

STAND!

Homework for Lesson 1

STAND FOR GOD

Scripture: Genesis 11; Daniel 2 and 3

Lesson Summary:

Charles Dickens' classic novel *A Tale of two Cities* opens with the following famous lines

“It was the best of times, and it was the worst of times; it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way ”

This famous piece of English literature is set in the two cities of London and Paris before and during the French Revolution. The novel tells the story of a French doctor, his 18 year long imprisonment in the Bastille in Paris, and his release to live in London with his daughter Lucie whom he had never met. The story is set against the stark contrast of conditions mentioned in the opening lines that led to the French Revolution and the reign of Terror. The main characters are in constant danger of being tortured, imprisoned, or killed. In the troubling times of the 21st century, it is helpful to broaden our understanding that there are always “best of times and worst of times” in every generation.

In a spiritual sense, the historical time frame of the French Revolution was a vicious struggle between the forces of light and darkness that have been at war from the beginning of time. In every generation the same forces wage this persistent war, and many are brought to the forefront in the great struggle between good and evil – men and women called by God to STAND for truth and justice. The Dickens story oscillates between the two cities of London and Paris, where revolution is stirring and thousands are dying. It was the “best of times” because of the potential it created for good men to rise up to STAND for what was right and true. It was the worst of times because of the immeasurable cost it demanded for those fighting for justice and truth in the bloody French Revolution. They faced death and destruction at every turn.

Likewise, I believe we are living today in what might be considered “the best of times and the worst of times.” It is the best of times because of the great opportunities that abound for spiritual heroes - giants of the Christian faith to rise up and make their

STAND against the forces of evil and darkness. It is the “worst of times” because the world is growing darker by the day and the cultural stream against which the believer must swim is upstream, demanding, and often dangerous. Swimming against the current is never easy and always carries a cost, but God has allowed us to live in this present generation for His purpose - to know Him, love Him, serve Him, and STAND FOR HIM no matter the cost.

From beginning to end God’s word highlights the all too familiar battle between the forces of light and darkness that will ultimately culminate at the end of human history with the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. The dark forces of evil will finally be dealt a fatal blow as Jesus returns to rule the world in perfect justice and truth.

As the Dickens novel centers upon two European cities, likewise the Bible centers upon two cities - Jerusalem and Babylon. Jerusalem is the city of God, the place of God’s chosen people, the place of God’s presence, and the place where the spiritual battle between the forces of good and evil has been and will be most fierce as history moves toward its culmination. Jerusalem is the place to which Jesus will return to set up his Millennial Kingdom from which He will rule the world in perfect truth and justice for 1000 years. In contrast, Babylon is the city God declares as rebellious and godless. When this city is mentioned throughout both Old and New Testaments, we find decadence, cruelty, abuse, injustice, captivity, and at the climax of human history, the city of Babylon is called “the Mother of Harlots.” When it comes to spiritual light and darkness, these two biblical cities stand in staggering disparity to one another.

What all the writers of God’s word agree upon is this: although Babylon is an ancient city whose origins are traced back to the time of Nimrod in Genesis 11 and no longer exists in power today, the **spirit of Babylon** in its rebellion against the one true and living God is indeed alive and well as we draw closer to Christ’s second coming. Our ever faithful God has not left us in the dark to figure out what is going on in our world today and how we are to live in the midst of these opposing forces. He has given us the wisdom we need to navigate our times, discern the spiritual forces at work in our culture, and understand the Babylonian spirit of godlessness that is growing ever stronger as we move toward one final world government under the leadership of one final world leader the Bible calls the Antichrist. We need God’s instruction to understand our times and build ourselves up in the strength of the Lord so that we may STAND against these ancient demonic spirits and warring forces that continually seek to steal, kill, and destroy anything and anyone who stands in the way of their determined evil purposes.

In Lesson 1 of our study called “**STAND**” we will focus on this battle between the forces of light and darkness and the struggle every genuine believer is called by God to face in order to **STAND** for God and represent His light. It may be the best of times and the worst of times, but God is sovereign over all times – over all circumstances, all people, and all events. Nothing takes Him by surprise, and He is working out His plans and His purposes for all humanity as well as the progression of world history. Our challenge is to realize that God is calling us as believers to live at such a time as this to be His royal ambassadors of light and truth and to **STAND** for Him as Daniel and other great heroes of the faith were obedient to do no matter the cost.

We are living in perilous times, friends. God’s people (that’s YOU and ME!) hold the key as to whether God will bring the revival we are praying for or allow us to continue moving toward His judgment. Never has there been a time in this great spiritual battle that our standing for God has mattered more! The Bible declares that one person with God is a majority – imagine what impact could be made if an army of soldiers willing to stand against the darkness rose up together to turn the tide of evil. I believe this is the only answer to the revival we are pleading with God to give in our day. We must rise up – **WE MUST STAND** – we must be willing to suffer and potentially give all we have to this fight, but with God we can do all things! It starts with humble repentance before God for how we have been complicit in embracing the darkness and asking for cleansing and purity so that the Spirit of God in us is not compromised in any way. God’s power and our purity go hand in hand. God doesn’t use a dirty vessel to accomplish his work. Revival cannot come to those who are only playing games - to those who are only admirers of Christ but not true disciples of Him. Never forget Jesus’ words: “If anyone shall come to me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. No one having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:57 – 62)

There is a great cost to following Jesus, and we are swimming upstream! I have prayed for this class for over a year now asking God for this study to be the catalyst that will bring revival to our community and nation. We need to recognize the forces of darkness that are threatening to destroy us, but we do not need to feel hopeless that they will overcome us - for God is with us, and with Him we can do all things. Will you commit to begin this study with that thought in mind and ask God just what YOUR part is to be as He begins to work in you, through you, and for you. May we be astounded at His faithfulness in our generation to do exceedingly, abundantly, above and beyond what we are asking of Him. And through His army of courageous soldiers of light (that’s YOU and ME), may He bring our nation back to His truth, His justice, and His goodness. May our nation return once more to what He ordained it to be – one nation UNDER GOD.

Study Questions for Meditation and Application

God's Sovereignty Over All Things

1. **Read: Daniel 4:28-33** and examine closely God's power to reduce the greatest Babylonian king in the world of that day to nothing - in an instant. What insight does this one verse give you about God's power over all people and nations? **Record your thoughts.**
2. How are you encouraged that God is sovereign over the best of times and the worst of times?
3. **Meditate upon Psalm 22:28** and make a choice now to embrace the truth that God is the ONE who raises up kings and deposes them.

The Present Day Move Toward Globalism

1. How do you understand the present day movement known as Globalism and the push toward a one world government? What dangers do you see as the world moves rapidly in this direction? In your view, do you recognize this trend as "the spirit of Babylon" alive and well in our present day? **Explain.**
2. In what ways can globalism and one world government usher in the biblical prophecies that the Bible predicts will be in place in the final days of earth's history and the return of Christ?

3. How are we to stand for Christ against the dark forces moving us toward globalism? **Give practical suggestions.**

4. Find assurance from the following scripture verses and record your thoughts about each:
 - A. **Habakkuk 2:14**

 - B. **Psalm 72:19**

 - C. **Revelation 11:15**

God's View of Globalism

Read: Genesis 11 and Daniel 2

1. Describe Nimrod and what he attempted to create.

2. Why is Nimrod considered the first prototype of the coming Antichrist?

3. **Read: Daniel 2** and describe the nation of Babylon and its most powerful king, Nebuchadnezzar.

4. What is significant about Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation?

5. Make a list of the various parts of the statue and what each section represents.

6. How does Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream demonstrate to you that forces of darkness are no match for the power of God?

How Can YOU Make the Worst of Times into the Best of Times?

1. PRAY!

Thank God right now for making you a part of His family and commissioning you to be part of His plan to STAND against the darkness for His glory.

2. **STUDY** Daniel 3 and ask God to use this chapter to give you strength to **STAND** against the darkness of our times no matter the cost!
3. Describe the “test of faith” God used in Daniel 3 to determine if Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would stand against the powerful empire of Babylon.
4. What hardships are you willing to endure for your Christian faith?
5. Which of the 10 Commandments anchored the three Hebrew young men to STAND FOR THE ONE TRUE GOD?
6. What can you learn from them?
7. What comes to mind when you apply the following principle:

We must fear God more than we fear man.

8. Read: Daniel 3:24

- A. Who is the 4th “man” in the fire?
- B. How are you encouraged by this as you examine God’s mighty power and provision to save his own in the midst of the fire?

9. STAND FOR GOD!

- A. Defend God's truth by standing alone if necessary
- B. Run your race to the finish line
- C. Decide to stand for Christ ahead of the crisis
- D. Believe God is sufficient for any crisis you will ever face
- E. Endure hardship like a good soldier
- F. React with grace and truth
- G. Reach your goal of hearing Jesus say, "Well Done!"

10. **Ask** God NOW to make this lesson very personal to you.

Pray for the strength to STAND FOR HIM no matter the cost!

11. MEMORIZE: MICAH 6: 8

"And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."

"Therefore, my beloved and longed for brethren, my joy and crown, STAND fast in the Lord" Philippians 4:1

"They have bowed down and fallen; but we have risen and stand upright." Psalm 20: 8