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Page 1

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II Thess. 2:3 "Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

In the words I read to you this morning from God's bible, there is contained one of the most solemn warnings coming from God through His holy ⁴postle and a warning that pertains very specially and particularly to these days of time. When we look out upon the world and we remark its chaotic state and condition, those who know God's bible, know that these very things have all been conceived as the work of man linked up with the powers of Satan. Never let us make the mistake of laying the blame of world conditions on God. Our Father God has given us the supreme gift and Sacrifice in His Only Begotten Son and He made it because He loved the world. God still loves this world and is moving, as He may, in the Instruments that are consecrated to His service and to the very best of His power, to bring men and women to the knowledge of God.

When the world knows the Lord, war will have completely disappeared, for to know the Lord Jesus Christ is to become an Inheritor of that Spirit of peace and power of the presence of God. Our God is a God of love, but world conditions are brought about by men linked up with the powers of Satan, in all their selfishness and underhanded purposes and plans so that nothing appeals to them but their own aggrandizement, though it may bring the sorrows of Satan even to the whole world.

The solemn warning I refer to is uttered in verse 3, "Let no man deceive you by any means" . . .for these are days of deception; Days when men and women will be deceived unless the grace and power of God is in their lives and the Word of God has become the foundation of their Christian experience and thought life. With the Word of God in our hearts, deception is impossible, for He said, "that day shall not come except there come a falling away first." We are speaking of that day of the Lord Jesus Christ when He shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the Voice of the Arch Angel, and with the Trumpet Sound of God. And when He comes, the resurrection of the righteous dead shall take place. Sin and sinners will be destroyed and the Glory of the Lord shall cover all the earth as the waters now cover the sea. But He said that day of gladness and God's goodness and mercy to the world shall not come except there come a falling away first and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition to oppose and ascend himself above all that is called God.

The thing Christians, God's believing people, need to fear and to watch out for is that falling away. There has come, in the last century of time, a terrific falling away from those fundamental foundations that have carried the world along for more than 18 centuries of time; the foundations that are laid in our heart by the record of His Word. The foundations emphasized by Martin Luther, John Wesley, Dwight Moody, George Fox, Charles Finney, Billy Sunday and others who have fought to maintain the foundations of the Gospel in all their purity as they were primarily delivered to us by Jesus and all His Holy Apostles who came after.

There has been a falling away from that simple Truth, that Holy Truth. Get back to the cross of Jesus. See in that cross of our Lord Jesus Christ that triumph that shall rid the world of all sin, for that is the purpose of the Cross. How wonderful it is for men and women today to be able to kneel on their knees and humble themselves under the mighty Hand of God, to confess their sin and realize their need of a Saviour and Redeemer, and to go to the Cross of Calvary and there receive that washing in the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ that makes for eternal purity and power with God forevermore.

But that falling away ---- may I warn our friends once again, let nothing come between you and God's marvelous love. Let nothing dim your faith in the Atonement. Let nothing come between you and your Bible. There are so many things that are held out as divine attractions in these latter days of time. There is only ONE Mt. Calvary, only ONE JESUS, only ONE SAVIOUR, and LORD, and that ONE has demonstrated the Glory of His Power in the salvation of multitudes and in the perpetuation of things. Without that Cross the world would long ago have gone down into devastation. "But He who hindereth" --- one of these days when the Holy Spirit ceases to ~~ceases to~~ hinder the onward races of the sons of iniquity; but it is wonderful for me to be able to say to you, there is yet time; time today; time this very hour in which you may renew your allegiance to the Cross. That falling away is upon us. The man of sin is about to be revealed, the son of perdition, but you and I are safe as we hide ourselves in the Rock of Ages, our Lord Jesus Christ. He was the Stone that was rejected of the builder of this world system, but He has been accepted and received by everyone who loves Him.

JOEL 3:1 "For behold, in those days and at that time when they bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land."

In these days God's people are very fond of living in those prophecies that pertain to the last days. The prophecies of the last days in God's bible are both good and bad. They are encouraging on one side and distressing on the other, for there are two sides to God's ways and dealings with this world of ours. On the part of those who do not see in Jesus that wonderful Saviour and Lord, that Redeemer, that God made manifest in the flesh and walked among men -- to those who deny His Name and turn away from Him and follow the uncleannesses that come on us sometimes over night, or who sell themselves to demons and unclean spirit powers coming so close to this earth in these last days and time -- for those people who know and show no mercy, the judgment of God according to His Word shall be poured out in exactly the same fashion.

For the indifferent, the unregenerate, these last days are fraught with terrible and terrific consequences. The conditions in this world today are not precipitated by men and women who love the Lord. It is by those who have denied the Lord who bought them, who have turned their backs on God and laid their hands in vengeance on the people of God just because they are the people of God. For that class of people the world holds nothing but sorrow. There may be temporary victories and triumphs and physical blessings for them, for a little while, but just as sure as God's sun shines through this world, so that kind of a thing will come to and end.

In this scripture it speaks of a certain rain, "Behold, I will cause to come down for you the latter rain in his season....." That sounds like a time of plenty, but I say to my friends again this morning that the world stands today on the brink of the greatest food shortage that has ever been known in the history of mankind. The missionaries were telling me, while they were waiting in Japan, that gasoline cannot be bought -- automobiles cannot be run. Sugar can only be bought by the ounce and butter, only one-half pound to a family every week. Along so many lines there is a shortage. What is true in Japan is true in all the countries of Europe and it is coming in other countries. It looks like a real terrific time of food shortage. That is all in line with God's bible, but not because God has ordained it so. The God of our salvation is a God of super-abundance. He loves to give abundantly. "I am come that you might have life and have it more abundantly." It expresses the heart of God towards mankind, not only in spiritual but in temporal things. It has always been in the heart of God as a profound Father, to provide wonderfully for His people -- to give them fruitful seasons in times of refreshing, out of the abundance of His own heart.

So it has always been and so it always will be. But shortages come -- not because of scantiness on God's side but because men have not valued the food situations that keep their body and soul together. They have valued gold more than bread, and other things in the same line. But how wonderful it is to know that you and I are serving a resourceless God. It is His rain that falls on the earth and His seed that goes in the ground. What God gives us should be prized and cared for.

Nevertheless, He has said, "I will cause for you to come down the rain." This is not the natural rain with which we are so well acquainted in Seattle. It is a divine rain. Rain that comes down from Heaven. "He shall come into us as the rain." The Lord uses that simile to show us that one of these days the Glory and Power of God will come down on the earth in the midst of blood and smoke and all the terrible things that attend the on-slaughter of Nations today. In the midst of it all the Spirit of God will rain the righteousness of God down on His people. "See that ye hurt not the oil and the wine." These are expressions that refer to God's people only; to those that love the Lord.

It does look simple to be really religious. That is because men do not understand it. When we give ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, we give ourselves to One Who has in hand the destinies of time and eternity. Just as Jesus controlled the storm at sea, and ministered the healing power, and raised the dead -- just so, His Grace and Glory are come to you and me in these last days to heal the hurts that wicked men have made. "The time came when the saints of God possessed the Kingdom." God wants you and me to make preparations for taking over all the possessions. He has redeemed all things in the pouring out of His life's blood. Let us heed the words of Scripture in the book of Zechariah when He said "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain."