

Overwhelming Surprise 2 of 8

Fear

#0418

Study Given by W. D. Frazee— November 1965

“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them” 1 Thessalonians 5:2–3.

Does God intend that His people shall be *engulfed* in this great disaster? No. “Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake *you* as a thief.” We are to be saved from this overwhelming surprise. Now in order to be saved, we must be prepared; we must understand what it is that’s leading the world to these disasters. We must be kept, not merely from the end result, but from all the causes along the way. That’s the purpose of these studies—it’s to help us understand the basic causes that are leading the world to Armageddon. That’s another name for the end disaster that brings down the curtain on human history.

We noted that because of the fear of war and fear of want, men are being led to extensive combinations, confederacies. Does the Bible predict that? Where did we find that? Isaiah 8. God plainly states that His people are not to enter into those confederacies. That isn’t the answer. He says that while the people of this world are talking confederacies, God’s people will be looking up to Him. That’s the answer. When we look to man, trouble grows. When we look to God, trouble goes. And we must learn that day by day in our own experience.

There is a most interesting report of a statement made by a leading Roman Catholic Cardinal commenting on the Pope’s visit to the United Nations. He says:

“It was a striking thing that no voice has been raised in protest against the Pope’s visit. As recently as ten years ago, a papal visit to the United Nations would be considered an onslaught and an invasion. But today people are simply thrilled at the invitation to the Pope to visit the UN, and his willingness to do so. The reason for this is that people are so frightened of war that they are willing to try anything in desperation” *Review and Herald*, November 4, 1965.

The Cardinal spoke truer than he knew. He put his finger right on the point. It is not some genuine turning toward God or toward religion in the right sense that’s leading the world to welcome the leadership of the papacy. Oh, no. What is it? Fear! Fear!

Speaking to God’s people:

“Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid” Isaiah 8:12.

Are we afraid of war? No. Our Father is the King of this universe.

Notice the awful price that the people of this world are paying and will continue to pay, driven by their fear of war and fear of want. They are selling their souls for a mess of pottage, and they won’t even get the mess of pottage. Esau got his lentils, but the people of this world are not even going to get what they sell their souls for.

Now, take this matter of peace. What are they selling for peace? What are they going to lay down in order to accept the leadership of the Pope of Rome? Is the Pope going to lead?

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him... All the world wondered after the beast” Revelation 13:8, 3.

And we saw how there how the United States is the one that leads out in combining the world under the leadership of the papacy. What is the price of all this? Here’s a very interesting little verse. It’s right on the point of what we’re studying:

“Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” Proverbs 23:23.

Can truth be bought and sold? Apparently. You remember in Revelation, the True Witness says:

“I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see” Revelation 3:18.

The eyesalve is the discernment to know what’s right and what’s wrong. Buy the truth. But once you’ve bought it, don’t sell it, don’t sell out. That is right where the world is missing the thing today and the popular churches are missing. In Reformation days men like Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, and Wesley bought the truth, and it led them to a separation from Rome. Today the Protestant churches are *selling* that glorious heritage. They are *selling* the truth which their fathers sacrificed everything to buy. That’s the price they are paying to get back in favor with Rome in order that the Pope may save them from a third world war.

Do you know that some of the creeds of Christendom today are being revised in order to say no longer the Bible *is* the Word of God. But the revised statement of some of the creeds is, “The Bible *contains* the Word of God.” A nice little turn of the phrase, isn’t it? Which do you believe? The Bible *is* the Word of God. And there’s an *infinite* difference between those two things, my friends.

“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth”

John 17:17.

The Bible *is* the Word of God. The inroads of modernism, of higher criticism, are weakening the faith of Protestants in the Scriptures. *These* have prepared the way to accept a human court of appeal, in the person of the papacy, to interpret what is truth.

The servant of the Lord tells us that the reason *Great Controversy* deals with the controversies of the past, the apostasy in the early ages, the rise of the papacy, the Dark Ages, and the rise of the Reformation is simply what has been will be again. The last conflict into which we are even now entering is the climax of an age-long controversy. The issues are the same. The unseen forces are the same. And Rome that led the Christian world away from the Bible, away from the truth, and set itself forth as the representative of Christ here on earth. That Rome, which in the Dark Ages, slew the saints of God is the same Rome under whose leadership all the world will be united to war against God's remnant. Therefore it is very meaningful to study into the history of the past and see how Rome came to be.

In *Great Controversy*, we're told about the experience of John Huss. John Huss was burned at the stake because he became a reformer. He had been a papist; he was a Roman Catholic priest. As he studied the Bible, he came to a certain conclusion:

"God speaking in the Bible, and not the church speaking through the priesthood, is the one infallible guide" *Great Controversy*, page 102.

Now there's a difference between Roman Catholicism on the one hand and true Protestantism on the other. And this is the truth which the Protestant world is *selling* that they may buy the favor of the papacy. What is it? It is the fear of Communism, the fear of atheism, the fear of war. Fear is driving them to compromise.

Notice the attitude of the true believers at the time the papacy was in the process of formation. A faithful few would not go along with the Bishop of Rome and his hierarchy.

"To secure peace and unity they were ready to make any concession consistent with fidelity to God; but they felt that even peace would be too dearly purchased at the sacrifice of principle. If unity could be secured only by the compromise of truth and righteousness, then let there be difference, and even war" *Ibid.*, page 45.

Now there is the protestant position, and that is the position of Christ's followers in all ages; not to make trouble unnecessarily, not to push differences that are not vital. But when it comes to truth, principal, no ecumenical idea is worth selling truth.

We have the Savior's earnest prayer for unity among His believers, but in that same prayer is this text we've already noticed, "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth." So the great question before Protestantism today is this: "Which is

more important, truth or unity?" And there are thousands, yes millions and they are a growing multitude, who are willing to sell the truth in order to secure unity.

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The next sentence is meaningful:

"Well would it be for the church and the world if the principles that actuated those steadfast souls were revived in the hearts of God's professed people" *Ibid.*

The only thing which will keep us from being engulfed in this world movement for security and peace, unity, the ecumenical movement—I say the *only* thing which will keep us from being engulfed in it sooner or later—is a love for truth, that we would rather have *any* war than give up truth. Our love for peace must never degenerate into a willingness to compromise. And that must be so in the details of our personal lives. If we get into the habit of sacrificing principle just so that we'll be well thought of, we're on the road to Rome. No question about it. The remnant will be those who overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and who love not their lives unto the death (Revelation 12:11).

Speaking of this apostasy in the early ages we read:

"Almost imperceptibly the customs of heathenism found their way into the Christian church" *Ibid.*, page 49.

How did this compromise come about? Almost imperceptibly. What does "imperceptibly" mean? Unnoticed, like the daylight comes. It's hard to pick out a given minute and say it was dark and now it's light. The same as twilight falls. But this was the twilight. And as the darkness settled upon the Christian world, it came almost *imperceptibly*. That is the Devils' game, to make the advances toward the world, each one so small that the person who resists one of these advances is looked upon as silly, odd, unreasonable, stubborn. Do you see? Why, you certainly wouldn't make a fuss over a tiny little thing like this!

Again, notice the field. It isn't always in direct defiance to what God says that this compromise begins.

"Rome began by enjoining what God had not forbidden, and she ended by forbidding what He had explicitly enjoined" *Ibid.*, page 290.

Rome began by telling people to do things that God had not plainly said they shouldn't do. Let me illustrate. Here are these various feasts, Christmas for the birth of Christ, Easter for the resurrection and many others. Is there something in the Bible that says, "Don't celebrate the birthday of Christ and don't celebrate the day of His resurrection?" No. So Rome began by introducing *all* manner of things that

weren't expressly forbidden in the Bible. But notice, that was but the beginning. She ended by forbidding what He had definitely told people to do, and the Sabbath is the great outstanding example. But watch: when men get in the habit of accepting as religious guides those who tell them to do *more* than the Bible says, they will inevitably end up by following those guides to do what the Bible has forbidden. This is exactly the path that Protestantism, so-called, has been following for many years.

“As the Protestant churches have been seeking the favor of the world, false charity has blinded their eyes. They do not see but that it is right to believe good of all evil; and as the inevitable result, they will finally believe evil of all good” *Ibid.*, page 571.

That's exactly what's wrapped up in this attitude towards the papacy today. The popular thing in the Protestant churches today is to pat everybody on the back. And at the moment, Seventh-day Adventists in many places are riding on that tide of popular favor—the ecumenical spirit. Many of the popular churches are ready to welcome Seventh-day Adventists as a part of the great Christian world. But the same spirit that leads them to welcome us on that basis is leading them to welcome Rome. We need to look very carefully at the hand that is stretched out to us, remembering that it is also stretched out to the Vatican. And what is it? It is the spirit of compromise.

In the name of tolerance, in the name of goodwill, in the name of Christian love and charity, this hand is extended. Here and here and here and here. But what will it lead to? This says it will lead them *eventually* to “believe evil of all good.” And that hand which has been extended toward Rome will eventually be used not to welcome us but to smite us.

We need to look into our own hearts and see if there is anything in our *souls* that responds to this spirit of compromise. Are we weary of the war? Are we tired of the toil? Do we long for release from the conflict? And will we, in order to *buy* that release, *sell* the truth? That's the question. Will we give up conscientious convictions? Will we soft-pedal the Word of God?

I mentioned that the world is not going to even get its mess of pottage that it sold its soul for. Oh, my friends, this world that is selling the truth in order to buy peace from the Pope of Rome, see what it's going to wake up and find:

“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army” Revelation 19:19.

This power that has supposedly led the world to peace is going to lead it instead to war. And war of wars: *this* is the war against God. So while this world is following after that phantom of peace, they are led to the greatest war of the ages.

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto

the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty”
Revelation 16:13–14.

Notice:

“As we approach the last crisis, it is of vital moment that harmony and unity exist among the Lord’s instrumentalities. The world is filled with storm and war and variance. Yet under one head—the papal power—the people will unite to oppose God in the person of His witnesses. This union is cemented by the great apostate” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 7*, page 182.

Under *one* head, the papal power, this world is going to unite to oppose God in the person of His witnesses. Where will you and I be? We’ll be on one side or the other. We’ll either be with Jesus and His remnant church, faithfully, conscientiously standing for what the Word of God says, all ten of His commandments, or else we will be with the *great* popular movement which has *sold* the truth in order to buy peace. But remember, they’re not going to get what they bought. They’re going to sell the truth, they’re going to lose that, but they’re not going to get the peace. “When they shall say, peace and safety; *then* sudden destruction cometh upon them,” and they shall not escape.”

Friends, when the voice of God ends the captivity of His people, when His law is seen in the sky, there will be a great awakening among all these churches that have combined together in compromise to buy peace. There will be a terrible awakening. The union that the great apostate has cemented will fall to pieces. The great city will be divided into three parts, and every man’s hand will rise up against the hand of his brother.

Read the awful picture in Revelation 16 and Jeremiah 25 and in *Great Controversy* in the chapter, “The Desolation of the Earth.” See the breakdown of civilization. See the churches in chaos and the members actually tearing the ministers and the priests limb from limb. This world is going to be plunged into the scenes of the French Revolution worldwide. Peace? Oh, no. No peace. The *sacrifice* of truth can never lead to peace. And so, it means much to you and me this morning to answer the question: Do we *love* the truth enough to die for it, enough to live for it? Or are we willing to compromise?

Dear Lord, write upon our hearts Thy truth. Deep in our souls put a love for it that we would rather die than sacrifice the truth of God, for Jesus’ sake, amen.

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