

"We Have Seen Strange Things Today"

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(Luke 5:17 to 26)

"Strange things" are always to be seen where moves the Matchless Man with the seamless robe.

It had been a great day in the Master's ministry. The people thronged from near and far to wait on His words, and witness His works. Even the "Pharisees and doctors of the law were sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem." It was a great congregation, and the record has this significant word to say—"The power of the Lord was present to heal them." Anything could happen.

The atmosphere was charged with the presence of God, and yet there could be sensed a subtle, cold undercurrent, as the religious doctors sat by in silent scorn. So mighty was the faith-creating presence of God that day that a poor paralytic, unable to gain access to the presence of the Master, was lowered through the tiling by friends who shared with the sick man the confidence that he would be healed.

Such faith stirred the Master, and He immediately forgave his sins. This seemed like ample excuse for the scribes and Pharisees to challenge the authority of Jesus. This they did, and then followed an amazing demonstration, rich in teaching, and powerful in manifestation. The Master associated sin and sickness by saying, "Whether it is easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, rise up and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power upon earth to forgive sins (he said unto the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house." The man immediately arose. "And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, 'WE HAVE SEEN STRANGE THINGS TODAY.'"

Spoken 2000 years ago, these words are again becoming familiar to our ears, not as an echo from those far-off yesterdays, but as freshly stimulated exclamations of amazement drawn from the lips of modern men as they behold in this, their own day, the very same miraculous happenings which caused that cry of amazement in the long ago.

For lo, the paralytic leaps from his cot, the blind man opens wondering eyes to catch his first glimpse of God's created handiwork, the deaf ears are made to hear,



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and the burdened and tethered hearts are delivered, and set free, and men go away, exclaiming, "Strange things!—we have seen strange things today."

And so, as the sun of human history sinks in the gloowering western sky of these troubled days, behold "there is a light at eventide," and the "children of light" rejoice in the restoration of the manifest powers of their soon-returning Master. Great auditoriums groan with their burden of suffering humanity as the servants of Jesus move from city to city, to minister life and healing to them in "the Wonderful Name." The signal fires of divine reviving are being kindled on a thousand hills, and "the shout of a king is in our midst."

We were told that He had withdrawn His mighty hand when He went home to the Father in the glory-land. He had just been loaned to earth for a few short years with His gifts of blessing, of healing, and comfort, but these He had taken back with Him, and we must not expect them, but must be satisfied with a cold and naked faith which has no right to expect these things.

And so men sought to warm their hands over the ashes of a fire which no longer burned. It is little wonder that the church of God moved into the cold, wintry days of the Dark Ages, when the chilly blast of the bitter north wind found the "little flock" of succeeding centuries, bound together in groups, warming each other with the faithful testimony of His Person and Work, and longing for the hour of deliverance. The faithful cry of these saintly supplicants was destined to be heard, and to the camp of Israel God dispatched His Davids. "Time would fail us to tell of"

these champions, of Huss, and Latimer, and Ridley, of Luther, and Zwingli, and Calvin, and Knox, of Wesley and Whitfield, and many others. From glory to glory, and from strength to strength, the people of God move on. Moving from one great truth to the other, rediscovering the things that had been lost—justification, sanctification, the coming of the Lord, the priesthood of all believers, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts—all designed to make His church glorious. Not glorious as several groups, each separated from the other, but glorious as one great army, traveling under a single banner, owning a common faith, confessing a single Lord.

Is it thought then, a thing impossible that in our day God should raise up men to further His programme of unity and power, gathering to one great testimony all those who name His Name in sincerity and in truth, until whole communities are shaken by the power of God, and signs and wonders are wrought in the Name of the holy child Jesus? Indeed, no. For this is the very will of God concerning us, and we are witnessing it before our very eyes. We are seeing "strange things this day."

Such glorious advances, however, are not realized apart from vigorous and vicious opposition. It has always been so, and our present day is no exception. For, just as on that day, long ago, as the Great Physician stood in the midst of the multitude to heal the sick, and speak words of comfort to the distressed, there were present quibbling, carping Pharisees, so today, under similar circumstances, we find them present, bearing all the earmarks of their ancient forebears. It is written of them that they "began to reason, saying, who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" They were there that day, and they are still with us. These religionists are always to be found where God is moving, seeking to inject questions intended to create unbelief, jealously guarding their own religious goodness, and setting themselves up as authorities. They have always been offended in the presence of Jesus' words and works, and He charged them in His day with "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:19). These touchy teachers of the law were upset by our Lord's charge against them, and apparently made it known, for we read that Jesus' disciples came to Him and said, "Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?" (vs. 12). To this the Master replied, "LET THEM ALONE: they be blind leaders of the blind."

Now, although such men are not easy to convert, their mouths can be shut by the demonstration of the miraculous, their

quibbles quenched by the preaching of the word of truth, and their pompous pronouncements made ridiculous by the simplicity of honest conviction.

There is little value in arguing with the self-assertive intellectual, or the self-complacent religionist, comfortably established in his ecclesiastical easy chair. He is best answered by a demonstration of the power of God, and although he himself may not have the honesty to embrace the truth, his vicious grip of influence will be broken, and honest, seeking, God-hungry hearts will be set free to follow the Master.

Thus, Jesus perceived their criticisms, and upset their protests. They had questioned His right to forgive sins. So, to prove that it was His to deal with the root of all human distresses, He spoke the word of authority, and smote the fruit, even the sickness borne by the faithful man. And in so doing, gave eloquent proof to the fact that He who could curse the fruit could also lay the axe at the root.

"And immediately the man rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God." That was Jesus' answer to the "Pharisees, and doctors of the law." It must be our answer today. "Strange things" were seen that day. And we are seeing them once again.

It might be well to turn technical just for a moment, and consider the meaning of this word "strange." It comes from a Greek word, "paradoxos," which will be immediately recognized as being related to our English word "paradox." Liddell and Scott's Greek lexicon defines the word as meaning "contrary to opinion, unexpected, strange, marvelous." The dictionary definition for paradox is most interesting—"a tenet or proposition contrary to received opinion; something seemingly absurd, yet true in fact. A statement or phenomenon apparently at variance with, or in opposition to established principles, yet demonstrably true."

We who have been privileged to stand with Brother Branham, and others similarly ordained of God, have witnessed this very thing. The arthritic given up by medical science as incurable, doomed to remain rigid for the rest of his days, has felt the pulsating life of the risen Christ breaking the demons of tension, and restoring rigid bones and motionless muscles to their normal functions again. The lame have been seen to walk, the deaf have heard, the blind have seen, and numberless other manifestations of divine power have been witnessed.

Now, let us see how these events correspond with the meaning of the word "strange." Are these things "contrary to received opinion," and to many "something seemingly absurd," and yet, thank God, "true in fact"? Indeed, "demonstrably true." I think we will agree that this just about describes the attitude of many. We are seeing strange things. They are

SEQUEL TO THE NOVEMBER PROPHETIC ARTICLE

Surprise Attack on Pearl Harbor to the Surprise Election of Nov. 2—2,520 Days

Last month we carried in *The Voice of Healing* an article entitled NOVEMBER, 1948, IN PROPHECY. In the article it was shown that a period of seven years, or 2,520 days (called seven times in the Scriptures), had a remarkable significance in the Bible. For example, Nebuchadnezzar's insanity lasted seven years. There were seven years of plenty in the days of Joseph, followed by another seven-year period of famine. The Seventy Weeks of Daniel's prophecy were periods of seven years each.

We then showed the manner in which events today, even as in Bible times, were following the same remarkable cycles—if anything, they were more marked. Thus from the beginning of World War I to the signing of the peace was 2,520 days. Again from the beginning of World War II until the peace conference was also 2,520 days. (Only this time there is no peace). Besides these we showed that practically all the major events were timed in cycles of 2,520 days. *That is, events at the beginning of the seven years usually have a very definite significance or relation with those at the end.*

We were especially interested in the 2,520 days following the attack on Pearl Harbor which would end Nov. 1-2, 1948—the date of the election. But at the time of writing, it appeared that the election was "in the bag." Not a newspaper, poll-taker, commentator of importance, or even the immediate officers of the President considered that Truman had a chance. George Gallup, whose polls have always shown uncanny accuracy, declared that evidence overwhelmingly showed Dewey would inevitably be the next President. On the basis of all this information it appeared

that Nov. 2 would reveal nothing that America did not already know. Then came the news, by the following morning, of the astonishing electoral landslide of Harry S. Truman, which made him President of the United States in his own right for the next four years! The event was the greatest surprise to America since the attack on Pearl Harbor 2,520 days earlier (if part days are disregarded), excepting, perhaps, the dropping of the first atomic bomb. As the Pearl Harbor event mightily influenced the history of the United States, so the election of Harry S. Truman must. For one thing, the chain of events will move swiftly now, and not hang fire for several months as they would if a new President were to be inaugurated.

World developments are at the moment pressing rapidly. The Truman Doctrine of halting expansion of the Russian Iron Curtain is well understood by the Soviets and they are acting accordingly. All of China is now in jeopardy, and an imminent collapse before Red armies suddenly threatens us worse than the Pearl Harbor disaster. The U. S. prepares to enter into a world military alliance. And events in Palestine come to a definite climax. The fact simply is that world events are not happening at random, but a definite mathematical pattern is seen, which absolutely proves that Divine Providence is directing world history. Surely all these things indicate that Jesus is coming soon!

Dec. 7-8, 1941	Nov. 1-2, 1948
Surprise attack on Pearl Harbor	Surprise U. S. Election

not acceptable to many creeds and principles of denominational conduct, and they are indeed contrary to the opinions of many, and to yet others seemingly absurd. Over against this rationalistic reaction to the manifestation of God's power, we have the many witnesses who have experienced deliverance by the power of God, and have found that these "strange things" were "demonstrably true."

In what class do you find yourself today? Are you a quibbling Pharisee, demanding that God move in accord with your views? Or are you a humble onlooker, amazed and filled with fear at what you behold? Or better still, are you as the paralytic and his friends who made an opening in the roof, that they might bring their problem to Jesus? You can be a

critic, an observer, or a partaker. Jesus is passing this way. Rush out into the road to bid Him welcome, for this is "the day of visitation," and the prophet's word is being fulfilled, there is "light at eventide." And we are "beholding strange things this day."

Healed of Kidney Trouble

For five years I have been afflicted with kidney trouble. As Bro. Branham prayed for me, I was instantly saved as well as completely healed. I am thankful to Him for healing me and for saving me.

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