



Open Water Ministries

~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Worship Music

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Prayer

Lord, I thank You by faith that I am NOT going crazy and I am NOT losing my mind. The stress and pressure I've been facing is going to pass, and I know You will bring me through these challenging times. You promised me a sound mind, and that is exactly what You have given me. I can't ever thank You enough or fully express my gratitude for the power, love, and sound mind You have given to me that will carry me safely through these times. In Jesus' name. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

“ God Acts On Our Behalf”

Charles Stanley

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1 BEN-HADAD KING of Syria gathered all his army together; thirty-two kings were with him, and horses and chariots. And he went up and besieged Samaria, warring against it. 2 He sent messengers into Samaria to Ahab king of Israel and said to him, Thus says Ben-hadad: 3 Your silver and your gold are mine; your wives and your children, even the fairest, also are mine. 4 And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to what you say, I am yours, and all that I have. 5 The messengers came again and said, Thus says Ben-hadad: Although I have sent to you, saying, You shall deliver to me your silver, your gold, your wives, and your children— 6 Yet I will send my servants to you tomorrow about this time, and they shall search your house and the houses of your servants; and all the desire of your eyes they shall lay hands upon and take it away. 7 Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land and said, Notice now and see how this man is seeking our destruction. He sent to me for my wives, my children, my silver, and my gold, and I did not refuse him. 8 And all the elders and all the people said to him, Do not heed him or consent. 9 So he said to Ben-hadad's messengers, Tell my lord the king, All you first sent for to your servant I will do, but this thing I cannot do. And the messengers left; then they brought him word again. 10 Ben-hadad sent to him and said, May the gods do so to me, and more also, if the rubbish of Samaria shall be enough for each one of all the people who are at my feet and follow me to get a handful. 11 The king of Israel answered, Tell him: Let not him who girds on his harness boast as he who puts it off. 12 When Ben-hadad heard this message as he and the kings were drinking in the booths, he said to his servants, Set the army in array. And they set themselves in array against [Samaria]. 13 Then a prophet came to Ahab king of Israel and said, Thus says the Lord: Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know and realize that I am the Lord. 14 Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus says the Lord: By the young men [the attendants or bodyguards] of the governors of the districts. Then Ahab said, Who shall order the battle? And he answered, You. 15 Ahab numbered the attendants of the governors of the districts, and they were 232. After them he numbered all the people of [the army of] Israel, 7,000. 16 And they went out at noon. But Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the booths, he and the thirty-two kings who helped him. 17 The servants of the governors of the districts went out first; and Ben-hadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out of Samaria. 18 And he said, Whether they have come out for peace or for war, take them alive. 19 So these [strong young guards] of the governors of the districts went out of [Samaria], and the army followed them. 20 And each one killed his man; the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them. Ben-hadad king of Syria escaped on a horse with the horsemen. 21 The king of Israel went out and smote [the riders of] the horses and chariots and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter. 22 The prophet came to the king of Israel and said to him, Go, fortify yourself and become strong and give attention to what you must do, for at the first of next year the king of Syria will return against you. 23 And the servants of the king of Syria said to him, Israel's gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we. But let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. 24 And do this thing: Remove the kings, each from his place, and put governors in their stead. 25 And muster yourself an army like the army you have lost, horse for horse and chariot for chariot. And we will fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. And he heeded their speech and did so. 26 And at the return of the year, Ben-hadad mustered the Syrians and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel. 27 The Israelites were counted and, all present, went against them. The Israelites encamped before the enemy like two little flocks of lost kids [absolutely everything against them but Almighty God], but the Syrians filled the country. 28 A man of God came and said to the king of Israel, Thus says the Lord: Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills but He is not God of the valleys, therefore I will deliver all this great multitude into your hands, and you shall know and recognize by experience that I am the Lord. 29 They encamped opposite each other seven days. Then the battle was joined; and the Israelites slew of the Syrians 100,000 foot soldiers in one day. 30 But the rest fled to the city of Aphek, and the wall fell upon 27,000 men who were left. Ben-hadad fled into the city and from chamber to chamber. 31 His servants said to him, We have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings. Let us put sackcloth on our loins and ropes about our necks, and go out to the king of Israel; perhaps he will spare your life. 32 So they girded sackcloth on their loins and put ropes on their necks, and came to the king of Israel and said, Your servant Ben-hadad says, I pray you, let me live. And King [Ahab] said, Is he yet alive? He is my brother. 33 Now the men took it as an omen and they hastily took it up and said, Yes, your brother Ben-hadad. Then the king said, Go, bring him. Then Ben-hadad came forth to him, and the victorious king caused him to come up into the chariot. 34 Ben-hadad [tempting him] said, The cities which my father took from your father I will restore; and you may maintain bazaars of your own in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria. Then, said Ahab, I will send you away on these terms. So he made a covenant with him and sent him away. 35 And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said to his neighbor, At the command of the Lord, strike me, I pray you. And the man refused to strike him. 36 Then said he to him, Because you have not obeyed the voice of the Lord, behold, as soon as you have left me a lion will slay you. And as soon as he departed from him, a lion found him and killed him. 37 Then [the prophet] found another man and said, Strike me, I pray you. And the man struck him, so that in striking, he wounded him. 38 So the prophet departed and waited for King Ahab by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face. 39 And as the king passed by, the [prophet] cried out to him, Your servant went out into the midst of the battle, and behold, a man turned aside and brought a man to me and said, Keep this man. If for any reason he is missing, then your life shall be required for his life, or else you shall pay a talent of silver. 40 But while your servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said to him, Such is your own verdict; you yourself have decided it. 41 The man hastily removed the ashes from his face, and Ahab king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. 42 And he said to the king, Thus says the Lord: Because you have let go out of your hand the man I had devoted to destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people. 43 And King [Ahab] of Israel went to his house resentful and sullen, and came to Samaria.

Chapter 20

Now Benhadad who was presently the king of Syria gathered all of his host together: and there were thirty-two kings that went with him, with their horses, and chariots: and they came up and besieged Samaria, and they warred against it. And he sent messengers to Ahab the king of Israel the city, and he said unto him, Thus saith Benhadad, Thy silver and thy gold is mine; your wives and your children, the best of everything you have, is mine. And so the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to your saying, I am thine, and all that I have (1Ki 20:1-4).

So he asked for complete capitulation. I want all your gold and silver. I want all your wives, all your, you know, all of your possessions. So Ahab was surrendering. He said, "Everything I have is yours." So Benhadad wasn't satisfied.

He sent back his messengers again, and said, Thus speaketh Benhadad, saying, Although I have sent unto you, saying that you shall deliver to me your silver, gold, wives, and children; Yet I will send my servants unto you to morrow about this time, and they will search through your house, and the house of your servants; and it shall be, whatever is pleasant in their eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away. And the king of Israel called his elders together, and he said, Mark, I pray you, look how this guy is just really seeking a fight: he doesn't want just our gold and silver and wives; he wants a fight. And so all the elders that were with him said, Don't hearken to him, don't consent. Therefore he sent messengers to Benhadad, he said, Tell my lord the king, All that you did send for your servant at the first will do: but this other request that you have made we're not going to do it. And so the messengers departed, brought him word again. And Benhadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so to me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for the handfuls for all the people that follow me (1Ki 20:5-10).

And he said, "If everyone took the dust of Samaria, there wouldn't be enough for the number of people I have to even have a fistful of dirt. I got so many people that I'm coming against you with."

And so the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girds on his harness boast himself as though he was putting it off (1Ki 20:11).

In other words, don't count your chickens before they hatch.

And so it came to pass, when Benhadad heard this message, as he was drinking, and his kings in the pavilions, he said to his servants, Set yourselves in array. And so they set themselves in battle array against the city. And, behold, there came a prophet to Ahab the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Have you seen this great multitude? behold, I'm going to deliver it into your hand today; and you will know that I am the LORD. So Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Even by the young men the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall order the battle? And he said, You. And so Ahab numbered the young men, the princes from the provinces, there were two hundred and thirty two: after them he numbered the people, all of the children of Israel, seven thousand. They went out at noon. And old Benhadad was drinking himself drunk in his pavilions, he with his kings. And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; Benhadad sent out, and told them, saying, [There are. They sent. They came to Benhadad and said] There are men coming out of Samaria. And so he said, Have they come out if they've come out for peace, take them alive; if they've come out for war, take them alive. So the young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army followed them. And they slew every one his man: the Syrians fled; Israel pursued them: Benhadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with his horsemen. And so the king of Israel went out, and he smote the horses, the chariots, he slew the Syrians with a great slaughter. And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go and strengthen yourself, and mark, and see what you are doing: for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against you again (1Ki 20:12-22).

In other words, now strengthen yourself, fortify things, because at the end of the year the guy is going to be back.

And so the servants of the king of Syria said unto them, The problem is their gods are the gods of the hills; that's why they were able to defeat you; now if you could fight them in the valley, then you could defeat them (1Ki 20:23).

Because their gods are the gods of the hills and not the gods of the valleys. Now of course, they thought of gods in localized sense. We should never think of God in a localized sense. God is what we say omnipresent. That means he's everywhere at once. Therefore, it is wrong to think of God in a locality. Sometimes we think of God in a localized sense in heaven. And he seems very far off and remote because I don't know where heaven is. It's out there in space somewhere. But I'm pointing out in the space this way but you know if you realize the earth is actually round, and so you'll be pointing down that way through the earth and not in space in the other direction. So I may head out, you know, in space looking for God but I may be going the wrong direction in space, if I think of God in a locality, you know, heaven, wherever that may be.

Or if I think of God here in the church, in a locality. And so often even in our prayers we sort of express the idea of God dwelling here. "Lord, we are so thankful that we can come into Your presence this evening. We can gather here together in Your presence." Hey, you were in His presence when you left home tonight. You were in His presence when you were driving out here. You can't escape the presence of God. And thus it's wrong to think of God in a locality. And yet that was the pagan concept of God. He's the god of the hills. And that was your problem. You let them fight you in the hills and their god is the god of the hills. That's why you were defeated. Next time fight them in the valleys because their god is the god of the hills, not the god of the valleys and you'll be able to defeat them, so they said.

Now gather your army again, all of the kings, all of the chariots. And go up again the second time. And so Benhadad gathered the forces of Syria together and he came up to Aphek to fight against Israel.

And the children of Israel were numbered, all that were present, went out against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids (1Ki 20:27);

They were totally, hopelessly outnumbered. but the Syrians filled the country (1Ki 20:27).

They were just like two little flocks. And here the whole vast number of Syrians.

And there came a man of God, and spake to the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is the God of the hills, but not the God of the valleys, therefore I'm going to deliver this great multitude into your hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD (1Ki 20:28).

Now the interesting thing to me at this point is that though Ahab had turned against God and was a very wicked king, still God was continuing to speak to him. You know, though you may turn your back on God, and though you may go your own way, God continues to speak to you. God doesn't just forsake you and let you go, though you may have forsaken Him. God is continuing to speak after this guy has turned his back. So long his back has been turned against God and yet God is still speaking to him. As God continues to speak to you because He loves you and He's seeking to draw you unto Himself, and thus God doesn't cease His work speaking to man.

And so the children of Israel came against them and they're in the valleys and wiped out the Syrians really worse this time than before. The Syrians were fleeing. Benhadad was captured and he was brought back.

And he said unto him, The cities, that my father took from your father, I'm going to restore them; and you shall make streets we'll make streets for you in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. And then Ahab said to him, I will send you away with this covenant. So he made a treaty with him, and sent him away. And a certain man, one of the sons of the prophets came and said to his neighbour, Smite me, I pray you. And the man refused to smite him. Then he said, [All right, because you've refused to smite me,] you've not obeyed the voice of the LORD, so as soon as you depart from here, a lion is going to slay you. So as soon as the man departed from the prophet, a lion slew him. So he found another man, he said, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, in that he was wounded. And so he came and he waited for Ahab to come along, he disguised himself, he put ashes upon his face. And the king passed by, and he cried to Ahab: and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: and if by any means he is missing, then we'll require your life for him. And this man got away from me and now they want to kill me. And Ahab said, You pronounced your own judgment; you said that it was your life for his life and you let him get away. [Man, you've set your own judgment.] And so the guy took off the disguise; and the king of Israel discerned that he was one of the prophets. And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Because you have let go out of your hand the man who I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people. And the king of Israel went home [and he began to live more carefully from that point on,] but he was heavily displeased when he came to Samaria (1Ki 20:34-43).

(Through The Bible Series C-2000; Chuck Smith; 1979-1986; Commentaries Through The Bible)

THE LIVING GOD DOES NOT ASK US to believe Him and honor Him only because of His mighty acts done in the past. The writer to the Hebrews informs us of a spectacular future judgment promised by God. It will be a "shaking" of His creation and the actual removal of temporal things to ensure that "what cannot be shaken may remain."

This is the brief review of God's acts provided in the Letter to the Hebrews: See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns from heaven? At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire." (Heb 12:25-29) We believe the Holy Spirit of God is the true Author of what is written here. We note the warning that men and women may be guilty of refusing to heed the God who speaks to His creation on earth. God's first divine act described in these verses was His giving of the Law—the Ten Commandments. On Mount Sinai He spoke to Moses and through him to the people of Israel. The second reference is to the gospel—God's revealing from heaven His grace, mercy and love in the person of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son. When this message was written to the early church nearly 2,000 years ago, both of these mighty, divine acts were already history. God had spoken to the fallen human race, first from the mount, from the earth, and then from heaven itself with the plan of redemption through Jesus Christ. But the Hebrews text continues with the promise of a future act of God. It speaks of the great day of consummation—the final judgment that is often mentioned in the Scriptures.

God's word at Sinai _____

First, I want to review the two great acts of God in the past. The Old Testament record makes it clear that God chose the nation of Israel to witness and exemplify Him before a lost, sinful humanity. From that nation as well would come the promised Messiah and Savior.

The Israelites, at the time God spoke from Sinai, had just been delivered from grinding slavery and oppression in Egypt. For four centuries they had been surrounded and influenced by Egyptian paganism. Three months after leaving Egypt en route to Canaan, Israel under Moses' leadership had come to the rugged wilderness terrain of Sinai. The dark red granite peaks clustered ahead of them, rising to heights of 8,000 feet. Israel was encamped in an area of open ground that looked upward to the peak of Mount Sinai. Dangers and uncertainties loomed ahead of them. Surely these chosen children of Israel did not realize that they were about to participate in an awesome, even terrifying encounter with the Lord, their God. It was to be an event unprecedented in human history. The living God was ready to declare His holy, moral will to a young nation. Israel's intended role was to communicate that will to an earthly society in a sin-cursed world. God called Moses to go up into the mountain. He told him to prepare the people of Israel to receive His sacred Law. On Sinai, God in a mighty, significant act spoke from the earthly mountain, declaring His moral will for His people. The giving of the Law on Sinai was accompanied by supernatural terror, according to the Scriptures. The mountain burned with fire. There was darkness and tempest. There were the sounds of a mighty trumpet and the divine Voice, so overpowering that the encamped people pleaded that they could not endure it and begged that they should not have to hear it. The experience was so far beyond the limits of normal human expression that Moses cried, "I am trembling with fear!" God was dramatizing the necessity for people to live according to His will. In unforgettable fashion, God was setting before human beings the high principles of morality that He requires of His creatures.

God said, "This is what I expect" _____

It was in those Ten Commandments that God said to His earthly people, "Here is what I expect from you, My covenant people.

My Law declares specifically your individual moral duty to Me and to your fellow beings." God promised Israel through Moses: "If you obey me fully and keep my covenant, ... you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exo 19:5-6). For the first time in history, men and women could actually be measured in the performance of their moral duties both to God and to their fellow beings. History tells us how thoroughly Israel disregarded God's Word. That was Israel's great tragedy: she disregarded the word from God. God bore patiently with His erring people. He brought them into the promised land of Canaan. He made them a great nation—under David and Solomon, dominant over all the surrounding nations. Israel's temple atop Mount Moriah was a thing of beauty and splendor. History tells us that Israel lost her temple. The nation lost her king. The people were driven from their land and scattered among the nations. Ultimately a remnant returned to struggle against superpowers that controlled their homeland. In the fullness of time God sent Messiah. Israel failed to recognize Him. Instead, she put Him to death on a cross. Short decades later, Rome mercilessly devastated Jerusalem and blotted Israel from national existence. In all the succeeding centuries, the Jews have known trouble and persecution. They have wandered the earth. The famed wailing wall in present-day Jerusalem is a continuing symbol of Israel's great tragedy: her failure to hear and heed the God who spoke so eloquently on earth from Sinai. I will only remind you, for you surely know it well, that many people have declared the Ten Commandments no longer valid, no longer relevant in our society. I watch the papers to check on the sermon topics of my fellow ministers, and it is apparent that Christian churches are not paying attention to the Ten Commandments. Dwight L. Moody preached often on the Commandments. John Wesley said he preached the commands of the Law in order to prepare the way for the gospel. R. A. Torrey told ministers if they did not preach the Law they would have no response to the preaching of the gospel. It is the Law that prepares us for the gospel. It is the Law that shows us our need for the gospel of salvation and forgiveness.

That Law has not been annulled _____

When I said the Ten Commandments are no longer in vogue, I referred to common attitudes held generally among unbelievers. In our Christian churches, we generally respond, "Well, we are not living under the Law; we are living under God's grace!" It is accurate to say that our binding obligation is not to Old Testament Law. As believing Christians, we are under Christ's higher law—that which is represented in His love and grace. It is true that if we are in Christ, His better law of love is operative in our lives. Is that a big relief to us? Something else needs to be said about God's Law and God's will and God's grace. Everything that is morally commanded in the Ten Commandments still comprises the moral principles that are the will of God for His people. As believing, regenerated Christians, we must acknowledge that God's moral will for His people—then and now—has not changed. God expressed His will for His covenant people. He said, for example, "You shall have no other gods. ... You shall not make for yourself an idol. ... You shall not bow down to them or worship them" (Exo 20:3-5). It has always been God's will that His people shun idolatry. We take our position in God's grace that we are not bound by Mosaic Law. Are we free, then, to worship idols? No, of course not! We are in our Savior, Jesus Christ, by faith. We have met God. We love Him with our whole being. We admire Him and we worship Him. To us, it would be utterly senseless to worship an idol made by the hands of human beings. That is our higher reason—and it confirms the moral will of God. We can apply the same moral and spiritual standards of our faith to the matters of taking the name of the Lord in vain, to covetousness and murder and adultery and stealing and lying. We are not bound by the exterior chains of the old Law—true. If we are what Christ means us to be through love and grace, that kind of external allegiance is not necessary. The apostle Paul expressed well for us this new principle of grace: Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be as in offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. (Rom 8:2-4)

God's second mighty act _____

Now, let us review the second mighty act of God—the giving of this gospel of grace. The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is the declaration of God's redemptive will for men and women on this earth. Quite surely we can agree that this act was more completely divine than the first. I say so because of the participation of the three Persons of the Godhead—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—in the plan of salvation for the lost. This brings us to the mystery and miracle of the Incarnation—God coming to take our humanity and our flesh, yet without sin. Luke quotes the message of the angel Gabriel to Mary: You have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. ... The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God." (Luk 1:30-35) The overshadowing of the Most High, the Father; the energy of the Holy Spirit; the enfleshment of the eternal Son—here were the Persons of the Godhead cooperating in a gracious act on behalf of lost men and women. Later, at the crucifixion, in that most important of all moments for a lost, death-doomed race, the three Persons of the Godhead are again in full view. Our writer to the Hebrews expressed it concisely: "Christ ... through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God" (Heb 9:14). Then, in that culminating miracle—the resurrection of Jesus from the dead—we view again the Trinity in action. Jesus Christ our Lord—to use the apostle Paul's words in Rom 1:4—"through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead." So, in this mighty, once-for-all act of redemption, the three Persons of the Godhead were participating as one—lovingly, harmoniously, effectively working in behalf of lost humanity. In this personal communication from heaven, God declared His redemptive will for us, even as He had declared His high, moral will earlier at Sinai.

Why would Israel not listen? _____

There is a question to be considered at this point. Why did Israel refuse to listen to their God who spoke to them on earth? First, consider the acceptance of idolatry in Israel's culture and worship. The Israelites had not been able to resist the power of example in Egypt. They had lived among their pagan overlords for 400 years. These heathen masters had dominated their lives. When they saw the Egyptians worshiping their idols, the temptation was there to ask, "Why should we be satisfied with an invisible God? Let us fashion something visible to remind us of Him!" Then the mighty hand of God—the God who had never forgotten or abandoned His people—

these Israelites from slavery and from their pagan surroundings. On the mount, He gave them His Word and His Law. But, as the Bible admits, the children of Israel fell to a new low. They not only committed adultery and fornication in view of the thundering Mount Sinai, but they turned such immoral acts into a religious rite, believing that they could worship Jehovah God with licentious sexual practices. From the very start of their heathen rituals, the Almighty God condemned them. But although they were His covenant people, they refused to hear and heed the voice of Him who spoke on earth. There were other areas of disobedience as well. God in His Law had commanded that one day in seven should be observed as a holy and reverent Sabbath. But Israel was largely an agrarian nation, and there were economic reasons for breaking the law of Sabbath rest. If a storm threatened a field of ripe grain, it became easy for the Israelite to finish his harvest on the Sabbath. He would reason within himself, "I know God is not going to be displeased as long as I have a reasonable economic excuse."

We are guilty, too _____

How do we apply this kind of rationale to our practices in this generation? Surely we must admit that the Israelite farmer of long ago was not alone in his shortcomings! We have become quite adept in our own time in finding and using economic, social and other reasons for doing things we should not do and for making decisions that we should not make. We presume the grace of God is so wide and so flexible that we can do just about anything that pleases us or is convenient, and God will look the other way. But Jesus was very dogmatic concerning the lives and attitudes of His disciples. We recall how plain and direct His teachings were. Jesus was not concerned at all about the preservation of economic and cultural customs. He said it was most important that His followers should accept the offense of the cross. I remind you and emphasize it that every serious-minded, committed believer is going to be challenged and even persecuted because he or she is a disciple of the crucified Jesus. Some times there are alternatives, both of them good. But at other times, we shall be called upon to take a right and proper stand for Jesus' sake. Jesus did not promise that consistent Christian living would be easy. He did not promise a release from daily problems and pressures. He did not promise to take us home on a fluffy pink cloud. We live in the knowledge of the grace of God, but we dare not forget that our Lord came to die for us and to express the never-changing moral and redemptive will of God for His people. Before we condemn the Jews of Bible history for their failure, we must be sure we are not overlooking spiritual and moral shortcomings of our own. The prophetic Scriptures announce a coming day when there stored Jewish remnant will come into a blessed, glorious future. We confess that we are indebted to Israel for many things. We owe them for our Bible, for our Messiah who is now our great High Priest in glory. And when the prophecies of our Lord are fulfilled, restored Israel will again be an effective, God fearing nation. But at present, Israel remains under divine judgment. Why? Because Israel rejected the God who loved them, who spoke to them, who cherished them as a chosen people. Israel has turned from the speaking God. In the light of that history, the writer to the Hebrews has this question for his Christian readers: "If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?"(Heb 12:25).

We have a personal responsibility _____

Israel must give her own accounting to God. But what about us? As Christian believers, you and I must be careful about the reasons we give for not heeding God's Word and God's warning from heaven. Have we taken His grace seriously enough that we have asked Him to forgive our spiritual carelessness? Have we identified and dealt with the twin sins of indifference and apathy that are always trying to creep into our daily living? In our day, we hear strange things concerning the measurement of spiritual life and activity. What measurement will be made of your life if you are among those who insist—sometimes loudly—"I am just as good a Christian as most of the people in our church!"

God's message is clear:_____

"Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire." (Heb 12:26-29)

The apostle Peter was in that generation to whom the above words were originally addressed. I close this chapter by telling you that Peter got the message and responded to it! Through Peter, the Holy Spirit has given us one of our best glimpses of the coming shaking of all things and what our preparation should be:

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. (2Pe 3:10-13)

A.W. Tozer; Jesus, Author of Our Faith; AND OTHER ESSAYS ON FAITH; COMPILED AND EDITED BY GERALD B. SMITH
Aiden Wilson Tozer (April 21, 1897 - May 12, 1963) was an American Protestant pastor, preacher, author, magazine editor, Bible conference speaker, and spiritual mentor. For his work, he received two honorary doctorates. Among the more than forty books that he authored, at least two are regarded as Christian classics: *The Pursuit of God* and *The Knowledge of the Holy*. His books impress on the reader the possibility and necessity for a deeper relationship with God. Living a simple and non-materialistic lifestyle, he and his wife, Ada Cecelia Pfautz, never owned a car, preferring bus and train travel. Even after becoming a well-known Christian author, Tozer signed away much of his royalties to those who were in need. Prayer was of vital personal importance for Tozer. "His preaching as well as his writings were but extensions of his prayer life", comments his biographer, James L. Snyder in the book, *In Pursuit of God: The Life Of A.W. Tozer*. "He had the ability to make his listeners face themselves in the light of what God was saying to them", writes Snyder. Tozer himself produced the works: *Let My People Go*; *Man : the Dwelling Place of God*; *Paths to Power*; *The Divine Conquest**The Knowledge of the Holy*, (1961) New York: Harper & Row, ISBN 0-06-068412-7; *The Pursuit of God*, (1957) Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, ISBN 0-87509-522-4; *The Root of the Righteous*; There are also many compilations of sermons and other writings which were edited and published by Christian Publications, Inc., after Tozer's death. Although the books were published posthumously, authorship is attributed to A. W. Tozer. Wikipedia

The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

1 Timothy 1:14

Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich. — For where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. — Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. — According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

2 Corinthians 8:9. Romans 5:20. Ephesians 2:7-9. Galatians 2:16. Titus 3:5,6.

Daily Light on the Daily Path.

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 549-553)

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