

THE FOLLY OF LEANING ON A SPLINTERED STAFF!

Isa. 36:6 [1-21]

INTRODUCTION:

Read text.

1. Background of text: Sennacharib's invasion. Israel was trusting in covenants with Egypt.
2. Sequel to this incident: Hezekiah prayed to the Lord and Sennacharib turned back toward home, having lost 185K soldiers to the Lord's angel of death in just one night. Isa.37:22-35. But later on Israel again trusted in Egypt, and Egypt's help failed to come. This is when Nebuchadnezzar carried Israel captive to Babylon.
3. TODAY, many are also still leaning on a **splintered staff** [or, as per KJV: **bruised reed**] in hope of their religious anticipations! A splintered staff, or bruised reed, not only fails to support, but it is the very cause of disaster -- when it breaks it fails to support **and also** pierces the hand of the one depending on it!

I. WE'RE REPEATING THE FOLLY OF LEANING ON A SPLINTERED STAFF WHEN WE DEPEND ON OUR OWN MORALITY FOR SALVATION FROM SINS!

- A. SALVATION from the guilt of our sins just on the merits of our living a "good moral life" is very popular in the religious world today!
 1. Millions are trusting the **eternal destiny of their souls** on this *fallacious & hopeless* doctrine.
 2. Church membership, adherence to religious tenets, participation with others in common fellowship are all regarded as non-essential for the hopes and aspirations of having a home in heaven with God!
- B. **But, CONTRARIWISE, the Scriptures of God teach us:**
 1. The CHURCH is the household of God. Eph.2:19- "*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household.*" 1 Tim.3:15- "*but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.*"
 2. Only the children of God—those in His household—are His *heirs* and *will inherit His blessings!* Rom.8:16-17- "*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.*"
 3. And the reason for that is that **ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS ARE IN CHRIST.** Eph.1:3. An eternity *being with God in heaven is certainly a spiritual blessing!* cf. 1 Cor.15:44, 54: "*it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. 54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory."*"
 4. **ONLY THOSE who are IN CHRIST**—in His **BODY**, in His **CHURCH**, in His **HOUSEHOLD**—can be saved from their **PAST SINS** or **have ETERNAL LIFE!** Eph.1:6-7- "*to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. 7) In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.*" Eph.5:23- "*... Christ ... is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.*" Acts 2:47. **IF GOD ADDS THE SAVED TO THE CHURCH, WE CAN'T BE SAVED AND NOT BE MEMBERS OF IT, CAN WE? I MEAN, CAN GOD MAKE A MISTAKE LIKE THAT???**
- C. And the truth of the matter is that even Cornelius, *testified to by God to be a GOOD MORAL MAN*, even had to be baptized and be a part of the household of God in order to be acceptable spiritually! Acts 10:48; Luke 7:30- "*But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John.*"

II. DEPENDING ON DENOMINATIONALISM TO SAVE US IS ALSO “LEANING ON A SPLINTERED STAFF!”

- A. OTHER millions also expect that the Lord OWES them salvation because they hold membership in some man-originated religious organization, or “church”!
1. The basis of beginning of some of them are:
 - a) E.G. White, in a dream or a trance, saw a “halo” around the fourth of the ten commandments, and so initiated the beginning of the 7th day Adventist church.
 - b) Joseph Smith claims to have found golden plates under the direction of an angel of God, and translated them into the “doctrines” that produced the Mormon church.
 - c) The Nazarene Church is an outgrowth of a “holiness movement” begun in Providence, RI on May 12, 1886. In the Nazarene Church Manual, the official creed of that church, it states on page 17: *“In October, 1895, a number of persons under the leadership of Phineas F. Bresee & J.P. Widney formed the First Church of the Nazarene at LA, Calif. with 135 charter members.”*
 2. Even in light of the seeming absurdity of some of these claims, many people are basing the eternal destinies of their souls on the ideas, doctrines, churches and yes, **deceptions** of MEN!
- B. Would it surprise you to know that the word of God addresses this thought? SO, just *what does the word of God say about it?*
1. Even in his agony, Christ was mindful to pray for the UNITY of His followers. **Jno.17:20-21.**
 2. **DENOMINATIONALISM** is the very **antithesis**, the **direct opposite**, a **contradiction** of this prayer of the Lord’s. **Jer.10:23; Prov.14:12.**
 3. Jesus said there’s to be an **UPROOTING** of denominationalism! **Matt.15:13.** The **REASON** for this extraction is because the efforts of denominationalism are **TO NO AVAIL!** **Matt.15:9.**
 4. Some of the traits of many of the denominational bodies are sincerity, zealous activity, aggressiveness and persistency. **Rom.10:1-3.**

III. DEPENDING ON “NOMINAL CHRISTIANITY” IS ALSO LIKE USING A ‘BRUISED REED’!

- A. There just seems to be an PROFUSION of religious people, even in the church of Christ, who are members in NAME ONLY! **The way this attitude is manifested:**
1. By attending services spasmodically.
 2. By contributing penuriously [*if at all!*]
 3. By indulging in many worldly pursuits.
 4. By flippantly disregarding their responsibilities of service.
- B. Again, *listen to God’s instructions in His word about these things---* **Jas.1:22; Matt.7:21; Lk.6:46; Jas.2:17-** *“Even so faith, **if it has no works**, is dead, being by itself.”* Finally, hear John’s summation in these words: **1 Jno.3:18-** *“Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, **but in deed and truth.**”*

CONCLUSION:

And so we plead with you to PLEASE not be depending on a **“splintered staff,”** a **“bruised reed,”** for your *salvation from past sins*; for your *instruction in how to live your daily life*; or for your *GUIDE to that eternal home of the soul in heaven with God & His angels*. To use **such a staff** in any of these realms will prove to be inadequate, undependable, and ALSO INJURIOUS to your spiritual well-being! **OBEY GOD’S WORD AND DEPEND ON HIM FOR SECURITY AND SAFETY!**