

Beloved, we are in a fierce war that is a life and death struggle for our faith. Satan is determined to shipwreck and destroy the faith of God's elect; and the stronger your faith, the greater will be his attack against it.

A Christian with unshakeable faith is marked as Enemy #1 in hell and the reason is this: By faith and its released power, kingdoms are subdued, righteousness is born, promises of God are obtained, the mouths of lions are shut, satanic fire is quenched, and there is escape from the sword. Out of weakness the faithful are made strong and become brave in the battle, turning the devil's army to flight. These faithful ones wake the dead, don't give in when tortured, gladly endure mockings, beatings, stonings, and, if locked in jail, they sing. Faith sustains those who possess it.

When faith is shattered or lost, believers become weak and turn to idolatry and wickedness. Paul warned that some had cast aside faith. He charged Timothy to fight the good fight by *"...holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck (ruined)."* (1.TIM 1:19).

He also warned Timothy that *"...in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."* (1.TIM 4:1). Together with Timothy, Paul warned the church that Satan would attempt to *"overthrow the faith of some"* (2.TIM 2:18).

Peter came under a ferocious attack by Satan against his faith. His faith so enraged hell that the devil asked permission to sift it to see if it would stand. *"And the Lord*

Satan Is Out To Destroy Your Faith

said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." (LK 22:31-32).

Prosperity has always been a factor in shipwrecked faith. Just before Moses died, he lamented over the tendency of God's people to cast away faith when they were blessed and prosperous. In his final words he said to Israel: The Lord was your Rock! You were His portion, His inheritance. He found you in a howling wasteland. He led you out and instructed you, and He kept you as the apple of His eye. Like an eagle, He spread His great wings beneath you. The Lord alone did lead you, because there was no strange god among you. You are the increase of the fields: you sucked honey out of the rock: you had abundance of oil, butter, milk, sheep, cows, goats and rams; and you drank the pure fruit of the vine. But you became proud as you were blessed and grew complacent and hard. You took all His goodness for granted and forsook your faith in Him.

And the Lord saw it and He abhorred them because they provoked Him. *"Then He said, I will hide my face from them... for they are a perverse generation, sons in whom is no faithfulness."* (DEUT 32:19-20).

When Israel lost her faith, casting it aside and going on her own, everything spun out of control and God stopped the flow of blessings.

The Lord proclaimed from that moment on, *"I will heap mischiefs (troubles) upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them."* (DEUT 32:23).

This is exactly what is happening to America in this very hour. We have become that nation "in whom is no faith." Once we believed in God: We put His name on our coins; we honored one day a week in His name (in the days of Sunday "blue laws"); we prayed to Him in our schools, in our courts, and in Congress because this was a nation "under God". As a result of this, we enjoyed all the blessings and goodness spoken of by Moses.

We have now cast aside faith in Him, turning instead to greed and lust, and all forms of wickedness. In doing so, we mock and curse the very source of all our blessings. On Friday, October 13, 1989, the stock market fell 190 points. This was two years, almost to the day, after a warning from God of similar circumstances (October 19-21, 1987). The San Francisco earthquake followed in a few days.

Now the warnings of Moses have come upon us. God is going to heap troubles upon us, raining down arrows on this nation as never seen in all human history. I believe God has committed Himself to chastising this nation and thus bringing America to its knees.

The generation that is being judged at Wall Street is the

Woodstock generation who had formerly dropped out of materialism and society, so-to-speak, because nothing satisfied them. Woodstocks stands as a symbol of this generation when 450,000 young people gathered together, stoned on drugs and their music, looking for peace. They were searching for something to satisfy their inner longing. That generation ended up half-dead, while those who remained intact eventually turned to Wall Street with its greed and materialism. Now these, having run their course, have brought that generation back to drugs. There is probably as much or more drugs abuse in the Wall Street culture as there is on the streets.

I see America likened to a patient lying on a table during open heart surgery with many surgeons around clipping all the bleeding vessels. Just when the surgeons think they have stopped all the bleeding and are about to wash their hands, the main artery bursts and there is a haemorrhage. I believe America has already begun to haemorrhage. Although they may patch things up, the very thing is coming to our economy that we have been crying out and warning would come: The iron yoke that cannot be broken is upon us. The party is over! The American lifestyle as we've known it is going to change forever.

Recently, we had a riot in one of the jails here in New York. The kitchen was being remodeled, so a cold supper was served - which incensed the inmates. They opened the windows, threw the supper out and started burning things. All this, because their supper was cold!

What is going to happen if our colleges begin to close and our young people don't have the money for the sports cars, clothes, tape recorders, and all the other things that they are so used to? They've never been deprived.

I had a dream recently like I've not had in my lifetime. I've been praying that the Lord would speak to me first through His Word, then through prophetic movings of His Spirit and through dreams, for no other reason than that I might have a clearer vision of what He is

saying to my heart. This was the dream:

I was walking here in the streets of New York (I presumed it was New York because of the tall buildings) and it was gray, dark, and a scene of ugliness. I was walking on the sidewalk and came upon gutters filled with young people who looked to be college-age-students. Their bodies were draped over each other four and five deep. Those lying on the bottom had their heads half in the filth that filled the gutters, and I thought to myself, "They are drowning in that filth!" I thought they were all dead; however, they were moving just a little bit. A finger would move here, a thumb there; they were alive but they were all drugged.

Occasionally, someone on top of the heap would get up a little bit, open a book and lazily look at it, then close it and lie down. I realized that they were students! Then the books were all closing, and I began to weep saying, "Oh, God, look at them! They are lying up and down in the gutters. What's happened to them? They are dying! Nobody is studying; nobody is working; nobody is eating! They are dying!"

Beloved, the accelerated judgment is going to affect our young people more than any other segment of our society. Most of them have never known any kind of suffering; they have had everything they ever wanted. We are going to have riots and burnings among our young people.

I believe what the Scripture says is clear. God has begun judgment. Rather than dropping it on us all of a sudden, God said He was going to **"heap trouble and smite with His arrows."** As I see it the trouble is going to start accelerating little by little, one bad report here, one there, then suddenly a flood from all sides. It may be a year before it affects many of you. This trouble won't affect the average person on the job as much as it affects the wealthy of this nation. Those of you who have always bemoaned the fact that you had an ordinary job are going to come to the place that you are thankful, because many white-collar workers will suffer greatly.

Keeping the Faith - Individually.

The same principle of continuing to keep faith in God is true for our individual lives as well as for our nation. You have no idea what trouble is until you lose faith in the fact that God cares for you. ***"But without faith it is impossible to please him: For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*** (HEB 11:6).

When you have no faith you will find you talk to the Lord with sarcasm. The disciples were in a storm-tossed boat, and Jesus lay fast asleep while the waves pounded them. Thy woke Him saying, "Lord, don't you care that we are going down?" They accused Him of not caring. Jesus calmed the storm but looked incredulously at His disciples and said, ***"Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"*** (MK 4:40).

Some of you right now are in the biggest storm of your life and it seems as though the troubles are only accelerating: No job, money problems, enemies coming at you like pounding waves to sink you. It appears that the Lord is sleeping on your problem. There is a raging sea inside you where nothing is calm!

Do you have any faith left or has it begun to ebb away slowly with each new disappointment? Do you find that you speak in your heart to God with sarcasm? "God, don't You care? Are You going to just stand by, without stopping this? Will You let me drown in this sea of destruction?"

No wonder Jesus spoke these awesome words, ***"Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"*** (LK 18:7-8).

I often wondered how Jesus could ask such a question in view of all the Charismatics and Evangelicals flocking to churches. But will their faith hold out when the shaking comes? Evidently, the troubles are going to be heaped so high, and God's arrows of judgment will be

so swift, that many will cast away their faith. Will He find you faithless in this hour?

Satan has a well-planned strategy to bring down your faith.

Satan Perverts the Righteous Judgments of God in the Church.

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1.PET 4:17-18). Peter's warning has come true.

Satan is taking credit for God's exposure of sin in the church to make it appear that wickedness is uncontrollable. All the exposures in the last few years have not been the work of the devil. It has been God judging and purging. Satan would have preferred to keep up the false front, the mixture, the double standards because he wanted a foundation of evil in the ministry. The Spirit of God suddenly turned on the floodlights of heaven and sent an army of angels to shake out the evil.

A dear brother said, "Who's next? It seems as if every one I trusted, every one I thought was so holy, so anointed, is being exposed for some horrible secret sin! Who do I trust now?" You find out that some evangelists or pastors never did have victory over a besetting sin. You hear of years of secret drinking, perversion and bondage, years of yielding to temptations - all while preaching victory in Jesus!

Along comes Satan with his perverting lies trying to take credit for the Lord's house cleaning. He is trying to make sin look uncontrollable and to convince Christians that besetting sin will never end. His one big lie is this: "Everybody is doing something wrong. Everybody is living a lie. You, too, are headed for a fall. If the supposedly strong, holy ones didn't make it, you don't have a chance."

God has given us a powerful weapon to use against this attack on our faith. *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay*

aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." (HEB 12:1).

Get your eyes off those falling around us. Set your eyes instead on *"the great cloud of witnesses"* who have already made it to glory! This verse depicts an army of victorious saints of all ages hovering over us, like those seated in bleachers, cheering on the saints still left in the race! Listen to their cry, "Put away that sin; there is victory! We won! We fought to the death and did not fall because God kept us! Our faith never wavered. Run with patience, move on, the truth works! We are overcomers!"

So, a few preachers fall. So, a few thousand preachers fall! So those you trust fall! Does that mean the devil is gaining power? Does that mean there will be only a few victorious ones? Look up and see a great cloud of witnesses all dressed in white!

Was it worth it all? Ask Noah. "All my generation fell! Only eight of us kept the faith, but we held on for 120 years in spite of the violence, rampant sin and mockery. You, too, can overcome."

Say to the devil, "If sin is so all-powerful and you say everybody is a phony, then what about that great cloud? Where did that army of witnesses come from? If sin is so strong, how did so many get free? Look at that triumphant army of witnesses, waving palms, wearing crowns of righteousness. How did they make it?"

"Satan, you robbed and spoiled their homes. You sent in your henchmen to throw their children in the rivers. You cut them in pieces; you cut off their heads, thrust swords through their bellies. You whipped and beat them. You hung them, cut their throats, and yet they would not bend. Their faith prevailed!"

Satan Misrepresents the Lord's Refining Process.

All the prophets foretold of God's people going into the refiner's fire. *"I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried."* (ZECH 13:9). *"For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers*

soap and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: And he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness." (MAL 3:2-3).

God said to Jeremiah, *"Is not my word like as a fire?"* (JER 23:29). And Jeremiah said, *"His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones"* (JER 20:9). God is once again sending a fiery, refining Word as hot as the coals on His altar! He is turning up the heat. You will see it more and more as the Lord sends forth holy prophets who are purged messengers. *"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven."* (MAL 4:1).

Whenever silver or gold is refined by fire, all impurities, alloys, lesser metals, dirt, little specks of waste and dross come to the surface. Satan comes around when God has you in His purifying process and you are sitting under His red-hot Word. As impurities are brought to the surface and hidden corruption is being separated by fire, the devil says, "Look in the pot and tell me what you see. Dirt and impurities of all kinds. The hotter the message - the more the dirt. Look at you, a refiner's pot of dirt and corruption! You've been under the red-hot Word for years and all you've got is dirt!"

You answer him, "Devil, see that One sitting beside me? That's my Master, the Refiner. He's fanning the flames and it is He who put me in this fire. And devil, that scum is only surface deep - below that the whole pot is filled with gold! The Lord is getting us ready. See that thing in His hand? It's a strainer, and when He's ready, He's going to skim off the top of the pot and keep skimming until one day He'll look in there and smile because He sees His own face reflecting back, right there in me!"

Satan Is Trying to Shipwreck Your Faith By Distorting the Loving Chastening of the Lord.

Satan will do his best to convince you that your present chastening is from God's anger and displeasure at you.

The New Testament has much to say about chastisement (educa-

tional correction): *"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"* (HEB 12:5-7).

Jesus Himself declared, *"As many as I love, I rebuke (correct) and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."* (REV 3:19). Paul wrote, *"We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."* (1.COR 11:32).

The Old Testament, too, speaks of chastisement: *"My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of His correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."* (PROV 3:11-12).

What you are going through as a child of God is no accident or isolated calamity. Every test, every fiery trial is under His careful scrutiny and there is a purpose to it all. It is *"...for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness."* (HEB 12:10).

Chastening can seem grievous, as though some strange thing is happening to us. It is not joyous, but after it passes it produces the *"peaceable fruit of righteousness."* However, only those who want to learn and are willing to be trained by it will bear fruit.

Chastening can include bodily pain, suffering that goes on, children who rebel, unemployment, loss of business, faithlessness of friends, distress, turmoil of mind - any kind of fiery trial.

Satan will speak to you as he did to Job, "The righteous do not suffer! If God heard you, if He saved you, if He loved you, if His promises are true, you should be rescued immediately. Your suffering should not be so prolonged. Where is your God? Is this what your faith gets you?"

Beloved, don't faint! Don't cast away your faith! Satan is a liar!

You are suffering because God loves you, because He cares!

You asked the Lord to make you more like Himself and only He knows what that takes. He knows what is about to destroy you! He knows just when to make a way of escape. He won't act until it is His time.

Don't faint! God has everything under control, including that pain, that lingering sickness. You might not go all the way if He lifted it right now! Like Paul you have a thorn that keeps pride away.

The very thing you want so much, the answer you believe is so necessary, might be the thing God knows will destroy you. If God says no, you must yield, knowing He is saving your soul from later destruction. The cloud of witnesses cry out, "Get back in the battle and fight with faith! Lift up the hands that hang down and strengthen the feeble knees. Don't turn aside. Stay in the race. Do not let a root of bitterness spring up."

Multitudes, when chastened, fall for the devil's lie. They allow a root of bitterness against the Lord to get into their hearts. God warns, "Be diligent, be careful not to let that happen. Hold to your confidence because it His great recompense of reward."

The Lord Desires a People Who Will Keep Faith Even if They Suffer the Loss of All Things.

"But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions... and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." (HEB 10:32,34). Here is a people greatly afflicted *"after they were illuminated."* They had seen the light. Their goods were lost, but faith made them joyful because their eyes were on *"a more enduring substance."*

If you lost all your goods, would you cast away your confidence? Many are going to lose it all. In Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and elsewhere, it's already happened. I heard of a Christian businessman,

one of the most successful in Texas, a multimillionaire with a private plane, who lost it all! For the past year he has struggled just to put food on the table! But the Father is putting his heart to rest. He now sees God as His sole provider and neither he nor his family has gone hungry.

The days of the American lifestyle as we know it are numbered and in that we are all going to be affected and feel the pain. It's easy to talk faith when all is well, but we will soon see who will endure in hard times.

Paul kept the faith in good times and bad times. In his final days he could boast, *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."* (2.TIM 4:7). He could say, *"Satan sent messengers to fight me in Jerusalem, Damascus, Asia, Ephesus, Antioch, and in Corinth. But, I kept the faith! Five times the Jews beat me with 39 stripes. I've been cast into prison so many times, beaten with rods three times, stoned, robbed, even by my own countrymen, but I kept the faith!"*

"I've been so weary at times, full of pain, sleepless nights, hungry, thirsty, cold and naked, loaded down with cares of all kinds, yet I kept the faith. I've been troubled, perplexed, distressed, persecuted, but never cast down, never destroyed, never shaken in my faith."

These words will sustain us in the days ahead:

"He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD." PSA 112:7

"The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore." PSA 121:7-8

"For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock." PSA 27:5

"Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." PSA 50:15

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