

Commentary – From the Margins *The Best of Times*

When in first and second grades (before leaving Indiana for Oregon), I heard adult aunts and uncles say that my grandfather had copies of newspapers in which my dad's war letters were printed. Dad died in the middle of my fifth grade year, so as an adult myself, I never knew Dad, never heard his thoughts about politics, or prosperity, or the poverty of the Depression. He graduated from Petroleum High, Petroleum, Indiana, in 1932. For a graduation present, Grandpa gave him what appeared in the one photo that was preserved to be a five-ton truck. With it, Dad earned a living through the hard years of the Depression. He was drafted in that first lottery call-up spring 1941, and he spent the war driving truck: 3rd Division, 15th Infantry, C Company.

During the Depression, Dad hauled grain and hay from northern Indiana down into the South, where he cross-loaded logs and hauled them back to a little sawmill. I don't know how prosperous Dad's trucking business was. There wasn't a lot of money in circulation, so his business was probably cash strapped, evidenced by him driving school bus one winter and bucking feed sacks another winter. During the 1930s, times were tough for farmers and those employed on the fringes of farming, a solace to which I could turn when I found myself in tough conditions logging on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula, or fishing a too-small boat out of Dutch Harbor.

In 1997, at a Kizer family reunion, I finally encountered my dad's thoughts on politics and prosperity. My uncle gave me a copy of the Wednesday, August 11, 1943, edition of the *Bluffton News-Banner* (Bluffton, Indiana) in which was an excerpted letter from Dad to the newspaper. (A copy of the letter has been scanned-in and is attached as a [pdf](#) file.)

Dad writes,

I guess everyone has heard of Sicily. Many times I've read articles about the beautiful island and the many races of people and old buildings there.

Quite some time ago I wrote a letter from North Africa. Since then We [sic] have come a long way and a lot has happened. The road has been hard and rough and at times very discouraging. But the farther we go, we realize more and more what we are doing over here and what it would mean if things were the same in the good old United States.

We might think things are tough in the States, and that we are being mistreated, and at times falsely led, but until one sees the once well-to-do people on the streets begging for food, because they have had nothing to eat for days, then, and then only, can we realize just how fortunate we of the United States are. Can any one of you, with a good home and substantial income, picture yourself standing on the street in ragged clothes asking someone for a slice of bread or can of beans, or maybe a can of milk for a baby?

The pace of American life today truly doesn't allow those who have good homes and substantial incomes time to reflect upon what it would be like to beg. Dad's question presupposes a changed status, the transition from prosperity to extreme poverty. As

such, it remains a valid question. Can anyone who has never done without really imagine having nothing? If the biblically prophesied period commonly identified as the [Tribulation](#) is close at hand, the argument behind my theological writings, then the face of poverty will become the face in every disciple's mirror. Christians will not be bodily raptured to heaven. Within greater Christianity, only the LDS Church has actively made provisions for a social upheaval. And then, their plans will have them leveraging food into discipleship, thereby causing spiritually circumcised descendants of Abraham to become descendants of Esau rather than of Israel.

Continuing with Dad's letter,

Yes, these people have lived on little or nothing for years, but never have they lost courage or faith in God that some day someone would come to their aid. Of course it is true that we of America are of a different world and that in practically no way are we dependent on these people of Sicily, but after all, they are human too and we are giving them the chance to live again. When one sees the confidence and faith and hope these people have in America, you realize that we are living in the best place in the world.

A second or a third year into the Tribulation, will it be said of Americans that *these people have lived on little or nothing for years, but never have they lost courage or faith in God?* Or will those disciples who today sincerely believe that they will be raptured to heaven lose faith in God when loved ones perish from hunger? Will they have the courage to walk uprightly before God when they have no covering for their spiritual nakedness but their obedience to God? Or will they, because of unbelief that turns to disobedience, attempt to enter God's rest on the following day? Prophecy has the greater Church rebelling against God 2300 days before Christ returns. And because those rebelling Christians didn't love righteousness and the truth enough to walk uprightly before God, a great delusion will be sent over them so that they cannot repent. They will sincerely believe that they serve God when they kill genuine disciples. But they will be spiritually condemned with no hope of a reprieve, for God will have consigned them to the cross and the lake of fire.

During this holiday season, as the last few shopping days before Christmas quickly pass, America experiences prosperity beyond anything Dad could imagine. The gulf between the people of WW2 Sicily and 21st-Century Americans is almost too great to be imagined. Yet the promise encompassed in the Tribulation is that no time in the past will be as difficult as will be those seven years. And the legitimate question must be asked: How can that be and humanity still survive? The prophet Isaiah writes,

Behold, the Lord will empty the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants...The Earth shall be utterly empty and utterly plundered; for the Lord has spoken this word. The earth mourns and withers; the world languishes and withers; the highest people of the earth languish. The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are scorched, and few men are left. (Isa 24:1, 3-6 ESV)

The prophecy is that few men will survive. The promise of Christ Jesus is that [all who endure to the end shall be saved](#) (Matt 24:13). So between *a few* and *all who endure* is keeping courage and not losing faith in God, a difficult task for an Evangelical Christian who expects to be raptured before the Tribulation begins. The last Eve, however, will not miss her hard labor pains of bringing many sons of God to glory. Again, the Church will not be bodily raptured to heaven, nor will it go to a place of physical safety. To teach otherwise is to teach falsely, to teach as one who has not been sent by God.

Dad writes,

We on the fighting front have no complaints whatever, and we are proud that we can depend on you people at home for the supplies that keep us living and in good health. All we want is to see the end of all this and get back home to live a normal free life. We realize the road is going to be long and bitter, and that some of us may go to the world of lasting peace before we reach the end.

The firstfruits of God, with the exception of a spiritual Joshua and a spiritual Caleb, have been consigned to death, with Christ Jesus as the first of the firstfruits sacrificed as the paschal Lamb of God. For the road from mortality to immortality is long and bitter, and some of us will go to the world of lasting peace before humanity arrives at that moment in time when Christ returns, and judgments are revealed. The world of lasting peace isn't heaven, but the timelessness of the grave, where the dead know nothing until their change comes.

The disciple who is unwilling to lay down his or her life for Christ Jesus is unworthy of salvation. The disciple who believes that God will not require as much from him or her as those formerly well-to-do Sicilians endured will sell the person's birthright for bread and a bowl of lentils, will make him or herself a spiritual son of Esau, whom God hated (Rom 9:13). The disciple who tries to enter God's rest on the following day will have returned to lawlessness or disobedience or sin, all words that mean the person has missed the mark of righteousness. And when the Son of Man is [revealed](#) (Luke 17:26-30), the Body of Christ will have to cover its nakedness with its obedience to God. There will be no other covering for sin for those disciples who were not covering their nakedness with the blood of the paschal Lamb of God. Taking communion however and whenever a person wishes is to offer sacrifice as Cain did, placing before God the fruit of the ground [bread and wine or grape juice or water]. And as God tells Cain, the person will be accepted if the person does right, or practices righteousness (Gen 4:7). But sin lurks at this person's door. Unless a person covers sin with the [Passover Blood of Christ](#), taken as Jesus established the example, sin will continue to lurk at the disciple's door.

The problem with prophecy is what is revealed: the firstborn son of God will be sacrificed as the ransom for humanity's liberation from sin and death. Jesus of Nazareth as the first of the firstfruits already sits at the right hand of the Father. He died on the cross so that a last Eve could be created, and this last Eve will give birth to the remaining disciples who must be sacrificed as those were who wait under the altar. This last Eve will give birth to three sons. When the Tribulation begins, she will bring forth a spiritual Cain who will try to enter God's rest on the following day and who will slay his righteous brother. Then halfway through those seven years of tribulation, this last Eve will give birth to a third son, a spiritual Seth who will be accepted, who only has to endure to the

end to be saved (Matt 24:13). The news of this third spiritual son's birth is the good news that must be proclaimed to all the world as a witness to all nations before the end of the age comes (v. 14). The first two sons die, one spiritually, one physically. And every disciple today has the freewill to determine his or her spiritual mother, has the freewill to determine if he or she will descend from Cain or Abel. Disciples are not greater than their Master [Teacher]. And if disciples do not have more courage and more faith than formerly well-to-do Sicilians who were reduced to begging, then these disciples will in no way endure to the end.

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