

BOTH / AND (CCC LEADERSHIP SUMMIT 2011)

EITHER / OR – Either Raymond or Beverley can go
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We have to beware of “either / or” thinking when we begin looking at new methods. The Bible has no problem with new methods, in fact the Book of Acts is full of dramatic transitions in method. However, the correct way to think is “both / and” when it comes to new and old methods (i.e. they didn’t kick Jews out of the church when they started including Gentiles).

Matthew 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: **these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.**

So let’s talk about a couple of critical, fundamental, foundational basics that we cannot neglect in favor of new methods ...

PRAYER is very easy to talk about, and much harder to do consistently.

When Daniel went on his 21-day fast, God gave him a grand vision – every word was true, but it didn’t all happen immediately!

Daniel 10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

There is an important principle of deliverance you need to understand:

Joshua 1:3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

TREAD – “DARAK” – to string a bow, tread down, conquer, fight for!

WHEN GOD DELIVERS YOU, YOU STILL HAVE TO FIGHT FOR IT!
Although God had allowed them to enter the Promised Land, they had not yet possessed everything that was included in that promise!

Judges 1:1-3 Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand. And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot.

JUDAH – “PRAISE” – to worship, throw a stone, shoot an arrow
SIMEON – “HEAR AND OBEY” – pay attention, shew forth, witness

If we want DELIVERANCE, it will take WORSHIP and OBEDIENCE!

The book of Judges has actually been called “The Dark Ages of Israel” because of the nation’s constant backsliding and because of recurring foreign oppression. **The HARVEST of Israel is being stolen, both physically and spiritually.** But remarkably, this age of failure in Israel was in a special way the Old Testament Age of the Spirit, when men were enabled by God’s Spirit to accomplish mighty acts!

Judges 6:3-6 And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them; And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.

Judges 2:16 Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.

DAVID TRAINED HIS MIGHTY MEN TO STAND THEIR GROUND!

1 Chronicles 11:12-14 And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who was one of the three mighties. He was with David at Pasmammim, and there the Philistines were gathered together to battle, where was a parcel of ground full of barley; and the people fled from before the Philistines. And they set themselves in the midst of that parcel, and delivered it, and slew the Philistines; and the LORD saved them by a great deliverance.

2 Samuel 23:11-12 And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines. But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory.

ALL THESE MEN ARE SAVING THE HARVEST GOD GAVE THEM!
(“It may not be important to you, but this is MY harvest!”)

THIS IS PRAYER – STAND YOUR GROUND UNTIL GOD DELIVERS!

Ephesians 6:10-17 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

THIS IS PRAYER – STAND YOUR GROUND UNTIL GOD DELIVERS!

The Napoleonic Wars which stormed through Europe from 1792 to 1815 were waged in the name of megalomania. Napoleone Buonaparte was bent on establishing his very own empire. He had risen quickly through the ranks of the French army due to his natural talents for leadership and strategy. With age, his ambitions grew more lofty and by his late twenties Napoleon had forced all of France's continental opponents to submit.

Napoleon returned to France and launched a successful coup d'etat to overthrow the Republic. He then declared himself Consul for life. Then, eager to expand his burgeoning empire, Napoleon began by selling the territory of Louisiana to the U.S. to raise funds for future military campaigns, especially campaigns against France's oldest rival, Britain.

In the early 1800's, Emperor Napoleon proclaimed himself King of Italy, defeated Prussia, acquired the Kingdom of Westphalia, and made the Russian Czar Alexander I his ally. Despite these successes, Buonaparte was still unable to defeat Britain by conventional means. In 1806, Napoleon initiated economic warfare against that "nation of shopkeepers." Britain quickly retaliated with its own trade embargoes, and before long, American vessels and other neutral trading ships were embroiled in the European war. Both Britain and France began searching and seizing U.S. ships.

In 1812, Napoleon attacked Russia to punish it for abandoning their crucial economic alliance. This campaign ended with Napoleon's humiliating retreat from Moscow, and was the turning point in Napoleon's dream of total conquest in Europe. Napoleon abdicated in 1814 and was exiled to the Mediterranean island of Elba. And then, after a short-lived escape and return to power in March of 1815, Britain and its allies ultimately defeated Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo a few months later.

From an original force of 678,000 men that entered Russian Territory in June 1812, only a force between 10,000 and 30,000 crossed the Nieman river into Kovno and left Russian territory to return home to France in December 1812. In the judgment of the majority of historians, it was not the skill of the Russian Army that was responsible for their defeat; it was simply that the Russians held out until the harsh Russian winters cut off Napoleon's supply lines. His army literally starved and froze to death

Charles Minard's famous graph – tan line showing how many marched into Russia, black line showing how many marched home to France, and recorded along with the temperatures they faced

The historical novel "Napoleon and Blücher" by Luise Mühlbach begins with these words ...

"It was a fine, warm day in May, 1812. The world was groaning under the yoke of Napoleon's tyranny."

But this was the year that Napoleon chose to lift his hand against Russia! Later in the book comes this dialogue between Napoleon's nemesis, the Prussian General Gebhard von Blücher, and one of his direct reports, General Scharnhorst, about the outcome of the Russian invasion ...

"Has [Napoleon] again obtained a great victory?"

"No, general," said Scharnhorst, solemnly, "God has obtained a victory!"

Blücher raised his head, and laid his clay pipe slowly on the table. "What do you mean, general?" he asked. "What do you mean by saying, 'God has obtained a victory?'"

"I mean to say that He has sent into the field troops whom even Napoleon is unable to defeat."

"What troops do you refer to?"

"I refer to the cold, the snow, the ice, the howling storm blowing from Siberia, like the angry voice of Heaven, striking down men and beasts alike."

"And these troops of God have defeated Napoleon?"

"They have, general!"

"Blücher uttered a cry, and, jumping up from his chair, drew himself up to his full height. "The troops of God have defeated Napoleon!" he exclaimed, solemnly. "I have always believed in divine justice – slow sometimes, but sure. Tell me every thing, my friend, tell me everything," he added, sinking back into the chair, quite overwhelmed by what he had heard.

This quote was later attributed to Czar Nicholas I of Russia ...

“Russia has two generals in whom she can confide – Generals Janvier and Fevrier.”

Isaiah 55:8-11 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

His word SHALL accomplish the thing for which He has sent it, as surely as the earth watered by rain and snow brings forth life on earth.

Rain and snow. We get rain. We understand that rain waters, nourishes, brings forth life. But snow?

Snow. Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow. Who wrote that song?! I thought snow killed everything. But the promise in the Word is that snow will bring forth, bud, and give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater. When it's brutally cold and there is a ton of snow on the ground, I'm not a huge fan of the weather man. But rain and snow BOTH bring forth God's purpose. Both seem destructive at times, but if you just wait around awhile, you'll figure out that we can't even exist without rain and snow.

Think about the seasons in your life when you feel cold, and numb in your heart, like there is a storm all around you. Even in that time God is still working! Just like snow preserves dormant seeds until spring, that's what God is doing in your life even when you can't see Him at work. If you'll stay steady, you'll see the seed spring forth after the winter.

Job 23:8-12 Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

God's Word will NOT return (i.e. evaporation cycle) until it accomplishes what He sent it to do! So hold on to the WORD God has spoken to you – it is piling up like snow until it stops the devil dead in his tracks!

For generations, there was always a remnant of Jewish people who waited every single day anticipating the arrival of the Messiah. They literally lived their everyday lives expecting him to appear, looking for him. But nothing happened. Generations of them were born and generations of them died, and there was no fulfillment of that promise.

Thousands of the Jews essentially abandoned the heart of their faith during this time. After all, they had been through captivity in Egypt, in Assyria, in Babylon, and in Medo-Persia. They had been through many civil wars and the destruction of the beloved temple built by Solomon. Now they existed under the iron boot heel of the Roman Empire. And the Messiah had not come. There hadn't even been a glimpse of him.

Have you ever had a time in your life when God was so quiet that you found yourself asking, “Why am I doing this?” Is this more of a superstition that I was raised in than something that is really true?

Luke 1:5-7 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

These were good people, but their entire faithfulness to God was based on a promise given to Abraham 2000 years before they were born – and that promise hadn't been fulfilled!

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

After their first captivity in Egypt ended, when Israel finally became a kingdom, it looked like this promise had a chance – definitely so during the reigns of King David and King Solomon. But after the kingdom fractured into civil war and went into captivity again, and again, to believe that Israel would bless the whole earth seemed like cruel mockery.

By now, the nation of Israel had changed hands over 25 times! They had absolutely no clout among the nations of the world, and at the time of Zacharias and Elizabeth the country has been dominated by the Empire of Rome for decades. For generations they had believed that the Messiah would come. But absolutely nothing had happened!

To add insult to injury, in 63 BC the Roman General Pompey the Great intervened in a civil war between the Pharisees and Sadducees, broke down the wall of the Temple courtyard, pushed past the Temple guards, went right into the Temple itself, and marched straight toward the Holy of Holies. This was the place where the Jews believed that God dwelt, by His Shekinah presence between the angels on the Ark of the Covenant. This was the place where only the High Priest could go, and even he could only enter one day a year, on the Great Day of Atonement. This was the Ark that Uzzah touched by mistake and died for it. This was the place that the Jews couldn't even look into, for fear of death.

On this day, as Pompey pushed past the Temple's defenses, many of the priests committed suicide. They couldn't bear to watch as the Temple was defiled by a Gentile, and they were even more afraid of the wrath of God that was about to fall if Pompey dared even to look into the Holy of Holies. Those that remained alive gasped as he pulled the veil aside and walked into the holiest place in all of Judaism, where he calmly looked around ... and walked out, unharmed. The implications were clear – Jupiter, the god of the Romans, must be more powerful than Yahweh, the god of the Jews. The power of God, and His promises, were untrue – simply a myth that the Jews had mistakenly believed for centuries.

"Of the Jews there fell twelve thousand, but of the Romans very few ... and no small enormities were committed about the temple itself, which, in former ages, had been inaccessible, and seen by none; for Pompey went into it, and not a few of those that were with him also, and saw all that which it was unlawful for any other men to see but only for the high priests. There were in that temple the golden table, the holy candlestick, and the pouring vessels, and a great quantity of spices; and besides these there were among the treasures two thousand talents of sacred money: yet did Pompey touch nothing of all this, on account of his regard to religion ..." (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 14, Chapter 4)

The word spread quickly throughout Israel, and thousands more of the Jews would eventually secularize or totally abandon their faith. This event shook Israel to the core. Zacharias' father was without doubt a priest serving in the Temple on the very day of Pompey's desecration, and Zacharias would forever remember the night he came home weeping and tore his robes because the Temple – and everything they believed in – had seemingly been proven untrue by a pagan general who had ignored everything they held sacred, and God did nothing.

And yet, with all this horrifying history in his background, this young man Zacharias grew up and became a Jewish priest like his father before him, served God his whole life, and entered into his twilight years still believing in the promises and the power of God that to many, many others was simply no longer real.

Others lived their lives as though their daily existence and meager possessions were all that mattered, but Zacharias still lived for something MORE ... he continued to live every single day as though the Messiah could suddenly appear.

Hundreds of the Jewish priests had let serving God become simply a religious ritual, and multiplied thousands of the Jews in his generation had turned away from worshipping in the Temple altogether. They had decided that their secular life was more real to them, and they began to believe in Greek and Roman philosophy more than in Scripture. But not Zacharias!

Others said, "It's over. It's fiction. It's just a myth that our forefathers believed in. The Messiah isn't coming." But not Zacharias!

Priestly duties at the temple alternated between each of the families that had descended from those appointed by King David in 1 Chronicles 23. The offering of incense was one of the most solemn parts of the daily worship and, owing to the large number of eligible priests, no priest could hope to perform the task more than once during his lifetime. But it just so happens that Luke records in his gospel that, during the week when it was the duty of his family to serve at the temple in Jerusalem, the lot for the privilege of performing the incense offering had fallen to Zechariah.

Luke 1:8-13 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

It is not an accident that Luke starts his gospel with Zacharias' story!

Luke 1:18-20 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

God has had this day marked on His calendar for centuries!

Luke 1:26-27 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

In the sixth month of what? Of Elizabeth's miraculous pregnancy! Zacharias and Elizabeth got to be the opening act for the great drama of redemption that was about to unfold. The Messiah was finally here!

I'm also standing here today, in spite of what many people would say is strong evidence to the contrary, and I'm also standing on a 2000 year old promise that to date has never been fulfilled. But while many people have abandoned this promise, I still look for it every day. While others say, "It's over. It's fiction. It's just a myth that our forefathers believed in. The Messiah isn't coming," I still believe that He is about to return!

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

I know there are scoffers and mockers, but they can't shake my faith!

2 Peter 3:3-4 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

2 Peter 3:8-9 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

The only reason God has waited this long to return is MERCY. But be assured of one thing, **God has had this day marked on His calendar for centuries!** The Rapture will happen exactly when He planned it!

IT'S NOT "EITHER / OR" (EITHER YOU WORK HARD FOR GOD HERE OR BE READY FOR THE RAPTURE) ... IT'S "BOTH / AND" !!

Luke 19:12-13 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, **Occupy till I come.**

THIS IS THE TENSION THAT I LIVE WITH – OCCUPY UNTIL HE COMES, AND LIVE TO LEAVE AT ANY MOMENT! BOTH / AND

1 out of every 30 verses in the Bible mentions the subject of the end of time or of Christ's return to earth. JESUS IS COMING!

Jesus pinpointed a generation of people who would witness a rapid series of astounding events, culminating in His second coming.

Matthew 24:4-14 ⁴ And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. ⁵ For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. ⁶ And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of sorrows. ⁹ Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. ¹⁰ And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. ¹² And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. ¹³ But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

SIGNS of the times are like LABOR PAINS ... as the time of birth gets closer, the pains get more FREQUENT and more INTENSE.

Romans 8:22-23 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6 ¹ But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. ² For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. ³ For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. ⁴ But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵ Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. ⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.

ILLUSTRATION: ISLAMIC REVOLUTION

Hebrews 12:27 And this [word], Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Hebrews 12:27 (NLT) This means that all of creation will be shaken and removed, so that only unshakable things will remain.

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