

A Message from Psalm 80:3

Turn Us Again: The Voice That Turns and Satisfies

Shall we look again at the verse in Psalm 80, verse 3:

"Turn us again, O God. Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved."

The question this verse raises is: how does one get turned? It is a lovely verse, but it raises a large subject. I have been thinking about three passages where someone turned — and what it was that turned them.

The First Turning: Mary in John 20

The first is in John's Gospel, chapter 20, where there are a number of turnings. Verse 16:

"Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master."

Mary got turned. And it is not entirely obvious, from the words alone, what it was that turned her. It was not a long discourse. It was not a complicated doctrine. In fact, it was one word. And I would suggest — it may seem a strange suggestion — that it was not even the word itself that turned her. It was His voice.

If it had been Peter standing there and saying Mary, do you think she would have turned? She had just turned away from two angels — she did not want to look at them. But it was the Lord Jesus who said her name, and it was His voice that turned her. His voice satisfied her heart, because she was satisfied with nothing in this world. She was not satisfied with angels. Only Jesus could satisfy her heart. And she found that satisfaction when she was turned — turned by the voice of the Lord.

The Second Turning: Rhoda in Acts 12

The second turning is in Acts chapter 12. It does not even use the word turn, but it was a turning of the same kind. Peter had been arrested and imprisoned, and the disciples were gathered and praying. At verse 13:

"And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But

she constantly affirmed that it was even so."

Rhoda was a young servant girl whose job was to answer the door. And she got turned. When she turned and came back, she had a message. She was no longer politically correct — when she spoke, they told her she was out of her mind. Her whole life was changed. What had Peter said to cause it? Nothing is recorded. It was not what he said — it was just his voice. Such a little thing. Just his voice.

There is a lesson here for how we handle the words of Scripture. If you were to give the words of the Bible away to its enemies, would they leave behind the voice of the Lord? No — they would not. You cannot surrender the words of Scripture to the infidels without losing the voice of the Lord. It is that voice — not merely information, not doctrine in the abstract, but the living voice — which turns. Just as Peter's voice turned Rhoda, changed her, sent her with a message that the world called madness.

The Third Turning: 1 Thessalonians 4 and the Coming of the Lord

The third is not a past event but a coming one. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4, words of encouragement for those who have sorrowed over beloved brothers and sisters who have fallen asleep in Jesus — for those who have followed them to the very door of eternity and been left behind. Verse 16:

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

The thought is that we should not have to turn very much at the coming of the Lord. Our hearts should be so filled with Christ, the object of our souls so fixed upon what is above, that when He comes with that shout we should not have to turn very far. Because of our imperfection we shall all turn to some degree — we are not gazing upon Him in glory with full, undistracted attention. But the idea is to have that turn be as small as possible. To hear His voice today. To be satisfied with Jesus today. To have our lives transformed and changed so as to become fruitbearers for His sake — and then at His coming, not to have to turn very much at all.

The Voice of the Archangel

It is an interesting voice the Lord will come with. The verse says He will come with a shout, with the voice of the archangel — not that the archangel will speak, but that the Lord will come with a voice of archangel character. Now, has anyone ever heard an archangel speak? Of all the Bible, from one end to the other, there is, as far as I know, only one place where the archangel ever said anything. It is in the

epistle of Jude, verse 9:

"Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."

The only person — not a man, but a person — who at the coming of the Lord will be able to recognize the tone of that voice, at least as far as I know from Scripture, is Satan. He will recognize it. He heard it once before in connection with the body of Moses. And that is a sobering thought: that the enemy of God's people, the source of the idolatry that divides the hearts of God's people from the Lord Jesus — he is the one who will know that voice when it comes.

May God so draw us closer to Christ that the voice of the Lord is not strange to us when He comes. May He be the satisfaction of our souls now, so that the turning at His coming is as small as possible — hearts already fixed on Him, already satisfied, already waiting.

May God bless His word, draw us closer to Christ, and increase the fruit till Jesus comes.