



## TROUBLED TIMES

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The apostle John had a vision in which Jesus revealed to him many of the events of the last days. He wrote these things in the book of Revelation.

(Revelation 13:11-18) <sup>11</sup>And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. <sup>12</sup>And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. <sup>13</sup>And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. A being is coming, probably a human being, who will perform all of these wonders. In some ways he will seem like a lamb, gentle and kind, so that he can deceive many people, but in reality he will speak like a dragon. He will be irrational, but many will be deceived by his harmless and gentle appearance. For example, when Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany, many people liked him due to his charismatic speaking and what he did in the nation; helping the economy, cleaning up the streets, clamping down on various vices, giving the nation a new sense of identity. Even various churches accepted him happily, thinking he was a good leader. But later, his true character was revealed. The deceiving beast of Revelation will be similar. **We have to be able to discern the times. And we can only discern if we are walking in fellowship with Jesus.**

<sup>14</sup>And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. <sup>15</sup>And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. The apostle John had never seen a television. Never. So when he writes about an image of the beast that speaks, perhaps in his vision he saw a large screen, but didn't know how to explain it. With modern technology it's quite possible that this false prophet will communicate via television. And he will cause all those who don't worship the beast to be killed. Well, that's also very possible. For example in Communist Russia, there were secret police everywhere. The State taught people to betray their friends and relatives, to inform the government if anyone didn't do what the government wanted. But this kind of thing is going to happen worldwide. Everyone will have to worship the image of the beast. The beast will probably appear like a human being, a world leader. Better not to worship him. Better only to worship God. Amen?

<sup>16</sup>And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads... There will be no exceptions. It doesn't matter if you're the President of the USA or an incredibly poor person in Africa, you will have to take this mark. Why?

<sup>16</sup>And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads <sup>17</sup>And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. ... There will be no exceptions. It doesn't matter if you're the President of the USA or an incredibly poor person in Africa, you will have to take this mark in your right hand or in your forehead in order to be able to carry on buying and selling. Technology already exists to place a very tiny chip inside the human body, containing all that person's personal data including their bank accounts. Perhaps this is what the mark will be. It would be much simpler than having to carry around so many identity cards, cash, and so on! It would also be a way to control people's lives. But there is a problem, because those who love God will not wish to take the mark, since it's the mark of the beast, the mark of the antichrist.

<sup>18</sup>Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six. We don't know exactly what, but there is some relationship between this number and the mark of the beast.

We only worship Jesus Christ, so what will we do? The day is coming when everyone will be required to take the mark in order to buy or sell; and it will be claimed that all who do not worship the beast are criminals and deserve to die. What will we do? We have to decide now. Better not to take the mark than to identify ourselves with the anti-christ. **Better to die than to worship a lie.** How will we eat if we can't buy or sell? Well, we have to look at the things that are not seen. We have to trust in the Word of God.

*I have been young and now I am old, Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his descendants begging bread.* (Psalm 37:25 NASB) The Word of God says that He will provide for His children. Note, for His children, not for everyone. If you refuse to surrender your life to Christ, and also refuse to take the mark, there are no guarantees of provision for you. But if you have Christ in your heart and decide to honor God and not take the mark, one way or the other He will provide for you.

So we may as well begin now learning to trust in Him, while the trials are light. They are opportunities to grow in our faith. To learn to trust in God. To learn to have faith, the conviction of that which is not seen. So, returning to the present, seeing all these price increases and my income low, I for one have taken this situation as an opportunity. "OK, God, we're going to learn to trust in You more, that You are our provider." And my children will not beg bread. The Father will provide. And if the Father can provide now, He can provide in the last days when the beast is established on earth.



(1 Kings 17:1-16) *And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.* God is judging King Ahab of Israel, so He gives the prophet Elijah authority to control the rains. And Elijah declares that there will be no rain. And if there's no rain, there's no harvest, and no food.

*And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, <sup>3</sup>Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.* Elijah's Father God gives him instructions. In the same way, **our Father God wants to give us instructions** about how to live and what decisions to make, so He can look after us in our times.

<sup>4</sup>*And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.* God will provide for this son of His so he can eat.

<sup>5</sup>*So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.* <sup>6</sup>*And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.* **Can God provide or not?** Yes. How many Israelites did Moses have to lead in the desert? More than a million. And they lived there for 40 years. There is no harvest in the desert. However God sent them manna every day. He provided for His people. And He will go on providing, because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

<sup>7</sup>*And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.* <sup>8</sup>*And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, <sup>9</sup>Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.* <sup>10</sup>*So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.*

**CAN GOD  
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<sup>11</sup>And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. <sup>12</sup>And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. How sad. This woman is about to die because of the lack of food. She was ready to give up.

In our day, there's a great temptation to give up. "Oh Lord. The government. My circumstances. People. Poor me. I'm such a victim." Instead of saying, "Lord, you continue to be my provider. I will keep walking with my head held high. I will keep praying for the government, but my focus will not be on them but on You, on Your provision, on Your perspective."

<sup>13</sup>And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. What a thing to demand! "It's OK, I know you're going to die, but prepare something for me first." How could he be so cruel? Because he was not cruel. He had God's perspective. He had faith in God. He knew, "God has provided for me through the ravens, and now He will provide through this widow, and not just for me but also for her and her son."

For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. <sup>15</sup>And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. <sup>16</sup>And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah. God provided. "Very well," you might say, "but that happened thousands of years ago and things are different now..." God tells us in the New Testament that He gave us these stories so we could understand and know our God, the God who never changes. It's the same God who will provide for us, protect us and guide us. We have the same God as Elijah, and Elisha, and as Elisha's servant.

(Luke 12:22-40) And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. <sup>23</sup>The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. <sup>24</sup>Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? <sup>25</sup>And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? <sup>26</sup>If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? <sup>27</sup>Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>28</sup>If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? We have to walk in faith, to trust in God.

<sup>29</sup>And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. <sup>30</sup>For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. <sup>31</sup>But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. We have to believe this.

<sup>32</sup>Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Once again God encourages us not to fear.

**WE CAN ONLY  
DISCERN IF WE  
ARE WALKING  
IN  
FELLOWSHIP  
WITH JESUS.**

<sup>33</sup>Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. <sup>34</sup>For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. God knows our circumstances. He knows the pressures we live under. And He tells us, "Don't worry, I'll provide for you. Your part is to focus on Me, on My kingdom, on My plan for your life, and I'll take care of the rest."

Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; <sup>36</sup>And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. <sup>37</sup>Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

<sup>38</sup>And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. <sup>39</sup>And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. <sup>40</sup>Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. We don't know when He'll return, but we need to be ready. How? Walking in fellowship with Him day by day, listening to Him, obeying Him, loving Him, focused on Him. Learning to trust Him. Fixing our eyes on Him and not on circumstances. That's how we'll be ready. Amen?

*For thou o Lord art a shield for me; my glory and the lifter up of my head.* (Psalm 3:3) We should live with our heads held high. And this will be a testimony to others who don't know Christ, who don't have anyone to trust in. Our attitude can encourage questions like this, "Why do you have such peace in the middle of these circumstances?" "Well, because I have a Father who looks after me. And you can know Him also."

<sup>17</sup>For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; <sup>18</sup>While we **look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen:** for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18) The unseen things are eternal, real and true. What has God called you to do? Do it. Even if He is only calling you to trust in Him and cultivate your relationship with Him, do it. If he's called you to do something more, do it with all your heart and with your eyes fixed on Him. On His provision, His protection, and His reality. In your daily life, keep looking not at the things which are seen but those which are not seen.

Lord, thank you for your Word. Show us how to apply this Word in our daily lives. Thank you that You are our Father, You have given us precious, and entirely trustworthy promises in your Word. You always encourage us not to fear or worry. Instead, to trust in You, obey you and move forward. So we commit our ways into Your hands, we ask for Your provision, protection and wisdom. We ask that Your reality might reach many of the people amongst whom we live. As always, thank You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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"IF ANYONE THIRST, LET THEM COME TO ME AND DRINK"- JESUS  
(JOHN 7:37)