

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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A Reed in the Wind?

By Steven Deaton

In Matthew 11, John's disciples went to ask Jesus if He was the One. The answer, of course, was yes. "Go and tell John the things which you see: the blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me" (Matt. 11:4-6).

Jesus then turned to the crowd and said, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?" (Matt. 11:7). This referred to John. He was the one "crying in the wilderness." He was one the people knew as a prophet of God; a steadfast, immovable, uncompromising man.

It did not matter how hard the wind blew, John did not bend. The powerful religious leaders went to hear him and were dressed down with ferocity. "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bare fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones" (Lk. 3:7, 8). In other words, you are sinners and your Hebrew pedigree will not do a thing for you; repent before it is too late.

We know what kind of man John was. What about you and me?

We live in a time when the wind is blowing hard. It is getting stronger; by the day it seems. Satan is conducting an all-out assault on the people of the Lord. He is attacking us with materialism, sexual immorality, worldliness, intoxication, and much more. His

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tactics are insidious. The devil uses people around us. They are the wind as they speak great swelling words of emptiness. Some entice us with pleasure. Others threaten us with pain. The questions, will we bend?

One of the big onslaughts is the push to accept homosexuality. Legislatures and courts are pushing for legal privileges for sodomites. Businesses and schools are pressuring people to either agree or get out. It is intolerable to have an intolerance for sin.

Another troublesome trend we are just beginning to face is Islamic infiltration. Some of the events are in the news, but much of what is going on is not. The institutes of "higher learning" are filled with moral-relativists which go further than justifying premarital sex. Moral relativism also addresses the view one has of cultures and religions that influence those cultures. A generation or more has been taught Islam is just as valid, and in some ways superior, to Christianity. This battle is just starting and we fear the ramifications will be greater than any of us can now imagine.

What are we going to do? Are we going to bend like a reed in the wind? Or, will we be determined to follow in John's footsteps. Let us resolve here and now to be firm in our conviction that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and that His Law is the one and only religious truth (Jn. 8:24; 16:13; 17:17). The wind will howl greatly. Some of us, like John, may pay the ultimate price for a lack of compromise...and speaking out. So be it. The Lord will reward us.

Christians are special. They are a chosen generation, royal priesthood, and holy nation (1 Pet. 2:9). They are special to God. Christians are a breed apart; not in arrogance, but purity with humility. Christians know they are blessed to be in God's kingdom of light, instead of being trapped in Satan's domain of darkness. With the privileges come responsibilities. Christians are to abstain from fleshing lusts and live honorably (1 Pet. 2:11, 12).

Are you a Christian? Act like it.

A Doomed Nation

And the Lord God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy.

- 2 Chronicles 36:15, 16

“Cold, Hard Facts”

By Steve Niemeier

David gave Solomon strong words in I Chronicles 28:9 – he did not “sugar coat” the words – he did not do anything but let his son know that these are the “cold, hard facts” about serving the Lord. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we all would adhere to these words of a father to a son?

We have way too many folks today trying to justify their way of life by looking to others and their faults and saying “I may be doing this but they are doing that so I am okay.” As a result many do not listen to sound words such as the words David gave Solomon.

The words of David to Solomon are “personal” – “As for you, my son, Solomon...” The words of Jesus to Peter found in John 21:22 are personal “You follow Me.” It made no difference about anyone else – it was a personal thing that Peter was to concentrate on serving Christ. It made no difference to David about anyone else – Solomon was to serve the Lord. The cold, hard facts about the matter – we are individuals and we are to serve the Lord – REGARDLESS of what anyone else is doing.

If the elders talk with you about your service – take it personally and adjust to the cold, hard facts! If a brother or sister comes to you and talks with you about your service or lack thereof – adjust to the cold, hard facts! It is way past time for us to stop trying to be so “politically correct” in our

dealings with sin and lack of service from those who refuse to face the “cold, hard facts” about serving the Lord. Too many souls are not being taught the gospel of Christ because of all the time spent in “babysitting” so called weak members.

Yes, we all struggle at times and need assistance – but we can read the instructions – now we need to adjust and follow the instructions – no matter how cold and how hard the facts are – it is personal and our eternity depends on it!