

# To Love the Word of God (Part 4)

by Paul Washer

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*Paul Washer emphasizes the importance of loving God wholeheartedly and internalizing His Word through memorization, meditation, and obedience.*

**Duration:** 39:33

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 6:4, Deuteronomy 6:6-8, Psalm 119:11, Proverbs 3:12, Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 3:20

**Topics:** "Loving God", "Scripture Obedience"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. He highlights that many people desire to escape hell and go to heaven, but very few truly desire a relationship with God. The preacher encourages the practice of memorizing, meditating on, and obeying Scripture. He shares anecdotes about the power of the spoken word and the need for obedience to what we hear. The sermon emphasizes the need for genuine love and obedience towards God rather than just seeking to escape judgment.

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## Transcript

Praise the Lord. Well, let's open up the Bible to Deuteronomy, chapter six. Verse four, let us stand the reading of God's word, chapter six, verse four, here, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one.

You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up, you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.

You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Let's pray. Father, we come before you and Lord, I thank you for these testimonies of your working in and through the lives of your people.

Lord, I thank you for your word, which is an eternal testimony to your faithfulness, a revelation, a clear revelation of your will. Please help us tonight, Lord, to understand this word and to obey it in Jesus name. Amen.

May be seated. This morning we touched on verse three here, O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do that, careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly just as the Lord, the God of your fathers has promised you in the land flowing with milk and honey. The gist of this verse is simply this, that God has a great desire for you for good things and for blessing.

But an intricate part of that, what much of that depends upon is you hearing the word of the Lord and bringing your life into conformity to that word, to practicing the Bible. In verse four, he sums up the faith of Israel and the faith of all who are true believers in Yahweh. He says here, O Israel, the Lord is our God.

The Lord is one. This verse, as I said this morning, is so powerful. This one statement has the power to change an entire life, to change every thought, every activity, every word.

If we truly come to grasp what it means that God is God and God is absolutely sovereign over all things and has the right to demand of us a perfect allegiance and loyalty that can transform a person's life. We go on to verse five, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might, that we were created not primarily to serve God, but to respond to the love of God by loving in return. My prayer for my children in this text is about children.

My prayer for my children is that they be great lovers of God. Now, I have met in my life many important men who not only did I doubt their love for God, I doubted their salvation. You could talk about every manner of church growth prospect or strategy, anything that would make their building or their ministries larger, and they would be listening to you with full intent, begin to talk about the glories of Christ, and they'd yawn.

When it really comes down to it, what does God desire? That we love the Lord, our God, with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, all our strength, everything we are, that it be a manifestation of love, that our obedience be a manifestation of our love toward God. Never forget this, you catch a field on fire, snakes will run out of that field so fast, but they're still snakes. Many, many people want to escape hell, and many, many people want heaven, but very few people want the God who dwells there.

It's not enough just to want to escape judgment, do you desire to worship and serve the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength? Now we go on and he says these words, verse six, which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart. Now, I want us to look at something that's rather amazing. We would say that it would be a great manifestation of arrogance, that it would be a thing beyond us to command another person to love us.

Some people would even go so far to say is you cannot command someone to love you. But look what we have here today in verse six, these words, which I am commanding you today, God commands us to love him. And how can he do that? Because he is, in fact, God and because he is worthy and because the greatest thing we could do, the thing with the greatest purpose is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

In the book of Romans, chapter 12, verses one and two, very important text, it talks about offering our bodies as living sacrifices to God. And then it uses a word there that can mean spiritual or reasonable. This is your reasonable service of worship.

The only reasonable thing that a creature can do that lives in absolute dependence upon a creator is to love him and to offer their life to him because our life only finds meaning. As a matter of fact, everything in

creation only finds meaning to the degree that it is turned back and given to God. Now, these words which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart.

A very important statement. Why? When I'm dealing with seminary students and such, I'm always trying to keep them from pitfalls. And one of the pitfalls is turning their chase after God into an academic discourse.

And one of the things that I think is quite remarkable in Scripture, and I did this one time, I wrote a book that's used in South America on how to study the Bible. And I noticed something that just seemed to pop out to me on every page. There isn't a lot in Scripture about academic study.

There isn't a lot in Scripture about diagramming sentences and the such, even though that's all necessary. And I do that, but there isn't a lot in Scripture on such a thing. There are three things that come out in Scripture and they can all be summed up in this internalizing the word, digesting the word, feeding on the word.

Even regurgitating the word and feeding on it again. There are three words that stand out to me when it says here in verse six, they shall be on your heart. The first one is memorization.

If you look through Scripture, you will find many, many places where it talks about memorizing Scripture. And in Psalms 119, 11, your word, I have treasured in my heart that I may not sin against you. I have treasured it in my heart.

What do you treasure? You treasure treasure. What do you put in a treasure chest? Treasure, of course, or it wouldn't be called a treasure chest. You should treasure the word of God.

And if you're sitting here tonight saying, well, I don't treasure the word of God. You know what that is for you? That's a red flag popping up, telling you that you need to fall on your face before God and beg him to take away the hardness of your heart and return or restore a love for his word to you. You see, whenever you come into Scripture and you see something that's there and it's not in your life, it is a call to you to fall down on your knees and to cry out to God to help.

What most people do instead of that, they hear that we should treasure the Scripture. They say, well, I just don't. I want to, but I can't seem to do it.

Maybe it's just not my personality or, you know, I've tried so many different Bible studies and the such, but I just don't have that much of a passion for Scripture. Well, all that you're doing is wrong. If you don't have a passion for Scripture, fall down on your knees and beg one from God.

When your heart is cold, fall down on your knees and beg a warm heart from God and stay there until it is granted. When you feel loveless or feel no fire to worship, fall down on your knees and cry out to God until it is granted. Kids, every good and perfect gift comes down from our Father, and you have not because you ask not.

Every malady of your heart, now I'm running a rabbit here, sort of, but it's a good one to run. Every malady of your heart is cured by crying out to God. You say, well, I don't have passion in my marriage anymore.

That is sin. Fall down on your knees and cry out to God because only God can give that to you. Not reading a book on marriage.

Only God. You see, church, you need to understand it really is only God who can do anything for anybody. That is the truth, and that's the thing that's going on here.

You don't so much need a man, you need a God. It's not a man-sized job, it's a God-sized job. And cry out to God.

Every time you see something in Scripture that contradicts who you are, or you see a standard that you just can't live up to, cry out to God. That's what He desires. And let me tell you something else.

Whenever you're reading through Scripture and something just really knocks at your heart, that hits you hard, scrapes you, even hurts you like a rasp against your flesh, don't take it as condemnation. Don't take it as God pressing down on you and showing you how wrong you are and how much He dislikes you. Take it as an act of mercy.

It is only to His children that He gives reproof. It is only to the ones He loves that He corrects. And so when you look at a passage that speaks of one treasuring God's Word in their heart, and you say, well, that's not a reality in my life, then cry out for it to be a reality in your life.

Knowing that He is able to do immeasurably, exceedingly, abundantly above all you can ask or think. Memorization. I'll never forget, I was at Southwestern Theological Seminary about 150 years ago studying, and my preaching professor, who was a very, very kind man, very conservative man, he said, I don't want any of the students missing on Tuesday.

Tuesday, you're going to see one of the most remarkable things you will ever see. Man, he had our attention. We didn't know if he was going to resurrect Spurgeon and bring him into class or what was going to happen.

So we get there, and there's a little old man in his late 80s or early 90s, just sitting over there on one of the seats. They called roll and everything, and then our professor just simply said, Brother, come take the lectern. That man began to recite Scripture.

He did not begin to recite verses of Scripture. He began to recite chapters of Scripture, and it went on and on and on. Books of Scripture on and on and on.

And I remember after about 35 or 40 minutes of listening to this, I realized all of a sudden I was sitting on the edge of my seat. Literally, my body was tense and I was focused on everything he was saying. And I looked around at the other students and it was the same.

He wasn't preaching. He wasn't commenting. He was reciting Scripture, and it was so powerful.

And then as a demonstration for the last 15 minutes, he began to recite even wonderful hymns, poetry, Christian poetry, godly verse of men. And I noticed that within five minutes, I was once again sitting back. My focus was gone.

The intensity was gone. The power was gone. What a demonstration of the spoken word.

And what a demonstration of the need to memorize Scripture. You say, well, I just can't memorize Scripture. Well, join the club.

It's hard for most people to memorize Scripture. But then again, that's never supposed to be the obstacle, is it? Most good things are hard. Another thing that I want to encourage you about, encourage you with your children.

Many times, Scripture is just, okay, we've got this packet of Scripture we need to memorize. And people start memorizing these packets or teaching certain verses to their children. And it just seems to be kind of meaningless.

I'll tell you why. When you go to a doctor and tell him that you have pneumonia, he just doesn't throw a packet of all different kinds of medicine at you. There's specific medicine for specific ailments.

You need to memorize Scripture that has something to do with your life. Something to do with the problems in your life. Something to do with some of the sins that maybe are besetting you.

You need to memorize Scripture. If you're a person who doubts, you need to memorize Scripture that will give you courage and faith. If you're a person given to anger, you need to memorize Scripture that talks about peace and not to be quarrelsome.

One of the reasons why we memorize Scriptures and fail is because we do it so haphazardly. We're always trying just to follow some system. Instead of just memorizing what we need at that moment.

And going over it and over it as God applies it to our hearts. Memorization of Scripture. Now, another thing that's very, very big in Scripture, meditation.

Psalms 119.97, Oh, how I love your law. It is my meditation all the day. To meditate upon Scripture.

Scripture. Now, there's two ways in which we can look at this. One of them is just meditating as a daily activities.

You're driving in your car. You're meditating on a certain Scripture you've memorized. Being at work.

Maybe you work with your hands, whatever. Walking from your office to another office. Having a little bit of free time.

Meditating on Scripture. Again, to meditate on just Scripture for the sake of meditation's sake is no good. You meditate upon Scripture that you need.

What part of your life is hungry? That's the part of your life you need to feed. Now, there's another type of meditation that's very, very foreign to the Western Church. And it is simply sitting alone and being quiet.

And meditating upon God's Word. I'm not talking about necessarily crossing your legs and chanting a manta. But you will find how amazed you will be if you try to literally sit still for 10 minutes without speaking or moving.

You will find it almost to be an impossibility if you're an American. Or to concentrate upon one aspect of God's Word. Your mind will run in a million directions.

And there is a sense of learning to discipline your mind to meditation. I knew one man who said it upon himself that the verse that he would make a life verse of the passage would be Psalms 23. And I mean, he's literally spent most of his life, now he reads the Bible all over, but meditating much upon that one

psalm.

I mean, it's amazing to hear him go through that chapter. Starts out with, The. The Lord is my shepherd.

The. He can speak for probably 15 hours on The. Because he's the Lord, not a lord.

Every word of this. Spurgeon used to say about the Word of God, the dust of this thing is gold. And it is true.

I had a professor that told me one time, he said, Paul, I want you to be able to sit out in the middle of a field so quiet that you can hear a cricket crawling across the grass. Meditating on scripture. He said, that sounds funny to me.

It does sound funny to Western ears, but it's a wonderful part of our life. If we can make it a discipline to have everyone to be in such a situation where everyone and everyone is running around wildly and you can just sit, gather all your thoughts before God and begin to meditate upon things that are wholesome, pure and excellent. Things worthy of a child of God.

We go on not only meditation, but obedience, obedience. These are the three great words when we talk about scripture, memorization, meditation and obedience. James 1.22 says, but prove yourselves doers of the word and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

I heard a missionary one time speaking about speaking in Africa. He was in a tent meeting and he got up and he preached and he had three different principles that he wanted to teach that night. And after he taught the first one, a young man got up and ran right out of the tent not to come back.

Next night, the same man is sitting there again. He gets to another principle. The young man jumps up, runs right out of the tent.

He does this several nights. Finally, the preacher stopped him, said, young man, what on earth are you doing? He said, sir, as soon as I get in here, you tell me one thing I'm not doing. I figure I shouldn't stay around to listen to anything else.

I might as well get busy doing the first thing you told me to do. The need to obey what we hear. It's like the preacher who's preaching in a small country church and he looks back in the foyer because the doors were open and a thief comes in on a cold winter night, stealing everybody's jacket.

So he cries out from the pulpit. Hey, there's a thief stealing everybody's jacket. And everybody just, that's nice.

Amen. Finally, after the third time, he thought, well, I'm just not going to tell them. So they all go back after the service is over in their shop.

They go, pastor, where's our jackets? He said, I told you a thief stole them. They said, we didn't know we were supposed to take you seriously. We thought you were just preaching.

That's the way people simply turn themselves off. They turn themselves off as though we were up here for a poetry exhibition or something. My friend, this is truth and you'll be held accountable.

It might be wise for some of you not even to come hear stuff like this because you'll be held accountable for it. You'll be held accountable for it. So there's obedience.

Now, he says here in verse six, he said, these words which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart. Now, I want you to understand something, a pronounced difference between the old covenant and the new covenant. He is talking to the nation of Israel, which most people don't understand this truth.

And if you can get this truth, it'll help you. Israel was basically an unregenerated nation of people. God called out a nation by blood.

Not everyone who was an Israelite was born again, my friend. Not everyone who was an Israelite was saved. Not everyone who was an Israelite had a regenerated heart or displayed faith at all.

There was a remnant of godly people within the nation of Israel. So he is telling basically a nation to guard these things in their heart, to keep themselves from idolatry and the such that their nation might not be judged but prosper. If God can say that to a nation that's primarily unregenerated, how much more should we be able to hear this word? Because although there was a remnant that was godly in the nation of Israel, there is no godly remnant in the church because everyone who's truly in the church is godly.

Listen to what Jeremiah 31, 33 says. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord. I will put my law within them and on their hearts.

I will write it and I will be their God and they shall be my people. What he is teaching us here is he says, I'm going to do an entirely new thing. Moses gave you a law written on tablets of stone.

I'm going to take that same law and supernaturally write it on your heart and in your mind. One of the greatest problems we have is that we think God's always speaking in metaphor and poetry and that we're not really to take him seriously. My dear friend, when a person is regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit, born again, God writes his laws on their heart.

It is a supernatural thing. And the dullness of people who profess to be Christians today is a terrible sign that many who profess to be Christians are not. Now, let's look at verse seven.

You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. Now, I want us to look at this. You shall teach them diligently.

This word diligently in Hebrew actually means to sharpen, to sharpen diligently as with a stone. Now, one of the things I do, I love to hunt and I hunt with a bow and arrow, a wooden bow. And one of the only ways you can really kill something that's very, very large with a bow like that is your arrows have to be very, very heavy and your broad heads, the part that's metal, have to be extremely sharp.

The night before I go out to hunt hog or whatever, my wife will see me sitting there sometimes for hours, each arrow, each broad head, both sides, looking at it, holding it up in the light, testing it, running my finger across it, see if it'll cut the hair on the back of my hand. More and more refining it and refining it and refining it and refining it. Do care to every angle, making sure there's not one nick, one little place out of place can cause that arrow to fly, to fly wrong.

So very, very carefully. And when it says that we are to teach our sons diligently, it is that we are to do the same with our children. Now, folks, again, this is not a metaphor.

This is not just some pretty poetry. What he is saying is that we literally just need to be working constantly to make these children effective arrows in the quiver of God, doing everything in our power. You see, sir, just because you take your children to soccer games and to gymnastics and to ballet and to school and all these different things, it does not mean anything.

The question is, are you honing them and sharpening them with all your might to be quivers, to be arrows in the quiver of God? Are you working to give them this? You give them so much, but are you giving them this? And you can't hire someone else to do it. You can't. God won't allow it to happen.

Do you know how I know that this church is God's church? Not because of your successes, but your apparent failures is what is telling me this is really a work of God and has been for some time. Now, what do I mean by apparent failures? He's not allowing you to use all the gizmos and gimmicks that he lets other churches use in order to become big and important. He is zealously guarding you from those things.

He is not going to let you play the same games. He's invested too much. He's not going to allow you to do it.

But then again, if you go too far and keep your neck too stiff, he will allow you to run just like everybody else. He wants you to be biblical. He doesn't want a youth minister raising your children.

He won't allow it to happen. He doesn't want children church people parenting your children. He wants you doing it.

And he wants you to be doing it with such tedious care. Sometimes when I go hunting, I have to get up at three in the morning and walk through the snow. And I mean, I'm still up at midnight honing, honing, honing, sharpening, sharpening.

It's that important. How much more with my children? How much more with my children? It is not enough to just study for yourself, gentlemen, mothers. But it is to communicate these truths to your children.

Now, John Calvin says something absolutely wonderful on this. Just listen. Care and diligence are to be used and pains taken.

It's a painful thing. Sacrificial thing. Pains taken to instruct children.

Can you say that you have sacrificed a great deal to instruct your children in the Word of God? Your free time and everything else, you've sacrificed to instruct your children in the Word of God? Instruct your children as soon as they are capable. As soon as they are capable. What does that mean? They're just about capable from the very beginning.

I remember the first time my little boy, he just started crawling and he went over to my my surge protector on my computer has a light on it. He looked at that thing and I said, no, he looked up at me, put his hand out. I went through his hand back.

I said, no. Extended his hand again. Just like that with a finger.

No. Pulled his hand back. He did this about 10 times until finally he actually did this.

He went just like his mother. Bam. No.

You instruct them from the very beginning and you instruct them by non-instruction. But how much more as they get older? They know everything about Barney. They know everything about this and that and everything else.

But do they know about Jesus? You run them all over the country to teach them how to kick a black and white ball or to bounce an orange one. But do you give so much concern for their eternity as soon as they are capable and instruct them in the knowledge of God and his commandments? One of the things I hope to get out here pretty soon is what's called, now don't be afraid, a catechism. Baptist catechized.

Who made you? Simple catechism. God. Prove it.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. In his commandments that they are to love him, fear him, serve and worship him. This is to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

It is expressive of diligence and industry in teaching. You're to be industrious. You're to work at this.

You're to think up new ways to do it. Your whole life is to revolve around communicating the fear of the Lord to your children. By frequent repetition of things, by inculcating, which means impressing them, impressing things upon them continually in their minds, endeavoring to imprint them there.

Now, here someone stands up. I just love it when some secular person stands up and goes, that's brainwashing. Yeah, you bet it is.

I'm washing a brain that you're doing with all your might trying to contaminate. I'd rather be accused of brainwashing than brain dirtying because that's what's going on. You don't think they know television has your child program.

Everything has your child program and they are to be in the word of God. It is God's word. They are to hear.

He goes on impressing them continually into their mind, endeavoring to imprint them there that they may be sharp, ready and expert in them and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house and at the time of meals or at leisure hours or even when employed in any business in the house which will admit of it, every opportunity should be taken to instill the knowledge of divine things into their tender minds. And when thou walkest by the way in a journey and any of his children with him for or for diversion in garden field or vineyard. Now, I want to share something with you that demonstrates how wrong we can be.

It's when we make compartments out of our lives and out of our spirituality. We're very good at this. Let me give you an example.

There are different ways to teach a children to two ways if I were to generalize it. One is in specific teaching, family devotion, memorizing scripture with them, going through the Bible with them. But here's the problem.

We are so programmed to to make a department out of this that we basically say, OK, this is our lesson for today. And then after that 15 minute lesson is done, nothing more of the word of God. We do the same thing in our so-called quiet times.

Had my quiet time, got God out of the way. Now I can live. Also, I've been to church on Sunday, but now it's Monday.

Don't have to do that again until the next Sunday. But what the Bible is teaching us is something totally different. We are to have those specific times of teaching our children the word of God, of catechizing of other things, of impressing upon their mind the truths of scripture.

But then our entire walk of life should be a school of teaching everything we do every where we go. Somebody got shot a doe the other day in front of my house. She died right in my front yard.

And my son said, Daddy, go get her. She's sick. I said, son, she's more than sick.

Dead sick. I said, no, son, dead. She'll not get up again.

Ever. That night the coyotes came, cleaned her. Where'd she go, Dad? Play.

Man is like the flower of the field. So he flourishes and the wind passes over him. He is no more.

And the place where he existed acknowledges him no more, son. This is the state of men. We are dust.

But there is a God who can resurrect dust. And breathe into it, holy breath. Everything a teaching, everything a teaching.

And goes on. Matthew Henry says this frequently repeat these things to them. Try all ways, any way you can find of instilling them into their minds and making them pierce into their heart as in wedding a knife.

It is turned first on this side and then on that. Be careful and exacting in teaching thy children and aim as by wedding to sharpen them and put an edge on them. Teach them to thy children, not only those of thy own body, says the rabbinic Jews, but all those that are anyway under thy care intuition.

We should be. You see a child running around here. It ought to be an opportunity to tell them something about God.

Amen. Now we're going to close five minutes over. I want to close by saying this.

He says you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be frontals on your forehead. Many Jews take this literally. Even today in Israel, a little box is placed on the arm and it's tied with a leather strap and even one put between the eyes.

You say that is not at all what God means. No, it's not. We do the same thing.

Bands around our arm that asks us what Jesus would do crosses in our pockets and everything else. My friend, I don't want to be offensive, but let me say this. If it takes a band around your arm to remind you to be like Jesus, that would be a red flag for me as to whether I'd even come to know Christ or not.

If God living inside you is not enough to direct you into the places you should walk and direct you how you should live, I would be terribly afraid. And I know I know probably people here that have, you know, what would Jesus do on their bumper and everything? And I don't I'm not mad, but I'm just telling you, these are things that we just so accept really quick and people make a lot of money on them. But my dear friend, that's not the meaning that he has here.

It's not wearing Christian T-shirts. It's not putting some pin on your lapel so that everyone will know you're a disciple. Something much deeper than that.

And what is it? That word of God is to be bound to this hand. The hand represents activity. All the activity of my life ought to be brought into absolute subjection to the law of God.

Every movement of my hand, every step of my foot. That's why the high priest, the blood was placed on his earlobe. His ear would be holy unto the Lord.

Hear only what was of God was also placed on his thumb. Sanctify his hands, all his activity to be done in the name of the Lord in absolute subjection to the law of God on his big toe, because everywhere he walked, he was to walk according to the word of the Lord. And that's the whole point that he's saying here, that putting it between our eyes is that the word of God is always to be in front of us, always to be directing us, always to be guiding us and correcting us and everything else.

It is literally to be a thing that consumes our life. We are to be a people of the book. Every aspect of our life is to be directed by the word of the Lord.

Now, one other thing that I'd like to say, he says that you shall also write them on the doorpost of your house and on your gates. This means more than just Christian pictures in your house. This means more than just playing contemporary Christian music on the radio.

This means that that house of yours, everything in it and going out of it is to be governed by the word of the Lord, that it's to be built upon the rock of God's word and not upon the sands of psychological psychobabble. It's to be the word, the word, everything. It is just to be the word.

And so that's pretty narrow minded. Yes, it is. It is narrow minded, narrowed into the confines of God's will.

Because there is a broad way out there and many broad minds are walking on it and it leads to destruction. There is a narrow gate and a narrow way. And that narrow way is defined by a narrow book.

And it's called the scriptures. And we have got to begin to take this seriously more and more in our lives. We have got to because Joshua said, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Now, he just didn't make that bold statement thinking, OK, we will serve the Lord. Whatever that means. No, we will serve the Lord.

And he meant according to the scriptures, according to the scriptures. Father, I pray that you would use this word for the benefit of your people. In Jesus name, amen.

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