

# GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

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PO Box 571 - Priest River, ID 83856 \* [www.gentleshepherd.com](http://www.gentleshepherd.com) \* March 2012

## SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL

### The Tsunamis

#### Part 8

Rayola Kelley

If you are like me, you are watching world events, knowing that what was prophesied in the Bible is coming true before our very eyes. Depending on where you put your focus, it can be either very frightening or it can bring an assurance that it is now time to look up and keep looking up for the fulfillment of the Blessed Hope promised in the Bible. The Blessed Hope is Jesus is coming back, first for His Church, and then to put things right.

Meanwhile, we live in a time where everything that happens will be anything but right. It will look as if evil will ultimately triumph in every situation, injustice will be rampant, despair will be the prevailing mood, death the victor, and hopelessness the reality. It will speak of the culmination of history as the environment during Noah's time takes center stage and the likes of a Nimrod, who first established the kingdom of Babel, begins to become increasingly blatant as each of these individuals openly take strides in order to gain world dominance.

As you watch the diverse power plays take place between individuals in high places of finance, religious kingdoms, worldly governments, and political maneuvers, it is obvious that these different powers are on a collision course. Granted, they may be using each other to arrive at a particular goal and to get rid of any hindrances and obstacles, but in the end they will turn on each other to devour the other in order to gain world dominance. After all, you cannot change the nature of a wolf, and these people are nothing more than predators.

Caught in the middle of the power struggle are those who are

trying to maintain some semblance of life. They want to secure a life that will guarantee them a measure of security and stability. However, behind the scenes are the predators, prowling around, making plans, and scoping out the lay of the land and to accomplish their objectives. They do not care who they use, take captive, or sacrifice to fulfill their wicked agendas.

However, there is something these foolish, godless individuals do not realize and that is wickedness causes a backlash. It comes in the form of what I call a "tsunami." The sowing of wickedness causes cracks in foundations, its ways send shock waves through every part of the land, and its deadly fruits create a wave of judgment and destruction that travels through the ocean of humanity, bringing ruin and despair everywhere it hits. Eventually, this wave will take captive everyone who is not hidden in the ark of God, Jesus, including those who have created it.

This brings us to what I consider the different tsunamis in the Bible. The first one was that of deception. We see this wave hitting the Garden of Eden. In her innocence, Eve had no idea of the tsunami of deception that was coming at her full speed ahead. She was completely beguiled, proving she was not prepared to discern its dangerous ascent on her; therefore, she quickly fell victim to it, and was drawn out into the ocean of judgment by the receding waves of transgression (2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:14). We know that due to his own inward condition, Adam also allowed himself to be taken captive by the waves of transgression as he gave way to temptation. We can point fingers at who had the greatest fault for being taken captive by such a destructive wave, but the harsh reality is that because of what happened in the Garden of Eden all mankind was taken out by this tsunami to taste death and destruction. Praise God,

He provided the lifesaver of His Son to pull us out of this deadly wave with cords of love, mercy, and grace.

Jesus warns us that in the end days another great wave of deception will hit this world (Matthew 24:4-5, 23-25). This deception will be very religious in nature. It will offer a different Jesus, be motivated by a wrong spirit, and will preach a different gospel (2 Corinthians 11:3-15). It will come across as truth, but it will be a false light that will blind people to the tsunami that is behind it. In fact, we are told in 2 Thessalonians 2:11 that God will be sending this tsunami to test the hearts of His people. The only way to be prepared to avoid being washed away by this force to taste the bitterness of judgment and death is to love the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12).

To love the truth means you must believe that God's Word is truth. In essence, you must love God and His Word with everything in you. Jesus overcame deception in the wilderness by quoting the Word of God (Matthew 4:1-11). If you believe the Word, you will not take pleasure in unrighteousness; rather, you will flee it in pursuit of what is true and right according to the instruction and holiness of the Lord (2 Timothy 2:22).

This brings us to the next tsunami. It has to do with imagination. It is said of Noah's day in *Genesis 6:5*, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." There is a great tsunami that is now taking the minds of man into captivity.

The present wave comes as a war that has been waged by Hollywood and the music industry on morality. It has come in the form of pornography (fornication), lawlessness, and hatred. Granted, the waves were small as it conditioned us with the idea of romance and happiness. However, each time the tide rolled out, it left its impact on the terrain of man's mind, allowing for the following wave to gain momentum to

take additional territory with more blatant presentations of the immoral and the abominable.

Each wave has been designed to rob families and societies of more innocence, defile what is right, and destroy all that is true and absolute. Tragically, each time the wave recedes, the moral foundation has been eroded away. With internet the possibilities of filling our minds with absolute filth is endless, and as a result, our society is paying a price too great to imagine, leaving in its wake broken lives, families, and societies. Sadly, this wave has so desensitized many, even in the Church, that it seems that most no longer blink at or abhor the immoral, godless presentations that flash upon the different screens of our TVs and monitors. These desensitized individuals do not realize that each wave sweeps them further from the center of all that is true, pure, and right.

It is for this reason that we are instructed in *2 Corinthians 10:5* to cast down such imaginations and everything that would exalt itself against the Person and work of God. Keep in mind, all idolatry exists first in the mind and heart. When we believe that what we have imagined is important because of the lust of our eyes, we are erecting those images to a place of significance and idolatry. These images not only take our thoughts captive, but they will sweep up the affections of the heart with them. Once we bring the idolatry down, we can bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

The next tsunami has to do with ideas. Today there is a tsunami of ideology sweeping our world. We see this type of wave taking center stage in the case of the tower of Babel in *Genesis 11*. To understand Babel, we must understand the character of the one who founded it. His name was Nimrod (*Genesis 10:10*).

It is said of Nimrod that he began to be a mighty in the earth. The Bible describes this might by referring to him as a "mighty hunter" before the Lord (*Genesis 10:9*). Some interpret this as Nimrod hunting for the souls of men. The reason they believe this is because of the attitude that came forth out of Babel in *Gene-*

*sis 11:6c*, "and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do."

When you consider *Genesis 11:4*, you realize that what man had in mind to do was build a lasting memorial to himself. At this time the idea these people held was that if they came together in common agreement, they could reach the heavens with the intent of bringing God down from His height in order to exalt themselves and other gods (such as creation, the Zodiac, and so forth).

This is where we see the making of a one world-government run by man (tyranny), a one world-religious system that exalts man (humanism), and a one world-economic system (Communism) which would promote the type of memorial man wanted to establish for himself. This ideology pointed to the type of agreement that appeared as if even the God of heaven could not withstand. However, to be part of this agreement man would have to sell his soul to the cause of opposing his Creator. In essence, he would have to sell it to gain the world.

Consider the world we live in today. The ideology of Babel is alive and well. The educational system and the media are spewing forth propaganda that promotes the ideology and philosophy of Babel. With the help of the educational and media avenues, those in power are asking people to sell their souls by compromising the truth, negating righteousness, and flinging themselves into the waves of this evil cause. In fact, thanks to the many godless leaders and wicked financial infidels they are reliving Babel all over again. Due to the tsunami they have created with the help of the god of this world, Satan, they think they are going to succeed in bringing God down, establish a lasting memorial to man, and usher in a utopia for themselves. Since these individuals must rid the world of 80% of the population in order to control it, one must ask what about those "fortunate" souls who happen to survive these people's waves of destruction? The answer is simple enough—the "peons" who are left will be required to mindlessly serve the image that has been created by these sons of Belial.

The truth is the ideology of the wicked is doomed. As with Babel, the

Lord will come down and put a simple but powerful wrench in their plans. Only this time, the sky will part and Jesus will return as the King of kings and the Lord of lords to judge them. Like those at Babel, these wicked leaders may make inroads into bringing about Satan's wicked plan of being the ultimate ruler of this world, but the Son of God will usher in a day of reckoning for each of them. All of their attempts will be blown into the air by the winds of judgment and disbursed into the fires of wrath to be remembered no more.

*Colossians 2:8* states, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." As Christians, we must not turn our minds over to the world's way of thinking. The Bible is clear, we are to let the mind of Christ be developed in us. We must make sure our minds are not conformed to this world, but are constantly being transformed by the renewing of the Spirit that is being wrought in us by the Word of God.

We must come out and be separate from the influences of this present age as we take ownership of our souls by possessing them in patience. We must be watchmen over our spiritual lives, and be alert to the times in which we live to prepare ourselves to stand in faith as each tsunami approaches, withstand with truth when it begins to hit the shoreline of our resolve, and continue to stand in hope when it begins to consume the terrain around us. Clearly, we must do all of this knowing that we stand on the Rock, and that in the near future our Lord will come and set all matters right.

It is clear that some of the waves attached to the coming tsunamis have already hit our shores. As they recede, we must recognize that they are warning us that behind them is gathering greater waves of tribulation that will escalate with the momentum that is now present in the world. As Christians, we must not allow the roar of these waves to grip us with fear. We must choose to remember that our hope is not here in this world. It is in such remembrance that we can also take the opportunity to look up in complete assurance, knowing that our redemption indeed draws near. †

## THE INVISIBLE WIND

By Jeannette Haley

What is invisible, yet has the ability to be soft and gentle, warm or cold, powerful, influential, refreshing, mighty, and even deadly? How can something that no one can see, or capture or tame have such a powerful influence? Of course, I am referring to the wind. Mankind may be able to use it, and study its effects, but God is the one who controls it.

In *Genesis 8:1* we read the first mention in the Bible of the wind. It says, *“And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged.”* (From assuage.) In His mercy, the Lord “made a wind” to ease, pacify, quench, and quiet the raging waters that covered the earth. We can’t even begin to imagine what a powerful, world-wide wind that was! However, it does serve to remind us of the terrifying storm the disciples faced in *Matthew 8:24-27*, *“And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, inasmuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he [Jesus] was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea: and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!”*

*Psalms 89:8, 9* tells us, *“O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto thee? Or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.”* *Psalms 107:29* also declares, *“He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.”* Only God has total control of the elements of nature. Even though Satan can and does cause great death and destruction through wind and fire (see *Job 1:13-22*) our Creator God has the final say (*Job 38, 39*).

In their panic, the disciples turned to the sleeping Jesus. In their fear, they were undoubtedly shouting above the roar of the storm that they

were going to perish. After He rose and calmed the storm, He asked them, *“Where is your faith?”* Now, before we, who are reading this account two-thousand years later from the safety of our high and dry perch become too judgmental of His disciples, let me ask you this: Have you ever been at the mercy of the raging sea when it is tossed by contrary winds? Perhaps you have, and perhaps you were cool as a cucumber with nary a thought about death by drowning. If so, good for you. But, as for me, even 52 years later, I still have vivid memories in living color of the sheer terror of being aboard a single screw (single engine) small boat (about 25’ or so) in a gale at sea.

It would have been nice—well, more like smart—if my step-father had not chosen to ignore the red storm warning flag hoisted by the Coast Guard at Point No Point located at the northern tip of the Kitsap Peninsula, Washington. Instead, we cruised past it on a deceptively calm sea. In fact, the Straits of Juan de Fuca for as far as we could see didn’t appear to have breaking swells. Therefore, it was decided to make a run for it across the Straits to Cattle Point on San Juan Island. What we didn’t know, however, was that the invisible wind was producing a major gale storm which was rapidly moving in from the Pacific Ocean. By the time we realized that we were in major trouble, it was too late. The waves mounting up on the port side of the craft were averaging fourteen feet or higher. To try and turn around would be suicide. As my step-father fought to make some headway while at the same time battling to prevent the boat from capsizing, I did what I do best in such a situation; that is, freak out and get violently seasick.

You may wonder if, like Jesus’ terrified disciples, did I pray and cry out to the Lord? Well, as Balki (“Perfect Strangers” TV comedy series) used to say, “Don’t be ridiculous. Of course I did!” Believe me, I can identify with Jesus’ disciples one-hundred percent. Maybe Jesus’ disciples could visibly see Him in their sinking fishing boat,

but I knew He was resurrected from the dead and seated on the right hand of God. Regardless of who you are, or where you are, there are times when invisible, powerful contrary winds will test your faith to the limit, and reveal to you just how fragile your faith can be. Consider this: If there were no storms to challenge us, and test our faith from time to time, would we seek His face in earnest, or remain in our lukewarm comfort zone. As for me, when we finally docked in a since forgotten safe harbor on San Juan Island, I was so utterly thankful to be on terra firma once again I felt like kissing the ground.

The Bible has much to teach us concerning the wind. Interestingly, consistently throughout Scripture whenever you read of an “east wind,” you will see that it is associated with the judgment of God, such as famine. (*Genesis 41:6, 23, 27; Job 15:2*). A “vehement east wind” that God prepared for Jonah caused him to faint and hope to die (see *Jonah 4:8*). In *Exodus 10:13* we read, *“And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts.”*

In *Exodus 14:21, 22* we read of the east wind that brought judgment upon the Egyptians. *“And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.”* The rest of the chapter records the overthrow and destruction of all of the host of Pharaoh that hotly pursued them.

Job, in describing the sudden judgment of destruction upon the wicked rich said, *“The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth: and as a storm hurleth him out of his place”* *Job 27:21*. *Psalms 48:7* states, *“Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.”* Concerning God’s judgment upon His people that forgot Him, the Prophet Jeremiah declared, *“I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will shew*



Point No Point

them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity." The question is, what about America? We know that God sent an "east wind" in the form of the Babylonians and other enemies as a form of judgment upon Israel and Judah. Will America face an east wind in God's dealings with her?

God is a God of order. His warnings and dealings with the Children of Israel should serve as an example to us of His ways so that we can know, understand, and repent before the east winds of His judgment totally destroy this nation. We would do well to keep in mind what God tells us in *Isaiah 55:6-9*, "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Therefore, regardless of people's opinions of why God would want to bless America, save America, overlook America's sins, lightly chastise America, or destroy America altogether, the bottom line is our opinions, strong feelings, and conclusions about this matter are not the same as God's ways and thoughts. God has not ceased to be who He is because we have tacked His name onto our money, our institutions, our cultural traditions, our various religions, and our so-called "Christian" organizations. He remains "the Lord, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up" above all the earth and the vain thoughts, imaginations, inventions, institutions, and activities of man.

The truth is, the Word of the LORD that came to Ezekiel (and other prophets) concerning Israel can likewise be applied to America today. With this in mind, consider *Ezekiel 17:7-10*, "There was also another great eagle with great wings and many feathers: and, behold, this vine did bend her roots toward him, and shot forth her branches toward him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantation. It was planted in a

good soil by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine. Say thou, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Shall it prosper? Shall he not pull up the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof, that it wither? It shall wither in all the leaves of her spring, even without great power or many people to pluck it up by the roots thereof. Yea, behold, being planted, shall it prosper? Shall it not utterly wither, when the east wind toucheth it? it shall wither in the furrows where it grew." "But she was plucked up in fury, she was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up her fruit: her strong rods were broken and withered; the fire consumed them" *Ezekiel 19:12*.

Some may protest, "That was about Israel. God forsook them." "There has never been a nation like America. God loves America, and will fight for it." "America is Israel; therefore, God is for us, God bless America!" If you believe these, or any other like assumptions, then my questions for you are, when did God cease to be God? When did the immutable God change? When did God break His everlasting covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendants? When did God become an unholy humanist like many professing "Christians" are today? When did God decide that sin is no big deal so that people can live any way they want after mouthing the words to a "sinner's prayer"? When did God change His opinion about idolatry, fornication, the murder of innocent blood, iniquity (moral deviation), perversion, pornography, incest, bestiality, homosexuality, filthy communication, sorcery (drugs), witchcraft, greed, covetousness, envy, lust, dishonor to parents, pride, evil imaginations, lying, stealing, cruelty, slothfulness, ingratitude, pride, respect of persons, preaching a false gospel, resisting the Holy Spirit, and the list is seemingly endless. When did the Word of God cease to be the only truth that man must live by? If you can tell exactly when and how the immutable God changed, then you can answer the above questions and give a defense as to why God should not judge, not only America, but the entire world.

An insidious, devastating east wind has been blowing in earnest against America for decades. It began as a seemingly harmless, whisper. A "puff of air" reminiscent of Satan's enticing question to Eve. "Yea, hath God said"... "Thou shalt have no other gods before me?" How hard has it been for Americans to serve both God and mammon? People tend to trust in their riches if they have them, or lust for other's riches if they don't have them. Either way, perhaps "In God We Trust" is merely throwing a bone at Him in the hopes that He will bless us in our sin.

Then the east wind became a tantalizing breeze whose siren call of sorcery seduced millions into the hazy mist of an altered state of consciousness. Sorcery, which is strictly forbidden by God is, as you may recall, pharmakeia from which we derive our word pharmacy. It involves drugs, magic, and witchcraft, all of which bring about an altered state of consciousness. An altered state of consciousness not only distorts reality, but it opens a person up to demon possession. In *Revelation 9:21* we read, "Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." In this one verse we can see at a glance that America is just as guilty as any other nation of murder (for example, 60 million aborted babies); drugs (both legal and illegal); fornication (pornography and illicit sex); and thievery (I am thinking from the highest office in the land on down to the pickpocket in the street).

There are many other ways to seduce a person's mind into an altered state, or trance-like state such as Transcendental Meditation (TM). Certain pagan forms of chanting, drum beats and "mystical" New Age music can produce such an altered state. TM, reincarnation, yoga, and mind-science religions such as Unity and the positive confession movement, which is the foundation of Robert Schuller, Norman Vincent Peale, E.W. Kenyon, Kenneth Hagin, the Copelands, Benny Hinn, and basically every "star" on TBN is the mesmerizing east wind of Hinduism that carries with it a haunting, celestial undertone of Satan's ancient song, "Ye shall be as gods." Mormonism

and the Roman Catholic Church, find their roots in the east wind of Freemasonry and Baal worship. The Mormons also believe the New Age lie that men shall become gods.

There are many devastating whirlwinds of judgment from the east that are threatening to annihilate us as a nation. To me, the four most dangerous are China, Islam, the Kenyan-born dictator at the helm of this nation (both he and his wife have been caught on tape admitting this fact), and the infiltration of New Age winds blowing into the professing church. *Ephesians 4:14* warns, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

When will these east winds stop blowing death and destruction? The answer can be found in *Revelation 7:1*, "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." As you read this chapter you will see that this was just prior to God sealing the 144,000 from the tribes of Israel. Thus, we read of God controlling the wind in the first book of the Bible when He made a wind to blow over the entire earth to abate the waters of judgment, and then as we follow the winds of judgment through Scripture, we come to the last mention of the wind in the last book of the Bible.

The question we need to ask isn't how can we save America from the east winds of judgment, but, instead, how shall we escape God's wrath? *Hebrews 2:3a* "How shall we escape, of we neglect so great salvation?" (Emphasis added.) Let us draw near to God in true repentance, seeking His face, and crying out for mercy. "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" *Acts 2:21*. Ask the Lord to send His "rushing mighty wind" of the Holy Spirit to fill you so that "you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" to be a witness unto Jesus Christ in these end days.

Believe the Lord Jesus, who said "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him" *Luke 11:13*? Will you do it? †



## COMMENTS & EMAILS

"I have been out of the church about 18 years. I even saw back then how our church was doing SNEAKY things, not using money that was given for certain things, and using it for other things they wanted. They got all YES MEN in to sit on the board—NOT GOOD—SO I LEFT. I have looked and looked for a church. But when I go, I can see little things that are going on that I had seen in our church all those years ago, AND I SAY 'NOPE - not coming here.' I can see what road they are heading down, and I don't want to be a part of it. BUT I SO MISS THE FELLOWSHIP..."— OH

"We have been inoculated AGAINST the real gospel... by getting placebos..!!"— AR

"I went to the \_\_\_\_\_ Church this morning, which lasted a total of 10 minutes before the Lord told me to get out. I couldn't believe what I was witnessing. They had round tables like what you would see at a reception with banquet tables instead of pews like they were there to partake of feeling good about themselves, but not to sit at the banquet table of God and partake of His word. There were some announcements and then we were asked to greet one another, but instead of people sitting down some continued to talk, laugh and socialize as the so-called worship started. A grieving and sadness came upon me and I felt like running through the place crying out "Ichabod," the Spirit of the Lord has departed. This is when I got up and left. Something else that I

took note of...was...my spirit was uncomfortable with...their pastor and I asked the Lord what the check in my spirit was and I got pornography. He also had a homosexual spirit about him even though he was married. I realize that only God knows this, but whatever it was he had a powerful lustful, perverted and unclean spirit.

"I had been told about \_\_\_\_\_ Church which was a couple of blocks away so this is where I ended up next. They asked all the kids to come up and finish worship. This is when I got sick to my stomach again because literally these kids sang and did hand gestures while hard rock songs were played and images of the cross and words like you are my salvation, my God etc. were displayed on this HUGE overhead projector. I walked out again. It saddened me and I asked the Lord how these kids can say that He is their salvation and God when they do not even know Him. How can you know Him when His Spirit isn't there? It brought Jesus' words to mind when He said in *Luke 18:8*, 'Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?' There is only one faith, one Spirit and truth and Jesus is the only entry way into worshiping Him in Spirit and in Truth. You feel like a misfit because people are looking at you like what is wrong with, you just loosen up and have fun, but then I remember that we are just sojourners and we are not supposed to fit as we are called to be separate. I can see why Jesus said, 'Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.' God is righteous and is not going to step outside of His holiness especially meet us where there is rock music. I realize that rock music seems to be the mainstream in Christianity now, but to me rock music is no more than Satan's music which stirs up and invokes pride and rebellion. God will only draw near to those who are humble in spirit and pure in heart." - ID

"The only one I have ever watched [on TV] that I thought was good and he fell big time was Jimmy Swaggart. Since then, I Have been VERY PICKY WHO I LISTEN TO. I bet over 80% of ministries today are corrupt, sad to say." - OH

## RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

### IS ANGER A SIN?

**Q:** *I was recently given the impression that any show or sign of anger is a sin. Is there any Scriptural basis for this conclusion?*

**A:** Sadly, some of the popular presentations in regard to true Christianity are not realistic. The subject of anger easily falls into this classification. You would have to be an unfeeling robot, a mannequin to adhere to the concept that a Christian will not feel, experience, or express anger in some way during his or her lifetime.

The truth is, anger is an emotion. It is sometimes an expression spurred by disappointment, disgust, frustration, hurt, misunderstanding, weariness, and fear. The Bible is clear that anger is not a sin in itself. After all, God also possesses anger. His anger can be expressed in three ways. They are:

*Righteous indignation:* This type of anger is directed towards that which is unrighteous and unjust. Jesus expressed righteous indignation when He threw the money-changers out of the temple at the beginning of His ministry and at the end of His mission. Such indignation takes offence and will express itself when there is a blatant show of contempt or disregard for the things of God.

*Wrath:* This is the most intense display of anger on God's part. Such wrath can be related to rage. However, when man rages, there is no righteousness to be found in it. God will only show His wrath upon disobedience (*Ephesians 5:6*). God's wrath will not occur until His overtures have been completely rejected, man's iniquity has come to full bloom, and there is no other recourse but for Him to display His wrath toward all that which is godless and rebellious. Such anger will always operate within the bounds of righteous and holy judgments.

*Vengeance:* The final aspect of anger is expressed in vengeance. Anger that produces vengeance can prove to be destructive when it comes to man, but just when it comes to God. Man is not to seek vengeance because God in His righteous judgments will justly address those who are guilty at the proper time. This is

why Scripture is clear that vengeance belongs to the Lord (*Romans 12:19*).

The truth of the matter is that when it comes to man, it depends on how he handles his anger whether it becomes sin. *Ephesians 4:26-27* instructs us to not let the sun go down on our anger and give a foothold to Satan. *Ephesians 4:31-32* tells us to put it off with all malice and give way to that which is loving and virtuous.

The reason for these instructions is that anger turned within becomes depression and hopelessness, while anger that takes root turns into bitterness. Anger that festers turns into malice and indifference, while anger that seethes turns into hatred. Anger that is allowed to escalate turns into rage and violence. It is for these reasons that anger must always be kept in perspective. It must be channeled in the right way as it becomes tempered by love. It must never rule us; rather, it must be overcome by meekness as we quickly come under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

I do hope this brings the subject of anger into proper balance for you.

### A cheap, easy Christianity

(J.C. Ryle, "The Cost")

*"Any of you who does not give up everything he has, cannot be My disciple." Luke 14:33*

What does it cost to be a Christian? I grant freely that it costs little to be a mere outward Christian. A man has only got to attend a place of worship twice on Sunday, and to be tolerably moral during the week--and he has gone as far as thousands around him ever go in religion. All this is cheap and easy work--it entails no self-denial or self-sacrifice. If this is saving Christianity and will take us to Heaven when we die--we must alter the description of the way of life, and write, "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to Heaven!"

But it does cost something to be a real Christian, according to the standard of the Bible. There are . . . enemies to be overcome, battles to be fought, sacrifices to be made, an Egypt to be forsaken, a wilderness to be passed through, a cross to be carried, a race to be run.

Conversion is not putting a man in a soft armchair, and taking him pleasantly to Heaven. It is the beginning of a mighty conflict, in which it costs much to win the victory. Hence arises the unspeakable importance of "counting the cost."

True Christianity will cost a man...his self-righteousness, his sins, his love of ease, and the favor of the world.

A religion which costs nothing--is worth nothing! A cheap, easy Christianity, without a cross--will prove in the end a useless Christianity, without a crown!

### A RIGHT CONCEPTION OF GOD

"The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man's spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God....

"A right conception of God is basic not only to systematic theology but to practical Christian living as well. It is to worship what the foundation is to the temple; where it is inadequate or out of plumb the whole structure must sooner or later collapse. I believe there is scarcely an error in doctrine or a failure in applying Christian ethics that cannot be traced finally to imperfect and ignoble thoughts about God.

"It is my opinion that the Christian conception of God current in these middle years of the twentieth century is so decadent as to be utterly beneath the dignity of the Most High God and actually to constitute for professed believers something amounting to a moral calamity."—A.W. Tozer

"What a wonderful thought—that I may save a sinner from everlasting death. This can happen if I bring that person back to truth. This is the calling of every Christian...What a change has cover over the Church! Many Christians never try to bring others to Christ. May the time soon come when Christians will feel constrained to share the love of Christ." —Andrew Murray