

Thus Saith God's Word

by Rev. Ted Brooks

"Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." (Matthew 16:16)

"He began to curse and swear, I know not this man of whom ye speak." (Mark 14:71)

The ultimate test is used in many ways to find out if it really is as good as it claims to be, the ultimate speed of a car operating from a distance by remote control.

So it is with man. He often fails the test when trials come. There is a danger when temptation comes to entice, to do wrong by promise of pleasure or gain that which is to arouse you to action, to risk the danger.

It was Satan who came to Jesus in the wilderness to tempt him. "And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward hungered. And when the tempter came to him, Satan said, if thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Jesus said unto him, it is written again, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Satan cried out, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down." (Verse 6) Satan on a high exceeding mountain sheweth him all the kingdom of the world and the glory of them. Satan said all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. (Matthew 4:1-9)

Jesus' weapon was the word. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." In Brother Paul's writing, he declared "Wherefore let him that thinketh he stand, take heed lest he fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12)

My friend, there is a great falling away today. Many of those who have been in the church as a member, to preach, teach, lead the choir, ordained Deacon, are now being tested. Satan has many on his tread mill to investigate judicially to put to the test the limit of their breaking point.

The Devil does this all the time. Look back and see the young person who was single and they were trying to skate in this world alone. Soon a partner came along and they teamed up and began to skate together. They get married. Soon children come along. Months go by, then years pass on. Then comes a temptation from Satan. You slip and fall. Once you embraced each other, held hands and you secured each other in every move. The music of life was great. All at once, the music stops. Nothing seems to go right anymore. Steps were out of place. There on the floor with all eyes on you, you fell flat on your face. You are embarrassed. Even worse, your partner skates off and leaves you flat on your back. Satan slips in and will say to the one left standing, go ahead and leave him or her behind. You can skate better by yourself.

Jesus had said to Peter earlier, "Peter, Satan has a desire to sift thee." At that time Peter was high on the mountain. The keys to build the church were given to Peter and with a promise from Christ Himself that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." It was here that Peter boasted to follow Christ even unto death and Jesus warned Peter that a cock would crow twice in his denial. Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He began to curse and to swear, I know not this man of whom ye speak. (Matthew 16:16 and Mark 14:71) Can you not see the contrast? Is it not a startling one. It is at first sight almost inconceivable that these are the words of the same man, and yet we know they are. Peter said, "I know not the man."

A cardiologist has what is called a treadmill. Some call it a stress test. This machine has many monitors to connect to the body of a person. This machine will force you to walk at a pace which is above the normal walking pace. The purpose is to reveal the condition of the heart. It is an ultimate test to reveal the true condition of the heart.

"Peter, lovest thou me more than these? Peter replied yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He said feed my lambs." Three times Jesus confronted Peter with this question: lovest thou me more than these? (John 21:15-17)

You see, my friend, after several minutes on a tread mill, when cut off the monitors will do a print out. The result will tell the doctor if you have a problem with your heart. Possibly a blockage, valves closing off, hardening of the arteries.

God does this in similar matters. God allows us as he did Peter, a test in our lives, not to kill us or harm us or to cause us a heart attack, but to give us a diagnosis concerning the condition of our faith.

God did tempt Abraham. Satan wanted Abraham's faith tested and tried to see if he really loved God. Satan had said, "Does Abraham serve God for naught. You bless him with herds, flocks and provided him with a son through a barren wife. You protected him against other kings, even when he was not honest. You asked him for his son and he will curse you to your face." (Genesis 22:1-18)

Satan with a breath of hate saying, "Put him on the tread mill. Give Abraham

the ultimate test. Let me have that remote. Let me turn up the speed. Let me have a few minutes with him under extreme pressure."

God's purpose for Abraham was for Abraham to know that he loved God. To know his own truthfulness, his worth and his own sincerity.

My friend, God wants us to want him. "They that hunger and thirst shall be filled." God can bring us to the place that we will call and say, "O God, I need you and I will not let you go." My friend, there is a modern theology out there which will make you believe if you listen that God will never allow you to be in that place. But I am telling you that according to the Bible God will allow his children to reach a place that they have no other source. God you are my only source, my only way out. I've done all I know to do. God I've got to have you. Look at Jacob. He was desperate, leaving his father-in-law home (Hebron) he had taken all his glory and Laban was in hot pursuit and ahead of him was Esau, an angry brother with a mind to commit murder and the Bible tell us "And Jacob was left alone and there he wrestled with a man." (Genesis 32:24) First the isolation, the desperation, now confirmation. Jacob had a plan, a scheme. If all other plans fail, then run. He divided up his family in groups to flee. Jacobs was desperate. Esau had promised to kill him. Now Jacob has a plan. He had some gifts to send Esau and if that didn't work, we all will split up and run and some of us will escape.

Now look and see God bring Jacob to a place of desperation, and now God says to Jacob, I am going to cripple you. You said that in your last resort that you could run, but I'm taking away plan three. I am going to put you in a position that you are going to have to depend on me. There are those in the church who need to be brought to that place that God is your only source, not the church or a building but God. I tell you with tender love, if there ever has been an era in the churches of our country that we need to reach a place and to realize that God is our only source that our only substitute is God. If we ever need God, it's now. As I write this message this land, this country is under attack. May it help us to realize God is our only source and that we need God today. I tell you we not only live in a troubled world, but we have a troubled church. You see, we are not immune from the troubles of this world. In this world you have tribulation and because of the tribulations of this world it has crept in among the saints and the saints are in trouble and when you get a troubled saint, you have got a troubled church and when you get a troubled church you have got a troubled clergy and when you have a troubled clergy, you have got trouble.

You and I need to pray that we would no longer depend upon the system of the church, that we only love but bring us to that place that God would be our only source. We need God in our lives. He is our only source.

Preacher, it is not a finance package that you need; it is God. He alone is our subsistence. God knows where you are best at and if it takes desperation, isolation, God will bring you to such a place and to be any where else you will find that fire that you warmed yourself is a false fire and it will not comfort you.

Folks, as I write this message this nation of ours is being attacked. We need to pray that God will use this to bring all mankind to a place that God is our only source.

(Continued next week.)

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Search for Truth

by Elder Joseph Bullard

The Seal of God

In the final days, just before the coming of Christ, there will be two groups of people on the earth-those who have the mark of the beast and those who have the seal of God. Those who have the mark of the beast because will receive the seven last plagues, but those who have the seal, which God will place upon His people, will be protected from the terrible plagues.

What is the mark of the beast? How can you be sure that you will receive the seal of God? Elder Joseph Bullard explains the Bible's answers to these questions for all that sincerely *Search for Truth*.

The seal of God is the answer to the cry of the wicked. Revelation 7:1-3: "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. (2) And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea. (3) Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."

The sealing work is now going on and will be finished soon- at the close of probation. Revelation 22:11-12: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. (12) And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

A seal is that which authenticates, confirms, ratifies, makes stable, and which secures. 1 Kings 21:8: "So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth."

Throughout the Bible, God appeals to the fact that He, as the Creator, is the supreme Evidence that He is the only true God. Psalm 95:5; Jeremiah 10:10-12: "For all the gods of the nations are idols; but the LORD made the heavens." (10) "But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king; at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation." (11) "Thus shall ye say unto them, the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens." (12) "He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion."

The seal of God must be some distinctive design that God has chosen as the sign of His authority as the only true God. Exodus 31:16-17: "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. (17) It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed."

When you find the seal of God it will be something that reveals the name of God, the distinguishing title of God and the territory over which He rules. This verse in Exodus 20:8-11 shows all three. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. (9) six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: (10) But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: (11) For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it."

Actually, the Sabbath is a double seal or sign of God- a mark of His creative power and sanctifying power. Ezekiel 20'20;20:12: "And hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God." (12) "Moreover also I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them."

Sanctification is a work of grace, so the Sabbath is actually a sign of salvation by grace. The Sabbath is the flag of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Creator and the re-creator or sanctifier of His people. Isaiah 58:13-14: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shalt honor him, not only thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words. (14) Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

The sealing is a restoration of the image of God. The sealing is the definite settling of the human being into the truth, the permanent fixing of the Law of God in his life. Revelation 14:1: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousands, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."

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Keith Baugh, MD, MPH, is the new medical director of Southeastern Occupational Health WORKS and a member of the medical staff of Southeastern Regional Medical Center.

A native of Asheville, NC, Dr. Baugh earned his medical degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1992. He completed an internship at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC, in 1993. Dr. Baugh earned a master's degree in public health and completed a two-year residency in occupational medicine at the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences in Bethesda, MD, in 1999. He is certified in occupational medicine by the American Board of Preventive Medicine.

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