**CAST THE FIRST STONE**

By Ernie Knoll

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In my dream, I am standing with the Herald. The guide angel and the announcing angel stand behind the Herald, who steps forward, calls me by my heavenly name, and tells me that they were rushed here to give an important message.

I now stand with the three angels who were sent so quickly. I see Barry, Troy, Chris, and many other men having a discussion about the disgusting way that today’s women dress. They talk about how they cause them to lust as they look upon their form, and that they are causing them to fall into sin. They say that these women should be stoned, because they are not covered the right way.

The Herald closes that scene and says: If God sends dreams on how certain women should dress, that cannot and must not be judged. Those who are called to do this are not sinning, but obeying what God has instructed. These women will not be held accountable for how others perceive them. Those who condemn the women who are obeying God will reap His condemnation. They are not being like Christ, the Perfect One, who endured all forms of temptation. Those who are quick to cast blame will not be numbered with the 144,000 or be saved.

I am now told that, in the beginning, God created Eve as a perfect woman. However, she failed to follow God’s direction and instruction to stay by Adam’s side and not eat of the tree of knowledge. She doubted His instruction. In the end of time, God will have certain women who know God’s voice and will follow His specific instructions without doubting or questioning.

The Herald now says that those who take the position of condemning and casting blame on these faithful women, stating that they are a stumbling block by tempting men to lose control, will never be like Christ. He did not give into any temptation, even though subjected to seeing all forms of evil.

The Herald now shows me a scene with Jesus and Mary, where she stands garbed only in the righteousness of Christ, in the innocence of what she was. However, she was trapped and dragged out naked in public, because those who only wanted to condemn her hoped to use her as an example.1

1Jesus looked for a moment upon the scene,--the trembling victim in her shame, the hard-faced dignitaries, devoid of even human pity. His spirit of stainless purity shrank from the spectacle. Well He knew for what purpose this case had been brought to Him. He read the heart, and knew the character and life history of everyone in His presence. These would-be guardians of justice had themselves led their victim into sin, that they might lay a snare for Jesus. *The Desire of Ages,* p. 461

Those who condemned and called her a whore held rocks to stone her. Jesus looks upon her with pity, as a sister. He sees her form without lust, and without yielding to temptation. Removing His own outer garment, He wraps her with this precious robe that also symbolizes His love and forgiveness. He looks at those who accuse her and says: “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her” (John 8:7).

[END OF DREAM]

God wants to do amazing things, great things with us. But we—the instruments He has to work with—are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked! Each of us has different aspects of our character that need major repair, including the surrender of our doubts, fears, embarrassment, and pride due to what others may think or say about us. If we cringe because someone is making fun of us, or thinking badly of us, or laughing behind our back, how will we ever make it when we’re wrongly accused of doing something really bad?  As the prophet Jeremiah wrote, “If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?  (Jer. 12:5)

For some, fear is a big factor. Revelation 21:8 lists those who will find themselves in the lake of fire. Listen as I read it: “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

Did you notice who were mentioned at the top of the list? It wasn’t the murderers or the liars, but the fearful and the unbelieving!  We need to take this seriously. God cannot and will not take to heaven those who do not trust Him.

Today, in order to prove that Eve’s lack of faith and disobedience can be overcome, it is VERY important to God’s plan that certain selected women today do exactly what He is asking. In Eve’s case, it was easy: “Don’t go away from Adam,” and “Don’t eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Now, He is asking harder things and things that may seem strange.

Consider that the angels do what God asks them to do without question. Remember when I wanted to protect the baby from the terrible work that the angels had come to do?

God is trying to take out the defects from our characters by asking certain individuals to do things that they would normally NOT be willing to do, because it requires giving up something very dear, like their pride. However, we demonstrate our love for Him by willingly accepting and doing whatever He asks, because HE is the One who is asking, and because He knows what we need to overcome in order to be labeled as conquerors. Obviously, part of the conquering is our own fears, doubts, shame, embarrassment—any of the “reasonable excuses” we give to avoid doing what He is asking.

Because He so desperately wants us in heaven, our stalling and doubting literally force Him to put us through tougher and tougher trials to get us to surrender the stubborn resistance that would make us unwelcome in heaven. Listen to a quote from the SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 4, p. 1146:

“God's children are always being tested in the furnace of affliction [distress, suffering]. If they endure the first trial, it is not necessary for them to pass through a similar ordeal the second time; but if they fail, the trial is brought to them again and again, each time being still more trying and severe. Thus opportunity after opportunity is placed before them of gaining the victory and proving themselves true to God. But if they continue to manifest rebellion, God is compelled at last to remove His Spirit and light from them”

God asks His people to do harder and harder things, because they are so stubborn. They’re really telling Him, “God, I’m not sure You know what You’re asking me to do.” Is this You asking, or is it Satan? If you believe that I am a true messenger from God, then all my messages are from God. You can’t pick and choose.

This is why I was shown, Blessed be the ones who believe **before** the evidence mounts. Like Thomas, so many want to touch Jesus’ wounded side before they will believe. Their tendency is to doubt God’s plan and demand to know the whys and wherefores. God’s answer is: Read Hebrews 11.

How will the unfallen beings ever be convinced that we—rebels and felons—are safe to bring into their neighborhood if we don’t demonstrate now that we trust God implicitly? God does not have the luxury of a lot of time to accomplish the polishing that our characters need. If we refuse to cooperate, He will have to move on and invite someone else who is willing to sacrifice and receive a number on the forehead.

Jesus gave us Himself as an example:

“Christ … set his face as a flint to conquer.” *The Youth’s Instructor,* Jan 4, 1900

And God promises to help us:  Ezekiel 3:9

As an adamant [an unbreakable substance], harder than flint [a type of quartz used in road construction], have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks...

“All things are possible to them that believe. Since God is working in you, you can safely set your face as a flint to do His will, and you may trust the Lord perfectly. . . .”  *Our High Calling,* p. 124

This needs to be our response:  Isaiah 50:7

“For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”

Let’s pray for a face like flint in facing the challenges God sets before us. We *know* that we can face those tests with joy, because it is always a privilege to serve God, especially when you have been individually called by Him!