

What's Going On??!!!



We have all heard the recent news stories concerning decisions by our President, our Congress and our Supreme Court. These decisions seem to be against every principle, both spiritually and morally, that our nation has been founded upon. The world of Christianity within our country has been "rocked" and "shaken." I have heard many views from Christian leadership as well as from those on Christian Radio and Christian television. These views have varied. Some given express extreme thoughts from "both sides of the pendulum" and some "middle of the

road" thoughts. Many Christians have become very disheartened. Some have become disillusioned. Some have gotten down right angry. So who is right? What should we do? Where should we stand?

I am reminded of the account we see in Joshua 5:13-15, the night just prior to the events at Jericho. Joshua meets up with "a man."

"And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."

Notice Joshua's question. It was a very logical question. He was about to lead his people into their first battle against what seemed like a formidable foe. We cannot blame him for being a little on edge. He asks the simple question of whose side the "man" was on - our side or the enemy's side. Notice the response of this "man." First, he makes it clear who he is, "... captain of the host of the LORD am I..." Who exactly is this "captain of the host of the LORD" is for another discussion. Secondly, he makes it very clear concerning whose "side" he was on. He basically said that he was on neither side. What he was really stating is that as the Lord God's "captain," he was on "Yahweh's side." That is always a great "side" to be on.

As children of the Lord God, Yahweh and as disciples of Jesus, the only side we need to be on is God's side. I know that can mean different things to different people. Therein lies the problem. Just as Joshua was preparing to go into battle, he was out that night trying to think up a strategy to defeat this formidable foe known as the city of Jericho. However, as we all know God already had a plan concerning how Jericho was going to be defeated. It was a pretty silly plan looking at it from a military point of view. Just march around the city seven times and on the seventh time shout and blow the trumpets and the walls fall down. Simple right? The point is that God had a plan. Joshua just had to allow God to be God and allow God's plan to go forth. As Joshua did this, not only was God's plan accomplished but His will was done, as well.

God always has a plan. Nothing! Nothing! I mean nothing, takes God by surprise. He knows the beginning from the end and the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). He never has a "plan B." It is the same yesterday (as in the case with Jericho). It is the same today (as with the recent events and rulings that have come forth). And it will be the same forever. God always has a plan. Just remember, Jesus is the "...Lamb slain before the foundations of the world." (Revelation 13:8) Did you hear that?!! Jesus was "slain" before the earth was even created. This means that God already knew that Adam and Eve would fall even before they were created. He had a plan of salvation already in place. When Adam and Eve fell it did not

take Him by surprise. God didn't go running around heaven after the fall of Adam saying and asking, " Oh no! What do I do now?" He already knew and He already had a plan.

It is the same for what is happening now upon this earth. Nothing! I mean nothing, is taking God by surprise. The rulings and decisions by this nation's leaders and courts are not taking God by surprise. The rise of ISIS and Islam is not taking God by surprise. The instability and ultimate collapse of the world's financial systems and institutions will not take God by surprise. Things concerning Israel are not taking God by surprise. You name it. Whatever is going on upon this earth, it is not taking God by surprise. Whether we realize it or not; whether we believe it or not; everything that is happening are all parts of God's plan for these end times. Everything is for the purpose of bringing to pass Biblical prophecies concerning the soon return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The problem is that things are not happening the way we, as Christians, think they should be happening. We have our own ideas about what the end times should look like and how they should transpire. Many times our ideas are very different from God's one and only "plan" - His "plan!!!"

We have read in the scriptures that the coming of Jesus will be "as a thief in the night." This analogy has always been a "thorn in my flesh," per se. I have always had difficulty with the use of this analogy, even when used by Jesus, Himself. Why would Jesus compare Himself to a sinful "thief?" Therefore, I must be missing something. Let's see...

The use of this phrase throughout the New Testament is always found within the context of Jesus' return or "Second Coming." It is always associated with a warning to be watching, ready and prepared for the unannounced and unexpected coming of Jesus.

- *"You know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night."* (1Thessalonians 5:2)
- *"The day of the Lord will come like a thief."* (2Peter 3:10)
- *"I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you."* (Revelation 3:3)
- *"Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed."* (Revelation 16:15)

The term "thief" is not a complimentary term to call someone. It seems to be the complete opposite of the character and nature of Jesus. Jesus used the concept of a "thief" to refer to the devil who comes to "steal, kill and destroy." (John 10:10) Why would Jesus refer to Himself as a "thief in the night?" Does this "thieftood" of Jesus apply to those He calls His Bride, His beloved ones, and His brethren? Is Jesus one who comes "sneaking" stealthily upon those whom He loves and who are preparing and waiting expectantly for His promised return? This does not fit the character and nature of my Bridegroom, my beloved, the Jesus whom I love.

The answer to my question was found in the full context of its usage in 1Thessalonians 5:2-5 - *"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness."*

This clearly states that Jesus will come as a "thief." However, He is coming as a "thief" to those not expecting Him, those in darkness! The language is clear that "they," the ones in darkness, are the ones to whom sudden destruction will come. Paul goes on to say, *"ye...children of the light,"* referring to Jesus' beloved Bride, the Body of Christ who are **prepared and ready** for Him, we are not in darkness!!!

The day of the Lord **will not** be as a "thief" to those He loves because they are always ready and looking for Him. Their mind and hearts are always serving and tending to His "household." If you are always ready and watchful you are never caught "off guard." It would only seem like it was a "sneak" return by

Jesus to those whose minds and hearts were not looking and yearning for the return of their beloved King and Bridegroom. Now that I have that "thorn in my flesh" removed and settled in my heart, let's continue...

As we were discussing - God's plan will always come to pass. We must align our ideas and thoughts concerning the way these end times "should look" and what "should be happening," with God's plan for this hour. That "plan" is found in His Word - the ultimate "prophetic truth," "the more sure word of prophecy." (2Peter 1:19) If we don't quite grasp everything, that's okay. We simply must believe that God is a sovereign God and that He has everything under control. Whether we believe that or not, it is the truth.

In these perplexing, difficult and somewhat discouraging times, we need to be encouraged by the One who always brings comfort to those that truly love Him with all their heart, with all their soul and with all their might. Below is from Malachi 3:13 - 3:18. It is the very last scriptures of the Jewish scriptures (Old Testament) found within our Bible. It is a passage of hope and comfort to those that will choose to simply trust in the Lord no matter what things may "look like" in these times.

First let's look at Malachi 3:13-15 (KJV) - *"Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered."*

In these scriptures we read that some have been speaking "harshly" concerning God. God goes on to say that they have actually said that it is "vain and useless" to serve God. Why would the people be saying such things? They may not have been saying it out in public but most likely they were saying it within their hearts – within in their own thoughts. It goes on, in verse 15, to give the reasoning behind their misgivings.

In their mind and thought patterns, a deception was being birthed. They were beginning to think incorrectly and come to the incorrect conclusion that all those who were doing wicked and evil things around them, all those that were prideful, those that were trying to "tempt or test" God, and even those that were persecuting them, the people of God, were actually prospering. It looked as if the wicked were actually "getting away with it," unpunished.

If we are honest and truthful with ourselves, many times we think this same way. We may not say it publicly; however, we do sometimes think it. We look at the world and all that is taking place. We see sin and wickedness going forth full throttle. It looks as though anything and everything that is based on Biblical truths and values are being tossed aside and ignored both in the secular world and even within the Body of Christ. It may even seem at times as if the enemy is winning. That is exactly the place where the enemy would want us to be in. The enemy is coming "full speed ahead" at each of us. He is coming at us with a strategy that wants us to think that it is useless to continue serving the Lord.

Our difficulty today, just as it was back in the day when Malachi was bringing forth this prophetic utterance, is that we can get caught into the trap of looking into the natural realm and believing in the false reality of the physical realm, when actually, the opposite is true. It is the "Spirit Realm" that is the real world. We must continually put our total trust in our God and know that He is in full control. He knows that it may seem as though wickedness is being victorious, however, He is in full control.

Throughout the scriptures and throughout Christian history we must always remember one thing – there was, is and always will be a "remnant." There were always those that would not give in to the arguments of the enemy; those that would somehow, someday, find others of similar and like faith, and speak words of life and encouragement to each other.

That is what we read next in Malachi 3:16–18 (Amplified) - *"Then those who feared the Lord talked often one to another; and the Lord listened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him of those who revered {and} worshipfully feared the Lord and who thought on His name. And they*

shall be Mine, says the Lord of hosts, in that day when I publicly recognize {and} openly declare them to be My jewels (My special possession, My peculiar treasure). And I will spare them, as a man spares his own son who serves him. Then shall you return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him who serves God and him who does not serve Him."

This was and is a wonderful and awesome promise from our God. It is a promise to those who will stand and not yield or submit themselves to the lies of the enemy. It was and is a promise to those who will not listen or give credence to the arguments of the enemy. It was and is a promise to those who do not get "weary in well doing." It was and is a promise to those who remain steadfast in the things of God no matter what it may seem like in the natural realm. It was and is a promise to those who gather with others of similar and like faith and "talk often one to another" and encourage one another that the Lord has actually "listened and heard" their prayers and most importantly, their hearts.

It makes such a sweet, sweet sound that it reaches the ears of Yahweh Adonai. He not only hears it but He writes a "**book of remembrance**" with their names in it. It goes on to tell us in those scriptures that those that stay faithful shall be called "Mine." God, Himself will publicly acknowledge them as His "jewels," his treasured ones. HALLELUIAH!!!

Finally, He states that those whom he refers to as "Mine," His "jewels," will return and be the ones who will rule and reign with Him. They will be the ones who will discern who is truly righteous. The wicked will finally reap, unfortunately for them, from what they had sown.

The point in all of this is that God is such a faithful God. As each of us remain faithful and live our lives as that true worshipper with the attitude of heart to be that living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to Him, He will never forget us. He will never leave nor forsake us. God never will forget the worshipper. He will openly and publicly declare to all, who His people truly are. Can we all say, "Wow and Amen!!!" If that doesn't get you excited, I do not know what will.

The remainder of the Book of Malachi (chapter 4:1-6) continues on with God's promises to His people. It states that if they would turn back towards Him and keep His statutes and the ordinances of the Law of Moses – He will send (the spirit of) Elijah who will "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers."

The "days of Elijah" came when John the Baptist declared, "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven (the coming of Messiah, Jesus) was at hand." Jesus came the first time. The message to us in these "end times" is the same. The "days of Elijah" are now. We must turn towards God. We must repent of the incorrect thinking and wrong conclusions concerning God and what's going on. We must "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven (the Second Coming of Jesus) is at hand."

So what are we to do in these days of great trial? What are we to do when things seem to be "hitting the fan" and darkness seems to be prevailing? "...As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15) We will trust that Yahweh is a sovereign God and has everything under control. Everything is going according to plan - His plan!!!