

Great Controversy Series
WILL I TAKE A STAND?
Chapter 9 – The Swiss Reformer
Bible Sermon Study by Elene Rodgers

WILL I TAKE A STAND?

(This is a personal question that we ALL must answer.)

What does taking a Stand look like?

Daniel 3:1-18

- 1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height *was* threescore cubits, *and* the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.
- 2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.
- 3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.
- 4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,
- 5 *That* at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:
- 6 And whoso falleth not down and worshipping shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.
- 7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down *and* worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.
- 8 Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews.
- 9 They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever.
- 10 Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image:
- 11 And whoso falleth not down and worshipping, *that* he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.
- 12 There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.
- 13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in *his* rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.
- 14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, *Is it* true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?
- 15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; *well*: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who *is* that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?
- 16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we *are* not careful to answer thee in this matter.
- 17 If it be *so*, **our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.**

18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew that God was ABLE to deliver them from dying in that burning fiery furnace however they did not know IF they would be delivered or be martyred in the fire. They trusted God and had the assurance that they would be delivered at the end of time when Jesus comes again and resurrects His faithful people.

How do we know that some of God's faithful people are martyred?

Daniel 11:32, 33

32 And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do *exploits*.

33 And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, *many* days.

Some of God's faithful people were martyred for example John the Baptist, Zachariah, William Tyndale, John Huss, and Jerome. Daniel 11:32 and 33 particularly is talking about when Papal Rome was ruling and that is what they did to God's people. Even in the Bible days God's people were martyred. Nevertheless God will deliver His faithful people from death at the end.

In this message we will look Zwingli the reformer.

- Zwingli was from Switzerland (Switzerland is a beautiful country surrounded by mountains and around this natural grandeur it spoke to his young mind about the glory of God.)
- Zwingli was born in a modest cottage home
- Zwingli lived from January 1, 1484 to October 11, 1531 at the age of 47 (we will see how he died further on in the message)

“A few weeks after the birth of Luther in a miner's cabin in Saxony, Ulric Zwingli was born in a herdsman's cottage among the Alps. Zwingli's surroundings in childhood, and his early training, were such as to prepare him for his future mission. **Reared amid scenes of natural grandeur, beauty, and awful sublimity, his mind was early impressed with a sense of the greatness, the power, and the majesty of God.** The history of the brave deeds achieved upon his native mountains kindled his youthful aspirations.” {GC 171.2}

How did Zwingli learn of God that planted a seed of truth at an early age?

“And at the side of his pious grandmother he listened to the few precious Bible stories which she had gleaned from amid the legends and traditions of the church. With eager interest he heard of the grand deeds of patriarchs and prophets, of the shepherds who watched their flocks on the hills of Palestine where angels talked with them, of the Babe of Bethlehem and the Man of Calvary.” {GC 171.2}

Zwingli's grandmother taught him Bible stories that she had heard, and it was inspiring to him. Remember the church kept the Bible away from the common people hidden in Latin so common people couldn't understand it.

- Zwingli's father wanted his son to have an education so he first sent him to his uncle to learn some things
- At the age 13 he was sent to Bern which was the most distinguished school in Switzerland at the time.
- When Zwingli was in Bern there were some monks that were there saw how talented Zwingli was and the Dominican and Franciscan monks each tried to allure him to join their monastery to add to their pomp and display. Zwingli's father did not want Zwingli to be a monk so when he heard about the monks trying to allure him he sent for him to return home without delay.

- He resumed his studies at Basel.
- In 1506, Zwingli left from Basel to Glarus where he received ordination as a priest.
- While his was in Glarus serving as a parish priest and as a chaplain in a monastery, he also became chaplain in the Swiss mercenaries (What are mercenaries? Mercenaries were bought soldiers)
- The Swiss mercenaries were known to be tough in battle.

When Zwingli was a chaplain for the mercenaries what did he see? and what was his response?

From the thirteenth century to the time of the French Revolution, the Swiss provided a large number of soldiers as mercenaries who served the emperor, the king of France, the pope, or whoever needed an army and would pay the price. Switzerland lost 1,000,000 men through that mercenary service. In the sixteenth century alone, the country lost 200,000 men. **Yet nobody questioned the practice until a few people like Zwingli began to say it was not right. He was a chaplain to the mercenaries, and he saw 10,000 of his countrymen killed in one battle. He went back home from that experience determined to oppose the mercenary practice.** Zwingli took a stand against it.

Zwingli's stand upset the pope, because the pope depended on the Swiss. The pope had no army of his own, so he hired the Swiss to fight his battles. The Swiss Guard is still used in Vatican City today. It is a medieval carryover from the days when the pope depended on the Swiss for his soldiers. Even the Swiss people were not completely happy with Zwingli because the mercenary activity brought in income to the country. However, many people began to listen because Zwingli explained what he saw.

Because Zwingli took a stand against the mercenary practice what did he experience?

Opposition. The wealthy merchants who had control over the mercenary practices strongly opposed Zwingli. They were making money from the selling of soldiers to other countries. This was a big business. The mercenary activity brought in a lot of money, though it took a lot of lives. Those who were making money from this business did not like what Zwingli said.

As a result of opposing the mercenary practice what did he find it necessary to do?

Many people began to think differently about the mercenary business and the practice there began to subside. As a result, some of the wealthy mercenary business owners opposed Zwingli to the point that he felt it was necessary to relocate. Zwingli decided to move to Eisiendeln.

Eisiendeln was an important city in Switzerland that reached people around the entire region. "Pilgrims at all seasons resorted to the shrine of the Virgin [at Einsiedeln]; but at the great yearly festival of its consecration multitudes came from all parts of Switzerland, and even from France and Germany." GC -175

What was the formula demonstrated by Zwingli to spread the gospel.

1. Zwingli spoke up and took a STAND.
2. As a result, there was OPPOSITION.
3. This led to the FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL

What stand did Zwingli take in Einsindeln?

Zwingli was in Einsindeln the same city were the shrine of the Virgin was. It was claimed to pardon sin. People would go there and give lots of money to the church to have complete pardon for their sins. What did Zwingli say about this? "Do not imagine," he said, "that God is in this temple more than in any other part of creation. Whatever be the country in which you dwell, God is around you, and hears

you. . . . Can unprofitable works, long pilgrimages, offerings, images, the invocation of the Virgin or of the saints, secure for you the grace of God? . . . What avails the multitude of words with which we embody our prayers? What efficacy has a glossy cowl, a smooth-shorn head, a long and flowing robe, or gold-embroidered slippers?" GC- 175

Did Zwingli get opposition because of his stand?

"To many listeners these teachings were unwelcome. It was a bitter disappointment to them to be told that their toilsome journey had been made in vain. The pardon freely offered to them through Christ they could not comprehend. They were satisfied with the old way to heaven which Rome had marked out for them. They shrank from the perplexity of searching for anything better. It was easier to trust their salvation to the priests and the pope than to seek for purity of heart.

But another class received with gladness the tidings of redemption through Christ." GC – page 175 par. 1, 2

Furtherance of the gospel. Where did God have Zwingli next?

Zwingli's popularity spread and he was given an offer to go to Zurich. The largest city in Switzerland and prominent church. Did Zwingli take a stand among all those people? What did he do? Note: They already told him to not preach the reformation but Zwingli told them that he was going to teach them the Bible.

"Speaking of his experience at this time, he afterward wrote: 'When . . . I began to give myself wholly up to the Holy Scriptures, philosophy and theology (scholastic) would always keep suggesting quarrels to me. At last I came to this, that I thought, 'Thou must let all that lie, and learn the meaning of God purely out of His own simple word.' Then I began to ask God for His light, and the Scriptures began to be much easier to me."

GC – 174 ”

How did Zwingli study the Bible?

"He submitted himself to the Bible as the word of God, the only sufficient, infallible rule. He saw that it must be its own interpreter. He dared not attempt to explain Scripture to sustain a preconceived theory or doctrine, but held it his duty to learn what is its direct and obvious teaching. He sought to avail himself of every help to obtain a full and correct understanding of its meaning, and he invoked the aid of the Holy Spirit, which would, he declared, reveal it to all who sought it in sincerity and with prayer." GC – 173

"The Scriptures," said Zwingli, "come from God, not from man, and even that God who enlightens will give thee to understand that the speech comes from God. The word of God . . . cannot fail; it is bright, it teaches itself, it discloses itself, it illumines the soul with all salvation and grace, comforts it in God, humbles it, so that it loses and even forfeits itself, and embraces God." The truth of these words Zwingli himself had proved." GC- 174

As a result of of Zwingli's study of the Bible, his words were filled with the Holy Spirit and many people listened.

"Such was the interest in Zwingli's preaching that the cathedral was filled to overflowing with the crowds that came to listen to him. Little by little, as they could bear it, he opened the truth to his hearers. He was careful not to introduce, at first, points which would startle them and create prejudice. His work was to win their hearts to the teachings of Christ, to soften them by His love, and keep before them His example; and as they should receive the principles of the gospel, their superstitious beliefs and practices would inevitably be overthrown." {GC 180.2}

Zwingli talked against...

- Mass/Eucharist

- Indulgences (There was a man named Samson who came to their town to play on the superstitions of people but when he was there the people were not deceived by his lies because of Zwingli preaching from the Bible)
- Idolatry (in his service Zwingli got rid of all of the imagery)
- Celibacy (He showed that to require clergy not to be married was not Biblical - even Peter was married. Zwingli got married to Anna and had four children)

Opposition

“Accordingly the bishop of Constance dispatched **three deputies** to the Council of Zurich, **accusing Zwingli of teaching the people to transgress the laws of the church, thus endangering the peace and good order of society.** If the authority of the church were to be set aside, he urged, universal anarchy would result. Zwingli replied that he had been for four years teaching the gospel in Zurich, "which was more quiet and peaceful than any other town in the confederacy." "Is not, then," he said, "Christianity the best safeguard of the general security?" GC – 180, 181

Furtherance of the gospel

“The deputies had admonished the councilors to continue in the church, out of which, they declared, there was no salvation. Zwingli responded: 'Let not this accusation move you. The foundation of the church is the same Rock, the same Christ, that gave Peter his name because he confessed Him faithfully. In every nation whosoever believes with all his heart in the Lord Jesus is accepted of God. Here, truly, is the church, out of which no one can be saved.' **As a result of the conference, one of the bishop's deputies accepted the reformed faith.**” {GC 181.1}

Persecution for the sake of the gospel ALWAYS leads to the furtherance of the gospel.

What did Paul say about the opposition he received?

[Philippians 1:12](#) But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto **the furtherance of the gospel**;

Paul and Zwingli were opposed as they shared the gospel and we will be persecuted too if we take a stand for truth. [2 Timothy 3:12](#) Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Don't be afraid to take a stand because of persecution. Remember, if you continue to hold on to the promises of God, be faithful, and endure to the end you will receive the reward of the GREAT DELIVERANCE - REDEMPTION.

Zwingli's death

“In Switzerland, as in Germany, there came dark days for the Reformation. While many cantons accepted the reformed faith, others clung with blind persistence to the creed of Rome. Their persecution of those who desired to receive the truth finally gave rise to civil war. Zwingli and many who had united with him in reform fell on the bloody field of Cappel. Oecolampadius, overcome by these terrible disasters, soon after died. Rome was triumphant, and in many places seemed about to recover all that she had lost. But He whose counsels are from everlasting had not forsaken His cause or His people. His hand would bring deliverance for them. In other lands He had raised up laborers to carry forward the reform.” GC – 211, 212

Shortly after Zwingli's death God sent John Calvin a reformer to Switzerland. Switzerland became a major hub for the Reformation. It was where people would go when fleeing from persecution from the other surrounding countries.

Will I take a stand?

[2 Chronicles 16:9](#) For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of *them* whose heart *is* perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly:

therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.

“In every generation God has sent His servants to rebuke sin, both in the world and in the church. But the people desire smooth things spoken to them, and the pure, unvarnished truth is not acceptable. Many reformers, in entering upon their work, determined to exercise great prudence in attacking the sins of the church and the nation. They hoped, by the example of a pure Christian life, to lead the people back to the doctrines of the Bible. But the **Spirit of God** came upon them as it came upon Elijah, moving him **to rebuke the sins** of a wicked king and an apostate people; they could not refrain from preaching the plain utterances of the Bible-- doctrines which they had been reluctant to present. **They were impelled to zealously declare the truth and the danger which threatened souls.** The words which the Lord gave them they uttered, fearless of consequences, and the people were compelled to hear the warning.

Thus **the message of the third angel will be proclaimed.** As the time comes for it to be given **with greatest power**, the Lord will work through **humble instruments**, leading the minds of those who consecrate themselves to His service. The laborers will be **qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training of literary institutions.**” GC 606.1, 2

Watchmen, GIVE THE WARNING!

Ezekiel 33:7-11

- 7 So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.
- 8 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked *man*, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.
- 9 Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.
- 10 Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins *be* upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?
- 11 Say unto them, *As* I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

If you do not take a stand on things we consider little things you will not be able to take a stand in big things. Remember in Daniel chapter 3 the three Hebrew boys took a stand. Earlier in Daniel chapter 1 the three Hebrew boys took a stand with Daniel not to defile the body with the king's meat and the wine. This stand preceded the bigger stand in Daniel chapter 3. The stand in Daniel chapter 1 strengthen them for the next stand. The same with Zwingli. He continued to take a stand even against the Eucharist which is at the center of false worship. From the study of the Bible, Zwingli learned that the communion supper was to be done as Jesus said “in remembrance of me.” (Luke 22:19) He taught this and many Protestants understood this Biblical principle which was another major point of controversy during his time.

Progression of abominations—you must take a stand against the abominations

Ezekiel 8:6-17

- 6 He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? *even* the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, *and* thou shalt see greater abominations.
- 7 And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall.
- 8 Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door.
- 9 And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here.
- 10 So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the

idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about.

- 11 And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up.
- 12 Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.
- 13 He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, *and* thou shalt see greater abominations that they do.
- 14 Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which *was* toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.
- 15 Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen *this*, O son of man? turn thee yet again, *and* thou shalt see **greater abominations than these.**
- 16 And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, *were* about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and **they worshipped the sun** toward the east.
- 17 Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen *this*, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that **they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence**, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose.

Expect persecution from those who oppose the message

Luke 21:16, 17

- 16 **And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.**
- 17 **And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.**

Daniel 12:13 But go thou thy way till the end *be*: for thou shalt rest, and STAND in thy lot at the end of the days.

For the great day of his wrath is come; and WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO STAND? (Rev 6:17)

Like all the faithful through the ages, if we take a stand for truth we will be persecuted. But remember this **if you take a stand for God you will be able to stand in the day of judgment** and be a part of God's everlasting Kingdom where God "will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken *it*. 9 And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this *is* our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this *is* the LORD; we have waited for him, **we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.**" Isaiah 25:8,9

Excerpts from a sermon of Zwingli

"Whoever retreats from the Word of God for the sake of this ephemeral life will lose his life. Whoever depends on his own knowledge, counsel or feeling, thinking therewith to save himself, will destroy his own soul. Therefore the shepherd must deny himself, throw off his self-love, and certainly prepare himself to bear each day a new cross. Christ Jesus himself did so, always subjugating his will to that of the Father, bearing every cross until he came to the honor of sitting at the right hand of God." - sermon entitled "The Shepherd" 1523 by Zwingli

If we are to have the honor of being a part of God's Kingdom we have to bear our cross and take a stand. **WILL I TAKE A STAND?**