

## Put it in an Earthen Vessel

We hear a lot of talk today about the war on terrorism. We hear about a war called jihad, a war in Palestine, ongoing war in Afghanistan and Iraq, threats of war from North Korea. Never in history has there been such a time of war throughout the earth. And these conflicts are widely publicized, because of the instant communication we have. Almost immediately, we receive reports of bombings, ambushes, death tolls. These are the wars and rumors of wars Jesus spoke about. And just as He prophesied, people's hearts are failing them for fear. The wars we're seeing are causing terror throughout the earth. Yet these wars are all minor skirmishes. They're merely symptoms of a much greater war. There's actually just one war going on. And this war is taking place in heaven. It's a war between God and the devil.

Judges 20 is a gruesome, grievous account of how a crazed mob of homosexuals sodomized a priest's concubine and left her for dead. When the priest found her, he decapitated the corpse and sent the body parts to the twelve tribes of Israel. The incident ended in a civil war among God's people over homosexual rights. Thousands of Israelites were killed. The book of Judges closes with these awful, chilling words: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). This is Satan's design for every generation. He succeeded in bringing down all true worship in Israel. By the end of Judges, men, women and children had gone their own way. And that's exactly what Satan is achieving right now, in our generation. He's attempting to outlaw the Bible, making it seem totally irrelevant. Everyone is encouraged to interpret God's Word in his own way. It's a deception straight out of hell.

What we see happening in the world right now is Satan's last-ditch effort to destroy the bride of Christ. The devil has issued an all-out battle cry. And he's releasing everything in his arsenal to try to bring down God's elect. Scripture calls Satan's assault "a flood out of his mouth" (Revelation 12:15). This flood is one of iniquity. And Satan has brought it against the church, to try to carry her away from the protection of Christ's blood. Jesus warned that in the last days iniquity would abound. And because of this flood of iniquity, the love of many believers will grow cold (Matthew 24:12). It seems like the church is beleaguered and besieged on every side.

- Violent movies have numbed the minds of many Christians who indulge in them. And sexual acts in films have become perverse beyond belief. One Christian ministry receives regular reports of grade-school-age boys, only six or seven years old, who have tried to rape little girls their age and younger. When asked why, they say, "I saw it on a video my daddy and mommy had."

- There are now more than 300,000 pornography sites on the Internet. These sites contain the most vile, wicked images humankind has ever seen. Worst of all, young children are stumbling onto these sites. Their tender minds are being exposed to images that damage them for years to come.
- Homosexual marriages are about to become commonplace. Already some newspapers feature gay couples on their wedding pages. Now a growing number of elementary schools are preparing to teach a curriculum titled "How to live the homosexual lifestyle." Young children are about to be indoctrinated in the specifics of homosexual life.
- Homosexual militancy has pushed its way into upper levels of the church. The Episcopal denomination recently ordained an avowed homosexual as a bishop. When the ceremony ended, the new bishop turned and held his male lover's hand.
- A movie star who's running for governor of California was advised he would win if he could just be exposed in some kind of scandal. He was told that having an affair would make him a hero in people's eyes. It would increase his popularity, gaining him more votes. And it worked!
- A U.S. circuit court judge ordered the removal of a granite carving of the Ten Commandments from the grounds of a government building in Alabama. Meanwhile, the judge made his ruling from a federal building that has a statue of Zeus at its entrance. We believe in god, just the wrong one!

It looked just as dark for the prophet Jeremiah in the last days before Jerusalem's destruction ...

**Jeremiah 32:2-3 (KJV)** For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem: and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house. For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it;

**Jeremiah 32:2-3 (MSG)** At that time the army of the king of Babylon was holding Jerusalem under siege. Jeremiah was shut up in jail in the royal palace. Zedekiah, king of Judah, had locked him up, complaining, "How dare you preach, saying, 'God says, I'm warning you: I will hand this city over to the king of Babylon and he will take it over.

**WHY DO YOU PREACH? HOW DARE YOU PREACH?** Don't tell us what we have to do! Don't tell us that judgment is imminent! Don't infringe on our lifestyle and our comfort! Don't tell us we're sinning!

What good does preaching do anyway? Why bother with all these services? Why strive for worship, prayer, giving, holiness and faithfulness? Why try to build a church in a culture that doesn't care?

### **It Matters to this One**

As I walked along the seashore, this young boy greeted me.  
He was tossing stranded starfish back to the deep blue sea.  
I said, "Tell me why you bother, why waste your time this way?  
There's a million stranded starfish, does it matter anyway?"  
And he said, "It matters to this one, It deserves a chance to grow.  
It matters to this one, I can't save them all I know.  
But it matters to this one, I'll return it to the sea.  
It matters to this one, and it matters to me."

With imminent destruction staring Jerusalem in the face, God told Jeremiah to do something absolutely ridiculous ...

**Jeremiah 32:6-7 (KJV)** And Jeremiah said, The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that is in Anathoth: for the right of redemption is thine to buy it.

**Jeremiah 32:13-15 (KJV)** And I charged Baruch before them, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.

With imminent destruction staring the world in the face, God tells His church to do something absolutely ridiculous. Invest in people! Buy into them! It looks like they're going to resist, reject and ridicule you – and they probably will – but do it against all reason and common sense! Take everything you've fought for and paid for, and put it in an earthen vessel. It looks like you'll lose everything if you do that, but God says that your investment is going to be eternally valuable! Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land! The enemy may besiege us, he may even win some battles against us ... but revival shall happen again in this land!

**2 Corinthians 4:7-10 (KJV)** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

**Jeremiah 32:26-27 (KJV)** Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying, Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?