

STUDY, WORK, AND DON'T BE ASHAMED! : PART ONE

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Bereans - Faithful Students Of God's Word, Importance Of Recording And Teaching God's Word To Others, Everlasting Shame, Being Acceptable To God, Study And Believe, Having Open Minds, New Wine For New Bottles, The Endtime Apostasy Truth Shall Make You Free, Jesus Is The Truth, Freed From Sin And Death, Members Of God's Royal Household By Faith, Lazy Children Or Industrious Workers, Faithful In The Least The Price Of Christian Discipleship, Christian Persecution

A short while ago, I took a small break from answering correspondence from our Christian mailing list, and I went into the kitchen in order to prepare a small bite to eat. While doing so, as often happens, my mind turned to the Lord and His Word. I don't recall exactly what I was thinking about at the time, but the Lord's Spirit suddenly brought the following verse to my mind:

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2 Timothy 2:15, KJV

As our regular readers and mailing list members will already know, I have often quoted that verse from Paul's Epistle to Timothy, both on our mailing list, as well as throughout my many articles; however, each time that I have shared it, my point has usually been to emphasize the fact that we are supposed to undertake a serious study of God's Word, just as the Jews in the ancient town of Berea did when they were visited by Paul and Silas. Allow me to refresh your memory regarding that incident, as it was recorded by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles:

"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few."

Acts 17:10-12, KJV

As I stated a moment ago, while I have usually used Paul's words to Timothy to emphasize the fact that we each need to be serious students of God's Word, this time the Lord saw fit to present the verse to me in a different light, and He pointed out another part of the verse to me; and that was this: ". . . a workman that needeth not to be ashamed". Why did Paul use that phrase, and what did he mean by it? As I stood there in the kitchen, listening to the Voice of the Spirit, the previous verse was immediately followed by this

one from the Gospel of Mark:

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Mark 8:38, KJV

With that second verse, the meaning of Paul's words began to become clear to me; so I immediately rushed back into my computer room, so that I could enter all of my thoughts into a text file before I forgot what the Lord was showing me. As a result of many previous experiences of this nature, I have come to learn that whenever the Lord begins to pour down His Spirit upon me, and opens my spiritual eyes to a particular truth found in the Scriptures, as a faithful guardian of His Word, I need to always be ready to make a record of whatever it is that He is showing me, so that I can accurately share it with others as I have been called to do. As Paul states only a few verses earlier in that very same Epistle to Timothy:

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

2 Timothy 2:2, KJV

If it weren't for the fact that the First Century Apostles and Disciples were faithful students, recorders and teachers of God's Word, where would we be today? I think we all know the answer to that question. To continue then; as I sat here all excited, and entered into my computer what the Lord had begun to show me, He continued to reveal more to me; which I am sharing with you now. Allow me to explain.

In writing this part of his letter to Timothy, it seems that Paul may have been referring back to what Jesus Himself had stated regarding His Second Coming. In short, the Lord was saying that if we are ashamed of Him, He will most certainly be ashamed of us at His Coming. You may recall that in some of His other Lessons and Parables, Jesus also warned:

"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Matthew 7:23, KJV

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:"

Matthew 25:41, KJV

I am also reminded of the words which the Lord gave to the ancient Prophet Daniel, in the twelfth chapter of that book where he wrote:

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Daniel 12:2, KJV

What a dreadful thought indeed! But let us go back and look at the original verses which I shared with you. As we do so,

your understanding of Paul's words will be greatly expanded, just as mine has. First of all, Paul states "Study to shew thyself approved unto God". In this particular phrase, the word "approved" is derived from the Greek word "dokimos", which is pronounced dok'-ee-mos, which basically means to be accepted. In other words, if we diligently study God's Word, we will be acceptable to Him. Why would we be acceptable to God? The answer becomes rather clear when we examine exactly what happened to the Jews of Berea after they also looked to the Scriptures, in order to verify the message which was being delivered to them by Paul and Silas. Once again, we are told ". . . that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed . . ."

And that, friends, is the secret: they believed. In other words, when we believe, we become acceptable to God. Why does Luke tell us that the Bereans believed? He states that it was a result of their studying the Scriptures daily in order to verify what Paul and Silas had been preaching to them.

Allow me to draw your attention to another important point which is contained in this account of the travels of Paul and Silas. Please notice the phrase "with all readiness of mind". The word "readiness" is derived from the Greek word "prothumia", which is pronounced proth-oo-mee'-ah, which my Greek lexicon defines as meaning zeal, spirit or eagerness. In other words, we are being told that the Bereans eagerly accepted the message which was being preached to them; they had open, receptive minds to what the Lord's Spirit was revealing to them through Paul and Silas.

Ironically, and sadly, in our modern world, it seems that, as is his custom, Satan has totally reversed the situation. How many times have we heard of Christians being accused by their antichrist enemies of being close-minded, prejudiced, narrow-minded, bigoted, old-fashioned and out of sync with the times? I know that it happens to me all the time. What a travesty of the truth! This tactic is nothing new. Looking to the Old Testament, we discover that in exposing the liars and deceivers of his day, the Prophet Isaiah was inspired to write:

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"
Isaiah 5:20, KJV

Truly, this verse aptly describes our own time as well. You may also recall that in the Gospels, when the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked Him why the Pharisees, as well as they, fasted, while His Disciples did not, the Lord cryptically told them:

"No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved."
Matthew 9:16-17, KJV

In other words, not everyone is able, or willing, to accept the truth of God's Word. As I point out in other articles, such as in "Are You Just a Baby Huey?", some people prefer to cling to their false ideas, their false ways, and their false doctrines and traditions; even when those beliefs are not based soundly upon the truth of the Scriptures. Not only do they prefer to cling to them due to their pride, arrogance and spiritual blindness, but they also rabidly fight against those people who dare to proclaim the truth. In fact, as I have pointed out on a number of previous occasions, the time is coming when this world will be totally overtaken by a spirit of darkness and apostasy. Tragically, it has already begun, as anyone who is in tune to God's Spirit can see. The Lord Himself, as well as His Apostles, were well aware of this coming time of evil, when men would blaspheme against God, cast His truth to the ground, and even persecute His children. Thus we find it written in the Scriptures:

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd."

John 3:19-20, KJV

". . . Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

Luke 18:8b, KJV

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

2 Peter 3:3-4, KJV

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [Christ's Second Coming] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, KJV

"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."

Matthew 10:22, KJV

So the lesson is clear: If we are going to study God's Holy Word, we need to do so with an open mind and heart, and like the Bereans, with an eagerness to know the truth. We cannot, and must not, approach the Scriptures with our minds already made up. We cannot allow our preconceived ideas to get in the way of our accepting the truth which the Word reveals to us, as otherwise, we will be just like the Scribes and Pharisees of old, and our spiritual growth will not only be stunted, but it may in fact be halted altogether. On the other hand, if we study the Scriptures, and if we have an open heart to what they reveal to us, a very wonderful thing is going to happen to us; and that is this:

". . . If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free . . . If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."
John 8:31b-32, 36, KJV

So what we see then, is that if we study God's Word with an open heart, first of all, we are going to learn the truth; and second; if we accept and begin to live that truth, it is going to set us absolutely free. Exactly what is the primary truth which the Bible reveals to us? Namely this:

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
John 14:6, KJV

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
John 3:16, KJV

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
Romans 5:8, KJV

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."
John 6:37, KJV

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."
John 10:28, KJV

So as I point out in such articles as "True Christianity: A Religion Of Peace", Jesus came to set the spiritual captives free; free from the lies and delusions of Satan, and free from the spiritual bondage and penalty of sin. Exactly what is the penalty of sin? Again, the Bible tells us plainly:

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
Romans 6:23, KJV

Jesus frees us from the wages of sin; He frees us from death; and He offers us Eternal Life, which He paid for with His own Blood on the Cross. That is why in quoting from the Prophet Isaiah, He said at the beginning of His Earthly Ministry in the Gospel of Luke:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,"
Luke 4:18, KJV

Following is the Old Testament version of the same verse:

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim

liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;"
Isaiah 61:1, KJV

What we have seen then, is that by diligently studying God's Word, we can know the truth; and by accepting that truth, as well as acting upon it, we can be set free from the penalty of sin, and inherit Eternal Life. Furthermore, by believing in the truth of the Scriptures, we become acceptable to God. In fact, not only do we become acceptable to God, but, as I point out in such series as "Is Jesus the Only Begotten Son of God?", we actually become His adopted children through faith; we become members of His Royal Family. Once again, please consider the following verses:

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"
John 1:12, KJV

"And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."
Luke 20:34-36, KJV

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."
Romans 8:15-17, KJV

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."
Galatians 3:26, KJV

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,"
Ephesians 1:5, KJV

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;"
Ephesians 2:19, KJV

But you see, the story doesn't exactly end there. No parent likes to have lazy children; and our Heavenly Father is no different. As I point out in some of my other articles which deal with Christian Discipleship, such as "Parable of the Sower: Salvation and Service", once we become members of God's Household, we also become symbolically drafted into His elite work force. Throughout the New Testament, we find God's workers described as fishers of men, as farmers who plant the life-giving seed of His Word, as teachers and evangelists, as holy priests, and even as soldiers in His

Royal Army. While we receive the Gift of Eternal Life freely through the Blood of Jesus Christ, from that point on, God expects us to work diligently and faithfully for His Cause. This brings us back to Paul's letter to Timothy. In reading that same second chapter, we find the following verses:

"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier . . . The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things . . . Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself . . . Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth . . . Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

2 Timothy 2:1-4, 6-7, 9-13, 15, 19-21, KJV

Please notice some of the key points of Paul's remarks to Timothy. He tells Timothy to stand strong in his new faith; he instructs him to impart the doctrine to others; he encourages him to endure hardness as a good soldier of the Lord; he admonishes him to work diligently in the harvest fields of the Lord; he tells him that he must be willing to suffer persecution for the Lord's sake and for the sake of those sheep who will come to know Christ; and he tells him that he must faithfully study the Word and skillfully teach it to others. In conclusion, Paul tells Timothy that God knows those who belong to Him, and that if Timothy does all of these things, and is not ashamed of his faith, he will become a very useful and honourable vessel in the House of the Lord. In his Epistle to the Corinthian church, Paul also writes:

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

1 Corinthians 4:2, KJV

Of course, we know that Paul is only reiterating the very same lesson concerning faithfulness, which Jesus taught in some of His very own Parables, as we see by these verses:

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?"

Matthew 24:45, KJV

"His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

Matthew 25:21, KJV

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"
Luke 16:10-12, KJV

"And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities."
Luke 19:17, KJV

From reading Paul's Epistle to his dear son in the faith, we know that because of his hard work and faithfulness, Timothy did in fact become the first bishop, or leader of the local body of believers, in the city of Ephesus. In the final chapter, we find the following commentary:

"The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen. [The second epistle unto Timotheus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time.]"
2 Timothy 4:22, KJV

Jesus likewise tells us that Christian Discipleship is not for the weak, and that it is not just a part-time job. Once a person is called into the Army of the Lord, he is expected to remain faithful and true until the very end of his life. He must be willing to sacrifice all, even his very own life if need be, for the sake of the Gospel, and for the sake of bringing the lost to Christ. It is for this reason, that the Lord admonishes each of us to count the cost before we make a serious commitment to a lifetime of Christian Discipleship, as we see by the following verses:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."
Matthew 10:34-38, KJV

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."
Luke 9:23-24, KJV

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

Luke 14:26-33, KJV

"And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

Matthew 19:29, KJV

As you can plainly see, being a faithful follower of Jesus Christ does come at a price. While Jesus paid the full price for our Salvation almost two thousand years ago, we must be willing to pay the price of alienation, and persecution, in order to bring God's message of Love and Salvation to others. As we saw earlier, and as I also point out in a number of my other articles, such as in "Civil Disobedience and Christian Persecution", not everyone is interested in hearing the Good News; and not everyone wishes to be freed from their lives of sin, so that they might inherit Eternal Life. In fact, as Jesus clearly pointed out, the vast majority of people will strongly reject the message which we offer them, and they will resent us, and they will continue to blindly march down the broad road which leads to their own destruction, in spite of our endeavors to stop them. Once again, please consider these verses:

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Matthew 7:13,14, KJV

"Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied."

Proverbs 27:20, KJV

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

2 Corinthians 4:4, KJV

"And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?"

Luke 6:39, KJV

It is a matter of Biblical as well as historical record, that since two thousand years ago until this present time, God's Children of Light have been continually persecuted by the Children of the World; that is to say, the Children of Darkness. Sadly, in our current time, because of the fact that many Christians have forsaken the serious study of God's Word, and have instead chosen to embrace the lies of modern politicians and the false prophets of organized religion, a serious compromise has occurred in their lives. Many are no longer willing to pay the price which is required to be a bona fide Disciple of Jesus Christ; they have become fearful of the opinions of men; but if we truly wish to please and be acceptable to our Lord and Saviour, and the God whom we worship, we simply cannot worry about the opinions of men; and we cannot be afraid of what they might do to us. In speaking of the persecution which would originate with the enemies of the Gospel, Jesus offered this warning to those who might be tempted to save themselves from their enemies through their compromise of the truth:

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
Matthew 10:28, KJV

In quoting from a Psalm of King David in the Old Testament, the Apostle Paul also wrote the following in his Epistle to the Hebrew brethren:

"So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."
Hebrews 13:6, KJV

In its original form, King David wrote:

"The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?"
Psalms 118:6, KJV

As we conclude this article in part two, we will be looking at such topics as the Sufferings of Christ, our willingness to become of no reputation for Christ's sake, Christian persecution, remaining steadfast in our faith, backsliders and failures, Peter and Jeremiah, preaching the Gospel boldly and allowing our lights to shine brightly before the world, exposing lies and deceptions, being accountable, avoiding compromise and political correctness in our lives, ostracism and being tried in the fires of faith, and the World Trade Center/Pentagon attacks. I trust that you will join me.

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STUDY, WORK, AND DON'T BE ASHAMED! : PART TWO

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Sufferings Of Jesus Christ, Of No Reputation, Christian Persecution, Steadfast In Faith, Backsliders And Failures, Peter, Prophet Jeremiah, Don't Hide The Light, Expose The Lies And Deceptions Or Be Held Accountable, Preach Boldly And Don't Be Ashamed, Coming Trials And Ostracism, Gold Tried In The Fire, WTC/Pentagon Attacks, Be A Burning Ember For Jesus

As I recently reminded one of our dear mailing list members, Jesus became of no reputation for our sake. He was laughed at, ridiculed, mocked, demonized, beaten and finally cruelly hung on a Roman cross, in order that we might gain Eternal Life, and entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven. Please ponder the following verses:

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."
Isaiah 53:3, KJV

"And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!"
Matthew 27:29, KJV

"And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him."
Luke 16:14, KJV

"Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:"
Luke 18:31-32, KJV

"And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God."
Luke 23:35, KJV

"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:"
Philippians 2:7, KJV

It is clear that Jesus certainly didn't seem to care what people thought of Him. He just came to accomplish a task, a very important task; just as we are here to accomplish the task of furthering His Message. As such, we should simply be about that task, regardless of what people may say or think about us, and in spite of what they may do to us. We must be

willing to become of no reputation, just like Jesus, and we must be willing to suffer persecution for His Name's sake. Following are some additional verses for your consideration:

"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also."
John 15:20, KJV

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."
Romans 8:35-36, KJV

"We are fools for Christs sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."
1 Corinthians 4:10-13, KJV

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
2 Timothy 3:12, KJV

So my fellow Christians, in the words of the Apostle Paul, please be strong and steadfast in your faith. Don't allow yourselves to be shaken by the lies and deceptions of the world, or by the light afflictions which may come your way. Here again are some verses for you to consider:

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."
1 Corinthians 16:13, KJV

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."
Ephesians 6:10, KJV

"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."
2 Timothy 2:1, KJV

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
1 Corinthians 15:58, KJV

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."
1 Peter 5:8-9, KJV

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;"

2 Corinthians 4:17, KJV

Please remember that if we worry too much about the opinions of men; if we worry about being ridiculed, alienated, or possibly even persecuted because of our faith, we may never accomplish whatever it is that God has ordained for each of our lives. In fact, if our faith is that weak, we may even backslide from our faith, and return to being just like the rest of the children of the world; and we will become dismal failures in God's sight. As the Apostle Peter tells us:

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

2 Peter 2:20-22, KJV

How sad. Imagine being viewed as a dog or a pig due to your failure to fulfill God's Will for your life. And Peter most certainly knew what he was talking about. As I point out in my article "Peter: Faith Tried in the Fire", Peter suffered a number of serious trials and tests in his life, as Satan did his best to try to prevent Peter from fulfilling God's Plan for his life. So rather than tone down or compromise our message, and bow to political correctness, or bow to the false god of this current world and all that he has to offer us, we must only bow to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, through our daily submission to His Will for our lives, whatever it may be; for as it is written:

". . . As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

Romans 14:11b, KJV

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Philippians 2:9-13, KJV

Like the Prophet Jeremiah of old, we must not try to hide our light under a bushel in order that we might blend in with the crowd and appear to be politically correct, as a great number of false prophets do today; and what a truly sickening sight they are. If we do; if we try to quench God's Spirit, that Eternal Flame will burn right through it, and we won't be able to contain it. Consider these verses:

"Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."
Jeremiah 20:9, KJV

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
Matthew 5:14-16, KJV

"Quench not the Spirit."
1 Thessalonians 5:19, KJV

So again; we must be willing to boldly proclaim the words of truth when God calls upon us to do so. We must always be ready to give a clear answer to anyone who may ask of us concerning our faith. We must also be willing to expose the lies, deceptions and sins of this adulterous and wicked generation of the Endtime, even if the Sword of God's Word cuts them to the heart. If we are not willing to do this, not only will God be ashamed of us, but He may even require their blood at our hands. Please consider these verses:

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"
1 Peter 3:15, KJV

"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."
Ezekiel 3:17-19, KJV

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
Hebrews 4:12, KJV

Following are some additional verses on the topic of boldly preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Lord help us all to be like the founders of our Christian faith:

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus . . . And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine

hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."
Acts 4:13, 29-31, KJV

"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."
Acts 5:29, KJV

"But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him."
Acts 9:27-29, KJV

"Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands."
Acts 14:3, KJV

"And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly."
Acts 18:26, KJV

"And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God."
Acts 19:8, KJV

"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."
Ephesians 6:19-20, KJV

"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."
Philippians 1:20, KJV

"So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."
Hebrews 13:6, KJV

"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"
1 Corinthians 9:16, KJV

I must agree with Paul when he writes ". . . woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!". I feel exactly the same way. Some Christians may deceive themselves into thinking that they are saving themselves from a lot of personal discomfort and persecution when they attempt to hide their light under a bushel, but one of these days, they may be in for a very

rude awakening. As we have already seen, if we are ashamed of Christ now, He will be ashamed of us at His Coming.

If there is one thing which the Lord has been impressing upon me for quite some time now, it is that as the world continues to grow colder and darker in a spiritual sense, the more brilliant our lights will begin to shine. But, as we have already seen, it will come at a cost. We, and our faith, will be hated more and more by those who simply do not wish for their sins to be revealed. If we proclaim the truth, while the world's politicians and false prophets are spreading their subtle lies, it simply cannot be helped. We will become totally ostracized from society, if we are not already. As I explain in such articles as "666: Patience of the Saints", I am fully convinced that God is slowly polarizing the world. He is dividing the sheep and true shepherds from the goats and the false worldly shepherds. With each coming year, I foresee the Lord testing our faith more and more. He is going to allow each one of us to pass through the fires of tribulation, in order to determine what we are made of. Only those who cling to Him, and to His Word, will make it through, and come out a vessel for the finer. I am again reminded of verses such as the following:

"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."
Job 23:10, KJV

"And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God."
Zechariah 13:9, KJV

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."
James 1:2-4, KJV

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:"
1 Peter 1:7, KJV

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."
1 Peter 4:12-14, KJV

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."
Revelation 3:18, KJV

As a small example of this polarization of the world, and more specifically, of God's children, as I sit here writing this article, eleven days have passed since the world was shocked by the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City, and the Pentagon in Washington, DC. The mass media has been filled with all kinds of political posturing, stories of heroism, theories and speculations, calls for prayer, and particularly stories which discuss America's preparation for war against terrorism, beginning with Afghanistan. The key point I wish to emphasize with you here, is that in all of the reading I have done, to date, I have found very few people, and to be more specific, very few so-called "Christian" leaders in America, who are even willing to discuss the real issue at hand here. They seemed to be scared stiff of even discussing why this happened, or even who allowed it to happen; and as I point out in that article, God most certainly did, because He is very angry!

God has given these men an important job to do, and most of them are failing quite miserably at it due to their fears, their desires to be politically correct, and their sickening compromise with the world. Perhaps they are afraid of being branded religious fanatics. Maybe they worry about a drop in their book sales. These men know that to even suggest that God purposely allowed these events to occur, will make them appear very cruel, very cold-hearted, and without a doubt, very unpatriotic; so they shut up. Very few of them will even dare say the "R" word; and if you don't know what I am talking about, it is repentance. So sadly, many of these men have made their choice; and as far as I am concerned, they are standing on the wrong side of the fence. They are just like the deceived leaders, and false prophets and priests of Jeremiah's day, who persecuted Jeremiah, for daring to speak the truth, while they prophesied to the people of peace and plenty. Of course, we know who was vindicated in the end; it was poor old Jeremiah. Among other things, Jeremiah said:

"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?"
Jeremiah 5:31, KJV

As I shared earlier in this article, the Apostle Paul wrote:

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."
2 Timothy 3:13, KJV

So my point is, we cannot be afraid to speak the truth, regardless of the cost. Our primary obligation is to obey and to please the Lord. He is our Boss. We owe our loyalty and allegiance to Him first and above all. We must say and preach what He tells us to, no matter how unpopular of a message it may be; and doom, destruction and chastisement is by no means a popular message in our current day when people just love to totally indulge themselves in the flesh, and deceive themselves into thinking that America is going to live forever. In spite of their mockery of us and the sober message which we bare, in spite of the persecution which they may bring against us, we must each allow our light to shine brilliantly before the Lord. In conclusion, borrowing

the title from another one of my articles, allow me to ask you "Are you a burning ember for the Lord?". I certainly hope so. I pray that this article has been a blessing and an inspiration to many. Wake up, America! Your days are numbered unless you truly repent!

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