

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

The Flood of Darkness

The early church was birthed in a glorious outpouring of the Spirit of God. In a short period of time, this visitation from Heaven spread throughout the Roman Empire, and far beyond. The simple message they carried was Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer whom God sent into the world to make an end of sins and bring in everlasting righteousness, just as the Prophets had foretold. Yet, at some point in the midst of this great outpouring, the Spirit of God began to speak a clear and stark warning about what was on the horizon.

Writing from Laodicea, Paul told Timothy, *“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron...”* | Timothy 2:4.

There was no doubt about what was coming. The Spirit was very clear. There was going to be a falling away from the truth, and men would begin to receive their doctrines from devils instead of from the word of God.

As Paul made his final journey to Jerusalem, he met with the church elders, and repeated this warning he had received from the Spirit of God.

He said, *“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”* Act 20:29-31. Perhaps in a time of great revival, this warning seemed almost unbelievable to these early saints, but Paul warned them over and over for three years that the false teachers were coming. Even some he spoke to that day would be swept up in the flood of falsehood which was soon to follow.

The Apostle Peter gave the church a similar warning shortly before he was executed by Rome. He wrote, *“But there were false prophets also among the people, **even as there shall be false teachers among you**, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”* II Peter 2:1-3. These false prophets would surely come and make merchandise of the people while many would follow their damnable heresies.

The Apostle John lived for several decades after the other Apostles were martyred. Yet, in his old age he wrote, *“Little children, it is the last time:*

and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. ¹ John 2:18-19. These “many antichrists” were the false prophets and teachers that were flooding into the church. The other Apostles warned these were coming. John lived to see them arrive.

The book of Jude was written close to the end of the first century. Jude saw that the false teachers were no longer just a warning. They were now the reality. He wrote, *“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Jude 1:4. Before the first century had passed, false teachers had twisted the message of grace from being a great truth that made people free from sin as Jesus had promised, into a dead theology that assured them they could walk in ungodly lusts and still claim Heaven as their eternal home. Jude closed his letter reminding us this is what the Apostles were warning about. He wrote, *“But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.”* Jude 1:17-18.

In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul personifies this flood of false teachers by calling it “*the man*

of sin.” This “*man of sin*” would not be content until he was the center of worship in the Temple of God, which is the church of Jesus Christ. Paul was clear that this invasion of darkness was already beginning in his day. He said, “*For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.*” II Thessalonians 2:7. The Greek word translated as “*letteth*” means to “*hold down*” or “*hold back.*” Paul, and the other Apostles, were the ones who were holding back this flood of falsehood. Paul would later write, “*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*” I Timothy 4:7. The Greek word translated as “*kept*” means to “*guard.*” As long as he lived, Paul fought back the flood of false teachers, but when he and the other Apostles passed off the scene, very little stood in the way of this onslaught from Hell.

By the end of the first century, the seeds of darkness which ushered in the dark ages were already planted in the church. Just a few centuries later, the church which had once won converts through a life changing visitation of God’s Spirit, was now gaining converts through the power of the sword. Men also began to set themselves up to be worshipped in the church just as the Apostles had warned.

For most of the 1900 years since, darkness has been the norm instead of the exception. Isaiah spoke of such a condition, saying, “*we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we*

stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men." Isaiah 59:9-10. Isaiah then gave the reason for this darkness, saying, *"...for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter."* Isaiah 59:14. When truth is fallen in the streets, it will lay there until someone picks it up and begins to declare it. Sometimes it lays there for years, sometimes decades, sometimes centuries. It is only when someone picks up the truth and begins to declare it that judgment, justice, and equity can enter. Over the centuries, the church has seen many such times when someone who seemed insignificant dared to believe the word of God, stood up, and began to declare it. In these times, light begins to pierce the darkness and the flood waters of falsehood are parted for a season. Yet, when those who speak the truth pass off the scene, the flood of darkness quickly returns.

God gave Isaiah an eternal promise which was first fulfilled in Christ, then repeated upon those of any generation who pick up the truth of God's word. He said, *"When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him."* Isaiah 59:19. A person who picks up the truth from where it has been *"fallen in the street,"* and boldly begins to declare it, is like Moses stretching his rod over the Red Sea. The waters will soon part so that those who believe the truth can walk out of the bondage of sin and darkness. As long as they dare to speak the truth, they are God's standard against the flood of the enemy. It makes no difference if they

are Luther, Wesley, Finney, or you. God will raise up a standard!