

GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH ~ MAKING DISCIPLES ~ EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR MINISTRY

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UNFEIGNED FAITH

Part 8

OMMISSION

By Rayola Kelley

We have been considering what unfeigned faith looks like and how it will work and express itself in our lives. As you probably know, we discover or experience different stages of faith in our Christian journey. For example, the first stage of faith is when we are born again. At such a time a new life has been quickened in us by the Spirit. The joy of it all represents sort of a honeymoon in light of discovering Jesus. It is all so exciting and wonderful.

The next stage of faith involves preparing our spiritual muscles to stand. Needless to say, this stage finds us crawling around in uncertainty as we try to find some stable means to pull ourselves up to explore an unseen world that appears to be out of reach. As we test our ability to stand, we find ourselves a bit wobbly as we struggle to put our trust in God so that we can stand on His promises in expectation of them coming to fruition.

Once we learn to stand, then we can begin to take small steps in confidence that if we fall, our loving Father will pick us up and dust us off. He will encourage us to take the necessary risks in order to walk out the life that is being formed in us. After all, faith is about taking a risk. It is obvious that you cannot discover the depths or heights of God unless you are willing to risk normalcy, comfort zones, and conveniences of the present life. To learn to take steps, we must learn to obey His Word. Such obedience allows us to discover the unknown that can prove to be both exciting and frightening. Even though intellectually we know that God will



not fail us, we also realize that He may not catch us when we think He should. In our immature way of thinking we can question whether He will bother to pay attention to our particular plight or circumstances. It appears that our unstable spiritual legs also represent our uncertainties and doubts as to whether God will truly take note of us. After all, there is nothing that dictates to Him that He must prove Himself faithful to be at our side while we take such steps. His presence and intervention in our lives are a matter of His abiding grace, not because we are worthy of such consideration from Him.

Once we begin to walk in obedience towards His Word and purpose, our walking legs will become strong and we can begin to run the race toward our high calling and heavenly destiny. We can begin to explore the depths of God's ways and discover the heights of His character. As we become more disciplined, the path will become narrower. As we are called to the place of excellence, we press forward to apprehend the heavenly prize of possessing our Lord Jesus.

Genuine faith is what gets us where we need to be. Each new forboding terrain of our spiritual walk will cause us to reach down into the depths of our souls in the way of determination, in order to reach up with everything in us to cling to the character of the Lord. It is for this reason that God is able to count or impute that which originates from unfeigned faith as righteousness (Romans 4:4, 9).

God must count or impute righteousness to us because as Romans 3:10 states, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." There is no good or beneficial thing in our flesh; therefore, what we would consider to be righteous in our lives is viewed by God as being filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6; Romans 7:18).

Since God is holy, He cannot accept that which is not righteous before Him. It is for this reason that the

matter of righteousness has been clearly outlined in Scripture. Due to the reality that we have no real origin or source of righteousness outside of Christ, we need to understand what God counts or considers as being righteous. We are reminded in 1 Peter 4:18, "the righteous are scarcely saved." When you understand how God imputes such righteousness to us, you will understand how Peter could make such a statement.

Right standing in God: The Bible tells us that upon salvation, God places us into Jesus who is the essence of righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30). When God considers us, He sees the righteousness of Christ and not the best of our filthy rags, which are nothing more than attempts to make ourselves right. Because we are placed in Christ, we have right standing in God. As a result, we can be established in a right relationship with Him.

Right standing before God: To stand right before God entails faith. As previously stated, genuine faith is active. Faith believes God. Such faith declares, "Amen, so be it, for it is so." In other words "amen" is the same as saying that a matter is already so. Since a matter is what it is, it makes it truth. Because it is truth, its fruits will be brought forth to fruition in the appropriate time. The beauty about active faith is that it will always line a person up to the truth of God. Keep in mind, an unsaved person is naturally bent towards the matters of sin and the world. These people's preference is the darkness that will hide the intent and purpose of their wicked deeds. However, when active faith is applied to truth, it causes a person to line up to the heavenly and the eternal. Faith clearly changes the bent on a situation. Since the person is standing in line with the purpose and will of God, he or she will be reckoned as standing upright before Him.

Right standing because of God: Active faith walks hand and hand with love towards God (Galatians 5:6). It desires to please Him in honorable ways.

As Jesus stated, if you love Him, you will keep His commandments. The natural bent of godly love and unfeigned faith is to obey the Lord as a means to bring glory to Him. Because of love and the desire to do right by God, a person will have right standing *because* of Him.

True righteousness can only find its source and inspiration in God. For this reason we need to recognize that even though we may be counted as righteous by God, we must realize that it is His source and standard of righteousness that He is imputing to us.

This brings us to how righteousness will manifest itself in our lives. Righteousness will express itself in doing right. I am not just talking about doing "good" things. Deeds may give the appearance of righteousness but such deeds may be considered reprobate or useless to God (*Titus 1:16*). Once again, righteousness is more than doing "good" deeds. It is an attitude that produces a holy inward state that will express itself in godliness.

The reason we must understand how righteousness operates in and through us is because it creates right attitudes in us. The one attitude that speaks of righteousness is its blatant repulsion towards sin. Righteousness abhors sin for it is totally contrary to it. The Apostle John in his first epistle bears this out in *1 John 3:9-10*, "*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.*"

The reason righteousness will not tolerate sin is because it breaks fellowship with God and puts one on shaky ground with Him. Sin will cause one to inevitably walk under the covering of the darkness of deception. Since faith is the platform in which righteousness can be declared, established, and brought forth, it will choose to believe God rather than walk in unbelief towards Him. In a way, it will tremble before God in dread of displeasing Him, and be sober as to the responsibility of

properly handling the matters of God.

We see this same dread and sobriety in the case of Noah. He lived during wicked times. Because he believed God, he walked with Him in the midst of an environment where the Spirit of God was withdrawing (*Genesis 6:3*). As a result of Noah's faith, he found grace or favor with God (*Genesis 6:8*). To avoid the pending judgment coming upon the face of the earth, he was instructed to build an ark. We are told that he, in the fear or dread of the Lord, obeyed. Due to Noah's reaction towards the wickedness of the world and his response of faith towards God, his right standing before his Creator brought judgment upon the rest of the world (*Hebrews 11:7*).

Righteousness is what brings a needed contrast into the world. Without contrast there is no means of bringing distinction or understanding to a matter. For example, the Lord imputed the Law to show us we were sinners so it could point us to our need for Christ (*Romans 3:19-20; Galatians 3:24*). Without the Law of God there would be no such contrast to awaken or cause people to consider their spiritual plight.

Righteousness will have no part with wickedness. It will not only refrain from partaking of evil, but it will flee it. It was because of unfeigned faith we see Moses choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. The reason he chose the way of affliction is because, "*Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward* (*Hebrews 11:26*).

Moses clearly valued the things of God. He was aware of the promises given to the people of God and had faith that in due time those who maintained the integrity of their faith towards God would experience the fruits of it. In a sense, Moses had gained spiritual sight that allowed him to see beyond his present time and world to a future promise. *Hebrews 11:27* states that he forsook Egypt and endured as seeing Him who is invisible. Remember, Moses encountered God's presence on Mount Sinai, and beheld His glory.

Faith will cause one to stand upright before God and endure to the end

to receive the reward. For Moses, it was the future revelation of Christ, and for Christians, it is the fullness of their redemption.

This brings us to the second type of fruit that righteousness will produce, and that is doing what is honorable. Being right before God is not just a matter of refraining from the ways of evil, but it also entails doing what is honorable. Note, I am not saying doing what is right, for people have different ideas as to what they think is right. Doing what is honorable has to do with doing that which has been ordained by God. In summation, it is what God can count as being right and accept it as a means of service or sacrifice (*Romans 12:1-2*).

The reason the term "honorable" is used instead of "doing right" is because honorable points to doing that which would constitute your reasonable service. On the other hand, "doing right" perceives that a person is being quite "noble" about a matter. In many cases the individual is seeking honor or recognition for his or her deeds.

The heart attitude behind honor and nobility is diversely different. Honor comes out of true humility. When you go to honor something, you must first exalt it. Nobility comes out of pride. When you are regarding something in light of whether it is right or wrong, you are being placed in a position of being a judge over the matter.

The truth is there is nothing noble about doing right in regards to the things of God, for it is the least a person can do (*Romans 12:2*). Doing right does not deserve recognition for it is one's responsibility to do so. Therefore, the concept of being honorable in all we do entails having a right attitude towards the matters of God. As Christians, we must always do what is right because we love Him. We must always be honorable in all matters because it represents the One we serve. Since we have the Lord's Spirit in us we should be inclined to do right, as well as develop godly tendencies that will ensure the proper disciplines to maintain the integrity of our Christian walk.

Unfeigned faith is what causes us to walk in an honorable way. It directs us in the right way, while inspiring us to greatness and leading us to that which is excellent. It will not settle for less nor

BLURRY
By Jeannette Haley

If you have ever tried to navigate through a blizzard, a blanket of thick fog, smoke, or a dust storm, you know how fearful it can be. The same holds true for driving in the pitch dark along a country road during a rainstorm, with a lousy windshield and wipers to match. I've been there many a time when I lived in Western Washington. Sometimes I think it's a miracle I'm still here. In situations such as these, you may have your eyesight, but you can only see just enough to know you can't see. All you can think about at such a time is finding a safe place to hole up until it clears enough to be able to safely continue your journey. Such an experience has the power to cause a person to realize how small, helpless, and vulnerable they really are in the scheme of things.

Journeying through life can be a lot like "driving blind" for those who are lost and without Christ. Such people cannot tell you why they are here, or where they are going. Therefore, they automatically look to the world to fill in the blanks for them and give them some sort of purpose, or meaning for their existence. However, all the world has to offer is vanity and pride. None of it can truly satisfy the longing soul, heal the brokenhearted, or give purpose and meaning to life. The world cannot offer hope when passing through the "valley of the shadow of death," nor can it offer forgiveness, and everlasting joy, peace, and love.

When we talk about the world, we are not referring to God's beautiful creation, but to the Satanic systems of this world. These systems make up the broad path that leads to destruction. Jesus warned in Matthew 7:13-14, "*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.*" What we need to beware of is that this broad path can appear, to our "natural eyes," to be bright, beautiful, logical, wise, desirable, pleasurable, and right. The broad path seems to be the route to choose, especially when a

person is young and full of energy and ideas that may lead to fame and fortune. The broad path playfully beckons the youth to taste of its pleasures, while tantalizing their senses and emotions with the possibilities of experiences and sensations yet to be tasted. It lures the unsuspecting by stirring up their "youthful lusts," and in a light and teasing manner subtly mocks and scorns the things of God. Such roadblocks as truth, holiness, reverence, purity and godliness are not to be found on this smooth highway to hell. From all appearances, it is the perfect path. After all, most people choose to travel this road. Isn't that proof enough that it is the right, normal, and intelligent thing to do?

Of course, the wide path offers a broad spectrum of every belief, philosophy, and religion known to prideful man *except* true Christianity. Anyone traveling the broad path can easily find and become involved with any practice, tradition, religion, or church he or she desires. It's all there for the taking, in plain sight, ranging from atheism to paganism to various forms of witchcraft. How people live their life, what their goals and agendas are, is up to them. The broad path, unlike the rigid narrow path, is flexible. One can change it to suit oneself. The broad path appears to the natural man to be well-lit; however, the source of this light is Satan, an "angel of light" (see 2 Corinthians 11:14).

While those who travel this broad highway believe they can see, the truth is, the false light is total and utter darkness. The line between truth and error, right and wrong, good and evil, life and death is blurry. The end for those "driving blind" on the broad road is destruction, death, and ultimately the judgment of God, *unless somehow, by God's grace and divine intervention, a person traveling on this path suddenly realizes that things are becoming blurry, and he or she cannot see.* Such is the story of John Newton, slave trader turned Christian, who wrote the beloved hymn, "Amazing Grace." The epitaph on John Newton's gravestone says: "JOHN NEWTON, Clerk [preacher] Once an infidel and libertine A servant of slaves in Africa, Was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, restored, pardoned and appointed to preach the Gospel

which he had long laboured to destroy. He ministered, Near sixteen years in Olney, in Bucks, And twenty eight years in this Church." Written by John Newton, it is engraved on a marble plaque in St Mary, Woolnoth, UK.

Praise be to God, God knows what it will take in the lives of the "heirs of salvation" for them to wake up, look up, give up, and change direction. The Apostle Paul wrote, "*But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 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 4:3, 4. Therefore, we must continue in prayer for the lost, and "*sanctify the Lord God in [our] hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh...a reason of the hope that is in [us] with meekness and fear*" 1 Peter 3:15. And, we need to preach the gospel to the lost "*for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*". (See Romans 1:16.) Note that the power of God to save sinners is *the gospel*, not signs and wonders, entertainment, professionalism in the so-called "worship" services of most churches today, or in the charisma of the pastor.

Compared to the "wide and broad" way, the "straight and narrow" is hard to find. Jesus said that many would "*seek to enter in, and shall not be able*" Luke 13:24b. There is only one way to enter through the "strait gate" on to the narrow road, and that is through Jesus Christ. He is the "gate" or the "door" and the only entrance to the narrow road. (See John 10.) In John 14:6, Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*" We need to let this sink down into our spirits: there is no other way in which to enter the narrow path—not through religion, church membership, good works or humanism. Those following Jesus on the narrow path have faith in *Him*, not faith in faith, faith in their doctrines, faith in some leader, or faith in themselves.

There are those who try to navigate onto this road without first entering in through the gate, for they cannot accept the fact that there is only one way that is acceptable to God.

Such people prefer to believe their own conclusions as to the way to God and eternal life; thus, they develop and construct their own road, beginning with redefining who Jesus is. This road may run parallel to the narrow way, but there is no price to pay, no self-denial or sacrifice of self, and no challenge to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. There is no criteria demanding love for the truth, challenge to seek the truth, or commitment to cling to the truth. Thus, it may appeal to a greater number of people, and it may outwardly offer a "smoother ride" that is less offensive than the straight path, but it is a false way. The true servant of God hates every false way (see *Psalm 119:104*) for it is devoid of truth and life. A false way is a way that lacks understanding—it is "driving under blurry conditions" that leads to destruction. In reality this shallow and deceptive "easy street" is nothing more than the broad path that leads to destruction. (See *Matthew 7:21-23*.)

How are we to see and have clear vision as we travel upon this narrow road? *Psalm 119:105* tells us how we can clearly see as we travel down the straight road, "*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*" "*The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple*" *Psalm 119:130*. In *Proverbs 6:23* we read, "*For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.*" "*It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*" *Matthew 4:4*. Thus, we have a sure and unfailing light, and perfect "road map" to guide us.

But, we are not left alone to make our way, day by day, down this narrow road. We are following behind Someone. How many times have you driven at night down an unfamiliar road that was under construction, full of chuck holes, and where wildlife threatened to loom in front of you at any moment? We have been in such situations, and the one thing that we truly appreciate is when there is another vehicle in the lead that seems to be familiar with the treacherous terrain. On the narrow road, there is One in whom we can trust at all times, for He has gone before us. In this life, He

calls us, as He did His disciples when He said, "*Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men*" *Matthew 4:19*. Therefore, we can expect Him to teach us "how to fish" as we travel down this road.

As we follow behind Him on this road, we need not fear darkness for He promised, "*I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*" *John 8:12*. Not only shall we be able to see, but we shall also be able to hear. "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me*" *John 12:26*. Will there be suffering on this narrow road? Yes. The Apostle Peter encourages us with these words, "*For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps*" *1 Peter 2:21*. The Apostle John explained how we are to travel on this path, "*He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked*" *1 John 2:6*.

Without truth our vision can become cloudy, and the lines blurry. Yet, we have not been left to helplessly grope our way through the fog of confusion, doubt, and unbelief, but have been given a Guide. Jesus promised, "*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come*" *John 16:13*.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church, "*For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity*" *1 Corinthians 13:12, 13*. Therefore, as we travel this narrow road, following the Lord, guided by His Spirit, obeying His Word, and trusting His promises, we long for that day when we no longer must pass through those times when our vision is threatened by the trials and tribulations that we encounter. Instead, we can press on knowing that as the days grow darker, the brightness of His coming draws nearer when He shall appear, dispelling all darkness, and filling the earth with His glory. Come quickly, Lord Jesus! †

LETTERS & COMMENTS

"As always, this issue [April] is an encouragement and comfort to me, while it's filled with meat from God's Table! I'm not sure how to put into words what I sensed while reading, but it seems to me that what you gals have gone through for the past 3-4 years, has produced that peaceable fruit of righteousness. There is an extraordinary sense of strength and glory to God in all that has been written in this issue! You stealthily set forth truth, in a very good and affirmative manner. Kudos to the whole crew, and especially toward God in that you survived the whole ordeal! Again, thanks to all of you for staying faithful to God's call in your life we get to eat the fruit of your banquet." - FL

"That picture I sent out [email] about the transvestite flight attendants - when is it enough. This made me sick. I suppose this is the plan....to degrade our morals - our society to the point we have no morals, no compass, no righteous anger or dignity. The righteousness of people needs to be wiped out for the antichrist to come on the scene. Sex, porn, drugs, immodest attire, etc. is permeating our society. God is so very patient but enough people! - AK

"Well, let's see, we have purpose driven, apostles rising, Lent and Maundy services, and Psychology, and no one batting an eye. We have prophetic art on the church platform during the services and other situations and a few of us trying very hard to remain faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ, risen and seated on the right hand of God. We have many in our families needing deliverance, with no anointing and many avoiding church at all cost. We also know we cannot go to the medical, very fatal. Sooo that is how it is....Everything is prophetic over here....I have one friend who sees this stuff and she is just into the shock stage." - WA

THANK YOU, CO-LABORERS

We appreciate and love you more than words can express—and thank you for your support through prayer, sacrificial giving, encouraging words, and faithful friendship. Hebrews 13:16

accept what is nominal as a means to simply get by. It will be willing to identify with the suffering of the present world to possess the glory of the next.

This brings us to the reality that unfeigned faith must be mixed in the equation in all matters of life if we are going to prove to be honorable in who we are, what we do, and who we ultimately become. What is not mixed with faith will prove to be unprofitable (*Hebrews 4:2*). It will not be considered righteous; therefore, it will be rejected by God.

Romans 14:23 tells us this, “*And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatever is not of faith is sin.*” To do something that is wrong before God reveals that the person does not believe God about the matters of righteousness. To fail to do what is honorable or right shows that the person is walking in unbelief towards God. The individual lacks sobriety towards that which is honorable and will end up showing contempt towards that which is righteous.

Today many Christians take pride in refraining from doing wrong. However, the greatest discrepancy in their spiritual walk is that they fail to do what is honorable or right. Doing wrong is the sin of “commission”, while failing to do what is right when the opportunity arises is the sin of “omission”. In essence, a person is omitting the ways of righteousness in a situation, failing to bring honor or glory to God. Keep in mind refraining from doing something wrong will not bring honor to God; rather, it puts you in a position of having a clear conscience, a pure heart, and a credible witness before God, allowing Him to meet with you and show His grace. But, when it comes to doing that which is right, it will honor God. For this reason, Jesus made this statement, “*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven.*”

Unfeigned faith keeps us on the cutting edge of Christianity. It keeps us open and prepared to receive the truths of God, as well as be available

and willing to do what is honorable. Regardless of the terrain and challenges, genuine faith keeps us going forward towards our ultimate destination. It will keep our feet on the narrow path. Because of such faith, we will not have any desire to take a detour by turning to the right in lieu of judgment and excuses, or to the left to embrace deception. Because of its steadfastness, God will be able to keep our feet from slipping on the rocks of uncertainty in times of adversity.

Test your faith and see whether it is active or useless. Try your faith to see if it is founded on the eternal Rock or standing on shifting sands. Examine the fruits of your faith to see if it is bringing contrast or whether it blends into the worldly terrain. Honestly consider whether you are betraying the faith first delivered to the saints, or if because of it your life is bringing glory to God.

When we examine these elements, as believers, we must recognize that the past does not require us to have any faith. Faith enables us to walk in the present in light of the future. It is active; therefore, able to possess what has been promised. The writer of *Hebrews 6:12* confirms this, “*That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*”

In considering this Scripture, we can begin to see that those who live in the past are slothful towards the present, and inactive about walking out a matter according to the saints of the past who now serve as our examples. Clearly, we may regard the past in light of examples, but we must not longingly look back or regard the past as that which now defines our present life and the future hope. We cannot place our past in front of us if we are planning to follow those who left all behind to follow God into a new life.

It is through faith and patience that we inherit the promises of God. However, when people are in limbo, it is due to a lack of faith. Since a person is not waiting in faith according to God’s plan, there will be no need for patience to be established. Obviously, these individuals have no need to inherit promises because they never have let go of their fantasies of the past. They are not looking to inherit such promises, but their desire is to do

the impossible by changing their past, thereby, changing the type of person they have become or are allowing themselves to become. Sadly, such people will never possess any promises or realize their potential in the kingdom of God. †

EXCERPT FROM VOLUME 6 By Rayola Kelley

Romans 3:23 tells us that all men have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory. Few Christians understand the implication of this harsh reality. Man does not fall short because of what he does, but by what he fails to be in light of God’s plan and purpose.

God formed Adam to be a reflection of His glory in creation. When Adam disobeyed, he fell into a state of darkness from his original state of having the ability to reflect God’s glory. This darkness snuffed out Adam’s potential to reflect the light and the glory of God.

This darkness has caused man to prefer and operate in darkness. It represents anything from delusion, superstition and wickedness to self-righteousness. These works and coverings of darkness give a person a false sense about what is acceptable and holy. Delusion of this nature is capitalized upon as people clothe this wretchedness with religious garb that allows for compromise with the unholy. Such false clothing helps them to believe that they are okay without humbling themselves and paying the price.

COMMENT FROM A PREVIEWER:
WHY isn't this taught? This is the crux of all TRUTH, yet it never ceases to amaze me how most will just ignore this fact!!!! They get so zoned in on DOING STUFF, that they completely fail to make a point of the biggest "ignore" that can happen IGNORING the Light that God has given to each one!!!!

RAYOLA’S BOOKS, as many of you know, are slowly but surely being published in book form. Be sure to inquire of this ministry, or Ketch Publishing, which books are now available for your personal library, your church library...or as gifts for your friends, family, church leaders, missionaries or others who are thirsty and hungry for “solid food”!

RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

WILL ISRAEL BE DESTROYED?

Q: I keep hearing about how the nation of Israel will be destroyed since it appears as if she is standing alone. Do you believe Israel will be destroyed?

A: To best answer your question, I want to quote a godly man who was once asked by an atheist to give evidence that God exists. The individual told the man that he would give him one word to verify that God is real. The one word was, "Israel."

From the very beginning of Israel's conception, Satan and those who serve his kingdom have been trying to unsuccessfully wipe her out. The people of Israel have been scattered, persecuted, and murdered by various despots throughout the ages. Yet in spite of everything they have suffered as a people, they have not only survived but they have thrived. They have maintained their genealogies, brought the Hebrew language back to life, and have caused the land promised to them by God to become productive. Through them God has fulfilled many prophecies, and since God cannot lie, He will fulfill the remaining prophecies concerning this nation.

The truth of the matter is the people of Israel will once again inherit all of the Promised Land. It is the Arabs and Muslims who are the squatters on the land. One day the people of Israel will possess the land that God has promised their great patriarchs. God will clearly verify that they are the ones who rightly own the deed to the land.

However, the Bible tells us before this will be accomplished there will be a great battle. *Zechariah 13:8-14:3* tells us only a third of the Jewish people will be brought through the last major fire of persecution as Jerusalem and its people are ravished. Jerusalem at this point is a cup of trembling to the rest of the world (*Zechariah 12:2*). However, it is not only what many religious fanatics consider to be the main prize, but it will be trodden down by ruthless Gentiles for three-and-a-half years (*Luke 21:24*). We are told that it will almost

be brought to utter destruction by an earthquake in *Revelation 11:13*.

Jerusalem is the place where all the armies of the world will eventually gather to wipe out every memory of the people of Israel. In fact, God will put hooks in their jaws and draw them to His city (*Ezekiel 38:4*). The purpose for drawing these leaders and their armies to the city of the Great King is so that God can pour His wrath upon them, wiping out all remembrance of them. The armies gathering around Jerusalem will signal the coming of the King of kings and the Lord of lords, Jesus Christ. He will not only set matters right, but He will fight for His city and His people. When He comes, all the kings and unbelievers will recognize who He is. They will plead for the rocks to fall on them in order to hide from the wrath of the Lamb (*Revelation 6:16-17*). However, they will find no place to hide! We are also told in *Zechariah 14:13* that at such times even the armies will turn on each other. These godless fools will taste the vanity of their wickedness and the clarity of His wrath.

When Jesus returns to reign in His city, Jerusalem, He will make all things right. This includes reestablishing the boundaries of the Promised Land. Israel will reclaim its land while the people of other origins will go back to the lands from which they came. *Zechariah 14:11* gives us this insight, "And men dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited."

Meanwhile, all of the world is turning on the nation of Israel including America. It is easy to see that the executive leadership in Washington D. C. is an enemy of Israel, which clearly makes these individuals enemies of God. Eventually they will come up against an angry God who will pour His wrath upon them; but meanwhile these godless, wicked, Socialistic despots are setting us up as a nation to taste God's judgment, as He withdraws His hand of protection and blessings from it.

We need to stand with Israel, as well as pray for her people. The events that are occurring have already been prophesied. Therefore, as believers we must not be surprised by what we see transpiring on a national

and international level. Rather, we must do as the Bible instructs us in relationship to the days we are living in. Jesus was clear in *Matthew 24:13*, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." †



SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL

By Rayola Kelley

What does it mean to spiritually survive? Does it mean we keep the life we have in this present world intact? Does it mean we prepare ahead so we do not feel the affect of what is about to happen? Does it mean that we come out on top in the game of life? Does it mean that we come out with what we perceive to be due respect from those around us?

We must understand what is in stake in order to survive. We must decide what the most valuable asset to our survival is for it will be from this premise we will have to count the cost. If the fires of adversity, persecution, and death come our way, what must survive such fires? Jesus summarized it best when He said "count the cost." As believers, we must count the cost in order to spiritually survive.

How great of a light do we need to see through the grave darkness or the confusing shadows of the world we live in? It is not a matter of how great the light is, but how intense it is. Too much light can blind, but intense light can penetrate the darkness. Jesus is the great light of heaven that came to penetrate the darkness of this world. My hope is that His light is penetrating the darkness in each of our lives to bring hope and guidance. (See *Matthew 4:14-17*)

TURNING THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN

"The chief danger of the Church today is that it is trying to get on the same side as the world, instead of turning the world upside down. Our Master expects us to accomplish results, even if they bring opposition and conflict. Anything is better than compromise, apathy, and paralysis. God, give to us an intense cry for the old-time power of the Gospel and the Holy Ghost!" - A.B. Simpson