

HE ON THE HOUSETOP

"In the day that the Son of man is revealed; in that day, he which shall be on the housetop and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it." Luke 17:30-33.

The description is relative to matters due to take place after the Lord has come. The six preceding verses explain how he will be present in his days as the lightning – invisible, its presence recognized only by the thunder and the flashes of light which come from it. Present while mankind will be eating, drinking, planting and building; present, but unrecognized; but not long will it be so; his presence will soon be made known; he will be revealed in this day so that all shall recognize his presence and power.

First to recognize him will be the "little flock" soon to be made His Bride, otherwise called his friends, from whom he hides no good thing, but reveals to them all things and shows them not only things present but also "things to come." These will know first the blessed news of the presence of the heavenly Bridegroom; then by-and-by as the judgments begin to come, first on the nominal church and then on the world, all men will come to know of his presence, for He shall be "revealed in flaming fire." (Great and notable judgments.) We find from our lamp – God's word – that the Bridegroom has come, is now present, consequently the revealing of his presence has commenced; it is revealed to us through the "sure word of prophecy" and we do not wait to see in the light of flaming judgments. Seeing, then, that we are living in the day of revealing, it is due time that we should understand

our text which treats of matters due to transpire here and now; let us therefore give heed to our text and obey its teachings. [Read it again.]

We first inquire what house is referred to, and find that the nominal church is meant. There is a sense in which only the overcomers are spoken of as the house – "Christ as a son over his own house, whose house are we if we hold fast," etc. Again the Jewish Church and the entire nominal church of wheat and tares are called houses, and we read that Jesus shall be for "a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to both the houses of Israel." Isa. 8:14.

This is the house referred to in our text – the nominal Gospel house – which we elsewhere read is to stumble. They in the house are the members of the nominal household; they on the housetop represent those nearest heaven – the most devoted and consecrated ones – the jewels which the Lord says he will gather; "the stuff in the house" represents the individual interests centered in the organizations, such as honor, respect, family ties, friendships; these are valuables indeed; we all love these things, but the Lord says that in this day, as soon as we discern his presence we must flee and escape from the house – the house is stumbling and about to fall. A terrible gale is coming on; we know it is just at hand, for we see the flashes from the dark clouds of trouble which indicate the presence of him who is as the lightning.

It is the same message which is put in other words in Rev. 18:2. "Babylon is fallen; come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and receive not of her plagues." But how loathe are the inmates to leave their old and comfortable home; they will not believe that their house can fall – these will not obey the voice; they will be buried in the ruins. "Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion."

But there is another class which cries and laments for Zion's transgressions, who are not at ease. Some of these housetop saints hear and believe the call, but some stay and try to prop up the shaking house and hope against hope; some of them take the alarm and attempt to

escape, but loving their stuff (goods) seek to take it with them; this involves delay, and is dangerous. It is this danger our Lord warns us against, saying: "Let him not go down to take it away. And let him that is in the field likewise not return back." Those who have got out of the house and are fleeing from the coming storm let them not think it a false alarm and return, for the destruction of the house (nominal church) lingers only until such sheep as hear the shepherd's voice, "Come out of her, my people," and are obedient, shall have had opportunity to escape; then will come the crash and fall.

Now mark the illustration given: "Remember Lot's wife." In the days of Lot they of Sodom ate, drank, etc., as usual, but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. We all recall the story, how Lot was called out of Sodom before sunrise; how he endeavored to get his relatives, who were wedded to Sodomites, to flee with him; how his words seemed to them like idle tales; how even Lot and his family were so tedious that the angels laid hold of their hands and urged them out. They had hardly escaped when the destruction came upon the city. So here God pronounces certain judgments upon the world and on a worldly church. He tells his "friends" (represented by Abraham), who live separate from the world – from under the influence of Sodom, of what is coming upon Sodom, and delivers the class who have become almost overcharged with the cares of this life – if they will hear his voice, obey and come out into separateness of life.

But Jesus called special attention to Lot's wife, who, when on her way out, began to remember her goods, and slacked her pace for a moment to sorrowfully look back. Let us see the application of this to those who are now called in this day of the revealing of the present Lord to come out from the Gospel "house." He that loveth houses, or lands, or reputation, or relatives, or friends, more than the Bridegroom is not worthy to be of his Bride; let him stay with his stuff, and they

will; but let each one who has consecrated all to the Lord remember that he has [R229 : page 1] nothing of his own, and let him leave all and obey the voice, "Come out of her."

Here the test seems to be entire consecration; every interest of life and comfort draws and binds you to remain in the now condemned house. [We understand that the nominal church was given up in 1878, the exact parallel of time to the giving up of the Jewish house when Jesus said to them: "Your house is left unto you desolate;" as he now says to this house: "Because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth;" – my word of truth and knowledge will no longer be uttered through you. We believe also, as previously shown that there are three and one-half years of favor to those in the house, during which the Lord is revealing his presence to the saints and calling on them to come out – that this three and one half years of individual favor ends with October of this year, and by that time "the voice of the Bride will be heard no more in the Babylon (confusion) house. Hence we would urge, Flee out of Sodom; "flee out of Babylon;" stay not in all the plain – leave the stuff – sacrifice it in obedience to the Lord's word.

Yes, it will test you sorely – "every man's work shall be tried so as by fire." He that loveth his life, (honor, reputation, friends, etc.,) shall lose it, and he that sacrifices all these elements of the human nature, shall find that which God hath promised to the overcomers, viz: The crown of life" – immortality.
