

TROUBLED?

By Tom Stephens

To The Reader

Though this message *Troubled?* details a small piece of the corruption of the human heart, there is hope – hope for peace – peace only Jesus can give. This is what *troubled* will emphasize to God’s people. Hope. You can have this hope that brings peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

But not only hope. If you are a Christian, you have hope of peace and joy on this earth; peace that no man understands, and the power and authority over our enemy (click on, “Church Alive”, then “Take It By Force” for a powerful article on our weapons of spiritual warfare).

Though the writing is somewhat fragmented, it was written from the heart. Your hope will be determined by your own personal growth; hence, the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-26), without which you will never become an overcomer in Christ Jesus.

Please take note of the story (at the bottom of this article) of a Sudanese slave who was crucified by his Muslim master and lived to tell his testimony – with photo.

Ephesians 3:13-21

Be blessed.

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The Church of Jesus Christ today is suffering more and more persecution by the governments of the world. We, the Christian family within these United States of America already feel the tremendous pressure from our own Government as well as many other entities such as A.C.L.U. (American Civil Liberties Union). In these final days, God's people must be spiritually alert because of this persecution.

Pornography is out of control as is abortion (all abortions except for the saving of one's life are grievous to the Holy Spirit of God), homosexuality, same sex marriages, confusion among our national leaders, growing unrest in the world and war spreading to other nations. The list goes on and on. We are truly living in troubled times.

Recently I read an article about a young 7 year old Sudanese slave boy who was "crucified" by his own master because he loved to sing hymns and worship his Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Seems one day the boy made an error while on an errand, so his master literally nailed the boys feet, knees, and hands to a long section of wood (no indication in the story of a cross shape).

Amazingly, the boy lived to tell his story! Sudanese law allows a master full authority to punish in any manner (The update on this story called *Faith Under Fire*, is at the end of *Troubled?*).

But we who are saved by the precious blood of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ can be comforted knowing He is our source. I am impressed with a familiar passage found in the 14th chapter of the book of John:

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

We are living in a very serious and critical hour. No puny finite mind of man could ever conceive of the day and hour in which we exist today. Accordingly, it should not come as a shock if we arose tomorrow morning to find a headline similar to this:

"RUSSIA PREPARING TO ATTACK ISRAEL!"

We all realize the Third World War most likely will be fought in three ways: *First*, by missiles which today are able to reach nations across the ocean and land within yards of a precision target. *Second*, by dangerous chemicals and bacteria. We've seen the gripping power this type of warfare holds over an entire generation of citizens. With scientific know-how and the proper tools of initiation, terrorist's could literally sow enough chemicals and bacteria designed to slow kill millions of men, women and children over a wide area. This could be accomplished by several groups of terrorists in different areas of our Nation, all at the same time!

And third, the next war will be fought by nuclear power. On August 6, 1945, in the city of Hiroshima, the people arose and went about their normal tasks. Many heard the single plane overhead. Thinking it was one of their own, they ignored it. A B-29 flew over the city, dropped a single atomic bomb, and in just seconds, 78,150 people met their death.

Scientists said the city of New York could be destroyed in three hours time by four of these atomic bombs. Shortly after they dropped the bomb on Hiroshima, the Secretary of Defense of the United States sent out this statement which was published in Life magazine: "The next war will be fought in 36 hours time. The destiny of the world will be settled."

But that was the age of atomic warfare. Today, we are in the nuclear age.

So do we, or do we not, live in a very dangerous age? What will tomorrow hold for us – our nation – our world? Here we stand with our hands tied behind us as a nation with absolutely no control of the way our world is headed...and we sleep. Did I say we had no control? That depends on who your Father is.

In this dark hour of trial in America when our civilization seems to be on the rocks, it appears to many the peace of the world inevitably must perish. (And here I just imagined statements in the news of how the Russian sabotage game is once again alive and probably already planning to eat the heart out of Israel before yoking together with eastern nations to destroy our nation.)

We continue to ignore our heritage given us by honorable men who loved God – men who presented to us a new nation which would be the instrument in the hands of a loving God to bless Israel so she in turn could fall in place with His perfect will for these final days. We have fallen asleep.

The enemy of our nation has placed his teachers in our schools, from universities all the way down to elementary schools. Our pulpits have been infiltrated with the servants of Satan who want to destroy our power and our anointing to continue "in the destruction of the works of the devil."

Denominations fight among each other over doctrines rather than teaching Jesus and Him Crucified". The world is our congregation, and, instead of Jesus, we show them every frailty of the Church. Our government is saturated with the enemy, as is the United Nations. They have poisoned the minds of our people to the point of extreme confusion. Our people don't know whether they want war or peace. What will tomorrow hold for us?

Christ stands in our market places. He said it's ok to the mothers who have boys in uniform, to the young men and women who continue the physical battle. Christ is here saying, "That's alright. Let all the dark hours come your way. Let wars be hard...the trials come. Let the Sadams of the world swing away! But...

“LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED”

Not, "Let your mind not be confused." Nor did He say, "Do not stand in amazement and wonder what tomorrow may hold." What He did say is, That's ok, though you wonder and though you cannot understand, "let not your heart be troubled."

I'm filled with wonder at Jesus' standing in the market place! He's there for the soldier in Iraq, His hand over his shoulder, encouraging that young person to have courage...the courage only found in Christ. He's there for you in the night hours as you wonder what tomorrow holds. He's there with the victim of terror and crime...to show Himself mighty in their sight. "Let not your hearts be troubled."

Notice when Jesus spoke these brave and gallant words of peace and comfort to His disciples, He realized their hopes were soon to die, though temporarily. It was almost time for Him to give Himself for the price of salvation. They needed to have hope and consolation and He knew it must come from the true source of

hope. From the resurrection on, that hope has ministered to multitudes, to comfort and bring peace where there seems to be no peace. Jesus knew that would happen.

But for now, He is absorbed in the ministry to those who were with Him and who would be most affected by the coming events. "Let not your heart be troubled" – He speaks to us in this hour as well as then – when the peace of the world is endangered by wrong thoughts and decisions of men – when our young men and women march the battlefields – when the dark clouds hang over the horizon, "Let not your heart be troubled."

When the hope of all men is behind them, and they have utterly failed, "Let not your heart be troubled." We ask why? The main reason is:

"YE BELIEVE IN GOD."

Stop and be in agreement with me. There is a new and fresh knowing that right now, I could experience Him again, brand new. The Spirit overwhelms me as He begins to fill me once again with His nourishment of love and joy in the Holy Ghost. Write in the clouds of His majesty and glory as He holds the entire heavens and universes between His thumb and His pinky! "Believe in God", He says. "Write it on the rainbow that circles your limit of vision. Bridge it across the sky to the nations that He is Love. And when we rest, we'll realize we can have no other God before us!"

What have we done? We have gone astray as Israel did coming out of Egypt. We have forsaken our God and turned to our own ways; done what is right in our own eyes. The God of most of us is barely away from the gods who know not, see not, and hear not...gods of silver, brass, iron and stone.

No! I cannot see how any who have known the Lord God and pursued after His presence, could forget Him. Any man who confesses (after having known God) he no longer wants God to be a part of his life, is deceived and a most miserable person!

Without God, we have no hope at all. Without God all our hopes and ambitions are linked to the yoke of the enemy. If we have not God, then we die, turn to the dust of the earth and remain there.

But we are not without Him. He Lives and reigns for eternity! Jesus said, "That's all right. Though death stands face to face with you, I have defeated death! Let not your heart be troubled. I AM, and I promise to go with you even to the ends of the earth. I will never leave you, nor forsake you!"

Daniel had the courage to proclaim by faith when all the powers of men failed before him, "I have a God in the Heavens that rules in the Kingdom of men."

He does rule in the Kingdom of men, therefore we must be encouraged and our hearts must not be troubled, for our God controls the Sadams of this world. Our God controls the destiny of our lives. What joy and consolation to have that peace. No peace comes to us outside the Father. There is no problem in that doctrine, and no stress; no sorrow there. Now Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God."

"BELIEVE ALSO IN ME."

"Let not your heart be troubled because you believe in God and you also believe in Me." Though I die, I will yet stand with Jesus. I know it was because He was resurrected, and is alive forevermore, that I am also resurrected unto eternal life. When sickness and death of this puny body overtake me, I can go to Christ, for He and He alone is the great Physician; "Let not your heart be troubled."

To those past prime, your health is gone and you are homesick for the Master, "Let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God. Believe also in Me. He says, "Come, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest in your soul" (Matthew 11:28). Jesus speaks of the sinner here, but the same invitation is open to all who have given themselves to Him.

We stand here looking as the war clouds build and darken on the horizon. If we now believe in God and in Christ, our thoughts will not be troubling us. Rather we will be filled with the peace that overcomes this world. The most common Old Testament phrase denoting God, is: "The God of Hosts". That means we serve a God who stands among the mightiest, and none shall stand with Him, for there is none like Him, no not one. He is a mighty warrior Who stands before the host of hell without blinking an eye. He has defeated our foes. And that word peace is a powerful weapon of the New Testament. The God of Hosts has become the God of Peace also. "But the God of peace shall soon crush him under our feet" (Romans 16:20).

Jesus said, "I am the Prince of Peace." Though wars and rumors of wars engage the nation, kill our youth on the battlefield, destroy our people, yet in Christ shall we have peace for He is the Prince of Peace. One day we will rule and reign with Him on David's throne for a thousand year reign of righteousness. There will be no more war; there will be no battlefield; there will be no communism for there will be nothing to endanger our peace there, so "Let not your heart be troubled."

If you believe Christ is Who the Bible says He is, and are not a Christian, He also comes to speak these words of peace to you. Though you be covered with sin, though you live in a contaminated world, He wants to say these words to you, "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God.

Believe also in Me." By your belief and acknowledgment in Christ's death and resurrection unto life, you will be saved. By accepting Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God, who came in the flesh, and gave His life for you, you have by this same Son been lifted from the miry clay of sorrows. You have been raised from death unto eternal life. You will live forever more with the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords.

FOR IN MY HOUSE ARE MANY MANSIONS

"Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me." The third reason He could say, "...for in my Father's house are many mansions." While in the Isle of Capri, off the eastern shore of Italy, I saw some of the most beautiful mansions in that part of the world. I saw the fabulous home of a noted movie actress located on a hill on that Isle. I saw the Vatican in Rome and toured it thoroughly. I have seen a few mansions that overwhelm me, yet the most magnificent mansions, castles, and cathedrals of the world would never compare to the lowliest mansion built by Jesus Himself for those He loves.

We may boast of our great architectural achievements; we take great pride in our mighty skyscrapers standing (and falling) like great towers of steel piercing the horizon. But they all come to nothing compared to the mansions in my Father's house!

Christ could say to us, "Let not your hearts be troubled!" Though wars come and destroy your home, though they tear down mighty nations, though they crumble to the ground, and your cities turn to rubble, "Let not your hearts be troubled."

We can be content in our small and modest homes while here on earth. But when we get an opportunity to buy a brand new home, we should accept it. My son-in-law, Brian, and his lovely wife, Sandi (my daughter), recently had a home built. It is a nice double decker they are certainly proud of. The design is a good one,

but I have to hand it to the kids. They really made the house what it is, with the color combinations and furnishings. But no matter how lovely it is, when all is said and done it will seem as nothing when we are promoted to the absolute best!

IF IT WERE NOT SO, I WOULD HAVE TOLD YOU

"Let not your hearts be troubled. In my Father's house are many mansions," and then Christ said, "if it were not so I would have told you."

"When ages advance and the knowledge of man comes to naught, when all civilizations pass off the scene and the predictions of man stand to be untrue and unjust, the promises of God alone stand true.

Though the promises of all the lawyers, our governors, lawmakers and presidents are unfilled, the promises of Christ will remain, for He never spoke a false word. Let all our books stand as a lie, yet will the Word of God stand true when He reminds us He will return with 10,000 of His saints in the clouds of Glory. "Let not your hearts be troubled, for if it were not so, I would have told you, and I go to prepare a place for you."

I GO TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU

We will live in a place spoken into existence by the Creator of the heavens and earth, ordained by power of God, for Christ has promised He Himself personally will go to prepare a place for us.

Many times the question arises: "Where is Heaven"? Well, Heaven is wherever Jesus Christ is, brother and sister. He is Heaven.

At night, in your home you open the blinds. Tell me, does the darkness rush in? No? That's because light is much more powerful than darkness. You can light a candle in a black cavern and the light will penetrate a much greater distance than you would normally believe. Well, Jesus said, "*I am the light of the world.*" And He is. He is the light of your life if you are born again. Where the Lord is, there is no darkness. No, none at all. However, when we begin to sin, that part of our life has darkness. Jesus cannot dwell in the area of our lives that is not clean. That's the reason we must continue our growth in Him. That's why it's so important to adhere to His Word and to develop the fruits of the Spirit in our lives. He is Light.

We will not need the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars to give us light, for the heavens will be lit by the very presence of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

If Christ is there, there will be no death. He has conquered that. If Christ is there, there will be no frailty, no sickness. Each time Christ came by the lame, blind, and the dead, He restored them to perfect health. He gave them back their sight. Their hearing was renewed to perfection. If we are incapacitated in any way when we go to be with Him, we will be perfected in our new eternal body.

I have a sister who, at birth, did not survive. Her name is Orva Jo. So many times as I reminisce about the Kingdom of God (and I find I do that more and more as I grow in Him), I think about my sis there with the Lord. I know this sounds unreal, but I long to see her, as I continue to pray, "even so, come, Lord Jesus."

If Christ has gone to prepare a place for you, remember it will be a perfect place of peace. It will be a perfect place of joy. It will be a perfect place of happiness. It will be a perfect place of contentment.

If you are discouraged in your frailty, for fear of falling, and failure to focus on things that are dear to you, remember the love by which Paul delivered to the saints when he wrote the book of Philippians: "*And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you*" (Phil 4:7-9).

Therefore, don't be worried about the frailties of this life. Let not your heart be troubled, for I will go and prepare a place for you, and If I go,

I WILL COME AGAIN

What victory comes with the knowledge of His return! Especially in this late hour of time, we must have great cheer! We should be humbling our hearts before His throne. We should be shouting with joy in the Holy Ghost. Church, we should rise up out of our sluggishness. He's coming back!

I have family members who have recently gone to be with the Lord. I remember mounds of dirt around the place of burial. These stand as a memorial to those who have lived and gone on ahead of us, hopefully to receive the reward of life from the Master. What hope does this world have? I printed a piece of news from the internet the other day that made me realize just how lost our world is. The article spoke of the amount of light lost by the sun over the many billions of years since its existence. It added thoughts concerning the bleakness of our future, noting science saw no hope for the future of life on this planet.

How cruel is their god! I cannot imagine having a God who gives me no future. After I printed out the article, I wrote across it, "The lost have not hope. What's worse, they realize it."

I want you to remember what Jesus said concerning life and death. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life." This is the greatest note of triumph for the Christian facing death. "*Oh death, where is your sting; Oh grave, where is your victory?*"

He is coming back again. In spite of hell and high water, He's coming back. In spite of Stalin, Hitler, and Sadam, He's returning again to catch His bride away to forever be with Him. Where He is we will also be. "I will return and I will receive you unto Myself."

AND RECEIVE YOU UNTO MYSELF

Soon that trumpet will sound and time shall be no more; the corruptible shall put on incorruption and the mortal shall be changed to immortality, for when He comes back, He will come back not to receive kingdoms, not to receive dominions and empires, not to receive gifts, and not to receive glory and honor of man. Christ the King of kings and Lord of lords, Creator of all heaven and earth is coming back for one reason and that is to take you and I to be where He is; that we may dwell forever in the house of the Lord.

Jesus is a personal God. He will come personally to get His bride. He has a personal salvation given by a personal Savior. The Holy Spirit is a personal guide and helpmate. My redeemer became a personal Savior to me. My Shepherd is a personal Shepherd. He will lead me toward Himself. He will attract His bride to come unto Himself.

His incomprehensible compassion is to be wed to the cleansed; the Creator of the heaven and earth joining hands in holy matrimony with His own creation. Can the puny, finite mind of man conceive a love like that?

We are to become His bride personally. His hand will be joined in our hand personally, and we will be wed personally to Him, the Creator of the Universe. We will rule and reign with Him personally on David's throne; therefore, "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go, I will return again and receive you unto myself...."

“THAT WHERE I AM YE MAY BE ALSO”

We will live in the presence of Jesus Himself. We will enjoy that celestial City. We will live in that New Jerusalem, and the streets will be paved with pure gold under the rule of Christ Himself. We will live in that incomparable happiness from everlasting to everlasting. For we will live in the very presence of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

God's servant, David, destroyed Goliath because he attempted to defy the armies of the living God. Today, we are called by Jesus Christ to defy the enemy of His Church. Just as David received authority from the captain of the Israelite army to destroy this giant, so do we today in the Church of Jesus Christ, have much greater power and authority in the destruction of our spiritual enemy.

When all things are accomplished on the earth according to His will, then He will receive all whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Satan cannot defy this order! Soon, the Father will shout, "It's enough!" That trumpet will sound and time will be no more. We will leave this puny body. We will leave this puny flesh. We will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. We will live forever and forever in the very presence of God. "Let not your hearts be troubled."

We will take courage. We will fight. We will praise our God for His glory instead of worrying about the world conditions. "Let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me." Stand up Church. Victory is ours!

FAITH UNDER FIRE

Boy slave 'crucified' by Sudanese Muslim
Now a youth, he tells Voice of the Martyrs he's forgiven attacker

A Sudanese slave who was assigned to watch his Muslim master's camels was "crucified" when he was caught sneaking out to attend a Christian church, according to reports from Voice of the Martyrs.

The aid organization that helps persecuted Christians worldwide said the reports come from witnesses in the Sudan who were in contact with the youth, now about 15.

Damare Garang was seven when the attack happened, officials said. He had been captured by Islamic soldiers when his Sudanese village was attacked, and sold as a slave to a Muslim family in Tuobon, Bahr el Gazel

His duties were to tend the master's camels, but one day one fled.

"How could you do this? You will surely have to pay! You stupid slave, I should just kill you now," he was told.

However, the child escaped any injuries at that point.

Then the following day Damare, who had been raised in a Christian family, sneaked away for a time to a small church service across the village.

His master was waiting when he returned.

"Where have you been?" he was asked, and partly from fear and partly from not having another answer, he said, "to church."

"You have made two grave mistakes," the slave master said. "Yesterday you lost one of my camels, and today you worship with infidels!"

The master went to a barn and returned with a large board, some rusty spikes and a hammer, the report said.

"Frozen in fear, Damare was dragged out to the edge of his master's compound where he was forced to the ground with his legs over the board," the VOM report said. "The savage brutality of the master was unleashed as he proceeded to drive the long nails through Damare's knees and then nail his feet securely onto the board."

While Damare was screaming in agony, the slave master simply walked away.

The boy's help arrived in the form of a Good Samaritan who happened by, and saw the small boy. The man sneaked into the compound and carried the boy to a hospital where the board and nails were removed.

Damare later was released to the custody of his helper, with whom he lived for the next 18 months.

Once again, then, there was a militia attack on his village, and he was separated from his protector.

When the Islamic army soldiers were driven off, a commander of village forces recognized Damare's speech as being of the Dinka tribe, and took charge of him.

That commander eventually adopted Damare, who now lives in Mario Kong.

He remains disappointed he is unable to run quickly like other boys, but he says he's forgiven his attacker, because Jesus was nailed to a cross to forgive all sins.

"Before leaving, we gave Damare a care package with mosquito netting, soap, new clothing, shoes, a hat, a new Bible, a soccer ball, fishing line and hooks," said the VOM report by Tom Zurowski. "Please tell the Christian children in America to remember to pray for the children of Sudan," Damare told his visitors.

