

Timely Greetings, Vol. 1, Nos. 27-30

Description



A ROD THAT SPEAKS CALLS FOR REFORMATION AND CREATES GREAT CONTROVERSY

OPENING PRAYER THOUGHT

I shall read from "The Mount of Blessing," page 184, the last paragraph

Not until you feel that you could sacrifice your own self-dignity, and even lay down your life, in order to save an erring brother, have you cast the beam out of your own eye, so that you are prepared to help your brother. Then you can approach him, and touch his heart. No one has ever been reclaimed from a wrong position by censure and reproach; but many have thus been driven from Christ, and led to seal their hearts against conviction. A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring, and hide a multitude of sins. The revelation of Christ in your own character will have a transforming power upon all with whom you come in contact. Let Christ be daily made manifest in you, and He will reveal through you the creative energy of His word, a gentle, persuasive, yet mighty influence to re-create other souls in the beauty of the Lord our God.

According to Inspiration's eyesight none of us is qualified to find fault with anyone. Did you note what we read? That only when we come to the point that we are willing to lay down our lives for an erring brother, shall we be fitted and able to help others to correct their faults.

In the light of this, what is our need, Brother, Sister? Should we not pray for an experience that Christ be manifested in us; pray for an experience that will prepare us to help others instead of hinder them; pray to have a gentle, persuasive, mighty Truth's influence on them? Then shall we be able to wisely approach the erring ones, touch their hearts, and show them their faults. Only then will they listen to us but certainly not until then.

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A ROD THAT SPEAKS CALLS FOR REFORMATION AND CREATES GREAT CONTROVERSY

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
MINISTER OF DAVIDIAN 7TH-DAY ADVENTISTS
SABBATH, FEBRUARY 8, 1947
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Our subject for this afternoon begins with

Micah 6:1, 2 Hear ye now what the Lord saith; Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice. Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with His people, and He will plead with Israel.

First to be noted is the fact that the messenger of God is instructed to contend before the mountains, and that the hills are to hear his voice. Obviously, then, in this scripture as elsewhere in the Bible, mountains and hills must be figurative of kingdoms and governments.

He is to contend before the mountains not against them; that is, he is to proclaim that the Lord has a controversy with His people, that He is asking for a thorough reformation among them, and that they are not willing and co-operating.

It was seen in previous studies that the prophecies of Micah 4 and 5 are to be fulfilled in the latter days, our time, in a time that Inspiration by the revelation of these prophecies calls for a reformation among God's 14 people. The prophecies now being unsealed for the first time since they were written, and the reformation already on foot, the fact that instead of gladly accepting the freshly revealed message, they are creating a controversy throughout the Adventist churches, very obviously indicates that now is the time to contend before the mountains, now is the time for them (the mountains) to hear the Lord's controversy with His people.

The words, Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice, imply that heretofore his voice has been heard only locally but that now he must meet the situation even though the mountains, hills, and the strong foundations of the earth hear that the Lord is having a controversy with His people.

Until now, we have been merely trifling with the Lord's adversaries but now we must get down to business regardless who hears it. His people must now forever turn from man's sayings,

whatever they be, and confine their faith and hope in â??Thus saith the Lord,â?• regardless through whom He says it, or else they lose out. As followers of the Lord, we should hearken to His heart-rending plea for revival and reformation:

Verse 3 â?? â??O My people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against Me.â?•

Think of it! A great and infinite God pleading with such insignificant and sinful human beings as we, wanting to know why they are against Him.

Verse 4 â?? â??For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I **Î?5** sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.â?•

God is speaking to us who are the descendants of the prophets, of the apostles, and of the disciples who through the years of servitude among the Gentile nations have lost our national identity. Though we may not call ourselves Israelites, Jacobites, or Jews, God does so call us.

God's faithful few throughout the ages were willing and even glad for the sake of Truth and righteousness to face the reproach of their blind and unfaithful brethren. Ought we not be just as glad to do as much? They won the race and the crown, and there is no reason why we should not. Indeed we cannot afford to lose our reward at this late hour.

Verse 5 â?? â??O My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord.â?•

Here we are told that to know the righteousness of the Lord is to remember God's dealings with our forefathers, for His love toward us is not less than it was toward them. He reminds us of the incident when Balak hired Balaam to curse Israel, and how He caused Balaam to speak for Him and to bless His people, that for their sake He brought the king's aim to nought and caused Balaam to proclaim to Balak: â??And now, behold, I go unto my people: come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter daysâ?!. There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his **Î?6** enemies: and Israel shall do valiantly.â?• Num. 24:14, 17, 18.

In effect Balaam said to the king of Moab: â??I have tried my best to obtain your favor and to curse Israel, but God has prevailed. Israel has won; you and I have lost. And further, let me tell you what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days: He that is to rule Israel shall smite Moab on all sides, and Israel shall do valiantly.â?•

Thus was Balaam impelled to predict Christ's birth and His ruling, causing Israel to do valiantly against Moab and his neighboring peoples in the latter days.

To know all this is to know the Lord our righteousness; that if He is for us then no one can win a thing against us; that the battle is the Lord's; that we have no need to fear our enemies; that whatever we do shall prosper regardless who is for or against us.

Verses 6, 7 • • • Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? •

From these verses it is apparent that the unfoldment of these scriptures brings a revival and reformation among God's people such as the world has never seen: Those who receive the Truth in Its fullness, humbly confess that they are sinners and that they wish to know the worst of their case. They gladly sacrifice anything and everything; to them no sacrifice is too great that would bring them closer to the **I?7** Lord. As soon as their pride of opinion leaves them, as soon as they humbly inquire how to come and bow before the Lord, just that soon the answer comes to them:

Verse 8 • • • He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? •

To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God is the greatest gift one can bring to the Lord. In order to learn how to do justly, how to love mercy, and how to walk humbly, we are emphatically told:

Verse 9 • • • The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the Rod, and Who hath appointed It. •

The Lord declares that His voice is crying to the city (to the church), and that the men of wisdom shall see the name, and shall hear the Rod and Him Who hath appointed It.

Manifestly, this rod is capable of speaking and of being heard, thus the command • • • Hear ye the Rod. • • • So far as we know, the only rod that has ever spoken is • • • THE SHEPHERD'S ROD. • • • Moreover, it was not the results of any studious searching of the Bible that the book was so named, the author was not familiar with this scripture, nor did he have any understanding of the book of Micah at the time the title • • • Shepherd's Rod • • • was given to the book.

I for one cannot overlook, neglect, or reject the Lord's counsel in this matter. I must hear the Rod and Him Who has appointed It if I expect to have a **I?8** home in His Kingdom. I cannot afford to do otherwise, God helping me, for He Himself declares that if I would know how to come before Him, what offering is acceptable to Him, how to do justly, how to love mercy and how to walk humbly before Him, I must hear the Rod that • • • crieth unto the city. • • •

Now it is up to all of us individually to decide whether we should hear the voice of man or the Voice of God's Rod. This is now everyone's test, and it must be everyone's concern, for one of these two voices – the voice of men or the Voice of God's Rod – will determine everyone's destiny either for eternal death or for eternal life.

Since this message announces that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is at hand – that the Judgment for the Living is about to begin, and since Isaiah the prophet was given a vision of the Lord's moving into His temple for this judicial work, the prophet's experiences while he was yet in vision must, therefore, represent the experience of God's servants who are to announce the day of the Lord. His experience and commission must be our experience and commission:

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And He said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And He answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. • Isa. 6:8-10.

Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. • Isa. 8:13-15.

Verses 10, 11 – Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable? Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights? •

Here is definitely implied that these abominable things – treasures gained by scanty measures are yet in the house of the wicked. The aim of dishonestly getting rich quick at the cost of another's sweat, is here condemned. All these abominations, prompted by selfishness, must be put away by all who want to survive the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

The Lord's latter question, Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights? • denotes that some are still hanging to their deceitful weights, and mistakenly expect to be counted among the pure.

There are two types of thieves. Thief number one is the person who outright steals. Thief number two is the person who in a deal manages to get a little more than what is really his own. He cares not if in the deal the other fellow makes little or nothing. All he cares about is that he himself fairs well. This sort of thievery is the worst because it is practiced even by so-called best of

Christians.

Verse 12 For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.â?•

The acts of violence, lying and stealing, declares Inspiration, are among Godâ??s people.

Verse 13 Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate because of thy sins.â?•

The time has come, Brother, Sister, to forget self and to be honest with all men, to realize that self is as it were the body of a dead man tied to oneâ??s back there to sap oneâ??s strength and to put him sick in bed. To such greedy, selfish folk, the Lord declares:

Verses 14, 15 Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; and thy casting down shall be in the midst of thee; and thou shalt take hold, but shalt not deliver; and that which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword. Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine.â?•

Verses 16 For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the work of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels; that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore ye shall bear the reproach of My people.â?•

Rather than walk in the counsel of Godâ??s Rod, the wicked walk in the counsel of the wicked. And how wicked are their counsellors? Inspiration declares that they are as wicked as were those of the house of **Î?11** Omri and Ahab. (Read 1 Kings 16:25, 26, 29, 30, 33.) Consequently their fate will be the fate of the house of Ahab. (Read 2 Kings 10:10, 11.)

Surely Micah 6 leaves no doubt whatsoever that the time is fully come for Godâ??s people to get down to business as never before. The message with which we have been entrusted, Inspiration commands, should be scattered as the leaves of autumn.â?• â?? Testimonies,â?• Vol. 9, pg. 231. And here are the leaves.

Î?12

ON THE THRESHOLD OF A NEW WORLD IN THE SIGHT OF THE OLD

TEXT FOR PRAYER
The Truth Shall Make You Free

I shall read from The Mount of Blessing,â?• page 186, paragraphs one and two. These paragraphs, you will notice, are based on the scripture which says, Give not that which is holy

unto the dogs.â?•

M.B., pg. 186 â?? â??Jesus here refers to a class who have no desire to escape from the slavery of sin. By indulgence in the corrupt and vile, their natures have become so degraded that they cling to the evil, and will not be separated from it. The servants of Christ should not allow themselves to be hindered by those who would make the gospel only a matter of contention and ridicule.

â??But the Saviour never passed by one soul, however sunken in sin, who was willing to receive the precious truths of heaven. To publicans and harlots His words were the beginning of a new lifeâ?!. Beneath an appearance of hatred and contempt, even beneath crime and degradation, may be hidden a soul that the grace of Christ will rescue, to shine as a jewel in the Redeemerâ??s crown.â?•

Here we see that in His statement, â??Give not that which is holy unto the dogs,â?• Christ instructs His followers to abstain from trying to poke down any Bible truth into those who have no desire to be freed from sin. Regardless how far one may have fallen in sin, God will not overlook even one soul who is willing to be helped, and willing to accept and practice the Truth. With this assurance, let us pray for an increased desire to escape from slavery of sin. Indeed the important thing is not how good or how bad we are or have been, but how susceptible and submissive to present Truth we are now while It unfolds. The real burden of our prayer, should be that we catch a vision of the Truth that makes free if accepted as the Scroll unrolls.

Î?13

ON THE THRESHOLD OF A NEW WORLD IN THE SIGHT OF THE OLD

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
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SABBATH, FEBRUARY 15, 1947
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This afternoon we are to study the seventh chapter of Micah. This chapter brings to our attention three divisions of time in which three different conditions obtain on the earth. The first condition is recorded in the first four verses; the second in verses 5-14; and the third, in verse 15 down to the end of the chapter.

Now let us begin our study withâ??

Micah 7:1 â?? â??Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat: my soul desired the firstripe fruit.â?•

Something is likened to a vintage after its fruit is gathered in. What is it? We will find the answer by readingâ??

Verses 2-6 The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net. That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up. The best of them is as a **Î?14** brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge: the day of thy watchmen and thy visitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity. Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.â?•

The righteous having been taken out of the world and the wicked alone left in it, its condition is depicted by a vintage that has been robbed of its fruit and left in a state of loneliness and fear because of total wickedness. This sifting takes place in the day God visits His watchmen; that is, in the Judgment day, the day He separates the wheatâ?• from the tares (Matt. 13:30), the good fish from the bad fish (Matt. 13:47, 48) the sheep from the goats (Matt. 25:31-46).

Verses 7-10 Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, until He plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold His righteousness. Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the Lord thy God? Mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets.â?•

These verses present Godâ??s faithful people, the people to whom these prophecies have been unfolded as having an enemy that bears the feminine designation sheâ?•. This sheâ?• questions and doubts Godâ??s presence among His people, she mocks them for their faith.

Î?15

Since these prophecies are now for the first time brought to light they constitute the message of the hour; and since upon us has been placed the burden of carrying the message to the church, and since she is our enemy as was the Jewish church to the Christian, Inspiration thus bears witness against her, and pronounces her doom.

Then it shall come to pass that the Gentiles shall see the saints' righteousness and all kings their glory and they as a people shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.â?• Isa. 62:2.

Verses 11, 12 In the day that thy walls are to be built, in that day shall the decree be far removed. In that day also he shall come even to thee from Assyria, and from the fortified cities, and from the fortress even to the river, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain.â?•

Since this decree is removed in the day the Kingdom (the church purified) is restored, in the day the saints are fortified, the decree has no effect on them. In that day, declares Inspiration, there shall be a great gathering from Assyria and from the fortified cities, even from sea to sea and mountain to mountain. This message, therefore, is the one that precedes the harvest of the earth, the great and dreadful day of the Lord, the Judgment for the Living, the day in which all things are to be restored (Mark 9:12).

Verses 13, 14 Notwithstanding the land shall be desolate because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings. Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old.â•

Î?16

Before these promises are fulfilled, though, Inspiration declared the land was to be desolate, the dispersion of the people would first take place.

This Rod of God not only speaks, but It feeds, too. And what can It be if not meat in due seasonâ•? if not the message of the hour? The people, explains the scripture, are those who dwell solitarily in the woods, in the midst of Carmel. Prophecy, for this day and hour recommends the message which the Rod contains, and which Carmel puts out, none other.

Verse 15 According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things.â•

We are given the promise that the saintsâ•? experience is to be similar to that of the Exodus movement; that is, just as they were led out of Egypt by the mighty hand of God, and were brought safely into the promised land, so shall it be now.

â•And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.â• Isa. 11:11, 12.

Verses 16-18 The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf.

Î?17

â•They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of Thee. Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the

transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy.â?•

â??The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them. And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with His mighty wind shall He shake His hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod.â?• Isa. 11:13-15.

As great as shall be the day of the Lord for the faithful, just that dreadful will it be for the unfaithful.

Verse 19 â?? â??He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.â?•

Our God is wonderful indeed! He retains not His anger. He delights in mercy. He remembers not the sins of the penitent, He casts them away where they cannot be found anymore.

Verse 20 â?? â??Thou wilt perform the Truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.â?•

Inspiration reaffirms all Godâ??s promises. They **î?18** never fail. His prophecies are sure. We are on the threshold of a new world in the sight of the old â?? soon there shall be sin no more.

â??Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.â?• Rev. 7:15-17.

Even now, says the Lord, â??I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

â??The Lord hath sworn by His right hand, and by the arm of His strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured:

â??But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the Lord; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of My holiness. Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the

stones; lift up a standard for the people.

Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord: and thou **Jerusalem** shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken. • Isa. 62:6-12.

We are indeed at the threshold of this new world in sight of the old. Let our works and faith now answer the Lord's most astounding questions since the world began:

Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' sope: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years. And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not Me, saith the Lord of hosts. For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. • Mal. 3:1-6.

Jerusalem

A TRODDEN-DOWN KINGDOM RISING TO PROMINENCE AND PEACE

TEXT FOR PRAYER

I shall read from The Mount of Blessing, page 187, the second paragraph. This paragraph is based on the scripture which says: Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. •

M.B., pg. 187 The Lord specifies no conditions except that you hunger for His mercy, desire His counsel, and long for His love. Ask. The asking makes it manifest that you realize your necessity; and if you ask in faith, you will receive! When you ask for the blessings you need, that you may perfect a character after Christ's likeness, the Lord assures you that you are asking according to a promise that will be verified. That you feel and know you are a sinner, is sufficient ground for

asking for His mercy and compassion. The condition upon which you may come to God is not that you shall be holy, but that you desire Him to cleanse you from all sin, and purify you from all iniquity. The argument that we may plead now and ever is our great need, our utterly helpless state, that makes Him and His redeeming power a necessity.â?•

How reassuring to us sinful human beings ought this thrice-repeated promise be! The Lord lays down no complicated and hard-to meet conditions. He merely says, â??Ask.â?• By asking for the blessings we need in order to perfect our characters in Christ, we manifest our desire for His counsel and His help, we thereby demonstrate that we actually realize our helplessness without Him. When we do this, then we need have no fear that the Lord will fail us. Indeed not, for He is the Person of His word.

In view of this, what shall be our prayer this afternoon? â?? Simply that we may realize our needs, that we may desire to be cleansed from all sin, and that we may in faith ask, knowing for certainty that we shall receive.

Î?3

A TRODDEN-DOWN KINGDOM RISING TO PROMINENCE AND PEACE

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
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SABBATH, FEBRUARY 22, 1947
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We are now to study the book of Isaiah, beginning with the first chapter, and continuing on into the second chapter. The first part of chapter one, you well know, deals with the sins of ancient Israel, while the latter part of the chapter, along with the second chapter, deals with the re-establishment of the Kingdom in the latter days. Specifically, it is this latter subject that we are to study today.

The prophet Isaiahâ??s being instructed to record what was to befall the people of God in the early days as well as in the latter days of their history, quickly unfolds the fact that the Lord at the same time had in mind not only His people in ancient time, but also His people in our time. (This same dual-view practice on the subject you will detect throughout the Bible.)

In this connection we should raise the question, Is our record as a people better or worse than that of the Jews? This can be readily settled by reading â??Testimonies,â?• Vol. 3, pp. 252, 253.

We shall read right nowâ??

â??The message to the church of the Laodiceans is a startling denunciation, and is applicable to the people Î?4 of God at the present time.

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God: I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

The Lord here shows us that the message to be borne to his people by ministers whom he has called to warn the people, is not a peace-and-safety message. It is not merely theoretical, but practical in every particular. The people of God are represented in the message to the Laodiceans as in a position of carnal security. They are at ease, believing themselves to be in an exalted condition of spiritual attainments. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right, when they are all wrong! The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception. They know not that their condition is deplorable in the sight of God. While those addressed are flattering themselves that they are in an exalted spiritual condition, the message of the True Witness breaks their security by the startling denunciation of their true condition of spiritual blindness, poverty, and wretchedness. The testimony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake, for it is the True Witness who speaks, and his testimony must be correct.

It is difficult for those who feel secure in their attainments, and who believe themselves to be rich in spiritual knowledge, to receive the message which declares that they are deceived and in need of every spiritual grace. The unsanctified heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. I was shown that many are flattering themselves that they are good Christians who have not a ray of light from Jesus. They have not a living experience for themselves in the divine life. They need a deep and thorough work of self-abasement before God, before they will feel their true need of earnest, persevering effort to secure the precious graces of the Spirit. • Testimonies, • Vol. 3, pp. 252, 253.

I need not read more. Inspiration plainly states that today there is to be a message borne to the people of God; that that message is to be borne not by ordinary men, but by ministers called especially for that purpose; and that it is not a message of peace and safety as the ministry in general would naturally have it. The author endeavors to impress us with the fact that the people of God are deceived in imagining that they are in an excellent condition. Yes, God's people at this time are every bit as deceived as were the Jews in the days of Christ's first advent. In fact, they are perhaps even worse, for they have had the types and the examples of the past as well as added light shining on their pathway which the ancients did not have.

The prophet Isaiah had sad news for God's people in his day: He told them that if they continued in their erroneous ways, all of them, good and bad alike, **1?6** would be dispersed and assimilated by the nations. But for the faithful of today, he has good news:

Isa. 1:24-26 "Therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease Me of Mine adversaries, and avenge Me of Mine enemies: and I will turn My hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city."

Rather than let all as a people suffer the consequences of sin, the Lord at this time promises to avenge only His enemies, His adversaries that are within His church. He will purge and purify His church, and then restore His judges and counsellors as at the first. Then she will indeed be called "The city of righteousness, the faithful city."

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord.

"In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge." Jer. 31:27-30.

Verses 27, 28 "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness. And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners **1?7** shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed."

In these verses a distinction is made between the transgressors and the sinners. No doubt the sinners are those who continually live in sin, while the transgressors must be those who sin only occasionally. Nevertheless their end shall be the same: Both the habitual and the occasional sinners shall be destroyed together.

Verses 29-31 "For they shall be ashamed of the oaks [the great and popular men] which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen. For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water. And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them."

This is just what the wicked may rightly expect. It is the best God can give them, for they do not make it possible to have something better.

Now we shall go on to the second chapter of Isaiah's prophecy, for it is a continuation of the first. Since verse one is but an introduction to what the prophet is to say, I shall omit reading it, and begin with

Chapter 2, verse 2 "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."

Out of the ruins of both Judah and Israel, is to emerge a Kingdom and a people which shall be exalted **178** above the nations.

The Prophet Daniel, too, plainly declares: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." Dan. 2:44.

Note that the Kingdom which Daniel is speaking of is to be set "in the days of these kings," not after their days. Moreover, note that it is this Kingdom (the church purified) that breaks the great image. To this coming Kingdom (the church "cleansed," purified) "shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:10).

When the Headquarters of the gospel are thus established, then it becomes certain that the work is to be finished without delay. The gospel of Christ is then to reap an abundant harvest, and the converted multitudes rather than beat their plowshares and pruning hooks into instruments to kill human beings, shall instead beat their spears and swords into farm implements "rather than work to kill, they shall farm to feed.

The prophecies are simple and logical, instructive and enlightening. Certainly God cannot save the world by a lost church. The very thought will appear unreasonable if we ask ourselves these questions: How can He possibly by His church lead the world out from its sins while sin is flourishing in the midst of His church? How can He lead the world into all Truth while those whom He is using to teach advancing Truth till He comes imagine that they are rich and in need of nothing more when in fact they are in need of everything? "even blind and naked, and themselves about to **179** be spued out. How can He say to His people that are in "Babylon," "Come out of her My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues," if He is to bring them into a church wherein sin is practiced? In view of the fact that the church with sin and sinners in her midst is just as vulnerable to the plagues as is Babylon, how much worse off would His people be if they were left in Babylon?

The answer to all these questions is simply this: There must be an awakening to spiritual poverty and earnestness in searching Truth. There must be a stop to sin, there must be a sinless place and people "an ark of safety, so to speak, if we are ever to be saved from the plagues. "Achans," too, must be put away before Israel can triumph and take the land. God in His wisdom knows that it is better to destroy comparatively few enemies of Truth, than to lose the whole world. All the stumbling blocks must be removed.

Then the church will have a second Pentecost. Then every church member will be filled with the Spirit: "And it shall come to pass afterward [after the "latter rain"], that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit." • Joel 2:28, 29.

Let us now solemnly and diligently heed the Lord's plea to His people at this very time:

Verse 5 "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord." •

10

Very obviously this verse implies that heretofore God's people have been walking in the light of man.

Verse 6 "Therefore thou hast forsaken Thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers." •

His people as an organization are forsaken of Him, but as individuals who come to walk in His light to follow Him in Truth and righteousness are re-accepted. When the present controversy over the message of the hour is ended, then those who survive the purifying process, the Judgment for the Living in the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17), the cleansing of the sanctuary (Dan. 8:14), will be the inhabitants of Zion and of Jerusalem, the members of the church, the body of Christ.

Verse 7 "Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots." •

Of all the nations in the world today, America, the nation in which are the headquarters of the church is the richest. Especially so at this particular time the time in which this Truth is unfolding. Moreover, no other nation has as many church leaders (horses) and as many churches (chariots). No other nation in the world has for every one of its citizens room in its "chariots." • These are the designating marks which the Lord employs to point out the land and the people to whom He is speaking.

Verses 8-10 "Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made: and the mean man boweth ¹¹ down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not. Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty." •

The nation referred to, evidently brags much about her achievements. The great and small are all alike in this respect, says Inspiration. True, there is nothing wrong in progress but progress should never become our God. Eventually all will come to the end of their idolatry, for when the Lord manifests His power, they will leave their idols and run for the rocks.

Verse 11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.â?•

Those who now exalt themselves will have to be humbled.

Verses 12-19 For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols He shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth.â?•

Î?12

Though men are now exalting themselves even above God, the day is upon us in which they will see themselves as they actually are. They will feel very small as they behold the power of a Great God.

Verses 20, 21 In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth.â?•

Those who do not now cast their idols to the moles and to the bats, as it were, will have to do so later, but it will then be too late to profit them.

Verse 22 Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?â?•

Here is God's simple remedy for His people. They should cease listening to soothsayers,â?• they should instead hear what Inspiration has to say. They should study God's Word for themselves with the aid of actually inspired teachers of God, and make their own decisions never, never rely upon the decisions and judgments of others, no matter what they are, or who they be.

Just recently a certain sister gave her reason for leaving one man's teachings and embracing another. Said she: So and so prays more, and has more of the Spirit than so and so, and I intend to stay by him. Never again will I trust in a man.â?•

It is obvious that this sister chooses to stay by one's teaching, not because of the teachings themselves, Î?13 but because of the man's appeal to her. Then her statement, Never again

will I trust in a man,â?• positively proves that she does not know herself, and that she knows even less what it means to â??trust in a man.â?•

We believe in the Bible writers not for what they were, but for what they wrote. Men that are deceiving are all praying men, for the Devil knows that the more they put themselves and their religion on display, the more will the people fall for them. They have nothing else anyway. The majority do not pay much attention what the Bible really says and, therefore, know not that the Jews who crucified the Lord were deceiving the common people by much praying where they could be seen, that none of the prophets endeavored to thus sell themselves to the people; that what they were anxious to sell to the people was not themselves, but God and His Truth; that they all were very careful not to make a display of themselves. Jesus Himself reaffirmed the same pattern: He did not pray with Nicodemus, or with the rich young ruler, but plainly told them what Truth is. There is no record that He prayed with anyone. On the contrary, though, I know a man making a prayer room in the corner of a public toilet! Anything to sell himself to the people for that is what people are looking for rather than Truth.

It is because the laity are as a rule quick to listen to men that appeal to their taste, that because of this the enemies of Truth carefully and studiously try to pin something against the characters of those who bear the message of the hour. The adversaries well know that the laity are making their choice on the face value of menâ??s purported reputation rather than on the weight of Truth. For this reason the adversaries **Î?14** of Truth are taking advantage of the situation. And so, since they cannot refute the Truth, they desperately resort to Pharisaical falsehoods with which to char the characters of those with whom they disagree.

We nevertheless have good cause for great and solemn rejoicing that we are privileged to be living in a day when out of the ancient ruins of Judah and Israel, shall emerge a Kingdom and a people that shall be exalted above all the kingdoms and nations of the earth. When the Headquarters of the gospel are established in â??the mountain of the Lord,â?• then the work will be finished without delay. To repeat, converted nations will beat their swords into farm implements. They will turn from warring to farming.

After Godâ??s church passes through the purifying process, then it shall be clearly seen by all that a lost church could not save a lost world. During the second Pentecost every church member will be filled with the Spirit, and as a result thousands will without hesitancy embrace the Truth for this time.

There is no time to lose. The day is upon us when men shall see themselves as they actually are. True, those who do not now cast aside their idols, will do so later, but as we said before, it will then be too late to profit them. Now is the time to turn from men, and to make our own decisions in accordance with the promise that to any God-trusting and Truth-searching one God will give His Spirit to lead him into all Truth.

Even though the enemies of Truth may resort to every perfidy to harm the cause, yet Truth always triumphs, and Godâ??s people with It. Nothing can hurt **Î?15** the Truth. It is like an anvil: When the hammers of the adversaries are all worn out, the Anvil will still stand.

â??SEVEN WOMEN TAKE HOLD OF ONE MANâ?•

OPENING PRAYER THOUGHT

I shall read two paragraphs from page 188 of â??The Mount of Blessing.â?• The first paragraph elucidates on the statement, â??Seek, and ye shall find,â?• the second on the words, â??Knock, and it shall be opened unto thee.â?•

â??â??Seek.â?? Desire not merely His blessing, but Himself. â??Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace.â?? Seek, and you shall find. God is seeking you, and the very desire you feel to come to Him, is but the drawing of His Spirit. Yield to that drawing. Christ is pleading the cause of the tempted, the erring, and the faithless. He is seeking to lift them into companionship with Himself. â??If thou seek Him, He will be found of thee.â??

â??â??Knock.â?? We come to God by special invitation, and He waits to welcome us to His audience-chamber. The first disciples who followed Jesus were not satisfied with a hurried conversation with Him by the way; they said, â??Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?â?! They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day.â?? So we may be admitted into closest intimacy and communion with God. â??He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.â?? Let those who desire the blessing of God, knock and wait at the door of mercy with firm assurance, saying, For Thou, O Lord, hast said, Every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.â?•

Not only that we are invited to seek the Lord but we are assured that our seeking shall not be in vain. Our very desire to come to Him, is the prompting of His Spirit. To this drawing we must yield.

Let us now pray for unwavering faith in His promise that if we seek, we shall find: if we knock, it shall be opened to us

â??SEVEN WOMEN TAKE HOLD OF ONE MANâ?•

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
MINISTER OF DAVIDIAN 7TH-DAY ADVENTISTS
SABBATH, MARCH 1, 1947
MT. CARMEL CHAPEL
WACO, TEXAS

Today we are to continue our study of the book of Isaiah, beginning with the first verse of the fourth chapter.

Isa. 4:1 And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by Thy name, to take away our reproach.

The first thing we need to know is the time indicated by the term "in that day." The antecedent of the words "that day" is found in verses 13 and 14 of the preceding chapters of which the fourth chapter is a continuation. These verses point out that "that day" is the Judgment day, the day in which the sanctuary (the church) is cleansed the harvest day. So, pointing to the day in which we are now living, to the Judgment day, the scripture figuratively reveals that all (for that is what the Biblical number "seven" indicates) the churches have arrived at the place where by their actions they are in reality saying to the Lord: "We want nothing from you but Your name. Just let us be called Christians is all we want from You. We want Your name because it takes away our reproach; that is, if we be called Christians, then what we do can be blamed on You; You get the credit for it."

18

Accordingly, the world has reached the day when God, in order to save the Church, is finally compelled to do something as great and as revolutionary as brought about by the first Advent of Christ. And what could that be? The remaining verses of the chapter give the answer.

Verse 2 In that day [when seven women take hold of one man] shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

This verse shows that the time is now ripe for this glorious revolutionizing of the church and of the world. Let us remember that history repeats, and that a dark cloudy day is always followed by a bright one. So this great apostasy is to be followed not by chaos, but by glorious revival and reformation, by glory and prosperity for all the saints who escape the vengeance of a great God. The faithful shall reap a harvest of souls as did the Apostles on and after the Pentecost.

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days [in the Christian era] Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Jer. 23:5, 6.

This very message, therefore, is the message of "Righteousness by Faith" to them that believe. In the day the "righteous branch" is raised, Judah and Israel shall be saved, and they shall dwell safely. 19 Yes, the day is here when God's vengeance is to fall upon His adversaries, and the once trodden-down kingdoms of Judah and Israel are to rise to prominence and power. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land. Jer. 23:7, 8.

Plainly this is the final harvest of the earth, the gathering of the people from all countries. It is the day in which to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. This is to be the second and last Exodus Movement. So great will it be that it will entirely eclipse the Movement of Moses's day. Do we, then, realize that we are on the verge of a new day? a great day for the faithful and a dreadful one for the unfaithful?

Verse 3 And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem.

This verse clearly shows that while none of the wicked in the church will survive the purification, yet none of the righteous will perish. Indeed, all that are left, will be called holy, and will enjoy even greater security than did His ancient people at the time they left Egypt.

Behold, the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Mal. 3:1-3.

Verses 4-6 When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her. Zech. 2:5.

Anyone who knows the Bible can see that all these events are premillennial. So it is that this present apostasy is to bring forth the Lord's fruitful branch; that the wicked who are among God's people are to be taken out of the way, and the faithful, those that escape, are to be the servants of God and reap a harvest of souls, of such as should be saved; that the day of vengeance is already at the threshold of the house; that His faithful ones are to be raised to prominence and power; that the greatness and the glory of the movement is to cause the wonders of the Exodus Movement and of the early Christian church to fade into insignificance.

Brother, Sister, are you prepared to abide the day of His coming? Will it be to you a great and glorious day? or will it be a dreadful day? Will you find yourself at His right, or at His left? Will it be said to you "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world?" or will it be said unto you, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels?" Will your garments pass His inspection? or will you find yourself cast into outer darkness, there to gnash your teeth?

These are solemn questions that each of us must now answer to himself. If we do not answer them now, then we will have to answer by standing speechless before an angry God. May every one of us be able in that day to say "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isa. 25:9.