

Peace and Safety

Recently, while returning from a lengthy trip, like a lightning bolt from the heavens, these words streaked across my mind, "Peace and Safety!"

I had just been reflecting on President Bush's bewildering suggestion that Russia should not be considered an adversary of the Western world when my thoughts were interrupted with the above words, "Peace and Safety". Obviously, the political restructuring of the Eastern Bloc and the crumbling economy of the Soviet Union have visibly lessened the threat of a nuclear holocaust, yet does it mean we must lower our guard politically and spiritually? Can the heart of a godless system change so quickly? Could it be that the political environment of this hour is described by the scriptures?

"Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. WHILE they are saying, PEACE AND SAFETY! Then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:1:1-3).

It is clear by the scriptures, when people are saying, "Peace and Safety", then suddenly the day of the Lord will come. The church must not allow itself to be lured into lethargy and drugged into drowsiness. It must be awakened to the season the day of the Lord. Now is the time to take advantage of the world's political uncertainties and advance the kingdom of God. The crossing of international borders is easier now than six months ago. Joel writes, "Blow the trumpet in Zion and the sound the alarm in my holy mountain!" The church needs to be alerted to the opportunities to "preach the gospel to the ends of the earth!"

Presently there are two diverse major movements traveling on parallel lines, which are identified in 2 Thess. 2:1-14, the movements of deception and deliverance.

Consider: The lawless one "whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with ALL DECEPTION OF WICKEDNESS for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. And for this reason God will send upon them a DELUDING INFLUENCE so that they might believe what is false..."

THE LAWLESS ONE will be destroyed by the breath of God at His coming (Parousia).

Consider: "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

THE BELOVED BRETHREN has been chosen for salvation at His coming (Parousia).

Two streams flowing through time, but with different endings, one of eternal ruin and loss, and the other eternal life and glory. Each movement existing at the same time, just prior to the coming of the Lord. Which stream do you choose to be in? Is it going to be destruction or deliverance?

The "mystery of lawlessness" can be characterized by DECEPTION. The spirit of the world is deceiving the masses with the words, "Peace and Safety, Peace and Safety." Satan is the archrattitioner of hypnosis and has skillfully inserted this practice into his scheme to delude the minds of millions. The church must not listen to this music of deception, but reject it with the word of God.

Paul was fearful for the embattled church of Corinth when he penned these words, "But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3). Can you imagine a church with all the gifts of the Spirit being mentally led astray by the crafty serpent, Satan? Paul recognized that possibility and sternly warned them. Every spiritual gift must be tested by the word of the Lord. Satan has historically duplicated the spiritual gifts listed in 1 Cor. 12; therefore the anointed word remains as the final test of authenticity.

If there is a major stream of deception flowing throughout the world now, and there is, should not the church begin to desire for the "gift of discernment" seriously? The gift of discerning can distinguish between good and evil, the Holy Spirit and the evil spirit, the truth and the false.

The Corinth Church had to deal with disguised apostles, who were deceitful workers, and disguised angels, even Satan himself. (2 Cor. 11:13, 14). The Present Truth Church must still do the same. If savage wolves penetrated the perimeter of the Ephesian Church (Acts 20:29), then we too must be on guard for our churches. The false workers are disguised and dangerous! They are disguised with honey-combed doctrines that tickle the ears of the people until they are hypnotized and then later victimized. Awake Zion, and know them that labor among you!

There could be a Simon, the magician, among you, who is baptized and seemingly seeking the Lord (Acts 8) or there could be an Elymas, appearing to be wise and influential, opposing your witness (Acts 13). Do as Peter did! Do as Paul did! Having discerned their hearts, they un-movingly confronted the issue and stabilized the victory of Christ in the midst of the people of God.

Paul says, "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day (of the Lord) should overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober" (1 Thess. 5:3-6).

I stand firmly on this promise: the church, composed of the sons of light, will not be drawn into the deluding influence of darkness, but will in turn quench the schemes of the devil (Eph. 6:11).

WHAT EVENTS TAKE PLACE AT THE COMING (Parousia) OF THE LORD?

1. "...He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints" (1 Thess. 3:13).
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2. "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23).
3. "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep" (1 Thess. 4:15).
4. "For just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be" (Mt. 24:27).
5. "And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming" (2 Thess. 2:8).
6. "Where is the promise of His coming?...But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:4,10).

The above scriptures describe six special happenings that take place upon the coming of the day, or on the day of the Lord. In each scripture the Greek word "parousia" is translated into the English as "coming."

1. Hearts are made unblamable in holiness.
2. The spirit, soul and body are preserved without blame.
3. The righteous are raised and changed to be caught up together.
4. The Son of Man's appearance is compared to lightning.
5. The lawless one will be slain by the breath of God.
6. The heavens will pass away and the elements will melt.

The child of God is not destined for wrath, but rather for salvation and deliverance (1 Thess. 5:9). It is apparent, according to the above scriptures, the church of the living God will remain public, powerful and alert in the day of the Lord. Present theology has clouded the time sequences of the quoted scriptures. My encouragement is to put your hand to the plow and not look back; to forget those things that are behind and press forward toward the goal of the high calling of God; to be about the Father's business; to be alert at all times; to expect opposition, but defeat it by the delivering power of the cross of Christ; to stay visible as a son of God and the light; to search for the lost and not for a cave; and to witness continuously of the saving grace of the Lord Jesus.

Is it important to discern the Body of Christ? Yes!

Is it important to discern the times and seasons? Yes!

WHAT TIME IS IT?

"And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled". (Luke 21:24)

This tick on God's clock of the ages took place on June 6, 1967, when for the first time in over two thousand years; Israel took full control of Jerusalem. It has been recorded in history as the "Six Day War." Therefore, the following events must take place after this date. Let us list the "ticks" on God's clock since that time and you be the judge of where they are to be placed historically.

(tick) 1. "There will be signs in sun and moon and stars..."
The space program of Russia and U.S.A. should be considered.

(tick) 2. "And upon the earth dismay among nations..."
The nations of the world are bewildered and confused.

(tick) 3. Nations "in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves."
Perplexity means problems without resources of answers. Consider the population explosion, race, economics, and aids: Are there any answers available today for these problems? Frustration is evident as the roar of the sea and the foam on the beach.

(tick) 4. "Men fainting from fear..."

Fear is running rampant and people are weakening on every hand.

(tick) 5. "The expectation of the things which are coming upon the world."

Educators are predicting awesome and dreaded events in the future.

(tick) 6. "For the powers of the heavens will be shaken..."

This is agreement with Hebrews 12:26. The spiritual world must be shaken!

SIX TICKS ON GOD'S CLOCK have been listed. Where does the year of 2009 fit on God's calendar? I pray that revelation would flood every reader's mind and they would straighten up and lift up their heads, because of the nearness of the redemption of the Lord. God, His orchestra, His army, His saints are poised in heaven, ready to burst through the sky in destruction and deliverance. Will you mentally picture this awesome event?

The Lord will descend from heaven with a shout.

The cry of command to arise from the dead!

The trumpet of God will sound.

The signal of the battle charge!

The voice of the archangel.

The shout in the midst of great conflict!

The outcome of this climatic conflict is described by Apostle John:

"And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean were following Him on white horses. And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone" (Rev. 19:11-21).

Paul and John, in their personal revelation, wrote about the demise of the beast, who was the lawless one, and the false prophet, who wore religious clothes, and the great victory of the KING OF KINGS AND THE LORD OF LORDS, JESUS CHRIST!

THE THIRD PART (The remnant of God)

"For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons (huios) of God" (Ro. 8:14).

In the family of God there are various levels of maturity. The last generation that is present at the time of the Lord's coming also has its mature ones. These are the remnant of God who will take action and do exploits in the name of our God, Jesus!

After prophesying of the crucifixion of Jesus, Zechariah writes, "And it will come about in all the land, declares the Lord, that two parts in it will be cut off and perish; but the third will be left in it.

And I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say they are My people, and they will say, The Lord is my God" (Zech. 13:8, 9).

The third part that passes through the fire is to be refined as silver and tested as gold. This process separates the impurities from the metal. The third part, or the remnant of God, is those who are being led by the Spirit of God to perform His will upon the earth.

The prophet Daniel was instructed to seal up "the book" until the time of the end. At that time many would go to and fro, or back to the book, and knowledge would be increased. This is revelation knowledge and not necessarily secular knowledge. The promise is directed at those who have insight into the will of God. "The many" that go back to the book will be "purged, purified and refined" in order to complete the mission of the gospel in the earth.

Purged is to be cleansed and polished.

Purified is to be made white.

Refined is to be separated from impurities.

The church without spot or wrinkle or any blemish (Eph. 5:27) is God's perspective at His coming. The Holy Spirit has been commissioned to outwork the victory of the cross in every believer (St. Jn. 16:13-15), having become submissive to the will of God.

The Prophet Malachi, looking forward to His coming, asked these questions: Who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? Then Malachi describes the Lord as being a REFINER'S FIRE and like FULLERS' SOAP! The fire is for the inward man and the soap for the outward man. The first deals with what we are and the second deals with what we do. Righteousness must be within and without!

This dual righteousness must first be manifested through the ministry. "And He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness" (Mal. 3:2, 3). Levities represent the ministry. They are to be clothed with "linen garments" (garments of righteousness provided in the atonement work of Jesus Christ), "linen turbans" (Miter that reads: holiness to the Lord- a mental righteousness) and they are not to wear garments of wool, or material that would make them sweat. Sweating in the presence of God corresponds to our own works and efforts to satisfy the heart of God. Before the body of Christ can attest to the fulfillment of Eph. 5:27, the ministry must have passed through the fires of purification and the cleansing of the fullers' soap.

THE ARMY OF GIDEON

After the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, he blew a trumpet and called the people of his area to follow him. Trumpet blowing time? Yes, the trumpet of the Lord must be sounded to awaken and gather the people of God together for battle. 32,000 initially responded to the call, but 22,000 returned back to their home because of fear. 300 were chosen from the 10,000 remaining people to attack and drive out 132,000 Midianites and Amalekites. The 300 represents the "third part!" God fights battles in peculiar ways and this one highlights that fact. God has used choirs, thunder, fear, hail stones, a boy, disease, a Red Sea, a shout trumpets and breaking pitchers to defeat armies. Great is our God and mighty is His works. Gideon divided his army of 300 into three equal parts, spacing them around the 132,000 marauding soldiers, blowing the trumpets and breaking the pitchers, all the while shouting the battle cry. On that fatal midnight, the Midianites and Amalekites in the confusion of the moment began to slay one another. **THE SWORD OF THE LORD AND OF GIDEON PREVAILED!**

The number "300" stands for victory! The ark of Noah was three hundred cubits long, and that represents the total victory of the church. Solomon made 300 shields of gold, a symbol of the victory of the Holy Spirit in believers. 300 can be expressed as 3×100 . The number "3" demonstrates the total expression of God to the world and 100 speaks to the believer of promises obtained and complete liberty.

The Third Part, the remnant of God, in the last days will become like David (Zech. 12:8) and the angel of the Lord that went before Israel. That is the future of the Present Truth Church.

Doubt, fear, reluctance on our part must be challenged in order to qualify for the front lines. The victories in the spirit-dimension must be transferred into real life! This admonition I leave with you, Stand, Stand firm, Stand against the deception and press for the goal of glory that is in Christ Jesus!

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