



The Gathering Together

So much has been said, but still not enough, about the fantastic wonders of the coming Gathering Together of all Christians. World events of mass gatherings pale into insignificance when this one great event is considered. Worldly views of the sheer expanse and magnitude of this one great event will not alter one single aspect. The Christian's Gathering Together will proceed as planned regardless of opposition, beliefs, speeches, military might, economic factors, governments or the devil. Christians are a "set-apart" people, unable to be judged by worldly means. Each and every one, no matter who, has a distinct and irrevocable reservation. It does a Christian's heart well



to often reflect on Scripture relating to this event. *The Gathering Together is a planned event that will eventually come to pass, perhaps in our lifetime!*

Do you remember when, in Genesis, you learned about the gathering together of the waters?

(Gen 1:9-10) And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together

unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. {10} And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

Can you imagine this? Before this gathering together, the waters and the earth were all awash, mixed up together, seemingly inseparable. But with one word from God, everything changed. Before His very eyes, the mud slinging of existence came to an abrupt halt. The expanses of the waters overall became separated, and on this glorious earth, its waters were collected into the vast oceans. To this day, the boundaries established by God

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have not been defied by any man, spirit or reason. Yes, the devil does try, but he simply cannot undo God's mighty handiwork. When the waters were gathered together and named, they stayed that way. *The devil's floods and storms and rages are nothing but the scurrying of mouse feet across the surface of time, unable to alter a certain prophecy and destiny.* When God destines a gathering of any sort, it is destined and cannot be altered by anything less than God Himself!

Elijah had a most unique experience with a gatherer of sticks. He followed God's instructions and ended in Zarephath.

(1 Ki 17:10) So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city,

behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

The land was in a terrible state. There was a most serious drought and the people suffered greatly.

(1 Ki 17:1) And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

This drought was so bad that even Elijah experienced the trauma of it, but God took care of him. Do you remember that he was fed by ravens?

(1 Ki 17:2-5) And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, {3} Get thee hence,

and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. {4} And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. {5} So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

But even that brook couldn't withstand the severe drought.

(1 Ki 17:6-7) And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. {7} And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

What was he to do? This is when God told him to go to Zarephath:

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(1 Ki 17:8-9) And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, {9} Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

So he went and found this woman.

(1 Ki 17:11-12) And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. {12} And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

This poor woman was in such a sour and poor state by this

time. Her response to Elijah was certainly understandable, but hardly due if God was going to take care of her. Perhaps she simply wasn't aware of her impending relief. Here she was, desperate, hungry and thirsty, in the last throes of her existence, gathering two sticks for her "last supper" fire. Even though Elijah was standing there in front of her, she couldn't sense the impending greatness and significance of that which was about to follow her gathering together of two sticks.

Often, it is difficult for us to imagine relief and greatness when suffering in the midst of onslaughts of despair. But don't forget

that great things can easily follow a gathering together.

(1 Ki 17:13-14) And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first,

and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

{14} For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.

She had no idea, and maybe you have no idea as well, but when your gathering together takes place, you will be totally relieved and cared for, in ways that you simply cannot imagine. Do you think this woman could comprehend her relief, even after hearing Elijah's words? Probably not, but she was sure willing to try.

(1 Ki 17:15) And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.

In order to receive God's promises, you must follow His

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instructions. What instructions did she follow with Elijah? He told her to feed him first, and then feed her and her boy. Then he gave her the promise of an abundant food and oil supply. *Sometimes, you just have to believe. You just have to walk out on a promise.* If you don't, you could end up missing an eternity of blessings. This woman tapped into her last vestige of hope and believing and did what she was instructed to do. She was totally and completely willing to put her trust in mere words. In fact, she staked her entire life on what was said. Are you willing to stake your entire life on what God's Word says? This stake in believing and hope will make the greatest difference to you and yours for all of time. Elijah, she, and her boy were all saved from a certain, and otherwise impending death.

(1 Ki 17:16) And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.

Success always follows those who believe and who place their hope in Almighty God.

We just looked at an Old Testament account of a woman gathering together a couple of sticks, and found that, when she followed the instructions of God's Word, she reaped a most glorious existence thereafter. Yes, I know I am making a big deal about gathering sticks, but I am using it to make a point. To this woman, her sticks were symbolic. She had to collect them for her cooking fire. Could she have mixed up that last bit of flour with that last bit of oil and just swallowed it down and been done with it? Sure, she could have. But she didn't. She

took the time to gather those sticks in hopes of preparing something nice. Then came her instructions. When she did what she was supposed to do, things worked out quite well. That's my point.

(2 Th 2:1-2) Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, {2} That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:2, we see something remotely similar. We see instructions for dealing with our time before our gathering together. We are told to not be soon shaken in mind or be troubled. Hummm. This is quite interesting! Aren't these two of our greatest follies? Aren't these two of the most

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pressing daily issues – every day? If you want to stop being all shaken up mentally; if you want to stop being all troubled mentally; you must follow these instructions. There are forces at play determined to shake you up and disturb you mentally, right up until the very second of the Gathering Together. In verse two, we are told that spirits do this. These spirits are devil spirits. They are everywhere, trying to ruin what would otherwise be a wonderful life. We are told that words do this. Have you ever tried to reject all of the millions of words bombarding you daily? The volume of words striking our minds is mind-boggling. But, it would certainly do us well to try and restrict their entry. Letters and false teachings about the Gathering Together being at hand is exactly what these spirits, words, and false teachings propound. They want you to think that you missed the

Gathering Together, that you are not going to be gathered together, or some other nasty reality that simply cannot happen.

(2 Th 2:3) Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Man is the main conveyor of such sinister illusions.

We are told to be aware, to pay attention, to follow these instructions – so that our hearts will remain free and peaceful as we await the Gathering Together. Many people become deceived though. We, on the other hand, are those who must refuse deception.

I must talk a moment about the “day of Christ.” This particular day is not the Gathering Together.

It is after the gathering together. Several events are listed in 2 Thessalonians 2. Verse one mentions two of them: the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; and our gathering together unto him. Verse two mentions another event, the day of Christ.

Verse three starts discussing the sequence of these events. It teaches us that the “day of Christ” shall not happen until there is a “falling away” first. This falling away is what directly precedes the revealing of the son of perdition. Christians don’t understand this at all generally. They think that they will be around when the son of perdition is revealed. They won’t be, but quite often, they are deceived into thinking that they will be. This is the deception that I mentioned earlier.

Let me jump back to the “day of Christ” by reading verse eight.

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(2 Th 2:8) And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

This is what will happen during this “day of Christ.” Notice that it does talk about “his coming,” but what most don’t understand is that “his coming” is in two distinct parts. First, he will come to gather together his saints. Then he will come to reveal the wicked one. Christians won’t be earth-bound during this second part. They will have already been gathered together with Christ. The “falling away first” refers to the gathering together of all Christians.

(2 Th 2:3) Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be

revealed, the son of perdition;

The day of Christ will not happen until after the gathering together!

The actual gathering together event is described in 1 Thessalonians 4:

(1 Th 4:13-18) But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. {14} For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. {15} For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. {16} For the Lord himself shall descend from

heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: {17} Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. {18} Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

All Christians, those who have already died, and those who are still alive, will be gathered together. No one will be missed. All Christians will be with Christ at this time! Verse 15 tells us that those who are alive at the return of Christ will have to wait their turn, so to speak, for they will not prevent [proceed] those who are asleep [dead].

The heavens will be ablaze with a mighty shout and the archangel’s voice and the trump

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of God. Can you imagine? When this happens, the dead in Christ shall rise first. We will witness this with our own eyes. Immediately after this, those of us who are alive will rise into the clouds. *We'll meet the Lord in the air and ever be with him.* Comfort yourselves with these words today and forever. And don't forget. When God gathers something together, it's a done deal!

Much love in Christ,

Jerry D. Brown