

## **So Easy and Yet So Hard**

‘Our teacher asked us what our favorite animal was, and I said, “fried chicken”. She said I wasn’t funny, but she couldn’t have been right because everyone in the class laughed. My daddy and mama told me to always be truthful and honest, and I am. Fried chicken is my favorite animal. I told my dad what happened, and he said my teacher was probably a member of some animal group that loves animals very much. I do, too, especially chicken, pork and beef. Anyway, my teacher sent me to the principal’s office. I told him what happened, and he laughed. Then he told me not to do it again. The next day in class my teacher asked me what my favorite live animal was. I told her it was chicken. She asked me why, just like she’d asked the other children. So I told her it was because you could make them into fried chicken. She sent me back to the principal’s office again. He laughed again and told me not to do it again. I don’t understand. My daddy and mama taught me to be honest, but my teacher doesn’t like it when I am. Today, my teacher asked us to tell her what famous person we admire most. I told her, “Colonel Sanders”. Guess where I am now . . . ???’

If only everyone was as honest as this little boy! Recall Lord Jesus’ prayer in Matthew 11:25-26: “O Father, Lord of heaven

and earth, thank You for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike”. The little boy exhibited the very quality that the Lord Jesus praised because Father God revealed heavenly things to the “childlike”. So, if this little boy is an example of being childlike, then what does this make his teacher? Presumably, among “those who think themselves wise and clever”. The teacher asked questions of the class, but expected only certain kinds of answers. When the little boy’s answers fell outside of what the teacher considered acceptable, she sent him to the principal’s office. And we look on that and ask, “Whatever for?” Well, the boy’s dad thought perhaps it was because the teacher was a liberal animal lover, and by inference, the teacher was trying to indoctrinate her students into an idolatrous love of animals as well. She was likely a health nut, perhaps even a vegan, since it seemed that the concept of “fried chicken” triggered her, and offended her, so much so that she found herself unable to deal with the emotional trauma it caused her so she had to send the boy away, out of her sight, out of her classroom, to the only place she could send him—the principal’s office, if only for a few minutes relief from his “racism”. Oh, horror of horrors! Are we going to have to witness statues and likenesses of that paragon of deliciousness, Colonel Sanders, torn down, be hidden away, and his likeness or reminders of him in KFC commercials forever purged?

I’m sorry. Did I digress? Or go off on a tangent? But

doesn't it seem like such a train of thought is exactly what our mass media want us to fixate on? So I ask you, as Christians, people who follow the Savior of the World 24/7, what should we "dwell" upon? Didn't we read just last Sunday this line from Psalm 91:1: "Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty"? To "live in the shelter of the Most High" means to "dwell in" God. In other words, us believers are to "live in" all that is God; our thoughts are to "dwell upon" God and the things of God. Today's psalm reiterates these facts in verses 18 and 20: "The Lord is close to all who call on Him, yes, to all who call on Him in truth. The Lord protects all those who love Him, but He destroys the wicked". This ever-so-simple command to "live in" Him seems utterly unattainable to the self-identified "wise and clever". But it shouldn't be in the least bit surprising. For the "wise and clever" of first century Jerusalem couldn't see the Messiah as He walked and talked right in front of their faces. In their blinding arrogance and condescending conceit, all they could "see" was a fraudulent imposter tragically leading the simple people astray, Who had to be stopped by any means necessary. They succeeded in getting rid of Him, by legal machinations, getting Him sentenced to death by crucifixion, thus silencing Him forever, and protecting the people and the whole nation from certain doom and destruction.

Well, they didn't silence Him in the least. In reality, by crucifying Him, they actually "succeeded" in amplifying His voice and

message countless times when He resurrected and then ascended into Heaven, sending down Holy Spirit to live and speak through the ever-expanding crowds of disciples forming the new Church of Jesus, the Bride of Christ. This was all pre-planned by God. He is always in control, even and especially when it doesn't look like it. For whatever the devil intends for evil, God ultimately transforms into good for His people.

Consider the prophecies we just read in Zechariah 9. Some have already been fulfilled, or partially fulfilled, while others still wait to be realized. Many are the same prophecies we find expressed in different ways in Daniel and in Revelation. But look specifically at the opening verses of this chapter. They speak of a future destruction of the proud city states north of Judah and Jerusalem, most in present day Lebanon. Chief among them is Tyre, at one time one of the richest and most powerful cities in the entire ancient world. One of the oldest, continuously occupied cities in the world, even today it's the fifth largest city of Lebanon. But when Zechariah wrote these prophecies, Tyre, though maintaining its independent status by paying tributes to Babylon, was still a legendary and influential regional force. It and many of the surrounding city states had not yet been fully subjugated by any outside power. But Zechariah here prophesies that they all will be. Two hundred years later, the entire region fell to the powerful Persian Empire. During which, Jerusalem and the Temple were rebuilt, all on the Persians' dime. And here we see verse eight

fulfilled: “I will guard My Temple and protect it from invading armies. I am watching closely to ensure that no more foreign oppressors overrun My people’s land”.

Specifically, this last part of the prophecy was fulfilled for the first time when the Persian Empire succumbed to the might of Alexander the Great of the Greeks. The Temple had been rebuilt, and Jerusalem restored. But, as the Jewish historian Josephus records, when Alexander overran the Persian Empire and set up a new capital in Babylon, he ordered the high priest in Jerusalem to send supplies for the Greek army. Juddua, the high priest, refused the order saying he would send nothing as long as the last Persian king, Darius, was still living. Enraged Alexander then vowed to march on Jerusalem and kill every single priest. Months later, as Alexander and a small army approached Jerusalem, Juddua declared a special time for prayer. While praying, he dreamed that when Alexander arrived, all the priests should wear white, while he, the high priest, should wear his royal priestly garments. And he was told to have no fear. When Alexander entered Jerusalem, he saw this grand procession of the priests in white and the high priest arrayed in royal priestly robes in resplendent colors. And then, Alexander saluted the high priest. For he had seen in a dream while still in Macedonia, northern Greece, this very man in this very apparel. He was then shown in the writings of Daniel the prophecy of a Greek destroying the empire of the Persians. He realized he was that Greek, and thus he

then freed the Jews from all taxation for seven years, and gave them autonomy to rule themselves.

And so Zechariah's prophecy was fulfilled. And I tell you, it will be fulfilled yet again in far greater scope for in the remainder of the chapter, verses, 9-17, both the first and second comings of the Messiah, Lord Jesus, are prophesied. Folks, so much history has transpired. Miraculous history, stupendous events, all foretold in God's written word, hundreds and thousands of years before they happened. And yet our educational institutions are failing to teach true history. In many respects, history should be the most important subject taught, because it is through history that a people learn who they are. Is it not all-too-painfully obvious that far too many of today's young people haven't a clue who they are? Like children, they gather together for mutual self-affirmation, a sense of belonging, meaning and purpose, for they've not been taught who they are and Whose they are. And so they think socialism is the answer! Don't they know of the mass genocide communism has caused every time it's ruled? No, they don't.

The Bible must needs to be put back in the schools. Lord Jesus said that His yoke is easy and His burden light. What is His yoke? It's His teachings and instructions which are so easy to follow if we would just accept them in blind faith as a trusting child would, but yet so hard if we're convinced we're "wise and clever". So be truly smart, and accept God's word, and dwell in Him. You won't regret it! Ever.

