

“Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.” (Pro 22:28)

We live in amazingly evil and spiritually dangerous times. All around us we are bombarded with sin, tempted with great temptations to follow Satan and his minions, and to forsake the Lord our God. We are indeed approaching the days described by Amos

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.” (Amos 8:11-12)

I say approaching, because if they ran through Topeka, they’d find the words of the LORD spoken, studied and eaten up like the bread that they are – right here in this house and amongst all of us. So, there isn’t a complete famine yet. Anyone watching this situation today with a spiritual eye has got to be like Joseph looking at the corn supplies dwindling as the famine of Egypt wore on. Knowing it wasn’t always this way is a sobering and sad piece of knowledge.

“Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.” (Acts 4:4)

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” (Acts 2:41)

It is very, very difficult for me to visualize such events as these, given the experience in our time. Thousands of people stepping forward proclaiming their belief in the truth and seeking to be baptized? Not that I doubt it for one second it happened, I just marvel at it. Think how awesome that would be to suddenly grow those to whom you are spiritually linked by thousands! We get excited over one soul, and rightly so, but five thousand? It’s inconceivable to me. Obviously there has been significant decline since those momentous days.

This decline didn’t happen overnight, just like it didn’t happen overnight in ancient Israel that they turned from God to worshiping everything but God. This decline is a process, which has been executed gradually from those days that the church grew so dramatically. From those days when these doctrines we look to were freshly delivered from the mouth of Christ, and the idea of the fulfillment of Moses’ law created a dramatic change in worship, to today where there are no vestiges of those doctrines left in what passes for Christianity. It has been a dramatic degradation of God’s standards.

That process amounts to a pushing away of the standards and a replacing of them with fables, fairy tales and lies derived from the depravity of the human heart. It has been a

removing, year by year, century by century, of the landmarks God put in place from the beginning. Today I want to talk about this removal of landmarks and our duty to stay in the gap and defend them.

The idea of the landmark, or border, boundary, etc., is clearly established in the law and set limits to the land any one family had inheritance rights to. It established the political boundaries of each inheritance so it was plain and clear what was to be inherited by future generations.

These landmarks denoted the boundary, for example, between Ahab's palace grounds and the vineyard of Naboth's he coveted. When Joshua divided the land, they put stones in the ground on the borders of each inheritance. They were distinct, a pillar or a stone with some marking on it, placed in the locations described throughout the book of Joshua and not easily ignored. In political terms the boundaries clearly set lines on a map. This wasn't an original idea, as the Canaanites before them had done similar things, and looking back into history we find that virtually every civilization has had a similar system of marking boundaries. The Romans turned placement of landmarks into a religious event, putting the symbol of Jupiter on their boundaries and having their priests bless them to insure their permanence. This isn't a foreign or strange idea, these landmarks.

Contrast how Israel was supposed to treat their own landmarks, to what the Lord commanded the Israelites to do to the landmarks of the Canaanites:

“Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place.” (Deu 12:2-3)

He did that because these markers are important. They denote permanence. They are a physical manifestation of a standard and a point of law. Boundaries matter, as we also can see here

“And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.” (Rev 21:15-16)

Without boundaries, there are no limits to anything, and that's not how God works in regard to man, to put it simply. Only God is infinite, with no boundary, limit or border. Only He inhabits all of eternity, is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient, giving him boundless power, presence and knowledge. All other creatures are bounded, limited by various factors. These landmarks are physical reminders of these concepts, and as

an Israelite, every time you saw one on the border of your property, it should cause you to be thankful for that which you are given, that it is plentiful and meets your needs, and it should remind you not to be covetous of what your neighbor has. They reminded the children of Israel that there were bounds to their habitation, bounds established by God and communicated through Joshua His servant. The inheritance promised to their generations was established and laid out by God, not the arbitrary will of men. Moreover, these landmarks were clear reminders that the land was not theirs

“The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.” (Lev 25:23)

These landmarks were not placed arbitrarily by Joshua and the leaders of Israel, remember. This wasn't a “well, you know, we really like that mountain over there, so we want that in our boundary” or a “hey, we'll trade you this river plain for that good grazing land”. Not even remotely:

“By lot was their inheritance, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and for the half tribe.” (Jos 14:2)

To do a thing by lot is to put it directly into the hands of God. There are many ways lots can be cast, but whatever method is used, it is a thing the Lord controls.

“The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.” (Pro 16:33)

The Lord directed every single border, every corner of the layout of Canaan; all the curves and squiggles of the boundaries were dictated by God. At every one of the important spots which needed marking, there were landmarks placed. Landmarks that were not to be moved or altered in any way. These landmarks being drawn by lot should cause us to realize that they were placed from all of Eternity; this wasn't a happenstance thing or driven by chance.

Boundaries, like those measured with the golden reed should cause us to contemplate the limits God has put in place regarding that city, its mansions, its inhabitants and its measure. It is not boundless, infinite, and built to house all of mankind, for instance. It could have been, but the measurement of the boundaries gives us a clear understanding that it is not.

While not all the expositors agree on this point, I don't see how you can look at this issue and not find spiritual application. These same expositors can tear down the Tabernacle and Temple and point out every single type and shadow in them that point to Christ, but they seem to largely disregard and some directly argue there is no spiritual application of the landmarks used to mark the inheritance. The fact that this was done by lot, I believe, requires a spiritual application be applied to the situation. It

leads directly into the idea of the Redeemer, and it requires a submission to the sovereignty of God in your thinking.

I will point out one valuable argument from those who object to application of these landmarks as a spiritual metaphor. When looking at our spiritual landmarks, we must look to God and not history or the traditions of men for their placement, being ever careful not to confuse the two or substitute man's tradition for God's landmark. That's where they find fault with the idea, because they make the argument that the Jews spent much of their time spiraling down into a state where they were more interested in the traditions passed down from generation to generation than they were in God's law. This downward spiral brought them to a point where they left off consideration of and obedience to the written law of God in favor of their own ideas and traditions, i.e., idolatry.

This is a valuable point, but it is also my key point for considering this spiritually. Substituting human ideas for God's landmarks is the act of moving of them. We should be very careful considering what is or is not a landmark, and if it isn't in Scripture, discard it. We ought not be getting tied up looking for all the historical ways that worship was conducted in the early days of the church, for example. If it isn't recorded in Scripture, it isn't a landmark to be defended, it's a tradition of men. Where we have a landmark, it is laid out in God's word, and that is what we cannot move, attempt to move, or pretend isn't there.

How does one move a landmark? After all, you can't move Mount Rushmore! Especially since we're not talking about a physical stone or pillar but rather an idea, a doctrine, a belief? Satan has thousands of years' experience accomplishing this task, and he set out to do it from the beginning. People don't have to physically move the landmarks to effectively move them. If your neighbor hasn't plowed the field adjacent to yours for a couple of years, and you plow a few rows into his so you can expand your crop yield, you didn't move the landmarks, per se, but in effect you have by choosing to ignore them. That's one way they get moved.

Consider again Naboth. Ahab didn't move the landmark, but he accomplished his goal nonetheless:

"And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it." (1Ki 21:16)

Ahab didn't move the landmarks, he just removed the person who **wouldn't** move them, despising the righteous action of Naboth in not moving the boundary God set for his inheritance.

While Ahab's movement of the landmark wasn't exactly subtle, he used the same technique that has been used by all who move them – self justification. He was the

King, he wanted something someone else had, so he was perfectly within his rights to take what he wanted – the laws of God notwithstanding. It was about him and his desires being fulfilled, without a second thought given to the declared will of God. It's the same thing today, and I'm going to detail for you a very specific example for consideration.

There is a so-called church in this town called Lion and Lamb Church. I am using them because they represent the modern way that this gets done. If you want to do an in-depth study of how the landmarks get moved, I suggest that you closely consider the history of the Catholic corporation and how it has manipulated mankind over the centuries; there aren't many landmarks they haven't moved. I want you to see that this isn't perpetrated only by the Catholic whore, though – it is all organized religion today, and especially that calling itself Christianity. Consider this language from the Lion and Lamb website:

“Lion and Lamb Church is a fellowship of worshipping believers committed to authentically pursuing a vital relationship with Jesus Christ and obeying all His commands.”

That sounds kind of nice. A little loose, perhaps vague, but they're going to obey all Christ's commands. It's rare to see a church acknowledge that there are any commands to obey, much less claim that they're going to obey them.

Things continue to look kind of hopeful when you see they actually acknowledge that divorce and remarriage is an issue that should be addressed by a church. But then the moving trucks show up to pick up the landmarks. In their own words:

“The issue of divorce and remarriage is one which has eluded unanimity among Christians for centuries. The resultant confusion has left the practice of modern Christians barely distinguishable from that of the rest of the culture. The leadership of Lion and Lamb Church believe that it is essential that scripture form the basis of our beliefs and convictions, rather than a simple “baptism of what is.”

Nonetheless, after a fairly exhaustive review of various biblical texts on the issue, many good and godly brothers in Christ have diverged on the justification and even the scriptural basis for divorce and remarriage. To an extent, that diversity of opinion is reflected among the leaders of Lion and Lamb Church.”

I'll give your brains a moment to uncramp from that.

Here are the scriptures they list as most directly dealing with divorce and remarriage; scripture that has caused all this divergence and lack of “unanimity among Christians”.

Luke 16:18:

“Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.”

1 Corinthians 7:10-16:

“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?”

1 Corinthians 7:39:

“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.”

Ephesians 5:25-32:

*“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. **For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**”*

These are the supposedly difficult to understand, unclear, and divisive scriptures that this supposed church uses to support its position that divorce and remarriage is not a clear issue, there is no unanimity across all Christendom and therefore, no stand can be taken.

This is how a landmark gets moved – with deceit, deception and self-service, not an outright surveying and shift of the stone or boundary. What this church has done is just as deceitful as what Ahab did, pretending that murder and false witness cleared up the prohibition of moving the landmark, since he didn't move it. Claiming ignorance and confusion of plain precepts and scriptures doesn't mean you haven't moved the landmark – especially when you take a position! It's as if they walked up, moved one of the stones and when they were called out said “OH, is THAT what that stone was for? It was confusing to me, I just thought it was a rock in my field so I moved it.” Deceitful and rebellious to the core.

If you're going to claim to be a church of God, you must, like Paul, accept the responsibility of a “defence of the Gospel” (Phillipians 1:17). That means not moving the landmarks, and instead standing over the place where they belong when others move them and refusing to acknowledge their new position as rightful. If you truly don't

have light on a matter, you say that, and you absolutely don't take the position of society on the issue, knowing that it is a position generated by Satan. That's the job of the church, to declare truth in the earth and to show the people what their sins are! And let's be clear on a thing. There has always been and always will be unanimity in true Christian churches

“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.” (Act 4:32)

“Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.” (Php 2:2)

Divorce and remarriage is without a doubt one of those landmarks that must not be moved. This is a clear-cut issue, and the feigned confusion and complexity of it doesn't make it unclear; it just seeks to provide a smoke screen to hide self-willed rebellion. This so-called confusion started with the Jews, clearly, but not insisting the landmark be put back is insidious. Remember, the declaration to the Pharisees is followed up to the disciples, who sought greater understanding of the matter, and Christ gave it to them when He said

“Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.” (Mark 10:11-12)

That's not just pretty clear, that's crystal clear, and that's why the words are there! Christianity is not to follow in the follow of the Jews. If you put away your husband or wife and marry another person, it is adultery. That's the landmark that must not be moved at any cost. I'm not talking here about what society tries to do, or whether it's legal under our laws. I'm talking about the job of churches in their age not to make it acceptable to concede to sin. Churches must make it clear what the standard of God is on a matter if they're going to claim to be His mouthpiece! You don't get to just ignore the clarity of this matter anymore than you can ignore “thou shalt not kill” (Ex 20:13). I also include by reference here Ben's sermon on fornication – another giant landmark these churches have moved!

This isn't just a tirade against some church, friends. This is the error that plagues modern Christianity and that which we must be most careful not to partake in. Churches today are plagued with the idea that so-called unity with society is more important than the landmarks being maintained. They are so concerned with being seen as socially progressive that none of them have the courage to do what is right and expected of them as a church.

They hate this fundamental principle:

“And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” (2Co 6:15)

As churches and organized religion have moved the landmarks, they've stopped worshipping God, and instead worship an invention of their own imaginations that in rebellion they call God. That false god teaches the false doctrine of “inclusion” and “progress”. That's how these changes happen. When you move the landmarks that God has set in place, declared to be the boundaries of His worship and following, you aren't worshipping Him any longer, you're worshiping something else entirely.

Worshiping that false god leads you to moving other landmarks. If you can rip apart marriage and justify the adultery of divorce and remarriage, then there is no boundary at all, and that's how you get to fag marriage. That's how you get to the point where babies are expendable, and instead of calling it murder, you invent words like 'abortion'. These churches moving the landmarks and not defending the truth, keeping a moral compass in front of the people has brought about things like small children claiming they're 'transgendered' of all things. If the churches don't defend these things proactively, with vigor, then who will?

You don't defend one landmark and abandon the rest, either. The beauty of this metaphor is so complete. If you move one corner landmark, the shape of the land is changed. You don't get to claim that you defend the unborn but stand for fag marriage or tolerate divorce and remarriage or corrupt the Lord's Supper with the lie of communion or the thousand other things these churches do. It's an all or nothing proposition. The preachers are here to give guidance to men to help them serve God acceptably. They won't sacrifice being liked by all men to teach them how to behave. They won't stand in the gap.

“O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD.” (Eze 13:4-5)

The allusion here is to there being a hole in the wall fortifying a city or a soldier missing in a shield wall. The landmarks have been moved and the integrity of the wall has been compromised by sin. God's wrath is set to come pouring in these gaps, and the only thing that can stop that from happening is the preachers stepping into those gaps, preaching against the sin and exhorting the people to repentance. They won't go up, though. They won't stand in the gaps and do the job that God has given them to do. It isn't just cowardice or ignorance, it's worse than that, as again Ezekiel tells us

“And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the women that sew pillows to all armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature to hunt souls! Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and will ye save the souls alive that come unto you? And will ye pollute me among my people for handfuls of barley and for

pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to my people that hear your lies?” (Eze 13:18-19)

The pillows on the armholes is a metaphor that generates a very odd visual. But it's a wonderful description of what these preachers do. The idea is that at every moment, they have comfort and leisure, no difficulty, no discomfort due to preaching against their sins. They have these pillows to rest their arms on and have been lulled into a complacent sleep as it were. Then the false prophets blind the people of “every stature” – that is people of every size, young and old – with veils so they can't even see the truth if it's right in front of their faces. They move the landmarks and distract the people from their consciences with leisure and comfort.

Now, consider how terrible it would be to hear “I have somewhat against thee” when we stand before our Creator. Moving the landmarks is how you get to that dreadful phrase. If you look around at this body and think that this church could never hear those words and we would never move the landmarks, that's dangerous thinking you should dispose yourself of. It's not a difficult thing to see happen if we let our guard down. As we occupy and the years wear on, Satan works against us tirelessly, using every weapon he can to get us to move the landmarks. Not just these things that might seem bright and obvious like divorce and remarriage. Landmarks like exclusivity of membership and church discipline can be worn away easily if we look at things like being merciful from a human and not a spiritual perspective. These are the things we are responsible for defending and maintaining in the earth. If we don't do that, we aren't a church of God, plain and simple. If we allow ourselves to be shaped or influenced by the world around us, by our blood relations, by the tears of Esau, by anything other than Scripture and our God, it is certain our light will be extinguished and we will cease to be a Church.

Further, we have a non-delegable duty to teach our children to keep these landmarks right where they're at, and what they mean. Just as the Israelites did when they crossed over Jordan, setting the first landmarks

*“And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: That this may be a sign among you, **that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones?** Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.” (Jos 4:5-7)*

These truths we defend are a memorial to the grace and deliverance of God. He put these boundaries in place to give us clear guidance on how to worship Him and what

His will in the earth is. We teach our children to defend these landmarks not out of some sense of “legacy” or in the hope that “our work will go on”, but out of a sense of gratitude to God and our duty. This is our battle against the Prince of the Air, against the principalities and powers. Remember Peter’s exhortation

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:” (1Pe 5:8)

Vigilance is required to maintain the landmarks. To keep them right where they were put by God. This roaring lion isn’t only looking to devour us individually. He seeks to devour this body as well. If we move the landmarks, we are allowing him to do so, because he has accomplished his goal of moving us away from worshiping God and instead worshiping the creation of our own imaginations. That’s what he’s managed to do with organized Christianity. All these landmarks moved have created this faux Christianity and flavors of Christianity that don’t exist in Scripture.

Remember, landmarks tell you where you are. When you sail into a harbor and see the Statue of Liberty, you know you’re in New York. You wouldn’t expect to find the Golden Gate bridge there. When you walk into a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, you’re not going to see idols on the walls, you’re going to see women with uncut hair, you’re not going to see the Lord’s Supper handed to everyone. You’re not going to see tacky signs that say “we sing the old hymns”, as though that is a real thing to measure a church by. Promoting as a landmark the idea that singing songs written by a bunch of men is precisely the kind of thing we must strive against. Putting our human notions out there as a landmark to try and recruit other people to our cause because it makes us more palatable is prideful evil. The landmarks are God’s and we can’t change them. To try leaves us in a very, very dark place.

Ezekiel 13 and 22 lay it out in very stark, direct language which is elegant and terrifying. The Lord lets Ezekiel know what the responsibility of the churches is and what happens when they won’t fulfill it.

“Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts.” (Eze 13:2-4)

Foxes are crafty little creatures, excellent at getting into places you don’t want them, like your hen house to steal your eggs and chickens. They are resourceful and never pass up a meal. The false prophets strike at every opportunity to devour a soul, devour a body, lead a nation into ruin and they do it by moving the landmarks, prophesying and preaching things that are not from the Lord.

What the Lord expects of his preachers, and one of the ways you can identify them, is their willingness to stand in these gaps – false preachers won't.

“Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD.” (Eze 13:5)

To stand in the gap is to create a defensive wall, to do whatever is necessary to stem the tide of sin. The preachers are responsible for standing in that gap as a display of mercy from God, as we see from Ezekiel 22:

“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.” (Eze 22:30)

The seeking for a man among the preachers to stand in the gap isn't an indication that the Lord doesn't know what's going on, it's a statement about what the preachers aren't doing. It's a declaration of the rebellion of the people and the help they receive from the so-called moral leaders to engage in their sins by moving these landmarks that call out their behavior as sinful. It's worse than just a small mistake:

“There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.” (Eze 22:25-26)

Not joining the conspiracy is the challenge. We've been at this a long time, and we might be at this a long time to come – we don't know. To avoid becoming part of this conspiracy, our diligence must be maintained and the landmarks must be guarded so we do not even unwittingly become part of the conspiracy. We must stand in the gaps as long as it is required and not grow impatient. Our patience can only be increased through our faith, as I've said to you before. This will become increasingly difficult as the days grow darker and the famine of the hearing of the word worsens.

My exhortation today is to let this increasingly occupy your prayers as the days grow longer and darker

*“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, **and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein**, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.” (Jer 6:16)*

Let our feet occupy the old paths, let us defend the landmarks and not move them, and do our duty to our God faithfully as preachers, teaching our children how to be watchmen on the wall, never persuaded or influenced by the ways of the world to

soften our message, compromise the truths, and sacrifice walking in the right ways to walk with mankind toward destruction.