

Future Story D

Nancy's Example

Global Experience In The Days Ahead

Nancy's strong example in the following story is huge. There sincerely are many *Mark types* today and we need to steer clear of following in their footsteps given the Counsel our Lord Jesus gave us almost two thousand years ago. We pray you will be greatly edified through the story below.

Nancy grew up a Baptist. She was a *sheep* type, one who, for the most part, conformed to and supported her home church's doctrine, life-style and ministry activities. In a day of growing disrespect for Christian leadership, her honoring demeanor was seen as such a precious commodity. Given the direction the world was heading in relationship to this *giving respect to who respect is due*, Nancy applied the principle while at the same time honoring another crucial principle: It is better to obey God than to follow the examples and dictates of ruling human authorities, be they individuals or the collective majority. In her respect for leadership, she in turn gained the respect and admiration of others.

It was in her continued youthful vigor at the age of thirty-five when she met Mark, a man eight years her senior. Enjoying a healthy relationship (in the eyes of the nominal American church), Nancy and Mark, as single adults, grew to enjoy each other's company. During the years they spent together, their relationship matured. Over time, it blossomed into love for one another. Given the way they both were *wired*, physically, they had no problem it being a platonic one.

One day Nancy's ears fell captive to a sermon titled, "The State of the Church." It seemed to be a fair presentation, for both positive and negative observations were communicated by the visiting circuit preacher. But it was what Nancy heard *in the negative* that really impacted her. At times she had wondered about the very issues the preacher was raising, including the lack of intimacy with her Lord and the passionate life of devotion to eternal things. Another concern of hers was how the church in general, it seemed, was so like the world. Conflicting-with-Genesis-One views on origins, a renewed (but different) emphasis on the formation of the Christ Spirit or "Christ Power" within and a promoting of optimistic human potential to see realized a new dawn of global harmony were only a few of the things that concerned her. These messages were not only being heralded at her work and social settings, they had crept into her church as well. These seemed foreign to her until about five years back when she first began hearing more and more appeal that *Christianity must change or die*. But it just so happened that the visiting preacher touched upon many of these shared concerns. "Is this by coincidence?" she thought.

This state-of-the-church message caught her attention – so much so that she decided to give up her Sunday evening and catch the same speaker for a seminar titled, *Truth Matters! On Creation, Christ & Cross and Consummation*. Since she had the afternoon free, she took the sermon notes and visited a web site that was mentioned in the message. At first she was confused by it all until she read one small quote that helped put all the pieces together. "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man; it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." (Psalm 118:8,9)

“WOW!” she said to herself, “What a simple concept, yet one that runs deep. ‘Simplicity in profundity.’ Hmmm, I like that,” she thought. As she read over pertinent messages and concise philosophical statements about the issue of truth and how one comes to truth, the light further brightened. Now she definitely didn’t want to miss the evening presentation. She was taken back by a reading on the third web site (the first site had links to other sites) that appealed to Jesus’ application in Matthew 15 – how God disdains the practice of religious traditions of man being placed above (as more authoritative than) God’s Word.

It was during this reading that Nancy received a text from Mark. He was writing to invite her out to dinner, to which she responded, “Well, I’m going to attend a seminar this evening. Would you care to join me?” “Wonderful,” Mark thought when he received her immediate response, “she **is** online.” “I’ll tell you what,” Mark replied. “Let’s catch both.” And that they did. Little did they realize at the time how much that evening would forever affect their relationship. To make a long story short, Mark was offended by the message that evening, labeling it as another one of those fundamentalist, doom-and-gloom perspectives about the last days. Nancy on the other hand, took the free devotional titled, *One Year Book of Bible Prayers* and a simple but quality printout of a list of Scriptures about the days just prior to the return of Jesus Christ. Ten minutes into their dinner they agreed not to talk further about the seminar, for their discussion had become too heated. With the redirection of conversation topic, they went on to once again enjoy one another’s company the rest of the evening.

This day began for Nancy a ten-year journey into the study of contemporary issues in light of biblical prophecy. At the end of this period, which included a major inductive Bible study of end-time passages, Nancy found herself better discerning religious culture through a biblical grid as opposed to one offered by the (now dominate) contemporary religious community. This *Christian culture* had gone from being pluralistic in perspective to syncretistic in mandate. “More than just interesting!” she thought. She also critically observed that the two positions (the biblical one and the spiritual one being offered by the contemporary *church*) were rapidly growing to be in direct opposition with one another. Again, this fascinated her.

In the fourteenth year of her close relationship with Mark, global conditions were such that Nancy could not remain as quiet as she had been in the past. Things were heating up eschatologically so much so that she was compelled to speak out. She began telling others about pertinent Scripture passages, web sites and other resources concerning crucial biblical themes unfolding in present culture. Over this year she had countless discussions with Mark – brief ones, for the most part, due to, at times, apparent lack of interest on his part. But it was more than that. Something was clearly WRONG, for he seemed even further opposed to her concerns even though her warrants were impeccably justified. The fact that Mark was coming from a Christian background also rang odd, for through the years he had become more outspoken against biblical truths. “He should be more open-minded about these matters,” Nancy thought.

It was almost a year later that she decided to be even more vocal with Mark about her discoveries. She revisited an earlier discussion that she and Mark had had on the eternal consequences tied to following the present global mandate to contribute to world peace through simply joining the well-established One World Alliance by accepting the mark that provided both essential-for-living and non-essential pleasantries of great sensual appeal.

To this, Mark finally had to respond. While addressing these very things one day, Nancy continued to cast her points in a very clear and evidenced manner. She was especially touching upon this new mark that was now being mandated by the global village. Enough was enough. We join them in their conversation:

Mark shouted back, “**But I was always told, ‘Once saved, always saved!’** If that’s really the case, I can do whatever – even take this mark you’re calling ‘the mark of the beast.’ Come on Nanc! You know full well that we have to take it in order to continue existing given the present-day conditions that are clearly in full swing. God is gracious and will understand our plight. Surely He wouldn’t reject His own simply because we took this silly mark. I’ll tell you what, Nancy, let’s strike a deal. Let’s take the mark and then use it to buy necessary food for the other Christians who aren’t willing to take it. This way we’re safe for sure! God will understand if we use this mark to help provide for His people in Jesus.” After a short delay on Nancy’s part, Mark sought her response. “Honey, I really need your feedback here!”

“Mark, I hear what you’re saying but God has been very clear on this issue. Those who are truly His will not take this mark of the beast that is now being forced on the world. I know you acknowledge the authority of God’s Word above the global ideas of some of the religious leaders of our day. Mark, I love you dearly, you know that, but you must listen to me for just a minute, please! While I strongly encourage you to reread the entire chapters of Revelation 13 and 14 on your own after we part ways in just a few minutes, let me quote some key verses now. Don’t forget, these verses must be read in their context. Mark, would you promise me that you’ll read these two chapters when you go home this afternoon and think seriously about my point of view?”

“Nanc, I know you love me. And yes, I promise to read them when I get home.” His tears began flowing once again, as did hers.

“Oh my love, you don’t know how much this means to me!” Nancy’s voice was so gentle and kind, while at the same time both urgent and most serious. “While these verses that I want to share with you are few, they are very important, so please listen carefully.” As Nancy read, Mark was impressed, for never before had she spoken with such passion. And yet, Mark didn’t let her finish. As Nancy was reading the Revelation 13:14-17 and Revelation 14:9-11 passages, Mark interrupted, “Nancy, I hear your point but let me read this material on my own later today, okay?”

“Mark, you must. I’m floored by the accuracy of these passages! You see what’s happening out there, I know you do. It’s not just the taking of the mark that we’re commanded to avoid. It’s also understood that those who take the mark are aligning with this evil one. I know you see this and, like you, I also acknowledge that refusing to take this mark will surely bring major consequences – possibly even our death, I don’t know. But don’t you see the exchange we’ll be making if we yield? Let me share one last thing with you before heading out to catch a meeting with Audrey.”

“If God’s Word continues to unfold as precisely as it has so far, the fate of those ‘Christians-by-name’ who compromise and take the mark will be much more terrible than those of us who reject the mark and briefly suffer under the wrath of the antichrist.”

“**Nanc, NO WAY! You’re out to lunch on this one,**” Mark injected.

“Wait a minute,” Nancy relied. “Hear me out on this babe, please! The Word of God explicitly states those who fall into this **deception** will not only incur the Bowls of God’s wrath but will also suffer His eternal judgment in separation from God. According to many Bible passages, this will bring a *weeping and gnashing of teeth.*”

But Nanc, we’ll also be here during that time if we decide to reject the mark and somehow escape the persecution of this world leader,” Mark responded. “Then **we**, too, will receive God’s wrath in these bowl judgments.”

“Mark, that’s **NOT** correct! The Bible says that God’s obedient people in Jesus Christ will never incur His wrath. As a result, we will be spared His terrible wrath which He’ll see poured out on the earth during these bowls. You can read about this very deliverance in Revelation 14 where Jesus Christ Himself comes and reaps His people from the earth in verses 14-16. Those gathered thereafter, at a totally different gathering, are those who then are inflicted by these bowls of wrath. But God’s people in Christ Jesus miss this second gathering – this wrath-gathering – as a result of the first gathering at the final trumpet rapture gathering. Mark, it really does flow consistently through the pages of Revelation AND the other Bible passages concur.

“I’m not sure I’m following the chronology here Nanc,” Mark relied.

“The Book of Revelation and the Gospels chronicle this event Mark – it’s awesome!”

Nancy continued: “Don’t you remember talking about this with me almost a year ago? The 11th and 14th chapters of Revelation emphatically state this very truth. At the final trumpet, which is mentioned in I Corinthians 15, Matthew 24:31, I Thessalonians 4 and other passages, God will reap His people from the face of the earth – He will spare them from the *hour of trial which will come upon the earth*. Shortly after the seventh trumpet rapture gathering, the bowls of His wrath will be poured out upon those who have ‘the mark of the beast and those who worship his image.’ So, **NO**, Mark, God’s people in the Lord Jesus will not be around when this time of God’s wrath is delivered. It’s only those who yield to the **deception** of the wicked one who will be handed both the bowls of wrath and His eternal judgment. So you see, it’s not an option for us to take this mark. It’s not worth a temporary waiving of the antichrist’s wrath against us! Remember, dear heart, it’s those who endure to the end who will be saved. The patience of the saints of God in Christ Jesus is to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus!”

“O.K. O.K. **O.K.**” was Mark’s comeback. After a moment, though, he responded with more composure. “Nancy, you’ve given me a lot to think over tonight. It really seems that there’s no way in the world you’d ever think twice about receiving this mark. Am I right! Am I hearing you correctly?”

“That’s right, my love.” With Nancy’s answer, Mark held her tight for what seemed like hours. He was taken back by her extended gesture of verbal care for him. Oh what depth of passion and sincere belief, Mark thought. Gently taking her face in the palms of her hands, they exchanged an emotional kiss and said good-bye. Nancy then ran off to enjoy one last time of fellowship with Audrey.

Four hours later, Nancy was arrested. She had already accepted the possibility of this scenario even prior to her meeting with Mark earlier that afternoon due to how outspoken she had become about the global mandate to receive the mark. Given the Word’s emphasis on deception and specifically Mt. 24:10, Nancy wanted to be one who demonstrated the opposite of that which was prophesied in the last phrase of the verse. She wanted to love Mark even though it was a possibility that he would turn out to be one of many who fulfilled what is predicted in the middle portion of that same verse. She grieved over what seemed to be a confirmation that he was indeed one of those unwilling to take a stand for the true Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. It was now *very dark*, but not for Nancy. In great subtle duplicity, the deceiver managed, once again, to lead another astray.

“And then many will fall away [NKJV: “be offended”] and betray one another and hate one another.” (Matthew 24:10; ESV) Then, after the initial wave of deception (Mt. 24:4) – which takes place prior to the events spoken of in verse 10 – a second round of deception is determined: “And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.” (vs. 11) And yet, a **THIRD** round of deception will also come, this taking place **AFTER** the Great Tribulation: “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he

is! do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.” (vv. 23,24; ESV) Yes, deceptions is a HUGE theme during the days prior to Jesus Christ’s initial appearing! It’s the Word of God that offers to be a light unto our path and a lamp unto our feet IF we’re willing to *turn it on* by simply reading it.

Are you familiar enough with what the Word of God clearly says concerning our days – the days prior to Jesus Christ’s second coming? Eternity now hinges in the balance in relationship to these end-time topics, for those who talk themselves into justifying the acts of embracing the spirit of antichrist and/or receiving the mark of the beast will, no exceptions, face the earthly wrath of God during the Bowls of Wrath AND the eternal judgment of God in the Lake of Fire. TODAY is a good day to begin, if you have not already, thinking about these present and future things. The spirit of antichrist is present and the mark of the beast will be here before we know it.

For more information about these pressing matters, keep reading. Our eternal state matters, so very much. Eternity sincerely is a VERY LONG time!

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