

Expository Files

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EF 16.10

Front Page 16.10 ~ By Jon W. Quinn

Satan Has Desired to Have You

Reading in Luke 22:31-32, we find Jesus issuing a serious warning to Peter. In just a few short hours Satan was going to try Peter with all of his skill. But despite these conflicts shortly to take place, Peter was not much concerned - he was a tower of strength and had everything under control. He insisted to Jesus, "Though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee." (Matthew 26:33). Peter intended on staying with Jesus to the very end. He was not overstating his intentions either - he meant every word - in just a few short hours he would draw his sword against overwhelming odds to defend Jesus and Jesus would tell him to put his sword away. That was not what His mission was all about.

You see, Peter was ready to fight bravely for Jesus on the physical side - but he was also about to lose a spiritual struggle. Later that evening, he would deny that he even knew who Jesus was. Like many today, he was willing to scrap and fight to protect what was his. Brave men and women have fought for our rights and freedoms, but having won them, many fail to exercise them. We are free to worship God, but many seldom worship, and some do not worship at all. Its not that a law should be passed to force worship of God, because people cannot be forced to worship in truth and spirit. Such activity involves the whole heart. Many are ready to fight against flesh and blood, but unprepared to meet Satan on the battlefield of the heart and mind.

Peter lost the battle that dark night, but repented and came back to win the war, securing his place in eternity with the Lord. When all is said and done, we can do no better than that.

“Listen to Him!”

“...approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel .”

Matthew 17:1-8

By Jon W. Quinn

(based on an outline compiled by Gary Henry)

1 Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves.

2 And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.

3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

4 Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" (Matthew 17:1-5).

It was called the transfiguration. It happened on a mountain, and there was a great truth pronounced, as well as it's repercussion. It was an overwhelming experience for the three apostles present. They were terrified of what they were seeing and hearing.

6 When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified.

7 And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Get up, and do not be afraid."

8 And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone. (Matthew 17:6-8).

Following the pronouncement at the Transfiguration that Jesus was His beloved Son, God said, "Listen to Him!" Listening to Jesus is important because it is He through whom God speaks to the world today (Hebrews 1:1-3). In fact, our salvation and where we will spend eternity depends on us giving the appropriate attention and response to the word of Christ (John 12:47-48). We should listen carefully and diligently. To ignore His word, or pay only slight attention to it is a bad choice, let alone mocking or ridiculing it. Eternal salvation is to be found in no one else. There are no substitutes. (1 Timothy 6:20,21; Colossians 2:8).

"Listen to Him!" This is excellent advice that was given on the mountain by the voice of God.

God Is The Sole Provider of the Soul's Salvation

In Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, God did what had to be done if we were to be saved from sin. This was also something that we could not have done for ourselves, and He did so without our deserving it. The problem was sin and death (Genesis 2:16,17; 3:15; Romans 6:23). God's answer was the giving of His sinless Son as an atonement for our sins (Romans 5:6-11).

God provided the apostles as witnesses of what He had done who would announce the deeds of the Son to the world (John 17:20; Acts 1:8,22; 2:32; 5:32). God also promised to confirm the preaching of the witnesses with miracles which would give additional credence to their words as being from God (2 Corinthians 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:5).

The apostles were guided into all truth (John 14:26; 15:26,27; 16:13). The preaching of the truth by the apostles was confirmed miraculously by God for the rest of their lives (Hebrews 2:1-4).

How Do We Respond To The Provider of Salvation

Today, we can hear, believe, and obey the message that was preached by the apostles (Acts 11:20,21). When we respond in this way, we are saved by what God did in Jesus Christ - (Colossians 2:12). For example, when the Ethiopian eunuch listened to Philip preaching Christ, he obeyed the gospel and was saved by what Jesus had done for him, and for us, on the cross (Acts 8:35-38). Likewise with Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:5,6,22,33; 11:13,14).

In both the above examples, and in every case of conversion we read about, men and women were saved by the listening to and responding to the gospel. We are saved as we respond in the same way to the same message as they!

Same Apostles; Same Miracles; Same Message; Same Salvation

It would not be correct to say that we do not need apostles and miracles today. We need their words and confirming miracles that their words are true. For that reason, both the words and the miracles have been recorded for us in the finished work of the apostles, the New Testament of Jesus Christ. That “perfect” revelation of God; the Covenant of Christ, is ours to listen to (1 Corinthians 13:8-10; Jude 3). The delivery of that message is now complete. When we build our lives on the teachings of Christ in the New Testament, we are building on the exact same foundation as the Eunuch and Cornelius and every other disciple in the New Testament! The “foundation” remains exactly where it has been since the first century (Ephesians 2:20).

The Word of Christ is God's Power to Save

The word of the gospel is God's power to save (Romans 1:16). Quite obviously, God's words are the most important words of all. They will save us, and save us forever (John 17:7,8; Ephesians 6:17).

It is the truth of Jesus' words, and the power of God in that truth, that gives us life (John 6:44,45,63,68). God's truth is the counterpoint to all of Satan's lies and deception. If it is Satan's lies that produce the problem of sin, it makes sense that it is God's truth that makes us free (John 8:30-32).

The Danger of Discontent With God's Word

Many seem to be less than satisfied with the simple beauty, wisdom, and power of God's plan (1 Corinthians 1:18-25). Is it too simple? Is it too difficult? Perhaps it is thought too confining and restricting? Or maybe there are just too few others that accept it. But none of these things change it from what it really is; our only hope and the hope of all who are in the world. So, whether others might be discontented with it or not, we must “preach” only Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians. 2:1,2).

Conclusion

Even the powerful words of God do not save if they are not obeyed (Hebrews 5:9). Also, certainly once having obeyed, we still need to listen and be guided by His word throughout our lives. We have seen God's truth offering salvation as opposed to Satan's deceit offering condemnation. For the rest of our lives, God will continue to provide reasons to listen to the Word of Christ, and Satan will provide reasons to ignore it. We will end up listening to one of them.

What Paul and Barnabas Did on Their Return Trip

Acts 14:21-23

by Wayne S. Walker

We usually think of the apostle Paul's work during his three preaching trips as being primarily involved in spreading the message of salvation to the lost, and he certainly did a lot of that. However, he did not devote his time and effort exclusively to that. After establishing churches in Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, but before returning home, he and Barnabas went back to some of the congregations that had already been started. "And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, 'We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.' So when they appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed" (Acts 14:21-23).

Some have wrongfully concluded that the work of "evangelism" means only preaching the gospel to the lost and is done by "evangelists" while the work of "edification" concerns building up those who have already been saved and is done only by the elders. However, the Bible makes no such clear-cut distinction. Both evangelism and edification are accomplished by Bible teaching, and sometimes the same instruction that saves the lost can also edify the saved. There is no doubt that Paul and Barnabas were doing the work of evangelism, but in addition to their seeking and saving the lost, this text shows that they also took time to help and encourage those who were saved. So today, gospel preachers should surely do what they can to spread the message of salvation to sinners, but their work according to the scriptures also demands that they provide teaching and instruction to the

church and help build up the saints. Let us look at what Paul and Barnabas did on their return trip.

Strengthened disciples

To begin, they strengthened the souls of the disciples. God wants His people to "be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3.16). Would you rather have strong health or weak health? Would you prefer live in a strong nation or a weak nation? Most of us, if we can, would choose the strong health and the strong nation. In like manner, God would prefer to have His people strong rather than weak. So, how can we be strengthened? One thing we need for strong physical health is good physical nutrition, and for strong spiritual health, God has provided all we need for good spiritual nutrition in His word.

Yet, there is also a need for us to help strengthen one another. Jesus told Peter, in predicting his denial, that "when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren" (Lk. 22.32). While all of us can certainly help to strengthen ourselves spiritually by reading, studying, learning, and applying God's word, we must also work to strengthen one another. The church at Sardis was commanded to "strengthen the things which remain" (Rev. 3.2). How can we do this? One way is to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). As fellow Christians, we should do everything within our power to try and strengthen one another.

Exhorted to continue in the faith

Next, they exhorted them to continue in the faith. The word "exhort" is defined as meaning "to urge by earnest appeal or argument; advise or recommend strongly." It comes from a Latin word that means to urge completely and generally carries with it the idea of encouraging. "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3.12-13). One of the reasons why God ordained that Christians band together in local congregations rather than trying to make it through life all on their own is so that they can exhort one another.

What did Paul and Barnabas exhort the brethren to do? Luke says that it was, "To continue." In any human endeavor, especially when the going gets a little tough, there is always the temptation to throw in the towel and just quit. That is why Paul urges us, "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Gal. 6.9). God does not want us to become weary and lose heart. In living the life

of the Christian and serving God, we need to work at developing the patience, endurance, perseverance that will help us not to grow weary but to continue. "For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36).

Specifically, Paul and Barnabas exhorted the brethren to continue in the faith. Patient continuance is usually a good thing (Rom. 2.7). However, sometimes people choose to continue in sin or wrongdoing, and that is a bad thing. God wants us to continue in the faith, referring to the revelation of His will, "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints," for which He says that we must earnestly contend (Jude v. 3). Just as Paul and Barnabas exhorted these brethren to continue in the faith, we should regularly exhort one another to continue in the faith.

Appointed elders

Then they appointed elders in every church. This is not the first time that the inspired writer of Acts has mentioned elders in the church (Acts 11.27-30). Who were these elders? The word "elder" literally means an older man, but in the New Testament, the word is used of certain older men in local congregations who are chosen for a specific function. What do they do? In Acts 20.17-28 the elders of the congregation in Ephesus were told that they had been made overseer or bishops to shepherd or pastor the local church. Thus, New Testament passages referring to elders, bishops, and pastors are all talking about the same group of men in each congregation who oversee and shepherd the flock.

In every situation where human beings have to work together, there is always a need for someone to be in a position of authority. In civil government we have leaders. On the job there is the boss. In the home God ordained that the husband is head. In the local church, God has ordained that elders be appointed (Tit. 1.5ff). The work of these elders is to rule in the sense of managing, directing, and guiding the affairs of the congregation in harmony with God's will (1 Tim. 5.17). This does not make them dictators or tyrants to be "lords over those entrusted to" them (1 Pet. 5.1-4). Far too many congregations today have been in existence without elders for a long time. I have talked with preachers around my age who have never worked under elders. I have talked with young people who have never been in a congregation with elders. Sometimes the reasons for this beyond our control, and sometimes the reasons are result of our own failings, but in either event every congregation needs to be working to have elders, or if it has them, to maintain them because this passage indicates that it's God's plan to have elders in every church.

Prayed

Prayer is generally an important part of the life of the Christian. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. 4:6). "And since He bids me seek His face, Believe His word, and trust His grace, I'll cast on Him my every care, And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer." However, not only is it important for Christians to pray regularly as individuals, but also it is important for Christians to pray together. The church in Jerusalem was characterized by the statement, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

It is interesting that the very first thing that the church did when Peter and John were released by the Sanhedrin council and told their company what had happened to them was to pray (Acts 4.23-31). Then, when the church began to experience further problems of persecution, the brethren recognized the need for praying together (Acts 12.1-5, 12). It is just as true for entire congregations as it is for each one of us, that "O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer." So, Paul and Barnabas prayed with the brethren in these churches where they visited on their return trip.

Conclusion

So, what does God want gospel preachers to do? Even though Paul was an apostle and there are some things which he could do but we cannot today, the example of his work in preaching and teaching is certainly valid for all times (Phil. 3:17). Besides preaching the word to save the lost, gospel preachers need join with other members of the Lord's body to strengthen and exhort the brethren, encourage the appointment of elders, and pray with their fellow believers. Therefore, as Christians, we should all work together for the edification and upbuilding of the kingdom of God.

Nehemiah's Prayer

Nehemiah . 1:5-11

By Warren E. Berkley

As soon as you meet this man, Nehemiah, you discover what may be the most important thing about him: the rich activity of his trust in God illustrated by his prayer in Nehemiah chapter one (Neh. 1:4-11).

He lived in the capital city of Susa in Persia around 450 B.C. While serving as cupbearer of King Artaxerxes he heard the bad news that the people back in Judah were suffering in the ruins of Jerusalem. Nehemiah's first reaction was not political action, organizing a protest, abandoning his job, or getting drunk.

"As soon as" he heard this, he "sat down and wept and mourned for days." He fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

He prayed: "O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses. Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.' They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayers of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." (Neh. 1:5-11).

Nehemiah knew Who he was praying to. This was no obligatory remark, “our thoughts and prayers” are with the suffering people of Judah. He spoke to the God he had known all his life, and in addressing God, he shows his personal familiarity with Him. He was praying to the great and awesome God of heaven, with full confidence in His power to hear, to respond and to guide the work that was ahead.

Nehemiah knew the situation wasn't God's fault. He put the blame on the people (including himself) who “acted very corruptly,” in their disobedience to God's commands given through Moses. Nehemiah knew the history of the covenant and was aware of what had gone wrong. Someone said one time, “...might as well tell God the truth when you pray. He knows it before you start praying.”

Nehemiah knew the people belonged to God. He said, “They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand.” After this prayer was offered, Nehemiah would recruit, organize and mobilize a huge number of people to rebuild the walls. He went into that project knowing the people didn't belong to him, they belonged to God.

Read Nehemiah chapter one, and learn how to react to bad news. Determine to read Nehemiah's prayer and see the mature faith he brought to that conversation with God. And the dependence on God and devotion to God that governed him after his prayer.

Here was a man who did not act without prayer, but did not pray without acting.

Let God Be True

Romans 3:3-4

By Jacob Hudgins

“For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar”(Rom 3:3-4)

We enjoy safety in numbers. We laugh at TV shows because we hear a recording of other people laughing. We attempt to justify breaking the speed limit by arguing that everyone else is doing it too. Many a college student has been comforted by the thought that “The professor can’t fail all of us!” Because of this tendency, we need to remember that numbers don’t impress God. With God, there is no “safety in numbers”. “Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar”(Rom 3:4).

How do we respond to the fact that God’s law condemns all of us? That it does is clear: “There is none righteous, no not one”(Rom 3:10). “For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”(Rom 3:22-23). Do we follow majority rule—like the naïve college student, thinking “God won’t condemn all these people!”? Do we question God’s faithfulness and justice—as if somehow it’s unfair for Him to condemn us when we are the ones who sinned? Do we reason from results—some good comes of it, so it must be alright with God? We must recognize that all these responses are simply glorified forms of denial. Paul’s answer to the problem is that God must be true, even if that makes every man a liar.

Anticipating objections to the fact that we have all sinned, Paul asks, “For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: ‘That you may be justified in Your words, and may overcome when You are judged’(Rom 3:3-4). Some or all people being unfaithful does not indict God. They chose such a fate, and He dispenses punishment, or mercy, according to His good pleasure. Like the landowner paying wages, He may say, “Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I

am good?”(Matt 20:15). What gives us the right to question God’s justice when we well know we are guilty and deserve punishment?

Reasoning from results doesn’t work either, since God will always be glorified and proved right regardless of what we do. “But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I still judged as a sinner?”(Rom 3:5-7) Is it wrong for God to punish since He is shown righteous by our sin? Is it unfair that He is shown to be right, and on top of that punishes us? No! God will always be righteous, but that doesn’t excuse us or reflect on us! To think that we are OK because some good things have come out of our lives is to delude ourselves and deny God.

We desperately need a proper view of the incorruptibility of God’s justice. It is not affected by the number of people who deserve punishment. It is true even if it makes everyone else a liar. Not only that, it is so perfect that it would not be satisfied by God simply pardoning our sins with a wave of His hand. His justice had to be satisfied by Jesus’ sinless suffering for our sin. Justice demanded punishment for sin (“a propitiation”, Rom 3:25), and so now God sits as “just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus”(Rom 3:26). Remaining eternally just, He is now eternally gracious to those who believe and obey His Son.

The good news is that if we stop living in denial and place our faith in Jesus for our salvation rather than our empty righteousness, God has provided a way for us. Give up the “safety of numbers” and trust and obey Jesus—regardless of its implications for everyone else. “Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar”!

Is God on His Throne?

Is God's control of history evident today?

Topic Page

By Jon W. Quinn

We live in a time of great uncertainty on many levels; moral, spiritual, economic, social, national and international. It is easy to allow ourselves to be filled with anxiety. What does the future hold? Will things get better, or only worse?

What attitude should the Christian have in uncertain times such as these? Should we fear the future? Shall we worry for our well-being?

The answer can be found in remembering that God is in control. But is He really? Even in times of uncertainty and anxiety? It may help to understand by considering the sovereign rule of God.

The Sovereignty of God in the Old Testament

What it means for us today

The prophets often spoke of God's supreme rule in His universe, of which we all are a part. On any given day, with a few notable exceptions, it might have been very difficult for a person to have comprehended God's involvement in the current events of the day. A man or woman trying to be faithful to God in an apostate nation of Israel, or Judah, may have been hard pressed to find any evidence that God was involved at all. There was idolatry and immorality and threat of foreign invasion and then things went downhill from there. If asked "Where is God and what is He doing and why doesn't He fix this mess?" what would a person living in Jeremiah's day or Isaiah's day be able to say?

But God was there! How do we know? Simply this: In spite of a lack of what we would term as "tangible evidence" of God's involvement during some of these dark periods, everything the prophets said would take place did take place; both things predicted to occur later in the same generation as well as things to take place many centuries in the

future. Everything! Even the most unlikely things! Now, looking back at all the things that God said He would do, and seeing how all those things were done in history, we are further filled with confidence in the authority of His word and His rule. We learn that just because we might not be able to figure out how God's rule figures into modern day events does not mean it is not there!

Isaiah and the Sovereignty of God

Isaiah prophesied that God would have the Medes overthrow Babylon (Isaiah 13:17-20). This prophecy dates from about 160 years before the fulfillment in history. There were no clues in Isaiah's day that the Medes would be the ones to conquer Babylon. Isaiah further tells us that the motive would not be booty (silver and gold). It wasn't; it was power and revenge. Cyrus brought Babylon power to an end in 539, but left the city intact. Then, in 518 Darius destroyed the walls. Later, Alexander the Great wanted to rebuild it but died before starting, and then Xerxes destroyed the temple Belus in 312. From then on, it is described as a "desert". Here we see God's sovereignty at work as history fulfills all that He had spoken through His prophet Isaiah over a century and a half before.

Isaiah also proclaimed God's judgment upon such nations as...

- 1) Babylon - Isaiah 13-14
- 2) Assyria and Philistia - Isaiah 14
- 3) Moab - Isaiah 15-16
- 4) Damascus - Isaiah 17
- 5) Ethiopia and Cush - Isaiah 18
- 6) Egypt - Isa 19
- 7) Edom and Arabia - Isa 21
- 8) Jerusalem - Isa 22
- 9) Tyre - Isa 23

All these judgments came true as prophesied; verifying God's existence and sovereignty (Isaiah 46:8-11).

Daniel and the Sovereignty of God

When God, through Daniel, revealed Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation, Nebuchadnezzar came to admit the sovereign rule of God (Daniel 2:19-21). In this, by God's power and rule, Daniel used Nebuchadnezzar's dream to prophesy the rise and fall of the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman empires (Daniel 2:36-40). This covered about five centuries of "future history" from Daniel's perspective. We have the modern convenience of recorded history and can look back and see the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy.

God's Sovereignty and National Righteousness

God does not rule arbitrarily. His decisions include considering a nation's righteousness as part of the equation (Proverbs 14:34). A righteous nation is exalted, but a sinful nation is disgraced. There are no perfect nations, of course, but there are blessed nations (see also Jeremiah 18:7-10).

Also, we need to note that a nation's present prosperity is not an indication that God is pleased with them. The prophet Habakkuk had complained about the wickedness in the land. "Why doesn't God do something about it?" God answered and said that He was doing something about it. He was going to send in the Babylonians to conquer Judah (Habakkuk 1:5-11). But Habakkuk still had a complaint: he said that the Babylonians were even worse than Judah (Habakkuk. 1:12-13). God assured Habakkuk that He knew how evil the Babylonians (Chaldeans) were and that, in His time, He would punish them as well (Habakkuk 2:4,5).

God's Sovereignty Seen In His Son

God still reigns today, through the throne of His Son Jesus. The Old Testament had often spoken of the time to come when the rule of the Son would take place (Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 2:44; Psalm 110:1,2; etc.). When, after He rose from the grave, Jesus gave the "great commission" to His apostles, He claimed to have been given "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18-20; cf. Ephesians 1:20-22; Revelation 1:5). Jesus is "Lord of lords and King of kings"! (cf. 1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14; 19:16). His purpose will be achieved, and, just like in Old Testament times, this will be so whether we can discern His rule at a particular time or not. Nothing can change the outcome from what He decides it will be; it is as if He rules the nations with a rod of iron as far as His purpose is concerned (Revelation 3:26-27). He continues to "judge the nations" (Revelation 17:14) and will use various means to judge the nations of the earth; war, famine and so forth (Revelation 6:1-8). And, do not forget, such judgment may involve using one wicked nation against another!

My Response to God's Sovereignty

The best thing a Christian can do for the welfare of his or her country is to live by faith and spread the gospel (Romans 1:16,17). We can pray to the True Sovereign Ruler in behalf of our nation (1 Timothy 2:1-3). Remember that our true strength is in the Lord. We need not look to the future with anxiety for the one in control is our Lord Jesus. His righteous ones still live by their faith whatever the current circumstances and events may be. I do not have to know where things are headed or how'll they get there; all I need to remember is that they have always ended up where God had said that they would.

Worry – Finding That Eight Percent!

Final Page 16.10

By Warren E. Berkley

One of the books I read this summer was THE NOTICER by Andy Andrews. Partly fictional, it is one of those fun, heart-warming books to be enjoyed as a diversion from the more technical in-depth reading that is essential.

The main character of the book, Jones, discusses the futility of worry, suggesting some interesting percentages that may not be scientific, but should provoke some thought.

- 40% of the things we worry about will never occur.
- 30% of the time, we worry about things that have already happened.
- 12% of our worry is about needless imaginings about our health.

- 10% would be petty-little-nothing worries about what people think.
- 8%, “legitimate concerns.”

The legitimate concerns, according to the Jones character, “are things that can actually be dealt with.” Then he said, “Most people spend so much time fearing things that are never going to happen or can’t be controlled that they have no energy to deal with the few things they can actually handle.”

If this analysis is true or nearly true, in either case there is help. The more you bring your mind into subjection to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5), the greater your sincerity in prayer (Jas. 1:5; 5:16), and the stronger your determination to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:18), the closer you will be to finding that 8% of things you can do something about.