



April 3, 2005

Treasure In Earthen Vessels

Preparing the world for the coming of Christ, the prophets foretold of the abundance of God's mercy to all who live. Joel bears this out when he writes of the great things that would come about as a result of the revelation of the Messiah and the unfolding of God's will through a new kingdom that would last forever. "***And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.***" (Joel 2.28-32). In this passage, fulfilled and quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost, there is a figurative image created that tells that the blessings of God would literally fill the earth. Jeremiah, in writing of the coming of a new law and kingdom states, "***But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, an d every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.***" (Jer 31.33-34). The fact is that the word of God has so filled the earth that there is no reason not to know him unless we simply refuse to accept the obvious availability of His word. There are those who continually miss the point. Some religious teachings, claiming to be spiritual, tell people that there is that element of God within that is divine and when we seek this properly then we will see amazing things ("miracles") happen in our lives. I wonder if we took a survey, just how many apathetic, disillusioned people we would find who have heard these great promises. Promises such as receiving the Holy Spirit, of being suddenly free of things that one has fought with for years in their own lives, only to find that when we believe there is still yet more work to be done to come to an understanding of what God wants us to be. The real problem is that being obedient to God and living the way that he wants us to is just too simple for most to accept. There are many who have gone a search for spirituality, in spite of the fact that they have no idea what this truly means. Instead they have accepted the false sense of physical and emotional calm as being a spiritual state. Others have searched for this among the ranks of the multitude of unsaved believers who have bought into the ideas and practices of religious bodies who cannot support what they teach or practice with the scriptures. But, the search goes on. The old saying is true in this case. Most folks just can't see the forest for the trees. Jude tells us that the faith has been delivered to the saints (**Jude 3**). Peter tells us that God has included in this revelation all things that we will need to know about life and godliness (**2 Pet 1.3**). Paul then tells us that there is an expression of power on the part of God that goes unnoticed. Speaking of the word, Paul states, "***For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.***" (**2 Cor 4.6-7**). How is this so. Faithful Christians, those who have understood and obeyed the truth as revealed in God's word, teach others who then are able to obey as well should they desire to do so. There is no need for revelations, extreme sacrifices or other outward displays of things that God has not required of us. God is interested in a true submission to him in doing the things that we find in his word. That appears to be too difficult for most people who prefer to create their own idea of how things should be, then practice this from the safety of their own homes, while others become such examples of sacrifice and dedication that it seems impossible to understand how they accomplish what they do. All of this, however, is worthless if that which is done is not done according to true faith and service to God. The simple things continue to confound the wise even now (**1 Cor 1.27**). Most folks simply remain confused and cannot see the forest for the trees.

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