

THEY CAN LOOK BUT THEY CANNOT TOUCH YOU

OUR REDEMPTION WAS PLANNED A LONG TIME AGO



When we look at what is happening throughout the world today, one thing is clear, despite it sounding like a cliché: the end of the Church Age (or the dispensation of Grace) is very near. We are warned that it will happen, but at the same time, our loving Father has already put an escape plan into place:

And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. – **Luke 21:28, King James Version**

If you are a fundamentalist believer in the Word of God as the first and final authority, then you should understand the implications of the text quoted above. Let us explain the term “fundamentalist”:

In keeping with traditional Christian doctrines concerning biblical interpretation, the role of Jesus in the Bible, and the role of the church in society, **fundamentalists usually believe in a core of Christian beliefs which include the historical accuracy of the Bible and all of the events which are recorded in it as well as the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.** (Extracted from Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_fundamentalism)

I find it difficult to accept that any genuine Christian believer can be anything but a fundamentalist. You either believe in the whole fundamental truth of the Word of God, or you must leave it behind and go your own way. Of course, the world we live in misuses the word “fundamentalist” by giving it a sinister meaning and claiming that fundamentalists are looking to exclude people who do not agree with the Word of God and who live in sin. Well, if you go back to the main theme of this web site, John’s third chapter and specifically verses 16 and 17, you can clearly see that despite God’s love for mankind and the perfect way He has made to reconcile man to Himself through Jesus Christ, there will always be two groups of people. There are those who are reconciled to God the Father through faith in His Son, and there are those who do not want to accept salvation. You are excluded from eternal life until you join, based on God the Father’s prerequisites. Only then are you included and become part of an exclusive group of people.

It is time for fence-sitting Christian believers to take a stand for the whole Word of God:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. – **2 Timothy 3:16-17, King James Version**

You cannot decide to interpret the Word your own way or decide when it suits you.

Given the current situation, we are compelled to turn to the Bible for answers. Jesus’ warning to the disciples was to look up, for that is where He will come from in the future, and this future is closer than we think! What about God’s message for his children many years ago? Did they ever live without the fear of a world leader or system threatening their lives?

You often read the psalm below in the past, probably even before you became a believer, as this was taught in our schools many years ago. Of course, if you are in school now, or were in the last 20 years or so, you will know that Scripture reading in school has been abolished, lest we “offend those from other religions.” Many of us can recite Psalm 23, but do we really understand the depth of the reassuring message given here? Let us read it now:

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters.
3 He restoreth my soul:
he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
5 **Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.**
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. – **Psalm 23, King James Version**

The focus is on verse 5:

**Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou
anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.**

David certainly had his fair share of enemies. The psalms are full of him asking God to relieve him from his enemies and persecutors (The history is found in 1 Samuel 17:21 and 34; 1 Samuel 18:25; and 2 Samuel 12:9). Here though, he paints a canvas of utter calm, despite the presence of enemies. Let us think who our enemies are right now, at a time when the world is running around, trying to find answers not only for the disease around us, but also for the lies we are being fed by our leaders. Your enemies could be any or more of the following:

- A disease that has taken many lives already
- The resulting economic collapse
- Loss of income due to furloughs, being put out of a job or having to depend on reduced income
- Loss of property and security, as a result of the loss of income
- Loss of freedom of movement, socialising, association, and separation from family and friends
- Threats made by authorities for committing miniscule offences
- Depression and the feeling of being let down by the authorities who are supposed to set an example

Firstly, the psalmist says that the Lord is preparing a table, a feast, for me. What does “preparing a table” mean? During a normal week, dinner is often a rushed affair – at best the dining room table is sparsely prepared, if at all, and we may have dinner mostly in the kitchen. It is so much more convenient. Maybe only kitchen cutlery and plates are placed, the ones with chips and cracks. If this is too much trouble, ordering dinner is a mobile app away. We lead busy lives after all, at least this is the excuse.

However, if you have ever had to watch your mother preparing a meal for a special occasion, you will know that a lot of planning goes into it. On the one hand you have the preparation of the food in the kitchen. Then you also have the preparation of the dining room table. The best cutlery is taken from the buffet, the very cutlery we do not use in the week, along with the very best dinner service – matching sets for entrée, soup, salad, main meal, and dessert, along with the finest wine glasses.

You get the picture. Now look how the Lord deals with us:

Thou preparest a table before me

Let us return to the text, specifically the fifth verse. **Thou**, the Lord, prepares(t) a table for **me!** Imagine this for a moment. Despite all the millions of believers on the planet alive at this very moment, the Lord makes special arrangements for **me**. He does not send me a takeaway. He does not make me sit in the kitchen. He prepares, with the utmost care, a table, as if I am an invited guest of high rank. This is not going to be a rushed meal, but rather an occasion where host and guest can relax, discuss things in detail and enjoy a scrumptiously prepared meal. Great discussions often take place around a dinner table. But wait, there is more:

in the presence of mine enemies:

What do we have here? Am I being treated to a fabulous meal **with my enemies looking on and being present?** Indeed. This may be difficult to comprehend at first. Surely, we would not have enemies in the same room as where we are going to have dinner served? There must be something more to this text, and there is. While I am being treated and enjoy luxury, my enemies can only look on, with nothing for them – no invitation, no meal, and no fellowship.

thou anointest my head with oil;

If you understand the culture of the Bible, and indeed it still applies today across the Middle East and the surrounding countries, you will know that anointing the guest is common. It may not always be with oil though. Sometimes it is in the form of perfumes given to the guest or lit in the room and then the smoke of the oil, or sometimes wood, is waved over the person. This is a sign of respect shown by the host towards the guest and should be taken very seriously if you are invited and not used to it. **Our Lord** anoints **me** with oil. Here are some examples of the use of oil:

- In the Old Testament
 - Exodus 25:6 – for the furnishings in the tabernacle
 - Esther 2:12 – for beautification
 - 1 Samuel 16 – for the anointing the future king, David
 - Psalm 133:2 – for the priests. In this regard, there is no better example than this:

1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
for brethren to dwell together in unity!

2 **It is like the precious ointment upon the head,
that ran down upon the beard,**

even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. – **Psalm 133, King James Version**

- In the New Testament
 - Matthew 6:17 – used as preparation for fasting
 - Mark 6:13 – used as a healing agent during sickness
 - Matthew 25 – used to provide light

In the light of these examples, just think for a moment how much the Lord values you and I that He would anoint us with oil!

my cup runneth over.

Here we have another example of God's special way of treating me. He provides me with so much that it is more than abundant. **My cup overflows.** Jesus' own words come to mind here:

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it **more abundantly.** – **John 10:10, King James Version**

You can read more about God's abundance here: <https://www.gotquestions.org/my-cup-runneeth-over.html>.

What this verse teaches us is that:

- The Lord cares for us and we are special to Him (**Thou preparest a table for me**)
- The Lord cares for us during turmoil, persecution and tribulation and He keeps our enemies away from us (**in the presence of mine enemies:**)
- The Lord anoints us, treating us as the priests we will one day be (**Thou anointest my head with oil;**)
- The Lord supplies abundantly, more than we really need (**my cup runneth over.**)

In your specific circumstances you may not see this right now, or even believe it, but just watch how the Lord our God will come through for you. While it cannot be denied that things are going to get a lot worse just before Jesus comes to take us away from the chaos that is about to unfold, The Lord our God cares for us. Despite us often feeling dejected when we look around us, the Lord still supplies a meal specially prepared for us. He meets our needs. The enemy can only look on. Yes, the enemy can, and likely will, take your earthly, temporary life, but your heavenly and permanent life is already sealed in Jesus (Galatians 2:20) and as such cannot be killed because Jesus lives forever. In these last days, He does not still have to make plans for Christian believers. He has already planned for us and anointed us so that one day we can rule as priests:

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, **but they shall be priests of God and of Christ**, and shall reign with him a thousand years. – **Revelations 20:6, King James Version**

He supplies abundantly in this time – you surely would have had a lot of time at home, in isolation, where you would have had abundant time for Bible study. Spend some time

immersed in His Word and you will experience what David did, many years ago. The Lord's protection over us has never changed.

Your enemies can look on with envy, but they cannot touch you!