

# Lessons of the Great River

(Below is a link to a very good YouTube video, about 17 minutes long, somewhat misleadingly entitled *Ex Mormon Gives Most Incredible Testimony EVER! Will Give You Chills*. It is indeed incredible, but not simply for Mormons. The speaker exposes probably the most common false “Christian” understanding. It is well worth watching, and don’t miss the practical step recommended to him by a preacher [that he subsequently suggested to his family]: Read the *Bible* [starting with the *New Testament*] as a child and God will show you its truth – there is great power in the Word of God!

This is profound and just what we seldom hear in most churches today – with the only logical conclusion being that it is not clear if many church leaders really believe in the power of the Word because too many preach and emphasize its importance to their listeners less and less!

Read the *Bible* as a child (God gives Grace to the humble) and God will show you its truth – there is great power in the Word of God! . . . this is the simplicity on the far side complexity churches too often leave us in and confused with!

<https://youtu.be/r0mckI8Xfl8>

(Whether you have time to read the following, or not, this video is well worth watching!)

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Many people live on the banks of the Mississippi River, stretching almost 2,400 miles from near the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico – some on high ground, like in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and others on the relatively flat middle and lower-Mississippi. In all cases, however, flood waters are coming at some point in the future.

Most people, along the Mississippi, seldom think about the flooding and are instead (as is the fairly common focus of most people) constantly looking down at their “feet” rather than occasionally looking up and out to the horizon. The great majority of people are “eating, drinking, and striving to be merry” while only a minority seek to prepare in one of many ways – based on advice of various “experts” and, more recently, many internet quacks and charlatans.

If they are wise, though, all these folks are going to start thinking and preparing with a couple of key thoughts in mind:

1. The river is going to flood and, when it does, it is going to be in control. We obviously can and should think and act intelligently in light of this great truth because the fact that the river will be in control is decisive and should be the primary thought in any preparation as well as all “in-event” efforts when it does flood. Yet, in spite of this truth, we still should not be inactive in the face of this “sovereign” threat and we certainly should not expect to be passive when the flood arrives.
2. The flooding consequences are going to be wide-ranging while, at the same time, very personal – it will be little consolation, when the flood occurs, that “everybody else is in the same boat.” We are wise to look at the likely personal ramifications and take to heart the best-known pre-flooding thought and research. For, just because the flooding is a sovereign “macro” event we don’t control this does not mean there are not, in it, “micro” and personal actions we can take to largely or fully mitigate its damage to us individually – everyone does not fare equally under similar circumstances.

“Well,” many will think if not say, “Since the river is obviously in control of the flooding I will just, when it comes, do the best I can in light of what you and I both know – the great river is in control. And in any case, as I look around the vast majority of other people are taking the same approach – not devoting and wasting ‘fun’ times thinking about the morbid and tedious plans for when it floods.”

So, when the inevitable flood comes, we again see people running around like a Million Stooges and picking through the pieces (if there are any pieces left) while a few greatly benefit from their

preparations. For there are certainly helpful and critical steps we can take even in the face of great events we cannot control – and these lessons are learning how best to cooperate with coming “acts of God” we do not control versus our tendency, when in the middle of these calamities, to either totally give up or foolishly try to resist them by doing the exact wrong things. In other words, while there are many happenings we have NO control over (natural events, certain accidents, some health issues, governmental actions . . . all we could call sovereign, beyond our abilities to control, events) this doesn’t leave us helpless, but gives even greater reason to think and consider, ahead of time, how we can “flow” and cooperate with, versus fighting, them.

And the crucial Lessons of the Great River we can learn about life in general (now and, most importantly eternally)?

- Life is short and the final, greatest and most natural sovereign event for EVERYONE is death.
- As we look around we see most people apparently unconcerned with this universal personal last event – many based on assurances from various "experts" and today, many internet quacks and charlatans, that this greatest of all life events can be successfully navigated without any meaningful prior thought and, anyway, what can we do if indeed God is in total control of it?
- The answer is that we can read His Book (His ONLY Book and Word) given us about this event and how to prepare for it to successfully be on the right side of this overwhelming and final flood.

In total contradiction to what God tells us in His book we will hear many say:

- “What can I do in the face of death? I know I can’t do anything so I will just put my head down, do the best I can in life, have the most fun I can and hope for the best – I can’t do more than my best” (but God says differently!).
- “Since God is in control and He loves everyone He should and will save the better people (and I am one of the better people).” (Strike 2).
- “I will spend a little time thinking about this, but since others have studied it more than me, I will just listen to and follow what they say. God’s Book is too long, subject to too much interpretation (see how the many experts even disagree), I don’t have time, I don't like to read . . . so I will choose the best expert and listen to him.” (Strike 3 in the one time at bat life gives us).

In effect, all of these false beliefs are based on a single great error – they REALLY DO NOT believe God is fully sovereign and, an element of His sovereignty is, that He has given us guidance as to the necessary preparations we must make now and until we die (or He when, at some point/in some generation, comes for those prepared) to be saved to the best of all possible outcomes from the otherwise worst!

Good church • Good preaching • The *Bible* . . . are helpful in this preparation – the difference in them is that we do not control the first two (good churches and good preaching are harder and harder to find), but reading the *Bible* is a Grace offered everyone – and, moreover, reading the *Bible*, and seeking God in prayer to understand what we read, is required to appreciate and benefit from the Graces of good churches and good preaching. We may not have control over the first two (and they do not always come hand-in-hand), but we do have control over our reading

God's perfect Word so that we likewise are responsible for reading it and seeking God's Grace of guidance in our doing so.

Yes, like the lessons we can learn from the flooding of the great Mississippi River, there are great Truths we can know about preparing in the face of all sovereign events – how we can, and must, cooperate with what is coming vs. failing to prepare as God has graciously instructed us!

(Don't forget to watch the YouTube video - it is great!)

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