



International Region

Issue No. 3: 12th December 2008

Greetings brethren!

As we approach the end of a most interesting week and as we rejoice on entering another Sabbath, we still wonder whether we may have indeed begun counting the 1335 days that lead to the Resurrection. Certainly, as I write, we see no sign that God has as yet given power to His two witnesses. However, as tomorrow we shall no doubt be hearing from our beloved Pastor General Robert Ardis, I do not wish to pre-empt him in any way.

Meanwhile, world events certainly seem to continue to indicate, I daresay even more than ever before, the imminent collapse of the economic system in the nations of Israel.

All we need do to confirm this is to scan the latest *World Watch*, Issue No. 55. Here we will see, for example, that over these past seven days, America's money crisis has been accentuated by dark signs in the jobless figures, with the year's total job losses reaching 1.9 million after it was announced that the economy shed another nearly 600,000 jobs in November. We will also see that the foreclosure rate has registered a 76% increase from a year ago. A glance at the latest *news that matters* will also reveal that people have started to panic and that this has sparked an unprecedented rush into "safe US Treasury securities", triggering a gold shortage and pushing rates on the three-month bill negative for the first time, "amid the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression" (bloomberg.com). Whilst all this has been going on, the budget gap racked up in the first two months of the fiscal year has approached the level recorded for all of 2008, bringing the total deficit for this same period to \$402 billion. We've also had "the bad news that the growth rate in exports is falling very, very quickly", causing an unexpected rise in the October trade deficit (money.cnn.com). The latest news from the US was the blocking of the US auto

bail-out, which soon led to world stocks tumbling to new lows.

Across the Atlantic, we see that the UK economy is at risk and that as it continues to weaken, the country's largest mortgage lender has been constrained to take "a £5bn write-down on its personal and business loans and warned it expects the UK economic outlook to deteriorate further next year" (telegraph.co.uk). In London, "the high street is bracing itself for yet another week of gloom and doom" as "monthly sales figures are expected to show a sixth consecutive fall in trading" (business.timesonline.co.uk). The alarm has also been sounded that "Britain's services sector is set to inflict significant job losses on the workforce" and that a commercial property crash is leading to "Britain's offices and factories losing more than half their value by the end of next year" (telegraph.co.uk).

Now, as I was speaking to several of you over the past few days, some expressed their feeling that the world situation is not yet as bad as they expect it to get and still a far cry from what it was during the Second World War. Even though I wasn't around then, I concur that there was much more suffering amongst people in those very dark times than there is now; and I completely agree with this observation. However, I believe that we need to note that *it's what's happening right now* that will ultimately lead to the Four Horsemen's ride getting to the point where "a fourth part of the earth" is killed "with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth" (Rev.6:8). In light of this, we need to remain aware that Jesus Christ will only open the Fifth Seal once this gruesome mission has been accomplished. Then, the Great Tribulation *will* cause much more suffering than the Second World War!

This should stress the utmost importance to us of our need to watch *all* the news that *really matters*... and to educate ourselves to know *what* really matters. This past week, for example, we have again read the confirmation that Iran continues to enrich uranium, while top EU leaders affirm that a nuclear Iran is

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Beat discouragement!

by Frank Borg

Positive emotions are considered a goal. They are the key to health, happiness and wellbeing. On the other hand *negative emotions* such as fear, anger, insecurity and discouragement can pollute our life if not resisted. The emotion we feel is a result of choice. Deliberately or not, we *choose* to generate a feeling. This is a freedom that each of us have.

When things don't quite go the way we expect, human nature dictates that we can easily and quickly become discouraged. *Discouragement* is possibly one of the most powerful emotions because it could often lead to a number of other negative consequences. When one is discouraged, he or she could tend to become fearful to face what is laid before them leaving them without courage to go on.

Satan the Devil is the author of discouragement. He prowls around trying every trick in the book to wear us down. As he goes about doing this, he does what he can to see us undermine our faith in God, leading us to give up and give in (1 Peter 5:8). Our strongest defense against Satan is outlined in two verses in the book of James: "Submit yourself therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:7-8). We are to acknowledge Satan as our greatest enemy and, most importantly, draw near to God asking Him for help to resist negative thoughts and emotions.

We usually get discouraged because we are far from God. If God is not at the center of our lives, it is easy to allow negative moods and thoughts to take a hold of us which result in discouragement. The closer we are to God, the more we develop a sound mind (2 Tim 1:7). In times of discouragement, we have to trust in God to help us. This requires that we draw on the power of His Holy Spirit.

Here are seven powerful ways, emphasized in the Bible and expounded on during the ministry of the end-time Elijah and other men of God, to stay close to Him and conquer discouragement:

Pray every day and as often as you can
Prayer is fundamental to our well being. It is a force and a tool which must be used to give us stability and strength. "Be cheerful no matter what; pray all the time (persistently); thank God no matter what happens. This is the way God wants you to live who belong to

Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 5:16-18, *The Message Bible translation*).

Recognize God's presence

We must never allow ourselves to feel alone - this is Satan's plot to get us discouraged. God always knows *everything* that goes on in our lives! "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13).

Exercise the Holy Spirit and respond to its lead

If we are being led by God, we will be moved to seek Him. We must develop the habit of responding immediately to the influence of God's Holy Spirit, this way God's thoughts will flood our minds. "I made haste and delayed not to keep your commandments" (Psalm 119:60).

We must engage in daily Bible study

The more we study the Bible, the more we take on the mind of God. The Bible is replete with examples of people who put their faith and trust in God when faced with seemingly overwhelming trials and pressures. Each of these biblical examples demonstrate such powerful and positive fruit that they should serve as lessons of encouragement to each of us. "Study to show thyself approved...rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15).

Live the way of give

Discouragement often begins when we start to focus on self! When we fill our minds with our own thoughts, we undeniably push out the thoughts of God and resist the 'give' way of life. This results in a blurring of God's viewpoint which can quite easily overwhelm us. To offset this we must live the way of give beginning by simply giving happiness to others! "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Each day must count

Paul admonishes us to redeem the time. "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil" (Eph 5:15-16). The NIV translates verse 16 as, "making the most of every opportunity". We mustn't allow ourselves to get complacent, but use every moment as if it were our last! Use every day that God gives us as an urgent opportunity to grow in His character. We need to strive to accomplish as much as we can in the window of time God has blessed us with. "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing" (Matt 24:46).

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Put God first - always!

Those in the Church should *expect* difficulties! Acts 14:22 firmly states: “Confirming the souls of the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and *that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God*”. We must never allow problems to get the better of us – if they do, simply put, God is not first in our life! The Apostle Paul wrote “I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to be in plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. *I can do everything through Him who gives me strength*” (Phil. 4:11-13 NIV). God will never leave nor forsake us (Heb 13:5). He will always deliver us (Psalm 34:19) if we put Him first in our lives!

Satan wants us to focus on the negative in any and every situation. If and when we allow this to happen, fear, anger, insecurity and so many other negative emotions over take us. Discouragement ensues and Satan wins a battle. God’s way is that of looking for the silver lining in *every* dark cloud. This resists Satan, gets us closer to God and helps us win the war!

Let’s use the tools God has placed at our disposal, and do all we can, to take on and exude His emotion of COURAGE!

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Let not that Day overtake you as a thief – Part 2

by Andres N. Yparraguirre, Jr.

When the disciples asked Jesus Christ about the signs of his coming again, none of his disciples had yet received God’s Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ had yet to be killed and resurrected. But when John wrote the book of Revelation, Christ was already resurrected and had reported to the Father in heaven (John 20:17-19), returned to earth and stayed forty days (Acts 1:3) and then again went back to heaven (Acts 1:9-11). And ten days after the return of Christ to heaven, on the day of Pentecost, the disciples, about one hundred twenty of them (verse 15), received and were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). **Therefore, when John wrote Revelation, God the Father had already given much information to Jesus Christ including the knowledge about the day of his coming as a thief in the night.** Please read again Rev. 1:1-3. Time was not yet at hand prior to the writing of Revelation, and then it was at hand. That is why at that point when Revelation was written, John could already write that, he “... was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day ...” (verse 10). **At the time the Book of Revelation was written, Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32 ceased to be true. Jesus Christ already knew the day and hour of his coming and he was now ready to give his testimony to John. And John, having had God’s Spirit, was now prepared to receive the testimony of Christ (Rev. 1:9).** From that day on, it was but a matter of time that God should raise a faithful man, someone that typifies an end-time John, to come out and prophesy again (Rev. 10:11). That someone came out in 1997 and started preaching that the day of the Lord has come, the kingdom of God is now at hand.

Where is Christ? He Stands At Your Door!

Please understand that the day of the Lord had not come yet when John wrote the Book of Revelation. He was merely brought there in Spirit ahead of time and it would be for someone whom God would inspire to declare it, when that day came. But now the day of the Lord is a reality. Note also that **nowhere in the book of Revelation was John given any other task or commission** other than to write in a book regarding what he saw and to give it to the seven churches (Rev. 1:11, 19), **except in Revelation 10:8-11 and 11:1-2 where he was instructed to eat the little book, prophesy again, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.** John has since dead and not been able to accomplish the

other commissions given to him. If we are able to see who is doing these things today, it should give us an idea as to which church is continuing God's great work.

The book of Revelation was written in spirit on the Lord's Day and it was to be given to the seven churches of God that were in Asia and physically co-existing at that time (Rev. 1:11). But it was intended for the seven churches of God and their angels (messengers) that would rise one after another to do God's Work (Rev. 1:12-13, 16, 20). Therefore, the day of the Lord, in actual fulfillment, could only come when all of the seven churches have already done their work for God. In other words, the day of the Lord could not come until after the last and seventh candlestick-church of the Laodiceans was lit and performed its work. "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knoweth not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee ..." (Rev. 3:14-18). At the precise time this condition of the Philadelphia Church of God, the 7th candlestick-church, under its Pastor General Gerald Flurry, come to the full in 1997, Jesus Christ came as a thief in the night and used Mr. Robert Ardis through the Church of God's Faithful to knock at the doors of the Laodiceans. "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Rev. 16:15). "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:19-20).

Spiritual Darkness, Precondition for the Thief

In Mark 13:33-36 quoted earlier, the Son of man is likened to a man, a master of the house, who had taken a far journey and whose return could not be determined whether at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrowing, or in the morning. These scriptures indicate that Jesus Christ could come anytime of the day. However other scriptures we have already covered clearly stated that the day of Christ's return shall be as a thief in the night (I Thess. 5:1-2; II Pet. 3:10). Here it is indicated specifically that Christ

return shall be in the night and not anytime of the day. The Bible does not contradict itself. Given this principle how do we reconcile this seeming contradiction of the scriptures? Night is the opposite of day. Night represents darkness and day represents light. Jesus Christ represents light and Satan the devil represents darkness. "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For you were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light..." (Eph. 5:6-8). "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Pet. 2:9). "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (I Thess. 5:4-5). These scriptures, just quoted, show that the word night in the verse "thief in the night" does not refer to physical night but rather to spiritual darkness that should come into God's church as a prerequisite to the coming of the "thief in the night". That darkness descended into God's church which at that time was the Worldwide Church of God when Joseph W. Tkach, the Pastor General who succeeded HWA, started changing its true doctrines with the doctrines of this world. This is the context that we should bear in mind in understanding what Paul wrote to the Thessalonians that "... that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first..." (II Thess. 2:3). The falling away is from the truth and from the faith once delivered. The falling away is from Christ Who is the true light. Jesus Christ said, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). And the scriptures also say that, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). **The moment the church fell away from Christ, spiritual darkness descended upon it. Night came into the church and many had fallen asleep.** "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night" (I Thes. 5:6-7). When the night came into the church it was time to wake up and be on guard because anytime "the thief in the night" could come according to Mark 13:33-36. And the thief came and many did not notice it. Now the question is can we believe it?

Can We Believe the Thief in the Night Has Come?

Jesus said, “Nevertheless, when the son of man cometh (as a thief) shall he find faith on the earth?” (Parenthesis mine) The matter of believing whether the day of the Lord has already come is really a question of faith. Do you believe Jesus Christ came on October 1, 1997? Jesus Christ could be asking you that question even as you read. To answer this question, consider the following accounts of events that form part of the history of God’s Church:

1) When the apostle John received the revelations that he recorded in a book, he wrote,

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia ...” (Rev. 1:10-11).

2) In recounting his ordination into the ministry of Christ full time, HWA wrote:

“Being ordained and entering the ministry full time meant a complete change in my life. In former years the idea of becoming a minister was the very *last* thing I should have wanted to do. But by June, 1931, I had been preaching a great deal for three and a half years. By this time my whole heart was in it.

“The decision was not difficult. God had now brought me to a place where I really ‘heard’ the voice of Christ as if He were saying, ‘Come, and follow me, and I will make you fisher of men.’” (Autobiography of HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG Vol. 1, pp.426)

3) This is how Mr. Robert Ardis recalled the time when the day of the Lord was revealed to him on the night of October 1, 1997. He wrote,

“... The Time Is At Hand ...”

“That is where my thoughts were on the evening of the Feast of trumpets, October 1, 1997 as I asked God to inspire me in my sermon preparation. I began reading in the first chapter of the book of Revelation. ‘Blessed is he that reads and they that hear the word of this prophecy, and that keep those

things which are written therein: for the time is at hand’ (verse 3).

“AND THE TIME REALLY WAS AT HAND!

“As I read verse 9-10, I was utterly amazed at the thought that hit me like a bolt of lightning! ‘I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit ON THE LORD’S DAY ...’ This was AMAZING and STARTLING! HOW MANY times had I read those verses, but now they SHOUTED out the TRUTH which God had kept HIDDEN until the very TIME this fantastic event HAPPENED!” (The Day of the Lord – 6000 Years have Ended, 1998 Edition pp. 22)

No one among the disciples of his time attested to or had witnessed when John heard a “great voice” when he was in the isle of Patmos, and yet we believe him that the revelations that he wrote were from Christ. There is none today who could attest to or had heard the voice of Christ that said to Mr. Armstrong “Come, and follow me, and I will make you fisher of men” and yet we believe HWA that he was an end-time apostle and the Elijah that had restored much truth into the Church. If we have faith to believe the accounts of John and Mr. Armstrong, why can’t we believe that the Lord Jesus Christ came as a thief in the night on October 1, 1997 at the precise time Mr. Ardis read Revelation 1:9-10 whose thought hit him like a bolt of lightning, shouting out the truth about the day of the Lord? Certainly, this thing requires faith.

To those who say that the day of the Lord can’t be known and to those who until now still doubt that that day began on October 1, 1997, listen to what the Spirit says in the following verses:

“But, ye brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”

And BE NOT OVERTAKEN by the Thief in the NIGHT.

May the Lord, Jesus Christ, FIND FAITH in you!

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unacceptable; both events having deep prophetic significance (Dan. 11:40-41). Meanwhile, the EU presidency boosts ties with Israel; and we need to know that this is *yet another* vital prophecy being fulfilled at this time, understanding where it will lead (Ezek. 23:4, 22-30). On the latest *World Watch*, we also read that Syria is about to sign an association agreement with Europe within two months, a step that may speed up the coming together of nations that are enemies of Israel, who will say “let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee” (Ps. 83:4-5).

So, whilst we continue to strive to overcome and to become more like Christ, let’s also pray that God gives us *His perspective* on world events. Together with an understanding of what’s happening in the Church today, we may then be closer to being in sync with God even in the aspect of the prophetic progression of events.

With much love, in Christ’s service



Daniel Frendo