

God is Immanent & Transcendent

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Date: 29 August 2021

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[0 : 00] Father, we ask that you would gently but deeply pour out the Holy Spirit upon us, pour out the Holy Spirit upon us who are gathered here in the Ottawa Little Theatre, those gathered through YouTube Live.

And Father, for those who will maybe watch this service later in the week or in the weeks ahead, we ask, Father, that the Holy Spirit will fall with might and power and deep conviction. We, Lord, invite and give you permission to, without any qualifications or any conditions, we invite and give you permission, Father, to have your words speak into our hearts and rule in our hearts, so that we might, Father, be in your presence and receive grace from you and respond to you in a worthy manner.

And all this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Saviour. Amen. Please be seated. One of the things before the, we have an 8 o'clock service before this, and then we, of course, have this 10 o'clock service.

And before each service, there's usually the people involved up front, at least some of us, we have a very short prayer time. Basically, it's just me praying. And at both the 8 o'clock service and the 10 o'clock service, one of the things that I prayed is just for us to really be thankful and grateful that we're not in Afghanistan.

And I don't say that lightly, but just to think that Christians in Afghanistan, and there are Christians in Afghanistan, even before the Taliban took over, Afghanistan was the second most dangerous place in the world for Christians to be Christians.

[1 : 42] And so, but especially now, you could just imagine we'd be, we wouldn't be in here, we'd be in the basement with all the lights upstairs turned off, and we'd be meeting in the basement, and I can't even begin to say what it would be like to be in a situation like that.

But I can very well imagine that we would all be worried about the sound of a pounding on the door, that this might be the time that you're caught.

And so, you know, we just take our freedom so much for granted. And anyway, that's why I prayed. Thank you, Father, that we're not in Afghanistan. And at the end of this sermon, hopefully I'll remember to do this, because I'm going to mention Afghanistan a couple of times in this, that we'll remember just to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

I mean, for all of Afghanistan, obviously, but especially for our brothers and sisters in Christ. And it's just a bit of a wake-up call for all of us. We really have it very easy here, and yet the easiness, I mean, if you think about it, for many of us, we'd get upset if we posted something in social media, and it was Christian, and somebody gave us a thumbs down.

And we might get depressed about it. And the difference between that and a knock on a door in Afghanistan is a million, billion miles.

[3 : 04] It's just huge. Some of you might or might not know, I've said it occasionally in sermons, and I've said it in some of my blogs. I haven't watched the news.

Other than September 11th attack, I haven't watched the news since somewhere in the mid-'70s, so it's over 45 years since I've watched news on television. I read a couple of books by a man named Jacques Gillil, and one of them was on propaganda.

And after I read that book, I stopped watching the news on television, and I stopped listening to the news on radio, unless it's just sports news. So I haven't watched the news in a long time.

Don't listen to the news. But I read newspapers, and of course there's the social media. I try to stay away from that for my news. But all of us have been just horrified with the scenes that are going on in Afghanistan.

Like, it's just heartbreaking to see pictures of people crushed up against the airport in Kabul.

[4 : 07] I don't know if I'm pronouncing it correctly. Just desperately trying to get into the airport to be taken away from Afghanistan. The pictures of women holding their babies over the wall in the hope that their baby would at least be taken, knowing that they'd never see their baby, knowing it's very likely they'd never see their baby again for the rest of their life.

Like, that's heartbreaking. It just shows the great desperation they have to leave what they would see and probably are completely right to see as a place of doom and a place of oppression. As you know, God has blessed us with many kids, and just the idea that my wife would be able to hand a baby over a wall. Like, on one hand, I could see that she would do that as a final desperate act of love.

But it would break her heart. And I mention this not just for any type of cheap emotional effect, but because all this week I've really struggled.

All of us who have had to preach on these, we're going through a sermon series on the attributes of God called Knowing God, the Attributes and Characteristics of God, and I think all of us have commented.

[5 : 30] We found the sermons, on one hand, very, very difficult. I mean, they've been very fruitful, at least for, I think, for each of us who've had to reflect upon these things, but it's just any one of the topics can go in so many different directions, it's been difficult.

But it struck me that what's been going on in Afghanistan this week is a perfect way for us to understand the holiness of God and what it means for us to be called holy.

And so, I really do. I'll get to it in a moment, but just first, the first thing to understand about this talk, that God is personal and God is holy, and the situations going on in Afghanistan helps us to understand, enter into emotionally and at an imaginative level and an intellectual level, what it means when God calls us to be holy like he is holy, which otherwise just seems like a weird and awkward doctrine.

So first, if you turn in your Bibles, we're going to look at Psalm 24, then we're going to look at Leviticus 11, Leviticus 12, 22, then 1 Peter 1 and 1 Peter 2, just five texts today.

But we'll start just with a very, very simple text, which is Psalm 24, 1 and 2, verses 1 and 2. And if you don't have your Bible, you know, it's really helpful to have your own Bible so you can sort of follow along, and it's always really good.

[6 : 55] I want us to be Bereans. Those who are Christians maybe know what that reference is, that people check to see if what I'm preaching on is what the Bible teaches. And so it's really helpful to have your own Bible so you can look around and say, oh, George took that out of context, or no, oh, well, he didn't take it out of context, whatever.

Anyway, so here is the first text, very simple and famous text, Luke, sorry, Psalm 24, verses 1 and 2. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.

For he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. So the basic idea there is that everything is God's. God created everything.

He sustains everything. Everything is his. And he didn't only create everything. He sustains everything. That's why it says the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. In other words, everything in it.

The world and those who dwell therein. So it all belongs to him because he founded it upon the seas. In other words, he created it and established it upon the rivers.

[7 : 55] And both of those have this idea not only of creation, but of sustaining, that he continues to sustain the world. And so whatever we're going to mean about, whatever we're going to understand about holiness or God being holy, it always begins with this idea that God owns everything.

It's like the question, if people ever ask me about tithing, and they ask, and do I ask them, well, is it 10% is God's and 90% is yours? And it's easy to think that way.

But actually, the biblical teaching on tithing is that 100% of your money is God's. And that he just asks as a sign, a token of you believing and trusting that it's all his, that you give 10% for his purposes.

And so whatever holy is going to mean, it doesn't mean that there's just sort of some people that belong, that in a sense belong to God and everybody else doesn't. No, the bottom line is everything, every star, every nebula, every atom, every molecule, every person, every creature, ultimately belongs to God.

Now, obviously, this is going to raise the whole question about evil. I just realized I don't have to always be looking at the mic because I have this. And that, of course, only the Christian story, it's only when you understand Psalm 24, that the earth is the Lord's and everything in it, and then you understand how evil came.

[9 : 18] It's only the Christian story that really accounts for human experience. The human experience that there is both good in the world and that there's good in people and that there's good in things, but at the same time that there's evil in the world and there's evil in things.

And that, and it's, you know, one of the, there's many, many, many problems with critical theory and all of its offspring. And one of the great problems with critical theory and all of its offspring is it constantly is dividing the world between the good and the bad, the good people and the bad people. And the Christians, the Bible rejects that analogy completely and utterly. The word Christian is not a synonym or another word for good. There's lots of terrible Christians in the world.

And if we're honest, every single one of our Christian, of us who are Christians here, our walk is second rate. But the world is not divided between the good and the evil because the division between good and evil runs right through every single human being.

It's one of the many ways that Christianity, in a sense, rejects key tenets of critical theory and all of the critical theories offspring. And some of you who are involved in a more intellectual and that never know what I mean.

[10 : 38] Others, I've just put you to sleep. But to get back to this particular thing, the Bible has a very, very simple and profound story. And it's the only story that understands our human experience and understands our human experience with hope.

Because it understands that the Lord made everything. He made it good. He continues to maintain and sustain everything. And part of the way that he made human beings good is he made human beings have a very special place in the world.

In a sense, human beings are made and not in a sense, we are made in his image. And in a sense, we are made to every single human being is to be like a priest for the entire created order, offering up, in a sense, the entire created order to God at the same time that we were called to fill the earth, to flourish, and to have dominion.

And for God to create a creature like that, which is you and me, he can only do that if he gives us freedom. He can't do it without freedom. And then he gives us that freedom.

And if God has given us freedom, then it is possible that we will use our freedom to rebel against him, to choose evil over good. And that is, in fact, what the Christian story is, that during the time of humanity's probation, Adam and Eve used their freedom to choose to be not just like God, but in a sense, to be over God.

[11 : 56] And it's seen, if you go back and you read the original story of Genesis 3, they choose to go over God in the sense that they doubt his word. They now act as a judge of it. They don't really want to be like God, but because they want to be like God, they look at his word and they think that his word is wrong, so they're judging his word.

They very quickly move not just from, I want to be like God, I want to be God's boss. I want to be God's judge. I want to be over God. And when human beings did that, it bent them.

It bent us. It bent you and me. It created a tear in you and me. And because the entire creation is one piece, when one piece tears, the whole thing is, in a sense, torn.

If you went to a store and you were going to buy an article of clothing and there was a little bit of a tear, you'd either wonder why they didn't just throw it out or you'd ask for a very, very great discount.

And if they said to you, well, one moment, 99% of it is untorn, it's just that one little bit that's torn. What would you say? You'd say, no, it's torn. It's torn.

[13 : 03] And you don't just reduce the price, because there's only a 0.3% tear, so you're going to take 3 cents off of every dollar. You'd say it's torn. You should either throw it out or make it greatly reduced.

That's how we would react with any article of clothing. If we went home and found out it was torn, we would go back to the returns and act that. And if you were handy at sewing and you thought you could sew it, you might take the big discount or you might just say, I don't want it.

It's torn. But what the Bible says is that in the mystery of God's love, because God created everything out of love. It was out of the overflowing of his love that he created all things.

And that what God does is he doesn't just sort of discount and say, well, this is now just a tenth rate creation and I'm just, or he didn't discard it. What he does is he promises, well, first of all, what he does is he promises that there will come a time when he will judge the evil and that he will redeem those who do evil.

And he promises that. And he promises that at the same time part of his love and mercy is that not only does he begin to give these pointers about what he's going to do at some point in time in the future, he begins to enact it right in that original story by covering them with clothes.

[14 : 21] But at the same time what he's doing is he sustains the created order out of his love. And that's what our situation is in right now.

So that's why we can understand that the earth is the Lord and the fullness thereof. That is why I can say to my non-Christian friends sometimes when you have a very, very, very beautiful day in Ottawa can have some very, very, very, very beautiful days.

Days when, I don't know, take your pick about what's beautiful but it's, you know, the mid-twenties, it's sunny, there's no humidity, every, you know, maybe a day in the fall the leaves are all just glorious and I can say to my non-Christian friends days like this make it easy to believe in heaven. And that's part of God's goodness that he has maintained creation so that everybody can say that. But I could also say very easily to my non-Christian friends if we were maybe in a bar or a restaurant and there was a news clip going on about Afghanistan you'd say things like this make it easy to see that there's real evil in the world and a real devil because when you see something like this you can smell the sulfur you can smell the brimstone and I think non-Christians would go yeah just as an aside never say a day like this helps you to believe in hell because hell isn't where the devil rules hell is where the devil is judged hell is death and the devil's and evil's doom not where he rules it's a terrible mistake to think that hell is the place where he rules it's the place where he is finished now we mention all of this because as I said if we look at Afghanistan

I mean right if you think about that mom putting her baby up in the hope that a soldier on the other side will take that baby for her not only that it will then be under the control of Great Britain or France or the United States but that it would even come to this country and be adopted on one hand that very same image shows the great horror and evil that exists in the world and the great love that exists in the world doesn't it the great love of the mom and the great horror of the situation and so it's within this that we can then start to understand what the biblical teaching of holiness is let's look at the next bible text which is 11 Leviticus sorry a book that basically

[17 : 25] Christians virtually never look at or preach on when Messiah Kanata is off and running for a little while Daniel and I Daniel doesn't know this but I and I'm sure he's just going to go let's do this at some point time hopefully within the first year I've been meaning for a long time to preach through the book of Leviticus and so at some point in time we should just do it but Leviticus towards the beginning of the bible and if you look at Leviticus chapter 11 verse 45 look at this very very interesting text and one of the reasons that Christians don't read Leviticus is you get these long lists of the food you can eat the food you can't eat and how to deal with mold and whether it's a bad thing or not and leprosy and all the sacrifices and if you're rich you do this if you're a little bit less you do it just you know it goes on and on and on and for many of us it's just very very very off putting hard to read but one of the things and this is too generally about the bible is that one of the things about the bible is that the bible interprets itself and so what is needed is for an attentive reading of the bible where you can actually notice how it interprets things and you go oh that's what's going on in the rest of the book oh and so this is one of the first moments about halfway or a third of the way somewhere in between that 40% of the way through the book there's this very very powerful explanatory statement and it's it's

Leviticus 11 45 I could have quoted the other verses a bit before but this gets to the heart of it for I am the lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your god you shall therefore be holy for I am holy read it again for I am the lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your god you shall therefore be holy for I am holy so what is this revealing this is revealing first of all the lord is revealing that he's personal which I'll talk about in a second he's revealing that he's holy but he does it he reveals himself in the context of redeeming first he redeems and then he calls us to be holy like he is holy and this whole analogy of Egypt is very very appropriate to Afghanistan if you just realize if a law came in Canada and they wanted to show us a little bit of mercy so they weren't going to kill all the Christians but they said that every time a Christian has a baby boy the boy will be killed that's

Egypt if it's saying that all of the Christians will be slaves that's Egypt and so God uses his mighty power to deliver people out of slavery bondage death and doom into a land that is promised for them and so look at it again I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God you shall therefore be holy for I am holy don't know there's lots in this which is very significant that first of all is that God says I am the Lord he reveals himself as personal and one way to put it and I put it up on a screen is that the true and living God is a who not a what the true and living God is a who not a what and all of the religions and the spiritualities of the world divide along this very very important distinction

God is an I he is a who he is a person he is not a what and most of the religions and spiritualities of the world conceive of God ultimately as some type of a what but the Bible is very clear that God is a who he is a person and the second thing is if you put it up is that the true and living God and this is where we put in a sense Psalm 24 together with Leviticus 11 and Genesis 1, 2, and 3 the true and living God made lots and lots and lots and lots and lots of what but he only made each human a who it's obvious God likes what he loves atoms and energy and light and stars and worms and dogs and wood and he loves it he made piles of what in fact most of the universe is what but out of all of the universe he made each human being a who and that is why

I can speak to God as a who and he can speak to me as a who the second thing we see actually Claire could you flip back to 1145 thanks for I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God you shall therefore be holy for I am holy well what does it mean for God to be holy big books written on it but very very simple there's two basic ideas the first is that he is set apart and the third the second thing is that he's completely and utterly himself and set apart now this is this is going to be very important and it's part of the in a sense the subtext of the book of Leviticus which we don't really get unless we think of the the contrast or maybe a better way to put it is how do we naturally think of holy as Canadians and what most religions and most spiritualities and most ideologies in a sense the natural way for us as human beings to think is something along the line of a chain of being and at the top there's like some type of

[23 : 25] God and then I don't know you know there's different levels of beings you know maybe there's angels or something like that and then there's the but that's all the world of spirit so there's like God and then there's the world of spirit or the world mind and there's different types of spirit or spirits or mind or soul and then you come to the level of matter so to speak and so what most people think of when they think of holy is they think of something like Yellowstone Park only in terms of the levels of being in Yellowstone Park the earth's crust is very very very thin it's one of I think only three places in the world where the crust of the earth is very very very thin and all the stuff that's underneath is very close to the surface and that's why you have the geysers and the hot water and all those other types of things because the earth's crust is very thin and so what most people think of as holy is those places or people where the division between the realm of spirit and the realm of the body that that is a very thin place and so when we think of a holy person generally speaking you think of somebody who's emaciated looks like they're starving themselves to death they look anorexic they look as if they don't care about things like cleanliness or grooming why well that individual you see if matter and everything is sort of bad and evil and that person is representing that thinness and then maybe it's because they say all sorts of pithy types of things you know wipe left wipe right never mind anyway and the other thing is that we think of like a grove of trees or a church or a temple where everything is very still and very quiet and we can easily imagine that the distance between the other so to speak the spiritual and the physical is very thin and that's how we tend to think of holiness but you read the book of

Leviticus and it's talking about here's when you have your feast here's when you have your time of denial oh let's have another feast oh and oh let's have some more feasts and oh here's marriage and here's how you deal with the babies and here's the type of food you can eat and none of it looks very holy it looks all about how you're going to regulate things like marriage and friendship and how you're going to organize your to work hard and to make lots of money and be prosperous and flourish and it doesn't look like that thinness at all because you see at the heart of the idea of holy is that the Bible doesn't say that there's God and then there's a whole world of spirit or mind or soul and you go down levels and levels and levels and finally you come to the physical and then you come to the physical that has both a bit of spiritual and body because you have humans and dolphins and dogs and beetles and rocks the

Bible said that there's just this one line there is the triune God and everything else what did the psalm say the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit they create everything they make everything there's the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit there's this big line and then there's everything else there's mind and spirit and body and soul and creativity and physical labor and there's sex and there's all of this other stuff it's all there's no level of beings just God and everything else and so God is completely and utterly himself and he's completely and utterly separate and that's what to be holy and here's where we come to the thing in Afghanistan and the heart of discipleship if you fall asleep fall asleep until now you're going to fall asleep in three minutes you get this image you've got the heart of the sermon because what is it that the people making their way to the airport desperately want they want to be set aside and allowed into the airport for freedom they want to be delivered they don't want to be people who are still caught in the terrible mess of a

Taliban controlled Afghanistan they are hoping that some soldier some bureaucrat some person will look at what they hold and will do this and they will be set aside from the crowd to come into the airport to be taken under the care and jurisdiction of one of the powers my mom and dad are immigrants Louise's father was a basically a refugee her mom's parents were immigrants Louise's father did not come to Canada because he thought Canada wanted more Polish people he came to Canada because he believed that Canada wanted more Canadians my parents came to Canada because they believed that Canada wanted more Canadians and you see at the very heart of this idea of holy listen to the text again for I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God you shall therefore be holy for I am holy at the heart of this idea of holy is that not only has God redeemed you which we need to do away from evil but that

God sets people aside for himself for his purpose and for his mission if you could put up the third point the true and living God made lots and no sorry the third point is here it is I'm jumping ahead aren't I don't put it up yet that's fine you're right I'm wrong I have to follow my notes anyway that so that God sets people aside for himself and that's what's going on in Afghanistan and what we're to understand is that God sets us aside for himself in the face of our doom the face of slavery and the whole situation in Afghanistan helps us to understand discipleship because the fact of the matter is that the world the idols of the world are constantly beckoning us to be set aside for the purpose of the idol okay

[30 : 32] I'm going to say it I didn't watch very much of the Olympics what I gather and what I saw is the Olympics were an unrelenting advertisement for gay pride an unrelenting beckoning to embrace the LGBTQ plus movement see the fact of the matter is the world is always calling us to be set aside for its purposes now just to be clear LGBTQ plus God loves you Jesus died for you he is calling you if you're watching this right now he's not calling you and saying this to make you mad he's calling us so you will understand that he is calling you to say yes to Jesus just as he's calling heterosexuals to set to he's calling us to allow him to set you aside to transfer you from in a sense the kingdom of the world and the kingdom of death into his own kingdom and to be his treasured possession it's going to become more obvious in the very next text from

Leviticus to but the world is always beckoning us we as Christians I've had some it's not been a hard thing for me but I've had people on one side who would definitely like me to embrace the ultimate paranoia of the most paranoid in our society around COVID 19 and I have had people who have left the church because I have not said that we as a church will be united and refusing to wear masks.

The fact of the matter is, is that there's political ideologies that want, that call and beckon me to leave the gospel and embrace the political cause. And whether or not it's the call to embrace racism, or whether it's the call to embrace critical theory, or whether it's the call to embrace materialism and consumerism, or the might of empire, or the shame of our complete and utter culture, or whatever it is, the world is always calling us to allow it, to set us aside for its purposes and its mission.

Just as people going through Afghanistan are always worried, well, they're hoping that they can make it to the Kabul airport so that they will be set aside and allowed to enter.

And they're worried that at a challenge, at a checkpoint, the Taliban will tap them on the shoulder and say, come aside. If that happened to me, I'd wet my pants.

[33 : 32] And so in a world where the idols of the world are constantly beckoning us to be set aside, hear their call, and to be set aside for their purposes, their mission, their glory, in such a

world, God, in the person of Jesus and in his word, is calling you and saying to leave the idols of the world, the doom that you have because you will die, to leave that and set that aside, to leave all smells and all hint of brimstone and sulfur, because there is a great Savior and Deliverer who's died for you to redeem you so that if you heed his call and say yes, he will take you and set you aside to be his beloved child, his precious possession, to be holy.

And he is not calling you because he wants more Canadians or more rich people or more poor people or more handicapped or more mightily athletic or brilliant or gay or straight. He's not calling you because he wants more of them. He calls you because he wants more of his children where we get a new identity. Just as that baby that goes over and is accepted and eventually goes to Germany or France or the UK or United States will learn how to live within that country within, with its language and its culture, so it is that when we give our lives to Christ and we are set aside for him, we learn the language of grace and of mercy and of justice and of peace of the importance of truth over lies, justice over injustice, mercy over cruelty, goodness over evil, peace over conflict, love over hate, flourishing over diminishment, respect over belittlement, that God sets us aside in his kingdom to be holy like he is holy so that we will breathe his air and eat his food and drink his drink and learn his language and learn his culture and see the world for what it is and to react to the world not with hatred, not with despair, not with despising, but with love and with prayer and with pressing forward.

If you could put up the next text, let's turn to Leviticus chapter, I have to sort of wind this up very quickly, Leviticus 22 verses 31 to 33.

See, here's the other type of thing within the text is that the Lord reveals himself as personal, he reveals himself as holy, which means that he's completely different than everything else, he's always completely and utterly himself and he calls us to be holy and to be holy means that we will be set apart for him and in a very, very odd way as we're set apart for him, we become ourselves. [36 : 53] Just as God's holiness means that God is himself in this profound mystery, when we give up our other ambitions and allow him to set us aside for himself, we become ourself.

You know, it's just like the moon is the moon because it circles the earth. If the moon was ever to break its gravitational hold and stop circling the earth, it would just become a comet that would move to its eventual demise.

But as the moon circling the sun, it's itself. In the same way, we weren't meant to be our own bosses, our own gods. We just become comets that will flame out and die.

And this profound mystery is we allow God to set us aside for himself, knowing that he is himself and no other. In a mystery of grace, he begins to make you and me more like what we really are in our uniqueness.

I haven't used this analogy in a long time, but if you go into a room of people who are all stoned or drunk, their differences diminish. If you go into a room where people aren't stoned or drunk, then you notice more the peculiarities of their personality and their sense of humor and their wit.

[38 : 22] You see, sin and evil always diminish us and goodness and grace elevate us. But look at this text here. So you shall keep my commandments and do them for I am the Lord and you shall not profane my holy name that I may be sanctified among the people of Israel.

I am the Lord who sanctifies you, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. I am the Lord. See, here's this great mystery of redemption is the Lord who sets me aside.

When I, in a sense, say, Jesus, I want you to be my Savior. I trust you to be my Savior. I can't reach Him. He reaches me. He takes my hand. He covers me with His righteousness.

He is the one whose death upon the cross covers all of my wrongdoing and all of my sin from the moment of my birth to the moment of my death. So I, both the, there's a just dealing with all the wrong I've done because He takes my place and I'm covered with His righteousness and He takes me and sets me aside as His own and I am on one level called to give 100% of seeking to be holy, always mindful that I am only growing into what God has already called me and destined me to in His Son and at the end of the day it is only God who makes me holy.

All of these texts are pointing, all of these texts are telling our Jewish friends and pointing to the day they say, you deal with the lamb, you kill the bull, you kill the cow and it deals with the sins that you perform today but if you take these texts at their great depth you realize that God Himself must provide some greater sacrifice that will one day have to come for which all of these small sacrifices are but a hint and a foretaste and a pointer and when Jesus appears, John the Baptist says, behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and all of the promises of Leviticus, all of the

promises of Genesis are all fulfilled in the person of Jesus and we are the heirs of that when we receive it.

[40 : 32] And Jesus calls us like those people in Afghanistan, He says, it's like people being picked out and called and taken out of doom, set aside for Himself.

Here's the point, the Lord redeems you from doom, sets you aside for His way and mission as His treasured and adopted child.

Just in closing, very briefly, I'm just going to not comment on them basically at all, just read two texts in 1 Peter to see that these very same things that I've been developing just out of the book of Leviticus is exactly what the New Testament is talking about.

1 Peter is a small book right towards the end of the Bible, which I'm momentarily having trouble finding. There we go. 1 Peter 1, verses 13 and 16 says this, Therefore, preparing your minds for action and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that would be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.

[41 : 47] Since it is written, you shall be holy for I am holy. He quotes Leviticus. And then just look on the very next page, 1 Peter 2, verses 9 to 12.

He's referring to those of us who've accepted Jesus. Some of us have become Christians out of great homes.

Some of us have become Christians without knowing who our parents are. Some of us grew up in homes with great privilege. Some of us grew up in homes with great abuse.

Some of us here struggle with great sexual problems. Some of us, it's not a particular issue. Some of us have come out of poverty. Some of us have come out of riches. Some of us have great IQ. Some of us have low IQs. But when we put our faith in Christ, this is what he says. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

[43 : 02] Once you are not a people, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against your soul.

Keep your conduct among the world honorable so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of his visitation.

I invite you to stand. If you are watching this and you've never given your life to Jesus, there's no better time now than to call out to him.

And he redeems you. And when he calls, and when you accept him, when he takes you, he accepts you, he sets you aside as his own adopted child that he loves.

He sets you aside and he calls you to become like him, to allow him to do his work of redemption and grace in you, that we, you, and I can live for his glory, not allowing the world to call us to be set aside for its purposes, but to know that he has called us and set us aside for his own purpose that will end in glory.

[44 : 29] Let's pray. Father, first of all, we commend into your hands the Afghani people. Father, it's hard to pray in the face of victorious evil.

so we cling to your word and know that evil never has the final word, that whether on this side of the grave or the next, that you will judge.

You will judge all injustice, all hatred, all evil. But we call out, Father, for this people we believe, help our unbelief.

We ask, Father, that you would turn the hearts of those who seem bent on great evil, that you would bring about a day when there are leaders of that land who seek freedom and human flourishing and not oppression.

And we call out especially, Father, for our brothers and sisters in Christ in Afghanistan. Father, we confess we are so soft and weak it is hard for us to even imagine that in a land like that someone would willingly choose to heed your call and become your child.

[45 : 47] It's hard for us to imagine. So, Father, we thank you for their courage, their testimony, for your great grace. We ask that you would bless them in this great hour of trial, that you would deliver them, that you turn the heart of their persecutors away, Father, from persecution and to Jesus.

And we ask for ourselves, Father, that you would help us to be holy as you are holy, that you would help us to learn to live as your children in your kingdom under your gracious rule, being fed by you, being led and guided and directed by you, for our true good where we become ourself, we're the good of the world, and for your great glory.

and we are so weak, Father, we ask for the outpouring of your Holy Spirit upon us, that this might be our walk. We praise you that you are holy, praise you that you are God, you alone are God, and all God's people said, Amen.