



the green tree

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“For if they do these things in the green tree, what will happen in the dry?” Luke 23:31 When Jesus uttered these words He was carrying the cross to Calvary. He had just been sentenced to death and now was on His way to die a death that He never deserved. All that had happened to Him within the last 24 hours was totally unfair. He didn't receive a fair trial, nor have fair witnesses, all because the only thing they could find wrong with Him is that He helped people. Out of jealousy He was now condemned by what was supposed to be the most righteous people on earth, God's chosen people. He was their long awaited Savior and now because He wasn't what they wanted, was going to die

for it.

Jesus spoke these words in Luke 23:31 while some righteous women, on the Via Dolorosa, were found weeping over the injustice that was happening to Him. Jesus, whose heart is always for others, says not to weep for Him but for their children. Why for their children? Then He goes on to talk about a green tree.

What is a green tree? A green tree has life in it. It has leaves, sap, fruit. Green trees produce shade from the heat of the sun, and give refuge for birds of the air. They also provide food to eat and wood to build with. A green tree is a healthy tree. A dead tree on the other hand has no life, no sap running through it, no fruit on its branches. This type of wood is used

When Jesus spoke these words about what men will do in the green tree, He was referring to the time frame in which he had been ministering to the people of Israel. His miracles had produced much life to the hurting and sick of His day. He healed lepers, raised the dead and was a continual source of life for many. His teachings produced food to satisfy the hunger that the people were feeling in those days. He even said that His words were food. His compassion produced much shelter for the hurting and wounded. Many found refuge in Him then, as well as today. Truly, the time that Jesus lived was a time of



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This type of wood is used as fire wood.

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great growth, and life such as Israel had never seen. The Bible says that it was the fullness of time, a completed or perfect time. (Gal. 4:4) The crucifixion happened in a time when Israel was looking for a messiah, for it was the fullness of time. It was a healthy time, a green tree. It was the greatest time for miracles in the world's history, yet the ugliness of sin is truly seen by crucifying Jesus in a time of abundant life, in the green tree. Jesus said that if they, (meaning the world), do these things in the green tree, what about when it's not green anymore? That would be our day because the miracles don't abound, per capita, as in Jesus' day. I began to question, what did the disciples do in the green tree? If in Jesus' day He said, "Unless this people see a miracle they won't believe," how much

lieve? The moral decline and all that is taking place in the world, (the no care attitude about morals), has dried the tree up. The Bible says, "If we can't keep up with the footmen, what will happen when the chariots are upon us." Meaning, if in times of easiness and prosperity, (the green tree), we are unable to be faithful to God, what will happen when times of adversity come, (which is definitely coming); or even worse, persecution (the dry)? We know what the world will do, go from bad to worse. But what about the Christians, those who love the Lord? We see from the Bible, which always provides the extreme case for us, that the disciples struggled in the green tree. Peter, for example, as well as all the disciples, abandoned Jesus when He was arrested. Peter then followed from afar hoping not to be noticed. He did-

more because it might cost him physical pain. Then, denied knowing Je-

"Peter...didn't want to get close anymore because it might cost him physical pain"

sus when a servant girl asked him if he was one of them. Peter, in the green tree, denied Jesus when he was his most confident. Hours before, he swore that he was ready to die for Jesus. Now, he was cowering under the fear of a servant girl.

Mark chapter 14 relates a story of a young man who was with Jesus in the garden, who left his linen clothes behind when Jesus was taken, and ran away naked. We know that when we come to Jesus that He clothes us with a new robe of righteousness. Here is a story of a young man leaving it all behind. He would rather have the shame of being seen running

won't believe," how much more today won't we be-

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being seen running through the streets naked, than being counted as one of Jesus' disciples. He did this in the green tree, with the footmen, in the greatest time of the worlds history, the resurrection. Can you imagine preferring to have people see you naked in the streets than as one who stands with Christ?

Every now and then we see a naked person walking in the streets in Mexico, we usually think he or she is demon possessed. Yet today, many are naked in the streets not making a stand for Christ. They may not be physically naked, but spiritually they are. Spiritually, they've left the righteousness that Jesus gives, and are left uncovered.

What about Judas? He abandoned Jesus for money. Money took first place in his life and as a result, he died. He walked in the teaching of Jesus,

His ministry, was refreshed by the shade of His person, but it wasn't enough. Could the tree have been any greener? Judas exchanged the life giving green tree for the dry tree that is only used for burning. Granted, it gives off heat, but only for awhile. Like the pleasures of this world it was only temporal. So miserable was Judas, that he didn't even use what he thought was going to bring him happiness. The money that he was so fond of, he never used. The deception of money makes you think it brings happiness. Many spend their whole life in pursuit of it, only to find that it wasn't what they were looking for. Many loose their souls over it.

For many of us personally, right now we are in the green tree. Times of blessing are here. Our life's not in danger living for Jesus, yet our life is not dedicated to Him. We

diers yet the sound of chariots is in the distance. We'll cheer over a sports event but our worship is weak. We'll believe the newspaper more than the Bible. Spending twenty dollars on a meal is nothing but to put it in the offering plate is way too much. What will we do in the difficult day? We may say, "I'll get right at that time." However, if we can't be dedicated now, if we're ashamed now, how much more later?

"We'll believe the newspaper before we'll believe the Bible"

Recently, I was talking to an evangelist about a church in Cuba where many walk for two hours to be in the service. Then, he commented that he knew of a church in the states where they sent transportation to pick up the congregation and people would come to the door and say, "We're

in the teaching of Jesus,
saw and ate of the fruit of

not dedicated to Him. We
tire, walking with foot sol-

the door and say, "We're
not coming today". He



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said that he'd been to one church where they had electronic reclining chairs.

Jesus said not to weep for Him, but for their children, which would be those who would not be in the green tree, but those who are in the dry time without much spiritual conviction. That's today. Jesus knew He would overcome. The adversity of the cross didn't diminish any of His desire to do the will of God. The question is, will we be able to do the same. In Jesus'

day they knew the written word but not the Living Word. In these end times, it's time to draw near to God as opposed to sit back and relax. Many are making preparations for Y2K, feeling they have little time left before the crash hits: storing water, food, generators etc. because they know something is coming. May we as Christians be as wise and diligent to spiritually prepare for what is coming as well. There has never been a day when we could be distracted in

so many areas, doing so many things. Yet neither has there ever been a day when so much work has to be done, in the spreading of the gospel, with a greater need to depend on Jesus, like today. As professional as we might be, we are not exempt from our daily need for Jesus. May we draw near to him while there is still some sap left in the tree.

