

God working in the life of the godly (Quality: Average)

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Preacher: Barker, Charles (1913-1987)

[0 : 00] Deuteronomy chapter 4 the 35th and the 36th verses Deuteronomy chapter 4 verses 35 and 36 Unto thee it was showed that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God there is none else beside him out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice that he might instruct thee upon earth he showed thee his great fire and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire these words were addressed to Israel and as we go back and trace out the history of Israel we shall see that they were not a people that were chosen because of their goodness or because of what they appeared to be in the sight of men but they were chosen in eternity by God that triune God for a purpose and that purpose was his own honour and his own glory and there is much that we cannot understand in the scriptures but this we can be certain of even those things that we cannot understand are for the honour and the glory of God now we shall see that these Israelites they were nothing else but out and out wretches by nature they committed the most violent sins and as they sinned against Joseph they had no thought they were ruthless the way which they disposed of him simply because there was something in him that they couldn't understand something which the Lord had put within Joseph that they couldn't see they couldn't understand his ways but this they knew that it was something which brought about a hatred within their arms how typical this is of the child of God as he sees the blessed Redeemer it brings about a hatred and as he sees the way in which the worldling lives he's more inclined to follow the worldling and to follow his own sinful nature he has no sight no right understanding of God and that's how

Joseph's brethren continued and they'd forgotten all about their sin and then the Lord showed them Joseph for what sorrow it brought them into what confusion it brought them into as they were reminded of their sin and then the wonderful way in which they were forgiven even the naturally speaking the way in which Joseph revealed himself to his brethren surely would soften the hardest heart would to God there was mercy like it today among men so that all the bitterness and the malice and the confusion could be removed about how he spoke to his brethren how he wept over them how he kissed them after the way in which they treated him but how he could see the hand of God in his affairs and so not only was

Joseph taught but so was his brethren now unto thee it was showed that thou mightest know the Lord these commands and the things which the Lord showed the children of Israel under the power of Pharaoh that great power of Pharaoh was brought down eventually by almighty God and they had seen these things they had already seen Joseph they had already been convinced of their sin they knew something of what they were by nature but here was the law before them and that law which they had broken and it was shown to them and how God in this very chapter reminded them of the tables of stone Moses was a man chosen by God and how to have that spiritual sight to trace out throughout the word of God the way in which he deals with his people the way in which he led them forth and you'll see a great comparison between the children of Israel and your own soul you'll see the same evils within your heart but know to see that heavenly

Joseph now unto thee it was showed that thou mightest know the Lord he is God there are many who have never seen this many in a profession of religion who have never seen that the Lord he is God they believe in this God but they've never been shown anything of his power now man is unable to show us anything spiritually we may talk to you about God we can speak about his power we can set before you those things which took place in Egypt but all these things will have no effect whatever all we can do is to show them to you and you can receive them with a natural mind and understanding but you cannot receive them savingly now Joseph he had that power where he could have cast all his brethren into prison where he could have taken their lives he had great power didn't he but no power equal to the power of almighty

God no power equal to that heavenly Joseph but Joseph was a type he was a shadow of those good things to come we couldn't help feeling as we said in prayer that as we read of these commands we had to feel inwardly our inability to fulfill any of them and even that command where we are commanded to assemble ourselves together how often we find that to be tedious and if it were possible we would refrain from doing so and yet sometimes on those very occasions is when the Lord has met with us there were times when the children of Israel didn't want to go down into Egypt wasn't there to meet this Joseph they feared him and also they were afraid of what he would do although they didn't know him and the

[8 : 40] Lord works sometimes in the hearts of his people they fear him but they don't know him he hasn't made himself known to his brethren as yet but there are those things which they've heard and seen and they're afraid when one is brought in that slavish fear the fear of God and all they can see is this just and holy God before them there are those who are brought into the extremities of life and as death is before them they have a persuasion with regard to a God but they don't know him and there's awful fear I believe we've told you before how we witnessed one entering eternity screaming as it were in agony and saying that he did not want to die he was terrified of death and one we'd spoken to a few hours before but how he was ushered into eternity and how we witness some of the children of God as they've entered eternity what a difference when there's been that longing when

Joseph that heavenly Joseph has made himself known under his brethren the goodness of the Lord even in this in showing us those things where we've seen the difference between the death of the ungodly and the death of the godly the Lord has shown us this and we've seen something in it so there's been that within our heart that we too would desire to be numbered with those where the fear of death is taken away not where they go blindly as it were into the valley of the shadow of death but where the Lord has graciously worked within their heart and showed them the emptiness the vanity of this world showed them what a sinner they are in his sight showed them their need of mercy put prayer within their heart and then caused them to know him and so there's a vast difference between knowing this god as a just and a holy god and being terrified of eternity and then having our eyes opened and to see this god in such a different light and to thee it was showed now the

Lord shows all his people firstly their sins as he did with regard to Joseph's brethren they'd sinned they'd forgotten all about their sin but the time came when they had to stand before Joseph and confessed their sin now has the Lord shown you that you're a sinner has your sin been brought before you and have you known what it is to stand before God like these brethren did and you've stood there guilty realizing your sin when you've been terrified because of what was before you before you never realized that you were a sinner you'd forgotten all about those sins which you'd committed but how the

Lord showed you that you were a sinner how the Lord showed you eternity in what was before you apart from some way out and there appeared to be no way out this was Joseph who you sinned against this was God the God who had power to destroy you and cast you into hell unto thee it was showed that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God one who is brought under the law one who stands before this God he's in no doubt who this God is he knows he's a reality he knows he has power he's left in no doubt whatever would he go on to this God he knows this God and he knows his power he knows all about him as far as the soul standing is concerned but he doesn't know all about his mercy he doesn't know about the one who came to fulfill that law and that one who came to save him no he stands guilty before a just and holy God as the

Lord showed you this it doesn't matter with regard to the sins we've committed we've all sinned and we're all guilty and we all feel the same when we're brought before this God there was no difference they all had part as it were in this sin there was this conspiracy amongst the children of Israel to be rid of Joseph and they were all equal because they all had part in it and therefore we're all equal regardless of our sin whether in the eyes of men they were great sins or little sins all have sinned all must stand before this heavenly Joseph and that includes you as well as me and stand before him this side of Jordan we remember speaking from that word here some year or so ago we believe this side

[14 : 45] Jordan and what a mercy to have these things revealed to us this side of the grave for the Lord to show us this side of the grave and to see this God this side of the grave where we're able to plead the mercy but how Joseph revealed himself to his brethren showed them his love and his mercy well then you see they didn't want to be rid of him then did they we may under the law wish that there never was a God wish that there never was a law but when the law shows us his mercy his love and his compassion toward us well then we are glad that the Lord has shown us these things there is a blessedness in it now this is very personal unto thee it was showed thou mightest know that the

Lord he is God there is none else beside him now God in his wisdom will convince you of this man cannot do it man believes perhaps there's a God he's got some nominal belief but there's a vast difference between believing and being convinced in our belief and once the Lord reveals himself to his people there's no doubt within their mind that there is a God and a God whom they've sinned against and they're just as convinced as Joseph's brethren were as they stood before him that it was Joseph him why were they convinced why because he spoke to them in a language which they could understand before they didn't understand him but here they were before him and he was speaking to them in a way in which they understood him and then he reminded them of the way in which they had sinned against him exactly the same way as

God convinces his people he reminds them of their sin he reminds them of their need now unto thee it was showed that thou mightest know that the Lord is God and there is none else beside him David knew this well with regard to his sin and he was brought to confess against thee the only my sinned and done this evil in thine sight it won't be the confession of sin to others it will be this sin before a just and the holy God and you'll have to confess your sin to this God and you'll know it now out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice this was no natural voice it was a heavenly voice and it was out of heaven that this voice came now he made thee hear it why was I made to hear his voice and answer whilst there is room when thousands made a wretched choice and would rather starve than come he made thee there's no option with regard to the children of

Israel everything was planned in eternity everything was according to the divine will and purposes of God the Father and as they were led on and as they were taught by the Holy Spirit watched over and protected and led into various lands and spots and places they had the evidence that this God was with them did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the forest thou hast heard and lived or hath God to say to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation by temptation by signs by wonders and by war and by a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm and by great terrors according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes and so there was teaching in all these things which the Lord dead not only was there teaching for

Pharaoh but there was teaching even for Moses who led them forth under the hand of God as much we can learn if we have those eyes to see even those minor things which we look upon as being of no consequence to see the hand of God in it so that we can see without doubt in our own mind that the Lord has led us and the Lord has shown us these things now if there should be one here who knows anything at the Lord and being before this just and holy God as a guilty sinner and as yet there seems to be no movement you're just there standing before this Joseph he hasn't revealed himself to you as a saviour that voice is out of heaven it's come from heaven to convince you of your sin it's the voice of the

[20 : 15] Holy Spirit revealing to you your sinners and it will be exactly the same voice that will say come in thou blessed of the Lord why standest thou without the voice of God is not always a voice of comfort it's not always a welcome voice as indeed it's not to the sinner but know to hear it's not unto thee it was shown and not only was it shown but it was received received by the Spirit now out of heaven that he made thee to hear his voice it's personable today in the religious world for people to take up religion and to accept religion and to accept what is called the Christian faith without hearing this voice they are not made to hear it in other words it's their own flesh brought about by their own doings for those who are wrought upon by the

Holy Spirit know what it is to have their little world turned upside down and they are made to hear his voice there's no question about it whether they would or they wouldn't there's no question as to whether they would accept God as their saviour or Christ as their saviour they are made to and the Lord makes them hear his voice as he made you hear his voice you've heard his voice under the law and then you hear his voice instructing you out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice that he might instruct thee he he he we've heard much with regard to the conscience whilst the conscience is a good thing to have a good conscience but we should never get to heaven because we've got a good conscience there's only one way you and

I will get to heaven and that is by the merits of the Lord Jesus by forgiveness but how the Lord works and our conscience will tell us that we're sinners and how the conscience of sinful men tells them that they're sinners but there's a vast difference of knowing sin by the conscience that is in a natural way and knowing that we're sinners because of the word of God having entered within our heart but when one is brought to hear the voice of God and to see that he's instructing me that the Lord is showing you in such a way how this God does instruct his people he instructs them to pray he did with Paul didn't he we spoke about it the last Lord's day how we were stopped and how we had to pray and this is one of the first signs of life instruction now you and

I as we come and pray to the Lord our prayers may all seem confusion they may seem all jumbled up words we may not even mention a word just thoughts within but out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice and out of heaven he instructed thee it's only the power of heaven that will cause you to pray to God aright no other way can you pray to God aright only by the power of heaven and the Lord instructs his people how to pray that's why the disciples are bold ask the Lord to teach them how to pray it's instruction it's teaching isn't it and we need to be taught to pray we need to be taught to see the instruction of the Lord edges up our pathway the

Lord overturns our plans the Lord brings us from time to time before this heavenly Joseph and shows us that our plans have failed as the plans of the children of Israel failed so our plans will fail and we shall have to see that we're not our own we shall see our own weaknesses the frailties of our nature but how the Lord will instruct us and how the Lord will show us that this is not the way we're to walk in he'll clearly mark out the way for us but we cannot see the markings and we cannot see the way until we're well on it and sometimes have to look back and say well the Lord's hand was in this matter the Lord led me into this way it's a sad thing if we who profess to be the Lord's people cannot see the Lord's hand in turning us away from the world and the things of it and giving us a love towards him his people and his ways to have a love put within our heart but some may say were you just saying a few moments ago that you found it hard to go into the Lord's house at times let alone to fulfil his commands yes but when you hear that heavenly voice speaking to you then there's a prompting there's a desire you join with a hymn right you say

[26 : 22] I love to meet amongst them now and at thy gracious feet to bow though vilest of them all but can I bear the piercing thought what if my name should be left out when thou for them shalt call that dear man hath had a gracious instruction he'd been instructed in righteousness he felt a love to his God he felt a love to his ways a love to the Lord's people but he still had a fear within his heart that he might be left out as the Lord instructed you in this now you see there is instruction in this fear it's a fear which will cause you to depend more and more upon your God you won't just presume that you're one of the Lord's people you won't presume because the Lord has blessed you and because you can look back upon your life and see the hand of the Lord in it and you may be able to look back to some very remarkable instances where the

Lord's hand has led you and instructed you but you won't presume because of that that when the end comes you'll be saved because your end will be before you and you're being instructed with regard to this but even right down to the end of the journey you'll need this God to go before you now out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice and this is the voice of God speaking at times as we're so cluttered up with the things of time and as we see the vanity and the emptiness of a dead religion and how the Lord instructs his people what does he do he brings them into the wilderness he allures them brings them into the wilderness and there are the enemies there are the wild beasts but there's good instruction in it have you been brought in the wilderness you've seen the vanity of this world the emptiness of it in our younger days this world was everything to us and the things of it but what is there in the world today when one is under the influence of this heavenly voice there's nothing to hold there's nothing to keep you in this life but how we want to be assured how we want to hear that voice now out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice that he might instruct thee upon earth he showed thee his great fire in other words he showed thee the fire but you didn't feel it you didn't feel it

Shadrach Meshach and Abednego they knew something of the fire but it did them no harm in other words there was destruction in it and the Lord brings his people into those painful circumstances consuming circumstances where their pride is consumed where all presumption and everything else is consumed in that fire now made dependent upon this God and this God alone what do we know of this what do we know of the fire as the Lord has shown us that even in our most painful circumstances the Lord has spoken to us out of heaven we've heard his voice and therefore the pain and the suffering of the fire has been removed the worldling he can't understand it because he feels the pain he feels the sorrow of it we saw someone recently in hospital having been brought into a painful affliction and one who was naturally speaking more or less on their own with no support no help from any but in such a sweet frame of mind no need to grieve for them if taken into heaven why because in the fire they heard the voice of the living

God there's a reality when the Lord speaks there's a reality in the fire which you don't see out of it I am with thee Israel passing through the fire they pass through it they don't remain in it as one like unto the son of God with them now these are all evidences these are all instructions these are all marks and evidences and proofs of the living God this is a proof that your God who you worship that one you depend upon that one whose name you call upon is with you he's not a God made out of wood or stone but he's the real God and out of him he made you to realise it he's made you by these very solemn things realise that he is God and so from the beginning of your life to the end of your life this God is watching over you and every circumstance is controlled by him and whatever may take place in your life even from this very moment down to the end is all controlled by

God and this applies exactly the same to the ungodly as the godly except there's no mercy not as the child of God knows it with the ungodly they don't know what it is to have this God with them in their times of trial and yet those who are really taught by the Holy Spirit would tell you that their instruction their knowledge their teaching has been in times of trial and how they were brought before these enemies and how all their enemies were scattered and the Lord Jesus had enemies that they were all put to flight weren't they they never done him any harm and they won't do you any harm but like Jacob as you see Esau before you there you'll be full of fears you'll be afraid but how the Lord will defend you and so the

[32 : 58] Lord said to his ancient people I shall fight for you and you shall hold your peace and how the Lord still fights for ancient Israel today as a nation but how he fights for his people there's no need for them to find we may in our own spirit say we're going to do this we're going to do the other there's no need to the Lord knows whether you're right and if you're right the Lord will see to it and if you're wrong he'll put matters right for you so whether you're right or whether you're wrong the Lord will see you all right those things where we're wrong in there's instruction in it there's teaching in it it's all part of the way in which the Lord will bring his people it's all very well to say well of course we're going to stand firm for this and we're going to do the other because we're in the right but the Lord sometimes gives his people instructs them that that's the flesh he instructs them of their weakness the frailty of their flesh and he brings them humbly to his feet and they have to confess their sin they have to confess their pride they have to confess their weaknesses so out of him he made thee to hear his voice that he might instruct thee and upon earth he showed thee his great fire to see that eternal fire which will never consume as a solemn thing but to see the fire which will consume those things which are displeasing to the

Lord when all our self is consumed in it and that gold is refined as we stand before this God we have those right desires to be brought into that fire it is a great mercy it's a great blessing to be brought into God's fire upon this earth whatever that fire may be it will be a painful circumstance the flesh but it cannot possibly be painful to the spirit and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire how Moses saw this burning bush and it wasn't consumed but he heard the voice of God out of the fire have you when perhaps you've been in some painful circumstance some heavy trial some great loss have you heard God's voice speaking to you out of it has the fire been a profitable time to you your religion is not much worth is it if there's no reality in it if there's no life in it if there's no real

God in it that is by these very things and the worldling will say well why do we have to suffer why does God permit this why does God permit the other where he treats the whole of the human race the same naturally but in the furnace and in the fire he uses this for his people to bless them and this shows the difference between those who are called by grace the way in which the Lord deals with them in the furnace not the way they deal with the Lord the way the Lord deals with them in it and the way in which he deals with the worldly the child of God submits this condemns me because I rebel at the way the Lord deals with me yes you may do but God's word says for the rebellious also God has his rebellious children and the hymn writer says rebellious thou hast been and art rebellious still

I think I've known a little of that rebellion even in coming here this evening rebellious thou art still but since in love I took thee in I promise I'll fulfill and that promise is to bind up his people secure he's a covenant keeping God he's an unchangeable God and he's unchangeable with the promises that he's spoken to his people in the fire so to have a token to have an evidence from the Lord in the fire you'll bless the fire you'll bless the trial and you'll bless the Lord for bringing you into it those trials the Lord's people are brought into and they'll say I'll never bless the Lord for this I shall never be able to praise the Lord for this trial for this affliction this painful circumstance there's nothing in this to praise the Lord for but it only needs the

Lord to speak out of heaven to thee and when you hear that voice the trial disappears doesn't it now out of heaven and as we look before us there is eternity and as the Lord has spoken to us out of heaven with regard to eternity are we careless with regard to eternity are we careless with regard to our souls some of us are almost on the brink of eternity naturally speaking others the younger ones may be there before we are but to have the voice speaking to us and to know that voice of heaven so that we may look at them and say he who has helped me hitherto will help me all my journey through and daily give me cause to raise fresh

[39 : 03] Ebenezer to his praise we're not always there are we but to be able to see the Lord's hand in these things and to see the Lord's hand in our life now there's that which causes the child of God confusion because he's brought to look upon his past sins his presence sins he's brought to look upon his rebellious nature and he has to say to himself can ever God dwell here can I possibly be a child of God he has a tempter now you see there's a pharaoh in his life and these children of Israel they knew a pharaoh didn't they and pharaoh would not let them go until there was death and pharaoh will not let his people go that satan will not let the Lord's people go he'll harass them he'll tempt them he'll bring them into confusion and as they're tempted and the

Lord in his wisdom may instruct them of their weakness so they fall into sin and then that tempter will come again and say there you are you call yourself a child of God if you were a child of God the same as he said to the dear redeemer if thou be a child of God and so there's instruction in it and there was instruction with regard to pharaoh showed the power of pharaoh his strength and what he could do but all he could do was under the permissive will of God and whatever you may be passing through at this time you may have an enemy you may have a great pharaoh in your life but that pharaoh is under the permissive will of God it's a great blessing to see it and know it so that whoever our enemies may be however powerful they can go no farther than the Lord permits them and when one is brought down to the gates of death that last enemy death will be destroyed in victory as the one hears that voice from heaven saying to them you know there's much ado made with regard to the Lord's people and the way they took glory and their last words but what does it matter about our last words if we've never spoken to the

Lord in this life but then our last words will probably not be taken any notice of anyway if they spring from our evil flesh they won't but to know something the Lord's speaking to us here and then when we come to the end it won't matter very much what our last words will be but what will matter is this what our first words will be when we enter eternity have you ever thought about that the first words when we enter eternity will be blessed redeemer or what will it be if there's no hope for us if after all we've confessed all we've gone through all that hope that we've had ghastly hell is before us we can't explain it there's no words that we can bring before you whereby we can set forth what our first words would be as we enter a never ending hell but this we do know and the child of

God knows who's been instructed what he'll say as he enters glory he'll be amazed he'll be satisfied as never before unto thee it was showed that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God there is none else besides him out of heaven he made thee hear his voice that he might instruct thee upon earth he showed thee his great fire and thou heard his words out of the midst of the fire or may we be favoured to hear God's voice speaking to us and then to hear that voice of mercy speaking that's what we want isn't it the voice of mercy speaking I am Joseph your brother to know something of that union that blood relationship we must leave it may the Lord at his blessing amen say of to him may may get up acaba of and but heweh and■■ may they ask had the forgotten

Him him may and otherspool ■■ they have him he lead him he