

BRYAN STATION BAPTIST CHURCH
THE PIONEER BAPTIST

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GRACIOUS LORD

By: C. D. Cole

Isaiah 30:1-18 *“Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion. For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes. They were all ashamed of a people that could not profit them, nor be an help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach. The burden of the beasts of the south: into the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the young and old lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent, they will carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people that shall not profit them. For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still. Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of*

the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters’ vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit. For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. But ye said, No: for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill. And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.”

Grace is predicated upon the fact of sin, and sin must abound in our experience before grace can much more abound.

Our text comes out of a story of God’s dealing with his ancient people Israel. They were threatened with an invasion by the Assyrians and the story recounts their plan of defense and of God’s displeasure with their plan. In their danger and distress they ignored God and sought help from Egypt. They took council but not with God. They held their conferences and made plans for their safety as though God, who had redeemed them, did not live. They did not resort to God for help; they made no cry to Him for deliverance; they did not go to his prophets for advice in this time of national peril. And when the prophets warned against asking help from Egypt, they raved and said, *“...Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.”* Such was their state of mind and heart that they preferred a smooth lie to the plain truth.

Their defeat and destruction are represented in the story under the figure of a falling wall and the breaking of a potters’ vessel. This emphasizes the suddenness of their destruction. They had rejected God’s way of deliverance and nothing but defeat stared them in the face. God had said, *“...in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength...”* In other words their salvation was in God; in returning to Him and depending upon Him for de-

liverance from the threatened invasion. He had told them that their trust in Egypt would be in vain and to their defeat and shame. But they would not believe God and followed their own plan.

This story is an allegory of modern life. Multitudes are doing exactly what Israel did. They are faced with danger; the enemy of souls is on their heels; the justice of violated law is threatening them with eternal ruin. They are helpless in the face of sin and Satan. They are under the damming power of sin and Satan is leading them captive at his will. And instead of turning to God in penitence and confession of sin and taking refuge in the Saviour God has provided, they take council with flesh and blood. They have their own plan of defense and escape. They have their own pet ideas about how to be saved and when God says that in Christ Jesus alone there is safety, they make lies their refuge and hide under falsehood.

And God's own people, in times of trouble and danger are prone to turn aside from God's revealed way of peace and happiness and follow a course of their own choosing.

Our text speaks of God's gracious intention to bless Israel in spite of their sin and folly. It tells of his secret purpose of grace towards them. In spite of their rebellion God meant to bless them. Their sin abounded but there would be grace more abounding. And this is the only hope of any sinner; it lies in God's secret purpose concerning him. There is none for God to bless except the disobedient and wayward. But God would not bless Israel immediately. He adopted a waiting policy, and so we read, "*And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you...*"

We shall first speak briefly of this principle in God's dealing with His people and then give some illustrations from the word of God and human experience.

God waits. He is never in a hurry.

This is true both in punishment and in salvation. God has waited a long time to punish a rebellious world and the day of judgment is still in the future. We have to work while it is called day for the night cometh when no man can work. But night and day are alike to God. There is no night of rest and idleness with Him. There is nothing of the restlessness and nervousness about God that characterizes men. The world is jittery and jerky but God is ever calm and serene. Hurry, worry, bury describe many a life in this modern age.

God waits to be gracious. He waits to bless. Something else must precede God's gracious dealing. Grace is predicated upon the fact of sin, and sin must abound in our experience before grace can much more abound. Sin must become bitter with men before Christ can become precious.

God's waiting to bless his people is not the waiting of indifference. It is not because he has no concern for the objects of his love. God is not indifferent. He is not cold-hearted towards his chosen people. He means to do something for them. His waiting is not from a cold heart but from a wise head. Men often wait and hesitate because of indifference to the matter in hand.

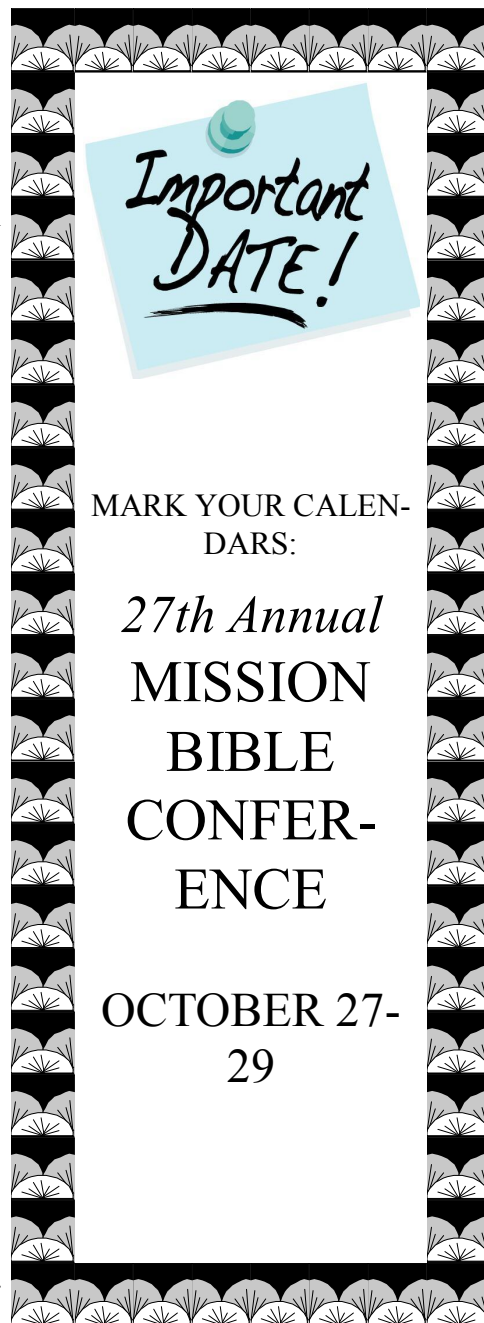
God's waiting is not a waiting of perplexity. Men often wait because they do not know what to do; they are perplexed and do not know which way to turn. But God waits because He does know what to do. He knows the need and when to send the help. He never sends help too soon; neither does he withhold help until it is too late.

God's waiting is not the waiting of deliberation. Men must deliberate if they act wisely. Proverbs 11:14 "*...but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.*" Men must take time and seek advice if they are to act wisely. But God needs neither time nor counselors in order to know what to do.

God's waiting is not the waiting of idleness. While waiting to be gracious God is busy in bringing the schemes of

men to naught. Dashing their false hopes to the ground. In waiting to be gracious, God is busy convicting sinners of their sin and revealing to them their need of a Saviour.

God waits with the intention of blessing the objects of His love. And He knows when to send help. There is a wrong time to try to save a drowning man, one must wait until he gives up the struggle to save himself. And so God reveals Christ to sinners in salvation when they have reached the end of their own strength.



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THE APOSTLE PAUL'S THEME

By: Dr. C. D. Cole

I Corinthians 2:2: *"For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."*

Introduction: Paul, in the context, gives us a little autobiographical glimpse, which is confirmed by some references in the Acts of the Apostles. I Corinthians 2:3 *"...And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."* There seems to have been a singular period of silence; apparent abandonment of his work and a spirit of dejection; about the time Paul came to Corinth. The reasons for his feeling are obvious. He had but recently arrived in Europe for the first time, and many of his experiences had been very discouraging. He had been imprisoned at Philippi; he had been smuggled away by night from Thessalonica; he had been hounded from Berea; he had almost failed to make any impression at all in Athens. And alone he came to Corinth, where he lay quiet for a while and took stock of his adversaries. In quiet meditation he came to the conclusion recorded in our text. The question of his future course pressed upon him, and in Divine strength and wisdom he determined to know nothing in Corinth but Christ and Him crucified.

This purpose was not formed in ignorance of conditions in Corinth.

PAUL'S THEME

Notice the exclusiveness of Paul's theme. *"Nothing but."* His theme was the biography of a man, with special emphasis laid on one act in His history; His death. The development of this expression leads to the very heart of the Gospel. Let it be fixed in the mind once forever that it takes something more than the bare facts of the life and death of Christ to constitute the Gospel. Now be careful to not di-

voice this sentence from the next one I am to utter, namely, that it takes Paul's conception or theory of these facts to make the Gospel. Unless you hold to Paul's commentary on these bare facts, you will miss the Gospel. Theory is of much importance here. You may believe the historical facts of the life and death of Christ, and hold a false theory concerning them. And to do so is fatal. Let us observe some of these false theories, before noticing the true theory:

The theory that Christ lived and died as an example. There is no Gospel in this theory of the life and death of Christ. A man who is paralyzed in his lower limbs needs something more to enable him to walk than to see other men walking. A blind man needs something more than the example of others who can see. A sinner dead in trespasses and sins, needs something more than an example. No atonement here.

The moral influence theory of the atonement. According to this view, the death of Christ was only to manifest God's love to the sinner in such a way as to turn the sinner from his sins. This view denies that man's sins have incurred the wrath of God, and that Christ's death was necessary to satisfy God's justice. Nothing in God to be satisfied. The only hindrance was something in man, and God would overcome this hindrance by a manifestation of His love in the death of His Son. But if men were not in danger from the wrath of God; if there is no hell to which God consigns sinners; then the death of Christ was not a manifestation of love but of folly. If a father should plunge himself into the water and drown himself, or thrust his hand into the fire and burn it off, this would not be a manifestation of love to his child unless it was done to save the child from drowning in the one case, or

of burning in the other.

The general atonement theory. According to this theory the death of Christ was not to make the salvation of any sinner certain, but of all men possible. Christ died as much for Judas who went to hell as for Peter who went to heaven. And for millions who were already in hell when He died. Revelation 5:9, *"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."*

Paul's view of the death of Christ. It is sometime called the commercial theory of the atonement. Paul's commentary on the life and death of Christ is this: As for the person of Christ, he was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead. As to His death, he died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Galatians 3:13, *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."* I Peter 2:24, *"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."* Hebrews 9:26, *"For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."* II Corinthians 5:21, *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*

CONTRARY TO POPULAR OPINION

The apostle preached contrary to popular opinion. He did not surrender to the demands of the people. Here is

the acid test of the preacher's loyalty to Christ; is he willing to preach the truth in the face of opposition?

The Jews required a sign, or miracle. They wanted something visible; a visible priest; a visible sacrifice. The Jews were the ceremonialist of their day. They thought salvation was in the observance of ceremonies. Ceremonialism is a great enemy of the Gospel today. The Roman Catholic church stands at the head of the Sacramental system, but she has many followers outside her fold. "The first Sacrament is Baptism, which, as the Church teaches, cleanses us from original sin and makes us the children of God." (Tract written by W. M. Collins and distributed by the International Catholic Truth Society.)

The Greeks sought after wisdom. The Greeks were the philosophers of their day. They wanted abstract principles, systemized philosophies. They have their successors today in Christian Science and New Thought etc. But Paul proclaims a living person and an historic fact with a Divine interpretation.

WHAT WAS NEEDED

The Apostle preached what was needed. And he knew what was needed. He knew the people needed the message they did not want. And how often is this the case. The most

dangerous men in the pulpit today are the men who succumb to the demands of the pew. Now, I am not saying that nobody loves the truth, but I am saying that everybody does not love the truth. The man who preaches the truth will be appreciated just in proportion as his hearers are of God. John 8:45, 47, "*And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not...He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.*"

POWER OF GOD

He attributes his success to the power of God. I Corinthians 3:5 "*...even as the Lord gave to every man?*" Paul could preach the Gospel, but he could not give to men the disposition to believe it. He had to look to God to do this. He preached the Gospel indiscriminately to both Jew and Greek, but to the Jews his Gospel was a stumbling block, and to the Greeks it was foolishness, but there was another class, made up of both Jew and Greek denominated the called, and to them Paul's Gospel was the power of God and the wisdom of God. Somebody has said that the way to catch fish is to give them the kind of bait they want. But we need to take care in comparing this to the gospel ministry. There are different kinds of bait used in fishing, but there are not different gospels to be used in fishing

for men. Paul used the same bait for all kinds of men, and lots of them would not bite, while others took the cork under, and were caught. The gospel bait angered the Jews and made them want to kill Paul; the Greeks laughed at it as a piece of foolishness. That is the Jews and Greeks left to themselves; in their natural state, but the Jews and Greeks who were called, that is those in whose heart the grace of God wrought, believed. Changing the figure from fish to sheep, we are told that it is the sheep that hear Christ's voice. When we preach the gospel, the sheep will hear and believe. John 10:16, 26, 27, "*And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd...But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*"

One trouble with our churches is that there has been too many different kinds of bait used.

Christ's sheep have two marks: One in their ears, "*They hear my voice;*" And one in their feet, "*They follow me.*"



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