

THERE IS A FAMINE IN THE LAND!

The wise man, Solomon wrote, "*Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he*" (Proverbs 29:18). Some have mistakenly used this statement to point out that we must have a vision for the future, a belief in our future success. However, Solomon is talking about a message from God, His word. Often the writings of the prophets are referred to as the "visions of" (Isa. 1:1; Nah. 1:1; Hab. 2:2). The prophet Amos prophesied, "*Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it*" (Amos 8:11-12). This was a prophecy of the failure of vision, revelation from God to man. Lamenting the misery of Jerusalem, Jeremiah wrote, "*Her gates are sunk into the ground; he hath destroyed and broken her bars: her king and her princes are among the Gentiles: the law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the Lord*" (Lam. 2:9). God's promise was fulfilled.

However, there is another "famine in the land", one of hearing the words of the Lord, not one of bread or water. This famine is self made, not the result of God withholding His revelation to man. This famine is simply the failure of man to read, study and learn the revealed word of God found in the pages of holy writ. Paul, speaking of Timothy said that "*the holy scriptures, ...are able to make thee wise unto salvation...*" (II Tim. 3:15). He then added that, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*" (II Tim. 3:16). The failure to "know the book" is a failure to "know" God's righteousness, for the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17). Paul spoke of his fellow Jews saying, "*For I bear the record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God*" (Rom. 10:2-3).

Friends, the world is full of people just like these, ignorant of God's word and establishing their own way of righteousness! Like Solomon said, "*Where there is no vision, the people perish...*"! We too shall perish without a knowledge of God's word!

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TO SEEK AND TO SAVE

Jesus stated His purpose for coming to this world in the form of a man. He said, "*For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost*" (Luke 19:10). Jesus places much emphasis on the lost in His teaching. He spoke of searching for and finding the lost sheep (Luke 15:6), the lost coin (Luke 15:8-9) and the lost son (Luke 15: 11-32). He stated that as one would rejoice for the finding of such, so rejoicing took place in heaven when one sinner was brought back (Luke 15:7, 10). Having used such illustrations about coins, sheep and sons, Jesus also stressed the relatively insignificance of things as compared to one soul. He said, "*For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*" (Mark 8:36). Lost souls is why Jesus came to earth the first time.

Jesus did just exactly what He was supposed to do in order to seek and to save the lost. He gave His life on Calvary's cross, shedding His blood that our sins might be washed away. Now, it is up to Christians to do as Jesus did. Not the sacrifice on the cross, but the seeking and saving that which is lost. Paul tells us, "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*" (Phil. 2:5). Having just noted that Christ's mind was on seeking and saving the lost, if we have the same mind, then we will be mindful of the lost. Jude the half brother of our Lord said that we should be "*pulling them out of the fire*" (Jude 23). Just as we save a physical body when we pull them from a burning building, so we save the soul when we pull them out of sin. James said it this way, "*Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins*" (James 5:20).

Brethren, this is our job as Christians! We are the Lord's work force on this earth and in this time. The apostle Paul wrote, "*For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building*" (I Cor. 3:9). If we fail to show the erring the error of their way, they will die in their sins, but their blood will also be upon our hands (Ezek. 3:18; Acts 18:6; Acts 20:26-27). It's about time we all got serious about seeking and saving the lost, snatching men out of the fires of hell, doing the work that the Lord has assigned to us. Otherwise, on the day of judgment, we have to give account of our "inaction" in not teaching the gospel to others.

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