

# STRAIGHTWAY

"AND STRAIGHTWAY THEY FORSOOK THEIR NETS, AND FOLLOWED HIM" (MARK 1:18).

CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

## Political and Religious False Prophets Of the End Time

Dr. H. T. Spence

*If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with the horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan? (Jer. 12:5).*

My dear earthly father often told me to find my generation in the Bible, allowing those passages to guide me in my preaching for my times and seasons. Therefore, I am ever observing both the patterns and principles within the Word of God for the times in which we live.

We have often declared in *Straightway* that we believe we are living in the End Time of the last days. The Lord Himself reveals specific passages to us about our times in the light of His coming. For example, note Luke 17:26–30:

*And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son*

*of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.*

Because Christ directs our attention to the days of Noah and Lot, we must draw from the insights of those times for our own season in history. In reflecting upon Genesis chapters 6 and 19, we carefully observe the parallelism of those days with our days. The growing intense violence and wickedness found in Genesis 6 are clearly like our day. The aggressive and expanding rise of sodomy (in the powers of homosexuality and lesbianism) has also

evilly pervaded our society (Gen. 19).

But Christ in Luke 17 gives us additional insights of circumstances that were occurring in those two generations; these must be heeded with equal concern. The contexts of these specific dangers are given to His disciples. These situations (eating, drinking, marrying, buying, selling, planting and building) which seem legitimate on the surface, could become perils to consume a Christian's life, yea, the thought, time, and heart affections of the remnant living in the End Time. We likewise observe that these warnings come on the eve of His expressed burden of being prepared for the Rapture, which is addressed immediately afterwards in Luke 17:34–37. Yes, we look for patterns to give us insight for living in the End Time.

## **STRAIGHTWAY**

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**Published by the  
Christian Purities Fellowship  
The Witness Outreach of  
Foundations Bible College**

**P. O. Box 1166  
Dunn, NC 28335-1166  
800-849-8761**

**WWW.STRAIGHTWAYONLINE.ORG**

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Nevertheless, we also look for principles. Principles are emphatic declarations. They often arise in Scripture concerning a season or event in a specific generation. Note Romans 1:24–28:

*Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.*

These are principles that reveal the characteristics obsessively marking a people or a society that God has given up to uncleanness, given up unto vile affections, and given over to a reprobate mind.

Considering the decisions and actions being taken, we may wonder why politicians think insanely today. It is because God has given them over to

a reprobate mind, to a mind that has reversed evil and good because of their hatred against God. He has also given these leaders over to a “strong delusion” (2 Thess. 2:11) that they should believe a lie. It is true that sin itself produces spiritual insanity (as seen in the prodigal son of Luke 15:14–17). But when a person, a ministry, or a nation refuses to love the truth, God will finally give them over to this strong delusion, or insanity.

With the philosophical powers of existentialism and postmodernism controlling the thinking within politics, morality, and religion today, we are witnessing a depraved, debauched, irrational generation of leadership that is the product of this insanity. God is the One Who has given over our society to this reprobate and delusional leadership! We may wonder how such atheistic men and women, with warped and perverted thinking, have come to leadership power in our country almost overnight? How has such political leadership risen in the halls of Congress, men and women who loathe the God of our forefathers, who hate the Constitution of our country’s birthright, who hate any leader who mentions God or prayer, or who desires for righteousness and morality to be restored in our nation?

But, dear reader, this is where we are. We are in a nation that has denied the God of Scripture and His Son.

Our nation has turned its heart and living away from biblical Christianity and has entered a mongrelized, pseudo-Christianity that has no regard for truth and biblical principles of living. The aggressive rise of this historic, radical change in the public voice of leadership proves our country has long ago left the principles and living of biblical Christianity. Therefore, America today is unable to fight against and subdue these ominous, demonic-personality powers that have taken over our nation.

God has providentially used our President Donald Trump to uncover the morally and spiritually diseased cesspool of the Deep State swamp with all of its iniquitous, beastly powers that were on the verge of the full overthrow of this last bastion of Western civilization, the United States of America. But it seems that the demented, postmodernist-driven powers are deeper and satanically darker than what we ever imagined. And no man, even a patriotic, global hating, politically incorrect president like Donald Trump can overthrow these powers of darkness.

We believe God has sovereignly used President Trump to reveal a mainstream news media that no longer reports objectively, choosing to editorialize everything politically. It is this media the President aptly calls “fake news.” The lies of such reporting have

now been truly unveiled. All these media personalities, birthed in liberalism, socialism, secularism, and presuppositional atheism, have become the Devil's advocates. This unveiling may become the only extent to which God will use this president both exposing their hypocrisy and allowing the remnant political, insightful knowledge to prepare for the inevitable collapse of this nation.

### **A Pattern for Our Times**

As with Noah, there were prophets who lived in the end of an era such as Habakkuk, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah. They lived at the end of the Judean kingdom, when a Babylonian captivity would soon radically alter their existence.

For this issue of *Straightway* we will consider Jeremiah as he faced the end time of the kingdom of Judah. Jeremiah was a prophet of the Lord caught in the web of an apostate nation that would not return to the Lord, even though it feigned to be the nation of the Lord God. Jeremiah was called to be a voice for Jehovah and a conscience unto a people whose personal and national conscience had died a long time before.

At his calling God told him that Judah would not listen to him and that they would ultimately turn against his preaching. Nevertheless, providence thrust this prophet into a tumultuous

river of hatred and disobedience that rapidly descended into the abyss of its apostasy. Even though this prophet endeavored to stop this descent into apostasy, the people of Judah would not listen to him nor return to the God of their fathers.

This condition is the very abysmal river of religious, moral, and political apostasy that we as a nation now find ourselves. The public display of leadership in our country, both locally and nationally, gives clear evidence we have no desire to change from the path that is aggressively leading us to the precipice of spiritual despair and final destruction.

Within this end-time book of Jeremiah, a prominent word arises from this man in both his conversations with the people and with the Lord. It is the word *prophet*, which is used ninety-three times, more than in any other book in the Bible. Surprisingly, it is primarily used regarding *false* prophets! Accompanying these contexts of false prophets is another prominent word—*lie* (sixteen times).

Jeremiah began his ministry in the days of Josiah, the last of the five good kings of Judah. After the death of Josiah, there were four final kings of Judah: Jehoahaz (Shallum), Jehoiakim (Eliakim), Jehoiakin (Jeconiah), and Zedekiah (Mattaniah). All of these last four kings hated Jeremiah's preaching; the people of Judah hated his preach-

ing; and Jeremiah's own relatives hated his preaching. But rising above this collective hatred, Jeremiah had to face the powerful and calculated attacks of these false prophets who regularly lied about his preaching both to the people in Jerusalem and to the captives down in Babylon.

Unto Jeremiah, the Lord condemned these men who claimed to be His prophets while speaking lies to the people. Jeremiah 23:13–32 presents an extensive attack from God upon these charlatans and His declaration of what He will do to them.

*Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness [levity]; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.*

Note also Jeremiah 27:16:

*Also I spake to the priests and to all this people, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Hearken not to the words of your prophets that prophesy unto you, saying, Behold, the vessels of the LORD'S house shall now shortly be brought again from Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you.*

By this time (598 B.C.), the first deportation of 606 B.C. had carried away Daniel and his three companions into Babylon. A second deportation would occur the next year. During those days

the false prophets were heralding a message that the captivity was only temporary and that all the captives would return to Jerusalem. They even prophesied the stolen 5,400 vessels of the Temple would be brought back from Babylon. These prophets lied to the people. The worst of God's judgment was yet to come.

Hananiah was one of three false prophets mentioned by name in this book. He appears in Jeremiah 28. In this context Jeremiah had placed a yoke upon his own neck as a visual message declaring that the yoke of Babylon would be placed upon the neck of the Judean people. Hananiah took the yoke from off Jeremiah's neck and broke it. The false prophet then declared:

*Thus saith the LORD; Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years (28:11).*

With no response, Jeremiah went on his way. Then the Lord told Jeremiah to return to this false prophet and declare, "Hear now, Hananiah; The LORD hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie" (Jer. 28:15). Jeremiah prophesied that the false prophet would die within the year. Verse 17 confirms this prophecy.

Shemaiah, a second false prophet, is mentioned in Jeremiah 29:31. Here the Lord through Jeremiah warns the

people, "Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not, and he caused you to trust in a lie." It is interesting to also note the Lord's words in Jeremiah 14:14:

*Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.*

Dear reader, amidst all that we are presently facing in our nation, yea, in the entire world, the powers of false prophets are End-time powers that we must face as well. These false prophets arise in both the political and the religious arenas. We must ever be careful that we are not caught believing their *lies*.

### **False Prophets Rising in the Present Crisis**

In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus prophesied that "Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Matt. 24:11). The Lord Jesus had warned about such false prophets back in His Sermon on the Mount where He declared, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:15, 16). But now in chapter 24 on the eve of His crucifixion, Jesus identifies these false prophets as "many," declaring that the majority

of professing prophets will be "false."

False prophets tend to multiply the closer we get to the coming of Christ and the Antichrist. They tend to multiply in every great crisis that comes, either in the institutional church or in the political world. Note First John 4:1:

*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

We must remember that though God has given to His true saints His Holy Spirit, there are other spirits active in the world that are not of God. We are not to "believe" these spirits! They will increase ("many") the nearer the world approaches the coming of Antichrist. The political arena is vastly increasing with both old and new personalities whose ideologies and voices call for radical world changes. Their cries of doom and the end of the world are loud and convincing, even declaring the end of the world within ten or twelve years unless we heavily invest in the Global Warming and Climate Change mandates. They are banking on the gullibility of humanity at this time in history, convinced we can be duped into believing anything and everything the prophets of the new agendas advocate.

Such political prophets are religiously part of the pseudo-Christian liberal elite. Thus, they expect us to believe what they say if they use the

name *Jesus*, or speak in a church, or use the identifiable word *Christian*. The workings of the Devil in the End Time have been intricately fine-tuned after centuries of experimenting on humanity. Therefore, “if it were possible, the very elect would be deceived.” Yes, there are “many” diabolical spirits that have gone out into the world. And such strange spirits are promoting a variety of dark logic to govern humanity. These political and religious prophets have brought into their professional arena profound distortions of truth that many times are very subtle and at other times are obviously absurd.

We are now facing personalities in the national government who are seasoned thinkers in the kingdom of darkness. They give evidence of satanic dementia with the empowering articulation of political rhetoric, convincing the mass of humanity to leave the way of truth and natural righteousness for the paths of darkness and destruction.

The Scriptures reveal seven historic periods of increased demonic powers. The last of these periods occurs in the End-time global apostasy of the institutional church as it approaches the Tribulation Period. These increased demonic spirits have gone out into the world, and they are all vying for control of humanity. In the year 2020 almost overnight, we have found ourselves in the global mandates of gov-

ernmental control. What “spirits” have empowered leaderships for such ruling with iron. Perverse winds are now striving in the earth, vying for control to rule the world with a rod of iron while mixing it with the brittle clay of End-time humanity. At this sin-intoxicated hour, only God knows what power and personality will finally emerge with hopes to rule the world. Whatever the truth is about the super-aggressiveness of this coronavirus, it must be said that the virus has been used as a global crisis to catapult world powers to greater control with a passion that is unprecedented in world history. We have witnessed the shockingly swift unanimity among the world governments to respond with similar mandates almost overnight.

Amidst this clamor of power, a global call has renewed hopes of establishing a one world government with an “executive” at the forefront who will lead us into victory over the invisible enemy that has taken the nations captive. This crisis has been manipulatively escalated by the wildfires of the news media; it is evident their fevered pitch will not relent until the world comes under absolute control “for the sake of the virus.” It has become clear in recent weeks that the medical world and news media have no desire for the mentioning of God or prayer for this “urgent” matter. In fact, they have mocked the call of the President and Vice President to prayer. As the

Laodicean Church Age declares that “we have need of nothing,” we are witnessing the hope of man’s utopia sounding clear the Beatles’ song “We Can Work it Out.”

The medical world has become a god in this pandemic; it has become the false prophet of the hour. It only believes in “facts” and a “science” that is without God and without His Son. The “lie” has ripened to create mayors of cities and governors of states who are getting drunk and giddy with authority, believing they have the overwhelming abilities to control humanity into isolation. Only God knows what will finally emerge out of this intoxicating hour for power.

### **Controlling Corporate Worship**

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution declares,

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.*

Since the virus was declared a global pandemic, it has prompted global mandates that have profoundly affected public gatherings to worship. This action is unprecedented in world history. Many in our country’s leadership are demonically intelligent to know that public worship is an impor-

tant part of the Christian life.

The last of the Roman emperors to give an imperial edict for the destruction of Christians was Diocletian. Of the ten imperial persecutions (from Nero to Diocletian), Diocletian satanically discerned that the only way to destroy Christianity was both to destroy the Bible and to separate Christians from one another. We have witnessed during this pandemic a global mandate that has profoundly affected the meeting of Christians together. Without technically outlawing public worship, these mandates simply declared only a small number of people (such as ten, five, or three) could meet together. Going further, some civic leaders demanded a house lockdown almost equivalent to house arrest. When violated, some governmental leaders went so far as to arrest or fine such violators. Some professing Christians tried to acknowledge the mandates by meeting in their church parking lots in their respective cars, with the windows rolled up, listening to their pastor giving the message from the pulpit via a low-power FM radio station. Some of these people were monetarily fined. Some governors threatened to permanently close churches if there were meetings.

These actions in the United States parallel the manner and spirit of communist countries such as China, North Vietnam, North Korea, and the oppressive countries of Islam. But how



is this possible in the free world? The subtle cry may be from the government, "It is for your own safety and the safety of America." Why were such mandates declared? What were the "spirits" behind these mandates? Could there have been other ways to have handled this crisis? It is evident that many of these political, authoritative voices are atheists, or strongly against Christianity, or very liberal "church-going" politicians.

Properly understood, a prophet (religious or political) is the mouthpiece of some spirit. True prophets are the mouthpieces of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth; false prophets are the mouthpieces of the spirit of Error (1 John 4:6b). It is the origin of these prophets' voices that matters. Behind every prophet is a spirit, and behind each spirit is either God or the Devil. We must try the spirits "to see" if they be of God. This statement of John (1 John 4:1) proves that false spirits have "gone out into the world"; they are on a missionary expedition, for there are many antichrists (1 John 2:18, 19). As Paul warned of antichrists in Acts 20:28–30, Peter warned in his Second Epistle (2:1).

It is the Word of God which is the true test of such voices. Yes, such false prophets and false prophesying can come in either religious or political garments. How do you discern a true versus a false prophet? Sometimes it is

difficult to define. But false prophesying in politics can include reasoning a so-called "national ideal" or "security" *independent* of any spiritual quality. True prophesying ever keeps uppermost the spiritual conception of the national life. This is true both politically and religiously.

An ideal is what is best for the nation. Political false prophets believe their concept of the ideal is the best for the country. Religious false prophets believe their concept of the ideal is a betterment of life through health and wealth. These have become the voices of the coronavirus crisis and how to deal with it. They advocate to shut down the country, the small businesses, the economy, fellowship, church worship, meetings, and so many privileges and blessings we have known throughout our nation's history. The media and the governments have pressed such fears upon our nation, causing us to believe the world population will die if we come back together. They want us in solitary confinement. They want us to be afraid of going to church, "forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." Yet, as Christians we are called to "exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). It is interesting to note that the word for *assembling* in verse 25 is the same word translated *gathering* at the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 2:1. The assembling of

God's people here is a prelude to our gathering at the coming Rapture.

What will come out of these weeks away from "congregating" together for worship? Do many in our government hope that church attendance will diminish after permission is granted to reassemble? Will the laity come to believe they do not need church attendance, that simply staying in the home is all right? Both Christian fellowship and public exhortation from Scripture are imperative.

"Social" worship with God's people is what the Lord has dictated for His people, especially as they "see the day approaching" (the day of the secret coming of the Lord, which we want to be ready for in heart and life). We are exhorted not to *neglect* it because it is *needful* for us. Although there are times when we are appointed by providence to be alone, God has made man to be a social creature—he craves friendship. In sorrow and joy, in labor and rest, we long for the support of companionship.

Heaven will be a place where God's people are together forever. This command in Hebrews is not simply referring to corporate worship on Sundays; it includes various kinds of biblical assemblies, including prayer meetings and special meetings for the promotion of our spiritual good. In these days when necessity places us in constant contact with those things that have nothing to do with God, we

need to greatly value being with God's people. We must come to see this need early in our lives. Pastors must press their people to attend such meetings. We need to do so in order to cultivate this matter of provoking unto love and good works (Heb. 10:24).

Although it is one thing to live for God and worship alone, there is something deeply precious and edifying about joining others in singing, praying, and listening to God's Word together. How we respond to the Word becomes a spiritual influence on others as well. We have now arrived in a time in our country (built upon the belief in God and worship) when the scare tactics of the political prophets under the guise of insightful doctors are aggressively and boldly taking away our First Amendment right. This right is not only the right to worship God; it is also a right to a peaceful assembly. Yet to many it has been taken away from them under the guise of "health safety."

These are prelude days to a new normal the government of Antichrist will universally mandate for earth. The days will soon come when we will be scattered to the ends of the earth, unable to worship publicly together in a biblical church. We are aware that our liberty in America is very rare on the earth today, for there are already communist and Muslim countries where such worship is prohibited. But

we have now witnessed and felt this restrictive spirit come to America. The Devil knows that when God's people are together, they are strengthened; if the Devil and his prophets can divide God's people, he can hinder the communication of truth and biblical fellowship. The conversations of true Christians with one another come from a wholesome thought life. This fellowship of thought is going to be more and more important to the saints of God in the coming days. Fellowship with those of like precious faith, speaking of the things of the Lord and exhorting one another are most important for God's people. This truth arises in Malachi 3:16:

*Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.*

The particular Greek word for "exhorting one another" in Hebrews 10:25 means "encouraging one another," not condemning nor tearing down. We must encourage one another "and so much the more" as the day of the coming of the Lord and the day of the coming of Antichrist are approaching.

### **Conclusion**

Christian worship is where we hear corporately the Gospel and how to live through the present generation. Though we can and should read the

Bible privately, it is very important in these days of the End Time to be in attendance to corporate preaching, to hear the Word of God given collectively to His people. The Lie will become the driving force of nations and religions in the End Time. Note John 8:44:

*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a [the] lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

We have already viewed Romans 1:25:

*Who changed the truth of God into a [the] lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.*

See also 2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12:

*And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a [the] lie. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

The secular world lives by lies and anticipates the coming Lie. And the embodiment of this lie will be the coming of Antichrist. Christ came and He was *the Truth*; Antichrist will come and will become for the world *the Lie*. Everything about Antichrist will be a lie. We have already witnessed in our country leaders who have lived the lie.

The Word of God is the singular source of truth for the crucial days in

which we live. Note the apostle Paul's warning in 2 Timothy 4:3, 4:

*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

Public Christianity has come to this, dear reader! The Christianity we are witnessing today in the public display is a religion that has denied the Word of God, the healthy teachings of God. And in that denial they have, after their own lusts and desires, accumulated "many" teachers, "many" false prophets, for they need someone to give them something to satisfy their ears. And when this happens, when they willfully turn away from the Truth, they "shall be turned [by an objective power and spirit] unto fables [myths, legends, or lies]." May we always have a "love" for the truth, "love" for the Word of God, and "love" for Christ our Saviour!

*If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with the horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan? (Jer. 12:5).*

May God help us in these prelude days before the Tribulation Period, in these days when we wait for the Son

from heaven to catch His waiting people home before the great and terrible day of the Lord. If we cannot keep up with the footmen in this crisis hour, how will we contend with the horses? And if when living in a land of peace it is difficult to trust in God, what will we do "in the swelling of Jordan?" This is not the time to backslide! This is not the time to grow cold with God! This is not the time to faint under adversity! This is the hour to rise and play the man and woman for God amidst inconveniences and mandates of the world.

Thank God, there is no mandate by man, no matter how powerful he is, to ever close heaven and the Throne of God! Let us hold forth the Faith! And, Heed the Hour! **S**

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# A New Land and Life Offered to America

Dr. H. T. Spence

We have yet to see how the world will look after this global lockdown; what increasing similarities will now emerge among world governments. Only God knows the truth behind all that we have experienced since the world entered this confrontation with an unseen virus. He alone knows what is real and what is part of “the Lie.” Yet, we must continue to trust that “the earth is the LORD’S and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Ps. 24:1). Our Sovereign God is still in absolute control of it all.

We have been caught in the throes of confusion, misinformation, and even disinformation. In the past, we experienced from China tainted toothpaste and lead-based toy paint; but now what is reputed to be their most deadly export has quickly become known as the novel coronavirus, commonly called COVID-19. Much hypocritical blame has been cast upon President Donald Trump, who we believe has done amazingly well in response to the massiveness of this virus dilemma. But as more information emerges from China’s cover-up, another great contributor to the spread of this virus has been the infamous World Health Organization (WHO) that has shamelessly propped up China’s lies.

Though the virus was not made public until December 29, 2019, it is now

reported that COVID-19 had commenced its breakout in China back in November. Assistance in keeping information from the world came from the head of the WHO, a prominent member of the violent revolutionary Communist Party. As the *New York Times* reported in 2017 (a full two years before the current coronavirus pandemic even began), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director general of the WHO, was accused of covering up three separate outbreaks in Ethiopia (his home country) when he was his country’s health minister. The deadly cholera outbreaks were brushed off as “acute watery diarrhea” by Tedros. As late as January 14, he declared that the coronavirus (originating in China) was not transmissible from human to human. He endeavored to back up the information that China was revealing to the world at that time. It is evident now that China’s dictatorial communist leadership has consistently lied about the reality of the virus, and the leadership’s actions did affect how America and the countries of Europe approached the problem. The WHO parroted the words of China, again declaring that the coronavirus could not spread through human-to-human contact. Such fabrication of lies cost the world thousands of lives.

It is difficult to believe that just a

few months ago we had never heard of a city called Wuhan or even the word *coronavirus*. Was the virus from China's stockpile of biological warfare (accidentally or intentionally released), or from the eating of a coronavirus-infected animal, or from a communistic, over-populated country that was in need of depleting its population of several millions of people? Whatever the truth of the matter, the situation has become a "geo-pandemic" problem for all the nations to deal with.

China was already in a strong confrontation with democracy supporters in Hong Kong when this virus exploded on them. A few leaders in China who have disagreed with how their government has handled this present distress have mysteriously disappeared or committed suicide. In more recent years China has risen in grand proportion to world leadership power. Again, only God knows what is behind these recent explosive, shocking occurrences coming from the largest populated country in the world and its collaboration with the World Health Organization. President Trump has been frustrated with the lies forged from the leadership in China and WHO, even to the point of withdrawing hundreds of millions of dollars of our country's support for the WHO.

### **The Fear of the Dark Unknown**

The absences of testing or a vaccine for this highly contagious virus

has precipitated the violent, fearful reactions from the common man and his leaders worldwide. Had several countries already been affected for a long period of time with this mysterious virus and we simply did not know it? Now that testing has commenced, has the news media contributed to feeding hysteria and global panic? The medical spokespersons standing behind the President in the daily briefings have gained immediate notoriety in power and influence. As President Trump stated in one of his daily broadcasts with the medical elite standing behind him: "We have made stars of all these people." In the months ahead these medical prophets, now becoming household names, may receive much wealth by writing and publishing about their influence behind-the-scenes. Possibly speaking opportunities will bring in tens of thousands of dollars for their personal word concerning the crisis. Yes, President Trump and this crisis may make "wealthy stars" out of these medical personalities.

It must be said there are far worse afflictions upon the earth today; these have been more devastating both in suffering and in their death toll. But the novelty of this invisible virus has the liberals and the news media quickly taking advantage of the situation, often trying to inflame more hysteria.

Recently, Lifeline Children's Ser-

vices (an international adoption and foster care organization) gave the statistics for January 1, 2020 to April 1, 2020 of various life-threatening afflictions in the context of worldwide deaths:

Covid-19 . . . . .	46,438
Seasonal Flu . . . . .	121,993
Malaria . . . . .	246,121
Suicide . . . . .	269,076
Traffic Fatalities . . . . .	338,715
HIV/AIDS . . . . .	421,808
Alcohol . . . . .	627,571
Smoking . . . . .	1,254,352
Cancer . . . . .	2,060,730
Hunger . . . . .	2,806,314
Abortion . . . . .	10,665,130

These statistics show there are far worse contexts leading to death than COVID-19. We need to also include that medical errors annually account for as many as 251,000 deaths in the United States. Yet, this current pandemic finally declared by the World Health Organization has brought a multitude of “false prophets” to the forefront, both politically and religiously, who declare the only hope for the world in the global revelation of COVID-19 is the coming together of all governments to aggressively fight this virus. Former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown voiced recently the need of a “temporary world government.” He believes that no one country can come up with the solution on their own; there must be a coordi-

nated global response. “We need some sort of working executive,” Brown said.

### **Rabshakeh: The False Prophet of Politics**

Arising out of this present distress throughout the world are many voices calling us to submit to mandates being forced upon us by governors and mayors. The cry is that this is for the betterment of our lives and families. We are being compelled to alter our lives in many ways that will become permanent changes globally.

Let us note a similar Old Testament pattern about a governmental prophet who was sent to the people of Jerusalem. This event happened when King Hezekiah was facing the powers of the Assyrian empire. After Sennacherib (the king of Assyria) had taken the Northern kingdom of Israel, he made plans to conquer the kingdom of Judah as well. At the beginning, the Assyrian king sent the lying representative Rabshakeh to Jerusalem to convince the people to give up their city and become the subjects of the Assyrians.

In Second Kings 18 this political prophet of the Assyrian king declared to the people on the walls of Jerusalem the following:

*Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his [Sennacherib’s] hand: Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely*

*deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me, and then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern: Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying the LORD will deliver us (18:29–32).*

This political mouthpiece of the Assyrian king spoke in the Hebrew tongue calling for the people to give up what they possessed or be inevitably destroyed. It was a call to “Let a new king take over your life, a new form of government, and a new life that will truly be better than what you presently have. Yes, everyone will have his ‘own vine,’ his ‘fig tree,’ and ‘waters of his cistern.’”

This hour for the Christian is almost surreal, one of inconceivable perplexity, confusion, enigma, and voluminous mandates from governmental powers. We find ourselves herded as cattle from one stable to a smaller one, with a growing police state to quell any uprising. It seems that every political leader both small and great is wanting a try at flexing his muscles in ruling with a rod of iron. Our coun-

try in its present drunken stupor will destroy itself in a brief period of time; the rest of the world lies in our wake ready to add confusion upon their own people. Yes, we are at an hour in world history where globalism is becoming the heartbeat of the conversations in leadership. And there are many Rabshakehs calling out to the people on the walls of society to let the past go, let the Constitution go that built this great nation on earth under God and His providence. These false prophets want us to believe there is a better land, a better life, a better living, a better approach to government that will make us all one.

Though President Trump in his last State of the Union address boldly declared that Socialism will never rule America, we may be facing the cry of a worn-out and forcefully unemployed society for the government to sustain them. They may believe the bottom is falling out of the American way. This geo-pandemic has given birth to many political false prophets who are promoting the fall of the former America and the need of a new authoritarian government for the people. They do not want to “Make America Great Again,” for they hate the past America.

A long time ago, our country left a republic form of government that humanistically gave way to a democracy. Now we are hearing with greater acuity the call for a full-blown social-



istic government, a government that has never worked without eventually becoming pure authoritarianism. The stimulus packages coming out of Washington (some 2.2 trillion dollars, with more to come) will only feed the socialistic poison to a fear-infested society that will cry, "Whatever is necessary, take away our problems." The geo-pandemic crisis will cause our economy to enter a capitalistic catastrophe, simply because most of the businesses have been forced into closing. Amid everything we have been facing as a nation, this is the year of another presidential election. The progressives, the socialists, and the extremists are all vying for the presidency, and only Heaven knows what the outcome of this most turbulent year of unknowns will be. The Rabbis are rising with the promises of a new world, a new America advertised to be a new Promised Land.

### **The Rise of Socialism Acceptance Among Youth**

We are living in a season where several generations are simultaneously rising with demands for a prominent voice. We have not had so many different generations living at one time as we do now. Because of this variety of generations, it is becoming more difficult to ascertain what is the governmental belief of present America? In the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation's "Annual Report on

U.S. Attitudes Toward Socialism," 58 percent of the upcoming generation opted for one of the three systems, compared to 42 percent who said they were in favor of capitalism. The most popular socioeconomic order was socialism, with 44 percent support. Communism and fascism received 7 percent support each. Marion Smith, executive director of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, said the report shows Millennials are "increasingly turning away from capitalism and toward socialism and even communism as a viable alternative." He noted the following:

*This troubling turn highlights widespread historical illiteracy in American society regarding socialism and the systemic failure of our education system to teach students about the genocide, destruction, and misery caused by communism since the Bolshevik Revolution one hundred years ago.*

Millennials are more likely to prefer socialism and communism than the rest of the country. Fifty-nine percent of all respondents chose capitalism as their preferred arrangement, compared to 34 percent who said socialism, 4 percent fascism, and 3 percent communism.

It is evident the educational system of America has been void of much historic truth in that a number of Communism's founding leaders are

admired by Millennials. Thirty-one percent said they have a favorable view of Che Guevara (aided Castro in the overthrow of Cuba), 32 percent Karl Marx, 23 percent Vladimir Lenin, and 19 percent Mao Zedong. Joseph Stalin is viewed favorably by just 6 percent. In the poll, only 33 percent of Millennials were able to identify the correct definition of socialism. Gen Z (the generation after Millennials) was the most informed group, with 43 percent correctly identifying socialism. Compared to other generations, where Millennials struggled the most was identifying capitalism. Just 51 percent correctly said capitalism is the “economic system based on free markets and the rule of law with legal protections for private ownership.” That was by far the lowest of any age group. Most Americans correctly identify capitalism 67 percent of the time. Millennials are also less likely to have a negative view of communism. Just 36 percent said they had a “very unfavorable” impression of the system, and only 44 percent said they would be insulted if described as a communist. As a whole, 56 percent of Americans view communism very unfavorably, and 63 percent would be insulted to be associated with the ideology. Millennials were the only age group more likely to say America’s economic system “works against me” rather than “works for me.” Gen Z had the most positive impression of the economy,

with 66 percent saying it “works for me,” although many of them have yet to enter the workforce. The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation survey was conducted online from Sept. 28 to Oct. 5, 2019, by *YouGov*. It polled 2,300 members of the general public, age 16 and above.

Millennials strongly support Bernie Sanders simply because they are socially liberal, especially on the LGBT rights, they are overwhelmed in student debt from school loans, and they have become discontent with traditional government, longing for a radical change. A recent shocking poll from *YouGov* is that 44 percent of youth between the ages of 16 to 29 said they had rather live in a socialist nation than in a capitalist nation.

### **Socialism and Its Intrinsic Evil**

Man continues to dream of a perfect promised-land government he calls *utopia*. The word *utopia* means either “no place” or the “perfect place.” The Greek philosopher Plato in his *Republic* as well as Sir Thomas More in his *Utopia* spoke of such a land for the people. In both works a utopia was ruled authoritatively; no individual choice was permitted. In Plato’s utopia only the philosopher kings were educated and, therefore, could rule. A police class served to force the remaining slave class of humanity to obey the dictates of the philosopher kings. Obviously, this utopia was void

of liberty. Although Thomas More's utopian society appeared as a paradise, all of the citizens dressed alike and lived in identical houses. Everyone spoke the philosophies and beliefs of their controlling powers. Karl Marx insisted that his utopia would be different because it would be classless and free of any nationalist sympathy. To bring about a revolution, the people, whom he viewed as "workingmen of all countries," were called to unite against the "ruling classes" and to break their chains of bondage.

Although there are many in Congress who are leaning strongly to Democratic Socialism (more than what we would imagine), this political philosophy has been the driving force of Bernie Sanders. Sanders has brought this ideological form of government to the forefront. This senator from Vermont has found a substantial following among the younger Millennials generation. His socialistic package includes what he calls racial, economic, and climate justice, as well as free public college and single payer health care. Although he attacks the top one percent in America who owns some 40 percent of the nation's total wealth, he does not acknowledge that this one percent does pay 39.5 percent of individual income taxes. Although he boldly lists all the freebies he will give to Americans, he does not reveal how he will pay for all of this, unless it is to increase massively the taxes on

the rich and their corporations.

So often the Scandinavian countries such as Sweden and Denmark are thought of as ideal countries of socialism. But we must remember that these Scandinavian countries strongly favor the free market and they oppose government ownership of their major industries and support private ownership. Where socialistic implications are found in a country, the income taxes are extremely high, often 50 to 60 percent of one's income.

Another Rabshakeh false prophet promising a new and better land has been Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, who gained 57 percent of the vote promising Medicare for all, free college tuition, the legalization of marijuana, and the complete elimination of the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). To many she has become the new face of the Democratic Party.

All forms of socialism have failed, wherever they were attempted in history. In the Soviet Union it was Marxism and Leninism; in China it was Maoism; in India it was State Socialism; in Sweden it was Democratic Socialism; and in Nazi Germany it was National Socialism. In all of these, socialism in a country has never come to a promotional classless society. Ironically, socialism has been forced to adopt several concepts of capitalism just in order to survive. China today necessi-

tates a certain measure of capitalism in order to stay afloat; this is evidenced in their “special economic zones.”

Do we recall when Mikhail Gorbachev took over the Soviet Union in 1985? He endeavored to revive socialism/communism through his famous *Perestroika* (a restructuring) and *Glasnost* (the concept of an openness economically). But it utterly failed, and the great Soviet empire began dissolving on Christmas Day 1991. In the late 1970s, China’s Deng Xiaoping abandoned the ridiculous excesses of Maoism. But his reform was more capitalism than socialism. India had to reject its state socialism in the 1990s and also resorted to capitalism; the result has created the largest middle class in the world.

As Christians, we must remember that Karl Marx, the founder of socialism, was an atheist socialist. He was not just an atheist; he was an atheist that deeply hated God! He called religion “the opium of the people.” This hatred has been evident when any of his followers came to power in a country. They would always target the churches with intense terror against them, shutting them down, and even killing pastors. When Marx rose to power, he executed priests and bishops of the Roman Catholic Church. He believed this was part of the “class-cleansing.” Marx’s view of human nature came from the Enlight-

enment thinkers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke. Marx believed that the human nature was not born depraved (as the Scriptures declare); man was simply (as Locke viewed) a *tabula rasa*, or a blank page. They viewed the state as responsible for creating the type of human citizen it sought.

We must remember that our country’s forefathers believed that man was made in the image of God, and our Declaration of Independence states that all men “are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights.” Our forefathers did not believe in the perfection of man, but that man’s nature was fallen. When James Madison was reflecting upon the nature of man, he declared, “If men were angels there would be no need for government.” He also stated, “Ambition must be made to counteract ambition.” He further stated, “Such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government.” And perhaps our beloved first president of these United States, George Washington revealed how the forefathers viewed man’s nature: “We must take human nature as we find it; perfection falls not to the share of mortals.” Socialism denies God so that the state may become humanity’s God. Socialism embraces evolution to explain man’s origin and absence of accountability. In the end, socialism, in whatever form, will always have a hatred for Christianity.

Karl Marx used the terms socialism and communism interchangeably. The ten steps needed to establish socialism included the following:

- a progressive income tax,
- the abolishment of private property,
- free education for all (forced public education to control all the country's children),
- centralization of all means of communication and transportation under the absolute control of the state,
- the forfeiture of the rights of man for the sake of the state.

At the heart of socialism is the belief that government is the key to human salvation. Socialism necessitates force upon the people; for this reason, they call for eradicating all guns or other abilities to defend oneself from the government. How forceful were the powers of Lenin's regime to implement socialism/communism in Russia? Lenin had to put to death approximately twenty million civilians, a greater number than Hitler put to death among the Jews.

### **Conclusion**

To a vulnerable society amid a geopandemic crisis, socialism portrays itself as the solution for this crucial hour. It promises safety, security, and sustainability through absolute control by the state government. Repeatedly

and without exception, history bears witness that socialism always ends in totalitarian control of a society and the loss of individual freedoms. False political prophets (like Rabshakeh) promise everything free at the simple cost of full surrender to a state leader (Sennacherib) who seeks to control all aspects of life, even the very thoughts of the heart.

Initially, socialism appeals to the flesh, promising to provide for all its people's physical needs in life. However in the end, all they realize is that the state has taken away their freedoms—freedom of speech, freedom of occupation, freedom of residence, freedom to travel, and our highest freedom, the freedom to worship by the dictates of the conscience according to the Word of God. The Devil holds out socialism as a promised utopia, a land as beautiful as the Garden of Eden, a land as plentiful as the Promised Land of Canaan, where all are one, living together in harmony with no problems to face. But in the end, it imprisons its followers in a living hell. As one Soviet defector wrote about Soviet life (and equally true in China), "We lived in a world swarming with invisible eyes and ears." Even our thought life will be judged by the state. Our books, our Bible, our writings in journals, they all will be limited to what the state will dictate as their "truth."

Shockingly, many today actually

question whether the Holocaust was a historical fact. Similarly, in 1932–33 the Soviet press continually dismissed and declared as an anti-communist myth the Soviet's forced famine in Ukraine that took the lives of seven million innocent people. Even Edouard Herriot, a strong supporter for the Soviet regime, stated, "I have crossed the whole of Ukraine, and I can assure you that the entire country is like a garden in full bloom."

We must be careful in listening to the rhetoric of the Rabshakehs of our time, a time when it seems that our country is collapsing and a time when stimulus packages are whetting our desire for quick and easy money. We dare not begin expecting more and more from our government. Will suddenly unemployed individuals be receiving more from the government than they even formerly made in their occupation? Providing such "free" money can only result in the spiraling rise of taxes.

The irony of these recent months is that the state and federal governments are losing tens of billions of dollars from taxes that normally would have been received from working men and women. But with millions without a job, our government will have to borrow the money from somewhere. Another irony is that our country has borrowed over a trillion dollars from China, and our debt to them continues

to climb. Will the answer for this present, overwhelming crisis be to give our lives totally to the government with the hope that in return the government will provide all our necessities of life? What will ultimately be the cost for this governmental stimulus? This coronavirus crisis may be the deceptive net to establish a final takeover for a New World Order.

Are the Devil's words to God true about humanity?

*Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face (Job 2:4, 5).*

Our money is stamped, "In God We Trust," but will our God become the government?

In New York City's Central Park, outside the wall of the Dakota Compound where John Lennon was killed, one can find a number of memorials to him. One of these is a pentagram with the one word *Imagine* in the middle. This one word was taken from his song on the cultural revolution of the End Time.

Imagine there's no heaven,  
It's easy if you try.  
No hell below us,  
Above only sky.  
Imagine all the people  
Living for today.

Imagine there's no countries;

It isn't hard to do.  
Nothing to kill or die for,  
And no religion too.  
Imagine all the people  
Living in peace.

Imagine no possessions;  
I wonder if you can.  
No need for greed or hunger,  
A brotherhood of man.  
Imagine all the people  
Sharing all the world.

You may say that I'm a dreamer,  
But I'm not the only one.  
And some day I hope you'll join us,  
And the world will be as one.

Beware of the political false prophets of world governments; their End-time words are oracles of hell. Our only hope is the Blessed Hope of Christ's Kingdom, and thus we pray, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

§

## Fear of the Future's Unknown

Dr. H. T. Spence

Fear is one of the great powers that potentially can obsess and control our thought life. The concept of fear begins in the mind as one's thought life observes and reacts to circumstances of life. Fear may even arise by musing on circumstances that may not exist at the present time; however, these circumstances may have been real in the past or potentially may become real in the future. Fear is a mental feeling or an emotion prompted by a thought. A person who fears something does not want it to happen; knowing its inevitability, he dreads the darkness and pain surrounding the contemplation of it. The fear response comes from sensing danger that may surround a coming circumstance. Perhaps in the natural understanding, fear is the body's way of protecting itself from confronting situations that may be dangerous.

### The Beginning of Fear

Our present-day word *fear* comes from an old English word *ferē*. Its earliest meaning (c. 700s) was the concept of "danger or peril." Not until the 1300s did this word begin to speak of the actual *feeling* of fear. Did God in His great creation of the various complexities of man create fear as part of the temperament and emotional makeup of man? Or was fear the result of the Fall?

There seemed to be no fear expressed from Eve as she spoke with the serpent. However, the emotion of fear is expressed from the first couple after Adam sinned against God in the Garden of Eden. In the immediate aftermath of their sin, "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they

sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Gen. 3:7). Their first fallen thoughts were of themselves—not thoughts of crying out to God. Their immediate thoughts were to cover themselves; they hurried to sew fig leaves together covering themselves from each other’s gaze. Perhaps this tree happened to be the nearest available tree to draw from for the manufacturing of an apron. The Hebrew word for *apron* is rooted in the meaning “to gird oneself,” or some sort of a girdle. It is evident that the first noticeable effect of their disobedience was shame. For both were equally guilty, and (it is interesting to note) they both experienced the same guilt at the same time.

Is this not one of the saddest anticlimaxes of history? The serpent’s words no doubt had built up a great anticipation within Eve, unto whom Adam eventually yielded. They partook of the forbidden fruit expecting wonderful results; instead they received a growing sense of shame. For the first time they had knowledge of good and evil. They were experiencing a *conscience*, yea, a guilty conscience. God permitted them to experience this shame. Furthermore, their sense of shame prompted them to cover that portion of the body which is identified with human procreation. Did they discern that their sin of disobedience would contaminate the very fountain and source of human life?

Amidst their shame, God came down in the “cool of the day” (the breeze of the day, perhaps the evening time). Adam and Eve hearing the voice of the Lord God endeavored to hide themselves from their Creator. When the Lord called out to Adam, we read of fear for the first time in the Bible: “I was afraid and hid myself.” In Genesis 3:10 Adam says, “I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” The very first words of a fallen man are found in this verse. It is clear that sin has already influenced his talk of half-truth, evasiveness, and even an attempt to deceive God. The only true words found in his declaration to God are “I was afraid.”

Fear first appears in created man as a result of falling away from God. Although Adam did not fully own his guilt, in effect he confessed it by owning his shame and fear in the matter. In contrast to Adam, mankind today knows no fear or shame for its sins against God. Since the fall of man, fear has been an emotional power either harnessed or unleashed through the power of the human thought life.

### **Our Present Hour of Fear**

History has brought us into an unprecedented hour of the greatest crisis of fear that the global world has ever known. All other circumstances and crises have been local or national. However, we have been told by the



liberals and the news media that this coronavirus could annihilate the planet Earth. Both the liberals/socialists and the media have banded together to intentionally instill fear, feeding our cry for the government to take over our lives and do whatever is necessary to alleviate this virus problem. For they have declared this to be far worse than “global warming,” or “climate change.” In fact, many are claiming that the virus is because of global warming.

The future spreading of this virus is still unknown as it continues in its path of volatile sickness and death. We dare not underestimate the effect of such a virus upon humanity. But potentially what could be worse than the virus itself is that we may tend to be plagued by thoughts of fear to a point of hysteria. When a society is pressed into fear, their mind is vulnerable to absolute control by powers that claim an answer to alleviate that fear. As a Christian I must candidly ask myself the questions, “Do I believe that God is over everything?” “Do I believe that everything is in His plan and power, including anything that is prompted by man or the Devil?” We must have present faith and hope in Him for our present and future as well as the future of this planet.

Prompted by such present global distress, this crucial hour could distress a Christian’s thought life. Concerning the context of faith and hope, a po-

tential problem is *discouragement*—a loss of confidence in God, in His providence, and in the promises of the Word of God. Such discouragement can affect how we live as well as our faith and trust in God.

Discouragement is the first step away from sound thinking. Discouragement means a loss of confidence. Although discouragement may also be considered a “disenchantment of self,” it is also a momentary or temporary loss of confidence in God, His Word, His ability, and His providence in a crisis hour. If discouragement is not properly addressed, it may lead into depression, entering a deeper, darker state of thought life. Depression is the loss of the sight of God and hope. Though it may not lose consciousness of God, it does lose trust in Him. Depression concludes that God is unable to help in a particular matter. It is when the thought life loses sight and hope of one’s self in God.

This spiritual depression is readily seen in Psalm 42 where there is a loss of sight for God and hope for the life:

*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?  
and why art thou disquieted in me?  
hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise  
him for the help of his countenance  
(Ps. 42:5).*

In such times of thought, one must speak to himself with words that pull the thought life out of the mood of darkness. Do not allow the words of

depression to fill the thought life.

There is also the example of Elijah the prophet. God through Elijah had a monumental victory over the 450 pagan priests of Baal at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18). The prophet then put to death all the false prophets, and Israel's heart turned back to worshipping the true God. But within twenty-four hours, Jezebel the wife of King Ahab (who had witnessed the fire fall from heaven and the demise of the prophets of Baal), sent word to Elijah guaranteeing that she would kill him within a day. When the prophet heard the threat (even after the wondrous miracle of Mt. Carmel), he panicked, and fear overtook him as he ran for his life. Traveling to Mount Horeb, he lamented to God in a state of spiritual depression:

*But he went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a tree; and he requested that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers (1 Kings 19:4).*

How sad that the prophet prayed such a prayer. For it was not in God's plan for him to die—in God's will Elijah would be translated from the earth alive!

But how does a Christian's soul fall into such a condition? We cannot reason that it is simply the Devil's singular work, though he does perhaps

initiate such a spiritual state of mind with projected thoughts. Sometimes the Christian himself initiates this frame of mind, and then it is strengthened by the Devil. We must remember that the Devil is relentless, in that he does not cease trying to destroy the Christian's mind and heart for God. He always endeavors to discredit the work of God in the believer. The Devil knows the power of grace and the transforming power of redemption. But he does everything he can to destroy that work. He will do whatever it takes to mar and ruin the work of God in the Christian's life. If he cannot keep us from becoming a Christian, he will do everything he can to bring us spiritually down after we become a Christian. He ever seeks to steal away our joy, our peace, and our trust in God's Word.

The Devil has witnessed throughout history the power of God within men and women who have placed their complete and unshakable trust in the Almighty, who have overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil. But he has also observed myriads of Christians who have fallen and who have never come to the victory that God could and would provide for them. From one perspective Redemption is a greater work than creation (and especially when we consider the way in which God achieved it through the great miracle of the incarnation and the immeasurable death of Christ on the cross). Therefore, the Devil desires

to discredit the purpose of Christ in a believer's life, to discourage the life, to depress the mind, and to cause the Christian to doubt all that God has done for him. He wants us to live in a way that gives the impression of being discouraged, depressed, burdened, and miserable.

How does he do this? Such provoking of thoughts appears in a variety of contexts. The Devil may endeavor to bring us to a state of discouragement or even depression by getting us to concentrate our sight upon our past so that by dwelling on the past we are cast down. Or, if he cannot cause discouragement concerning our past, he draws us to look to the future of our personal life and convinces us of the impossibility of living for God in the light of everything we will have to face. Or, he may create a scenario of earthly powers that we think will be impossible to face. It reminds us of the words of the Lord to Jeremiah again when the prophet complained how difficult it became for him to stand against the enemy he faced (Jer. 12:5).

Even in this crucial hour, when both government and news media are speaking of what we may have to face, are we as Christians embracing fear of the present and future for ourselves and for our family? Are we living in fear of what "could" happen? Yes, we could have victory over the past; it could be settled with a faith assuring

the soul that all is well with God about my past. But, it may be that our view of the future brings little hope as to what might happen!

Why does such darkness enter a Christian's life? What are the reasons one gives for fear of the future? What prompts the soul to be given to much talk about the fear of certain potential events?

### **What Causes the Christian to Fear?**

Perhaps we must begin where we are as a human being. Sometimes a tendency to fear is found in our temperament and disposition, often influenced by the family from which we came. Yet no two people are exactly the same, not even children born in the same family. We have our own particular characteristics, our virtues, our failures, and our weaknesses. As we are born into the world, we are born into a family, or if given up for adoption we come to live among others. The molding of the self is a combination of influences from within, from our circumstances, and from the home in which our parents viewed the circumstances of life. We may think becoming a Christian changes all of this, but it does not. Although our past sins are forgiven and Christ lives within, we are the same self after the New Birth. We may do the same things as others, but we do them differently. Even within a family there may be those whose proclivity is to be nervous or apprehensive about

facing life. Some may be frightened by certain situations and circumstances, while others tend to view it from an easier perspective. Some can converse or even witness to others in an easy fashion, while others find it more difficult.

But there is the need of God for our difficulties, a greater consciousness of our need through Him. Some are afraid of failure because of the constant thoughts that flood their mind as they think more on the deficiencies of self. Constant thought of one's deficiencies can become a continued oppression. There may be those who are hesitant to call themselves Christians, or respond, "I hope I am saved," simply because of the general fear and apprehensiveness regarding their lives and the future. They even fear things that might happen that would affect their testimony. Therefore, they are hesitant to acknowledge their salvation.

We must not lack faith in God for our lives in the present; we must hope in God for the future of our living, no matter what thoughts come to us. We must turn our eyes upward rather than inward. This is one of the purposes for the written Word of God—to give us both faith and hope, and to help us to maintain these precious virtues all the days of our lives.

### **Courage to Face the Future**

If fear ever takes control of our mind,

we will lose the imperative need of *courage* for these days. And this courage must be evident as the offspring of our thinking; no matter what thoughts come to our mind, we must take courage in our God. We need courage in every aspect of our living. Note Christ's words to the palsied man:

*And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy: Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee (Matt. 9:2).*

The Greek word for *cheer* is the word for *courage* or *confidence*. In this passage the Lord encouraged this man sick of the palsy to be of good courage in knowing that his sins were forgiven. This is a greater knowledge than physical healing. Oh, dear reader, is this resolved in our thinking, that all our past sins are forgiven? Then we need to take courage in this. In Matthew 14:27 we read of Christ walking the tempestuous sea, when great fear came upon His disciples in the boat. He announced to them, "Be of good cheer [courage]; it is I; be not afraid." Christ is present in the worst of storms and winds of life; we must take courage, and be not afraid.

In John 16:33 the Lord told His disciples on the eve of His crucifixion,

*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but*

*be of good cheer [courage]; I have overcome the world.*

It should be of great strength to our souls, that as we face this world, Christ has overcome the world. Yes, we should take courage in this. There is another important perspective of this courage found in Acts 23:11:

*And the night following the Lord stood by him [Paul], and said, Be of good cheer [courage], Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.*

No matter what circumstance we find ourselves in (even in prison), the Lord is with us, and He knows even the future events that the present will lead to in His good providence.

### **How to Deal with Fear of the Future**

Our greater concern may be in how to deal with fear of the future. First, we want to ask the Lord how are we to discover or know where to draw the line between *legitimate* forethought and *paralyzing* forethought. The Lord gave us passages of Scripture that are to help us in this distinction. In Matthew 6:25–34, the Lord says we are to “take no thought” about the needs of life. We are not to be *anxious* about these needs for the future. Anxiety must not control our thinking about life’s necessities. If the economic situation in America radically changes or a pandemic virus becomes a reality per-

sonally, we must not become anxious. We must not allow future concerns to paralyze us. Note Christ’s warning in Luke 21:34–36:

*And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged [weighed down, depressed] with surfeiting [giddiness and headaches resulting from excess thinking that leads to medications to alleviate thoughts], drunkenness, and cares of this life [anxieties over the tangible things of this life], and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things [the worries and anxieties over events, circumstances, and material needs] that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*

The investment of thinking and planning for the future is most proper only up to a point. If one goes beyond that point into worry and anxiety, the heart becomes crippled and paralyzed. Without God in the heart of our daily living, sin will enter. While it is proper to think about the future, it is wrong to be controlled by it. We do not want to become a prisoner to these fears that control our thinking about our future. We must not permit the unknown of the future to control us. We must view Christ for today in faith and let *hope reign* in our hearts for tomorrow. Remember, there are no unknowns

with God; there is no future to Him. God abides only in an eternal present. Solomon gave us the conclusion of the whole matter of life:

*Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man (Eccles. 2:13).*

### **Conclusion: The Spirit of a Sound Mind**

We have often wondered how Paul and Timothy each faced the growing religious and political powers against Christianity. Consider the times Paul was in prison: Acts 16 in Philippi, and from Acts 21 to the end of the book. He often was alone, although God providentially did provide a few companions to accompany the voyage with him to Rome. He was released from his first Roman imprisonment in A.D. 63. In A.D. 67–68 he was brought back to Rome for his final sentencing of death.

In reading Paul's final epistle to Timothy, he was becoming more and more alone because both friends and enemies were scattered from him. In First Timothy he speaks of the burden that "some" were falling away (1 Tim. 1:3, 6, 19; 4:1; 5:15; 6:10, 21). But in Second Timothy the "some" becomes "all" forsaking him (1:15; 4:16). His final trip to Rome was the crisis point. After Paul's martyrdom, we do not read of Timothy and how he fared with the increased persecution from the growing imperialism against Christianity. Church history declares that

in A.D. 97, Timothy (then an 80-year-old bishop) tried to halt a procession given in honor of the goddess Diana in Ephesus. There he stood before a great multitude and preached the gospel. Tradition says the angry pagans beat him, dragged him through the streets, and stoned him to death.

In Paul's last epistle to Timothy, we read of the faith of Timothy, which was first found in his grandmother and then his mother. For our days ahead, we must remember that God has given to us faith in His Word and the Holy Spirit; both are gifts needed for the present and the future. Our fears are due to our failure to stir up the gift of God, the Holy Spirit, which is in us (2 Tim. 1:6, 7). These verses reveal to us that we must approach our trials in a different way than before we became a Christian. We must overcome through the power of the Holy Spirit. We must think of suffering in a new way; we must face everything in life in a new way. God has given to us the Holy Spirit, Who is not only with us but in us.

Note the apostle Paul's important declaration:

*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7).*

We certainly know our weaknesses. Even in doing the will of God in obedience, Paul wrote to the Philippians,

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). When we make the decision of what to do, we execute that decision in faith, with fear and trembling, and trusting “it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). But even in trusting that there is this power within, we still have a “holy” timidity in doing what God wants us to do. Yes, it is the power of God working in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Whatever that will is, God will enable us with power from His Spirit. Peter was afraid to die that early morning during Jesus’ trials; he even denied the Lord because of that fear. But Peter was empowered with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power—an inward enabling to do whatever we are called upon to do or face in God’s will. God has also given us the spirit of love. Such a spirit takes us away from self-centered thinking in crisis situations. God has given us the spirit of love for Him and for others. Such a spirit delivers us from self-concern. But God has also given us the spirit of a sound mind, or spiritually healthy thinking in these days that are given over to confusion, irrationality, and insanity. A careful reading of Luke 21:7–19 is important for these days in the light of a needed deliverance of fear, even before an age that is out to destroy us.

We must earnestly pray in these days when fear and anxiety are sweeping the world concerning the coronavirus, that our heart will rest in God our Saviour. May we not be caught in the panic and hysteria of the present fear. We must trust our God with our life, our spouse, and our children. We must trust God with our ministries. And, we must trust God with both our living and our appointed time of dying. Let us know God’s Spirit. His Spirit is not a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.

*Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness (Isa. 41:10).*

*What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me (Ps. 56:3, 4).*

*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love (1 John 4:18).*

*So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me (Heb. 13:6).*

*Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest (Josh. 1:9).*