

June 1, 2011

Dear Friends & Family, **“LIGHTS, ‘CAMPERS’, ACTION!”?**

(5/24) Well, it hasn't been that long since all of my Via Dolorosa props & costumes have been put away, but I'm already working on other productions for my rapidly approaching summer camps, the first of which arrives at the end of this month. Typically each summer, I write & produce two dramas to present at camp: the first being my evening sermon's introduction, which I hope will be **“The Sower & The Coming Harvest”**. I've only performed this once, which was at our annual camp fund-raising banquet last September. I have yet to do it in a church/service setting. I hope to have it lead into a message re: Mat.13, where the Savior soberly warns His hearers that “His angels are coming”, to separate men. He repeats this twice in that chapter, making it all the more awful & dreadful. With the wicked, the angels will do the epic task of separating them from the righteous & then throwing them into the lake of fire. I have often meditated on this portion of the Word of God, direct from The Son of God's lips, & just as often

have been brought into the fear, awe, & dread of the Lord. I have often envisioned in my mind when pondering this dreadful day's event, i.e., of the approaching innumerable company of angels to harvest men, the scene from the 1939 production of **The Wizard Of Oz**. Who can forget the Wicked Witch of The West's “flying monkeys”, sent by her to capture & apprehend Dorothy & Toto? What viewer of this scene did not feel the sheer terror of these awful creatures flying toward them accompanied by their shrieking howls? I have often pondered re: these *holy* angels, when they do come, if by any chance they're among that company of the “12 Legions of Angels” that our Savior referred to in the Garden of Gethsemane, who, upon His request, could have come & destroyed not only His arrestors, but the entire world? I've also often mused, when forbidden by the Savior & His Father to do so, what emotions these awesome creatures of Jesus must have felt watching their Lord & Object of worship be so brutally handled by miniscule earthlings? I've envisioned the Father restraining them from wanting to come, almost like a dog on a leash, trying to break the bonds of his master, to run free to pursue his strongest desire, viz a viz, rescuing the Savior! Now, however, at the end of the age, these same angels (& I would assume that, as in another place Jesus says He will return with ALL of His Father's angels) will have “their revenge”, to some extent, authorized by their Creator & Leader.

“HELL-BENT”?

I felt the need, given the unfortunate popularity of Rob Bell's “Love Wins” book, which betrays his universalism theology, that eventually all men will wind up in Heaven, to inculcate the truth, eternity, & certainty of Hell to those who reject the Savior, His Word, & sin-expiating death on the cross, into the hearts & minds of the staff & campers this summer. I just learned last night, while watching Harold Camping's (of Family Radio, Inc.) explanation as to why the end of the world did not happen this past Saturday, a.k.a., **“May 21st”**, that he too has very faulty & unbiblical notions re: hell. I was dumbfounded when I heard him reveal to the press that he was an “annihilationist”, i.e., that after the death of the wicked, they no longer

cease to exist! In the light of that, I hope to follow the portion of the message of The Harvest mentioned above, with Christ's parable of The Rich Man & Lazarus from Luke 16. I have never preached on this sobering, dreadful portion of the Scriptures before. There was an old adage from days gone by that is still true & needs to be a clarion call to the young of our generation: "There is a Heaven to gain, and a Hell to shun". May the Lord enable me to impress these eternal truths upon the hearts of all present in the chapels this summer.

"THE WEIGHT OF THE WORD"

Our camp theme this year is "Chabod", the Hebrew word for "glory", "heavy" or "weight". I am not surprised in the least that this one word shares these meanings, as that is exactly what happens each summer at camp when God's glorious presence, i.e., His "glory"—"the manifestation of His perfections" (Charles Hodge) fills the chapel, & more importantly, the hearts & minds of those present. How does this happen? His being the eternal, infinite, immense, unfathomable God that He is, when He comes upon, when He comes into a room or a person via His presence, minute, microscopic, infinitesimal human beings cannot help but "feel" His "weight". This often happens just by the sheer weight of the *truth* of His Word, when it is preached & laid upon the human heart by His Spirit. Of course, we all have seen an infinite number of times this NOT happening to humans, when God by His Spirit chooses not to. This still dumbfounds me. We truly are blind & dead spiritually by nature until He quickens us first by His Spirit & the seeds of truth of the gospel.

"SAVED TO A PERSON, NOT A PLACE"

Both John Piper & Francis Chan have asked their audiences something to the effect of: "If when you died & went to Heaven, with all of its beauty, comfort, bliss, joy, & eternal blessings, you saw that Jesus wasn't there, would it bother you?". To answer "No" to such an interrogative would indicate such a dearth & shallowness of soul, & such a reply I'm sure would break the heart of The Godhead.

"STUCK IN THE MIDDLE WITH YOU"

If there is one truth of Scripture that has warmed, comforted, & awed my soul, it is when God's acts of redemption toward His people are expressed in the Greek language's "middle voice", i.e., when the subject of the action does such an action "to or for" himself. The first that comes to mind is Eph.1:4, where it says the Father chose [middle voice] us in Christ (to Himself) before the foundation of the world. Verse 5 states that He predestined us to be adopted "to Himself". Oh, blessed thought—that He didn't predestine us *to Heaven!* Who cares, if it's not *to Him!* But, in His fatherly love, consistent with His love for Jesus, He adopts His own to Himself. I'd rather spend eternity in Hell, if it's with Him, than Heaven without Him! His presence *is* Heaven!

"EARLY MORNING SLEEPING PILL"

I haven't slept well lately. This morning was no exception. When I awake earlier than I would desire, my mind "turns on". That's basically it. I have to get up, as falling back to sleep for me is a near impossibility; but not this morn-ing. I proceeded to lie there & meditate on some verses from John 14 which I was reading last evening.

Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go, I will come again & receive you unto Myself". Oh, there it is again! "Unto *Myself*"! He goes on to say, "...that (or, so that, i.e., this is My reason for doing so) *where I am, you may be also*". Just prior, in John 13, before He washed His disciples' feet, it says He did so, knowing He came forth from the Father, & was returning to *Heaven*. No, Beloved—not "to Heaven", though, of course, He was! The Holy Spirit through the hand of the Apostle John had him write "to *The Father*". We too, have been "brought close" to Him by the blood of Christ. May we continually avail our-selves of this unfathomable privilege! Thank you for reading this; I pray it was worth your time & effort.

Love in Him,

Michael and Kim