

The Strong

By

Curtis Dickinson

“The people that know their God shall be strong and do exploits” (Dan. 11:32).

There is more to knowing God than just knowing that He exists. The complicated and perfect harmony of creation boggles the mind of the scientists and reveals that it had a beginning, a design and a power to bring it into existence and to sustain it. Thus God is known by His creation. Yet, such knowledge does not tell us anything of His person and purpose nor of man’s ultimate destiny. The Bible does this.

To know God is to know what He has revealed of Himself. At the beginning He revealed that Adam would have life so long as he was obedient. After the sin, which resulted in Adam and Eve becoming dying creatures, God revealed that the sin could be covered by that which He provided, typified in the animal skins in which He clothed them. To them was given knowledge of the coming of One to save from death and restore life.

Noah was made strong with the knowledge of the destruction of the world, which was typical of the ultimate destruction of all who reject God. Under the worst conditions Noah obeyed God and was saved.

Abraham knew God well enough to intercede for Lot and the city of Sodom. God revealed that He would destroy Sodom, and example of the final judgment (Jude 7), and knowing this, Lot escaped with his life. Abraham was unafraid to offer Isaac in sacrifice because he knew God and had confidence that God would raise Isaac up from the dead if necessary in order to fulfill His purpose in him (Heb. 11:19).

Christians are admonished to have the same kind of faith that Abraham had.

The ultimate revelation came through Jesus Christ and His apostles (Heb. 1:1–2), in that which constitutes the gospel: the death and resurrection of Jesus. By Christ’s death is revealed the finality of judgment upon sin. On the cross Jesus was made to be sin on our behalf and underwent the punishment of sin by being put to death (II Cor. 5:21). If Jesus died for our sins, that is, if Jesus was undergoing that which is the ultimate penalty for man’s sin, then the punishment for man’s sin must be death on the day of judgment. The exact details of how man shall die, the intensity of his pain, the duration of the death-throes, may be matters of speculation, but one thing is clear through that which Christ underwent and that is that the final punishment must terminate in death. All the world reels today under the curse of sin, and the judgments that are now being meted out are forerunners of the final one.

While the sentence of death applies to those who are outside of the family of God, the doctrine of the resurrection reveals the ultimate and eternal purpose for all those who are in the family of God. Christ coming forth from the grave is a demonstration of the resurrection to life that is to be experienced by all who receive the forgiveness of sin and thus are received into the fellowship of God.

To know God is to know that our sins have been forgiven through the death that Jesus underwent for them and therefore to know that we are acceptable to God. Guilt is like a tyrant, driving one to extremes, sapping his courage and strength and robbing him

of purpose and hope. Sir Lancelot could boast, “My strength is as the strength of ten because my heart is pure.” But when he lost his purity by consorting with King Arthur’s wife, he also lost his strength. It is the knowledge that one has been cleansed by the blood of Christ that enables him to say that he knows his God. At the same time he leaves the ranks of those doomed to death and is translated into the kingdom of God’s Son with the hope of immortality (Co. 1:13–14).

It is the knowledge of his hope that makes the Christian strong in the face of adversity. Thus Job endured his afflictions saying, “I know that my redeemer lives...and after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet from my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:25–26). Jesus said, “Be not afraid of them that kill the body” (Matt. 10:28). The utmost and last that man can do is to put us to death, but we know there is a resurrection! Time and again the apostle Paul faced his enemies, ready to die because he knew that the next even would be a resurrection to glorious immortality. The strong are not necessarily the people who, by the grace of God, enjoy health and physical strength. Paul wrote of his “infirmities” and said that when he was weak, then was he strong (II Cor. 12:10). Contrary to modern day charismatics, instead of majoring on healing, Paul was able to “glory in the things that concerned his infirmities” (II Cor. 11:30). It was his theology that made him strong, not physical therapy. He knew the purpose of God and that God could accomplish it in spite of all adversity. “I know Him who I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him, against that day” (II Tim. 1:12).

With this knowledge the Christian does not fear the things coming upon the world. The spirit of apprehension is universal. Experts in finance and politics are pouring forth doom and gloom prophecies. A new kind of literature, which I call “survival literature”, is becoming popular. It consists of books, news letters and periodicals with advice and technical instructions on how to survive the final wave of violence and destruction that is to follow the failure of government and the chaos created by mass poverty. The deteriorating condition about us is the result of a generation’s refusal to know God, and therefore it is weak; weak in understanding (in spite of the so-called great educational system), weak in will, weak in purpose and weak in the execution of worthwhile plans. It has no strength to resist Satan, no will to uphold that which is good and right, and no determination to fulfill the loftiest purpose, which is to please God and do His will, because it has no knowledge of purpose. It has no strength to uphold the laws of God. The result is a giving-into the wiles of Satan. It gives in to every minority group that says, “we demand”; courts are ruled by the criminal, business caves in to the bureaucrats that are destroying it and labor gives in to the protection racket of the union bosses.

Christ said, “You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). The Christian is one that takes up the yoke of Christ in order to learn of Him (Matt. 11:29). He learns the truth which Christ has revealed and is made free from the burden of sin and guilt and death. He is freed from all the vain philosophy and so-called wisdom of man, freed from all the blind alleys which take up the time and energy of most people and avail nothing. He is free from all the entangling and encumbering activities of men which lead to nowhere. In short, he is free from Satan’s purpose and free to grow in the grace of Christ, to walk in the way that He has given, to exalt Christ and become God-like until he attains the very image of God which is God’s eternal and ultimate purpose.

These are the exploits of one who knows God and they are wrought in the face of all the world's calamities, such calamities themselves being a symptom of God's judgment upon people who reject Him. Inflation, poverty, war among nations, violence in the streets — none of these can separate us from God's purpose (Rom. 8:38–39). In fact these furnish the background upon which the true servant of God demonstrates his faith by obeying in the face of persecution and tribulation. They make the contrast between the kingdoms of the world and the kingdom of Christ stand out all the bolder so that it is obvious when the Christian follows Christ' order to "seek you first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33).

When man's kingdom begins to crumble, so does the strength of those who placed their faith in it and put it first. But those whose priorities have been given to God understand that survival belongs not to the most ingenious nor to the most politically minded nor even to the strongest military might but to the people who know God. God's kingdom cannot be shaken; it is eternal. Therefore the Christians will put God's kingdom and His righteousness first in all things. By doing so he does the most for his fellow man by giving him a standard to which he can aspire and at the same time he secures his own survival by being a part of the eternal kingdom.

The one who knows God does not compromise with evil that good may come. As do many of today's leaders who are responsible for the governing of the world. The result of such wisdom of man is painfully obvious in the chaos and near anarchy which encompasses us. Rather the one that knows God takes a stand and is faithful to the command of God even unto death. Such exploits may bring him shame and persecution in the world as they did Jesus, but they are what furnish the world with foundation and stability that makes civilizations possible.

Thousands of citizens have worked tirelessly to save the nation, but are failing because their efforts are directed at the symptoms of the disease instead of at the disease itself. The nation that knows God is governed right and prospers, therefore, the best way to save the nation is to uphold Christ and present the truth of His person., His death and resurrection. It is when men know Christ that they know God and the people that know God are strong. But whether it stands or falls, the Christian is to stand with God. This is the test of knowing God, to obey His commands with faith in His victory in spite of all else, even if it means standing alone while the nation goes the other way. The brain-washed masses follow a blind leadership to oblivion, but they that know God hear His voice and follow Him in the strength He gives and His way leads to life (John 10:27–28).

If we know God as Creator and Savior, we know that He will fulfill His promises to us. We know that nothing can keep us from doing the exploits that He has commanded. To excuse ourselves from boldly taking up the sword of the spirit and holding forth the word of life is to confess that we do not know God after all.

The day in which we live is most challenging. The camp of the Saints is encompassed by the enemy (Re. 20:9). All the world wonders after the beast (rev. 13:3). But the Kingdom belongs to the little flock of God and He that is in you is greater than He that is in the world. We are called not to fear the world nor to be indifferent to it but to overcome it by Christ who is the Victor (I John 5:4–5, Rev. 17:14).

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