



The Potter

“Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.” (Jeremiah 18:2-4)

*Philip Keller, born the son of a missionary to Kenya in 1920, lived in Pakistan for some time as a boy, and he was reading in Jeremiah and he came across a verse that said, ***“Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.”*** (Jeremiah 18:2) Keller became curious about the potter and what lessons the potter had to teach, and so he went down to the potter's house in the city in which he lived, and this is what he wrote:

In sincerity, I asked the old master craftsman to show me every step in the creation of a masterpiece. On his shelves were gleaming goblets and lovely vases and exquisite bowls of breathtaking beauty. Crooking a bony finger toward me, he led the way to a small dark closed shed at the back of his shop, and when he opened its rickety door a repulsive overpowering stench of decaying matter engulfed me. For a moment I stepped back from the edge of the gaping dark pit in the floor of the shed, “this is where the work begins,” he said, kneeling beside the black nauseating hole. With his long thin arm, he reached down into the darkness, his slim skilled finger's felt around amid the lumpy clay searching for a fragment of material exactly suited to his task.

“I add a special kind of grass to the mud,” he remarked, “and as it rots and decays, its organic content increases the colloidal quality of the clay, and then it sticks together better.” Finally, his knowing hands brought up a lump of dark smelly mud from the horrible pit where the clay had been trampled and mixed by his hard, bony feet. With tremendous impact the first verses of Psalm 40 came to my heart, ***“He brought me up out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay.”***

As carefully as the potter had selected his clay, so God has selected us.

And then the great slab of granite cut from the rough rock began to whirl quietly, operated by a very crude treadle like device that was moved by his feet, and as the stone gathered momentum, I was taken in memory to Jeremiah 18:3, ***“Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.”*** And what stood out most before my mind at this point was the fact that beside the potter's stool, on either side of him stood two basins of water. All the while that the wheel turned the potter kept dipping his hands in the water and then he would mold the clay and then he would dip them in the water and mold the clay, and never would he mold without the water because it would stick to his hands and ruin it; and so, his hand always had to be wet. It was fascinating to see how swiftly but surely the clay responded to the pressure applied through those moistened hands. Silently, smoothly the form of a graceful goblet began to take shape between his hands, and the water was the medium through which the master craftsman's will was transmitted to the clay. His will was being done in earth (clay) through the water and immediately, I thought of the water of the Word which is God's medium for doing His will in us (clay). When God touches our lives, He touches us with His Word, it is the water, the Word of God, that expresses the will of the Master and finds fulfillment in fashioning men into vessels of His choosing.

Suddenly, the wheel stopped. Very gently, the potter reached in and picked out a piece of stone, and then he began to spin it again and stopped it again and reached again to pick out a larger piece of stone. With the tenderness of his hand, the potter could feel every rough spot, every stone, every imperfection. The two stones he had taken out were too large and the goblet was marred, and so he reached for it and crushed it in his hands. Keller said to the potter, “Oh, that is sad, what will happen to it now?” “Oh,” said the potter, “I will make it into a common finger bowl.” I asked, “will it ever be a goblet?” “No,” he said, “it is too scarred.” And I thought again of Jeremiah 18:4 ***“And the vessel***

(Continued on Page 2)

that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter."

Seldom did any lesson come home to me with such tremendous clarity, why was this beautiful masterpiece ruined in the master's hands? Because he ran into resistance. It was the potter's intentions to turn out a uniquely beautiful work of art, but his effort was brought to naught. So, it is with God. Despite His best efforts and endless patience with us and besides the water of the Word applied to us, we end up nothing but a finger bowl, because of our resistance, because of our hardness. The sobering, searching, searing question I had to ask myself in the humble surroundings of that simple potter's shed was this: am I going to be a piece of fine china or a fingerbowl? What about you?

Keller goes on to tell us that when the potter finished his work, while it was still spinning, he took a long thread and pulled it through the bottom, and it cut it. Then the potter took it and placed it in an oven and through the hardship of fiery trial, it was finally finished. ***"But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand."*** Isaiah 64:8

The problem, as I see it, we have forgotten that we are the clay, and in our mistaken belief that we are the potters of our own destiny, we have turned God into clay. For many of us, God is a lump of clay which we mold and form with our imagination upon the wheels of our minds, constantly shaping and re-forming "our god" all our lives until we create a god made in our likeness and our image, a god that is perfectly satisfied with who we are and with what we do; no matter what that might be.

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen. Being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Romans 1:20-21

*Phillip Keller authored more than 35 books on various Christian subjects. His books are available on various websites on the internet. Phillip Keller died at the age of 77 in 1997 in Okanagan, a Canadian province of British Columbia.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." (1 Peter 5:8-9)

If evil came to us with detestable faces and huge razor-like teeth, then there would be no cause for carefulness and soberness. But evil is cunning, her face is pleasing to behold. She is tempting and deceivable; her sting is that of death and she maketh her bed among the graves. Fools consider not and pass on, ***"Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices."*** (2 Peter 2:14)

Evil comes to us in the night when our hearts are weary of watching and our eyes are full of sleep; when the canopy of darkness conceals her unsavory motives. She comes to us in our weakness, when our senses are dull, and we are weary of battle; when we have laid down our swords by our sides. Our houses are dark; idle hands have caused our lamps to burn out, and our spirits are but a faint glimmer for want of fresh oil. Evil wisely chooses her target; no effort is wasted on the strong; the sheep are at rest, and the slaughter is imminent.

She comes disguised; her face is hidden behind a mask of comeliness. She comes dressed in splendor; she glitters in the moonlight; it is sweet to our eyes. Her fragrance carries upon the wind; it is enticing to our nostrils; the aroma stirs us from within. She glides as a shadow; she draws closer; she whispers to us enticing words; electrified by her touch, we are drawn out at her caress. Like the comfort of an easy chair; with the convenience of a remote control; she promises that which is desirable to our flesh; we are captivated not knowing that our souls have been summonsed to the chamber of death.

"Come," she says, "Let us dance; let us glide like a warm fog across cool waters; let us take our fill of love till the sun rises upon our bed. Let the earth not move again for us till we have laid us down together. Let our souls be intertwined, let our spirits touch, and be joined. "Come," she says, "and let us know each other." So it is that we dance with death; we flirt in the face of danger; we coo as doves, not knowing that our romance is with evil. **(Continued on page 3)**

Surely Evil Cometh **(Continued from Page 2)**

Evil is beckoned, she comes not uninvited, nor does it wear the face of a stranger. Oftentimes it travels in the company of trusted companions; it hides behind the doubting eyes of loved ones. It is the dare they teased you with, or simply the thing that everyone else does. It is the rumor that wets your lips, the lawlessness of your spirit. It is the perverse thing hid under your mattress; it is the secret you keep locked within the strongholds of your mind. It lingers around every familiar corner; it waits at every lamppost for passers by. Like a spider, it weaves its web and waits for the blind and the simple; the unsuspecting. Fools are taken; they realize not that the jaws of death draw them closer.

Sometimes evil wears the label of a shortcut; it is the long-awaited break that you always knew you deserved. Could it be you were in the right place at the right time, and you simply fell into it; now you cannot seem to get out it. It holds you like quicksand: the more you struggle to free yourself; the tighter she clings to you until you are exhausted and overcome.

Evil is persistent; she goeth not away. She sleeps not as men do, nor does she faint in the heat of the day – in the midst of her labors. She is tireless, ever calculating, and always clever. Her ways are ever changing; her paths are always moveable; so that no man findeth them out.

Unlike the truth, her words are not naked but disguised. She comes to you, not with angry words, but with a flattering tongue. Words smothered with honey hides the bitterness of her venom; it clings to her lips like dew. Her voice tantalizes the ear; it slowly breaks down any lingering resistance. She whispers vanities; you draw closer to hear her well-chosen lies; they find their target; you are hopelessly lost. Like yeast, her words puff you up as their hidden devices intoxicate; you are overcome as your wits escape you and your senses become dull.

Evil desires your approval; she muses for your applause as she sings her subtle song. Persuasion is in her arsenal; a proven weapon in the lips of a master. To call evil good is the ruby of her eye; the trophy of her desire. She mocketh at the old and subverts it; gradually she substitutes that which is new. Ignorance and forwardness are her shield and buckler. She goes haughtily to battle to turn the rebellious at heart into sottish children. Desire and emptiness occupy her quiver. A wise man would do good to choose well; but the hungry dog considers

not and is consumed by that which it eats.

Evil brags before the simple, “Stolen fruits are sweeter, and that which is gathered in secret satisfies the soul best. Come; let us eat our fill till the morning light discovers us. It shall be our secret,” she whispers in your ear. The words are hers, yet the voice is that of your familiars; those with whom ye make merry. The fool gives ear and passes on to destruction. He makes a league with darkness; together they plot against the well-lit ways of righteous men who walk in time-proven paths. Thievery is in their hearts; that which is forbidden is their desired spoil.

How is the spoiler spoiled? How is it that wisdom has escaped unnoticed? Does not Wisdom cry in the concourse, at the going in of the gate? Does she not plead in the ears of all that will hear? Give ear unto wisdom, oh thou fool! Why wilt thou be destroyed, and that without remedy? Has not a warning been sounded? Has it not been shouted from the rooftops? Wilt thou escape the burning; ye who take the coals to your chest? Be not seduced by the flattering tongue, nor deceived by clouds that bear no water. For that which is evil, it shall not satisfy the longing of your soul; nor shall it fill the emptiness that occupies your belly. There is no lasting satisfaction from the partaking; for it perishes with the using thereof. Your hands bear evidence; the stains of your evil deeds; it washes not away. The blood of the innocent stains your teeth, yet your appetite remains; a barren womb that bringeth not forth. Hell rises up to meet you, yet you pass on as though immune.

“Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and our destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh

(Continued on Page 4)

upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD. (Proverbs 1:1-29)

Evil prepares her table before your eyes; she fills your plate with her choice dainties. Your eyes caress them; your nostrils drinks in their aroma. Consider well what is before thee for they are deceitful meats. Be not given unto appetite, least thou sell thy soul for one morsel of meat. Redeem thyself from hell's kitchen while thou hast the strength to resist; before the perversion of your palette is complete. Give ear to the still small voice that lies deep within; which thou has all but silenced.

Evil arrays her banquets; as wisdom cries aloud in every thoroughfare. Hearts are caught in the struggle between lustful longing and righteous discernment. Your soul stands at a crossroad, wearied by false delights; hungry for true sustenance. Shadows lengthen, yet a faint glow persists; the ember of conscience, flickering in the draught of temptation; never wholly extinguished by the howling winds of lasciviousness.

In the hush that follows the tempest of self-indulgence, a gentle invitation persists. Wisdom's voice, patient and unfaltering, amid the clamor. She does not force the door nor break the seal of will; but waits, steadfast, for the smallest turn; a glance, a breath, a whispered plea for light. She is not found in the fevered grasping after ease, but in the quiet resolve to stand, to refuse that which glitters falsely, and to yearn for what is lasting.

To turn toward her is not to stride with certainty, but to step trembling from shadow into light. Wisdom's rewards are slow in their coming, but sure: not the heady rush of stolen fruit, but the deep, abiding sweetness of innocence reclaimed. And so, Wisdom lingers on the threshold of eternity, her voice persistent though drowned beneath revelry and the cacophony of easy choices. She does not force herself upon the unwilling but waits—patient as the dawn—for hearts to soften and ears to open. Her counsel is a lamp in the dense fog of confusion, a gentle hand in a world enthralled by dazzling shadows. Yet, even as she pleads, many turn away, preferring the fleeting comfort of familiar darkness to the radiant discomfort of truth.

TheOlivePress54@Gmail.com

The Purpose of Prophecy

THE PURPOSE OF PROPHECY

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? (Matthew 24:3) – *“Tell us, when shall these things be?”* “Tell us what the future holds; prophecy unto us.” In the Bible, God tells us how it will all end; and He told us how it will all end from the very beginning. *“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, **Declaring the end from the beginning**, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.”* (Isaiah 46:9-10) In the Bible, God tells us how it will all end. God shows us how it will end from the very beginning, but unlike the weather, biblical prophecy is not hit and miss; it is always accurate. God's counsel shall stand; He will do all His good pleasure.

Before examining the content of verse 3, let us first examine the purpose and significance of biblical prophecy. Only God can declare the end from the beginning. From days of old, God told us about things *“not yet done,”* saying, His counsel shall stand. God is not separating the end from the beginning; no, He is declaring it and has declared it from the very beginning of time. God told us how the world will end. He declared it to us before it comes to pass. Only God can do that. The question is why? Why does God show us the end before it comes to pass? Why did God reveal to us, the future? The answer is, so we may consider our end, and in so considering it, we might seize upon the opportunity to alter our course in this life and in the next.

Six hundred years before destruction came upon Israel and Jerusalem, the prophet Ezekiel foretold of their end. *“Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and portray upon it the city, even Jerusalem: And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set battering rams against it round about. Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel.”* (Ezekiel 4:1-3) Biblical prophecy has a purpose; it is not simply a demonstration of God's omniscience. God declares the future to us to warn us, that we may consider our course in this life.

The Purpose Of Prophecy (Continued on Page 5)

The Purpose Of Prophecy (Continued from Page 4)

God offers us the opportunity to turn from our evil way, a way that will ultimately lead to our own destruction. This is what happened to Jerusalem; God warned them from the very beginning about things that were not yet done, and they would not listen to Him. Instead, they ignored Him and continued in their abominable ways.

When Titus, the Roman General, besieged Jerusalem in 70 A.D., he raised four mountainous inclines made of earth and wood against the walls. Upon these earthen ramps, he rolled wooded towers shielded with huge iron plates. With these towers, the Romans gained a height advantage; from which they slung huge boulders and wooden javelins upon the city. They mounted battering rams to the towers and broke holes in the walls surrounding Jerusalem. The battle plan, which Titus used to take Jerusalem, had already been written by God in the Book of Ezekiel, six hundred years before Titus was born. Six hundred years before their end came; God declared their end to them. *"Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations. And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee... An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come."* (Ezekiel 7:3-6) *"The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field shall die with the sword; and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him. But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys."* (Ezekiel 7:15-16) Those outside Jerusalem were slain with Roman swords, while those within the city walls died of pestilence and famine. But those who fled into the mountains, as Jesus warned them to do (see below), they were at peace like doves. These things were not hidden from Israel, for they possessed the writings of Ezekiel. His prophecies, concerning Israel and Jerusalem, were part of the Holy Scriptures which God entrusted to Israel for preservation. They taught these prophecies in their Synagogues on Sabbath days; they read them to their children for generations; they memorized and meditated upon them. They knew what was prophesied, they knew that destruction was coming, but they just did not know when. And knowing that all these things were coming upon them, they made light of it, they failed to take heed, they refused to take the word of God seriously.

Instead, they became indifferent to the word of God, and they would not repent of their evil ways. Israel had no excuse. God warned them time and time again; He declared their end to them from the very beginning, before it came to pass; but they refused to repent, they refused to forsake the evil ways that they had become accustomed too; sadly, they brought destruction upon themselves.

Approximately forty years before Titus laid siege to Jerusalem; a siege that ended with the destruction of the Temple and numerous other sections of the city, Jesus told us exactly how it would happen. Those details are recorded in Luke's Gospel, chapter 19, verses 41-45, and chapter 21, verses 6, 20-24. Jesus prophesied that the enemy would compass Jerusalem about and cast a trench around the city to keep them in; not allowing even the children to come out. Jesus prophesied that the destruction of the Temple would be so devastating and complete that not a single stone would be left standing, one upon another. Jesus warned those in Judaea to flee into the mountains and not to go into the city. But instead of fleeing from the city, people from far and wide fled into the city, thinking to find shelter and safety from the invading Roman Legions. *"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto."* (Luke 21:20-21) Jesus told them, those who survived the edge of the sword would be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem would be trodden down by the Gentiles.

Forty years after Jesus spoke these things all of them came to pass, exactly as prophesied. If only they had listened to His warnings and fled the city; a million lives would have been spared. A million cruel and violent deaths could have been avoided. But instead of heeding the Lord's warnings, they did the exact opposite; they fled into the city and were destroyed. The purpose of the Lord's prophecy was to warn the people to *"...flee from the wrath to come."* (Luke 3:7), just as the purpose of all prophecy is to warn all people to *"...flee from the wrath to come."* (Matthew 3:7) *"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains."* (Luke 21:20-21) Jesus warned them! All they had to do was to watch for the signs!

The Purpose Of Prophecy (Continued on Page 6)

The Purpose Of Prophecy (Continued from Page 5)

They were to know that destruction was nigh, and they were to flee from the wrath to come. They were warned, but they did not heed the warning; they would not, and they did not listen. They did exactly what He told them not to do! They did not listen then, **and we are not listening now**. Jesus gave us prophecy so that we can look to it and know that destruction is nigh, that the end of the world is near, that we may flee to Him from the wrath which is to come! How are we doing people? Are you listening, do you think this is a joke?

Rest assured, if the destruction of Jerusalem happened exactly as Jesus prophesied, so will the rest of His prophecies from the Olivet Discourse. Everything will come to pass exactly as Jesus described it. Just as the Temple was destroyed with a great destruction, so the world as we know it will end with great destruction; a destruction more devastating than the world has ever seen before! It will happen, mark it down; engrave it upon your walls; tattoo it on your forehead. It will happen; it will come to pass exactly the way Jesus said it would. ***“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.”*** (Matthew 24:21-22) Will you also ignore His warnings, as they did, and were destroyed, and that without mercy? ***“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come,”*** (1 Corinthians 10:11)

“The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. Oh ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?” (Matthew 16:1-3) ***“Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.”*** (Jeremiah 8:7) Biblical prophecy is like an accurate weather forecast (I said accurate). In order to prepare us for the storms which face us tomorrow, we have devoted a whole science to observing and studying climatic events. By observing the sky, and by paying attention to the sun's risings and settings, it is possible for man to predict tomorrow's weather. With the help of modern technology, a meteorologist can predict tomorrow's weather with some degree of accuracy; an approaching hurricane, a major snowstorm, tornadoes, and severe thunder showers. Knowing what tomorrow's weather may bring, helps us to plan and organize our personal lives, our business lives, and our travel plans. It helps us to prepare for, and to possibly avoid nature's disasters. It helps us to face tomorrow better prepared for the challenges ahead of us; at least where the weather is concerned. Everyday, many decisions are made based upon having accurate foreknowledge of the weather; how we should dress, whether we should take an umbrella or a light jacket, should we close the windows before leaving for work or school? Should we water the lawn or wait until the forecasted rain comes; when to mow the lawn, should we buy new snow tires or wait another week, when to book our flights, where to go on vacation and what clothes to pack. These things are all decided based on the weather report. Knowing that tomorrow will bring devastating weather, we need to do everything possible today, to prepare for it. By observing the face of the sky, we have learned to discern the goodness and the severity of nature, and how best to utilize its goodness while avoiding its severity.

In varying degrees, everyone wants to know what the future holds in store for them. They believe, if they only knew what tomorrow will bring, knowing will somehow help them plan their future. And so, in their quest to know what they know not, they seek out mentalists and futurists to reveal the secrets of tomorrow. Man believes he might gain an advantage by knowing things which God has otherwise hid from him. We seek for those associated with the dark side, from such creatures as witches, gypsies, diviners, and fortune tellers. We seek out cultists, psychics, palm readers, familiar spirits, prognosticators, star gazers, horoscope charts, tarot cards, fortune cookies, and yes, even ground hogs. Motivated by superstition and misplaced faith, we seek out these false prophets, believing, if we could but glimpse tomorrow, somehow it will help us to better handle today. We are all too willing to trust in deceivers, but we absolutely refuse to believe God; the only true source of prophecy. If you want to know what is coming, read and study your Bible. ***“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”*** (1 John 5:13)

The Purpose Of Prophecy (Continued on Page 7)

The Purpose of Prophecy (Continued from Page 6)

Jesus called the religious crowd of his day hypocrites, saying: *"Oh ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"* We spend a great deal of time discerning the sky and we pay no mind at all to the signs of the times. The Bible is filled with prophecy. Prophecies are God's "Signs of the Times." By discerning the sky, we may know tomorrow's weather. By discerning the signs of the times, we can prepare for coming world events. God has, from the very beginning of time, revealed the future to us before it comes to pass. That is an incredibly unique and remarkable thing. In His word, God reveals things to us, so when they come to pass, we may know, assuredly, that He is God and there is no other. With the inclusion of prophecy, the Bible stands alone, in a category all by itself. No other book, religious or otherwise, contains fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecy. Should anyone ask you, "What is so unique about the Bible," its uniqueness can be defined by a single word; and that word is prophecy. Prophecies stand as road signs for every passing generation. By paying close attention to current news events, and by determining where those events fit into God's plan for the ages, we may know where we are, and what lies ahead for us. But this generation, largely ignores everything the Bible has to say. Apathetic to an omniscient God, we stumble onward, aimlessly, towards our predetermined destruction. The Bible foretells of a great storm looming on our horizon. It tells us that we are the last generation, and that we are in the last days.

"Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?" (Mark 13:4). Not all things are revealed to us. The times and the seasons for many things, God has reserved to Himself. *"And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."* (Acts 1:7) Many things are discernible, and for those things, God holds us accountable to know them, for He has revealed them unto us. Not only does God expect us to know them, but we have no excuse for not knowing. *"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."* (Hebrews 1:1) We are in the last days, and God has spoken to us through His word, and we have no excuse for ignoring the things which God has revealed to us.

"But can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

Here Jesus rebukes the religious leaders of His day. They were responsible for teaching others, yet they themselves were unable to discern spiritual things. They were unable to read God's prophecies and apply them to the current events which were unfolding all around them. Literally hundreds of messianic prophecies were being fulfilled before their very eyes, and they were virtually blind to all of them. In God's eyes, their gross irresponsibility was inexcusable. There was no rational reason for them not to know. They pretended to savor the things of God, but in actuality, they savored the things of men and ignored the things which God had revealed to them from the beginning. The times when Jesus walked the Earth were, beyond a doubt, the most prophetic times in all of human history, and the second most prophetic time is today; it is now. The end of the world is upon us, we are living it, and most of us do not even realize it. ***"And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him."*** (Daniel 2:21-22) Knowing that tomorrow will bring a devastating storm, we need to do everything possible today, to prepare for it. How is that working out for you?

Ava's Verses

In this edition, The Olive Press would like to introduce a new addition to the newsletter. This new addition will appear in all future issues.

My granddaughter, Ava, gave me a mason jar full of triangle shaped pieces of craft paper. When you open the triangled shaped papers, she hand printed some of her favorite Bible Verses. In each future issue, we will select, at random, one of the verses to share with our Church Family.

"For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."
(Matthew 12:50)