

**Introduction:**

- *"As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence. He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed."* (Daniel 7:13-14, NLT)
- *"When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?""* (Matthew 16:13, NLT)
- My goal, as was last week, is to try not to look at the leaders being offered to us this year upon our ballots but to get us to look at our hearts, discern what is going on in there, and find the heart of God. I want to take us deeper into where I finished last week which was Samuel's instruction to a people who had sinned against God. "Don't be afraid, worship God with all your heart and don't return to idols." That all sounds good but I guess the question today is, "How serious are you about that?" How serious are you about doing those three things?
- Review:
  - When Israel began to perceive that Samuel was old (good leadership is going away), that he sinfully appointed his sinful sons to follow after him (bad leadership 'on deck'), and the abundance of terrorists in their land; then they said give us a king like all the other nations. The people perceiving the threats grasped for change. That change was a king.
  - We saw that kings 'take'.
  - Samuel says here is what you need to do...
- I did a brief overview of 1 & 2 Kings and I found this phrase: "He did evil in the sight of the Lord." or "He was pleasing to God." Both phrases seem to be random. And if you are going to live under a King you want a good king, a righteous king, a king who serves the people and does not 'take'. Can you think of a king in scripture who 'fits that description?'

**I. Discerning Jesus in the Midst of Drastic Distractions**

- A. Israel's cry for a king did not come out of lust to be like other nations it came out of fear: vacuum of leadership, current corruption with more on the horizon and threat of terror.
  1. This caused Israel to be uncertain, the atmosphere to be chaotic, and fear to abound.
  2. In this atmosphere Israel out of fear for her future began to grasp at straws.
  3. They were not looking for God they were looking to men and the ways of men to save them.
- B. Some of the most hardest times to 'find God' are in times of uncertainty, turmoil, and threats. How many of you have ever had to relate to that?
  1. We are living in such a time now.
    - a) Spiritual pressures are increasing: religious freedoms are increasing...for everyone but Christians.
    - b) We have police shootings, riots, terrorist attacks in our country.

- c) Everyone is concerned about our presidential election this year and where it will take us as a nation. There is lots of uncertainty.
- 2. In the midst of all these drastic distractions are you able to discern Jesus? Discern means: to perceive, to recognize, to distinguish. Can you perceive, recognize, and distinguish Jesus in the midst of all that CNN, FOX, and FaceBook present to you? Or are you like Israel grasping at straws, tweeting whatever comes your way, and un-friending people. Where is the Son of Man in the midst of this storm? Do you see Him?
- 3. Drastic Distractions call for drastic discernment.
  - a) Why is religious freedom increasing for every religion but Christianity in America? Maybe, just maybe, judgment is beginning with the house of God. *"For the time has come for judgment, and it must begin with God's household. And if judgment begins with us, what terrible fate awaits those who have never obeyed God's Good News?"* (1 Peter 4:17, NLT)
  - b) Dan 7:2 Daniel sees a great storm brewing over the sea of humanity. Distractions! Out the sea rises powerful but distinct governments. By the end we read: *"As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a **son of man** coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence."* (Daniel 7:13, NLT)
  - c) Out of the pressures of this life the Kingdom of God prevails. Pressure serves to purify the church, provoke the Saints to greater love, push us into the arms of God and cause the Kingdom of God to prevail!
- C. The Death of Uzziah. In 2 Chron 26, we find another great transition taking place. Uzziah was a good king pleasing to God until... *"But when he had become powerful, he also became proud, which led to his downfall. He sinned against the Lord his God by entering the sanctuary of the Lord's Temple and personally burning incense on the incense altar."* (2 Chronicles 26:16, NLT) Uzziah became powerful, proud, pretentious (entered the temple), and physically ill with leprosy and died.
  - 1. It is in this context that the priest Isaiah has his heavenly vision of God high and lifted up
  - 2. In the midst of a tragic distraction that brought about so many uncertainties economics, national safety, internal turmoil...Isaiah discerns God!!! He perceives, recognizes and distinguishes God.

## II. Discerning Jesus Requires Looking For Jesus

- A. To discern Jesus takes two things: 1. You must beware 2. You must be looking for Him.
- B. Be aware! In Matthew 16:6 Jesus tells the disciples to beware of the yeast (systems of men that blind men from seeing God) of the Pharisees and Sadducees. The disciples were so dull that they could not understand that Jesus was not talking about bread. Jesus rebukes them and they finally get it: *"Then at last they understood that he wasn't*

*speaking about the yeast in bread, but about the deceptive teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees."* (Matthew 16:12, NLT)

1. Jesus was talking about the things that filled the mind and block the heart from seeing the presence of God. These two religious group represent two different approaches to God. We have two major political parties with candidates and both parties have preachers that stand in their defense. Two socio-politico-religious parties that swear they have the revelation! *"It is essential that we examine our faith to see if it is the apostolic faith or the faith according to our culture or political party."* Stuart Greaves
2. Jesus is saying, beware of this! Beware of that which keeps you from seeing God.
3. I like what Stuart Greaves recently said, "Isaiah had unclean lips not because he was cursing but because he was not saying what heaven was saying, Heaven is not nervous about this election! The angels..."*"They were calling out to each other, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Heaven's Armies! The whole earth is filled with his glory!"*" (Isaiah 6:3, NLT) Isaiah was grieved he was not speaking what heaven was. What are you speaking? Glenn Beck, CNN, FOX, FB?

C. Be Looking! Be looking for Jesus!

1. Jesus takes them to Caesarea Philippi, a place of a fresh water spring. In the rock are grottos that are filled with idols. The Roman and Greeks worshiped the god Pan (half man half goat). And in the midst of the swirl of people worshiping false gods, Jesus asks... *"Who do people say the Son of Man is?"* 16:13
2. What is Jesus doing? In the midst of this 'storm' Jesus is trying to get them to look. Because if they will look they might just see something amazing!
  - a) Peter sees! Mt 16:16 He sees the Messiah! The Christ! The Son of the Living God.
  - b) Daniel in Dan 7 sees the Son of Man arising and crushing the governments of men!
  - c) Give us a king like the Son of Man! That will be my heart, your heart, our heart no matter who the president is on November 9th!

III. **Discerning Jesus Empowers Us As Believers**

- A. Any time you see Jesus it is a better day. When you see Jesus a prophetic perspective is gained and the Son of God become incredibly clear to you. The sight of the Son of God ravishes the heart. In scripture, I see Him. In visions, I have been undone by Him! In dreams I have encountered Him and awakened ever so clean, pure and encouraged. Because we do not see 'His Rule' we do not talk about it. Therefore we get a nation like we have. But when you see God you can't stay silent. John in his context could not stay silent. Rome had banished him. He was exiled and forgotten yet he discerns Jesus!
  1. John said it this way: *"And they were singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your works, O Lord God, the Almighty. Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations. Who will not fear you,*

- Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous deeds have been revealed.”* (Revelation 15:3-4, NLT)
2. The Holy Spirit wants us to see Jesus: *“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me.”* (John 16:13-14, NLT)
- B. This is what true prophetic preaching does...it reveals Jesus in all of His glory, unlocking our understanding to comprehend the depths of who He really is. This gives us hope! And Hope is what our nations needs! What are you looking at? What are you perceiving?
1. Listen to these words of Paul: *“Though I am the least deserving of all God’s people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ.”* (Ephesians 3:8, NLT) Have you seen the endless treasures available in Christ? Neither have I, but Paul did! And because he did he can tell me to go looking!
  2. Our nation needs a multitude of believers who will focus on these endless treasures in Christ (most people have one treasure-salvation) and get themselves anointed to tell others of the infinite wealth and beauty of the Son of Man! To see endless treasure takes time! You have to keep looking.
- C. In the midst of uncertainty, when we can discern, perceive, recognize and distinguish Jesus a new profound sense of security comes to us.
1. Daniel found stability and security when he saw the Son of Man not rise up out of the sea (seas have to do with separation-no seas in new heaven) but come with the clouds of heaven.
  2. Isaiah found it when he saw the Lord high and lifted up.
  3. Peter found the revelation of Jesus from heaven in the midst of pagan worship rising out of the sea.
  4. We want to be those who find God not in a political party but in a Kingdom that will never pass away.
- D. Learn like a seraphim live like a seraphim. 3 points from Stuart Greaves.
1. seraphim have the ability to peer into the glory of God Rev 4:8
    - a) *“The one thing I ask of the Lord– the thing I seek most– is to live in the house of the Lord ... delighting in the Lord’s perfections and meditating in his Temple.”* (Psalm 27:4, NLT)
  2. seraphim have the ability to receive the glory of God
    - a) *“The one thing I ask of the Lord– the thing I seek most– is to live in the house of the Lord...”* (Psalm 27:4, NLT)
  3. seraphim declare the glory of God.
    - a) Like Paul declaring the endless riches

b) Ps 145:4-6 "One generation shall praise Your works to another. I will meditate on Your glorious splendor and majesty, and on Your wondrous works...I will declare Your greatness."

**Conclusion:**

- So, tell me again what do I need to do to not be afraid, worship God and avoid idols?
  - 1. Discern Jesus. Look for Him. Perceive Him. Recognize Him in the storm of all the distractions. It is easy to look at the storm you have to focus to find Christ.
  - 2. Be aware of how easily the yeast of Glenn, Shaun, Oprah, CNN and FB can get into you. And with that in mind diligently look to find Jesus. The Word is a lamp to your feet and light to your path.
- Look to find Jesus in your storm.
- Be empowered to proclaim the hope you find.

Invitation to find Jesus. Start this morning. In the midst of your uncertain chaotic life, be aware of where you are and look for Jesus.