

LIVING
AS SALT AND
LIGHT

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LIGHT

DEREK PRINCE



WHITAKER
HOUSE

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LIVING AS SALT AND LIGHT God's Call to Transform Your World

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INTRODUCTION

WE CAN CHANGE THE COURSE OF NATIONAL EVENTS

In this book, we will be examining the theme of our responsibility as Christians toward the nations in which we live. It is my belief that the Word of God speaks to us about this obligation. It clearly reveals that as Christians, we are accountable for our own societies and countries. Unfortunately, the great majority of Christians have not even begun to think about this responsibility.

Many nations throughout the world are facing possibly the greatest crises of their entire history. Yours may be one of these. What a tragedy it would be if, in this context of crisis, we Christians accomplished nothing that had any bearing or positive effect upon the needs of the nations in which we live! If that were to be the case, I believe we would have failed God.

With this thought in mind, I will deal with the theme of our strategic position as Christians in our nations—including both our privileges and our responsibilities. I want to address this topic in the most useful way possible, so the teaching offered in this book will be as practical as it can be.

I once heard a speaker whose theme was the drastic situation in the United States today. He took three-quarters of his message to tell his audience how terrible conditions were, and how it was getting worse every week. As true as that might have been by itself, it certainly wasn't good news. (Let me just say that the gospel is good news. The gospel is not negative; it is positive. Jesus Christ never encountered a situation where He had to sit down, fold His hands, and say, "I'm sorry. There is nothing to be done.") At the end of his message, this speaker devoted just a little time to

share his belief that a Holy Spirit revival was what was needed. I trust I am doing him justice, but I do not believe he devoted one sentence to telling us *how* we could have a Holy Spirit revival.

It is my aim in this book to point out what we can do—what lies within our power as Christians—to change the course of national events for the better. I am firmly convinced that our countries need to be changed and can be changed. I am also convinced that *we* are the people who must bring about that change. My goal will be to show you from the Word of God how we can accomplish it.

PART I



**OUR POSITION, PRIVILEGE, AND
RESPONSIBILITY IN THE WORLD**

CHAPTER 1

A CITY ON A HILL—THE ONLY LIGHT



The Sermon on the Mount is universally accepted by Christians as the measure of faith and life that Jesus set for all true believers. It is not a special message just for those who have leadership roles, such as teachers, apostles, prophets, evangelists, or preachers. In this passage of Scripture, Jesus revealed the will of God, or God's standard, which applies to every faithful Christian. The message known as the Sermon on the Mount is unfolded in three chapters, Matthew 5–7.

For our opening text, I would like to present what Jesus said in Matthew 5:13–14:

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Speaking to all Christians, Jesus told us three very important facts about ourselves: we are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and a city that is set on a hill and cannot be hidden. As an introduction to my theme, I want to take a little time to point out some of the self-evident implications of these three statements. We will take them in the reverse order in which they were spoken. In chapter 1 of this book, we will cover the first two statements, and in chapter 2 the third statement.

A CITY SET ON A HILL

First of all, we are “*a city that is set on a hill [and] cannot be hidden*” (Mark 5:13). This fact is true of every person who publicly professes faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The moment you make that profession publicly, you become a city that is set on a hill. You cannot be hidden. You are conspicuous: eyes will be on you from every direction, at all times, whether you are attending school or working at a factory or in an office. These eyes will be turned in your direction to see if your Christianity is real. What will those watching you be asking themselves? *Is your faith genuine? Do you truly believe what you claim to believe? Do you live it out?*

People will analyze every aspect of your life—your family life, your business life, your social life, and so forth. They will also analyze the conduct and testimony of the church you attend. In most cases, they will form their judgment of Christianity from what they see in you. You are a city that is set on a hill.

I tell you frankly that as a young man in the Anglican Church in Great Britain, I came to the conclusion that Christianity was a failure. I formed my opinion by looking at the people around me and deciding they did not really believe what they claimed to believe.

So, you must realize that the moment you profess faith in Jesus Christ, you become conspicuous. You cannot avoid this reality. If you don't want to be conspicuous; if you don't want to be watched, judged, and analyzed; then don't profess faith in Jesus Christ. But if you profess faith in Jesus Christ, that will be your situation—people will begin observing you. From that time on, you will be a city that is set on a hill and cannot be hidden.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Second, Jesus said, “*You are the light of the world*” (Matthew 5:14). At various times and places in my life, I have been a teacher of the English language, and I understand English well enough to know that when the Scripture says “*You are the light of the world,*” it means that we are *the* light. In other words, there is no other light. The word “*the*” used here is exclusive. We are the *only* light. The world has no other light.

Jesus declared, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (John 9:5). But now that He is not physically in the world, we are His representatives. Therefore, in His place, *we* are the light of the world. If we do not give light, there is no other source to which the world can turn or look for light. This means that *the world is totally dependent upon Christians for light.*

There is a simple illustration in the Old Testament that teaches us how significant we are as the light of the world. In the tabernacle that God commanded Moses to build, there were two compartments. The first was called the Holy Place, and the second was called the Holiest of All, or the Holy of Holies. In the Holy Place, there were only three objects of furniture. One of them was the golden altar of incense, and it was placed immediately in front of the second veil, which was the way into the Holiest of All. No one could go into the Holiest of All unless he held a censer filled with incense from the golden altar.



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That leaves two other items of furniture in the Holy Place. On the left-hand side was a seven-branched candlestick. On the right-hand side, opposite the candlestick, was the table of showbread. The writer of Hebrews told us that these items were symbolic—they contained a message to the church of Jesus Christ. (See Hebrews 9.)

Let’s look first at what the candlestick says to us. In Scripture, the candlestick always typifies the church. It had seven branches, typifying the sevenfold nature of the church, begotten by the Spirit of God. (The same sevenfold message is represented by the seven churches of Asia referred to in chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Revelation.)

We would be wrong to picture this candlestick as the same kind we have today—wax candles standing firmly in some kind of base. In the tabernacle, the “candles” were bowls with channels filled with oil. Little wicks were dipped in the oil, and the light was produced by igniting the wick, which set the oil in the wick on fire. Unless there was oil in the candles, and unless

that oil was ignited, the candles gave no light. And, in the Holy Place, the candlestick was the only source of light. If there was no light coming from the candlestick, there was no light at all.

Do you see how this is true of the church? We, too, are the *only* light. There is no other light. We are the seven-branched candlestick. We give light only when we are filled with oil and when the oil in us is set on fire.

In Scripture, oil is always a type of the Holy Spirit. This symbolism tells us that the church can give light only when it is filled with the Holy Spirit and set on fire by God. The candlestick, in itself, was incapable of producing light without the oil and without the fire. Considering this fact, we are reminded that John the Baptist said of Jesus, “*He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire*” (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16).

OUR MAIN PURPOSE AS LIGHT

The function of the candlestick was to cast light on the object that was immediately opposite it, which was the golden table of showbread. The showbread, of course, represents Jesus Christ, who said,

I am the bread of life....I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.
(John 6:48, 51)

The whole purpose of the candlestick was to do one thing and one thing only: to illuminate the table of showbread. This is exactly true of the church of Jesus Christ. We are here on earth for one purpose and one purpose only: to cast light on Jesus, the Bread of Life. And we do this only when we are filled with the Holy Spirit and set on fire by God.

Here we have a remarkable picture of the church. Apart from the candlestick, there was no source of light in the Holy Place. Apart from the church, there is no light in the world. Just as the candlestick can give light only when it is filled with oil and set on fire, the church can give light only when it is filled with the Holy Spirit and set on fire. The candlestick had only one object upon which to cast light—the table of showbread. The church has only one “object” upon which to cast light—the Lord Jesus Christ.

The only reason that you and I, as Christians, are here is to cast light on Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life. This is the primary purpose of our presence on the earth. Everything else we may do is secondary to that. We are the light of the world.