

The Ultimate Snub

Joe Slater

Insulting God used to produce gasps and raised eyebrows. Today it's pretty much standard fare. But it's nothing new! Some 600 years before the birth of Jesus, King Jehoiakim of Judah demonstrated his disdain for God and His word in what might be viewed as the ultimate snub.

The Lord had been warning His people for centuries that He would send them into captivity unless they turned from their wicked ways. Jeremiah and other faithful prophets endured abuse ranging from mockery to imprisonment and death as they spoke truth from God.

Shortly after King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon conquered Jerusalem (606 BC), God told Jeremiah to write all of his previous prophecies on a scroll and have them read to the people in hope that they would repent (Jeremiah 36:1-3). The warning shocked the people, especially those in the king's administration. They arranged for Jehoiakim himself to hear Jeremiah's words from the scroll.

The king's servant, Jehudi, read from the scroll. *"And it happened, when Jehudi had read three or four columns, that the king cut it with the scribe's knife and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the scroll was consumed"* (36:23).

Burning the scroll didn't keep its warnings from happening. Jerusalem's condition continued to deteriorate. Finally, in 586 BC, Nebuchadnezzar attacked for the final time, destroying the temple, sacking the city, slaughtering almost everyone, and carrying the survivors into captivity.

Today the Bible suffers more from neglect than from people trying to destroy it. Jesus said, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away"* Let us not snub God by ignoring His word. Instead, store it up in your heart to keep you from sin (Psalm 119:11).

How To Beat The Devil

In 2002 The New York Times ran a story by Rick Bragg about the unusual events in Inglis, Florida. The town's mayor, Carolyn Risher, took the unprecedented step of issuing a mayoral proclamation banning Satan from the community's city limits. The restraining order declared: "Be it known from this day forward that Satan, ruler of darkness, giver of evil, destroyer of what is good and just, is not now, nor ever again will be, a part of this town of Inglis. Satan is hereby declared powerless, no longer ruling over, nor influencing, our citizens" (www.nytimes.com). The Times article went on to say that the proclamation was printed out and placed in four hollowed out posts staked at the town's four entrances.

Wouldn't it be nice if it were that easy to banish Satan, or even strip him of his power? This spiritual enemy has plagued those who seek to follow God since his lies in the Garden of Eden. But John has good news for the readers of Revelation. Satan CAN BE defeated!

John lays out the formula for us in Rev. 12:11: *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death."* First, we must have been washed in the Lamb's blood (i.e. baptized; Acts 22:16). Next, we must obey His will (the New Testament teachings). And finally, we must *"be faithful unto death"* (Rev. 2:10).

--David Bragg (via *Bulletin Gold*)

First Things First

I read about a man teaching a time management seminar. To get his point across, he brought out a gallon-size mason jar and a bunch of fist-size rocks. One by one he placed the rocks into the jar. Then he asked the group if the jar was full. They all exclaimed that indeed, it was.

The man then pulled out a bucket of gravel and poured it into the jar, shaking the jar as he poured so the gravel would settle between the large stones. He asked the group again if the jar was full. Catching on, most said no.

Then the man pulled out a bucket of sand and poured it into the jar, filling the small cracks between the gravel. He asked if the jar was full; one student sarcastically shouted, "Probably not!"

"Good," said the teacher as he pulled out a pitcher of water and filled the holes left by the sand. When he was through, he asked the class, "What was the point of this illustration?" One student spoke up: "The point is that no matter how full your schedule is, you can always fit in more stuff if you really try!"

The teacher replied: "No, the point is that if you don't put the big rocks in first, you will never fit them in."

We live such busy lives that it is important to make sure we fit the "big rocks" of life in first. If you don't make time for things like family and friends, then there will never be enough time for them. But even more important than those, as Christians we need to be certain we are making time for God. If we wait until after all the work, daily tasks, and chores are done, we will find there is never time.

So take a look at your lives. Are you making time for the big rocks? More importantly, are you making time for The Rock?

--Luke Bower (Abilene, TX) via Old Paths