

Acting The Fool

Biblical Folly

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Given 22-Apr-00; Sermon #444

I hope you have had a good Days of Unleavened Bread up to this point, and hope that it will get better as it goes, as we head toward the Red Sea, as it were.

Some of you may remember in your high school or college English literature class reading the poetry of William Blake. This man had a religious or mystical side to him, and tended to write about religious subjects or things that were slightly spiritual. One of his works is called, "A Vision of The Last Judgment." I have never read this, but I did see one section of it that had an interesting line in it that caught my attention.

In light of today's sermon, what he said is, "The fool shall not enter into heaven. Let him be ever so holy." Remember, this was called "A Vision of The Last Judgment." He was talking about how God judges people, and he says, "The fool shall not enter into heaven. Let him be ever so holy."

Another line by another English poet, Alexander Pope, who tended to be a satirist and tended to look at life in a rather wry way, has become a proverb: "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." We will see that both of these quotations are true biblically when we understand what a fool is from God's perspective.

Three weeks ago I gave a sermonette on "April Fool's Day." Studying for it was quite eye opening, I thought. I knew there was a lot in the Bible about fools, but I was not quite so struck by it until I studied it for that sermonette. We know that there is a lot in the Bible about wisdom. God wants us to learn and grow in wisdom, and so there is a lot in the Bible about wisdom. One whole book—the book of Proverbs—is pretty much devoted to helping us learn wisdom.

The flip side of wisdom is folly, and so there is really just as much in the Bible about folly as there is about wisdom, and that is what struck me when I was preparing the sermonette. I have come to understand though that our general secular idea of foolishness is not the same thing as God's idea—at least the idea that comes through in the Bible. We tend to think of foolishness in terms of someone being silly. You know, the fool with the dunce cap on his head or the bells on his shoes in the king's court tends to be the way we look at a fool.

We also tend to think of a fool as being stupid, like he is one brick short of a load, or the

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elevator does not go all the way to the top. I have heard lots of those. One tomato short of a sandwich. There are lots of those different ones, but we tend to think of foolishness in terms of silliness or stupidity.

This is an idea, if you pick up a dictionary, (and it does not matter which one, except that it is of the English language) and it will say that this is the common meaning of fool—foolishness, folly, that sort of thing—that it means someone who is stupid, or someone who is acting stupidly or acting in a silly manner. But the definition of "fool" from the time that the Bible was translated in 1611, the idea of fool, has changed somewhat. Its original meaning even before then was "lacking in judgment or prudence."

This is far closer to the biblical way of looking at foolishness than our modern view of it: lacking in judgment or prudence; someone who does not see things quite right; someone who makes poor decisions because something in his thinking is wrong or lacking. So the original meaning is "lacking in judgment or prudence."

Today what I want to do is look into folly from a biblical perspective so we can get this idea firmly implanted in our minds when we read the Bible and when we come across "folly" or "foolishness." Really this subject is very apropos to the Days of Unleavened Bread because foolishness is leaven. You will see in here that foolishness is sin from the way God looks at it, and it is one of those things we need to purge from our lives.

This sermon will pretty much be a word study. We are going to go through the words in both the Old and the New Testament. That will be the organization of the sermon. There are six basic terms—three in each Testament—that we will look at, and we will hang some Scriptures onto that outline, and hopefully by the time we are finished we will have a complete picture of how the Bible uses the word "fool."

Each Testament uses three primary words for foolishness. The Hebrew and the Greek however put slightly different twists on these words. The Greek word for foolishness is different from the Hebrew equivalent by just a little bit of a twist. There is a little slant that they put to it that makes it a little different. We would call it "spin" today.

The Greeks put a little different spin on the idea of foolishness than the Hebrews. This is not unusual because Hebrew- or Aramaic-speaking men primarily wrote in Greek in the New Testament. So they took the Hebrew term, found the Greek equivalent, and then changed it a little bit to raise it above the level of what the Hebrews thought of. What this usually did was it raised the word to have a spiritual meaning.

There are certain Hebrew words that have a spiritual meaning too, but the Greek words tend to all have a spiritual connotation to them and be on a little higher plane, a little bit more intent than the Hebrew words. We will start with the Hebrew words because that will lay the groundwork, and we will work forward and up toward the New Testament terms.

The Hebrews viewed folly as a moral issue from the get-go. That is why I said the Hebrew words do have a spiritual basis in them, but not as high as the Greek terms, so a fool was not someone who lacked mentally. He was a person who lacked something morally. A fool was one who looked at life, but was blind to or ignored the fact that his actions had consequences.

A fool, according to the Hebrews, lives as if he is accountable to no one. He does what his human nature demands without counting the cost or thinking twice. He just does what he feels like doing. Maybe this spurs a thought into your mind about accountability, but how often in the Bible does God have to remind the Israelite that, "Look! You're accountable to Me in the end. Do what you like, but in the end you'll have to answer to Me."

There is one place at the end of Ecclesiastes where He tells the young people to go out and enjoy life, but remember that in the end you are going to have to answer for every one of your deeds. Now this is the concept of foolishness that is coming out, that a fool is one who lives as if there is no tomorrow and he does not have to account for his action in any wise, that life has no consequences. You could tell from just this that is a really a dumb way to live, as if there is no tomorrow, so it does have the idea of stupidity back in there somewhere. But the main idea of foolishness in the Old Testament is one of moral deficiency of some sort.

A person, a fool, can be the most intelligent man on earth though, and still be foolish if he does not consider his end. Even Solomon—the wisest man that ever lived, outside of Jesus Christ—had points in his life where he acted the fool. It even says in Ecclesiastes 7, about the middle of the chapter, that he acted the fool. He did not consider his end. He went and did what he wanted, and he found out, by the end of that book, where he says, "Remember, you have to account to God. So fear Him and keep His commandments. That's the whole duty of man." See, when you fear God, you understand that there are consequences for your actions. So even the most intelligent, wisest man humanly that has ever lived has acted the fool.

Like I said, each Hebrew word has a slightly different focus. That is why there are three different words; otherwise one word would do just fine. The first one means moral

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deficiency. (I am not sure whether this is "*iwwelet*" or "*ivvelet*." I saw it both ways. It is probably *ivvelet*, making the "w" sound like a "v.") It is the basic term that is used for this particular idea—moral deficiency—particularly insolence, rebelliousness, being quick tempered, impetuous, and having a stubborn insistence on one's own way. This is the mildest, the most basic of the three in the Old Testament, and it basically describes an immature character.

Are not babies like this in many ways—insolent, rebellious, having very quick emotion, impetuous, and stubbornly insistent on having their own way? My little baby boy Jarod is just like that. We have told him time and time again in this room not to go out that door when it is open, and he stubbornly insists on making a beeline for that door whenever someone goes in or out. Everybody here in this room has seen him do that, and it takes a wary member, (and I thank you all for watching out for him) who goes and blocks the door to make sure he does not tumble down the steps. That is how children are, and the rod of correction needs to drive it far from him.

Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness [*ivvelet*] is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him.

Remember, I said *ivvelet* describes the immature character, and this kind of person can be cured of this kind of foolishness by a few rough spots in his life. Some kind of correction can make him see the light on this and repent and turn him into a wise person. All it takes is a few consequences to come and bite him in the rear end, and he turns. He becomes wise.

The second word is *kesil*. It takes this stubborn insistence that we found in *ivvelet* and it intensifies it. *Kesil* describes the obstinate man who persists in making choices that lead to his own destruction. Let us make it even more general than that. It is a stubborn man who insists on making choices that lead to destruction. The reason why I want to put it that way is because often times other people get caught in his destructive choices, particularly family members and friends, as well as innocent by-standers.

Kesil is a stubborn person, one who persists on making choices that lead to destruction. He is not just stubborn to get his own way like the *ivvelet* type of fool is, he insists on a way that will harm him, or kill him or others. And this could persist throughout life. For instance, someone who smokes is a fool in this way—*kesil*. He is making a choice every time he takes a cigarette to kill himself. That is why they are called coffin nails and cancer sticks. You take a cigarette and you puff it down to the filter, and you put the potential for lung cancer and whatever other kinds of cancers there are—throat, lip,

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tongue—in your body. It is a carcinogen, or has carcinogens in it.

Who in his right mind would inhale smoke? You burn your house down, and the firefighters come, and six people go to the hospital for smoke inhalation. It is dumb. It is foolish. It is *kesil* to smoke. That is the idea here—making choices that bring harm or destruction upon oneself or others, and stubbornly insisting and insisting, and doing it over and over and over, and it seems like no matter how much someone tells you or shows you that such a thing is harmful to oneself or others, one keeps on doing it. Proverbs 1 mentions this type of foolishness. Wisdom is speaking here.

Proverbs 1:28 Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.

Remember *kesil*. Remember what this type of foolishness is: stubbornly, insistently, persistently insisting on their own destruction.

Proverbs 1:29-31 Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, they would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof, therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way [they will go down to destruction] and be filled to the full with their own fancies.

All their vices will fill them to the full, and it will kill them.

Proverbs 1:32 For the turning away of the simple will slay them, and the complacency of fools [*kesil*] will destroy them.

I just noticed another little tidbit of information about a fool who is a *kesil* fool. He is a complacent person. Now we have used that word complacent to describe a spiritual condition called Laodiceanism. A *kesil* fool will continue doing the things that will destroy him physically and spiritually. Wisdom says:

Proverbs 1:33 But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil.

This stubborn foolishness will drive a stake into one's heart if it is continued in. They will be slain, destroyed by their complacency. They are just happy the way they are, happy

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with the way things are going. They are complacent with their lot. They do not want to improve. They do not want to get better. They are very happy with killing themselves. "That's not wise," Wisdom says. They do this because they hate knowledge, and they do not choose to fear God. It is a choice.

Let us go on to the next term. We will be spending quite a bit of time here with this third term, *nabal*. I put these in a particular order because I wanted to increase the intensity. Kesil got pretty intense, did it not, whereas ivvelet was not quite as intense as that. But *nabal* is exponentially worse than kesil. Nabal focuses on the fool's inner disposition—his character—not just his actions. See, that is what the other two were all about basically—doing something rebellious, doing something insolently. Kesil was about doing something so stubbornly to the point that it kills you. Nabal focuses on the source of all that—one's inner disposition.

One can be a fool, be a kesil type of fool, be an ivvelet type of fool on occasion, but the nabal type of fool shows that there is something wrong deep inside, and it keeps coming out in one's character, in one's actions. This is definitely the most spiritual of the three terms, because the nabal fool denies God and will not consider Him, so morality and godly reason have no part in him. The fool denies God and will not consider Him, so morality and godly reason have no part in him. They have no standing with Him. He will not listen. There is something screwed up in his character that makes him turn away from God and any kind of morality.

Often such a fool is so bent in his character that he descends into gross immorality. Let us look at an example of this in II Samuel 13. This is the story of Amnon and Tamar. I want you to notice what Tamar tells Amnon, because it is very perceptive. Here she was a young beautiful woman, but she had some wisdom. Maybe she was the only wise one among David's kids. I do not know. But listen:

II Samuel 13:1-2 Now after this it was so that Absalom the son of David had a lovely sister [a full sister], whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her. [Amnon was from a different wife.] Amnon was so distressed over his sister Tamar that he became sick; [He was totally lovesick—the classic form.] for she was a virgin. And it was improper for Amnon to do anything to her.

Of course. They were half-brother, half-sister. Amnon decided he would discuss this with a friend, and the friend came up with this scenario, that Amnon would get David to come in, and he would get David to ask Tamar in to cook for him and to feed him, and

then he would propose the dirty deed to Tamar.

II Samuel 13:7-14 And David sent home to Tamar, saying, "Now go to your brother Amnon's house, and prepare food for him." So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was lying down. Then she took flour and kneaded it, made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes. And she took the pan and placed them out before him, but he refused to eat. Then Amnon said, "Have everyone go out from me." And they all went out from him. Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the bedroom, that I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them to Amnon her brother in the bedroom. Now when she had brought them to him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister." [Now listen to her answer.] And she answered him, "No, my brother, do not force me, for no such thing should be done in Israel. Do not do this *foolish* thing! And I, where could I take my shame? And as for you, you would be like one of the fools in Israel. [Nabal] Now therefore, please speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you." However, he would not heed her voice; and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her.

Amnon was such a nabal that he would not listen to her wisdom. It had no part in him. He was driven by his own desires to where he totally forgot that God, or even his father David, existed. He was so consumed with his own passion that he became a fool. He did not consider God, and thus morality had no standing with him. And Tamar said, "You are going to be one of the fools of Israel if you continue with this." She laid it right before him, but he would not listen.

We should not pigeon-hole nabal merely as foolishness that produces gross sins of the flesh. That would be holding nabal back too far, because it is much broader than that, much more complex in its meaning. Remember I said that it is the inner disposition, the character of a person, who does not consider God. That is important—the inner disposition, the character of a person who does not consider God.

In the Bible this is the state of the unconverted. An unconverted person may believe that God is. He may even be somewhat religious, but in his heart and in his deeds God does not play a part.

Let us go to Psalm 14. We will read the whole chapter here. These are very famous lines. We have a song to this chapter in the hymnal. By the way, this is so important to

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God that He included this chapter twice in the Psalms. I do not know if you are aware of it, but I believe Psalm 53 says almost word for word the same thing.

Psalm 14:1a The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."

Listen to how David then describes these fools who act as if God does not exist.

Psalm 14:1b-4 They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good. The LOORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside. They have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call on the LOORD?

It is like David says. It is just incredulous. "Don't they know anything, these people who are eating up God's people like bread?" And the answer is, "Evidently not." At least if they know, it is not penetrating. It is not making any inroads into their activities, into their conduct.

Psalm 14:5-6 There they are in great fear, for God is with the generation of the righteous. You shame the counsel of the poor, but the LOORD is his refuge.

That is the only defense that God's people have from the fools who act corruptly and eat them like bread because they do not understand. As much as we would like to talk to them and explain to them the wisdom of God, they are not going to hear, because they act and think as if God does not exist. There is no moral lever, let us say, that is going to convince them to treat us fairly and nicely, if it comes to that. Only something that God does would be able to save us from that sort of thing.

Now listen to what David says after contemplating this.

Psalm 14:7a Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion!

"Oh, that the kingdom would come!" I believe this is a prophecy of the Day of the Lord.

Psalm 14:7b When the LOORD brings back the captivity of His people, let

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Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad.

The fool acts as if there is no God. He does not know it, but he is totally corrupt. As the hymn says, "Their works are vile. Not one of them does good."

Paul quotes part of this chapter in Romans 3. He uses it to introduce his very long section on "justification by grace." What he uses is the part that says, "There is none that does good. No, not one." He is telling us that before God calls us, we are totally corrupt. Even though we may think that we have been worshipping God, we are deceiving ourselves, because nothing like that really occurred. We either deceived ourselves, or we were worshipping a false god until God turned something on in our mind and said, "Look, *this* is the One you should look to. This is how you've acted." Until our minds are open, we are fools, we are corrupt. We do not do anything that is really good; maybe humanly, but not from God's perspective.

This is the attitude, as we saw here in this Psalm, that causes "Christians" to persecute God's church and other Christians, and Muslims. And Muslims persecute Christians and Jews and whatever other religions there are. That is why there are religious wars, because these wars are contemplated and then put into motion by fools who act as though there is no God. And so David cries out for God's kingdom to come, because that is the only solution.

It is unfortunate, if we are not careful and conscientious, this foolishness can return to those who know God, and know God's way. In fact, I would say that it is another way of saying what causes the Laodicean condition. It is a return to foolishness, returning to the carnality before God opened our mind, and in many ways, as Peter says, it is worse. It is a dog going back to its vomit and a sow to her wallowing in the mire.

Unfortunately many people who were once among us and we considered brethren, are now out persecuting the church, not in a physical way, but all you have to do is check out some web site to see how much vile verbal usage is out there, especially attacking Herbert Armstrong. But when you come around to it, it is attacking anyone who believes what is right and truthful. I believe it is this nabal kind of foolishness that has led to the scattering of the church, because when you forget God, or act as if God does not exist, you descend into immorality. Immorality is Laodiceanism under a different term, and this type of immorality is nabal foolishness.

Let us see an Old Testament type of that in Deuteronomy 32. This is the children of Israel as Moses describes them in the Song of Moses. First of all, let us see what God

did for Israel. Obviously they knew God in some respect.

Deuteronomy 32:13-15 He made him [Israel] ride in the heights of the earth, that he might eat the produce of the fields; He made him to draw honey from the rock, and oil from the flinty rock; curds from the cattle, and milk of the flock, with fat of lambs; and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the choicest wheat; and you drank wine, the blood of the grapes. But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked: You grew fat, you grew thick [from all these blessings]. You were covered with fat; then he forsook God who made him, and scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

Now you cannot see it in that wording—"scornfully esteemed"—but that is a derivation of nabal. In other places it might say "foolishly denied the Rock of his salvation."

Deuteronomy 32:16-21 They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods; with abominations they provoked Him to anger. [We are talking about idolatry here.] They sacrificed to demons, not to God, to gods they did not know, to new gods, new arrivals that your fathers did not fear. Of the Rock who begot you, you are unmindful, and have forgotten the God who fathered you. And when the LORD saw it, He spurned them, because of the provocation of His sons and His daughters. And He said: "I will hide My face from them. I will see what their end will be, for they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faith. [They did not believe God. They did not do what was right. They were fools. They had lost their faith.] They have provoked Me to jealousy by what is not God; they have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols [their vanities, their worthless things]. But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation.

Is that not interesting that God says, "When My people get foolish, I will come against them with a foolish nation just like they are. I will fight fire with fire and let them see what they've become in their enemies."

Deuteronomy 32:22 For a fire is kindled in My anger, and shall burn to the lowest hell; it shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.

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That is God showing His anger at those who have forsaken Him and become fools, meaning that they do not live as if God really mattered. Is that not the state of the Laodicean? "I am rich and increased with goods. I don't need anything, not even God." So he lives as if God will not hold him accountable. Very interesting.

Here is another interesting use of nabal in Job 42. I picked out this one because I want us to see what God considers foolishness. This is a very fine judgment here that God makes.

Job 42:7 And so it was, after the LORD had spoken these words to Job [meaning all that between about chapter 38 and the end of 41] that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.

Remember, they have been in a long discussion about what Job had done, or what it was about Job that had caused God to smite him as He had, and Job kept saying against all the arguments of his three friends, "I haven't done anything wrong that I know of. This doesn't seem the way God is from how I know him, but I know that in the Kingdom He's going to want me, because I've tried to be good, I tried to do what is right." And his friends kept saying, "No, Job. There's something that you've missed. You know God punishes the sinners, and you know He rewards those who are faithful. And since you've been punished so heavily, there must be some terrible sin in you to cause God to react this way."

Now we come to chapter 42 and God says, "Look Eliphaz, you and your two friends had a totally wrong impression of Me, and you misrepresented Me to Job to the point where he did say, 'I wish I had never been born!' ". Very bad advice.

By the way, I wanted to add this, that God says, "My servant Job spoke right," which is interesting. Even though God, at the end of the book, says, "Job, didn't you realize I've done all this? Compare yourself to Me and you'll be in the right frame of mind." But Job's answers to his friends were right. Remember, it says right there in the first part of the book that he was blameless. God did not send these things on Job because he was a sinner. There was another reason. Actually God did not send them on him at all. It was Satan trying to get him to weaken, but God used it as a test to expose Job to something that would make his character stronger. So God tells Eliphaz and his two friends that they did not see it right.

Job 42:8 "Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams,

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go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly [nabal].

What they had done was act in a spirit of nabal—that type of foolishness. It is kind of interesting because the definition of a "nabal" person, as we have seen, is its inner disposition—one who does not consider God, and one to whom morality means very little. But here were three men who were talking to Job about God, but misrepresenting God. In their conversation was nabal. It is not just that they do not consider God, nabal foolishness is also misrepresenting or misunderstanding the way God is, and that includes a lot of us a lot of the time.

What they did was represent to Job that God was an angry Judge who squashed people for stepping out of line, and God says, "I'm not that way. I may be the Judge, but I'm a merciful Judge. I forbear a lot, and when I punish, it's after a lot of sin." Look how He treats us. He gives us enough rope to hang ourselves several times before He squashes us, and He often times does not do that. He just spanks us enough to get us to understand that we have done something wrong.

They also ascribed the acts of Satan to God. Satan was the reason why Job was devastated. That evil part of things was entirely Satan's doing. God was the One who allowed it, yes, but He put very strict limits on things, and He used it for Job's good. But they were ascribing evil to God in saying that God's motives for doing what He had done to Job were evil. It is basically how it comes across. Like I said, this is a very fine way of looking at this nabal type of foolishness.

The next example is in I Samuel 25. This is the example of Nabal and Abigail and David. I think it makes a good summary for understanding what nabal means. It is almost like an allegory. Nabal is a personification of this kind of fool. If you go through and read the story you will find that what had happened was that David and his men had camped right near where Nabal had his shearing place, probably near where he lived. What David and his men had done was protected Nabal and Abigail and his very large flocks and herds—his business.

When David asked Nabal for a little bit in return for this protection—he asked for what the people could eat—Nabal refused him. Abigail, who was much wiser than Nabal, says, "This isn't right," after she is told what David and his men had done for Nabal's business. I do not know for how long it was that David had protected Nabal and made him increase and really be blessed and prosper. So Abigail got together enough food

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and took it down to David and the men, and everything was fine between them. That night Nabal himself had a feast with his shearers, and it says that his heart turned to stone, and he died. God took his life. David mentions at the end of the chapter that God had judged basically between the two of them, and he had taken Nabal's life for the way he had treated God's servant.

I stuck this in there particularly because we have a lot of nabals out there who are mistreating God's servant Herbert Armstrong, and all that he did for them as an apostle; they turn around and treat him as Nabal treated David. They are unthankful, unappreciative of the truth, of the spiritual protection that Herbert Armstrong provided them through the truth. Remember it says, "Sanctify them by Your truth." The truth is our sanctuary. It is what keeps us and guards us, and that came through Herbert Armstrong. But now many of those who received his aid now want to give him no credit for what he did throughout his life. Instead, they mock him and deride him, among other things.

I just wanted to put that in there as an example of another aspect of nabal-type foolishness. One can be a nabal if one is not thankful for what God has provided, especially when it comes to providing a servant through whom the truth comes.

Now to the New Testament terms. These terms pick up just where the Hebrew ones left off, and all of them suggest that a person has misunderstood reality because he has failed to take God into account very much like Nabal. Or it means that they fail to see things from God's perspective. It is not just that they do not take God into account, but they do not look through the eyes of faith. They do not look through godly reasoning to figure out what is going on and what their reaction should be.

Remember I said nabal was pretty intense, but in reality the New Testament terms pretty much intensify nabal. It is like throughout the whole Bible everything keeps getting a little bit more intense, more focused on our spirituality.

The first word occurs six times. It is *anoetos*. Five times out of the six it is used of Christians—believers—where they are called fools or told not to be fools, and in only one time does it mean someone who is not. It means one who has a distorted viewpoint, one whose viewpoint is certainly not God's. This one, of all three of them, has the least moral connotation, because if you have a distorted viewpoint, it is pretty certain that the result of this distorted viewpoint is going to end in sin; but it does not necessarily have to be so. This type of fool just has a screwed-up way of looking at life, and it is not God's, because God does not look at life in a screwed-up manner. It is the least moral of the terms, although, like I said, moral shortcomings are certainly a result most of the time.

In Luke 24:13 is one example where Jesus calls two people *anoetos*. This is the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. I think you will see from this example why I said it does not necessarily have to end in sin, but it certainly could if it is allowed to go far enough.

Luke 24:13-17 Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened [meaning the crucifixion and the days in between, and then Christ's resurrection, and the women going to the tomb and no one was there, and Peter and John going and verifying no one was there]. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"

Jesus asked them what was going on, and they relate to Him to the whole story.

Luke 24:23-27 When they did not find His body [when they went to the tomb], they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see. [Now listen to Jesus' reaction to this.] Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

What He did here was saying, "Oh you foolish men with such distorted outlooks on life on what was supposed to happen! Didn't you listen to Me the whole time I told you it would work out just like this?" And so what He did, He took their "anoetos" [foolishness] and He tried to erase it by explaining to them from the Scriptures how the Christ was going to die and be resurrected, and go to the Father. He had to re-orient their distorted viewpoint once again. So here was a chance where they were foolish, but it was caught in time, so it did not end in sin. They did have some unbelief there, but it did not result in anything terribly destructive. He was able to catch it in time and turn it into wisdom.

The second word, used eleven times, is *aphron*. It literally means "without reason."

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"Phron" means the mind. The prefix "a" changes it into a negative—without mind, mindless, without reason, does not make sense. I am sure in the secular Greek this was used of a person who did not have any sense, who was very unreasonable, a person who acted as if he had not been given a mind. But like I said, the apostles took these terms and they twisted them a little bit to fit spiritual contexts.

Jesus and the apostles, when they used this term "aphron," used it to mean "without godly reason." It is not merely that they do not think logically, it means that they do not think logically like God does. This kind of fool fails to take God seriously, or conducts himself for reasons that God never gave. Maybe he is doing something that is marginally right, but he is doing it for reasons that God never gave. The Pharisees did this a lot. God gave certain laws, but they changed them enough so that they became burdens, and then they piled more burdens on the people.

They were acting without godly reason in these things, and so it blinded their minds for when Jesus came and gave them the true meaning. They were not thinking with the same godly reason that Jesus was, and that is why in a couple of places Jesus calls them fools. He says, "You don't have a godly mind. I gave you these things throughout the Old Testament for a reason of decreasing your burdens, and here you go and think along this other route that allows you to increase the burdens of the people.

Go now to Luke 12 and we will see the Parable of the Rich Fool. This is another illustration of this.

Luke 12:16-21 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, "What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops? So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." "But God said to him, 'You fool! [You mindless person who does not think like I think.] This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' [Now Jesus' summation here:] So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

There is the contrast. A godly person would think that the most important thing is to be rich toward God. You spend your time, your priorities building your treasure in heaven, as He says in another place. Well, this type of fool we are talking about here—this aphron type of fool—thinks that it is more important to have physical riches, and so he

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spends his time and his priorities all on trying to make more.

Here this man considered that he many years to live and enjoy the fruits of his labor, and Jesus, speaking for God, says, "How foolish to think that you have many years to spend all this on." A godly person would think, "I could die tomorrow. What should I have in my bank account—my spiritual bank account?" That is more important. So the achron type of fool is one who does not prioritize properly. He does not think in a godly manner.

In many cases this applies to all of us. Once in a while I am sure there are times when we forget God, thought carnally, and did things when we should have and could have thought properly, reasoned it out logically from God's perspective, and had done what was right. But we do not sometimes, and this is another link of course to the Laodicean, because just like in this parable, he thinks his wealth—his physical wealth (and maybe even his spiritual wealth) is enough. He is not thinking like God thinks, because God would always say, "Make that relationship even closer, not just be happy with the way it is now." Even if it were good, there is always room for improvement. God wants that relationship to be as close as possible, and a Laodicean is happy just the way it is.

The third term is most common and probably the most serious of all the "fool" terms in the New Testament. It is used eighteen times in its different forms. It is *moros*. It is the word we get our word "moron" from. Now moron we think of as a very unintelligent person, and so it was in the Greek. It meant a person without very much smarts. But the way Paul uses it, and the way others use it, is much more ethical and moral in its connotations. Like anoetos, *moros* describes one whose perspective is distorted because they fail to take God into account. It concentrates on not just a distorted viewpoint, but distorted judgment. Did you catch the difference there?

Aneotos was the fool who has a distorted view of things. *Moros* has a distorted view and makes distorted judgments because of his distorted view. Ratchet it up one step higher. That is why this is a much more intense term, a much more spiritual term, because it is not just the perspective, but the judgment of the person is bad. I want to put it just in a concise way. A *moros* fool's judgment is off kilter because he forgets God. His perspective is wrong, and therefore his judgments are wrong.

Let us go to Matthew 23. Here is another time when Jesus calls some people fools. He is speaking to the scribes and Pharisees here, and He is really giving it to them.

Matthew 23:16 Woe to you, blind guides, who say, Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is

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obliged to perform it.

Now think about this. What have they done here? They have made a determination, a judgment about which was more important.

Matthew 23:17-18 Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? And, Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.

Here is another determination that they made, another judgment. They determined that the gift is more important than the altar.

Matthew 23:19-23 Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. He who swears by the temple swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. these you ought to have done without leaving the others undone.

Do you see why He called them fools here? Not only was their perspective on things distorted, but they were also making judgments based on that distorted perception. They were misleading the people and at the same time enriching themselves and showing their greed, because it was the gift more than the altar, and it was the gold more than the temple that was important. They were fools because they were not judging righteous judgment. They were judging with their own distorted perception in judgment. They were judging something of God to be of less worth than something that would enrich themselves.

Christ castigates them several times in there for such things, calling something "corban" that is dedicated to the Temple rather than providing an inheritance, or providing for the upkeep and maintenance of their parents when they get old. So instead of providing for one's own, you give the money to the Temple, and that is more righteous.

Paul says later on that you are worse than an infidel if you do not provide for your own.

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You see, that is righteous thinking. The Temple can do without the gold, because who is living in that Temple? God, who owns everything. But if you have money to provide for your own, and you do not, then you are denying the faith. That is acting like a moros fool, where you have a perverted perspective on everything. And it is carnal, because our perspective is "more for me," not God's way which is "more for Him." So Jesus called them moros fools for leaving God out of the equation. And they were fools, when you understand what the definition is.

We have to ask ourselves, "Are we at anytime acting the fool?" Are we living at times without regard for God? I am sure that there are times when we consider God. We have reminders in this day and age with people wearing those "What would Jesus do?" shirts and bracelets and things. It is a good question to ask. If you are in a situation, what would Jesus do? That is trying, in a very simple way, to put God into our lives. I am not advocating those bracelets and t-shirts, but the thought should be there.

Here I am. I am being stopped by the cops for breaking the speed limit. How would Jesus react to this situation? Now Jesus would not have broken the law in the first place, but how would Jesus respond to a person of authority? How did He respond to the soldiers that came to take Him? Now if we want to think like a nabal, we put it in first gear and get out of there! But if we want to act like a godly and wise person, we defer, and we are humble, and we admit our wrong, and we promise, and do better.

Are we consistent though in asking ourselves, "What would Jesus do?" "What would God think?" I doubt it. I know I am not consistent in that, and I am pretty much "average Joe." I think just about everyone is a fool. Hopefully more seldom than more often, but I think we all slip at times.

Do we conveniently forget God when it is something we really want to do? Do we judge ourselves in situations from God's perspective, or on our own limited and oftentimes carnal point of view? "Oh, it won't matter this one time." I will leave it to you to answer those questions for yourself.

Let us close in I Corinthians 5 and just tie this in with these Days of Unleavened Bread.

I Corinthians 5:6 Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

Even a little bit of foolishness can affect our entire character. Even a little bit of foolishness can, over time, affect the entire church.

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I Corinthians 5:7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

See, we have been de-leavened through the Passover. First of all, I should say from our original justification, and then our Passover is sacrificed for us. He only did it one time, but we go through it once a year, and we once again become unleavened if we truly repent.

I Corinthians 5:8 Therefore let us keep the feast [this feast] not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness [and foolishness], but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.