

Don't Wait
Until It's Too Late!

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 5

Chapter 1 7

IS ANYONE LISTENING?

Chapter 2 13

RECOGNIZING GOD'S VOICE

Chapter 3 18

GOD OUR REFUGE

Chapter 4 25

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

CONCLUSION 32

INTRODUCTION

Recently on my way to work, the traffic was backed up due to a terrible accident. From a distance, I saw the lights of an ambulance. As I moved closer, I could see the wreckage of several vehicles, one of which looked exactly like my daughter-in-law's car. The possibility that someone I loved could be involved was overwhelming, and you can imagine the relief I felt when I realized it was not her car. Still, it was a horrible thing to witness.

A woman went shopping and left her eleven-year-old daughter home alone. Upon arriving at the shopping center, she heard on the radio that a little girl had been murdered in the area where they lived. Without hesitation, she turned around, drove forty minutes back to her house. When she burst into the house, her daughter said, "Boy, you're home early!" That mom was overjoyed to find her daughter alive and well.

Christians should have this same urgency to seek the lost. The hour is later than ever before. God has sent out a warning, and soon Jesus Christ will come for His Church. When that happens, our opportunities will be gone forever. For the people who were killed in that accident, their opportunity to hear the Gospel is gone. Today they are in eternity.

It is too late for believers to wrap themselves up in the things of this world. People need to see that Jesus Christ alone is the way, the truth, and the life. Let's get up from our beds of complacency and participate as called out ones, borrowed by God to reveal His life before it's too late.

Chapter One
IS ANYONE LISTENING?

When I think of what the Jewish people have gone through and will go through as a nation, I am overwhelmed. For example, in Jeremiah 22, the prophet warned Zedekiah, king of Judah, to either get right with God or expect destruction to come upon the land. Angered, Zedekiah took Jeremiah, who was God's "mouthpiece," and threw him in the dungeon. A short time later, an enemy besieged the nation (see Jeremiah 38). Frantic, Zedekiah brought Jeremiah out of the dungeon and said to him, "The enemy is coming through the walls. What do we do?"

The only words Jeremiah could have said were, "It's too late. *It's too late!*"

The enemies took Zedekiah out into an open field along with all of his children. They killed his sons, then they blinded the king by putting his eyes out. One of the last things Zedekiah saw

was the slaughter of his sons (Jeremiah 39:6-7).

Earth-Shattering Silence

Not long ago, during my private meditation, I spent time going over this passage. One minute seemed like an eternity to me. For sixty seconds I kept my eyes closed and just repeated those words, "*It's too late. It's too late!*" During that time I thought of individuals, people I meet every day who are without the Savior. I thought of the people I have preached to in churches and through television and radio, and of those throughout the world who have read our books or heard our tapes.

After God impressed me with the urgency of moments, He urged me to bring it to the congregation. I shared with them the reality of those moments. As every second ticked away, time had run out for one more soul. I asked them to stop and, with eyes closed, to consider the moments that make up each second and the seconds that become minutes, passing by while we barely notice them.

"Imagine how many souls go to hell each minute." The room became very quiet, and I said, "Think of friends and loved ones. Quietly say to yourself, as Jeremiah said to the king, '*It's*

too late!” For one minute I repeated the phrase. “It’s too late....It’s too late....It’s too late....It’s too late....Too late....Too late!....Too late....Too late....*Too late!*....Too late....It’s too late!”

Then, the room became absolutely silent.

Take those sixty seconds and magnify them by eternity. It is too late for every person who is in hell today. It’s too late for Christians to be carnal. So many refuse to get right with God and do not comprehend why we are here and where we are going. Oh, how serious a time it is for every person who does not evaluate the Word of God properly. Christians need to understand the seriousness of the times we are living in.

Important Salutations

In Jeremiah 6:10, the Lord said through the prophet, “To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear?” God was speaking, but nobody wanted to listen.

“Hear, O heavens, and give ear O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider” (Isaiah 1:2-3).

When there is a *double salutation*, the words

that follow are of utmost importance. “Samuel, Samuel”; “Abraham, Abraham”; “Moses, Moses” —all of these salutations were followed by hallmark declarations from God.

Many times in the Gospel of John, Jesus used the salutation “verily, verily.” These salutations should speak to us, saying, “This is important. This is very important.” I have studied the “verily, verily” passages in my private devotions. Every time before I read a verse that begins this way, I acknowledge that God is saying something to me that is very important for my life.

There is, however, only one *triple salutation* in the entire Bible. It is found in Jeremiah 22:29: “O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.” If a double salutation indicates something of the utmost importance, can you grasp the intensity of a triple salutation? “O earth, earth, earth, earth....” This is the heart of God crying out to His people: “O earth, earth, earth. *Hear the word of the LORD.*”

During some services, this verse comes to mind as I look over the congregation and notice those who are missing. Perhaps they are more concerned with their own business than they are about being in church with the Body of Christ. They do not recognize the value of being avail-

able for the anointing in a church service. The anointing of God's presence is so deep and rich; it is lofty even in God's viewpoint. Still, these people do not discern it. Today as much as ever, God continues to cry out: "O earth, earth, earth: Hear the word of the Lord!"

A Call for Consistency

The Word of God also records many *national salutations*. Three times in Jeremiah, God addresses Israel saying, "*Return* unto me" (see Jeremiah 3:12, 14, 22). And Israel would not. Malachi 3:7 makes it clear that God's own people had no desire to return to the One who had delivered them so many times.

Among the most revealing questions posed by the Lord through the prophet Jeremiah are those found in chapter 5:29-31: "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and *my people love to have it so*, and what will ye do in the end thereof?"

God's people did not desire things as they were in the days when they served God rever-

ently and experienced His holiness. They were well aware of the corruption yet contented with their present condition, with no fervency, consistency, steadfastness, or desire to draw near to God. They were content in their complacency and were not consistent. As Christians today, we need to examine our lives before God and be consistent.

The Word of God makes it very clear that we are headed toward troublesome days. Very shortly the Rapture of the Church will come; but in the meantime, we will encounter many sharp curves, steep inclines, and dangerous precipices on the road ahead of us. As we face these perils on the road of life, we must understand that judgment will come first to the Church. The Word of God says, "The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:30-31).

Chapter Two

RECOGNIZING GOD'S VOICE

Israel so often turned a deaf ear toward the cries of God. "To whom shall I speak?" God said, but Israel didn't want to listen. No one wanted to hear. Yet God spoke tenderly to His people. In Isaiah 51:12, His words were "I, even I, am he that comforteth you." He longed to bring comfort and blessing to them.

God has tried everything to get through to His people. In Isaiah 58:1, He said to the prophet, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions." In John 7:37a, Jesus Christ stood up and cried out. In Isaiah 42:2-3, however, God spoke very quietly; His voice could hardly be heard, if at all.

He speaks in many ways. In Revelation 1:15, His voice is as the sound of many waters. Other times it is a still, small voice (1 Kings 19).

God will speak before He brings unbeliev-

able cataclysmic events upon the earth—and even now, He is speaking. He will only restrain His judgment for so long, then, all of a sudden, He will not hold it back any longer. The Word of God says in Isaiah 2:19 that a terrible earthquake will shake the whole earth. It will not be localized but widespread in its devastation.

Revelation 8:1 declares that as God gets ready to pour out the trumpet judgments on the earth, there will be silence in heaven for the space of one-half hour. Then, in verse 5, there will be “voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake” that will shake His own creation. Even then, *God does not want to judge the earth*. He has held back His wrath for thousands and thousands of years. But the day of God’s wrath *will* come (Revelation 6:16-17).

Before the Tribulation on earth, the Church will be taken up in the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). All born-again Christians will be in heaven either to receive rewards or to suffer loss of everything they could have had. Many will suffer loss because they didn’t understand that now is the day of deliverance, *now* is the time of salvation.*

Habitations of Deceit

“Yet hear the word of the LORD, O ye women, and let your ear receive the word of his mouth, and teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbour lamentation. For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets” (Jeremiah 9:20-21).

That verse contains a *domestic salutation*. God was saying, “Your children and young men are going to perish. Mothers, start mourning; Fathers, take this seriously. Your children are going to die!” With this, I think of the six million Jews who died under the orders of Adolph Hitler. I also think of the tenth through the fourteenth centuries when the Jewish people suffered repeated persecutions. Little Jewish children would come home to their daddy and mother, and ask, “Why do they mock me at school?” As sad as it is, the answer is revealed in Psalm 44:14 where God says He would make the Jewish people a byword among the heathen, “a shaking of the head among the people.”

Is it any wonder in Jeremiah 31:29 that God said, “Your fathers have eaten a sour grape, and

the children's teeth are set on edge"? Yet, God has been faithful to send His Word. He brought it to the earth. He has brought it to His people wherever they have been.

In Psalm 137, the people of Israel were in captivity in Babylon. When their enemies required them to sing one of the songs of Zion, they couldn't sing, nor could they play their instruments. Instead, they hung their harps upon a willow tree and wept. But, I also read in that psalm that they were not so concerned about God as much as they missed their homeland. *It was the land they longed for and not God!*

Here they were in captivity because of iniquity, because of a series of wrong choices, nationally and individually, and *still* they had no concern about God.

In Jeremiah 9:6, the Word of God says, "Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit." I am overwhelmed as I consider many evangelical Christians in America today who are in habitations of deceit. I thank God for all the godly Christians who love Jesus Christ. Many, however, have become so protective of their reputation in the eyes of men that when a brother is accused, they often go along with the crowd against him. But we have been called to operate

with godly character that goes alone, believing the best, in the spirit of Matthew 7 and Galatians 6:1.

Though the Word of God is clear concerning what the Jewish people have gone through and will go through, we also read that God has kept a door open. In their backslidden state, God said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." (Jeremiah 31:3). *The door is always open.* "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jeremiah 33:3). Oh, the faithfulness of God! He is *always* faithful, *always* caring.

**For a thorough study, read The Pre-Tribulational Rapture by Dr. Daniel E. Lewis, Grace Publications, 1997.*

Chapter Three

GOD OUR REFUGE

Psalm 62, written by King David, is a beautiful story of growth and maturity. Absalom has gone against his father in a conspiracy to take over David's throne and the kingdom. Despite many questions, David reveals a tremendous level of maturity. His heart is fixed. At this place in his life, he has learned a magnificent way to study to be quiet. He understands that communion and fellowship with God are everything to him.

As I think back through the years, I can see how God has consistently given us stillness and quietness under stress.

"In God is my *salvation* and my *glory*: the *rock* of my strength, and my *refuge*, is in God" (Psalm 62:7). This verse deals with hope, courage, and stillness. David addresses God as *Elohim Yesha*. *Yesha* means "freedom from distress." A place of refuge is a place of freedom, a

place of trust where no harm can come. Godly freedom leads to safety and allows an individual to pursue the will of God.

Jeremiah 17:14, a parallel passage, speaks of God becoming a dynamic force in our lives, emotionally and physically. Jeremiah wrote, "Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save (deliver) me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise." Jeremiah's eyes were like a fountain of tears, and God delivered and healed him (Jeremiah 9:1).

David knew God in spite of his distress. When he wrote Psalm 62, he was confessing, "Lord, You have given me freedom from distress, freedom from the pressure I am under. You have, indeed, healed my emotions, and I'm so grateful, Lord."

The Meaning of Glory

In the phrase "and my glory" (Psalm 62:7), the Hebrew word for glory is *kabod*, a masculine noun, implying that the reason for David's boasting was the object of his praise. "To glory" is more particularly an act of the mind and an indulgence of the emotions in either quiet repose or in an outward expression of praise derived from an inner attitude of worship. Also, "glory"

refers to that which passes through death and comes into a glorified place in the eyes, heart, and mind of God.

Every Christian has been spiritually raised from the dead and can begin to understand what Jesus meant when He prayed to the Father in John 17:22: “And the *glory* which thou gavest me I have given them.” *God has given us the glory of a perfect position inside His Son!* Jesus Christ has given us the glory that covers us completely from our sins, our sin nature, and our iniquities. No matter what happens in our lives, the wicked one touches us not, in terms of our positional sanctification (1 John 5:18b). This is one of the meanings of glory.

The Lord Jesus Christ is our total freedom from distress and pressure, and He indeed is the One Who glorifies us.

In Psalm 32:1-2a, David wrote, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity.” In this Psalm, David introduces his understanding of the glory of God.

In Psalm 71:15, David declares, “My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day.” He understood that God’s

righteousness is imputed to the believer at salvation, then imparted by receiving the Word of God. This means that we are to receive not only the robe of imputed righteousness (Isaiah 61:10), but also the mental attitude of righteousness by reflecting the nature of God through the mirror of God's Word. As we do this, we are changed from glory to glory by the operation of the Holy Spirit, who has given us the spirit of liberty (see 2 Corinthians 3:17-18).

Because of David's level of maturity he could say, "Lord, my mind is filled and occupied with You. I love Absalom and I would die for him, but I can't change what he is doing. I can't change *his* attitude, but I have set *my* mind on things above. You have raised me up, and I can completely trust You."

Resting on the Rock

The phrase "*rock* of my strength," in Psalm 62:7 includes the Hebrew word *tsur*, a masculine noun describing the material of which mountains are made (see Job 14:18). Rock is an undeniably strong substance. It can bear up under winds and storms without breaking. Here, it describes a God-given capacity to endure the winds, the storms, and all the external pressures

of Satan.

It is no wonder that Jesus Christ is called “the Rock” in 1 Corinthians 10:4. In Exodus 17, water came forth from the rock, representing the Holy Spirit coming out of Jesus Christ, the Rock (see John 7:37-38).

David also speaks of the Rock as his “refuge” (Hebrew *machaceh*), a place that protects and shelters all who go there from every single detail of life. The noun is formed from a verb that describes the action of a person fleeing for his life to find protection from his enemies. David was very familiar with the life of a fugitive or a helpless defender. So here he is, praising God for providing a “very high place” as a refuge. David’s protection was not in the clefts of rock found in the Judean hills. No, his refuge was in God, whom David saw as the high place, far above all principalities and powers.

In Psalm 71:7, David referred to God as his “strong refuge”—a protection from every possible thing the enemy could do. Then, in Psalm 118:8-9, he said “It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in a man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.” According to Isaiah 14:32, the poor and afflicted could always find refuge in the city of

God.

Our refuge is God, wherever we are. I love this truth so deeply.

The Matter of Trust

“Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.” (Psalm 62:8).

“Trust in him at *all* times.” For a season, David’s own son tried to have him assassinated. David lost his kingdom to the son who, in terms of military power, had many more people on his side. But Absalom was not nearly as strong because the Lord was for David.

The Hebrew word for “trust” is *batach*, a kal imperative. The imperative mood describes action as a result of a positive command, something that should not be avoided. The verb *batach* carries the idea of encouragement.

“At all *times*” (*eth*) speaks of that which fills my time. Also, *eth* relates to an opportunity or a season. Here it means having the proper occupation with Christ so that my time is totally filled up with trusting God.

“Ye people” is a masculine noun, the Hebrew word *am*, referring to the people belonging to a prince, or in service to a person of rank.

“Pour out your heart before him” (shaphak lebab) speaks of emptying yourself by pouring out. We can do that because God is a refuge for us. Furthermore, David said, “Not only is He *my* refuge, He is *our* refuge, *our* high place, far above principalities and powers.” Our God is a shelter and a fortress, and no enemy can get in to hurt us.

Chapter Four
THE WAY, THE TRUTH,
AND THE LIFE

Consider some practical principles of Psalm 62:7-8. Our faith is in truth, and truth is not relative. *Truth is absolute.* For example, it was years before scientists and explorers recognized that the earth was round, though the Word of God made it clear in Isaiah 40:22: "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth." Still, people believed that the earth was flat and that it was possible to fall off the edge. Science finally caught up with the Word of God and proved that the earth was indeed round.

Truth never changes. God brings it to us as "the Father of lights, with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth" (James 1:17b-18a).

I thank God for the Christians who understand that truth never changes. Regardless of

how we *feel*, truth remains the same.

Breaking Barriers by His Broken Body

Jesus Christ said in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” and we have peace with God by the blood of His cross, “by him to reconcile all things unto himself.” We were enemies, and now we have been reconciled to God (Colossians 1:20-21).

The way for reconciliation was made when God removed the barriers between Himself and man. The barrier of *sin* was a devastating problem; so, Jesus Christ became sin for us. Then, our sins were a terrible problem; so, He bore our sins in His own body upon a tree (1 Peter 2:24).

Spiritual death was a barrier; so, He condemned Adam, died in our place, and gave us the gift of eternal life to replace spiritual death (Romans 6). *Physical death* was a barrier, so He overcame it by the Resurrection. He will resurrect us, spirit, soul, and body. In fact, the body is the only part that has yet to be resurrected. The other two-thirds—the spirit and soul—have been resurrected, according to Ephesians 2:6. He “hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” When we die and go to heaven, we will receive a new,

glorified body that will be absolutely perfect.

Incarnated with His Nature

When we were saved, Jesus Christ came to indwell our physical bodies, and we became temples of the Holy Spirit. As the Holy Spirit fills us, the love of God is incarnated in us, though we are sinners saved by grace. He leads us to the right pastor-teacher in the right ministry—one where Bible study is thorough, prayer is fervent, and time is dedicated and redeemed. Being led of God to the right church is more important than business, money, or any other thing. It's too late to be in anything less than the perfect geographical will of God.

As the Word is preached and God's exceeding great and precious promises come into our hearts, we become incarnated with His divine nature. The love that was on the outside—that I so much wanted to imitate, but couldn't—is now dwelling on the inside. I have received the love that is the source of all my activity, the cause of all my effects. I have received His life, so now I can produce an eternal quality of fruit.

We begin to experience an incarnation of the Living Word when grace and faith have a marriage inside of our hearts. The promises of God

become exceedingly great as we realize that truth will never change and not a single promise will ever fall to the ground. Though we had no eternal value outside of Christ, men and women can now enter into the incarnation of God's attributes (2 Peter 1:4). Just as Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and incarnated in His perfect humanity by God the Father, we as sinners saved by grace are conceived and incarnated by God.

We receive the Word of God as we study it, love it, believe and obey it. Then, applying categories of doctrine in the details of life, the incarnation intensifies. The glory of the holy Word of God becomes a mirror that reflects who we are in Christ. We are changed from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the living God.

I love it! The Bible says we can experience the incarnation now. Certainly we cannot grasp all that Christ is; yet, all that He is dwells in us now. And we can experience all He is when we come out of death by the resurrection power of the Cross and say, "Christ is all, and in all" (Colossians 3:11*b*).

The "way" is reconciliation, which gives us peace through His blood. And, in 2 Corinthians 5:19-20, Jesus Christ is saying to His people, "Be-

cause My glorified body is in heaven praying for you, will you let Me borrow your humanity? You are indeed My Body on earth, formed to reveal My life to the whole world."

Jesus Christ is the Way. Not only did He give us a ministry of reconciliation, but He also gave us a way through words of reconciliation. The barriers between sinful man and a holy God have been removed once and for all. The "middle wall of partition" that once separated Jews and Gentiles has been broken down (Ephesians 2:13-15). There are no racial or social barriers between believers; we are all one in Jesus Christ, and there is no difference (1 Corinthians 12:13). That is *God's* way.

Unchanging Truth, Abundant Life

Jesus Christ is the unchanging truth. Man will change. Man will misinterpret and misappropriate truth. Man will lie about the truth because of his lifestyle. But *Jesus Christ is the Truth*. And the truth leads to emancipation. Oh, thank God, the truth sets us free!

But there is one more thing: *Jesus Christ is the Life*. He said in John 10:10b, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." He doesn't just give us a little

of His life—He gives it abundantly.

The *way* of reconciliation gives peace with no barriers. The *truth* emancipates us, liberating us from the law of sin and death. It sets us free from fear, insecurity, and stress. Christ's *life* gives us joy, peace, power, and a living faith in the living God that will mobilize and motivate our heart, soul, mind, and spirit. Then it begins to dwell in our bodies, and physically we can sense the elevation of resurrection power. In many cases, the pains that used to plague us will be taken away.

The Privilege of Participation

And just as reconciliation is the way and emancipation is the truth, an abundant life means participation with the very nature of God. As we participate in Christ's life and the filling of the Holy Spirit, the wealth and riches of the Word of God begin to monopolize the soul. We become partakers of heaven's vision. We can participate with the purpose of God in the Person of Christ. We can participate in the provision of Calvary. We can participate in reaching young people and adults. We can participate in making an impact on the world.

It's too late to miss the opportunities before

us to seek the lost. We have the privilege of participating with our Head, Jesus Christ, to reveal Him as the only Way, Truth, and Life.

CONCLUSION

What a wonderful thing it is to participate with Jesus Christ in a vision to win the lost. Jesus came for lost sinners. People cannot be sought unless they are lost; and if people were not sinners, they could never be saved. In God's economy, lost things are not tossed aside as worthless. They are sought for because God sees redemptive value in every person He created. He sees the precious blood of His only Son, and there lies the value. When we begin to love as God loves, we will even dig them out of a pit if we must (Psalm 40:2).

My hope is that these words have stirred you to see the necessity in the power of Christ's incarnation in these days. Needs are met when the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit motivate people into action.

Because the life of Christ is in us, it must flow out. Reveal the God Who is in you, and as you are transformed by His Word, watch how

He begins to use you to seek and save the lost—
while there is still time.