

THE PATHFINDER

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GOD'S UNLIKELY SHEPHERDS

(Part 1 of 2)

We will notice the shepherds of God today; but perhaps not the shepherds we might have expected, such as, the Good Shepherd:

*"I am the **good shepherd**, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." John 10:14.*

Some of God's shepherds are far from the Good One, but they are still called the anointed shepherds of God. Oh, the mystery of it, as we will see.

For instance, Daniel studied the scroll of Jeremiah and realized that Israel's 70 years of Babylonian Captivity had been completed. During his study, Daniel also found that Isaiah had predicted the name of a pagan King who would deliver them. The prophet then took the scroll to that man, king Cyrus of Persia, and showed him that God had recorded his name in Scripture two hundred years earlier. History says that it shook him to the core, yet giving him the confidence to attack Babylon, and in turn, to free Israel from their captivity. The prophetic deceleration even called the idol worshiping king His "***anointed shepherd:***"

*"Who saith of **Cyrus**, **He is my shepherd**, and shall perform all my pleasure....Thus saith the LORD to his **anointed**, to **Cyrus**, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him..." Isaiah 44:28 & 45:1.*

This word was not given to one of the holy prophets or any of the kings of Israel; but to Cyrus. Although an idol worshiping pagan, he was an instrument chosen by God to overthrow the Chaldean empire and free Israel from decades of Babylonian bondage that God had chosen to befall Israel.

It was almost three thousand years ago that Isaiah gave that message. The prophecy came two centuries before Cyrus, and he was called by name, and this unfolded exactly as Isaiah had duly prophesied.

The prophet also spoke concerning this unlikely shepherd:

"I will give you the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the LORD, which call you by your name, am the God of Israel." Isaiah 45:-3.

Once the Jews were freed, Cyrus issued an edict for them to rebuild their Temple in Jerusalem. And, on the exact day he issued the decree, his soldiers unearthed vast amounts of silver and gold that the king of Babylon had hidden under the Euphrates River. God's Word was fulfilled to the letter.

The treasures of Babylon were like treasures in a bank vault. They were locked in the darkness of that kingdom until broken into and taken by Cyrus. Some of those treasures taken from the depository and returned to Jerusalem were *five thousand four hundred gold and silver vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought out of Jerusalem and had put them in the darkness of the house of his gods. Ezra 1:7.*

It is the same in the spirit that is working according to His will today. There are treasures of the LORD that are hidden away in dark places that are to be brought back to their rightful place in the Kingdom of God. These obscure places can be deep within individuals, hidden in

the darkness of religious organizations, as well as in the world. Unless it is by the Spirit, nobody will peer into those obscure places. If He does not open their eyes and send them forth, it will be impossible for anyone to see God's treasures that lay in reserve.

One might not suspect that the two Babylons, one of religion and the other of the government, would be holding many treasures of God's riches, but they do, and these treasures are not only spiritual things, but they are also people. In ***Exodus 19:5*** they are called ***a peculiar treasure who are called out of darkness*** while in the New Testament they are called ***a peculiar people called out of darkness***. ***1 Peter 2:9*** & ***Titus 2:14***.

It should be clear that we are the firstfruits of His peculiar treasure who were called out of darkness. But there are others that are still hidden away in the dark vaults of their own souls as well as that of the world. These neither know it nor do they know God; but He knows them and called them by name a long time ago, even like it was with us:

*"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." ***Ephesians 1:4***.*

The time, of course, will come when they will indeed know Him. He will call them in the Spirit by name. It is then that they will be awakened and begin to know Him. As with Cyrus, they will be shaken to the core, and for the first time also know who they are.

Whether these treasures are individuals in the darkness of Babylon, the treasures of His life that are hidden within the depths of their souls, or the treasures hidden in the darkness of the world, when the anointed ones of the Lord (the anointed watchmen in the heavens, the earth, or are nations' officials), they will invade man's kingdom. The treasures will be found and possessed. *"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I*

have called you by name, you are mine." Isaiah 43:1

At the appointed time, these *treasures of darkness* are to be brought into the light, no longer hidden from us or the world. These treasures are not only to be brought into the light, unveiled, and made known; but as the hour of the unveiling comes, without delay each of us will possess and present them to those in dire need of a long-awaited, refreshing rain. Until that time it can be said:

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him." 1 Corinthians 2:9.

Ah! Of necessity, the manifestation of the Sons of God! Who can remotely imagine the glory of it? None, to be exact! Moreover, there are none who can prevent it when the time comes.

Over the years, even centuries, a number of individuals have promoted themselves as having the keys to the treasures of darkness, claiming they hold the rich mysteries of God's Kingdom. However, not one of them whose eyes have not been opened by hearing the voice of the Son of God can truthfully lay claim to knowing anything about these treasures. Each of them must first be brought into view of the divine revelation before this is possible, and when this comes, the flood-tide and flow of heaven's riches will never cease; for the increase of His government shall never end.

You see, the plural word, *treasures*, signifies not only something laid up and hidden from common view and possession, but suggests an infinite, incalculable supply. It is an amount which cannot be exhausted. It suffices the soul and all spiritual needs and pleasures. It suffices and continually suffices, again and again, over and over, all needs and joys of His wonderful life.

As truth dawns in the person, and in the Spirit they see or know that their name is written in the book of life, the work of our Lord Jesus

begins to be a reality. It is then that the ever-flowing fullness of His grace in, through, and out of us can be known and seen. It superabounds over sin and fills our souls with holy awe while being as natural as breathing air. When we truly see the virtue and power that we have, it will produce the desired effect of manifesting those inconceivable treasures of darkness.

The end purpose of the cross will be experientially known, while carnal man's appetites are forever consumed by the glory of God's majesty. The blood of our Lord that judiciously cleanses all from all sin will be a manifested reality. His resurrection that we already know in part will rise in us. His purity, His holiness, His righteousness which is unto all will be joyfully embraced into the age of the ages.

Praise God! The treasures of mercy, grace, and redemption will be a living realities for all those who came out of Him, which is — **ALL!** He so loves ALL of His creation that He will not rest or relent until ALL know Him as they once did, yet carrying back to Him the treasures from darkness that *His anointed shepherds* give to them, they may think that they are dreaming! If it were any other way, He would not be the Savior and Rewarder that the Scriptures so clearly describe.

To see this by the Spirit is to enter into the beauty of His holiness. It is to comprehend the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the love in Christ. This is the love that passes human knowledge and understanding. In the unfathomable ages to come, even if the sun ever wanes to a dying ember, and if the earth should fail to yield her precious increase — these treasures will ever remain; for they are in themselves infinite, inexhaustible, eternal!

The LORD said that He would give His anointed Cyrus *the hidden riches of secret places*. Those natural riches of gold, silver, and precious gems symbolized greater riches that have been hidden away and awaiting discovery by today's anointed. They are spiritual in nature and each is worth more than a thousand worlds filled with treasures of gold,

rare gems, or inexhaustible fields of grain! Even, His anointed shepherds do not and will hoard them to themselves; but like the anointed Cyrus, they will give these treasures to those that have been liberated by their hand.

We still yearn to see them in a more lighted way, to know with clarity these rich discoveries of the wisdom and goodness of God. Although some have been revealed to us, many more are still a mystery. If they were not, there would be nothing lacking, and His Kingdom would be fully manifested. So, many of them remain concealed even from the keen eye of those who soar like the eagles.

The secret places are just that — SECRET! But when it is the Lord's pleasure to bring them forth to those whose eyes He has opened, each will know that it had truly never entered their hearts, nor crossed the horizons of their minds the treasures hidden in darkness that He had laid up in secret places.

The anointed word of truth surpasses every conceivable thought and every expectation of the heart. These riches of secret places transcend the wealth of the entire earth combined with everything in man's world of religion, economics, and government.

But it is only as these riches of secret places are opened to us that we see, feel, and know what the Lord Jesus Christ is to those who believe in and love Him. Joseph Philpot (1802-1869), who resisted the Church of England and was known as "*The Seceder*," said this in one of his sermons:

"It is this bringing forth of the hidden riches of secret places which stamps a divine reality upon God's Word, and makes it to be spirit and life to the soul. To feel the power and blessedness of these things is a part of that 'secret of the Lord which is with those who fear Him;' and it is by getting into these blessed secrets, handling these treasures, and obtaining possession of these riches, that we come experientially to

realize what a blessed power there is in a true, divine, heartfelt religion.

*"We may see the doctrines plainly enough in the written word of God; but if that is all we know about them, it is like seeing money which is not our own. The grand point is not only to **see** the riches, but to be put in **possession** of them. A religion without power, without savor, without a felt blessedness in the truth of God, by the application of the Spirit, is worthless both for time and eternity. Like a school-boy's sum, it is all upon paper — **a vast amount in figures, without the possession of a penny.***

"But observe how the promises are connected with 'crooked places,' 'bronze gates,' and 'iron bars,' and the going before of the Lord to remove them out of the way. Without this previous work we would be ignorant to our dying day of 'the treasures of darkness'; we would never see with our eyes, nor handle with our hands, 'the hidden riches of secret places.'

"There are but few, comparatively speaking, who know anything of the sweetness and reality of a God-taught religion; of the power of grace upon the soul, or of the riches which are stored up in the fullness of the Son of God. Most, even of those who profess the truth, are satisfied with a name to live, a sound creed, a consistent profession, and admission to church membership, without knowing or desiring to know anything of the blessed reality of communion with God, of a revelation of the Lord Jesus, of the manifestation of His love and mercy to the soul, and the sealings of the blessed Spirit on the heart.

"Is it not so in grace? The Lord may be said 'to call His people by name,' when, by a special work of grace upon their heart, He calls them out of the world to a knowledge of Himself. He does not speak in an audible voice, but the effect is as distinct as if He should say, 'John,' or 'Mary, I want you.' We are not indeed to expect to see the same light, or hear the same audible voice which shone upon and called Saul of Tarsus; but we must experience a measure of the same power, and feel

something of the same divine influence.

"When, then, God thus calls a man, he will, he must come, for He puts forth a power which he cannot and will not resist — at least, not to any purpose. It is certainly grace invincible, if not grace irresistible. Now just see the process. God calls the sinner by name; and though His call is not vocally as the Lord Jesus Christ called His disciples when He said, 'Follow Me,' the effect is still the same." —End quote.

In all this, we learn that the Lord has truly called us by our name, which is a genuine work of grace upon our souls. We did not just happen by accident nor decided on our own to follow after the good life of Jesus Christ. We may have thought so at times, or had our doubts and fears about it, but this did not stop us from being thoroughly tried through the years, and a few may have wavered with unbelief at times, and/or had many anxious misgivings. Even so, the unseen work of God placed His treasures in our hearts for safe keeping, even when we felt that there may have been nothing but darkness therein.

With this, to ever be one of *God's anointed shepherds* that will destroy kingdoms and free their captives would seem very unlikely. But please know, that we are in Christ Jesus who cannot fail, He is also in us, and even though in our estimation, we are ***Unlikely Anointed Shepherds of God***, He will call us forth when the time comes.

There was a day that dawned on us that our hardened hearts had somehow softened, our unbelief was lifted, and some of those treasures of darkness that the anointed shepherds, even those like Cyrus, were brought to light and began to bring us spiritual blessings beyond measure as we were freed from the captivity of Babylon. We then came to know beyond a doubt that God really did call us by our name, that all His works were real, we were not all that *unlikely*, and looking back upon all the ways in which we had been led, sometimes driven, we know that the Lord had gone before us in everything and made our crooked paths straight.

We can now declare with boldness that it was He who called us by our name while in darkness, and this was because He had already written our name in His book of life. This is the King's seal upon our hearts like refreshing dew from heaven. During the dark nights that were upon us at sundry times and seasons did not stop His work in us.

What a great light that shines upon God's own and reveals them for what and who they are! Here we have true religion before us, not man's that is inspired by the split tongue of the serpent, but one that is inspired by the Dove of love. In this religion there is heaven's substance, His divine reality, Jesus personified. It is that which comes down from the throne into the soul of every son and daughter of God as they are awakened to this reality which is initiated by the baptism of His Holy Spirit.

It is not just changing the views of our doctrines or an alteration in life styles, nor is it adopting a certain set of tenets of faith, or embracing special ministers as the only ones from which to learn. Neither is it by being a member of a particular religious denomination regardless how long it has existed. It is not by attending a certain deep-teaching Bible study group, and it is certainly not to go back to the Old Testament Law and live our lives in a legalistic, religious manner.

This *religion* is altogether something entirely different! It supersedes man's ways as much as light supercedes darkness, joy surpasses sorrow, or the mount of transfiguration transcends the hell in the belly of the great fish that held Jonah. There is that much difference between the reality of true religion, the treasures of darkness, and that of man's religion which **IS DARKNESS**.

Some will surely ask, "*Must all who are called by name and awakened to the priceless treasure of Him go through such trying times?*" At one time or another, it will be a must. For as it is written in Acts 14:22, apostle said, "*...that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*"

However, I believe at the present, it depends on whether or not they are the anointed of the Lord, of the firstfruits of the high calling. If, however, they are held captive behind the walls of religious Babylon, the answer is no. Their tribulations work differently and are other purposes. But they will not go through refining tribulation.

The ones who are called to free the treasured captives will certainly go through seemingly impossible odds. They will find that they can neither scale the walls of religious Babylon, their own inner religious borders, nor go through or under them, and likewise with the leaved gates of brass and bars of iron that went from underneath the city walls to the bottom of the river. All that Cyrus faced was humanly impossible. Until the hour is right and the way is revealed; such the Euphrates River is diverted.

Some felt at times that this nation's previous president was another *Cyrus*, God's *anointed shepherd* who would do all these things, and had given him the wherewithal to divert the deep river of socialism and drain the political swamp.

If that had been so, no one could have prevented it; for that which the Lord opens no man can close, and that which He closes, no man can open. Period!

To be continued....

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