

## **“AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME”**

“WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT, THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, THAT THEY ARE ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR WITH CERTAIN UNALIENABLE RIGHTS, THAT AMONG THESE ARE LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS...” Declaration of Independence

The pages of history speak volumes to our hearts when we realize the principles for which our forefathers fought. We, who have become so accustomed to the rights which we have, often fail to appreciate those who sacrificed their lives to win them for us. Was the world ready for those ideas of unalienable rights, for the freedom of every man to pursue happiness as equal brothers? Many thought that society was not ready for such drastic changes. They simply wanted to preserve the injustices which brought them greater luxury and gain. One man’s nobility was often bought for the price of another man’s poverty.

Recently our nation observed the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Looking back to the power of his work, our society sees a hero, a man driven by the principles which our forefathers taught long ago. His words were eloquent and moving and our souls were stirred. “I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that little children will one day live in a nation where they will be judged not by the color of their skins but by the content of their character. I have a dream that one day...right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hand with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.”

What is it about our times that could produce men like Martin Luther King? Where would we be today without the contributions of men like Abraham Lincoln? As we studied them in school, we began to realize what great contributions they made to the world. Then, before we knew it, that same society brutally took them away--from despair, to hope, then to despair once again. In spite of this, their work remains; an inspiration to us of what is noble and good. Was it merely the charismatic power of a few men that changed our society so dramatically or was there a greater force at work? The ideas of freedom remained with us after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. The ideas of equality for all did not end with the death of Martin Luther King. What we have seen is the progress of an idea whose time has finally come--an idea whose author and maker is God Himself.

In studying the Bible, we find that God has given us a chronological outline of what His plans are. It is in accordance with His fixed plans that we see things happen in the world. Based on Bible chronology we can determine that we are now in the 7<sup>th</sup> 1,000 year period since the creation of man. This is a very special time for the world. It is this 7<sup>th</sup> 1,000 year day that the scripture alludes to when it says, “six days thou shalt labor, but the seventh is a day of rest.” Leviticus 25 goes on to show that this day of rest would be a time of jubilee...a time when men would no longer oppress one another...a time when liberty would be proclaimed throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof...a

time when every man would be returned to a perfect society. It was with all this in mind that we are told, “He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you: whom the heavens must retain until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:21

We are presently living in the times of restitution. It is by the Lord’s overruling power that we see the work of restitution progressing. Restitution means to restore to a former condition. This refers to the work of Jesus which will restore mankind to the mental, moral, and physical perfection which our father Adam possessed in the Garden of Eden. In the beginning phases of His kingdom this work relates to the return of the human rights that Adam lost with his fall into sin. The immense changes that are occurring have brought with them great upheavals. In 1 Corinthians 4:5 we are told that the Lord will “bring to light the hidden things of darkness. And will make manifest the counsels of the hearts and then shall every man have praise of God.”

As we look at the world today we often fear because of the terrible things that are happening. Tonight, half the people of the world will go to bed hungry. Though the efforts of great men have been commendable, the problems of the poor and underprivileged are mounting every day. Simply having the desire to help cannot accomplish such a monumental task. All the missionaries who have ever lived cannot stop the hunger from returning or the oppression from continuing. Only He who has all power and wisdom can deal with our problems. “He (Christ) shall judge the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor...For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.” Psa. 72:4, 12

God’s designs are much more far reaching than our social problems. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:25, 26, that Christ’s reign of righteousness must continue “until he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.” In Malachi 4:2 we read, “The sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings.” The prophet Isaiah tells us that, “He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.” The scenes of total happiness that Jesus created when he raised the dead will be multiplied and relived over and over again.

The doctrines that Jesus taught were thrilling. They have inspired many people throughout the ages to serve God with their whole hearts. Knowing that we are now living in the time of the fruition of all the wonderful promises of God’s word, how it should gladden our souls and motivate our resolve to live in accordance with His will and ways until the realization of that dream of a “new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.” Isaiah 65:17