

## Whatever The Cost

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*So he took Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. The Devil said to Him, "I will give You their splendor and all this authority, because it has been given over to me, and I can give it to anyone I want. If You, then, will worship me, all will be Yours." (Luke 4:5-7, HCSBS)*

God's objective for coming as man down to earth was to regain legal control over what man had voluntarily surrendered to the devil. And here in the desert, where Jesus received final preparation for this world-transforming, life-changing mission, the very one from whom He had to snatch this destructive control over mankind away surprisingly offered it to Him on a silver platter, apparently for free. But with Satan nothing is for free. He knew that a succumbing Jesus would result in the opposite of God's objective, namely putting even the very Godhead under his control. Seeking to avert his own long prophesied defeat and horrific eternal punishment, this lure was the last resort of a mortally terrified devil.

Two millennia later we continue to be grateful to Jesus for resisting such cunning lure to dodge Calvary. For as dreadful and torturous the cross was, it also was key to destroying the devil's deadly grip on mankind, whereas accepting Satan's offer would have cemented it for eternity.

Unable to dethrone God, the devil continues to vent his fury at God's images - man. So in the same way he tempted Jesus, Satan and his demons offer man an array of ways to accomplish God's objectives that are contrary to Scriptures, the leading of the Holy Spirit and the Father's will. I have witnessed many believers willingly either submitting to or making use of unrighteous, thus ungodly ways to gain access to countries or authorities, earn a living, build and establish edifices, churches, ministries, businesses, organizations, or getting involved in politics, etc., all in the name of Jesus, attempting to build God's righteous Kingdom on earth. As if the end would justify the means. Such logic works in the fallen world ruled and controlled by Satan and his evil cohorts but certainly not in the Kingdom of God.

Just like Jesus, believers are still offered the world without the cross today. Sadly many take the devil's bait despite Jesus clearly warning us that if we were to follow Him in obedience, we too would have to take up our (own) cross (not His or another person's, though!) (*Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23*). Thus far, few believers seem willing to embrace the difficulties, challenges, hostilities, persecution, ridicule, mockery, loneliness, hurt and frustration their cross entails in a God-opposing world. Yet there is no other, easier way. No shortcut. Jesus knew it was never about a trouble-free road but obedient surrender to God's will and ways, whatever the cost.

Praying "*your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*" (*Matthew 6:10, Luke 11:2*) rolls off our tongues far too easy I believe. Cause God's Kingdom rule coming down to earth has huge consequences for every believer as we need to embrace and act on an entirely different set of rules/principles than the world under Satan's rule does. In fact, God's laws/principles usually oppose most of the conventional wisdom and textbook teaching we have grown accustomed to in the drab monotony of everyday life, even as believers.

Looking at economical/financial issues, for example, Scriptures leave no doubt that God's Kingdom presents an entirely different understanding to the world's interpretation of principles such as accountability, budgeting (planning), competition, corruption (bribery, cheating, fraud, theft, extortion, exploitation, etc.), debt (borrowing, lending), excellence, fear factor (insurances, pensions, security systems, etc.), financing, giving, get-rich-quick schemes, greed, inheritance, integrity, interest/compound interest, investments, land (property), marketing (advertisement), motivation, partnerships, payment terms, person-

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nel (relationships, hiring & firing, etc.), pledge/surety/guarantee/collateral/securities, pricing, profit, refund/restitution, retirement, tax, transparency, work ethics, etc.

So, frankly, taking honest stock of our lives, are we truly prepared for God's Kingdom rule? Are we open-minded and free to get our current paradigms shifted? Are we willing to embrace tough opposition as we engage in Kingdom building God's way? Are we ready to resist the devil's temptations presented e.g. in form of seemingly easy and cheap solutions based on conventional wisdom that on closer inspection clearly contradict biblical truth and principles? Are we prepared to obediently surrender to God's will and ways, whatever the cost, just like Jesus exemplified?

If my observation is correct then God is releasing increasing revelation to His people all around the globe, revelation we so desperately need it in these increasingly dark end-time. Isn't it time to stop philosophizing about them and start responding in deed and action?