

Another Culture - Order OF the Camp  
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Corbett Gaulden  
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This evening I'm going to talk about a thing called "order". Order is pretty cool when there's somebody at your table taking down what it is you want to eat but order is not so good when it's at the level of describing some reasonably mechanical characteristics of some human phenomenon and I'll make that clearer as I go. This evening the topic I want to speak to you about I'm calling "Order OF the Camp" and we're going to use the Israelites as an example of what the Kingdom of God very well begins to look like to us and then tomorrow morning, Lord willing, I want to share with you some thoughts on order IN the camp which has to do with how we interact with one another, there's a lot to be said about that, a lot more than I'll say tomorrow. But we're gonna use a particular format to work through some things related to that.

Now the order that I want to speak of this evening flows out of the fact that God first - and I wanna make this clear - before He created the woman He created familial relationship; before He created the woman He had already created familial relationship because Adam was His son before there was a woman and God was the Father of Adam before there was a woman. The first form of familial relationship was a father and son form. I've said this to you before, if you have no son then you are not a father, if you have no father then you are not a son, the relationship in the two is absolute; there's no father without a son, no son without a father. That's the way God started human existence off, He created Adam and Luke 3 makes it very clear that God was the Father of Adam or at least that Adam was the son of God, that's clear, that's indisputable in Scripture. That being the case we must conclude then that familial relationship even before marriage, even before boy/girl relationship there was father/son relationship, as I've said to you before, independent of gender, it had nothing to do with gender. The father/son relationship has to do with the older and the younger more particularly in the ultimate sense the Creator and the created.

Now very quickly after that God gave us an "other" familial relationship when He created the woman and the man took the woman to be his wife and then he perpetuated in that familial relationship the original familial relationship of children but in order to continue to perpetuate the species some of those children were male and some of those children were female. And the males and the females were given an attraction to one another that resulted in the pro-creation and also resulted in the possibility of God showing forth the final relationship between His Messiah, His truest Son and us. And so God was already play acting all these things from the very beginning. There's some place in Scripture it speaks of Adam as being the first man and Christ being the last it's because they were the two men in history who were directly sons of God. Adam by virtue of the fact that God breathed His spirit into dead flesh and Jesus by virtue of the fact that He was the Son of God when He got here bearing with Him already the presence of the Holy Spirit of Living God, that same Spirit that quickened the dirt of Adam and gave life to the dirt so that Adam had a place to inhabit while he was in the earth just as Jesus then by way of a woman's birth canal had flesh to inhabit while He was in the earth. Both were spiritual creatures, one was given to us as an original perfect son who flubbed it and the other was given to us as a Son who was subject to all the weaknesses that we have to show us that it was possible to continue to be the sons of God and to restore fully our identity as sons of God.

Now what I want to do is unfold for ya a bit this evening how it was that the Israelites functioned in the desert because it was in the desert that they first became a true nation and we are a nation, we are the nation that inhabits the Kingdom of God and some aspects of the nation that the Israelites were are occasioned by their behavior in the desert and what God had to do as a result of their behavior and by that I mean for example, at Sinai the people rejected the voice of God. When they rejected the voice of God God had to give them a religion, a structure that they could adhere to in order to continue to function as a people and not simply blow apart and so He created many things that we would today call the elements or the vestiges of a culture, the parts, the artifacts of a culture in the sacrificial system for example in the elevation of the Levitical priesthood and all those kinds of things. God did that because they wouldn't hear His voice and so He had to give them an alternative way of approaching His holiness. But there were also many practical matters that they worked out in the desert and God helped them establish those practical matters in such a way that they had a degree of predictability in their lives. That predictability is the thing or it's a big part of the thing that determined what we mean when we say "culture" and I wanna share and open that up with you this evening.

Now in the desert once the people had concluded that they really wanted a spokesman rather than to hear the voice of God and there's an argument that's going to be made about that, it may already be emerging in some minds, we'll tend to that, don't get all flustered about Harriet saying we need to have some sort of organization when in fact the only thing we really need to do is to hear the voice of God. In fact God sends, He chooses how He sends His voice to us, so don't go there too quickly too far yet, we'll arrive at I think a different conclusion together. Subsequent to the rejection of the voice of God and the then delivery of the written decalogue written by the finger of God and its destruction in the face of the sin of Israel and the third go round in which Moses received the decalogue and recorded it himself as a fallible man and brought it back down the mountain finding the people were capable of receiving it because of the human element involved in that. Subsequent to that God revealed a lot of embellishment of the Law, many, many manifestations of the aspects of the decalogue, the Ten Commandments, the "Ten Suggestions" if you prefer, whatever and in addition to that began to lay out the system of the priesthood, the Levitical priesthood. The Melchizedekian priesthood had already been set aside by the people, when they refused to hear God they had already done damage to the previously existing Melchizedekian priesthood because the Melchizedekian priests hear from God and that distinguishes them from the Aaronic priests, ok? And I'm not gonna try to prove that, that's a fact in passing.

But then they had to spend a pretty good period of time in the desert, shortly after they left Sinai having built the Tabernacle and all the things that pertain to the Tabernacle, they had the opportunity, they came up close to the border of the land called Canaan, the land of the slaves, and they sent out some spies, one from each of the twelve tribes. Right off the bat that's a clue about their sense of order, there was a representative from each of the twelve tribes present in the body of spies, men, who went into this place to see what was there. So those twelve went into that place and they came back bearing pretty much the same eyewitness testimony but two very different points of view about what it meant to them. Ten of the men said, "We're pretty puny and they'll just kind of run over us if we go over there." Two of the men said, "No that's not true, if we believe in God He will give us the land." The consequence was that the people listened to the voice of the ten, not to the voice of the two and were basically in a state of rebellion against Moses and God then blessed them with a curse and He said, "You know what, if that's the way you're gonna be then you won't go into the land, you'll just simply die and rot here in the desert and your sons who are unaffected by the spirit of slavery will inherit the land

in your stead.” And so in fact that began to occur. Now in that period of roughly forty years, more like thirty nine really, the people wandered about in the desert but they didn’t just wander aimlessly, they went from specific place to specific place. We speak of it as “the time of the wandering in the desert” and it’s not an illegitimate way to look at it but it was a wandering that was determined by God, it was in a sense an orderly wandering, basically He just kept them moving from place to place, as the resources gave out they went on to another place determined by God himself through the process of discovery that they sent out scouts and so forth. And they would move again to another place and set up camp in that other place and after a season they would move yet again in such a manner that they kinda ran around in circles, that’s not actually it, it was a long way away from the land of the slaves but it wasn’t in the land of the slaves and it would not end in the land of the slaves until the last of the men and women of that generation was dead. That day God numbered the days of the rest of that generation, none of them could live past the end of the forty years after coming out of Egypt, they could not, that was determined in the counsels of God and for the most part their children would; there were two exceptions: the man Joshua and the man Caleb who were the spies who said, “No, it can be ours,” but they were the minority guys and they got overruled by the people. The anger of God resulted then in this period of kind of in essence futile wanderings simply waiting until everybody died, let’s get right down to the facts here - waiting until they all died so that the generation who were not so affected by the mentality of slavery could inhabit what God was giving them.

Now I wanna say this in passing, whatever culture of men you name as the culture from which you came is a culture that has enslaved you one way or another and we need to be free of those cultures so that they don’t continue to provide shackles on us when we’re brought into the culture of the Kingdom of God or else our carcasses will rot in the desert. Are we ok with that? That’s extra, that’s not the point but it is a part of the reality I’m dealing with, they couldn’t let go of Egypt and they feared the slaves in Canaan. I’ve taught you on the slaves right? The slave culture of Canaan so you know what I’m saying when I say that. They had a sense of themselves as being less than what God’s reckoning of them was because they had been slaves but their children were not conscious of that and God could say then, “I’ll keep your children, they’ll inherit the land that you would not.” This was the verdict and we shall not, by the grace of God, die in the desert with the shackles of the memory of what we were still on us but we shall inhabit the Kingdom of God with the freedom of understanding that what we were isn’t relevant any longer as we move into the Kingdom of God and it doesn’t change the fact that I have no hair, it doesn’t change the fact that My wife is five inches taller than me, six inches taller than me, it doesn’t change those things, those are unchanged things. The fact that Ryan has this wonderful, healthy beard that I could never have, those things are unchanged but they don’t determine who were are any more, ok, everybody with me at this? Now part of the mechanical process of letting those thirty nine years go by so that a whole generation who could not release their sense of worthlessness so that they could die off basically of natural causes, mostly not even of disease just natural causes in the desert, there was an order in what they did and that’s where I want us to spend a bit of time together this evening.

That was introduction one and now introduction two, let’s actually get to the meat shall we before you all pass out on me. When the tabernacle was finished - the tabernacle was made of basically it was a collection of tents, one very large tent that had two tents in it and one smaller one that had in it a thing it became wherever it was a place called the Holy of Holies and there was an outer larger one that was the place that contained a number of other things besides the Ark of the Covenant which was inside - Indiana Jones didn’t find it - it was inside the smaller tent

and there were other things, the table of showbread and a number of other implements inside the second tent and then there was an uncovered tent of a much larger size outside all that, right, everybody kind of gettin' the picture? Now there was a particular order in the building the design of those things, God said, "Do it the way I showed it to you on the mountain." God determined what they had, He said, "Here's what I want it to look like Moses and here's what I want it to be made of and I want you to select two men who can actually be in charge of this whole thing," and if I'm not mistaken God might have even given their names to Moses, that part I'm not sure. But there were two men to be selected to be in charge of the putting together of all those things and so there was a number of different projects going on simultaneously and not only were there the tents but there bags for the carrying of the components of the tents and the poles that held the tents up and there were covers over the tent so that at such time that the tent was up the covers were on there to protect it from the elements and all kinds of things. And God gave Moses very intricate details as to what those things should be so that when the Israelites built this thing called the Tabernacle they could build it the way God intended for it to be built given that He was having to give them that system because they wouldn't listen to God, remember that was the starting point here.

So now they had this tent and another tent attached to it in the front that was I think twice or three times its size and then a big enclosed area and wherever it was it had to face directly east. So in all the thirty nine years that they carted that around in the desert, whenever they plunked it down and put everything up the opening of the outer court that was open on top faced directly east, the wall of that tent, that outer curtain, was directly north and south and the long walls were directly east and west and the wall at the back of the whole thing, the tent wall at the back of the whole thing was directly north and south so that the opening of the thing faced directly east, not approximately east or you know, "This is a pretty good looking' piece of ground but if we skooch it around about thirty degrees that way it will be better." No, it faced east and then the door to the Tabernacle itself, the Holy Place also faced directly east and the curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place was oriented in such a way that it was north to south and the opening in it faced directly east! And inside there there sat the Ark of the Covenant upon which was a cover called mercy, upon which were two cherubim and that Ark faced, one of its sides was directly east. There was a distinct order in which this was to be done and there was a distinct order of activities in the putting up of the Tabernacle whenever the people stopped and there was a distinct order in the taking down of the Tabernacle whenever the people were about to move on and there was a distinct group of people who were to perform the different tasks and there was a distinct group of people who were to carry poles and another group who were to carry parts of the tent, and another group who were designed to carry parts of the surroundings of the outer court and all of those things. God specifically gave that to Moses, there was no happenstance, Moses didn't make it up and they didn't get to change it every time, "Ooh, ooh it's my turn to carry one of those long poles!" That didn't happen, it was given to a particular family of a particular clan, of a particular tribe to do each of those things. In the context of that then there was no place for jealousy over the fact that Eleazar got to carry part of the tent and I get to pull a camel, there might have been some of that but it didn't do anybody any good, so Eleazar didn't have to give up his turn and go pull a camel around for somebody, it was all very, very, very, very specific.

Not only is it true that the opening of the outer court and the openings of the Tabernacle must face east always, it was also true that the alignment had to be correct; it would really be weird if they got the Tabernacle oriented properly and put up the outer thing wrong so that it was faced in another direction. There was complete alignment in these things whenever they stopped. It's

further true that when they stopped not only did they need to setup the Tabernacle in the configuration I've just described to you, it is also true that then the various tribes had very specific places to be and where they were to be was specifically determined by where the Tabernacle was. And so when the people landed in a place what was called the Camp of David was on the east side, the side that the Tabernacle was facing, the Tabernacle was facing east, the Outer Court was facing east and the camp of Judah was on the east. Did I say Judah a minute ago, I often do, David? It's Judah, David is just an inheritor of these things. The camp of Judah was on the east. In fact, the most honored position was the position furthest to the east and the tribe of Judah lived in that furthest out position. When camp was setup the Camp of David was immediately east of the Tabernacle, some distance from the opening of the Outer Court was the first of the three tribes of the Camp of David and I forget who the other two were in the Camp of David and we can look it up, it's not hard to find. (laughter) Then the second tribe and then Judah itself and the tribe of Judah when it setup its camp was aligned in such a way that the long axis of that camp, the long axis ran directly north and south and the short axis across that camp ran directly east and west and the pole, the flag pole that determined the position of the location of the tent of the leader of the tribe of David in his generation was in direct alignment with the gate of the Tabernacle outer court and the door of the Tabernacle itself and the center of the Ark of the Covenant inside the Tabernacle. This is this kind of precision that we're talking about.

And so the priests would come and the high priest I assume - I don't know this - the high priest would determine the position, the place in which the Tabernacle would be placed and then they would determine, "Ok, here's where it's gonna be, where is east? Let's get a direct sense of where east is from here." And there were a variety of ways they had of doing those kinds of things and we still do. So they would make that alignment, once that alignment had been made the leader of the tribe of Judah would say to his tribe and also to the whole camp of Judah, "We will go that way and when we're so many yards out the tribe of whichever one of the other sons it is in the camp of Judah, the one closest will stop and that man will place his flag in the ground and the leader of the next tribe will go a distance beyond that and place his flag in the ground. And he being the leader of the tribe of Judah would go a distance further and place his flag in the ground and there would be a straight line from flag, to flag, to flag, to the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle and that line was directly east. Now this all actually matters, you're probably going, "Why does this matter?" It actually matters because I'm going to try to show you that God is orderly in all of this and that His Kingdom is an orderly phenomenon.

Now how far were these tribes from the east gate, the east front of the Tabernacle? The first tribe was far enough and I'll talk about what "far enough" means in a minute, the second tribe was far enough past the first tribe to be far enough away from the first tribe to be in its proper position, whatever that was and the tribe of Judah, the flag that they had of the tribe of Judah was in a position that was far enough further out there that he was in the vanguard position and the tribe of Judah was not crowding the next tribe back, which was not crowding the next tribe back, which was not crowding the Tabernacle. So each of these leaders of the various tribes and their named for you in numbers, Judah, Isaachar and Zebulun; Zebulun was probably the closest in, Issachar in the middle, Judah the furthestest out east. And then there was the camp of I believe Reuben on the right, the south of that and a similar thing happened there, they took the position of the Ark of the Covenant and went off a certain distance south, dropped off the first tribal banner a certain distance further south, second tribal banner a certain distance further south, Reuben's tribal banner and there was a straight line from there right through the main axis of the Ark of the Covenant. The western tribes did the same thing as the tribe of Judah

except they went west and I forget which tribe that was on the west whichever one it was it was one of the dominant sons and then there was the northern tribes and these all began to happen simultaneously; the guys that were in charge of getting the camp of Judah setup took off east, the guys who were in charge of getting the camp of Ephraim setup took off north - Ephraim going to be the dominant son of the two sons of Joseph - Reuben south, north is Dan and Ephraim is west, that makes sense to me too because Ephraim and Judah were the two most important tribes as history would bore out later because Ephraim was the son of Joseph, the favorite son of Jacob. So this order prevailed, if you could see it from the air, a satellite photo here, we would see the Ark sitting here, the tent being constructed around and out there in the east in a straight line, three flags representing the camp of Judah, off to the west three more flags, all the way from that furthest out flag to that, from Manasseh's flag to Judah's flag a straight perfect line and all the way from Dan's to Reuben's, straight perfect line bisecting the major axis of the Ark of the Covenant and the others bisecting the minor axis. Carl can relate to those kinds of ideas and it couldn't have been any better, they had to do it according to the way God wanted it done.

But I want to come back to the matter of how far is far enough from tribe one to tribe two, from Issachar to Judah for example? How far was far enough between the flag of Issachar and the flag of Judah was? Ever how far it took for the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Issachar to be arranged in a particular, geometric order not bumping into each other but being next to each other. That's how far they had to be apart. Well if that's the case then that would imply automatically that everybody - when this was done - everybody that had a tent had a specific place for his tent to be; there was a specific place for your tent. And so this implies then that as soon as the leader of the tribe of Judah whose name was Nashun I believe at that time, maybe not, the son of Nashun, as soon as he put up the flag of the tribe of Judah then the leaders of the clans of the tribe of Judah would go off from that in a particular direction, a particular distance and put their flags up and so forth so that all the people that were of a particular clan knew about where their tents were going to need to go. And by the time this was done it was practically like square city blocks and everybody, every families tent had a particular place and when we left here so and so was the neighbor on the left and when we setup camp there so and so was the neighbor on the left and there was enough distances between the tents that the domestic things that go on were not disturbing to the folks in the next tent but of course they were tents after all so when it was really loud they probably did hear one another, you couldn't prevent that. But if the wife of the son of a particular household, of a particular family, in a particular household, in a particular clan of the tribe of Judah needed a cup of sugar she might send little Danny down to her sister who was over in another tribe some where and say, "Danny I want you to go over to Naomi's tent," I'll pick a nice Jewish girl's name, "Naomi's tent and get me a cup of sugar and while you're there ask her this question," because they were human beings. And so little Danny would go over there and do what mom asked and come back and you know he knew his way home, it wasn't just a mob scene with a bunch of tents setup somewhere. God is not a God of that kind of disorder, you didn't just go pick your own spot, the high priest picked the spot, the high priest picked the spot by default because he determined the position of the Ark of the Covenant, hopefully under the guidance of the Holy Spirit but he determined where the Ark of the Covenant went and once that was determined everybody else's place was absolutely determined. Well how did I know where to be? Well the tallest flag in a particular direction and I knew I needed to be the south or the east or the west or the north depending on my particular tribal affiliation, whoever I was born to, the tribe I was born in. And that is important because Joseph took Mary down to Judah because there was a taxation registration and he went to Judah into Bethlehem because he was of the house of David. That's

why he went where he went because of that affiliation and so in the desert once the camp began to be setup I knew I had to go east and so I might look for the tall flag way out there because I'm of the tribe of Judah and I know that off to the right of the tall flag south of it is where my clan is or north of it is where my clan is. You can see how very quickly then, everybody could very quickly begin to identify where their tent and therefore their immediate family was going to be for this period of sojourn.

In the book of Genesis in the 39th chapter Jacob began to bless his sons and he said certain things about his sons, he said for example, "Benjamin is like a ravening wolf," and he said, "Judah is like a lion," and he said a number of things, different things about different sons many of those things then were very - in their nature - picturesque. And so I can imagine - I don't know this to be the case - but I can imagine that those banners, those flags of the tribe of Judah for example bore a very - not only was it in the right place but it bore a very distinct figure on it. And such and so forth for all of the tribes, all twelve of the tribes, there was a flag that had a particular characteristic and so I didn't have to look very hard anywhere if I lost sense of direction I could still fairly quickly say, "Ok, well the Benjaminites are over there, there's the flag of the wolf, that's the Benjaminite." You imagining what I'm saying here? So the order that was preserved always was such that it became very useful to the people. I could get just by looking up for flags I could get real close to where my tent was supposed to be and if mama sent me for sugar and I couldn't quite find my way back home because the streets didn't have street signs on em', I could look for the flag that I was most familiar with and I could say, "Oh yeah, there's our clan flag right over there," and I could get home with a cup of sugar.

What is the application of that for us? The application of that for us is that when we know who we are spiritually, we know what house we're of, then we can know what clan we're of and we can know what tribe we're of and we know what nation we're of and we know who and what we are in the context of all those things. And so when it came and the Israelites had been wandering a while when it came time to setup camp it became a very predictable process, it wasn't a chain reaction, everybody went off in the correct direction simultaneously and very soon all of the markers were in place and so if I know my spiritual father then I know the standard that my spiritual father bears, there's the allegory in this thing. If I know him I must know the standard that he bears and so I don't become disoriented, I don't have to be disorientated because I can identify the place in the nation that my spiritual father occupies.

What is the application of that for us? The application of that for us is that when we know who we are spiritually, we know what house we're of then we can know what clan we're of and we can know what tribe we're of and we know what nation we're of and we know who and what we are in the context of all those things. And so when it came time - and the Israelites had been wandering a while - and when it came time to setup camp it became a very predictable process, it wasn't a chain reaction, everybody went off in the correct direction simultaneously and very soon all of the markers were in place. And so if I know my spiritual father then I know the standard my spiritual father bears - there's the allegory of this thing - if I know him I must know the standard that he bears and so I don't become disoriented. I don't have to be disoriented because I can identify the place in the nation that my spiritual father occupies because I know his banner and he knows the banner of his spiritual father, who knows the banner of his spiritual father. You following the analogy that I'm making here? And God gave us that in the persons of the Israelites. Where's the middle of this camp? Well we know that in the Jerusalem to come there will be no temple because God and His Christ because they're present and they'll be no need for sun because They are its light.

These are characteristics. But it is also true that in the Revelation where the thing is revealed to us dimensions are given, specific dimensional information is given to us. Why? Because it's important that we understand that the Kingdom of God is an orderly phenomenon. So I don't get to decide, "You know what, I saw a nice tree over there kind of back to the north west, I think I'll go be a Benjaminite for a while or whatever because I can get there quicker than anybody else and setup my tent." This is not the Oklahoma sinners where you go out and find a place nobody ain't yet and get your own by stickin' a flag in the ground, your flag had to go in a very particular place every time the Israelites setup their camp. And that is a characteristic of the Kingdom of God and I believe that extremely with every fiber in me, that is the characteristic of the Kingdom of God. I don't get to make the decisions, I am born to a particular destiny, I am born to a particular spiritual identity and having found who my spiritual father is I then have a point of reference for understanding who I am and anything that matters to my father must matter to me because I know that it is the providence of God that whatever matters to my father is what matters to our Father. God is our Father, I'm not disputing that, put the capital "F" on there and we're talking God only but He has provided us in these strange places in which we sojourn He has provided us with this picture of His sense of order.

Now the Israelites would settle in then and the camp would be setup in short order, in a very short period of time the tents would be up, they could sleep that night. It might take a couple of days but at the most before everything was in its proper place, completely assembled and the Tabernacle was open for business. This was not a chaotic mess where we made decisions when we got there, the way we treat the Kingdom of God today is that we'll make up the rules as we go and not only that if I don't like your rules I'll make up my own rules as we go. It's one of the reasons that we have such trouble in coming into the unity of faith, a man decides, "You know what, I really think it would be cool to be camped really near the Tabernacle so while it's true that we're kind of in the north east corner over there, I think I'm gonna just go down on the south side, get a company of guys down there in the south side of the Tabernacle so I can get up every morning and look at the tent that surrounds the Tabernacle." We do a lot of that in the Kingdom of God today, "I want to be what I want to be; I want to be where I want to be; I want to determine my identity." My identity is not up to me, it's no longer up to me and the structure and character of that identity is not up to me. Can I get along in the world? I can do ok, I've had a pretty reasonable career, I've done ok, as far as the world is concerned I'm a successful person. Carl knows from his familial background, his bio-familial background that deans aren't everywhere, while it is an abused person it is an accomplishment nonetheless. And so as the world sees things I'm a reasonably, at least modestly successful person, it's also true that deans don't have any money or very much money so I've also accomplished that. But the fact of the matter is that's not what we're talking about, I've done whatever it is that resulted in that by the grace of God but I am who I am also by the grace of God and it is a different grace than the grace that makes this bio life possible, that grace is a grace of an other kind of familial relationship.

And finally the understanding came to us as to who and what a spiritual father is or at least it's coming to us and I know who my spiritual father is and therefore I have some sense of my own spiritual identity in that identity that my spiritual father has and he has certain characteristics about him and his camp is in a certain place and his banner, his flag is in a certain place and my place is near his place. I'm not to be in some other place, I don't get to determine that for myself, I have to follow the lead of my spiritual father and where he makes camp I make camp and I trust because I know the Father of us all that where my spiritual father makes his camp is where

he should make his camp and all I've got to do is be properly positioned relative to that. And then when that's done the camp of the Kingdom of God, the nation that we call the Kingdom of God will be in completely proper order without jealousies or divisions because each person will be where God intended for them to be, not where they intended to be in the Kingdom of God. That's order. It sounds like I'm talking about some highly regimented thing, I'm strictly talking about it from an analogical perspective on the mechanics of how you can get er' done, I just have to look for the banner of my father. Carl's spiritual father and my spiritual father are the same, we have that in common, same spiritual father, that means that wherever Carl is going to pitch his spiritual tent, using that analogy, is going to be fairly near where I pitch mine but we don't choose that for ourselves, we leave it to our spiritual father to say, "Carl, put your tent there," and to me, "You put your tent there." You all hearing what I'm saying? I don't have to make the decision, in fact it's elicited for me to make the decision about what functions I perform in the body, the only ones who could do this particular function were the sons of Kohath, or the sons of Merari and so forth and so on. The only ones who could be out east on the vanguard in the most honored position were the sons of Judah, and only the sons of Judah, the ones that had to be furthest to the west were the sons of Ephraim, and only the sons of Ephraim. Nobody else would be in that camp, they may be visiting in that camp but the site, the tent, the location of everybody in the particular geographical context it would be called the camp of the tribe of Reuben had to be a Reubenite and everybody who was in the tribe of Ephraim in that particular geographic configuration had to be of the tribe of Ephraim of a particular clan, in a particular part of the overall territory of the tribe of Ephraim.

When the children then went into the land they were apportioned the land itself pretty much in the same manner. If you read it you will find that there was a territory of the tribe of Judah, a territory of the tribe of Benjamin, a territory of the tribe of this, that or the other and that in fact there were even certain laws to protect the territorial integrity. The individual camps were struck separately, each man took his own tent down and the last thing left were the banners and the banners stayed in place and the people stayed with their property until the Tabernacle was completely disassembled and the high priest said, "Go." And then the whole thing moved at once in unison. Am I the only one in here that's spent any time in the military? I probably am. It's kind of a remarkable thing that you can have a thousand, or two thousand, or three thousand people start to walk at exactly the same instant, leading off with the left foot in exactly the same direction. It's a remarkable phenomenon, it's like that. Carl's right, absolutely, there was an order to which it was put up, there was an order in which it was taken down and there was an order of movement and for example if the next camp is to the north we send scouts out to the north and the tribe of Reuben took off first and then the next tribe and so forth and then the Tabernacle and then the other tribes. Very, very preserving in essence the same geometric structures [of] the camp when they were moving, if so when they sat down it wasn't hard to reproduce the alignment that I've described in such laborious detail earlier. They didn't have to do all of those things every time, they were already very nearly to where they needed to be, all they needed to do was kinda fix the alignment a little bit because they were sometimes in rough terrain, for example, fix that alignment up.

Now as they traveled from place to place it might take several days or weeks even and the Tabernacle would not be erected and so the camp would be rougher in configuration respecting terrain characteristics. But the banners and flags still remained, every night, whether the Tabernacle was up or not, whether they were at their destination or not, the flags were still raised in such a way that the people could see them so they knew where to be. We're called to be a people of such order that we know where to be, what to be, who to be, how to be, all them

"to bes". Is all that making sense? This is not violating you, this is helping you to be who you are because God knows who you are, it doesn't have anything to do with your race, your linguistic background, your religious background. It has nothing to do with any of that stuff, it has to do with who you are in God and who you are in God is familially determined just like you are who you are biologically is familial determined. There is the family of God in which there is the Firstborn and there are all the other sons who are adopted because of the redemptive works of the Firstborn. They all are ordered as God chooses to order them and so we're finding, we're discovering now a new, a trans-generational phenomenon of spiritual family that involves fathers and sons in an orderly, orderly way.

You see in the arrest of Achan, the arrest and execution of Achan and it's about in Judges 6 or 7, right along in there, the way that Joshua did that - let's look it up. I've not, I've deliberately not spent a lot of time in Scripture, there's quite a bit that goes with it but I think I've explained it reasonably well and you can go back later and find the Scriptural references. Joshua 7:16, the sons of the slaves were surprised when they began to be defeated by the Canaanites and so they sought the Lord about the matter and basically it was revealed there was sin in the camp. Now instead of simply saying, "This is the guilty party," they went through a very orderly procedure. It says early the next morning after this was determined Joshua told them what was gonna happen, told them in verse 15, "The one that's caught with the things is going to be destroyed by fire along with all that belongs to him." Now early the next morning Joshua and Israel are coming forward by tribes, so the leaders of the various tribes came and it wasn't the whole gang, it wasn't all thousands of them, some representative leadership, probably the leader of the tribe came and the tribe of Judah was chosen. So the leaders of the other twelve tribes were dismissed and they said, "Now bring all the clan leaders of Judah forward." Right? Are you following me? Because look at the next steps, so all the clan leaders came to the father of the Israelites, the main Judahites in those days and it says that in 17, "The clans of Judah came forward." Now that Judah had been chosen the clans of Judah came forward, so all those clan fathers came forward and through a process that involved the urim and thummim that we don't fully understand, the priest designated it was this particular clan. Which clan was it? It was the clan of Zerah, Zerah was one of the sons of Judah, this was not an arbitrary name for some clan, they didn't vote on the name, Zerah was one of Judah's sons. You following me? In fact he was the son of Tamar, specifically Zerah and Perez were the two sons of Tamar.

So Zara being a son of Judah his name was given to one of the clans of Judah which was a subdivision of Judah, all of the Judahites belonged to one of the four or five clans of Judah, there was no Judahite that was not a member of one of the four or five clans of Judah. I'll try to say it another way - Carl for me and you. The set of the union of all the clans was at the same time in such a way that each member was in only one clan but the clans were exhaustive of all the members of the tribe, four or five of the tribes of Judah, every single Judahite was in one of those four or five clans so that when the clan of Zara was chosen the next task was to say, "Ok there is a Zerahite that's responsible for all this, which Zerahite was it?" Now all of the other clan leaders went away, "Whew!" At this point, "It's not a member of my clan." And so the next step was it says all the Zerahites come forward, that is the leaders of the various families of Zerah and one of the sons of Zerah is a guy named Zimri and the families of Zerah were in fact exhaustive of the clan of Zerah. I think there were three sons if I'm not mistaken, I believe I found that somewhere, three sons of Zerah and so there were three of these super families that were Zerahites and like the clans of Judah they exhausted all the Zerahites; everybody was a member of one and only one of those three families of Zerahites. Are we gettin' this?

So the family leaders whoever those fathers were, whoever the owners of those flags were came all three of them I believe and the priest did what he did urim and thummim and it says what? Zimri was taken. So Zimri's family group was taken, that meant the other two family groups were off the hook. You see the order in this? Now they have all of the households, the individual households of Zimri come forward and the priest did whatever the priest did with the urim and thummim that resulted in the specification that this man Achan who was a son of Carmi, who was a son of Zimri, who was a son of Zerah, who was a son of Judah was taken. What's interesting about that that you might not notice is that when Achan was taken his lineage was extremely clear all the way back to Judah in the camp that day. And so he could start with the father of the father of the father of the fathers and work our way down to the guilty man and everybody saw this happening, at least the major fathers of the various tribes, and clans probably, stood about while this was happening, while the priest did what he did with the urim and thummim and God gave him ultimately Achan because of who Achan was, that's the way the people could see it. God knew the guilt of Achan's heart, it wasn't a mystery to God, God wasn't gambling, Achan was the guilty man. But what God did do is He showed the people through their relationships, where the problem was, it wasn't a random thing, it wasn't some random Israelite, it was a Judahite of the clan of Zerah, of the family grouping of Zimri, of the family if you will, the household of Carmi of the specific tent of Achan, the man Achan himself.

This order is important. I'm looking at a negative example because it's a well preserved example in Scripture. When you look at the lineage of King David - has anybody ever studied the lineage of King David? Does it matter to you that King David had a specific lineage? It should, because of his lineage is Jesus in the flesh of his lineage is Jesus and that's spelled out for us in Scripture, all the way down through a fella named Zerubbabel by the way, who was the son of Shealtiel, who was the son of I think the last king of the southern kingdom of Judah, the last legitimate king, I can't remember what his name was right now. And then there were men completely obscured in history but their names were preserved so that in time we knew the biological lineage of Jesus himself and it went all the way back to Judah. Why does it matter that it went to Judah? The prophecy because Judah was the one who had the scepter until the One came whose it was, by the words of Jacob in Egypt.

Do you see the beauty and precision of the order of God? Now how can it be both precise and sloppy? I can tell you that Carl and I know - and I'm sure that you probably know it intuitively - it can't, precise and sloppy don't work together, they do not. The fact of the matter is that in Carl's business if there's a sloppy fitting in a machine that keeps an aircraft in the air "you gets problems", it just won't work. You don't get to say, "Well that's about right." They pay people like Carl money to make sure it's exactly right, in fact they pay him money to make sure it's exactly right within a very highly specified tolerance of rightness when you get right down to it, otherwise the thing doesn't work. The Kingdom of God is precise, it is not sloppy, otherwise it wouldn't work, it is orderly. God is not a God of disorder and so your rush to the front to be camped near the Tabernacle is meaningless, in fact it's chaotic, it's disorderly and eventually it will lead to some kind of relatively severe discipline. Your willingness to follow your father's banner into your proper orientation and place in the camp is precise.

Now I've give you this geometric picture very deliberately so that we can understand that the Kingdom of God is not just a bunch of sloppy stuff, it's designed in such a way that there is complete, absolute order and so Paul can say, "In unity of the Spirit," instead of James where he says "where there is selfish ambition" which is self determination, modern translation, there is what? Chaos and all kinds of evil. You know what the Greek word for "chaos" is? I've told

some of you this before, the Greek word for "chaos" is "chaos", it's such a powerful word in and of itself that we brought it into English to describe ultimate disorder. Where we decide these things for ourselves there is ultimate disorder and every kind of evil. I'm not trying to put you into bondage, I'm trying to grant you the freedom to know that where you put your tent down is the right spot if when you know who you are and if you don't know who you are, you are an orphan. I want to make one other point and then I'll close for the evening, I think I've probably been at this a long time have I not? Judy is real good at letting me know I spent too long, she's my number one something, "keeper of me in order" right? And it's her job, don't worry, she's good.

When the Israelites left Egypt it says in Scripture that a whole bunch of strangers left with them, other people who were not Israelites, right? I'm not making that up, it's in Exodus, let's go back, some of you are looking like, "What is he talking about?" In Exodus 12:38 it says, "And many other people went up with them as well as large droves of livestock, flocks and herds." Those other people were not Israelites, they were not of the tribes of Israel so who were they? Well, they were other people, they probably were mostly not Egyptians, they were other people who were not racially Israelites, not ethnically Israelites, not descendants of Abram, Abraham. They were other people, now they probably were people who were happy to leave Egypt, so they were probably also other oppressed peoples. Does that seem like a reasonable conclusion at this point? Other oppressed peoples who left with the Israelites. When Israel got to the border, when they got to the river and they're about to go into Canaan there's no mention made of these other people. What's more worser, if you back up thirty nine years when the camp was being ordered and setup and established there's no mention of other people, so what happened was the Israelites killed and ate em'. No, (laughter) the other people left with the Israelites and they were absorbed into the families of the Israelites, the only rational conclusion, they were no longer not Israelites then. They were strangers in Egypt but they were now members of specific Israelite tribes so that when the camp was setup in its proper order in all the different times it was setup these other people had a place to be as well and we don't have to mention them because they were absorbed into the camps of the Israelites. Probably there was some method by which they were adopted by mutual agreement into such and such a family so that they would have a place.

So by the time the Israelites got out of the desert and into the land these people had a place, when God got em' to the land He established this territory is the territory of Simeon. Within the territory of Simeon, the various clans of Simeon located in a particular sector of the territory of Simeon, within the various clans of Simeon the certain households located in a particular subset of the territory of the clan of so-and-so the tribe of Simeon etc, down to, "This is the place where your house is gonna be bubba and your descendants." Is this all working? You understand what I'm saying? So then the Israelites had received the fullness of the promise of a land of their own with a very orderly distribution of that land subject to their kicking out the Canaanites, displacing or destroying the Canaanites, the Canaanites ceased from history at that point, almost completely. Uriah was a Hittite, David's bane was a Hittite; Uriah didn't do anything wrong he just married a woman David was gonna lust after, nonetheless it was obviously a bane of David's, it caused David to get into a lot of trouble, he didn't cause it but he was there none the less. And Scripture points out that he was a Hittite very specifically and that was one of the slave peoples that were displaced from the land when the Israelites took it. You following me? So each of those tribes got a territorial allotment that was based partly on the number of men that there were when they crossed the river, the number of households that needed a house and the potential productivity of the land, the land that was more barren they would get a little bigger chunk. In West Texas we don't talk about cows per acre, we talk about acres per cow

because the land is so bad, it's not true but it certainly is a way of looking at the difference of that and say the lush green of Indiana, where you can get a bunch of cows in a little bitty spot more or less. Everybody following all of that?

And that's an analogy of what the Kingdom of God looks like. Why can I say 'It's an analogy of what the Kingdom of God looks like'? Because God designed it, it's completely orderly, I don't have to wonder where Carl's gonna be, I know where Carl's gonna be relative to where our mutual spiritual father is gonna be, spiritually speaking. So I don't have to worry about that. And so obviously within that family, a spiritual family, Carl is completely welcome and I know a good bit about what's going on with Carl because of the commonality, the kinship commonality that we have. So what matters to him matters to me more that it matters to somebody who's in some other family somewhere else in the Kingdom of God. I'm not taking your freedom from you, I'm giving it to you by doing this, please hear my heart in that, so it's not me trying to determine what happens to you, this is me trying to show you that God's already determined that and He places a component of that - if you're my son - He places a component of that in my hands and that's that. Hopefully He did a good job of choosing me to be your father in that event right? But it's not for you to question that, it's not for you to question that. Achan questioned the whole thing and we had to go through a rather elaborate process of removing the sin of the heart of Achan from the whole nation of Israel. For those of you that are still laboring with "Well that's the Old Testament, I live in the new," which is nonsensical, but if you're still laboring with that, when the man named Ananias and his wife Sapphira agreed to lie to the apostles God removed the cancer of their lie through their death, did He not? It's the same thing, the cancer of Achan's lack of faith and greed had to be dealt with and God did it in a very, very orderly manner. The man who was one of the chiefest of the apostles in the context of who he was said to Ananias, "You're gonna die bubba," and then when his wife came in she verified the lie that they had agreed together to lie and Peter said, "Ok, well the guys that took your husband out to bury him they're coming back and they're gonna carry you out too." And she fell down dead.

We're coming to such a time again when the order of God is much more important than your personal, political latitude of action, I think that's fair to say. This again, this is not about bondage, it's about the freedom to be who you are because it's God who determines where you are, you don't get to decide to camp on the south if God said camp in the north. If you do that, you're a rebel; if God says, "I've appointed you to be an apostle," you don't decide then to be a pastor, that's that. That would be like a toe trying to function like an elbow, don't work. Amen?

Another Culture - Order IN the Camp  
Midland, Texas, USA  
Corbett Gaulden  
October 01, 2009

There are really a couple of things I want to work on with you. At a recent retreat that we had, some of you guys were there at Camp Butman, some questions were asked related to matters in kind of the operation of the Kingdom of God and it occurred to me subsequent to that based on some additional questions that I received that it might be worth while because I'm trained to be a business professor it might be worthwhile to take a look at kind of the mechanical aspects of how this Kingdom might work. We've begun to explore together in a variety of different contexts, the idea that the Kingdom of God must have a unique and uniquely identifiable culture that is one of the characteristics that sets it apart from all other inter-human phenomena. We know that the Kingdom of God for example, has a different government in the person of God, that all other kingdoms, all other national states - I will use the term "kingdom" to mean "nations" even though there are very few kings left in the world by title - it is still true that nation states without exception have somebody who exercises ultimately the authority. We've tried a few cases where we had more than one guy in charge, it just doesn't work, that's a human experiment that does not work, somebody ultimately is in charge, they may not have much power but while men have talked about it being a kingdom of God and have claimed that various manifestations have been the Kingdom of God, it is not true that any of the kingdoms of men have been the Kingdom of God, nor is it true that any of the nations of men including this nation will ever be the Kingdom of God, they are kingdoms of men and the focus of all human governments is human beings. It is men governing men they do it they believe perhaps in the name of Allah but it is not truly theocratic, God is not in charge, they perhaps believe that God is in charge, certainly the idea behind the holy Roman Empire was that it was holy, it occupied more or less the same geography and more or less had the same authenticity as the old Roman Empire had had prior to the Christianization of the Roman Empire but it was not certainly holy. You can look at its history and if you read the history of the holy Roman Empire you don't have to read very long to realize it was not a very holy phenomenon, not "holy" as we understand the word "holy" at all, it was bloody, there was persecution, ruthless persecution especially of true believers. One of the most persecuted kinds of people in that era was a believer.

Now one who is an adherent to the churches doctrines and practices that was safe, but to be an actual believer who was not comfortable with and in some cases even challenged the practices and doctrines of the church, particularly the practices in that era were subject to all kinds of really terrible treatment to include things like being burned at the stake, constantly, daily having shoulders pulled out of sockets, having rags stuffed down the throat and then fluids poured in there to make the rags swell until the throat became almost incapable of even passing breath. You got in trouble with the church those were some of the kinds of things that could happen, now today the church could say, "Oh those were awful abuses perpetuated by men but not by the church." It's really hard to defend a relationship between Louie the Fare and the Pope for example, it's very difficult to defend that relationship.

There has never been in the earth a theocracy except for a short period of time - a true one, a true government of God - and that period of time came before Saul became the King of Israel. Now commentators in the books of Judges and Ruth will say things like - not commentators, the writers of Ruth and Judges will say things like, "In those days there was no king in the land and every man did what was right in his own eyes." Now I'll repeat what I said to most of you before,

that was not a positive comment, when every man does what is good in his own eyes you will have lawlessness because every man becomes a law to himself and if I make the laws and you make the laws and I make mine autonomously and you make yours autonomously, my laws will favor me and your laws will favor you, there's no two ways around that. My laws will be structured so that you have to do things the way I want them done and yours would be structured so that I have to do them the way you want them done and that then leads to a conflict, it leads to constant conflict and men cannot live that way and so men compromise and agree on laws. The process of compromising and agreeing on laws leads to men compromising and agreeing on what truth is and truth is not negotiable, Jesus said, "I am the truth," we don't get to bifurcate Jesus, I don't get to make up a truth and you make up a truth and both of our truths are ok. If we do that then we have to have a law that says we can't fight about the fact that your truth and my truth are not the same and this will lead us to a culture of accommodation and tolerance which has nothing to do with the truth.

Those are just some realities as I began to share these things with you. That's not the truth, the truth is I want to bring liberty and freedom but in order to bring liberty and freedom we must live in a culture that permits us to have true liberty and true freedom and as we in the months past and now going on years and in the years to come as we go about talking about the truth and talking about what this culture of a Kingdom of God is like it is going to sound like something that is foreign to virtually all of us, in fact it is foreign to all of us. The reason I can say with authority that the Kingdom of God is foreign to you and is foreign to me is because we have not lived there, we have lived in other cultures. Shirley lived in Hoosier culture for all of her life practically speaking. Is Hoosier culture different from any other culture? Well it's mostly redneck American but the fact of the matter is that if somebody is a Hoosier then they're not "not" a Hoosier and if they're not a Hoosier, they're not a Hoosier, those are just realities now. Does that matter most of the time in practical matters? Probably not but on occasion it will matter, it will matter because if you're not a Hoosier you don't share values, some values anyway, with other Hoosiers. Ok, I never really understood what a Hoosier was but at least I know where that term applies but it is a way that men have in that particular part of the country of speaking about people from that particular part of the country who have shared values with other people from that particular part of the country that sets them apart from other groups of people whose values might be very similar but not the same and it's largely determined by geography. But if you're in the geography very long you come to consider yourself and others as well consider you to be a Hoosier. Now there probably are some folks not too far from Indiana who'd be offended if you called them "Hoosiers" because all Hoosiers live in Louisiana. I have heard it told me that oximoron, everybody has heard the word "oximoron" right? It means something that can't possible be, it's inconsistent with itself. Well I've heard it said by a Norwegian that an oximoron actually describes a large Swedish person and I've heard it said by a Swede that oximoron actually describes a large Norwegian person if you're getting the drift of this whole thing. And we have perhaps nothing worse than friendly distinctions of that kind but we relate and we identify very readily and so we call ourselves for example "anglo Americans" and "afro Americans" and "hispanic Americans" and "Mexican Americans" and "chicanos" and all kinds of other terms that are used to describe that we are in some way different from other people and because we are different from other people we have a different culture than they do. And where I want us to get to is to understand that the Kingdom of God has all kinds of people but the things that we have historically - there'll even be some Hoosiers in it, and some Buckeyes - the things that we have historically used to make distinctions between ourselves are not relevant in the Kingdom of God and so there will be persons who "used to" be Hoosiers in the Kingdom of God and who used to be corn huskers and who used to be buckeyes and who used to be Cajuns and who used to be

wet backs and who used to be all of those other terms that people use to refer to one another or to themselves to set themselves apart. There used to be but in the Kingdom of God there are only the citizens of the Kingdom of God and the culture of the Kingdom of God is not like any of those cultures; it is not American, it is not Mexican, it is not Iranian, it is something else, it is not any of those things. Let's get that clear to begin.

Now we all will approach it from the standpoint of course of wherever it was we came from. I was raised in a lot of different places, we kept having to leave town, I don't understand that - no I'm kidding. (laughter) My dad was in a job with a company it was a statewide electric provider in Louisiana and they simply had facilities all over the state and from time to time we would move to another place, sometimes very distinctly different from the place in which we came. For about a five year period we lived in New Orleans which is distinctly different from the world, (laughter) for example, it just is a different place and my earliest memories are in northeast Louisiana which was not much like any other place and the differences in the people. And those each we call them "regional cultures", we would call them regional cultures today and so in a way there's kind of a northeast Louisiana redneck culture and there's a northwest Louisiana redneck culture or etc, etc, a cajun culture in Louisiana but that's not the same thing as Creole culture in New Orleans, for example.

These are different ways we have of looking at things and a person will take pride in being, "Well you know I'm a Creole," but what I'm here telling you is that you're not that anymore, that's a birth thing, a family thing, an old set of cultural values thing, it may be racial, it may be linguistic but it's where we came from, it is the "from" which we were lifted into an "other" kingdom, an "other" culture. If this kingdom is a unique kingdom with a unique governor, that is God Almighty Himself and a unique form of government and if Paul can say to us, "Be transformed by the renewing of your minds," if Paul can say that to us then we must ask ourselves, "Transform into what?" Transform from what I have been into something I have not yet been, that has to be the only possible answer to Paul's question. Being transformed then - being as Robert was mentioning earlier when we were talking in there - we are the "eklesia" we are the ones who are called out. What is it we're called out of? We're called out whatever it was were in when we were called out and for different ones of us that's different. Carl was raised by parents who his father was a university professor, I don't believe anybody else in here had that kind of an experience, we weren't raised by parents of that kind; the expectations in Carl's life were different than the expectations of the lives of the most the rest of us and to some degree those expectations influenced Carl's career track for example. And of course there's the genetic fact that he's fairly brilliant and that's partly simply genetic but also the expectations that his parents placed on him were for a progression through life Carl lived up to that progression, I'm assuming they were plenty proud, mystified perhaps but proud none the less. (laughter) The rest of us are also mystified, those of us who love Carl know that we don't understand Carl and that's fine, (laughter) he was on a different trajectory but Carl has permitted himself to be lifted out of that into the Kingdom of God and so that's not who he is anymore. We recognize those characteristics and traits just like I recognize the fact that Ryan's beard is black and I'm jealous because mine was white when I finally shaved it off, (laughter) completely white, it blended with my shirt, my dress shirts quite well.

In any event we do have individual characteristics and God - as I've said to you before - God loves our individuality or He wouldn't have given it to us. When the boys and girls got together under whoever the leader was in the plains of Shenar and decided to build a tower that would enable them to come up to the level of God, all of the diversity of human kind already existed.

When the only culture there was was the culture of Noah and his sons because that was the only culture there was for some period of time y'all there wasn't another one, there couldn't have been. Noah was the father of the culture of the folks who were the descendants of those who came out of the Ark because that's all there was and he was the father of all of those, the forefather of those who were the descendants of those who came out of the Ark. There was a single culture probably all the way up to the time of the building of that tower Babel and raised themselves up to the level of God and in so doing had decided, "We will do it in this manner," the sin was in the exaltation of man but it was lived out in the building of a monument to the pride of man. God touched men in such a way that they had different languages but let me point out to you once again, He did not that day cause different races, He simply caused different languages. The inescapable conclusion is that the races already existed, the conclusion that comes from that is that when Noah and his sons emerged from the Ark the races of men were already present at a minimum genetically which means they were present genetically in Adam. God created the diversity of mankind racially speaking and in terms of the number of physical characteristics as well, taller people and shorter people, all those kinds of things. That's God's business, He did that but it does not define the sons of God in the Kingdom of God, there is something else that does that and what does that is the commonality of being the sons of God redeemed from having been the sons of something else. And we're stuck with that, we're stuck with having to deal with that reality.

Now any of you who has a father still living, a natural, biological father still living has I hope an affection for that person, some love for that person and those who have a biological father who is no longer here and has passed on have some affectionate memories of that person. I'm not talking about those things, I'm not talking about what you had with your natural father, I'm talking about the fact that you are called to a different culture than the culture in which your natural father and mother brought you forth into the world and the expectations that you were given by your natural father and mother are not the expectations of the Kingdom of God, they're not, they're the expectations of some other culture. Love them, love their memory to the degree that you can, I would never want to take that from you, I want that that would be as good as it possibly can be and if your natural father is still alive I hope eventually if it's a bad relationship now that it will be a fine relationship by the time you or your father leave the earth, don't get me wrong. But those parents - at least one of those parents - and the culture and the situation in which that parent raised you has a whole lot to do with who you have thought you were - your attitudes and your values and so forth and we call that "culture"; language, religion and other related things go with that. Someone is not born inherently Muslim, someone is not born inherently Hindu, someone is not born inherently Christian, someone is not born inherently Taoist, etc, etc, etc, etc, those things are learned when we're children, they are part of a cultural milieu that helps you form some sense of yourself. And so we come each from whence we came at a particular point in time and we begin to embrace the thing that is called the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of God is good news, in fact the Bible says that Jesus went about teaching the good news of the Kingdom of God, it doesn't say He taught "the good news of salvation", it says He taught the good news of the Kingdom. There's only one place in Scripture that uses the term "gospel of salvation", only one out of all the times, I forget the total number but there are quite a number of times the word "gospel" is used and only once is the "gospel of salvation" the term that's used and it's not even just that, it's something like "the gospel of your salvation", the good news of your salvation.

What Jesus went about teaching was the good news of an other kingdom, different from the kingdom that the Jewish people lived in who in all the kingdoms that ever existed men most

quickly accused of being theocratic, "That's what's wrong with the Jews, they believe in a theocratic..." hogwash! There's so few believing Jews that you can't find them, extremely rare relatively speaking and they're not sure what they believe and they're divided about that. I'm not trying to be offensive, I'm trying to get us to deal with a current reality and that current reality is that hyponism, anglicism, africanism, asianism, middle easternism and all the other "isms" that are supposedly designed to explain a particular perspective based on birth and geography have nothing to do with the Kingdom of God. And I'm not even asking that we consider repudiating those things, I am what I am. I was born in Connecticut but I lived most of my life in the south, it doesn't change the fact that that's where this biological body was born but the spiritual man in me, the inner man, the real man that I am, the real identity that I have has nothing to do with Connecticut; it has nothing to do with Louisiana, it has nothing to do with my being white in my biological manifestation. None of those things is who I am, I am a spiritual creature, you are a spiritual creature created by God, the very breath which is also Spirit of God breathed into a pile of dirt and then from that pile of dirt another living being was made, a woman, and men and women began to procreate and we all come from that lineage and that methodology. But we are not that, we are spiritual, Adam was spiritual, eventually after 960 years - I believe Adam was the second oldest man in the Bible when he died, only Methuselah was older - his body died and when his body died his spirit went on to be with our Father, no doubt that we'll see Adam and that he already is in the great cloud of witnesses. That's Adam, he flubbed it but he was never not God's son afterwards, he flubbed what it was to be God's son but he was never not God's son and so there is an other culture. That's my introduction, I haven't even gotten to what I wanna do, this is the introduction.

Exodus 18:13, let's set the setting now, let's make sure we understand what's going on. Moses has gone back to the Israelites, the gods of Egypt have been judged, the night of the death of the firstborn has come, the Israelites have crossed through the Red Sea into Sinai and they're gathering at Mount Sinai. In chapter 19 we're gonna see them go up to the mountain and then in chapter 20 the decalogue is given to them, in 18 that's about to occur and Moses father-in-law has come to see him, Jethro has come to see him and Moses had sent his wife Zipporah back to stay with Jethro while he was in Egypt. Jethro now is bringing her back now to be reunited with her husband and it says in 18:5, "Jethro Moses father-in-law together with Mose's sons and wife came to join him in the desert where he was camping near the mountain of God," so we're setting the stage. We're about to have the rather remarkable set of events that lead up to the giving up the ten suggestions, that's about to happen in chapter 20, get ready for that but before that happens Jethro comes to visit Moses and to bring Zipporah and his sons to him.

Beginning now in verse 13 it says the next day, that was after Jethro got there, "Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people and they stood around him from morning till evening," now heres the way I see that. It wasn't every day but maybe one day a week or on some regular basis Moses would hold court in essence, he became on that day the judge for the people. They really didn't have anybody else to appeal to - there they were with this madman in the desert; there were no Egyptians around to get help from, there were no anybody "elses" around to get help from and if they had problems in the camp, people got into a dispute over who's goat's eyeball was that or whatever the case might be (laughter) - well that's a delicacy - whatever the case might be then if they were not able to kind of work it out amongst themselves on a regular basis - predictable apparently - the people would come, the two parties to the dispute would come and each would explain his side of the case or her side of the case. And Moses would listen to that and he would judge in the matter, it says that he did that from morning till evening, in this particular instance anyway. There were a lot of these little disputes and from morning till

evening on that day after Jethro arrived Moses sat and listened to those and he served as a judge, now that means he made a decision, he decided in favor of (I was going to use an Arabic name but that wouldn't pertain here) in favor of Simeon as over against Ezra for example in a matter of dispute between Simeon and Ezra. Now Simeon and Ezra left walking away from that judgment maybe not really happy with each other but at least there was a resolution to the matter, it was in fact Simeon's goat's eyeball in the suit, not Ezra's goat's eyeball, whatever it was, whatever the matter was between them. And as I understand it they didn't have a choice now, they had gone to the Supreme Court, in essence and made their appeal and he (Moses) said, "Ok, here's my judgment..." that's what a judge does, a judge decides an issue, ok?

And that went on all day "and when his father-in-law saw what Moses was doing for the people," now it says "for the people" because if you're the one that lost the suit in the matter you wouldn't be so happy with Moses. But it's unlikely there was anything else you could do about it, there wasn't another appeal, I mean all he could do was seek revenge or something like that, there was not another court to appeal to. And when he saw what Moses was doing for the people he said, "What's this you're doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?" Now he's not accusing Moses of being presumptuous in some manner here, basically as we'll see as we continue on saying to Moses, "This is too much, you got too many things to do without sitting here worrying about who's goat's eyeball it was," or whatever the dispute was, "You got really fairly important things to do guy, you don't need to be sittin' around all day long with all these people movin' around while you decide fairly trivial things."

Moses answered him in verse 15, "because the people come to seek God's will. Whenever they have a dispute it's brought to me and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and laws." So they're coming to Moses, they're getting an answer to their dispute and Moses delivering the answer in the form of "it is God's will" such and so. The decalogue hadn't been given yet but Moses knew the law of God in some manner and he delivered that to them and that was then the final resolution of their dispute. In 17 Moses father-in-law replied, "What you're doing isn't good, you and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. I mean they're standing around here all day long hoping theirs is next." Bubba vs. Suzy docket number 17 is up next, that kind of thing and everybody else has to wait until their number, their case is called and Jethro is saying, "You're just wearing yourselves out, all ya all is worn out as a result of this. The work is too heavy for you, you cannot handle it alone," he said to Moses, "You and the people are gettin' worn out and most everybody is spending mostly, nearly all of their time waiting for their opportunity to be heard and you're just sittin' there all day long dispensing judgement, that's too much. Listen now to me and I'll give you some advice and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to Him, teach them the decrees and laws and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform but," in verse 21, "but select capable men from all the people." In other words go out about amongst the people and select capable men, "men who fear God, men who are trustworthy, men who hate dishonest gain." Those are the three characteristics defined in these men; they fear God, they are trustworthy and they hate dishonest gain. Can we accept that those are the three qualifications for a judge? And they are from among the people and I'll show you in a moment "among the people" has fairly a specific meaning, "and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens."

So how would that work? Well you have one guy that's appointed as an official over ten people, ten other men, ten other households. So this person is appointed as an official over them and

then at the next level up so to speak there is a guy who is chosen to be an official over fifty men, fifty families. Now the five you would assume that that judge over fifty is also judge over the five who are judge over ten each, ok? Because we don't want to be mixing this all up because that would be very confusing. So you're in some sense in the judicial purview of this particular fella, Eleazar let's call him for the moment and he's got ten families that he's responsible for to provide judgement amongst and any two of those he'll be involved in providing judgement between them to settle disputes. Now over Eleazar he and four other similarly placed judges there's an other judge who if the matter's a little too difficult for them or it extends beyond the purview of one of them that judge would then be the judge. So that judge's name, let's let that judge's name, pick one - would be the judge over those five judges and things that were either more difficult or were outside the purview of anyone of them would go to that judge.

Then there's somebody to be appointed over the hundreds and that would be over ten of the low level judges and two of the higher level judges, are we find the sequence here? And then somebody is appointed over thousands, that one would be over ten of the judges over a hundreds, as a consequence over twenty of the judges over fifties and a hundred of the judges over tens. So there would be four different levels of scope of responsibility to be judges to settle disputes, any time the dispute crossed the lines of authority, that is somebody in this group of potential disputants that has a dispute with somebody in this other group way over here, it couldn't be settled by one or the other of those guys, they would have to collaborate and take it to the next one up and so forth all the way up to the top. Is that all working for you? You understanding that?

"Have them serve as judges for the people at all times but have them bring every difficult case to you." So the simple, ordinary disputes that people have that can be solved relatively easily you've got a series of jurisdictions where the matter can be solved and think about that if you got say a hundred cases in the camp of a million people they could all be heard simultaneously by an appropriate judge. Now maybe this is one particularly unruly area in the camp where there are lots of problems, that guy might have to work a little harder some Friday morning or whatever the day of judgement is. Are we seeing what's going on here? Now we don't have everybody waiting all the time, now we have relatively quick dispatch for all these cases - probably don't even have to wait until a particular day, the matter comes to the leader who is a judge and that guy says, "Ok, well tell me all the facts," and everybody tells their side of the story and he says, "Oh come on guys, I know your feelings are hurt but my goodness, that was Simeon's goat's eyeball," going back to the original example, ok? And the matter's done.

Now if Simeon and whoever Simeon was bringing suit, if Ezra didn't like the outcome Ezra might say, "Well you know what I don't like that outcome, let's take it to the next level up." So if it continues to be contended it might work its way up to Moses, just like court cases work their way up to the Supreme Court in America today, same kind of the thing, a little more informal, a little more laid back, rules of evidence probably weren't really severe like they are in typical courts today because really it wasn't so much about winners or losers, it was about reconciliation, putting out of the camp the unrest that's caused when men have natural, normal, human disputes because human beings are human beings. Going on to verse 22, "That will make your load lighter because they'll share it with you. If you do this and God so commands you'll be able to stand the strain and all these people will go home satisfied." Makes good sense, if it's not a hard case get it resolved at a relatively low level in the camp, get it done and get it over with, everybody gets their say, judgment is made and we go on about our business. "And Moses listened to his father-in-law and he did everything he said."

Now immediately what this did is it probably reduced the number of days that Moses had to deal with difficult cases to a very small number in a years time or in a months time, hardly ever would Moses have to settle disputes because the disputes would be resolved somewhere else. Really in the context of the kinship in which those people lived because he's got this order of the people arranged by clans and tribes and households and houses and families and so forth and so on, all arranged it makes sense that the leadership, the judging would occur in the context of relatively close kinship, the judge would be just a man who had these three characteristics; he feared God, he was trustworthy and he hated dishonest gain and he was known for that in the camp amongst his brethren, a man whose known for that, make him a judge among his kin basically, among his kindred. That would keep order in the camp and yes the process for resolution of dispute where the conclusion of the judge was still questionable in the mind of one of the parties in the dispute, there still was a method for appeal of a decision all the way ultimately up to Moses. My guess is that almost never happened, that it went all the way up to Moses that in fact most appeals - you know a lot of times when you have a dispute with somebody and it's real important and you feel strongly and then when somebody else hears it you're kind of embarrassed at how silly it was? It's like, "Ooh, did I really want people to know that?" You might want to make somebody feel guilty and feel like they owe you something, that's different than other people knowing that you're trying to do that.

It's a wonderful self-management system for the people of God and so the things that Jesus was teaching were very consistent with this idea of "let's get it worked out guys, it's about getting it worked out" it's about reconciliation so that there is harmony, order, peace, unity things of that sort in the household of God and the world should never see anything else except that, when they see the household of God they should never see anything except harmony, unity, peace, the fruits of the Spirit. Those who have been redeemed by the Lamb and are called out of the world and by being called out of the world are called out of the systems of the world of which adversarial courts are a significant part. Now when you're dealing with unbelievers it's a different deal, you can end up in court when you're dealing with unbelievers, might not even be your choice. But when it's a brother, when it's among the brethren, when it's within the camp so to speak, inside the camp there is an orderly way to have disputes resolved soon, quickly, as soon as they emerge, really soon after they emerge and in a way that brings about reconciliation because the purpose of God is reconciliation. For that reason, in order to provide for your reconciliation to Him He did His part already, if we are the sons of God our part is already done, if you're a son of God and I'm a son of God both of our parts are already done, all we really need from the body is support in the process of bringing feelings and things of that sort back around so that true reconciliation is possible between any two brethren, any two of the saints. Otherwise we're defeated by the enemy of the brethren and Satan is the accuser of the brethren, that term is specifically used, is it not, in Scripture? It's one of the names, one of the descriptors of Satan is he is the accuser of the brethren, that makes him the prosecuting attorney anytime one of the brothers lets a matter get beyond the Church he's automatically doing business with the Satan. That's a guy we don't want to do business with one way or the other, at all, period, ever. Does this all makes sense to ya?

So in fact order IN the camp is important just like there was when we said before an order OF the camp which had to do with just the simple logistics of doing things. This is more a matter of relational reconciliation. When there's no need for relational reconciliation that means things are harmonious and we don't have to do anything in particular with respect to one another except to love one another. Paul says in one place, "Owe no man anything except to love one another,"

the only thing that we owe is love to one another. If we don't permit ourselves to owe anything else, in other words develop a debt of any other kind except the debt of love which is never fully satisfied but is always fully satisfied then we're ok. When that has been shaken by a misunderstanding of any kind or a disagreement of any kind or a sin that one brother commits against another of any kind, the immediate responsibility of both the brothers, the offended brother and the offending brother is to find reconciliation. In the church we can find competent judges to resolve disputes amongst the brethren. Moses in Exodus his father-in-law who was a Medianite, not an Israelite, actually gave him the model, now this Medianite happened to be also a priest of God, a priest of Jehovah, he was probably a priest of some other things but he was a priest of Jehovah as well, we don't know what else he might have done but he wasn't an Israelite. He was a Mediany of a different racial stock, not too terribly distant but certainly not an Israelite, not a Canaanite either, by the way, a man who knew God none the less. And he gave Moses this extremely practical advice to keep the camp flowing in an orderly manner that resulted in quick resolution that was not risen to a hysterical pitch before it was taken care of. Where Moses didn't have to disrupt doing other important matters on behalf of the people, as Jethro said to him, "You need to go and find out things, be the people's representative before God. That's what you need to do Moses. Then let these other trustworthy men take care of the mundane disputes of everyday life." "You know Jacob was walking by and he kicked sand in my dinner." "Wow man I didn't mean to do it." "Yeah you did, I saw that you meant to do it." That kind of stuff. Let's get this taken care of, why wait a week or a month and then Moses have to endure that. By now what difference does it make anyway? You either ate the sand or you didn't. As Paul said in Corinthians, "Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?" Than to go to court over these kinds of things.

So the encouragement here is that the Body is capable and competent to settle disputes, in fact if that were not so God would not entrust the judgment of the nations to the Body, it would be ridiculous of God to do that, what arbitrary outcomes there would be if we were not competent to settle fairly simple matters and God sicked us on settling the matters of the world. You talk about chaos? Now God knows the condition of our heart, He's not going to appoint Jayan a judge of something over which Jayan is not competent to judge but those matters are where Jayan is competent to judge in the age to come she very well may judge. It's God's decision, not mine to make. If she's competent to do that she very well should be competent in this time, in this age according to the Lord's evaluation to judge matters. One of the functions of elders was to judge, one of the reasons, one of the things you wanted from an elder was he would be able to judge things that emerged in the church. Not everybody's running around being a judge all the time because that really is chaos and in those days there was no king in the land and every man did what was good in his own eyes. It says that three times in Scripture and I guarantee ya, that's not complementary, "and every man did what was good in his own eyes". That's not a compliment, if it had said, "In those days there was no king in the land and every man acted according to the will of God" that would be different but when it says "every man did what was good in his own eyes" it's pretty clear we're not talking about people who are being led by the Spirit. And as we mature and as we learn to be led by the Spirit we become increasingly capable of helping in matters between other people in the Body of Christ.

So that's kind of the summation of the matter. There is an order that is designed to preserve peace and harmony and unity and to promote peace and harmony and unity in the Body of Christ and it's none of the world's business when there are disputes in the Body of Christ. If we take it to the world the prosecuting attorney is Satan and we have already lost. If we turn a

matter over to the judgment of Satan, because he is the accuser of the brethren we have lost the matter, by definition Paul's basically saying. Amen?