

# **POWER for the CRISIS**

By

Curtis Dickinson

**WARS! IFLATION! VIOLENCE!** Each newscast focuses on a new crisis. Each day we witness the retreat of morality, the decline of law and order and satanic powers running rampant through the earth.

We live in a deepening crisis. Anti-Christ's openly blaspheme God before the world on T.V. In school rooms there is a determined effort to overthrow God-ordained authority of the home, substituting for it the principles of socialism backed up by the awesome power of an armed government.

But we are not the first to live in crisis. God's people have always been tempered in crisis. Living Christ's birth was a crisis for Mary and Joseph. Before the age of two He had to flee to Egypt to escape assassination. He lived in occupied country that seethed with revolutionary passion. Again and again "the Jews sought to kill him" (John 7:1, Mark 14:1, Matt. 12:14). In Gethsemane He faced the greatest crisis of all time, yet went from it to fulfill His purpose on the cross. Never once did Jesus allow crisis-living to drag Him down to depression, frustration and discouragement.

In the universal crisis of our time many are breaking under the strain, while others give in to reckless abandon as their hopes and plans are destroyed.

But some stand, firmly and courageously, having found that there is **POWER** for the **CRISIS**. God instructs and demonstrates that we may have the power to live in the crisis-not only just exist, but live with zest as God's sons, "as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life" (Phil. 2:15-16).

## **SILENT POWER**

"Power belongs unto God" (Psalm 62:11). Then where is it? Why does God not show himself?

He does. Only the world doesn't see His power, doesn't know it and doesn't believe it. The world sees only worldly power, such as nuclear warheads and planes loaded with napalm and rockets. Worldly power is seen in the tyranny of socialism. And make no mistake-all socialism is tyranny with the state the power to take all freedom and even life from the individual. (Ever heard of HEW or IRS?)

Worldly power is manifest in violence, economic controls, and production of goods through scientific technology. But God's arm is invisible and silent.

In the days of Noah the power of violence was in evidence all around, but the world never knew the power that sustained Noah and his sons as they went about their work, obeying God and drawing strength from Him.

While Sodom reeled in violence and unmentionable sins, while Lot “vexed his righteous soul from day to day”, God was sending a messenger to lead him out of the doomed city. Only a few citizens — a handful — had any contact with the angels who came to deliver Lot and his daughters. The city at large was ignorant of any power at work for the righteous; they only felt God’s power in judgment.

The silent power of God upheld the Christians in the first century. Saul, as hatchet man for the Jews, “laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women, committed them to prison” (Acts 8:3). After his conversion (his name being changed to Paul) he himself became the target of these anti-Christ’s and the church continued to suffer (See 1 Thess. 2:14-16). But in the midst of terrible persecution he wrote that God “is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us” (Eph. 3:20). Just when the power of anti-Christ was greatest, the church knew the deepest faith and realized the greatest help from God.

The world doesn’t see God’s power. It has its eyes glued to the TV screen thinking of the sensational power being displayed there. It knows nothing of God’s action in your life, just as it knew nothing of God’s action in the life of Jesus that night in the garden of Gethsemane. An angel came and ministered to Christ in that hour of crisis (Luke 22:43). Men did not see the angel, but they did see the power of a mind at perfect peace when Jesus emerged from that Gethsemane prayer to face the murderous Pharisees. The power of the world (of Satan: John 8:44; 1 John 5:19) was quite conspicuous there and in the court of Pilate that day. But God’s power for the crisis was known only by Christ.

### **POWER IN KNOWING**

While educators laud the great virtues of education, their students are burning the school house.

There is a hue and cry to save our schools. Why? The chaos today is the product of an educational system which denies the truth of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Technical science is exalted almost to the point of worship. But we might ask how the knowledge that puts men on the moon can be of any help in the crisis of a man on trial for murder, or in a divorce, or to a pregnant single girl or to an old person facing poverty because of inflation?

Modern educators keep getting the answers to the **WRONG QUESTIONS**. Young people are asking, “What’s it all about?” “What’s the purpose of life?” The public schools refuse to face this question. So the students give up and resort to dope, to immoral sex and revolutionary aims because they do not know God’s purpose for their lives. This is the knowledge that counts, that gives us courage to enter the arena of crisis, and God has revealed it in no uncertain terms. God wants to make man in His own image. This was the original plan, and it has never changed. Like a potter, He puts us through the process

of molding, turning, trimming and then the fire for tempering. Whom He loves, He chastens. “And every branch that bears fruit, He cleanses it that it may bear more fruit” (John 15:2). This Cleansing is done in the fire of opposition and in the waters of tribulation. The crisis in which we live is the very means by which God is making us to conform to His image.

There is power in knowing your destiny. John writes of the faithful martyrs who “loved not their lives unto death” (Rev. 12: 11). Christians at one time went singing into the arena to face lions because they knew that their ultimate destiny was through a resurrection to immortality in a glorious new creation with the creator Himself. The aimless, purposeless agnostic says, “If you can’t lick ‘em, join ‘em.” But the man who knows that his destiny is to be like Christ would rather die than switch.

There is power in knowing the presence of our Lord. Jesus said, “All power has been given unto me in heaven and on earth ... and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:18-20). A magazine writer recently asked, “Why has man become so small and suddenly alone?” We hear much about man’s “loneliness.” But the Christian is never alone.

Elijah, hiding out from Queen Jezebel, dejected and discouraged, felt utterly alone. He cried, “I, even I only, am left.” But God reminded him that He still had 2,000 who had not bowed down to idol worship. God had never taken his eye off of Elijah. A Christian whose husband had died continued to live in the big house by herself. Friends said, “You shouldn’t live there alone.” She answered cheerfully, “I do not live alone. I am never alone.” She knew that her Lord was with her. Such knowledge gave her power for crisis living.

### **POWER IN FAITH**

Some speak of the power of prayer. This may sound more poetic, but it doesn’t express the real power. The power is not in prayer itself. Power is in God and it is made available according to our faith. Prayer is only the expression of faith.

To put it very childlike — for we are told that childlike faith is the real kind — we simply are to believe that God will do what He says He will do. In the crisis will He come through to supply the need and to work His will? We know that the answer is YES.

Why do not all realize this power of God to do what we cannot do? Because of the lack of faith, Jesus once told the apostles that they were unable to cast out a demon because they lacked faith. No faith, no power!

This faith is not merely confidence or the hope that all will somehow turn out well. Christian faith has its foundation in certain distinct doctrines: that Jesus is the Christ, God’s Son; that He died for our sins and arose on the third day; that He is going to judge the world. These facts are believed by every Christian. But I am talking about faith in God’s power over life situations, His involvement is His creation. The secular educators have dinned into our ears the idea of evolution until the world hardly even believes in a

Creator. So-called liberals in the churches have denied the Bible, the miracles and the purpose of God until few church members really expect that God is there-Sovereign, Almighty-with things under His control. But that is what Christian faith embraces, that we live under the power and control of God.

Faith is effective just to the extent that we act upon it. Step out on faith and the power of God is there. Fail to step out and act and you never know the power He has in readiness for your benefit. "Faith, if it has not works, is dead in itself" (James 2:17). One can subscribe to certain faith and talk faith forever and yet never experience it. But the moment one begins to act upon it, if he is a sincere Christian, he will realize the mighty power of God. "It is God who works in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

You may not see Christ on TV or hear His voice above the roar of the world, but that does not mean that He has left the scene. His silent power is undiminished. His coming judgment is inevitable. His love is inexorable. His purpose will be fulfilled. He knows all about the crisis. He has power to meet it. Like David, we can say, "I will fear no evil, for thou art with me" (Psalm 23:4).

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