
If the Foundations Are Destroyed, What Can the Righteous Do?

By David Wilkerson

April 13, 2009 Scripture says a day will come when God shakes everything that can be shaken. The only thing that will remain after this great shaking is that which can't be shaken. What is it that can't be shaken by God's judgment? It is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have been saying that I believe the present shaking in America and throughout the world is a manifestation of God's wrath. The Lord is laying bare all the foundations that men have so trusted. The Psalms speak of this:

"If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3).

Think about it: Nobody — no politician, economist or financial expert — has been able to explain the sudden evaporation of great wealth. It is a shaking that has spread rapid-fire throughout the earth, with no nation immune. These systems were considered too big to fail. And now everyone is baffled about what's behind this widespread failure of humankind's greatest institutions.

In the midst of such a time, what are the righteous to do? What can we expect in such a time of volatility and upheaval? And how are we to respond?

Let me bring to your attention several things Scripture says God's people can do at such a time as this.

1. If you have confessed Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you need never fear the wrath of God. Those who are in Christ are forever sheltered by the blood that Jesus shed for them. This truth has to be the cornerstone of our faith. It will determine everything we think and all we do in times of chastening.

The fact is God reserves his wrath for the wicked. The Lord's mercies endure forever. And these mercies are renewed daily. But the unrighteous reject and harden themselves to all offers of God's tender mercies. According to Paul, they despise his mercies and suppress his truth. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18).

The concept of God's wrath toward hardened hearts is stated clearly throughout the New Testament. The apostle John spells this out in his Gospel: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

Likewise, Paul told the Christians in Ephesus: "For this you know with certainty, that no immoral, unclean, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with empty words: for *because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience*" (Ephesians 5:5, 6, my italics).

What about the righteous? Paul assured the Christians in Thessalonica, "Jesus...who delivered us from the wrath of God... For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 1:10–5:9).

Paul gave the believers in Rome a similar reassurance: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood,

we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Romans 5:8–9, my italics).

Yet during times of warning — when God's righteous wrath is being poured out on the earth — for a season his people will most certainly be affected. What does his Word say about the righteous during such times? What are God's people to do when the world is barraged with bad news? When major corporations fail — when markets rise and fall chaotically, and the world becomes paralyzed with fear — how are we to cope with our fears?

2. Isaiah tells us God has given his people a hiding place during just such a time. The Lord gave this word to Isaiah: "Come, my people, enter into your chambers [rooms], and close your doors behind you: hide for a little while, *until indignation runs its course*" (Isaiah 26:20, my italics).

When God spoke this to his people, it was at a perilous time in Israel's history. It was said of this period, "Behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity" (26:21).

As wickedness increases, God may seem to keep himself out of view for a time. But a day comes when the Lord moves forth to defend his name. When Isaiah spoke this word to Israel, humankind's condition was much like it is today.

The judgment that God sent forth then was what the Puritan theologians called a "signal judgment," meaning, "an event that serves to warn." (John Owen, the great Puritan theologian, called this a "signature judgment.") Isaiah made clear the Lord's purpose for sending it: "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (26:9). In other words, God means it to be a redemptive judgment.

Sadly, however, Isaiah stated, "O Lord, thy hand is lifted up, yet they do not see it." In other words: "God, your judgment is clear and approaching our very door. But the world goes on wickedly in spite of it."

That is when God gave Isaiah the message for his people: "Enter your room and close the door behind you. Hide yourself until the storm passes."

Perhaps you're baffled by this message. As a Christian who puts his trust in God's faithfulness, you may wonder, "Hide? Me, a follower of Jesus? Never! May this not be true of anyone who claims to trust in the Lord." Yet there is a very special meaning to this passage of Scripture.

3. The prophet says it is possible to find a place of comfort and composure during volatile times of his wrath. When you are distressed — when you feel overwhelmed with fear, laid low by great affliction, troubled by concerns for your future — God says there is a secret hiding place. It is a place of comfort where we find composure for our souls.

This secret hiding place is a chamber in your mind. Isaiah describes it this way: "He [the Lord] will keep him in perfect peace, *whose mind is stayed on him, because he trusts in him*" (Isaiah 26:3, my italics).

When God tells us, "Shut the doors," this is what he means. He is showing us the need to shut out the many troubling voices in our heads. We are to close the door to all thoughts about tomorrow, about world events. Jesus told us, "Give no thought about tomorrow." The Lord who has faithfully brought us

this far will not fail us in the days ahead.

Consider these cries of the Psalmist:

“Be merciful to me, O God...for my soul trusts in you: yes, *in the shadow of your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities be over past.* I will cry unto God most high; unto God who accomplishes all things for me. He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth” (Psalm 57:1–3, my italics).

“Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still” (4:4).

“When I remember thee on my bed, I meditate on thee in the night watches. For thou hast been my help, and in the shadow of thy wings I sing for joy, my soul clings to you; thy right hand upholds me” (63:6–8).

I have personally found great peace in doing as David prescribes here. In my bed at night, when all is quiet around me, I worship without speaking a word.

This is where I have found my secret place of comfort and composure: when I lie down and shut out all human voices, all bad news. I close the door to every troubling fear and instead commune with my merciful Lord. In those times, I worship and turn all my thoughts to the Lord, clinging to him. And my soul is flooded with his peace and rest.

4. We are to quench the fiery darts of Satan. Paul advises, “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” (Ephesians 6:16).

Paul elaborates on how we are to do battle with the enemy, who sends tormenting thoughts of fear:

“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, and the power of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:11–12).

Beloved, the conflict we are in is not a human struggle. It cannot be fought in an earthly sphere. This battle takes place in a supernatural realm.

The truth is if you are in Christ, then you face the wrath of Satan. Do not mistake this demonic wrath for the judgment of God. The wrath you’re up against is that of a devil gone mad because he knows his time is short to come against God’s people.

And Satan’s attacks are aimed especially at those who have devoted themselves to walk faithfully in the Lord. Again and again, the Psalmist boasts, “I take refuge in the Lord.” Here is a picture of a righteous saint who fully trusts in God. Yet it is because of this very testimony of trust that he is targeted by Satan. His unswerving faith is the reason for the fiery arrows sent at him from hell.

“Behold, the wicked [Satan] bends his bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, to shoot in darkness at the upright in heart” (Psalm 11:2).

So, what are the fiery arrows out of hell that are directed at you and me? They are fearful, disturbing thoughts about our future and about God’s care for us. The devil is a liar and an accuser, and his

every assault is aimed directly at our faith.

5. No matter how long you have walked with Christ, you will face Satan's fiery arrows. Right now, multitudes of believers all over the world are suffering ongoing pain and other deep afflictions. These people know what I'm referring to when I speak of Satan's fiery arrows. With every day that their suffering continues, they face the stinging pain of his accusations:

"Where is God now? You have cried out to him for weeks, months, years. Why does he allow your suffering to continue, with no answer?"

Their caretakers face similar battles. They struggle with heartbreak as they watch their loved ones endure pain daily, knowing the accusations the enemy brings against them. They know they cannot simply quote Scriptures or preach to those who are in the midst of a struggle with a numbing, unending physical pain. Yet they must continue to encourage them amid the ongoing battle.

Others are under deep financial pressure. They also know what it feels like to be hit with a fiery arrow. The lies they hear are, "Where is God now, when you need him most? And where will you be tomorrow?"

These have heard all the devilish lies, all the tempting thoughts that flash into the mind: "Just give up. You are on your own. God isn't keeping his promises to you. Your prayers aren't getting through. He has left you to face this by yourself."

When you're in the midst of the battle, Satan will send another kind of fiery accusation at you. He'll remind you of every past sin, every dark moment, every foolish thing you ever did. It is no wonder Paul calls such accusations "flaming arrows." The translation is "enflamed rage." Many saints know the pain of mean and hurtful words coming at them from those around them. Such thoughtless accusations are truly flaming arrows of enflamed rage.

At times you may think you are the only one under such attack. In such times we feel alone, isolated in our suffering. Even those who care for us most deeply can't seem to understand all we're going through.

The apostle Peter reminds us: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:12-13).

Paul adds to this: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Finally, Paul instructs: "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench [extinguish] all the fiery darts of the wicked [one]" (Ephesians 6:16).

What exactly is the shield of faith? It is an impenetrable armor built from the promises of God and burnished with our faith. This shield is our great protection against every devilish, hurting word spoken against us. To hold it up against the enemy's onslaught is to extinguish every voice of fear and unbelief. It is a defense that states with confidence, "Devil, I am not ignorant of your devices.

Nothing — not blinding pain, not shaky finances, not world chaos — can separate me from the love of God.”

6. When the enemy comes in like a flood or a fury of flaming rage, quickly speak God’s promises. Speak boldly to the wicked voices that come from darkness: “I will not fear. And I will not quit. I stand on my Lord’s promise to keep me from falling and to present me faultless before his presence. God promises that no weapon aimed at me shall prosper [hurt me]” (see Isaiah 54:17).

Finally, Paul urges, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” (Ephesians 6:10).

Here is my final word to you, from James: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

God be praised. He is our hiding place in times of crisis. And his faithful promises are our shield of protection. Cling to them! Amen.

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