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OUR FINEST HOUR

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As we close out the year 2021, and start 2022 let's keep the Lord in our memories. It's sometimes easy to let slip our commitments to Him. I encourage those who are praying for our nations, to keep praying through this season.

As we continue to seek the Lord, I pray the Lord reveals His secret to His faithful servants. Seeking to reap a great harvest as we draw ever closer to the Lord's return.

Stay strong and trust in the Lord.

Mark Johnson

29th December 2021

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THE LORD LOVES AND CORRECTS HIS BRIDE

JOE SWEET

If we are not heeding the rebukes of the Lord
we may have departed from the path

Turn at my rebuke; surely I will pour out My Spirit on you; I will make My words known to you.

Proverbs 1:23

The corrections of the Lord are given to those He loves, to bring us to repentance, to make His Words known to us, to receive a greater measure of His Spirit and a closer walk with Him.

And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."

Hebrews 12:5-6

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

Revelation 3:19

For whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.

Proverbs 3:12

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments (rebukes)

of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. ¹¹ Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward.

Psalms 19:9-11

If we truly understood this, we would be wise to ask the Lord for His rebukes, corrections and chastening.

Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but one who rejects a rebuke goes astray.*

Proverbs 10:17

(Heb. word for instruction, "musar", is defined as discipline; chastening; correction)

Corrections, chastening and rebukes are the path to life. If we are not heeding the rebukes of the Lord we may have departed from the path.

A Dream – Correction from the Lord

Recently a friend sent me a prophetic dream that he had received. In the dream he was standing on a grassy field that seemed to be like a soccer

field. There were about 15 people standing on the field and he knew that his wife was standing among them. However, he was frustrated when he kept looking at the people and could not recognize his wife. This was troubling to him because he knew she was standing there but, try as he did, he could not recognize her.

Suddenly he saw the Lord Jesus Christ standing to his right side. The Lord asked him "What are you feeling?" He told the Lord "I am very troubled and frustrated because I know my wife is standing there among the group of people, but I cannot recognize her."

"That is exactly how I feel" the Lord replied. "I cannot recognize my bride." The Lord went on to tell Him what was important to Him: "My greatest desire is that My bride would stand beside Me and openly confess Me."

The Great Commandment and the Great Commission

The Lord communicated His desire that His bride would "stand beside Me" and "openly confess Me". These two desires are found in the Scriptures: in the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment.

Matthew 22:35-38

To love God with all of our heart, soul and mind would mean that His will and His interests, not our own will, would be our highest priority; walking as close to Him as possible our goal. Jesus said in John 14:21 that the one who keeps His commandments is the one who loves Him. This Lord desires that we would stand beside Him as our First Love.

To seek Him first every day by spending quality time alone with Him and to seek to please Him as our highest priority throughout the day; that is standing by Him as our First Love. Is this how we are walking, or have we allowed our hearts to be distracted? Have we allowed other loves to eclipse Him as our First Love. If so, let's quickly repent and draw nearer to Him.

Secondly, the Lord desires that believers everywhere would be engaged in fulfilling the Great Commission; in openly confessing Him before the world.

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Mark 16:15-18

Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Luke 24:46-47

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Matthew 28:18-20

If we take an honest look at the church, most Christian congregations



are not being equipped to evangelize and do not even attempt to faithfully fulfill the Great Commission. Most Christians do not openly confess Christ to the world in an effort to evangelize or make disciples.

Fulfilling the Great Commission begins with having a burden to obey the Lord's commandment to "Go and preach the Gospel to every creature" and "make disciples". If we truly have the burden to evangelize and make disciples, this will drive us to prayer where the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit is procured. This is what the believers did in Acts chapter 4 after Peter and John were arrested, threatened and then let go.

And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the Lord and against His Christ.'

"For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Acts 4:23-31

Receiving the rebukes of the Lord results in an outpouring of His Spirit

Turn at my rebuke; surely I will pour out My Spirit on you; I will make My words known to you.

Proverbs 1:23

Isn't an "outpouring of the Holy Spirit" our greatest need today? It is! What will it take for this to happen? We must have ears to hear the corrections of the Lord and then turn (repent) at His rebukes. He said "surely I will pour out My Spirit on you; I will make My words known to you."

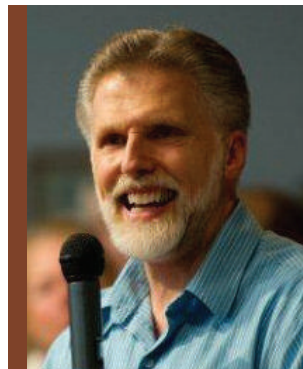
The dream that my friend shared with me contained two corrections for the church. In the dream, the Lord revealed what was important to Him:

1) We must put away all distractions and draw nearer to Him so that we are standing by His side, and
2) We must boldly confess Him to the world.

Can we hear and receive what the Lord is saying? If so, He will pour out His Spirit upon us. We will also begin to experience and abide in His love in a much greater way, resulting in the fullness of joy.

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹ "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

John 15:10-11



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The Incomparable Gift

SADHU SUNDAR SELVARAJ

Beloved, have you seen the Gift within you?
Have your eyes really seen the Salvation of God?

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift

2 Corinthians 9:15

For aeons, a wonderful gift lay hidden deep within the bosom of the eternal God. Only the prophets, patriarchs and a few individuals who walked intimately with God knew of this gift.

Why were the common men ignorant of the existence of this gift? Because this gift was hidden in God, who;

"made darkness His secret place; His canopy around Him was dark waters and thick clouds of the skies"

Ps 18:11

Those few who walked with God had had their souls saturated with the light of God. This light within their spirit, like a double-edged sword, pierced through the darkness and enlightened their eyes to behold the gift. The prophet Simeon saw this gift when he said, on seeing the baby Jesus.

"For my eyes have seen Your salvation"

(Lk 2:30).

And Anna too, upon seeing the baby Jesus, proclaimed to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem that this is indeed the promised Messiah (Luke 2:38).

Beloved, have you seen the Gift within you? Have your eyes really seen the Salvation of God? Or are you still sitting in darkness though you have embraced the light of the Gift (cp. Matt 4:16)?

What gift of salvation of God since you are already born-again, baptized in water and filled with the Holy Spirit? This gift is a deeper knowing of the Lord Jesus.

"For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness,"
2 Corinthians 4:6

Is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." What is this gift of light? A deeper



knowing of the Lord Jesus who is hidden in the glory of God.

The Lord Jesus told Philip, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father;" (Jn 14:9). There is a mystery of the Lord Jesus which is hidden in the glory of God. To those who are willing to seek for the Lord with all their heart and soul like the magi did looking for the Lord Jesus, angels will guide such true seekers to the knowledge of the truth.

The Holy Spirit Himself is a Gift of God (Acts 2:38). When you receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit, you also receive His nine gifts. Likewise, from the bosom of the Lord God, His Gift, the Lord Jesus, came forth (Jn 1:18). The Lord Jesus did not come empty-handed. He brought with Him the gifts of grace, truth and salvation (Jn 1:17; Rom 6:23). With these gifts, He reconciled man to God.

Like the man who buried his talent in the ground, is the Lord Jesus buried deep in the ground of commercialism, materialism and worldliness in your life? Your heart can either be filled with the light of God, transforming it into a Jerusalem, the city of God, or it can be filled with darkness caused by the cares and woes of this world, transforming it into a Babylon. How is the state of your heart?

"For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him" (Matt 2:2). This was said by the magi who came looking for the baby Jesus. When the magi saw the star in the East, why didn't it guide them all the way to Jesus' place of birth in Bethlehem? The Jews have been waiting for almost 4,000 years for the arrival of the Messiah. The star guided the wise men to King Herod's court so that the Jews could be informed of the birth of the Messiah.

Though the Jews had the Scriptures that states the place of the birth of the Messiah (Mic 5:2) and the confirmation from the magi, they did not go to look for the Gift in their midst. Why! This was because they were buried in the darkness of their traditions, fear of man and unbelief (Matt 23). Though the treasure was in their midst, they did not possess it.

Is your life, too, like that? Look at what the Lord Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: *"If you knew the gift of God ..."* (Jn 4:10). Do you know the Gift of God, or do you just have the Gift of God? Is Christmas just an exploitation of commerce? Is it just a celebration of the decoration of a tree? Is it just another time of the year to be merry?

The magi were not contented with the mere knowledge of the place of the birth of the King of the Jews. They pursued after the star. Just possessing the gift is not enough, you must know (pursue) the Gift into a deeper relationship.

One of the commercialization of Christmas is the showering of gifts upon one another. The magi brought gifts to the toddler Jesus. What did they bring - *gold, frankincense and myrrh*. As the prophets Moses and Elijah appeared to the Lord Jesus in glory and spoke of His decease which was about to take place (Lk 9:21), likewise the three gifts speak of the work which the Gift of God was going to accomplish.

Myrrh signifies the *death* which the Lord Jesus was about to suffer (Isa 53:8-12). *Gold* speaks of *holiness*. The Bible says that without holiness no man can see God (Heb 12:14). Sin alienated man from the presence of the holy God (Gen 3:23-24). Therefore, gold signifies of the reconciliatory work which the Lord Jesus was going to accomplish (2 Cor 5:19). *Frankincense*



signifies *prayer* or communion (Ps 141:2). Frankincense was one of the spices put on the altar of incense (Ex 30:34). Sin cut man from communing with God. It plunged man into the sea of peacelessness (Isa 48:18,22). Therefore, frankincense signifies of the restoration of communion between God and man which the Lord Jesus was going to accomplish (Eph 2: 14-18).

The magi brought gifts to the Lord Jesus. Have you ever brought any gift to the Lord Jesus? What gift should you give? Take the cue from the all-wise magi. You can give the gifts of:

1. Gold, by living a life of holiness and total surrender (1 Thes 4:7).
2. Frankincense, by giving

yourselves to prayer and seeking God intimately (1 Thes 5:17).

3. Myrrh, by offering your body as a living sacrifice to God and be willing to lay down your life as a martyr (Rom 12:1; Rev 12:11).

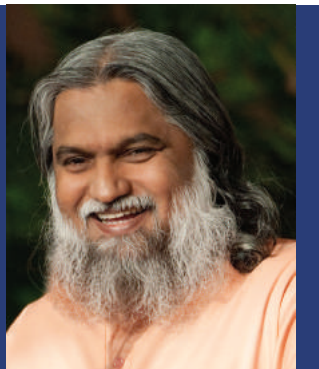
This Christmas season, pause and ponder what you are celebrating. Are you making merry of a festival or are you seeking on a deeper level the incomparable Gift that is within you? Are you presenting gifts to one another, or are you presenting yourself as a gift to God?

Make yourself a gift to the Lord Jesus. Give a gift that is precious to your heart to the Lord Jesus.

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AWAKE! ARISE! ADVANCE!

BOBBY CONNOR

This is the time to walk with a true goal aim and purpose,
not drift about in an endless circle

God is looking throughout the entire earth searching for the upright in heart; to them God will prove Himself strong and sure (see 2 Chronicles 16:9). The prophetic trumpets must make a clear call in these extremely crucial days in order to prepare a strong confident leadership (see 1 Corinthians 14:8). In numerous encounters the Lord has summoned me saying; "Sound the alarm!" "Awaken the warriors!" Prepare to advance the KING in His Kingdom!

This is the time to walk with a true goal aim and purpose, not drift about in an endless circle. None desire another forty-year trip around the mountain of misguided human efforts. The good news is that we do not need to wait nor wander any longer in the wilderness; it is time to access the Kingdom of God. Now is the time to move forward, establishing the Kingdom of God in power and true dominion authority.

The Spirit of God is preparing leadership by releasing upon them the anointing that rested upon the sons of Issachar.

They had understanding of the time and were aware of what the people of God should be accomplishing (see 1 Chronicles 12:32). The Spirit of Truth is releasing revelatory insights for all who are actively seeking to fully follow God (see Jeremiah 29:12-13). I was instructed that: "seekers would be finders, and finders would be sought!" Yes, God longs to release upon His people the anointing of wisdom; in order to respond to a world drifting in ever growing chaos and confusion. We need the tongue of the taught ones to know how to respond to the people that ask how do you discern and navigate these dark dangerous days (see Isaiah 50:4).

Let me stress again that the Kingdom of God will not be established by mere words or abilities of men, but by the Spirit of God (see 1 Corinthians 4:20).

This type of realistic confidence can only come from genuine union with Christ. It is abiding in His manifested presence that results in our boldness (see Proverbs 28:1). Never forget it is

the people that do know their GOD that will display strength and take action (see Daniel 11:32b). One translation states they we will do great exploits!

These days call for followers of Christ to stand firm knowing who they are in Christ and Who Christ is in them (see Colossians 2:9-10). God's Word declares that in Christ is the fullness of the Godhead and you are complete in HIM. Though and by Christ Jesus, we are unstoppable (see Romans 8:37). Never forget we are fighting from victory not for victory (see Isaiah 54:17)!

Awake, arise, and grasp your destiny; You have been chosen by God for God to function as a Priest and King in this critical time (see Revelation 1:5-6).

The Lord has issued an ultimate command. It is unmistakably clear – as followers of Christ we are to be bold, brave, and extremely courageous. Scripture declares in the book of Joshua:

"This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:8-9, NASB
The last phrase contains an overwhelming promise: the abiding presence of God. Keep this promise in the center of your heart: "...for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go!" This promise is repeated throughout Scripture and is the foundation of the promise in 1 John 4:4: "Greater is He [God] that is in you, than he that is in the world."

Our God is truly an awesome God! Prepare to behold Him in a manner not seen in our lifetime. God is at this time responding to the invitation of Isaiah 64:1, "Rend the heavens and come down."

As an athlete I never liked scrimmage or warm-up. I wanted the bell to ring or the whistle to blow and get the real contest underway. The time has come for the true conquest. The question is: Are you ready?

The Conquest
The conquest – the act of conquering – has commenced. This is neither warm-up nor scrimmage; this is the real thing, the main event. It is not time to hold back. Now is the time to give your all to the Kingdom of God. It is time to arise and advance.

With a spirit of excellence, you must be giving everything for the sake of advancing the cause of Jesus Christ. True Christianity is more about what we do than what we say (see 1 Corinthians 4:20). It is time for action not just mere words.

You are equipped to function in boldness and true authority (see Luke 10:19). You have been given an anointing, an unction to function, which is unstoppable; with Christ in control you are invincible. You are more than a conquer (see Romans 8:37).

Not only has Almighty God called you and I to be brave and courageous, He has commissioned us for these important days. We need to be prepared for conquest that brings about a swift and sure change. God's plan for His people is the plan of victory, not defeat (see Jeremiah 29:11).

You are called and commissioned to be a radical overcomer. Began to speak these promises over your life.



Joel 3:10 states the weak are to say they are strong. A good passage is Micah 3:8, "...truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord!"

Deep within the soul of every true Christian beats the heart of an overcomer. The word "overcomer" suggests winning after a hard struggle. We are to be strong, willing warriors. Never forget we are fighting from victory not for victory. Christ has won the victory; we just move into what He has provided.

Now is the time for the troops of the Lord to volunteer willingly (see Psalm 110:3).

We are to become history makers and world changers. God has determined the exact time of our birth. Truly we are in the Kingdom for such a time as this (see Esther 4:14). Never forget: the Kingdom is in you for such a time as this. Think about it. You had absolutely nothing to do with the timing of your birth. It's God's plan. Looking forward

to this day, He determined that you would be a great tool in His hands to fashion the Kingdom of God.

God has confidence in you. It is He working in you, both to will and to do His good pleasure (see Philippians 2:13). We discover in Luke 12:32 the Father's good pleasure is to give us the power of His Kingdom.

These are decisive days of destiny. God is calling each of us to arise and take our stand for righteousness.

You are extremely unique. Over seven billion people are alive on planet Earth, and guess what? Not a single person is like you. That is truly unique.

Yield yourself anew and afresh to God's Holy Spirit, be filled with power and purpose, and determine to make the most of these days of transition from glory to glory. Live to hear HIM say, "Well done good and faithful servant!"



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Coming! **READY OR NOT**

MARK JOHNSON

With what is coming upon the Earth, as Christians we won't survive without supernatural intervention. That is by design.

I'm often met with this remark; "we don't need to prepare, God will provide all my needs", or "we won't be going through the Tribulation, what are you preparing for?"

God does provide our needs, but here is the thing.

We live in a physical world and we have a physical body. Our bodies need to survive by, eating, sleeping and working to provide income to purchase what we need. We need to know how to navigate this environment, why? God has placed us here, in a physical body in a physical world.

Let's not forget, that our bodies are a living temple for the Holy Spirit. Ultimately the Lord wants us to be transfigured, just as He was, to move beyond this realm into the heavenly realm of the Kingdom of God whilst on the earth. Just as Elijah, Elisha and others have done. Until we reach transfiguration we have to contend with the limitations that this world has upon our bodies.

When we talk about End-Time preparation there are two groups or camps people sit in, those who prepare in the physical and those who prepare spiritually. There are the extremes in these two groups. The person who can disappear into the wilderness with nothing but the shirt on their back and survive, and the Enochs and Elijahs. These are the exception to the average person. My question is; why not prepare for both?

When I was preparing to speak at a conference, the Lord appeared in my room sitting at the foot of my bed. Speaking to me He said "stop separating the physical and spiritual realms, they need to become one. You need to operate in both at the same time."

The Kingdom of God needs to become so real to you, that it should become normal seeing the spiritual realm whilst being in the physical, continually! We need to change our mindset from separating the spiritual realm from our normal day to day living. You should be able to, at will, anytime, see in the spirit realm. Can



you do that? Yes you can!

Visible light is at a spectrum. Inferred light is at another, microwaves, radio are all at different frequencies. We can tune into those frequencies and pick up what is being transmitted. It is no different to seeing Gods Kingdom. How do we do that? By praying in the Spirit, focusing our thoughts and imaginations on the Lord.

Now bringing this back to the physical realm, as there is a spiritual principle I would like to highlight. Noah was commanded to build an ark and fill it with food. Genesis 6:13, 21.

That was what God required Noah to do. When we read on we see that God shut the door, sealed them in (Genesis 7:16). That was a supernatural event, after Noah did what was required of him.

Not only that, but Noah's ark was built like a submarine, no windows only a hatch. Being they were inside the ark for 365 days, how did they receive vitamin D without sunlight? The Lord supernaturally supplied all their needs.

We read another disaster event in Genesis, Joseph. After interpreting Pharaoh's dream, Joseph spent seven years storing grain for a coming drought. Why? To save the nation of Israel. The Lord chose a physical means to save the future nation of Israel. Preparing for hard times.

That's two events God chose to save a people using physical means. God gave foreknowledge of coming disastrous events. How were they prepared for? By physical means. Where else do we see the Lord giving foreknowledge of coming dark times; the book of Revelation.

With what is coming upon the Earth, as Christians we won't survive without supernatural intervention. That is by design. So you might be asking, why then should we prepare? Because it is a spiritual principle. Like tithing, the Lord requires we tithe 10%. But God

does not need our money, so why should we give it to Him? It is a spiritual principle, designed to help you!

Jesus fed thousands of people with 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread using the spiritual principle of multiplication. The disciples came to Jesus saying they need to pay taxes, but they had no money. Jesus answered them by saying "go fishing".

Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

Matthew 17:27

Elijah asked a widow to make him a cake with the last of the supplies she had.

And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.

1 Kings 17:13-16

Jesus turned water into wine.

Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. 9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

John 2:7-9



There is a pattern here. In each case there was a physical object (fish, bread, oil, fishing equipment) and by faith a miracle happened. In order to work a miracle there was an outworking in the natural first. If you don't have anything to give to God, how can He give back? Where is your water, fish, bread, flour, oil or fishing equipment. When we have something and give it to the Lord, that is called sowing. Sowing is a principle of multiplication, transformation. We prepare the best we can for what is coming, and let the Lord work a miracle.

How much do we Physically Prepare for?

The real question is "How much does the Lord want you to prepare".

The simple answer to that question is, "Prepare as much as you physically can, where God has placed you". We see this principle in the parable of the talents.

The servant who had received the five talents went at once and put them to work and gained five more. Likewise, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the servant who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money.

After a long time the master of those servants returned to settle accounts with them. The servant who had received the five talents came and presented five more. 'Master,' he said,

'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'

His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master!'

The servant who had received the two talents also came and said, 'Master, you entrusted me with two talents. See, I have gained two more.'

His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master!'

Finally, the servant who had received the one talent came and said, 'Master, I knew that you are a hard man, reaping where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what belongs to you.'

'You wicked, lazy servant!' replied his master. 'You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed. Then you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received it back with interest.'

Matthew 25:14-30

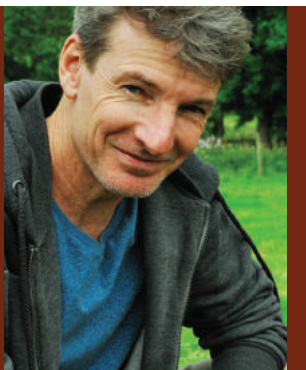
How much has the Lord entrusted you with? What resources do you have, where do you live (small apartment or acres of land), what job has the Lord placed you in, are you financially placed and most of all, we are all capable of thinking and learning. Learning is something we all need to pursue, learning both spiritually and physically.

When we come to the limit of our resources, let the Lord step in and watch Him provide for you where there is no way, Why? because you have been a faithful servant with what He has given you.

Let us all pursue the Lord, in the physical and spiritual realms, not separating them but allowing all of God's creation to work with us.

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He's Behind You

PART 1

ANDY TIPLADY

If it's in the Word we have to deal with it'

Introduction

In my last "Our Finest Hour" article, I suggested that the Anti-Christ, and his army, could be Islamic. I personally used to teach that the Anti-Christ would rise out of the revived Eastern Roman Empire, but I have come to question this and over the course of two articles I hope to share with you the reason for this, using Scripture to interpret Scripture.

On a side note, I have noticed how questioning traditional thinking can create quite a stir, and I suggest to you that this is actually very healthy. To quote a person I deeply respect, 'If it's in the Word we have to deal with it' and that is exactly what I'm doing here. We know the phrase from Acts 17:11 well, and to be good Bereans, we question the teaching and check that it's Scriptural! One translation of this verse reads: "And the people of Berea were more open minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message." The Lord is wanting to refine us all, teach us all, draw us into a deeper and humbler walk with Him and with each other. And that includes me!

I know for myself, a constant open mind to understanding Scripture is vitally important, and as I have said numerous times before, let us not simply adopt the teaching of our favourite preacher, however popular or eloquent or respectable they are. Together we have the mind of Christ, and together we can gain understanding of His Word. So, let's allow the Word to interpret the Word.

I have many good friends who I deeply respect, who believe in either a Pre- or a Mid-Tribulation rapture and some people are even teaching that we, the church, the bride, will be caught away (or raptured) at some point during the seven year tribulation. The Bible does not teach that.

Why does this topic matter?

You can say, well why does that matter? I believe it really does matter. Ministries who influence thousands are giving their congregants information that may be pleasing to the ear, but it is not preparing them for what the Bible says is to come.

Just look at the words of Jesus in Matthew 24 where He is preparing us and His disciples for tribulation. We are going to be hated for the Word of God, and our love for Him. There is a good old army saying, "Prepare for the worst, hope for the best." I would rather prepare myself, my family and my tribe, to go through difficulties, of both spiritual and physical nature, than not. Failing to prepare the people of God for the coming end time events, is setting them up to be offended, to be deceived and to fall away.

And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Matthew 24:10-13

Being unprepared for what is to come is setting ourselves up to fall at the final lap of the race.

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
Acts 1:8

The word 'Witness' in Greek according to Strong's G3144 is 'martyrs', (pronounced mar'-toos).

Perhaps our interpretation of being a witness needs to be revised to incorporate being prepared to be martyred for Christ. After all, the Lamb will have His Bride, who will be like Him in nature, and it is during the whole seven years of the tribulation, here on earth, that the Bride prepares herself.

And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Matthew 24:22

There will be believers/witnesses/martyrs throughout the seven year tribulation, during which time the Bride is preparing herself.

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.

Revelation 19:7

Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.

Daniel 12:10-12

Let's read and study it all, in context, without having preconceived idols in our hearts relating to 'my personal exit strategy'. If we are reading the book of Revelation trying to avoid the seals, the trumpets, the bowls and wanting to skip straight to the Revelation 21 onwards, then we have to stop and ask ourselves whether we are looking at this end time blue print in the wrong way. Let's remember that this is not about an exit strategy, this is about being witnesses for Christ and staying faithful to Him even amidst a time of deep darkness and deception covering the earth, and ensuring that we are amongst those who overcome.

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

Revelation 12:11

Who is this company of people that will overcome? Revelation 12:10 refers to the brethren, brethren in Christ, believers / witnesses / martyrs. Are we prepared to see this and be martyred for Christ? As I write this, many faithful



witnesses are being persecuted if not martyred for their faith in Christ. Why should the rest of the church plan to avoid this? Is this attitude helping us to take on the nature of the Lamb, our future Bridegroom King?

Again, confirming the words of Daniel, many shall be purified, made white, and refined throughout the final 1260 days.

Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

Revelation 19:9

So contrary to popular thought, **what if** the Bride is **not** removed from this world during the final seven years.

If the Bride has already been taken, why are they crying out, with the Holy Spirit, for the Lord to come.

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"

Revelation 22:17

The Fifth Seal tells us that the martyrs that John sees, come **out of** the Great Tribulation. What if I am asked to be one of the martyrs when the fifth seal is broken, to be a witness for my Lord who died for me? I would rather be prepared in my heart now for that event if I am asked to do that. When Christians realise that contrary to their beliefs, they won't be taken out, disappointment, despair, fear and hearts growing weak could become a common occurrence. This teaching will have hundreds of thousands of believers unprepared for these end days both physically and spiritually.

Being a watchman on the wall is not just about spiritual warfare, prayer and intercession, it is about raising the alarm, seeing and perceiving, and preparing the people for what is to come.

So let's study the Word for ourselves, it is so important that God's people are prepared for what's to come. Another rule of thumb I believe, is to shout what the Scripture shouts, whisper where the Scripture whispers, and tread very carefully where the Scripture is silent.

Is Rome the Legs of Iron?

Common teaching on Daniel 2 interprets Nebuchadnezzar's statue as follows:

- Head of Gold is the Babylonian Kingdom
- Chest and Arms of Silver is the Mede and Persian empires (two arms)
- Belly and Thighs of Bronze. Daniel later tells us in Chapter 7 who the first three kingdoms are and this one is Greece through Alexander the Great
- Legs of Iron must be Rome. Even though Daniel tells us in Chapter 11 where this kingdom arises from, most people are taught this kingdom is Roman. The Bible however does not tell us that. It tells us the legs of iron are not Roman, but out of the Seleucid Kingdom of the North. Modern day Turkey, Macedonia, and Syria.

*"And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, [that kingdom] will break in pieces **and crush all the others.**"*

Daniel 2:40 NKJV

As I've stated before, the Bible interprets the Bible. So here we have just that. Putting the Word and History together, from this passage and this verse, points to the fact that the Forth Kingdom cannot be Rome. Why do I say that? It states from this verse



that the Fourth Kingdom, spoken here by Daniel, crushes all the other three kingdoms. Rome never crushed Babylon – modern day Iraq: it never conquered Persia and the Medes – modern day Iran. Rome also adopted many of the Greek culture and religion and made it their own. Rome never ‘crushed’ the Greek empire. They copied it. Just look at the ancient map of the Roman Empire. You can see it never got as far as Babylon or Persia. You could argue that Trajan, 98 -117 AD, did. However, he died whilst on campaign after only a few months and Rome withdrew under Emperor Hadrian. They never crushed these areas. The saying “...the Parthian shot” came from this period as Rome could never defeated the Parthians. Look it up.



However, there is one Empire that crushed these areas, and only one. Look at the map below, and this map does not include the Ottoman Caliphate.



They crushed, as described in Daniel all the other three kingdoms. Rome never did. This is what the Bible says, through Daniel and others passages,

I've included.

We also must follow the chronological pattern, or order, of these empires coming down through History. All follow each other. Trying to shoehorn the Roman Empire to follow the Greek Empire does not fit. Again, this is a misconception and a lack of understanding of History, but commonly taught.

Let's follow this pattern that each nation up until the legs of iron follow in chronological order:

The Babylonian Empire; The Medes and Persian Empire, but one will be greater than the other (Dan 7:5); then the thighs of Bronze being the Greek nation through Alexander the Great.

So, if we are to follow this pattern chronologically, the 'legs of iron' simply cannot be the Roman Empire. Daniel tells us this so clearly in Daniel 7:6. When Alexander the Great died his kingdom was divided into four kingdoms, from predominately four to five, and you could argue six, families. Applying the principal and pattern of continuity, the four kingdoms were:

1. Seleucus I Seleucid Kingdom – Mesopotamia and Central Asia
2. Ptolemy I Ptolemaic Kingdom – Egypt
3. Lysimachus' Pergamon Kingdom – Thrace and parts of Asia Minor
4. Cassander's Macedon Kingdom – Macedonia and Greece

Daniel then tells in Chapter 11, through the power struggles that happened over the next 150 years, two kingdoms come out with all the power: the Northern Kingdom, which is the Seleucid Empire; and the Southern Kingdom, namely the Ptolemaic Empire. This is where the continuity



flows in pattern with the statue in chronological order, historically and Biblically. Just read Daniel 11. It's an incredible chapter of prophecy. Antiochus IV Epiphanes from the Seleucid Empire, from 175BC to 164BC merges in control of this Northern Kingdom. He is a type and shadow of the Anti-Christ who will emerge out of this kingdom. The Seleucid Kingdom comes out of modern-day Turkey, Macedonia, and Syria.

Alexander the Great representing the thighs of Bronze, died in 323BC, following the rule of continuity, we can see that clearly that two of his surviving kingdoms are there 148 years later. The annexation of Greece by Rome did not happen until 146BC. However, Rome also had to defeat a major power before this. There was a Kingdom that almost destroyed Rome before they truly came into power and that was the Carthaginians or Punic Empire.

The three wars are known as the Punic or Carthaginian Wars (264 – 146BC). Every boy would have heard the story about Hannibal and his Carthaginian army invading Italy by taking his Army with elephants over the Alps and attacking the Romans. He was never defeated by the Romans whilst fighting in Italy. He even reached the walls of Rome. He comprehensively defeated a Roman army at The Battle of Cannae in 216BC where it is estimated one-fifth of Roman men of fighting age were killed. Hannibal was finally defeated by Scipio Africanus at the Battle of Zama in around 202BC. However, the Carthaginian nation was not defeated until their final demise and collapse at the Third Punic War from 149BC – 146BC. It was only at this date that we see the total dominance of the Roman Empire in the Mediterranean basin.

If we do our Maths, starting with the death of Alexander the Great in 323BC to the total dominance of the Roman

Empire in 146BC we have a gap of 177 years. We have a problem here, since this does not fit in historically to the pattern of chronology, from the Statue of Daniel 2 with the Babylonian Empire, leading to the Mede/Persian Empire and on to the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great. The legs of iron can only follow on chronologically by one of the Kingdoms that followed Alexander the Great, and the only one that dominated all other three is the Seleucid Kingdom, the Northern Kingdom as mentioned by Daniel 11. It's the only one that fits. And from this Kingdom we eventually see this Kingdom followed by the four Caliphates only ending in 1923, of the Ottoman Empire, which so happens to be from the same area of the Seleucid Kingdom.

Daniel is clearly telling us that it is out of this revived Kingdom that the Anti-Christ will come from, which is modern day Turkey, Macedonia, and parts of Syria. Rome being the Legs of Iron just does not fit historically, chronologically, or biblically. Rome did not come into dominance until one hundred and seventy-seven years later in 146BC. Another problem with this theory is that the dominance of the Carthaginians was before the dominance of the Roman Empire, of the Mediterranean basin. History tells us that.

Clearly Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Daniel, Isaiah and especially Zechariah 12-14 states the Anti-Christ comes in as an invading army where the women are raped, two thirds of all Jews living in Israel will die. But hey-ho, we in the western church will be alright because due to popular teaching, we're out of here, caught away, raptured, taken out from the earth to a lovely wedding banquet that will be held in heaven behind closed doors.

This thought process is almost verging on anti-Semitic in nature. What we gentiles are saying is, we will be alright



and out of here, leaving behind our Jewish brothers and sisters who are going to be raped, murdered, and slaughtered. The goats and the sheep are separated based on their treatment of 'my brethren', (Matthew 25:40 NKJV).

We need to get a different perspective, and realise that the coming days are going to be hard for us all, both Jew and Gentile, both in the Western world and the Middle East. Remember, there are nations that will side with the Anti-Christ and they will experience the wrath of the Lamb. And the nations who oppose the Anti-Christ on the basis of their standing with Israel will experience the wrath of the Anti-Christ. We are all going to experience wrath, just you need to decide who's it is.

We certainly are not appointed to suffer wrath of God, but to receive deliverance, preservation, safety and salvation. Let's not fall foul at the last lap of our race, let's not even err into a form of replacement theology.

Also, Zechariah tells us where this gentile Anti-Christ army will come from.

*"Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness **to all the surrounding peoples**, when **they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem**"*

Zechariah 12:2

The 'am sabib', the surrounding

people. The scriptures clearly point to where this army comes from and I'm sorry to disappoint those biblical scholars out there, it's not a revived Roman Empire.

It's almost like we in the west stand on the western shores of Turkey staring intently into Italy and Europe, watching, waiting for the Anti-Christ to appear, totally ignoring what's going on behind us in the Middle East. I heard from my wife today, about a prominent Jewish believer living in Israel, supporting the credibility of a European/Western Anti-Christ emerging from the revived Roman Empire, quoting, "why would the Jewish people welcome a Muslim to the Temple Mount?" In other words, he is stating that, "The Anti-Christ will come from Europe, and everyone knows that!" However the Prophets are clear that he comes to Israel in war, and he will not be welcomed by the Israeli people.

I will continue this in Part 2 where I will show you how the Scriptures lay out for us the area/areas the Anti-Christ and his initial army will emerge from and attack Israel.

Like all good Bereans, from Act 17:11, we must study the Word for ourselves and come to our own conclusions. It's imperative we do this as we will be seeing these events start to play out in front of us, so we, like Moses and Aaron, will be witnesses for the Lord, and prophesy these events to a people who are not yet saved. When we are able to tell people the events that are happening, the events yet to come, then it gives them a choice to repent and turn to the soon returning King of all kings.

Exciting times are just around the corner for those who are prepared and who know the times and season that we are in.

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