

Faith on the Earth?

Jesus' parable of the persistent widow concluded with a promise and a question. Jesus promised that God will speedily avenge His persecuted people; and He asked, *"Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth"* (Luke 18:8).

Trials and mistreatment test our faith. The persistent widow in the parable kept pleading to the unjust judge for justice and finally received it. How much more should the servants of a just and faithful God keep praying even under the worst of circumstances?

But some disciples allow severe trials to destroy their faith. In the parable of the sower (Luke 8), Jesus spoke of the rocky soil where the tender plant had no depth of root and perished in the hot sun. This illustrated people with shallow faith who *"in time of temptation/trial fall away"* (8:13).

Christians in the early church endured devastating persecution from both Jews and the Roman government. Many remained faithful unto death; but some surrendered their faith to save their lives. They gave up before God avenged the blood of the martyrs by destroying Jerusalem and causing the fall of the Roman Empire.

Faithful believers have continued to be abused down through the centuries by Catholics, Protestants, atheist governments, and others. Here again, some brethren remained steadfast while others threw in the towel. Nobody said waiting for God to take His vengeance would be easy.

If persecuted Christians should remain faithful under such challenging circumstances, how much more ought we to serve the Lord zealously when the worst we face might be an ugly remark or a door slammed in our face? We know not when Jesus will return, but when He does, will He find you being faithful?

Reality . . . Not Myth

"Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly" (1 Timothy 4:7).

I recently saw a map listing reported Bigfoot sightings in the United States and Canada over the past fifty years. It went into such great detail that it broke down statistics by province, state, and county, sharing eyewitness testimony and the exact location of each sighting. Since 1974, a total of 109 sightings have been reported in my home state of Tennessee. Fortunately, none of the counties in my area or the bordering Kentucky counties have reported Bigfoot sightings. Whew!

For those unaware, Bigfoot (also known as Sasquatch) is a large, hairy humanoid creature reported to occupy the woods of North America. Numerous groups study the phenomenon with the hope of transforming myth into reality. Just this past year, a Bigfoot conference was held at a state park minutes from my home. And Bigfoot is not the only creature people seek. Equal research is given to prove the existence of others, such as the Yeti or the Loch Ness Monster.

May I make a confession? In my heart of hearts, I would be thrilled if someone presents tangible and undeniable evidence that said creatures exist. I would pay good money to see the Loch Ness Monster. However, confidence is high that these creatures exist only in lore.

Sadly, some try to place God into the same category. And by doing so, they totally disregard the historical record, the eyewitnesses of Jesus' life (John 1:14), Jesus' death and resurrection, and His mission on Earth.

Friends, the jury has returned a verdict on the naysayers. David wrote long ago, *"Only fools say in their hearts, 'There is no God'"* (Psalm 14:1).

--Kenny Westmoreland (Celina, TN)

A WAKE-UP CALL

I saw a social media post with two pictures. One was a man in a hotel room calling the front desk to request a wake-up-call. The second picture was a lady at the front desk responding with, "Of course sir. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is the free gift of eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."

Traveling folk often request a wake-up call. Mankind, during life's travels, needs a spiritual wake-up call. Some respond, some don't.

Romans is a grand book dealing with the eternal welfare of mankind. Its core message of the gospel emphasizes the serious need of mankind and the saving grace offered by God, the Father, through the His Son, Jesus Christ.

We are told that. *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23). There are many other similar verses that tell us, in no uncertain terms, that we need a wake-up call.

The following verses tell us that we *"are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins"* (Rom. 3:24-25).

Romans six indicates that we need a wake-up call, *"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound"* (Rom. 6:1)? It would seem that many think that they can go on sinning. The idea being, the more I sin, the more grace I have. No, no. Jesus said, *"And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray"* (Matt. 24:11). Truly a wake-up call is in order.

The rest of chapter six is a wake-up call, telling what we must do to respond to the call. Don't ignore your wake-up call.

--Roy Allen Crutcher (Mt. Carmel, IL)