

# WHEN THE WORLD IS ON FIRE

And Other Evangelistic Messages

by Hyman J. Appelman

Copyright © 1962 by Zondervan Publishing House Grand Rapids, Michigan

## CHAPTER THREE

### All Out for JESUS CHRIST

**"Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach .... Then answered I them, and said unto them, The GOD of Heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem" (Nehemiah 2:17,20).**

**"So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work" (Nehemiah 4:6).**

What men faced in Bible times they are facing today. Because there are more of them to the ends of the earth, their dangers seem to be greater. The same GOD who helped in the long ago is still on the throne. His promises are still "**Yea**" and "**Amen**" in the Lord JESUS CHRIST. His people must still comply with the same age-old conditions to obtain the mighty outpourings of His power.

It behooves us, therefore, to face the ruin, to recognize the remedy, to make the resolves necessary to apply GOD's remedy to the problems of this day and time.

We have Crossed the threshold of a new era. An epochal milestone has been passed by the human race. The world is at the Crossroads. We are on the verge of a titanic, cataclysmic collapse unless GOD intervenes. Somehow I believe GOD will intervene. It is for us to give Him the chance. We hold the keys to the treasure houses of GOD's grace. We surely will not turn the world over to Satan without a fight.

### **RUIN**

Consider with me therefore, first of all, the ruin. We have here the same age-old story of man's failure, of man's inabilities, of man's inhumanities to man. There is ruin nationally, internationally, economically, socially, even religiously.

Consider the ruin politically. Governments are not what they were even 25 years ago. Laws are not as binding. Leaders are not as certain of the wisdom of their plans. Ideologies are crashing hopelessly in every corner of the earth, even in our own United States of America.

Consider the ruin economically. Outside our own country, there is no nation anywhere in the

world of any size that is not on the very verge of economic downfall. There are some who say that if the United States of America does not take drastic action, it too will fall into the maelstrom of the world-wide catastrophe. I have no doubt about that, unless GOD Almighty will intervene and save us.

Consider the ruin morally. There is an increasing tendency to gloss over the awfulness of sin. Think of the rising tide of war-created bitternesses. Think of the disregard and depersonalization of the individual. Think of the irreligious tone of present-day education. Think of the national religious illiteracy. Think of the pressing problems of the modern home. It seems that conditions morally cannot get much worse without the Lord's sending another deluge upon the earth.

Consider the ruin religiously. The present spread of false religions of every cult and creed and kind is a definite danger. The tidal wave of modernistic "liberalism" that has now invaded every one of the larger denominations spells doom unless a bulwark is built up against it. Then add to that the coldness, the worldliness, the powerlessness of myriads of our church members and you have a witch's brew that is poisonous to its last dregs.

Yet, in spite of all that, we can face all these things victoriously with JESUS CHRIST. It was Joe Louis who said at the beginning of the last war, "There is nothing the matter with this country that Hitler can help." I say to you, in this hour, there is nothing the matter with America that GOD cannot help. He is definitely the GOD of the hard places, and He has proved Himself so for the time of trouble.

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

Consider next our responsibility. First of all, we Christians have the Gospel of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, the Blood of Calvary's Cross, the only answer to man's need. We have the burden of the lost condition of the myriads round about us. We have the divine command of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, which we call the Great Commission, which is just as definitely our responsibility as it has been the responsibility of GOD's children, of the servants of the Cross, through the ages.

These compulsions built the Church, they sent out missionaries, they established schools, they raised billions of dollars, they paved the way for the martyrs. They are the reason for the existence of the Church.

American Christians in this day and time face a compulsion.

America has a peculiar responsibility. America holds the key position among the nations of the world. America has a rendezvous with destiny. America must see to it that there is world conversion or there will be world catastrophe. The Christians of America are the most numerous, the strongest, the wealthiest Christians of the world. It is up to us, largely, to furnish the answer to this calamity that has come upon the earth.

America is in the forefront of the nations. America is the only great land that has been left untouched by the ravages of war. We have more wealth than all the Christian nations of the earth combined. We in America are still free to think and to act. America still has the mind for it.

America is the only strong, free nation on earth not on her knees in death struggle for her existence. America is just now entrusted with the cause of popular freedom and democratic principles in the whole world. As long as America remains true to her traditions and her ideals, there is hope everywhere. Should America be defeated physically and morally, the defeat would be universal, and perhaps for long, dark ages to come. We must save America to save the world.

What have we done with this tremendous responsibility?

We Christians are definitely responsible for the debacle that has come to pass. We cannot lay the responsibility at the doors of the statesmen, of the diplomats, of the educators. We know the causes, we have the cure; but what have we done with the cause and the cure?

We have split into groups. Our sects and sections, our denominations, sub-denominations, intra-denominations, inter-denominations, supra-denominations, non-denominations are the laughing stock of Satan and hell, as well as of a gainsaying world. We have argued over the minutiae of premillennialism, of whether the Church is going to be here during the Tribulation or whether she will be taken up with the Lord JESUS CHRIST, while all about us, men, women and children have been wandering on, on the road to eternal doom. We have engaged in Bible conferences, splitting Greek infinitives, parsing Greek sentences, while all about us men were dying in sin. Do not misunderstand me. With all my soul, I am for all the Bible conferences and all the Bible teachers. May the tribe of both increase. But if a Bible conference does not result in holier living, in more sacrificial giving, and especially in more effective witness bearing, it is not the kind that GOD can smile upon, it is not the kind that was intended by the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD.

We have refused to cooperate. We have majored on minors and minored on majors. We have sought out our differences rather than those things in which we all agree. We have refused to come together in concerted attacks against sin and Satan.

We have forgotten that it has always been the rule of satanic majesty to divide us so that we might not be a mighty army under one banner, engaged in one attack. There has been little love lost among us. We have criticized each other. We have found fault with each other. We have abused the churches that insisted on staying within their denominational folds. We have criticized the so-called "liberals" until they detest the very sight of us. Instead of loving them and praying for them, instead of agonizing over them, we have beaten them over the head with our criticisms. We have not confined ourselves to those who are not in our camps. In our very inner councils we have split and criticized each other until there was no time left for concerted prayer and concerted witness-bearing.

We have excused ourselves for the smallness of our churches, the paucity of our results. We have been idling at the job. We have not given as we should. Our very alibis have tied up our purses. Our very alibis have dried up our hearts. We have diagnosed so much and so often that we have not had time to apply the remedy.

## **REMEDY**

Now, what is the remedy? We all will agree, regardless of any other difference between us, that

the Gospel of the Lord JESUS CHRIST is the only remedy; but the Gospel itself, preached in ever so orthodox a fashion, is but a dead letter - words, words, WORDS! The Bible has no magic in it. The writings of Paul the apostle are not metaphysical. I repeat, there is definitely no magical quality in the Gospel, unless it is accompanied by the afflatus of Heaven.

The remedy is not only the Gospel of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, but the Gospel of the Lord JESUS CHRIST preached in the power and demonstration of the HOLY SPIRIT. It is the Gospel preached ceaselessly, endlessly, the Gospel planted beside all waters, the Gospel pressed and impressed upon the hearts of the multitudes.

The Gospel will save us.

First, it will save us from our sins. It will save our souls. It will put our feet in the way of the Cross. It will start us on the road to glory.

Second, the Gospel will save us from mediocrity. The study of it, the meditation upon it, the eating of it, the digesting of it, the thinking upon it, all these things together will save us from the mediocrity of preaching just to be doing something. Too many professional clergymen are preaching for a living, preaching because that happens to be their job rather than plumbing, or carpentering, or bricklaying, or bus driving. Oh, the tendency towards mediocrity on the part of so many "gentlemen of the cloth"!

Then there is danger of mediocrity on the part of those rank-and-file Christians, the children of GOD, who profess to be witnesses for the Lord JESUS CHRIST! Our religion, our testimony, our Gospel, our activities, ought to be transcendent in their impact and impress upon the souls of men.

The Gospel will save us from staleness. We need not be exhausted in our thinking, in our preaching, in our sermonizing. The Gospel is a fathomless source of everything that it takes to keep fresh and free, enthusiastic, forceful, powerful. The tragedy of staleness is apparent in too many books, in too many pulpits, in too many sermons, in too many activities of our churches. I believe with all my soul that majoring on the Gospel will banish any thought of staleness.

The Gospel will save our churches. It will save the unsaved in them. Oh, the multitudes of those on the rolls of our churches who know not CHRIST in the pardon of their sins! Our ceremonies, our programs, our organizations, our multiplied multitudinous activities can do them no good. They must be brought face to face with the claims, the conditions, the contents, the conquests of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST and be born again.

We may revive our backsliders for a little while by loyalty campaigns, by visitation drives, or by extracurricular activities that are so common and so commendable in our churches, but it is only the Gospel of the Lord JESUS CHRIST which brought them to the Son of GOD in salvation that will do any permanent good.

It will cause backsliders to fall in love afresh with their matchless Redeemer. It will give them a new affection for the Church, their brethren in the Lord JESUS CHRIST. It will furnish them a purpose;

- first, their own salvation;
- second, their own sanctification;
- third, the urgency of the salvation of multitudes round about them.

The Gospel will bring the HOLY SPIRIT. That is the promise of the Lord JESUS CHRIST. The Great Commission as recorded by Matthew finishes with the marvelous assurance, "**Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.**" Someone has said so well that the "LO" of His presence depends upon the "GO" of the preaching. It is definitely true.

- The HOLY SPIRIT will not come upon programs unless those programs are used to promote the Gospel.
- The HOLY SPIRIT will not come upon organizations unless organizations are dedicated to the preaching and proclamation of the Gospel.
- The HOLY SPIRIT will not come upon any activities in our churches unless they major completely, almost exclusively, on the telling of the story of CHRIST and Him crucified.

My heart was stirred recently when one of the top men of my own denomination, with tears, heartbrokenly said to me, "I do not know what to do. We have 1200, 1500 in the morning services on Sunday, and but 150, 175, or 200 on Sunday night. I have tried everything. I have prayed, I have fasted, I have sobbed. I have preached the best I knew, but our people are not on fire for GOD." There are hundreds like him.

That is a universal tragedy; it can be traced to the fact that the HOLY SPIRIT somehow has been grieved out of our activities. It can be traced to the fact that perhaps we have slowed down on the preaching of the Gospel. JESUS CHRIST still says to us, "**And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.**"

What can we give our church members that will bring them to their first love? What can we offer them when they come to us, consciously or unconsciously, with their broken hearts, their burdened souls, their tormented lives, their fears, their doubts, their questions, their hesitations, their uncertainties, their lack of solid foundations? Only the Lamb of GOD, the Rock of Ages, the fountain of Blood and water, the Balm in Gilead - only this will meet their needs!

The Gospel will save the lost. Nothing else can do it. Nothing else is doing it. Nothing else has done it. Nothing else shall do it. "**The Gospel... is the power of GOD unto salvation, to every one that believeth.**" The Gospel convicts of sin, the Gospel converts the soul. It is by the foolishness of preaching the Gospel that men, women, and children are brought out of darkness into light, out of damnation into salvation, out of death into life, out of hell into Heaven.

- This cannot be done by negative separation.
- It cannot be done by criticizing the modernists;
- it cannot be done by finding fault with the National Council of Churches;
- it cannot be done by blaming the juvenile delinquency situation;
- it cannot be done by saying that our churches are shot through and through with the world, while we ourselves draw our skirts of self-righteousness about us and stand aside to watch the parade bound for hell.

I believe in separation. I do not believe a Christian ought to have a thing to do with the things of the world. I believe a Christian ought to live victoriously over sin - daily, hourly. I believe a Christian belongs to GOD in the Lord JESUS CHRIST. I believe a Christian ought to exemplify GOD in the Lord JESUS CHRIST. I believe a Christian ought to exemplify to a lost world what it means to be indwelt by the HOLY SPIRIT. But separation that is not followed up by incessant preaching of the Gospel will not win the lost to the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

We are in perilous times. Everyone knows it. We are surrounded by all sorts of pagan ideologies. Most of our philosophers (so-called), our psychologists (so-called), our psychiatrists (so-called) have sold out to naturalism, to behaviorism, to humanism. False philosophies of every sort and description have grown up about us, choking out the truths of GOD's Word.

Most of our educators seem to think they can get along without GOD, without CHRIST, without the Bible, without old-time morality, without old-time HOLY GHOST religion. The hard grip of secularism has taken hold of the souls of multitudes of our church members, let alone of the great hosts of the unsaved. This world has gone mad after materialism. "**Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die**" seems to be the shibboleth of the street.

What can the world do without CHRIST? We know that it is utterly lost, that all its pomp and splendor is as ashes, as bitter wormwood, as gall, as smoke in the wind, as unstable as the waters of the tempest-tossed, tumultuous seas. What can the world do without CHRIST? CHRIST is the answer. Whatever else we do, we must major on preaching CHRIST, we must major on evangelism, we must major on soul-winning. I believe with all my soul that our day and time is giving Christianity another chance to present Christ to an idolatrous world.

## **TIME FOR REVIVAL**

We Christians must resolve, everyone of us, as far as possible enlisting the churches and the people whom we represent, to engage in a single-hearted, single-minded, single-souled, undivided, wholehearted, stupendous, massive, CHRIST-centered revival.

Whenever concerted efforts have been made for the good of humanity and the glory of GOD, there has ever been granted achievement. Consider Moses in the time of the Tabernacle:

And they all came with their gifts . . . from gold to goat's hair.

Think of the time of Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem: "**So built we the wall... for the people had a mind to work.**" The great, grand, concerted movement that began in the city of Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost and swept to the ends of the then known world is an incentive and an inspiration to us to engage in just such an effort.

The first essential of any worthy movement is worthy leadership. We have men in every denomination who are filled with the Spirit of GOD. But more than that, we have the Man, even Christ Jesus. It is under His banner, under His aegis, that we are to go out with the Gospel.

There must be unity of aim. I did not say union. I am uncompromisingly against union. Union means compromise. Union means concession. But unity means compassion. Unity means

communion. Unity means cooperation. Unity will result in conquest. There must be steadfastness of purpose. We must not be drawn away to any side issue. We must dedicate ourselves to the high purpose of praying down and of preaching up a revival from glory here upon this earth.

There must be willingness to serve anywhere, any time, at any price, regardless of who may get the credit. The glory, the praise, the honor is to go to the Lord JESUS CHRIST. We are to be servants of the Master and servants of each other.

There must be power. There is power. The HOLY SPIRIT of the Great Commission is still ready to go with us to the end of the age, to the end of the world. We still have the Gospel which is the power of GOD unto salvation to everyone that believeth.

There must be crusade. I do not know of any group of people under GOD's shining Heaven that can lead in a crusade for CHRIST in this all-out attack against sin and Satan any better than our American Bible believers. They are the choicest of the land. Their hearts are ablaze for JESUS. They are concerned for the souls of men. They believe in the verities of the Gospel. They would die before they would betray a jot or a tittle of the saving grace of GOD.

This is our opportunity! GOD wills it. The HOLY SPIRIT of GOD is calling us to this mighty crusade. Keep up house-to-house visitation. Keep up single church revivals. But I beseech you, by the mercies of GOD, by the needs of a lost world, by souls going down to hell, by the challenging CHRIST of GOD, by the glory of the Redeemer, by the power of the HOLY SPIRIT, by the briefness of the time, by the certainty of death, by the attacks of Satan, by the forces of evil, let us combine in one great, single-fronted, single-hearted, universal, evangelistic crusade to win men for CHRIST in these crisis days.

## **ONLY ONE HOPE**

There is only one hope for this dark, troubled world of ours.

I do not believe that we are going to save it from ultimate destruction. I am not too much concerned about that. There is not much in this old world worth saving. I for one shall be glad when it shall be purged with the divine fire of GOD's end of time visitation. I for one am panting for the time when the CHRIST of GOD shall make over this world to suit His plan, His purpose, His program.

What I am concerned about is that the Church may be revived, that the people of GOD may be brought anew and afresh to the complete surrender to the CHRIST of GOD, that the multitudes now lost in sin may be brought to a saving knowledge of the matchless Son of GOD.

- There is only one hope for this world: the crucified, resurrected, enthroned, second coming Son of GOD!
- There is only one hope for this troubled age and that is the preaching of CHRIST and Him crucified!
- There is only one hope for the lost souls of men and that is the Blood which flowed from Immanuel's veins!
- There is only one hope for any of us, and that is the authority that was vested, and is vested,

and shall yet be vested in the mighty, resurrected CHRIST, the Jehovah of the Old Testament!

Now is the time for us to go all out for JESUS CHRIST! GOD is calling us into this crusade!

This is the call of full surrender. We need to fall on our faces before GOD, with tears of penitence and confession on our faces. We need to lay our all on the altar that our talents may be entirely at His disposal.

This is the call to loyalty - loyalty to the old-time Gospel, loyalty to the Great Commission, loyalty to our churches, loyalty to our fellow Christians, loyalty to our tasks, loyalty to the HOLY SPIRIT, loyalty in our responsibility to the lost souls round about us.

It is the call to courage. We have nothing of which to be afraid. The CHRIST of GOD is still the mighty conqueror. The promise still is "**Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.**" We have much to encourage us. Souls are being saved. Churches are growing. The Gospel of the Lord JESUS CHRIST is triumphing. Multitudes are being brought to the feet of our Redeemer. Here and there blazing flames of the coming revival are beginning to show themselves in increasing fervor and extent. Yes, the mighty CHRIST of GOD still holds the reins of the universe in His hands.

It is the call to cooperation. It is a call to forget our petty differences, our picayunish distinctions. It is a call to bury our personal predilections in the one common fund of resources that we can all draw upon as we go out into this battle for GOD and for right.

It is the call to sacrifice. Think of the sacrifices that Great Britain and America and Russia made to win World War II. Think of the 300,000 Americans who gave the last full measure of devotion in order to save this world from a tyrant! Translate that into spiritual action and you will have the meaning of my poor, burdened soul and breaking heart as I plead with you for sacrifice.

Let us meet the nuclear bombs with the Gospel! Let us meet the ravages of communism with the Gospel! Let us meet juvenile delinquency with the Gospel! Let us meet sin with the Gospel! Let us give the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD this chance to demonstrate, through devotion, through dedication, through surrender, through cooperation, through loyalty, through sacrifices, through courage, through the exploits of His people, that there is still a GOD in Heaven, that His promises are still "Yea" and "Amen" in the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

\*\*\*