

Future Story E

Faulty Preparedness

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God Grants Favor To Those Who Do It HIS Way

Let's express our faith by heeding the closing passage below. God will surprise us as to answers He graciously brings through us IF we will let Him.

Zach was a detail man ... "A place for everything and everything in its place" was his motto. He also prided himself on being prepared for anticipated events. The topic of the tribulation under the rule of antichrist was included in the list of events for which to be prepared. As a result, Zach had a 35-page document providing him with suggestions as to what to say (and what not to say) when this period of intense persecution hit. We take up Zach's story only three months after the persecution climbed to the Daniel 7:21,25 and Revelation 13:7 level.

"Zach, you're wrong!" Yes, it's good to be prepared for things, but in this case you're not heeding what the Word of God clearly says about this specific matter. We are NOT to prepare ahead of time what to say when we are brought before these people who administrate the system of the antichrist. The Bible not only explicitly states His people are not to do so but goes on to promise answers will be given to those who trust Him – who don't prepare a script, for example – and that His answers will be given the very hour we need them. Yes, this does involve further trust but that's what our Lord Jesus has outlined for His obedient people." Maria tried to be kind in tone but she also wanted to communicate a sense of urgency given Zach's faulty perspective.

"You know," Zach countered, "God wants us to have an answer for those who ask for a reason in support of the hope that is within us. He doesn't want us to walk blindly into these settings. While I confess I don't have a quick answer to this concern you're raising – which really bothers me! – I do know God is gracious and will allow us our contributions."

Since Zach didn't seem teachable, Maria wisely discontinued the effort. She'd spent too much time on this already – actually trying for weeks to persuade him to see things a bit differently. As a result, she turned and walked away, ever so saddened by Zach's rejection of what their Lord had counseled.

Well, Zach's time came. Only three days after the conversation with Maria (above), Zach found himself preparing to defend his position concerning why his commitment to Jesus Christ was firm, a conviction which also included rejecting the global mark. Zach was ready to debate!

During the presentation of his case, Zach found himself enjoying an occasional "Amen!" to his defense – given by a few of the spectators who had also gathered for their own court hearing that day. ("Their hour of deliberation must follow mine," he thought) He was quite confident that his quality preparations and the way in which he was presenting his case would sway the listening audience,

an audience which included his accusers. Well, his crafty rhetoric did further justify the position of unwilling cooperation with the new global order ... at first anyway. By the time he was finished, he sat down, apparently proud of himself for presenting such a fine case.

In rebutting Zach's points, Zach was floored by the delivery of the ones in opposition. By the end of their time countering just about everything he had offered in his defense, Zach even found himself encountering new doubts, for the arguments of the opposition were such that they seemed flawless. Some of the others in the courtroom that day (who sided with Zach) were even more confused. Who knows how they ended up responding following Zach's hearing.

Zach went back to his cell – yes, the judicial process was quite different under the heavy hand of the global system! As he reflected on the *hour* of his punitive session – which ended up lasting almost six hours – Zach found himself becoming angry. The intensity was unexplainable. NEVER before had he been so angry with the Lord. “**YOU LET ME DOWN, MISERABLY**, Lord! How can you fail to respond like you did? Why did you allow such a thing given the tremendous opportunity it presented? I've been zealous in everything I've ever done for you. I've tried to be that faithful apologist your spirit can use in every situation. **WHY!?**”

Maria's cell was behind his and she heard everything. Though she was not a part of Zach's court session earlier that day, she had an idea as to what had just happened. Maria prayed: “Oh, Lord, in Your mercy and grace, please allow me the right words – Your Words – as I seek to help Zach in his hour of crisis.”

Carefully, softly, Maria whispered, “Zach, please confess your disobedience in failing to heed what our Lord has clearly outlined. Please humble yourself and receive His forgiveness. Please.”

Zach didn't respond.

The next day, still without having resumed conversation with Zach, Maria went into the same courtroom Zach had been in the day before. Maria's session lasted less than ten minutes. She allowed the Holy Spirit of God to speak through her in such a way she KNEW her Lord Jesus was exalted. You'd be shocked if you were to read a script of what she had said. But that's not ours to share.

Maria never returned to her cell. Zach knew where she went as a result of the judgment of the wicked pawns of darkness. In His sovereignty, God saw Maria safely Home whereby not a hair on her head had perished. Glory to His holy name.

Maria's witness also honored the Lord Jesus in that Zach, too, confessed his sin to His Lord and shortly followed his sister-in-Christ Home.

“But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. (Mark 13:9-13; ESV)

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