

Drama of Destiny

#0627

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

The psalmist says:

“My heart is inditing a good matter...” Psalm 45:1.

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

I want to study with you tonight about the drama of destiny, the drama of destiny. You know, to many people life is a series of accidents, luck, chance. 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 specific purpose. You were born for a certain place.

But the great fact that we must face is that it rests with each one of us whether we will accept that for which we were born or not. But one thing that we shall make clear tonight is this, that 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.

Now, we'll want some texts to support this thought and some texts to help us see how it applies down through history.

In the 4th chapter of Esther and the 14th verse (you can write that down), Mordecai says to Esther:

“Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for...” Esther 4:14.

What?

“...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's true, it isn't fictitious. It's real; it isn't pretense. It isn't make-believe; it's the real thing. But all down through the ages, we see this.

Turn now to Matthew the 18th chapter and the 7th verse. I want you to notice what the Master says about certain situations in this world. What's the first word? “Woe.” Not a very happy word, is it? The world is filled with woe. All right. What's the matter?

“Woe unto the world because of...” Matthew 18:7.

What?

“...offences...” Matthew 18:7.

That means occasions of stumbling, stumbling blocks.

“It’s too bad,” Jesus says, “that all around us are things to stumble over.”

Do you find them? Do you find people to stumble over? They’re all around us.

“Woe unto the world because of offences...” Matthew 18:7.

Those occasions of stumbling. But He immediately adds:

“...for it must needs be that offences come...” Matthew 18:7.

What a strange thing to say, “Woe unto the world because of something,” and then immediately to add, “It has to be; must be.” And then, He comes back to it:

“...but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh”
Matthew 18:7.

You remember that when they were surrounding the last supper there at the table, Jesus in mournful tones, said, “One of you shall betray me.”

And they began immediately to inquire as to who it would be. Who was it? Judas. And Jesus said:

“...Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed!
good were it for that man if he had never been born”
Mark 14:21.

Do you agree? Well, why was he born then? And why was he there? Why was he one of the twelve? Well, turn to the 17th of John. See if we can get some light on that that agrees with what we’ve just read in Matthew.

“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.

John 17, 12th verse, Jesus is praying to His Father:

“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in
Thy name...” John 17:12.

That is the 12 apostles.

“...those that Thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but...” John 17:12.

Who?

“...the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled” John 17:12.

You know, there are those who’d say, “See there, Judas couldn’t help it. He *had* to do it. He had to fulfill the prophecy.”

They do not understand what I’m studying with you tonight. But let us look at the text just as it says it. What did Judas do? He fulfilled what? The Scripture; he fulfilled the Scripture.

“Well,” somebody says, “did somebody have to betray Jesus?”

No. But it happened.

All right, let’s go to the 4th chapter of Acts verses 27–28. Let’s take another text on this. This is soon after the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the early church was witnessing for Christ, and they were getting into trouble because of it.

And the apostles had been taken and brought before the Sanhedrin and threatened. And finally, they let them go (23rd verse), and they went back to their own company, to the church and reported. And right away, the church assembled in a prayer meeting and sought God about it, and quoted the second Psalm, which they believed was being fulfilled right then.

Now, notice Acts 4 verses 27–28:

“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.

Well, what did all those wicked men, Pilate and Herod and the priests and all the rest, what did they do? They did exactly what God had determined before should be done.

“Well,” somebody says, “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, those very same 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 I'll tell you there's one thing that God reserves to Himself that you have nothing to do with, and that is when and where you are born. God takes in the whole sweep of history, and He sees the character that you're going to develop.

He'll have a Moses born at a certain time to do a certain work. It isn't just chance that Moses was born right at the time when a deliverer was going to be needed to lead a nation of slaves from Egypt to Canaan. That wonderful man, that wonderful character, came right at the right time, right on time.

But there was another man that came at the same time. Turn to the 9th chapter of Romans and the 17th verse, and you'll see what I mean. He was on the other side of the question. Oh, this is, as we say, tremendous.

"For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh..." Romans 9:17.

Who was Pharaoh? The king of Egypt. It's talking about the one that was king when Moses came down there and said, "God says 'Let My people go'" [a paraphrase of Exodus 5:1].

Now, this is what God said to 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 says:

"...For this same purpose have I raised thee up..."
Romans 9:17.

Well, the thing is this, my dear friends. A weaker man would have yielded long before. He was one of the most stubborn men in history. Read the record back there in Exodus.

God said, "Let My people go, and if you won't, the river is going to turn to blood" [a paraphrase of Exodus 7:16–17].

Most men after that river turned to blood would have said, "Israel, go. This is enough."

But that man was so stubborn that even when frogs came, and lice came, and hail came, and darkness and all those different plagues until the land of Egypt became one vast desolation, he still held on. And even at times when he began to yield, as soon as the plague was withdrawn, what did he do?

He said, "No, you can't go."

And finally, with a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm, God led His people out, as the firstborn of Egypt in every home lay slain, and what a cry arose. Upon all the gods of Egypt, our Lord had executed judgment [a paraphrase of Exodus 12:12]. And that man in his stubbornness made it possible for a manifestation of God's glory that a more easy-going king would not have made necessary at all.

Let me read it out of the inspired commentary here in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 267:

"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..." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 267.

God didn't create him a devil. He didn't create him a wicked tyrant. Oh, no. God didn't give him 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" *Ibid*.

Do you see? Think of a great stage and think of actors and actresses out here in the wing, hundreds of them, thousands of them, millions of them.

And now, as the great drama develops act after act, the great Manager says, "We need a man like Moses here," and Moses is summoned from the wing.

But oh, in the great drama of the ages, here is a person who is so stubborn because he has developed his faculties to fight against God that the counsels of heaven would say, "Where can *he* fit into this unrolling scroll?"

God says, "Put him right here on the throne of Egypt at this particular time, and as he exhibits his character against the glorious character of Moses, the two will stand out in such contrast that all the universe looking on will see the character of God on the one hand, and the character of Satan on the other, 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. He uses the light; He uses the darkness. He uses the glorious characters of His saints, but He uses the diabolical characters of the children of the dragon to exhibit the awful character of sin.

And as the play and counterplay of human history goes on generation after generation, ten million, million, million worlds look on. And as the result my friends, in the end, 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, from the gates of Eden to the present hour, saw each son and daughter of Adam. And it is not by chance that *you* are here in the twentieth century. It's not by chance that you're here in this chapel tonight. You have a destiny, and we're studying tonight the drama of destiny.

Oh, I think it's a wonderful thing. You know, I just have to honestly say I'm so glad I was born in this century. I'm so glad I was born at this time in human history. I rejoice in all that God has done down through the six millenniums. I'm so glad God let me live today.

Let me read a little more about Pharaoh here:

"Not that God had given him an existence for this purpose..." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 267.

That is in defying God.

"...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..." *Ibid*.

He deserved to die long before he did, you see.

"...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 Israelites need to feel the lash of the oppressor that they might learn to hate Egypt instead of love it. And it took a fellow like *that* Pharaoh to drill that into their backs and into their heads. You see, friend? Yes.

All right, now let's take another example. Let's go back to this experience we read here in Acts, I mean just the experience. Who did it mention were gathered

together against Jesus? Well, turn there if you've forgotten, Acts 4:27–28. I want you to notice the wording there.

Who's gathered together against Jesus? What's the first one's name? Herod. All right. Who else? Pilate. All right. Who else? The Gentiles. And who else? The people of Israel. Takes in quite a number, doesn't it? They were all gathered together against Jesus.

But what did they do?

“...Whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done” Acts 4:28.

How did it happen that a man like Caiaphas was high priest that year? How does it happen that a weak-kneed, time-serving man like Pilate was the governor of Judea? Pilate had enough sense to know that that Man before him was what? Innocent. If he'd been a strong character like that Pharaoh we're talking about, with the convictions that Pilate had, what would he do?

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, vacillating, afraid of the people. Well, why in the world did heaven let a man like *that* be on the judgment seat?

Precisely, my friends, it was 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 this world and all the universe might see how terrible sin is. Do you see?

“Oh,” 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. And He let everybody come on at the time when they would make their greatest contribution, either for right or for wrong, each one displaying either the light or the dark side of this question.

Now, I'm going to read that in the plainest language. This is from the *Review and Herald* of June 12, 1900. Oh, I think this is wonderful.

“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.

You know, actors have to practice and practice and practice, don't they? This is the real drama. There's no pretense in this, my friends. But it takes preparation. Pilate didn't become that way all in a minute, I can tell you that. Judas didn't become the Devil that he turned out to be in a few weeks or a few years. Judas could have

been one of the leading apostles of the early church all through that wonderful history of the book of Acts. He had talents, capacities of great value.

And I want to tell you this, friends. The greater saint a man *could* be the greater Devil he *will* be unless he lets God in charge of his life. Do you see?

All right, I read on:

“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 right back there at the gates of Eden, a man right there at the beginning of time could sink so low as to murder his brother? Who was it? It was Cain and Abel, same father and mother, same family worship, same environment, same training. And one becomes the first martyr and the other the first murderer.

How do you explain that? There’s no explanation, friend, except this, the human choice, the human choice. Cain *could* have been just as righteous as Abel, and Abel *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, those same faculties, and make us devils like himself.

Oh, my friends, the capacity, the infinite capacity in every human life to be like God or like Satan. And you *will* be one or the other. You will be.

It’s just as if you were to come in, as I say, to this great stage, and the Manager who’s directing the drama says, “Which character would you like to be? Which one 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 that drive the nails in the hands of Jesus? Or would you like to be one that stands by Jesus, like John?”

“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. I just mean this, friends, that looking down the ages, God has seen the talents and faculties that He’s given you, and what you can be either developed like God or like Satan. And according to the choice that 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'll develop. The choice is God's as to where you fit into the task or where you fit into the drama. And that's true of every human being.

You know, once we get hold of this, friends, we'll never be afraid of anybody. This is why Jesus wasn't afraid. The disciples out there in the garden, they got panicky, you know. First, they wanted to fight. Then, when Jesus wouldn't let them fight, they all ran.

And Jesus said, "Why, don't you know that I could pray to My Father right now and He'd send Me twelve legions of angels?" [a paraphrase of Matthew 26:53].

And then, He added:

"But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Matthew 26:54.

Jesus recognized the drama of destiny. He knew that He had come to this world, mind you, not to scatter the mob in Gethsemane by the shining of angels, but to go on to the judgment hall and suffer, and out to Calvary and be crucified. He knew that that had been determined in the counsels of heaven, and He was willing to carry out His part. But because of that, He was utterly fearless in the matter.

You remember that as He stood before Pilate, and the mob howled at Him, and His accusers were saying all kinds of things, He just stood there and didn't say a thing. And finally, Pilate marveled, and he asked Him why He didn't talk. He didn't say anything.

And then Pilate said, "Listen, don't you know that I have the power to release You or the power to crucify You?" [a paraphrase of John 19:10].

And then, Jesus let a little light into Pilate's mind.

He said, "You couldn't have any power at all in the matter unless it were given you from above" [a paraphrase of John 19:11].

Why, my dear friends, it's a wonderful thing to know that God is in charge of the drama. There's *one* thing you're in charge of—deciding whether you're going to play on God's side of this thing or the Devil's side. You can decide that.

I come back to the article in the *Review and Herald*, June 12, 1900:

"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" *Review and Herald*, June 12, 1900.

You know, this is what makes history so fascinating. Look at the great moments in history. Think of 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.

And think, on the other hand, of men like Hitler, Stalin and how their decisions would change the course of history. It's all part of the great drama. And God didn't create *one* of those men a devil. Each man in history, profane and sacred, has had the opportunity to develop a character that would shine forever in the courts of God.

But God says, "If you're determined to be a devil, we'll let you fill the places that the Devil has in this drama."

And He'll 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.

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

And this is what I want to make crystal clear tonight. It is exactly the same set of faculties that are used for Christ or Satan. It's just a question of whether they're developed by God or by the Devil. It's a question of whether they are developed in harmony with the Creator's plan of education or whether they're perverted to serve self and sin and Satan.

It isn't that here's one man, he's born naturally good, and another man born naturally bad. Oh, no. Every person born in this world has faculties that if he would only let God use them, he can be on God's side forever. Equally true, every person born in this world has faculties that if he just lets the Devil take them, he'll twist them and pervert them and make them just like the Devil.

Which side will *you* be on? Which side will you be on? Perhaps some of you have heard of an experience that happened many, many years ago over in Europe. One of the great painters was painting a picture of the last supper. Of course, he had the Master in mind and all the 12 apostles. And he was looking for somebody who might sit there, and he would watch them and translate their features to the canvas. He was looking for somebody for each one of these characters.

He looked for a long time to find a man whose face would represent the love and kindness and power mingled in the Master's life. And finally, he found a man, and he got him to come and sit. And day after day, he looked at that, 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 that he thought could be painted as Peter, and so with Matthew and Thomas and Philip and Bartholomew.

And finally, he came to that character of Judas. And he wanted a face that would reveal those characteristics for which Judas finally became famous. And he looked and looked. This whole experience took years, for it was the work of a lifetime.

And finally, he found a man, and he looked into that man's face, and he thought, "This is the man that I can paint as Judas."

And so, he made the bargain with him. He came and sat day after day. But when the work was finished, and he handed the man his money, the man said, "Sir Painter, I'm the man that several years ago you painted as the Christ."

Oh, my friends, is there somebody here that *could* be like Jesus? Is there somebody here that in his childhood was given advantages, opportunities, privileges to be like Jesus? What have you done with them? What have you done? What *will* you do? With a destiny held before you greater than that of crowned kings, what will you do? Who knows but you've come to the kingdom for such a time as this [a paraphrase of Esther 4:14]?

Oh, I wish I knew some way to tell it as it is, friend. But I trust Jesus to somehow help every one of us tonight to understand something of this wonderful subject. Do you agree with me this is important? This is wonderful.

Oh, think of it, friends, the great drama. Let me read a little more:

"In a crisis, just at the right moment, they will stand in the places 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 co-operate in accomplishing the purposes of God, just as did Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod. In putting Christ to death, the priests thought they were carrying out their own purposes, but unconsciously and unintentionally they were fulfilling the purpose of God...All men, whatever their position, whatever their 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 one another down as they act out their attributes and fulfill their plans, but they will carry out the purposes of God" *Review and Herald*, June 12, 1900.

And as the girls sang a little while ago:

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?

Will you? Let me tell you, friends, all that I've 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 that last chapter of *Great Controversy*. Read about it in Revelation the 20th chapter, 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, either inside the city with God or outside the city with Satan.

Listen to this statement in *Great Controversy*, 667. As the great picture of history is placed upon the canvass of the sky, and the whole story from the creation of the world and the fall of Adam and Eve, down through Old Testament times, and the life and death of Jesus, the early church, the Dark Ages, and the remnant—as that whole thing is flashed upon the sky, listen:

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

Then is when each one of us will see the whole performance. And my dear friends—oh, get the picture and never forget it. You will see *yourself* in that drama. Pilate will be there, and he'll see himself washing his hands in a fruitless effort to cleanse himself from the guilt of the blood of Jesus. Herod will be there, that monster that slew the infants of Bethlehem. Judas will be there, and once again, his soul will be wrung with anguish as he sees himself betraying the Lord and throwing down the thirty pieces of silver. Nero will be there and his mother, whose influence led him into that awful life that he lived.

But oh, my friends, 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 it all there, the moment when he left the throne of Egypt and threw in his life with the people of God. The whole scene will be there.

And my friend, *you* will be there. You'll be there in the flesh, either outside the city with Satan or inside the city with Jesus. And you'll see the drama, and you will see your part in it. And you will see exactly how, oh get this, how the choice you made fitted you to act the part that you acted.

If you developed scheming, underhanded action, there'll be a place for you in the cast. And it'll seem the most natural thing to do just what Judas did. Satan will have prepared you for that for a long series of events.

But oh friends, if your choice and your part are to be like Moses, to be like Jacob in his victory, to be like Paul, to be like John, to be like 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. Do you see, friends? This is what life is all about. This is why you

were born at this particular time. This is why you're here in this chapel tonight. Oh friends, it all depends then on what? Your choice.

What will your choice be?

"...Choose you this day whom ye will serve..."

Joshua 24:15.

Oh, wouldn't it be a wonderful thing, as we join in that great throng at the end of the thousand years, if we can be *inside* the city with Jesus, and as we see that rejoice that our destiny was cast with the people of God?

"I will follow Thee, my Savior,
Where-so-e'er my lot may be.
Where Thou goest I will follow;
Yes, my Lord, I'll follow Thee.

Refrain:

I will follow Thee, my Savior,
Thou didst shed Thy blood for me;
And though all men should forsake Thee,
By Thy grace I'll follow Thee."

Seventh-Day Adventist Hymnal, #623, first stanza.

Will you? He stands for you there. Will you stand for Him here? I'll tell you this, friends. 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. If you will, will you stand?

Loving Father, we thank Thee for this great drama of destiny, for the sweep of history that Thine eye has looked over from eternal ages. And we're so glad that we're not just atoms thrown together, but that every man and woman, every boy and girl here tonight is a special individual, born for a certain work.

We thank Thee for the faculties and talents Thou hast given each one, different from any other person in this world. We thank Thee for the particular place that you've assigned in the great drama.

Oh God, tonight we've registered our choice that we'll be on God's side of this thing and not the Devil's. With the precious blood of Jesus cleanse out of our lives the selfishness, the cunning, the scheming, the folly, the vanity, the pride, the deception, everything that would fit us to be with the Devil.

And then, Lord, develop in our lives the beauty, the love, the kindness, the truth, the mercy that Thou dost long to show forth through Thy children. We ask it for each one here, in Jesus' name, amen.

God bless you all.

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