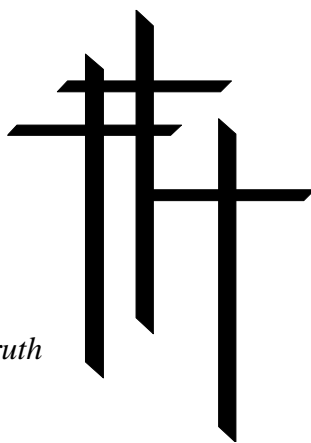


Timely Messenger

*Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth
Speaking the Truth in Love*



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THE DANGERS OF OUR DAY

By Charles Wages

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof; from such turn

away.” (2 Tim. 3:1-5)

Surely there would be an agreement or consensus of opinion that we live in dangerous or perilous times. However, why they are dangerous is not always agreed upon. The “last days” of the “church age” in which we live (not the “end of the world”) are dangerous for many reasons and in many areas.

These dangers can be classified in many areas. Warfare between the nations and people of these nations is affecting every nation on earth. There

seems to be no answer to avoiding or preventing it.. Our Lord said that there would be “wars and rumors of wars;” that “nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom” (Matt. 24:5-6). Though this refers to the future tribulation period described in the book of Revelation, yet the very language is typical of our times. Will wars ever end?

There are a myriad of physical illnesses which constitute a real danger to us all. The AIDS epidemic is capable of killing literally millions of people on every continent. The number of things that affect the body and mind are overwhelming and costs billions of dollars annually.

Then there are the natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, floods, fires, and weather related dangers all over the universe.

However, after all is considered concerning the “dangers” that affect mankind, the one that is the greatest danger and least considered is the very “heart and soul” of all humankind.

This prominent and

preeminent danger is the “spiritual warfare” being waged against every individual on earth. Some nineteen things are mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:1-5, but the last one could be the root cause of all the others: “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” This sort of spiritual corruption is invading and affecting every household and every person, young and old. This is the real danger!

While on earth our Lord used his harshest words in speaking to or referring to the “religious” leaders of His day. Some fifteen times in the book of Matthew, Jesus called the Pharisees “hypocrites.” This word, only used by our Lord, refers to one acting on a stage or just “play acting.” The word to describe this “play acting” is “hypocrisy” or “putting on” a front. At first glance, this may appear harmless, but when packaged as true faith, it is very dangerous.

Most of the things that we consider “dangerous” are things that harm or destroy the body. As important as this may be, it is

vastly more important that spiritual dangers be our concern. Why? This involves our eternal life! Much of the “health, wealth” religious preaching that we hear is for entertainment or personal gain. The propagating and proclaiming of this dangerous medicine is far more dangerous than W.M.D.

The two leading apostles, Peter and Paul, warn over and over of these “false teachers” and their “pernicious preaching.”

We read in 2 Peter 2,

“But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you; whose judgment now of

a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.” (vs. 1-3)

Remember the apostle Paul told us that we are living in “perilous” or dangerous times (2 Tim. 3:1) and then warned “from such turn away.” He especially characterized them by saying, they “have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.” He then concludes by saying, “from such turn away.” In conclusion, the wonderful truth of Ephesians 6:10-18 is always so appropriate. It stands, not only as informing truth, but as warning truth of the “danger of our days.”

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual

wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” (Eph. 6:10-18)

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding, In all thy ways, acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.” (Prov. 3:5-6)

HE GAVE HIS SON

He might have given the starry realms
As purchase price for me,
But starry worlds could never take
My guilt and set me free.

He might have given all the world
Because He made it, too,
But worlds cannot for sin atone—
God knew that would not do.

The universe entire was His,
And that He might have given;
But blood alone can sin atone
And make me meet for heaven.

And so He gave His blessed Son
To die on Calvary;
No other gift could cleanse my soul—
Christ was His gift to me!

—Ethel Clarkson

HEREIN IS LOVE,
NOT THAT WE
LOVED GOD, BUT
THAT HE LOVED US,
AND SENT HIS SON
TO BE THE
PROPITIATION
FOR OUR SINS.
(1 JOHN 4:10)

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*Thanks for your help
in this matter!*

AN INFORMAL SURVEY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

A Dispensational Approach

By R. B. Shiflet

II PETER

- I. INTRODUCTION 1:1
- II. INVOCATION 1:2-4
- III. IDEAL SPIRITUAL LIVING 1:5-7
- IV. INCREASING KNOWLEDGE 1:8

A. The Condition

“For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet. 1:8)

“These things” refers back to the graces listed in the earlier verses of this chapter. Peter writes, “if these things be in you and abound. . . .”

The Word “abound” means “to multiply, to overflow, to increase, to be overabundant.” The verb is in the present tense, which implies a continuing overflow, a lifestyle of abounding in these things.

B. The Consequences

1. You will Not Be Barren

The word means “sterile, idle, slow, not doing the work that one is supposed to do.”

2. You Will Not Be Unfruitful

This simple word just means “without fruit; not bearing what one is expected to

bear.” The believer who is in fellowship with the Lord, has the Word of God in his heart, and is controlled by the Holy Spirit will produce the fruit of the Spirit. The evidence of being filled with the Spirit is not an emotional experience, or the ability to speak in tongues or perform miracles, it is love, joy, peace, etc. And the consequence of this is that we will be fruitful in knowledge.

The word “knowledge” used here is the usual Greek word for knowledge with the prefix “epi,” which denotes full knowledge, precise accurate knowledge. It occurs twenty times in our New Testament and is used fifteen times by the Apostle Paul. It seems to be particularly used in connection with the special revelation given to Paul (see Ephesians 1:17; Colossians 1:10, 12, 2:2.) Dr. E. W. Bullinger published a work more than 100 years ago entitled “The Knowledge of God.” He offers proof after proof that the Christian’s greatest need is knowledge of God. That is very obviously true today. More people are interested in the latest hit movie than in studying the Word of God. We need more Christians praying, more Christians who are regular in church attendance, and are more dependable. But without a knowledge of God and His Word, we have no motivation and no ability to share the Word. God give us grace to be found faithful.

(To Be Continued)

OUR STRONG HOLD

“The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him.” (Nahum 1:7)

Nahum wrote and prophesied the destruction of the great city of Nineveh. This city had repented at the preaching of Jonah about 100 years earlier, but had soon forgotten.

It seemed almost impossible for Nineveh to be destroyed. Its walls were massive and rose to a height of 100 feet with hundreds of towers atop them. It is said that three chariots could drive abreast on them and that they enclosed approximately 1800 acres. The Tigris river protected it on one side and moats on the other sides. It seemed impregnable and invincible!

A century later, this great city was destroyed. It passed so far into oblivion, that for centuries no one

knew the location of its existence! It was destroyed by water (Nah. 2:6) and fire (Nah. 3:13-15).

In the context of all this destruction, comes the wonderful truth: “the Lord is a stronghold in the day of trouble.” How wonderful and reassuring to know that we have a place of refuge, a place of real safety! Though wars may rage as we approach the end of the age, we can seek the safety of the Saviour! The destructive forces of water and fire, or the devastating devices of the Devil cannot reach us!

Also, how comforting to know: “the Lord knoweth them that trust in Him.” Literally, “the Lord owns them that trust in Him.” We are reminded of 2 Timothy 2:20, “Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His.” We belong to Him; He purchased us with His precious blood. Don’t we know and believe that He will protect and provide for us in all kinds of times?

— Charles Wages

THE PROOF OF THE CHRIST

By Gregg Bing

When Jesus entered the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” (Matt. 16:13) When you look at Jesus’ life the answer is quite plain; it is just as Peter declared, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!” (Matt. 16:16). Hundreds of Old Testament prophecies concerning Israel’s promised Messiah were fulfilled in the Lord Jesus. The people were astonished at Jesus’ teaching, “for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Matt. 7:29). It was unlike anything they had ever heard (John 7:46). The people were also amazed at the miraculous things that He did: healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, casting out demons, even raising the dead. “But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him” (John 12:37).

In fact, the Jewish leaders, particularly some of the scribes and Pharisees, responded to Jesus saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” Jesus answered them with:

“An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Matt. 12:39-40)

Here was to be the most striking proof concerning the Christ – His resurrection from the dead! The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Romans, said that Jesus Christ was

“Declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of

holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” (Rom. 1:4)

What was so special about Jesus’ resurrection? After all, He wasn’t the first person to be raised from the dead. Both Elijah and Elisha raised people from the dead in the Old Testament, and Jesus Himself raised others from the dead, including Jairus’ daughter and Lazarus.

While Jesus was not the first to be raised from the dead, His own resurrection went far beyond these others. To begin with, Jesus’ resurrection was prophesied in the Old Testament.

“I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand

are pleasures forevermore.” (Psalm 16:8-11)

Jesus foretold His own resurrection, even specifying on which day He would be raised (Matt. 16:21).

Jesus had the power to raise Himself from the dead, something the others clearly did not have. He declared in John 10:

“Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.” (John 10:17-18)

The others who were raised from the dead all died again, physically, while Jesus was raised unto eternal life.

“Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for

all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.” (Rom. 6:9-10)

Finally, Jesus was the only sinless person to die and rise again, thus He alone could die for the sins of the world. The resurrection of Jesus Christ provided great victory for man; victory over sin’s penalty, bringing justification (Rom. 4:22-25); victory over sin’s power, bringing sanctification (Rom. 6:5-10); victory over Satan, resulting in redemption (Heb. 2:14-15); and finally, victory over death itself, resulting in eternal life with Him (1 Cor. 15:20-23, 51-58).

What tremendous power, this power of Christ’s resurrection, toward us who believe!

“And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far

above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.” (Eph. 1:19-21)

Yet, even this—the resurrection of Christ—was not enough for most people to believe in Him. We read in Acts 1:3 that the Lord Jesus “presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs:” the empty tomb, the numerous eyewitnesses (1 Cor. 15:5-8), and the extraordinary transformations of people’s lives, including the twelve apostles, the family of Jesus, and the apostle Paul.

But, just as Abraham told the rich man,

“If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.” (Luke 16:31)

The Jews of Jesus’ day had heard His teaching, they saw the signs that He performed, they heard the clear testimony of those

who were eyewitnesses to His resurrection, but they persisted in their unbelief. The majority of the people in the world today, both Jew and Gentile, also reject the testimony of the Scriptures concerning the truth of Christ's resurrection.

How will you respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ? We read in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 that:

"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. 15:3-4)

This glorious gospel, this good news of Jesus

Christ, has two important aspects. First, we have a **loving Savior** who loved us so much He was willing to give Himself on the cross of Calvary as an offering for our sins (Eph. 5:2). Second, we have a **living Savior** who, after three days, rose from the dead in victory and triumph over sin and death.

This wonderful Savior, based on His finished work of redemption, offers the gift of eternal life to all who will believe in Him (Rom. 6:23). The proof of the Christ and His powerful resurrection is evident in the Scriptures. Don't follow the world in their persistent unbelief. Hear the Word of God (Rom.

10:17), put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8-9), and be saved from the your sins (Acts 16:31). Will you trust Him as your Savior? To do so is to have life and joy and peace and hope.

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

(Romans 15:13)

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