Never in the history of the ages was any man more thoroughly shaved than through those four years of Civil War. And if we do not quit some of our individual sins, national sins, the Lord will again take us in hand.

He has other razors within his reach. He doesn't have to use war. There are epidemics, drougths, there are plagues, floods, grasshoppers, locus.

And the great nations of Europe and Asia may be combined to put us down. This nation is easy to approach on the North, South, and from both oceans. We might have more hostilities at one time than we can handle.

All of the fortresses - from New York Harbor on down. There are those that are capable of coming in by sea. And sending shells inland.

China, one of the wealthiest nations, is realizing her resources and development. And is adopting the modern warfare. Ways of modern warfare.

If the combined jealousies of Europe and Asia should come together, we should have more work on our hands than we can handle. I hope no such combination ever comes to pass.

But what I am trying to show you is that Assyria was the hired razor against Judea.

Cyrus, the hired razor against Babylon.

The Nuns, the hired razor against the Goths.

There are many razors that the Lord has hired and used.

In 1870, Germany was the razor with which the Lord shaved France.

And England became the razor to work upon Russia. But many of the world-wide calamities that are taking place today should help us to understand that the unrighteousness in Washington - the bad lives among ourselves. The way we defy Almighty God. All this may soon be brought into judgement.

One would think that the national symbol of the eagle - might sometime suggest another eagle.

That which (ancient Rome carried) In the eagle were clutched at one time Britain, France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Egypt - all northern Africa, all the lands and islands of the Mediterranean.

Indeed, all the world that was worth having and 120 millions of people were under the wings of that one eagle. Where is she now.?

Go and ask Gibbon, the historian, in the decline and the fall of the Roman Empire. And you can ask among the ruins, that are sad, and those that have conquered. You asked the day of judgement. Ask men and nations - they may be asked. But we need to repent and to trust in God. For we are not out of his reach.

Out of the (13 great battles) of the world, Napoleon had lost but one before Waterloo. But pride and destruction were in the same saddle.

Lastly, the razor is necessary. God is so kind and loving - but when it is necessary for him to cut - he must do it.

He goes to others for a sharp-edged weapon. In the same day, shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired.

God is (love). God is pity. God is our shelter, our rescue. If you want balm for wounds - he has that. If you want saue for divine eye sight--he has that. If there is the need of judgement - he has a razor that he can hire.

God has no problem getting an instrument. And we think about the tears. We ought to think about his judgement. But Jesus, like king Henry II of England - crowned his son as king. And on the day of coronation, put on a servant's garment and waited. He, the king, at the son's table - to the astonishment of all the princes.

But we know of a more wonderful scene - the king of Heaven. That will be ours

and has waited upon us. And we have become his servants.

Raphael held him up as a little child. Rubens painted him on the cross. Handel puts forth in one cord - he was wounded by our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities.

So here is the wonder of redemption - the height and the depth of God's love.

In our national capitol there is a monument that honors the man who led the American independence.

This is a very sad but an important story, and truth for us to see how the Lord's judgement - his razor brought down those who were proud.

I read the other day of an incident that happened in Korea - Catherine Marshall relates it in her book, "Beyond Ourselves". This happened in the mountain of North Korea, 23 years ago in February 1951. But it still has the power to reach our hearts. 43 American prisoners were huddled in a hut - trying to keep warm. Two of the men - severe cases of diarrhea. Not pleasant in close quarters.

In the course of an evening an American Corporal suddenly got to his feet - picked up one of his sick comrades, and dumped him outside. Then he came back and threw the other sick soldier out. Not a man stirred. Not a voice was raised in protest. It was 30 degrees below zero outside. The exposed men were dead within minutes. The merciless Corporal who was thus responsible for the two fellow countrymen's death was (tried after the war) - convicted of man-slaughter and sentenced to life in prison.

But what of the 40 witnesses. All of these were questioned about the incident by Army psychiatrists. The interview as reported by the doctors went something like

this. Soldier, did you see that man throw the two sick soldiers out of the hut. Oh, yes Sir. What were you doing at the time. Oh, I was huddling together with the rest of the guys trying to keep warm. That is the only way you could stay alive. Then you knew it would destroy these men to be exposed. Well, sure. But what were you doing about it. I wasn't doing anything except trying to keep warm. Why didn't you do something about it soldier - because the reply would come, it wasn't any of my business.

The words echo strangely - it was really none of my business. Now that is a question that comes to you. Would things have been different if you had been there. Do you have the conviction that you are your brother's keeper.

Now (man's razor) of judgement fell upon the Corporal. I wonder what God's judgement is going to do to the other 40 men who sort of closed their eyes.

That is why I am urging men and women to take Jesus Christ tonight. I am telling you as true as God is in Heaven - if you don't change, you'll stand before this great razor of judgement.

The (Holy Spirit) is working with you right now. Remember when your heart has been touched and you have said, yes, I ought to do that. I ought to take Christ. I ought to prepare for eternity. And I ought to do it right now - it is the right thing to do. I don't want to go to Hell - I want to go to Heaven.

Now, perhaps, some of you have thought that way before. You thought that way when your father was sick. Or you thought that way when your mother was dying. You thought that way when some loved one was passing away.

And you really said to yourself with all seriousness, I am going to do that. And you really were determined to do it. Especially when you listened to the minister

preach the funeral sermon. You thought, how wonderful. I will join the church. I will give my life. You went to the graveyard - and you listened to all the words there and saw the casket lowered into the ground. And you felt that somehow, something in your life - you had lost your best friend. And you walked away from that place and got into your car. Your heart was torn. Now, if you had just dropped on your knees and bowed your head - somewhere along the way, and said, I am taking Jesus as my Saviour - so help me God. You could have done that and the whole thing would have been different. It would have meant that with all your heart, mind, and soul - you might have settled it. And your name would have been written in the Lamb's Book of Life tonight. But instead of that, you haven't settled it. Some of you are still drinking whiskey. Some of you are still out in the world. All of your good resolutions gone. The Devil has taken away your seeds.

Well, you say, what about the big boys. The people that are at the head of the utilities, etc. Surely, they will not have to get into judgement. The Bible says the great and the small shall be there. The anti-Christ, the false prophets.

And remember, dear sinner, you will be there. What are you going to say? Just imagine you are there now. Stop and think about it a moment. What excuse would you have. What reason would you give for not having accepted Jesus Christ.

All you have now are your evil companions. Do you think that would be a good answer. Well, I was afraid that folks might laugh at me. No, that won't do.

You ought to think about this slowly and plainly. And the dead were judged by the records in the books according to their deeds. Rev. 20:12. And remember, the books are being kept about you. Every evil deed you do is recorded in a book. And the books were opened - and the dead were judged by the record in the books according to their deeds.

But the cowards, the unfaithful, the murderers, the liars will have their portion in the lake.

Why don't you get it settled now?