

Drama of Destiny

#0627

Study given by W.D. Frazee—December 20, 1968

I have something wonderful to study with you. The Lord has been pouring into my heart thoughts that I wouldn't take anything in this world for.

To many people life is a series of accidents. But it is not so at all. God, looking down the stream of time, has seen you, and you are here at this particular time in history for a particular purpose. You were born for a certain place. But the great fact that you must face is that it rests with each one of us whether we will accept that for which we were born or not. But if you do not fill the place that you could fill on God's side of this thing, you will fill a specific place on Satan's side that fits into the total drama of the ages. It rests with you.

We will want some texts to support this thought, and some texts to see how it applies down through history.

Mordecai said to Esther:

"Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this" Esther 4:14.

In God's providence Esther was in the right place at the right time with the right words. The book of Esther is one of the greatest dramas in all literature. And like everything that God inspires, it is real. It isn't pretense or make-believe. It is the real thing. And all down through the ages we see it.

"Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh" Matthew 18:7.

It is too bad that all around us are things to stumble over. Do you find them? But it must needs be that offences come. What a strange thing. And then "woe to that man by whom the offence cometh."

When they were at the last supper, Jesus said, one of you shall betray me. His disciples began to inquire as to who it would be. It was Judas. Jesus said:

"But woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born" Matthew 26:24.

Why was Judas born then? Why was he there? Why was he one of the twelve?

“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name: those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled” John 17:12.

There are those who say Judas couldn't help it. He had to do it. He had to fulfil the prophecy. They do not understand what I am studying with you. But let us look at this text just as it says. What did Judas do? He fulfilled the Scripture.

Someone says, “Did somebody have to betray Jesus?”

No, but it happened.

Let's take another text on this. It is soon after the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. The early church were witnessing for Christ and were getting into trouble because of it. The apostles had been taken and brought before the Sanhedrin and threatened. They were finally let go, and they went back to their church and reported. The church assembled in a prayer meeting and sought God about it, and quoted Psalm 2, which they believed was being fulfilled right then. Now notice:

“For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done” Acts 4:27-28.

What did all those wicked men do? They did exactly what God had determined that should be done?

Someone says, “Well, they couldn't help it then.”

Oh, no. That isn't the point at all. God is not taken by surprise. He looks ahead. And if you are willing to accept and work out and develop the character that God gave you the potential to develop, you can be a wonderful witness on God's side. But if you don't Satan will take those very same talents and faculties and so pervert them and pervert your character that you will become a witness for the Devil. God gives the choice to you.

But there is one thing that God reserves to Himself. It is something you have nothing to do with. It is where and when you were born. God takes in the whole sweep of history, and He sees the character that you are going to develop. He will have a Moses born at a certain time to do a certain work. It wasn't just chance that Moses was born right at the time when a deliverer was needed to lead a nation of slaves from Egypt to Canaan. That wonderful man came right at the right time.

But there was another man who came at the same time. He was on the other side of the question.

“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power

in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth” Romans 9:17.

Who arranged for that particular man to be on the throne at that time? God did. But he was a wicked man. What purpose did he have in it? God said that for this same purpose He raised Pharaoh up. A weaker man would have yielded long before, but Pharaoh was one of the most stubborn men in history. God told him to let His people go, and if he didn't the river was going to turn to blood. Most men would have told Israel to go. This is enough. But that man was so stubborn that even when frogs and lice and hail and darkness, and all those different plagues came until the land of Egypt became one vast desolation, he still held on. And even at the time when he began to yield, as soon as the plague was withdrawn he said, No, you can't go. And finally, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm God led His people out as the first born of Egypt in every home lay slain, and what a cry arose. Upon all the gods of Egypt our Lord had executed judgment. And that man, in his stubbornness, made it possible for a manifestation of God's glory.

“Still the heart of Pharaoh grew harder. And now the Lord sent a message to him, declaring, 'I will at this time send all My plagues upon thy heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like Me in all the earth...And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up for to show in thee my power.' Not that God had given him an existence for this purpose, but His providence had overruled events to place him upon the throne at the very time appointed for Israel's deliverance”
Patriarchs and Prophets, page 267.

Fate of a great stage, and fate of actors out here in the wing. Hundreds and thousands and millions of them. And as the great drama develops act after act, the Great Manager says, We need a man like Moses, and Moses is summoned from the wing. But in the great drama of the ages a man is so stubborn because he has developed his faculties to fight against God, and as the counsels of heaven would say, Where could he fit into this unrolling scroll. God says, Put him on the throne of Egypt at this particular time. And as he exhibits his character against the glorious character of Moses, the two stand out in such contrast that all the universe looking on will see the character of God on one hand and the character of Satan on the other hand in wonderful contrast.

Pharaoh could have been a man like Moses. And equally true, Moses could have been a man like Pharaoh. The choice in each case was with the individual.

But God has a use for everybody. Man uses the light or he uses the darkness. He uses the glorious character of God's face, or he uses the diabolical characters of the children of the dragon to exhibit the awful character of sin. And as the play and counter play of history goes on generation after generation, ten million woes look on, and as the result every question in the great controversy will be plain.

You are called to that stage. This is the last act in the drama. And it is not by chance that you are here in this remnant. Oh, no. God, looking down the ages,

formed the gates of Eden for the present hour for each son and daughter of Adam. And it is not by change that you are here in the twentieth century. It is not by change that you are here in this chapel tonight. You have a destiny.

I am so glad I was born in this century. I am so glad I was born at this time in human history. I rejoice in all God has done down through the six millenniums. I am so glad that God let me live today.

“Not that God had given him an existence for this purpose, but His providence had overruled events to place him upon the throne at the very time appointed for Israel’s deliverance. Though this haughty tyrant had by his crimes forfeited the mercy of God, yet his life had been preserved that through his stubbornness the Lord might manifest His wonders in the land of Egypt. The disposing of events is of God’s providence. He could have placed upon the throne a more merciful king, who would not have dared to withstand the mighty manifestations of divine power. But in that case the Lord’s purposes would not have been accomplished. His people were permitted to experience the grinding cruelty of the Egyptians, that they might not be deceived concerning the debasing influence of idolatry” *Ibid.*

Two million people needed to feel the lash of the oppressor that they might learn to hate Egypt instead of love it. And it took a fellow like Pharaoh to drill it into their backs and heads.

Going back to the experience we read in Acts, who did it mention were gathered together against Jesus? Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel. Quite a number. They were all gathered together against Jesus. What did they do? “For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”

How did it happen that a man like Caiaphas was high priest that year? How did it happen that a weak-kneed, time-serving man like Pilate was the governor of Judea? Pilate had enough sense to know that the Man before him was innocent. If he had been a strong character like Pharaoh, with the convictions that he had, he would have said to the Jews, Nothing doing. Turn this man loose. He hasn’t done anything wrong. But he wasn’t like Pharaoh. He was weak, afraid of the people. Well, why in the world did heaven let a man like that be on the judgment seat? It is a part of the great drama that Jesus should give His life, and that He should be slain by the enemies of God and man, inspired by Satan, in order that all the universe might see how terrible sin is.

You say, “Somebody had to do it.”

Oh, no. Not at all. God foresaw that there would be characters born in history with exactly that disposition. God simply arranged the cast. He let everyone come on at the time when they would make their greatest contribution either for right or wrong. Each one displaying the light or dark side of this question.

“Each actor in history stands in his lot and place; for God’s great work after His own plan will be carried out by men who have prepared themselves to fill positions for good or for evil”
Review and Herald, June 12, 1900.

Actors have to practice and practice. This is the real drama. There is no pretense. But it takes preparation. Pilate didn’t become that way in a minute. Judas didn’t become the Devil he turned out to be in a few weeks or years. Judas could have been one of the leading apostles of the early church. He had talents and capacities of great value. The greater saint a man could be, the greater devil he will be, unless he lets God in charge of his life.

“In opposition to righteousness men become instruments of unrighteousness, but they are not forced to take this course of action. They need not become instruments of unrighteousness any more than Cain needed to. God said to him, ‘If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.’ Cain would not hear the voice of God, and as a result he became his brother’s murderer” *Ibid*.

Did you ever wonder how back there at the gates of Eden a man could sink to the lowest to murder his brother? There was Cain and Able who had the same father and mother. They had the same family worship, the same environment, and the same training. One becomes the first martyr and the other the first murderer.

How do you explain that? There is no explanation except the human choice. Cain could have been just as righteous as Able, and Able could have been just as bad as Cain. Christ is waiting to take our talents and faculties and make us saints. The Devil is waiting to take those same talents and faculties and make us devils like himself.

Oh, the infinite capacity in every human life to be like God or to be like Satan. You will be one or the other. It is just as if you were to come into this great stage and the man who is directing the drama says, Which character would you like to be? Do you want to be Pilate? Do you want to be Judas? Do you want to be one of the men who drive the nails in the hands of Jesus? Or would you like to be John who stands by Jesus? Would you like to be Nero on the throne and give the order to behead Paul and crucify Peter, or would you like to be Paul?

Don’t misunderstand me. I don’t mean that any man can take any other man’s performance. Looking down the ages, God has seen the talents and faculties He has given you, and you can either develop like God or like Satan. According to the choice He sees you will make, He arranges your place in history either on God’s side or the Devil’s side, and you carry out your part. I repeat, the choice is yours as to which character you develop. The choice is God’s as to where you fit into the drama. That is true of every human being.

Once we get hold of this we will never be afraid of anybody. This is why Jesus wasn’t afraid. The disciples in the garden got panicky. First they wanted to fight. When Jesus wouldn’t let them fight they all ran. Jesus said, Don’t you know

that I could pray to My Father right now and He would send Me twelve legions of angels? Then He added, But how then could the Scriptures be fulfilled? Thus it must be. Jesus recognized the drama of destiny. He knew He had come to this world not to scatter the mob in Gethsemane by the shining angels, but to go on to the judgment hall and suffer, and out to Calvary to be crucified. He knew that it had been determined in the counsels of heaven, and He was willing to carry out His part. And because of that He was utterly fearless in the matter.

As Jesus stood before Pilate, and the mob howled at Him, and His accusers said all kinds of things about Him, He just stood there and didn't say a thing. Finally Pilate marveled and asked Him why He didn't talk. Pilate said, Don't you know that I have the power to release You or the power to crucify You? Then Jesus let a little light into Pilate's mind. He said, You couldn't have any power in this matter unless it were given you from above.

It is a wonderful thing to know that God is in charge of the drama. There is one thing you are in charge of. It is deciding whether you are going to play on God's side of this thing or on the Devil's side. You can decide that.

“Men of all characters, righteous and unrighteous will stand in their several positions in God's plans. With the characters they have formed they will act their part in the fulfillment of history. In a crisis, just at the right moment, they will stand in the places they have prepared themselves to fill” *Ibid*.

This is what makes history so fascinating. Look at the great moments in history. Think what it meant for a man like George Washington to be around when this country was born. Think what it meant for a man like Abraham Lincoln to be at the helm a little over a hundred years ago. Think of men like Hitler and Stalin, and how their decisions changed the course of history. It is all part of the great drama. God didn't create one of those men a devil. Each man in history has had the opportunity to develop a character that would shine forever in the course of God. But God says that if you are determined to be a devil, He will let you fill the places that the Devil has in this drama. And He will arrange for you to be at a certain place at a certain time to demonstrate something that will make all the universe loath and abhor the Devil forever and forever.

Friends, I would hate to contribute to the total plan of the ages by being that kind of demonstration. I would hate to make men sick of the Devil's program by being a Judas or a Caiaphas or a Herod. Wouldn't you? But you will unless you let Jesus take those faculties and talents He has given you and prepare you for the place He has planned for you to fill. It is up to you.

I want to make clear that it is the same set of faculties that are used for Christ or Satan. It is just a question of whether they are developed by God or by the Devil. It is a question of whether they are developed in harmony with the Creator's plan of education, or whether they are perverted to serve self and sin and Satan. It isn't that one man is born naturally good and another man is born naturally bad. Oh, no. Every person born in this world has faculties that if he would only let God use them would be on God's side. Equally true, every person born into this world has faculties

that if he would just let the Devil take them, the Devil will twist them and pervert them and make them just like him.

Which side will you be on? Perhaps some of you have heard of an experience that happened many years ago over in Europe. One of the great painters was painting a picture of the last supper. He had the Master and all the twelve apostles in mind. He was looking for someone who would sit there. He would watch them and translate their features to canvas. He was looking for someone for each one of these characters.

He looked for a long time to find a man whose face represented the love and kindness and power mingled in the Master's life. Finally he found a man, and got him to come and sit. Day after day he looked and painted that man's face on the canvass. He found another man and used him for John. He looked all around and discovered a man he thought could be painted as Peter. So with Matthew and Thomas and Philip and Bartholomew.

Finally he came to the character of Judas. He wanted a face that would reveal those characteristics of which Judas finally became famous. He looked and looked, and it took years, for it was a work of a lifetime. Finally he found a man who he thought he could paint as Judas. He made a bargain with the man, and the man came and sat day after day. When the work was finished, and he handed the man his money, the man said, I am the man that several years ago you painted as Christ.

Oh friends, is there someone here who could be like Jesus? Is there someone here who in his childhood was given the opportunity and privilege to be like Jesus? What have you done? What will you do? With the destiny held before you greater than that of crowned kings, what will you do? Who knows but that you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this. Oh, I wish I knew some way to tell it as it is. But I trust Jesus to help everyone of us to understand something of this subject. It is important.

Think of the great drama. In a crisis people will stand in the place they have prepared themselves to fill. Believers and unbelievers will fall into line as witnesses to confirm truth that they themselves do not comprehend. All will cooperate in accomplishing the purposes of God just as did Annas, Caiaphas, and Herod. In putting Christ to death they thought they were carrying out their own purposes, but unintentionally they were fulfilling the purpose of God.

All men, whatever their position or religion, loyal or disloyal, wicked or righteous, are fitting themselves for a part in the closing scenes of this earth's history. The wicked will trample each other down as they act out their attributes and fill their plans, but they will carry out the purposes of God.

And now, oh friend, will you be there
Among the blood bought throng?
And will you eat the fruit of life,
And sing the victor's song?

All that I have studied with you tonight is, as it were, the prelude. The great final performance of this drama will be when all the actors are on the stage at one time. This comes at the final judgment day. Read about it in the last chapter of *Great Controversy*. Read about it in Revelation 20. As the city of God descends through Orion and settles on the site of Old Jerusalem. As the great white throne appears above the jasper city. As the myriads of the lost are called from their dusty beds, and all the wicked, organized by Satan, come up in a final attack against the government of God—then every actor in history will be there at one time. They will either be inside the city with God or outside the city with Satan.

The great picture of history is placed upon the canvass of the sky. The whole story from the creation of the world, the fall of Adam and Eve, down through Old Testament times, the life and death of Jesus, the early church, the Dark Ages, and the remnant. Listen to this statement:

“Each actor recalls the part which he performed” *The Great Controversy*, page 667.

Then we will see the whole performance. Get the picture, and never forget it. You will see yourself in that drama. Pilate will be there. He will see himself washing his hands in a fruitless effort to cleanse himself from the guilt of the blood of Jesus. Herod, that monster that slew the infants of Bethlehem, will be there. Judas will be there, and once again his soul will be wrung with anguish as he sees himself betraying the Lord and throwing down those thirty pieces of silver. Nero and his mother, whose influence led him into that awful life that he lived, will be there.

Paul will be there. And how his heart will thrill as He sees how God used him to witness. Moses will be there. And how thankful he will be as he sees when he left the throne of Egypt and threw in his life with the people of God. The whole scene will be there.

You will be there. You will be there either outside the city with Satan, or inside the city with Jesus. You will see the drama and you will see your part in it. You will see exactly how the choice you made fitted you to act the part you acted.

If you have developed any underhanded action, there will be a place for you in the cast. It will seem the most natural thing to do just what Judas did. Satan will have prepared you for that for long periods of events.

But if your choice is to be like Moses, Jacob, Paul, John, or Jesus, then you will see how God, in His mercy, led you through a series of experiences to develop in you the very characteristics which would fit you to act your part in this closing act of the great drama.

This is what life is all about. This is why you were born at this particular time. This is why you are here tonight. It all depends on your choice.

What will your choice be? Choose this day who you will serve. Won't it be a wonderful thing if we can be inside the city with Jesus, and rejoice that our destiny was cast with the people of God?

Jesus stands for you there. Will you stand for Him here? You can't make yourself able to do the work for which you were born. But He who gave you life will develop in you that character, if you will let Him.

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