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A LINE IN THE DIRT

In the spring of 1836, William Travis, the commanding officer at the siege of the Alamo in Texas drew a line in the dirt with his saber. A time for a crucial decision had come, one he could not command or force on any of the defenders of Texan independence inside that tiny garrison near San Antonio. They ranged from 182 to 257 in number. Up against impossible odds, the defenders of the Alamo faced the vastly superior armed forces of General Santa Ana, Mexico's military dictator. Word had arrived that the reinforcements they were counting on under James Fannin were not coming. The fledgling recruits of General Sam Houston were few and not sufficiently trained for the fierce battle ahead. Two options lay before them: To flee and live to fight another day or to stay, fight and try to weaken the Mexican army, which was sure to launch an assault. The hope and future of Texas was at stake. Each had to decide on what side of the line in the dirt to stand. Realizing what was about to occur, these gallant men – caring more for their families and a life of freedom – were prepared to face the insurmountable onslaught. After counting the cost, they bravely gave their lives, repulsing two attacks before they were overwhelmed in a third attack and slaughtered. Most historians agree that 400 to 600 Mexicans were killed or wounded during that historic

battle. In the near future, true Christians also will have to make a similar difficult decision that very well could cost them their lives. How would you decide?

COUNTING THE COST

The end of this age is near. Prophetic events recorded in the Word of God have been happening all around us, culminating in the crises at the close of this end time. Although we as Christians have endured agonizing experiences at times, we have not yet been subjected to literally laying down our lives. Prophecy does make known that some will suffer persecution unto death. Matthew 24:9 tells us, *“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name’s sake.”* But the final part of Revelation 20:4 shows those martyrs will live and reign with Christ for a thousand years! The trials we have faced, though small by comparison to other Christians before us, should encourage us that a loving God has kept His Word. In I Corinthians 10:13 we read, *“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”* Our loving Father will be there in our time of need. That should assure us like a beam of light shining on the path ahead. In Acts 7:55–56, we see the example of the heavens opened for Stephen before he was stoned to death. He saw the glory of God, and Christ standing at the right hand of

God as he was dying for them. It was an awesome privilege. By this example, we can rest assured that whatever may be required of us, we can take comfort in the promise of our High Priest described in Joshua 1:5 and Hebrews 13:5, *“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

Over the next few months and years, Satan, knowing he has but a short time, will pull out all stops to destroy the faithful people of God. Whatever we must endure, we must have the trust and confidence that Paul espouses in Roman 8:35, *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”* We also should remember exactly who our enemy is. Ephesians 6:12 clearly states, *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”* Satan comes at us through many methods, using men, institutions, governments, man’s laws and beliefs. Again, in comparison to the many Christians before us, we really haven’t had it all that bad. None of us has sweated blood about what we have endured as Jesus Christ did on the night before His death. *“And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground (Luke 22:44).”* The trials we have endured, no matter how difficult, have been a conditioning process to strengthen our faith for the final

tests to come.

A TIME FOR COURAGE

We, of ourselves, can do nothing. We have no voice in this society, nor can we do anything about it. Only God can give us the strength and courage we need to face the next years before us. The Word of God, the scriptures in His Holy Bible, is our source of courage – the recorded examples of men of valor written for our example. Joshua was instructed to be of good courage for God was with him (Joshua 1:9). Just as God was with Joshua and all the other men and women of faith, God will be with each one of us.

At baptism, we all had to “count the cost.” Now, for those who have the eyes to see, we are approaching the end time, and a “line in the dirt” has been drawn. There is no turning back for true Christians. The hope that lies within us, the whole purpose for which we draw breath, is to be sons of God. As Christians, we need to stay close to our God, obeying His laws of liberty, exercising the fruits of the spirit and growing with the very character of God. As Christians, we will be building “kingly character” in order to teach and rule with God in the soon coming Kingdom of God. We need earnestly to be building godly qualities in our lives NOW. The gallant, incredibly brave men of the Alamo gave up their lives with only a hope that their families could live in a free Texas. While we are not to live by the sword or take up arms (Matthew 26:52), true

Christians have a much higher calling and hope for spiritual robes to live and rule with Christ in a world free. A world free from all the ugliness, crime, violence, war, disease, and every other misery devised of men. Many men are today driven by Satan the Devil to fulfill their own desires. These desires will bring misery to this world. Shouldn't we be willing to die for freedom, if a line is drawn in the dirt?

The Wholeworld Church of God is dedicated to staying faithful to the truth of the Bible and serving those who are looking for the truth of God and attempting to please the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. The following is an overview of what we are, what we intend to be, and what our basic desire is for the brethren of the Wholeworld Church of God:

We believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God. (2 Timothy 3:16)

We believe that we must live by every word of God. (Matthew 4:4)

We believe at this end time that we must follow the teachings shown to us in the Bible by the apostle of the Worldwide Church of God as the Philadelphia Era of the church. (Revelation 3:7-13)

We believe that we must preach the gospel as a witness for those whom God may be CALLING as they seek His word. (Romans 10:13-15)

We believe that we must help all truly converted Christians that are to be the sons of God (Romans 8:14) to prepare themselves for the Kingdom of God. (Matthew 6:33)

We believe we are to love our brothers and sisters, not judge them. (Matthew 7:1)

We believe we must glorify God the Father and Jesus Christ and to never glorify any leader in the church. (1 Peter 2:12)

We believe we must feed the sheep. (John 21:18)

We believe that the key to understanding prophecy is the identity of modern Israel at the end time and that the promises of both race and grace have come through the line of Israel. (Genesis 49:1-28)

We believe that the true Church of God is a hospital for sinners and a home for saints. (Matthew 11:28-30)