

Jude 1:18 (T.W.P. Wolston, Editor) 209330

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FIVE spies of the tribe of Dan came to a town called Laish. And they "saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in anything; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man" (Judg. 18:7). And they returned to their countrymen, and reported that it was a very good land, a large land, and a place where was no want of anything that is in the earth (vers. 9:10). And in verse 27 we read, the Danites "came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure; and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire. And there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon, and they had no business with any man; and it was in the valley that lieth by Bethrehob."

What a striking picture is Laish of the poor world at large today! It was situated in a very good and large land, where there was no want of anything, and its inhabitants dwelt carelessly, after the manner of their nearest neighbors, quiet and secure; and, as there was no magistrate, and no king (ch. 17:6, 18:1, 19:1), did that which was right in their own eyes (Judg. 21:25); and no one put them to shame, for they countenanced each other's doings. And as to business, their nearest neighbors being a long way off, they were just shut up to their own circle and selfishness.

And what is the poor world of today but a modern Laish? Though under the power of Satan, and the dominion of sin, we see on all hands what a good and large land the cities and villages of this world, are built in; where there is no want of anything, but where a faithful Creator-God has provided for every need of His creatures, the earth on all hands teeming with His bounty. But the inhabitants, how are they dwelling? Carelessly, after the manner of their neighbors, quiet and secure (as they think). And although there are mostly kings and magistrates, are not the vast mass living for time and self, doing their own will as far as they dare, daily indulging in their own unrestrained thoughts under the plea of liberty, in insubjection to the authority of God and His Word, and oft to those He has placed over them? whilst all kinds of evil practices and departures from the truth of God are sanctioned by custom, and approved because the mass follow them, and no shame? And how many are saying, I mind my own business, and I leave other people to mind theirs! which means, in short, I follow my own sweet will, and delight in my own way; and I don't want, and I don't mean to brook, any interference on the part of others! In two words, we may sum it up broadly: In this world "self" reigns, and Christ is (though oft proffered) refused. The world of today is indeed a modern Laish, lying in the wicked one (1 John 5:19); without God, without Christ, and having no hope (Eph. 2:12). But the eye of God was fixed on careless, selfish, godless Laish, and solemn and sudden judgment was in store. We read, "And the children of Dan went their way:... and came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure.: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire. And there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon, and they had no business with any man" (vers. 26-28).

And the eye of God is fixed too on this careless, selfish, godless world of today (and fixed on you); and though judgment is His strange work, and mercy His joy, and though abounding grace lingers till the last moment, judgment is appointed, and judgment will come. Tens of thousands are doing what is right in their own eyes, living quietly and securely, saying, "Peace and safety," but sudden destruction will surely overtake them (1 Thess. 5:8). And in that day, as in the day of the calamity of Laish, there will be no deliverer for the guilty. They shall not escape (Heb. 2:4). The inhabitants of Laish lived far from Zidon, and had no business with those who dwelt there, but were, so to speak, wrapped up in themselves, so that when the foe came they cried in vain for help. And the men of the world, who have kept aloof from their neighbors, who might have shown them in the days of their prosperity the folly of being careless in the present without providing against the future, will find, when judgment sweeps the scene, that they have forsaken their own mercies, and that it is too late to find a deliverer.

But, dear reader, though you may not care to have to do with us, as may be, you think us, far too religious, we see your danger, and would have to do with you, and warn you, ere it be too late, of the threatened judgment of God (Acts 18:30, 31), and of the consummate folly of dwelling carelessly, quiet and secure, immersed in the pleasures, follies, and business of this life. Judgment is at your very door (James 5:9). This world is doomed, as certain as the world in Noah's day, or Sodom and Gomorrah, Babylon in Belshazzar's or Jerusalem in the time of the apostles (Gen. 7, 19.; Dan. 5; Luke 21). There will be no deliverer then, as there was none at Laish. But, thank God, there is a Deliverer today, a Saviour and a great One (Isa. 19:20), if you will only turn to Him. His name is Jesus, which denotes a Saviour, for He shall save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

You may follow the course of the nineteenth century, without a single blush of shame; but this poor shameless world will surely be put to shame, and you along with it, in the presence of the Lord. The tables will be turned then. An infidel world, with a hypocritical religious garb, put the Son of God to shame in the past, and pursues the same fearful course till today; but soon the Son of God will return in power, to the utter discomfiture and eternal shame of all His foes.

You may seek to find a refuge for your uneasy conscience in a religious profession, but no plea of church or chapel going, or religious morality, will stand you in stead at that moment. God wants reality. Sham Christians can be counted by thousands, miserable counterfeits of the enemy, miserable sinners confessed; but on the threshold of true Christianity stands inscribed, "Ye must be born again." If you think that means your baptism, you are laboring under the greatest delusion. It is a distinct operation of the Spirit of God in the soul. And without it, you can neither see, nor enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5). Oh, sinner, when will you be real? God sees behind your religious mask; He knows you, and that thoroughly. The whole depth of iniquity of your desperately deceitful and wicked heart has been fathomed to the very bottom by Him (Jer. 17:9). Then, when will you look eternal realities in the face, and face them? You must, but alas, alas! if you face them in your sins, naught but eternal perdition can be your sure and irretrievable portion. But if you face them today in self judgment before God, He presents you a Deliverer, His Son, Christ Jesus the Lord, a present and everlasting Saviour for every one that believeth! Then look to Him, to

Him alone, poor burdened sinner, doomed inhabitant of this Laish world, and be ye saved (Isa. 45:22).

And what a salvation! God's salvation! God's salvation for the guilty and the lost, the careless sinners of this ruined godless world! God's salvation, full, free, and eternal, prepared for and proffered to all, everywhere. All the price is paid; the blood, the precious blood of His Son, was the cost. Slowly the centuries have rolled away into the past since the day that He laid down His life, and still He sits at the right hand of God in glory, a living, present, and eternal Saviour, with arms of mercy outstretched, through the righteousness of God, to welcome all who flee to Him. And grace triumphant reigns. What a God is our God! What a Saviour is our Saviour! Oh, careless, heedless sinner, what think ye of Christ's blood? Without it, there is no remission; with it, full and eternal remission. Sinner, trust in the precious blood while ye may, and follow the precious Saviour till He comes, —for the modern Laish is doomed!

E. H. C.

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