

## **HORSES, CHARIOTS, OR JESUS!!!!**

How many of you remember what happened 65 years ago? I remember. Franklin Roosevelt was our President. Cordell Hull was Secretary of State, and had only recently made the statement, "If we could just have a few more months." Crowds were gathering for Sunday School on Sunday morning when Captain Fuchida of the Japanese Air Force gave the command. It was 7:55 AM when he flew that lead plane through the mountain path of Oahu leading 100 Japanese airplanes in that sneak attack on our Naval Station at Pearl Harbor. Within a few moments 2,353 of our choicest young men were killed, 960 were missing 1,272 were wounded, making a total of over 4,000 casualties, missing, wounded, and killed in the attack. 177 US planes were destroyed on the ground. They didn't even have a chance to take off. 1102 men were killed on the USS Arizona alone as one of those bombs went down smokestack. And if you've ever been to Pearl Harbor, you will know that you can go and stand right above the USS Arizona a look upon that ship; they've never even recovered the bodies of those sailors, not even to this day.

I was in Sunday School that Sunday morning Dec. 7, 1941, and by the time we got out of Church there were newsboys running up and down the streets of our town in Joplin, Missouri. I will never forget it: they were shouting "Extra, EXTRA, read all about it, the Japanese have attacked Pearl Harbor and WAR IS ON! What a horrible day it was - I will never forget it.

The Cabinet rushed to the White House and called for a special session of Congress to call for a state of National Emergency as war was declared. Soon people began to put up blue stars on flags in their windows. They had given one of their boys, or maybe their husband, or father, for the service of our country. And soon blue stars were replaced by gold stars, as husbands, fathers and sons, who went off to fight in that war which was supposed to end all wars, NEVER CAME HOME AGAIN.

Times haven't changed very much, have they? Today, 65 years later, what lessons has America learned? What are we trusting? Back in the Old Testament, in the 20th Psalm, the 7th verse, "Some trust in chariots, and horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." That pretty well describes the United States of America in 2006. Things are not much different than they were in 1941. War still threatens us, and we are just as close to a sneak attack today as we were in 1941. The only difference is that our enemy today is far more godless and ruthless than was our enemy in 1941.

Some trust in horses; some trust in chariots, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. These days of 2006 are serious times in which to live. We are living in horror that once again the black cloud of war is going to spread across our world. Our forces seem to grow smaller while the enemy's seem to grow larger. We are constantly reminded that we are only one push of the button away from atomic or hydrogen war. Back when Khrushchev was Premier of Russia he bragged that they had bombs of the 100 megaton variety and he dared the United States to prove that we had even one 50 megaton bomb.

### **I. SOME TRUST IN HORSES**

In these crucial days, who are you trusting? Or what are you trusting? What is the meaning of the scripture, "some trust in horses?" Well, back in the Bible days, in the oriental lands horses represented the ability of a nation to wage offensive warfare and that's what some people are trusting in today here in America. Some are trusting in our atomic aircraft carriers, our atomic submarines, our atomic bombs; our Navy, our Army, our Paratroopers. We have been told there are British and United States soldiers sitting in missile kits around the world in strategic locations in command of nuclear warheads and they can launch them at a given signal. We have been told that the sun never sets on U.S. airplanes that are carrying live atomic bombs.

In New Mexico, we are told that we have an airbase and from this airbase there are planes that

leave every day flying to distant points around the world carrying live atomic bombs. If you've ever been in Albuquerque, New Mexico, you know that you can stand there and look off in the distance and see the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. In the sides of those mountains there are now great, open places, big caves where we have stockpiled hundreds and hundreds of atomic bombs and atomic weapons of every description. Enough, our government has assured us over and over again, that we can completely wipe any enemy off of the map if they ever dare to attack us.

On Pearl Harbor Day 1961, Admiral James J. Sides made a speech in commemoration of that infamous attack by the Japanese, and in his speech Admiral Sides emphasized over and over again, "Readiness is the key." The whole text of his message was that we are trusting in military preparedness. He said we must be strong. Well, I would agree with Admiral Sides that we must be strong, but I believe that we must be strong in the Lord, and it's a pitiful thing that in an hour and a time when our nation needs to be strong in the Lord, it seems to me that we are the weakest that we've ever been, except maybe during the dark days of the Civil War.

The Supreme Court of the United States has even outlawed the offering of prayer in our public schools and the reading of God's Word. Foreign countries look upon the United States as a Christian land. I've been in Australia many times; I've spent many months preaching the gospel in Australia, where ninety-six percent of the population never goes to church. You could not possibly call Australia a Christian nation. But in that NON-Christian land, it is the law that they must have Bible reading and prayer every day in the public schools, and it is the same in New Zealand. It is the same in many African nations, and they can't understand how in the United States, which is supposed to be a Christian land, it is against the law to read the Bible and have prayer in the public schools. Now the same atheist who got the Supreme Court to pass that law also threatens that she is going to get our national motto removed from our money - "In God We Trust" - and it wouldn't surprise me if she can get that done.

If our nation loses faith in God, it won't make any difference how many airplanes we have, or how many aircraft carriers, or anything else. We will not be saved from doom if we give up our faith in God.

Where does your hope rest? Are you trusting in horses? are you trusting in our airplanes, our submarines, and our bombs, and our missiles? If you are, I know that you're miserable and afraid. I know that you're just like the Democrats and Republicans up there in Washington, who are debating every day about just how much more tax money we're going to spend on military preparedness.

## **II. SOME TRUST IN CHARIOTS**

Some trust in horses. And then our text says "some trust in chariots;" now what does that mean? Well, chariots were used in defensive warfare. A chariot was nothing more than a pair of wheels and one axle. It had two sides, but no rear. It was used for protection during time of attack by the enemy. Pharaoh, in the days of Moses, maintained an army of 600 chariots. The Philistines, in the time of King Saul, had an army of 30,000 chariots; and the Syrians during the time of King David had an army of 32,000 chariots. Solomon always had 1400 chariots. Chariots were supposed to frighten the opposition.

Well, things haven't changed very much, have they? We have our Nike bases, and our Nike missiles, and the evacuation routes clearly marked in metropolitan cities, and the public bomb shelters labeled. Our government says that retaliation is certain. If our enemy does drop the first bomb, we'll have our planes in the air and we'll wipe them off the face of the map. This is supposed to give us a comfortable feeling. But somehow it doesn't give me any comfort because I keep thinking, "What if the first bomb drops on me?" How is that retaliation going to give us comfort? And you remember back the days when Russia was setting up missiles in Cuba there was a big scare and people started building bomb shelters. They even argued about who was going to be allowed to go in the shelters. Some even said "I'll shoot my neighbors if they try to go

in my shelter", so what kind of an attitude is that? How does that fit in with "comfort?" To trust in defensive warfare.

### III. JESUS IS MY BOMB SHELTER

"Some trust in horses; some trust in chariots, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." I want to recommend a bomb shelter that you can trust - Jesus. Are you trusting in Jesus? Oh, how you need to, if you have not put your trust in Him. I want to especially speak these words to the many young people that I see in the audience tonight. You young people think that you have plenty of time to think about Jesus. Your toddling great-grandmother, whose hair is silver, whose body is racked with pain, whose wrinkles are multiplying daily, who stoops when she walks, who trembles when she talks - your great-grandmother may not be any nearer to death than you. Young people die as well as older people. So young people, be sober and listen to me for a few moments. There are 4 possibilities, as I see it:

**Possibility No. 1** is that you may live; it may be just like you think it's going to be. You're young, and you think, "I'm not going to die; that's years and years ahead. OK, that's a possibility. You may live! If you live, you need to live your life for Jesus Christ. He is your only hope in living. In John, the 10th Chapter, 10th verse, Jesus said: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." In John, 14th Chapter, 6th verse, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

I'm sure that you have watched the movie Tora Tora as shown on television. I always think about it because I have been to Pearl Harbor several times and have held evangelistic meetings twice for the Pearl Harbor Memorial Christian Church, so I have often been there and seen the wrecks of the ships that are still there. I've stood there and have looked down at the USS Arizona where the 1102 sailors were buried and their bodies are still there; so I think about it lots. And I've often thought about Captain Fuchida. I wonder how many of you have realized, or read or heard about what happened to that man since then?

Did you know that Captain Fuchida has heard the gospel and that he has accepted Jesus as his Savior? In 1954 that Japanese pilot was brought to the United States by a group of Christians in this country, and he made a tour, speaking everywhere for Christ, and urging young people to follow Jesus; telling young people that Christ was the only hope in living. He had learned that lesson. A very dramatic thing happened when he came to Chicago, Illinois. There was a U.S. sailor living in Chicago; I don't know his full name. I just heard his nickname, "Curley." It seems Curley was on the deck of one of our ships there in Pearl Harbor when Captain Fuchida, flying the lead plane, swooped down and dropped that first bomb in the attack that was made on our Naval Station. Curley saw the face of that pilot as the plane swooped low over his ship. He said, "I would recognize that man, and someday I'm going to see him and when I meet him I'm going to kill him." Now people were quite worried when Captain Fuchida was in Chicago, Illinois, because more than one person had heard Curley make that threat over the years - that the day was coming when he was going to get that Japanese pilot.

Well, that night a solemn hush fell over the big audience, as the Master of Ceremonies stepped up to introduce Captain Fuchida. One of the most amazing and dramatic things happened that I've ever heard of - in all my life. This man who was serving as Master of Ceremonies called Captain Fuchida to the podium and he said, "Captain, were you a Christian on December 7th, 1941?" The Captain said, "No, sir, I was not." And the Master of Ceremonies said, "Curley, would you come up here a moment?" There was a gasp from the audience, because the former U.S. Sailor was there. He stood to his feet and came to the platform. Here he was on one side and here was Captain Fuchida on the other side. There they were face to face. Many people wondered what Curley was going to do. The Master of Ceremonies said, "Curley, were you a Christian on December 7, 1941?" Curley said, "No, I was not." He said, "Captain Fuchida, are you a Christian now?"

Then the Captain stepped to the podium and gave his witness for Christ. He told about how, following the war, General Douglas MacArthur asked for ten thousand missionaries to come to Japan and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. He praised God for the missionaries who came to his home town and preached Jesus. He told about how he heard and came to believe and accepted Jesus as his own Savior, and how Jesus had transformed his life completely. Then he said, "I've dedicated the rest of my life to just telling people about Jesus, my wonderful Savior and your Savior, too."

At that point the Master of Ceremonies said, "Curley, are you a Christian?" Curley was thrilled that he called his name because it was just a few days before that meeting when Curley himself accepted Christ as his Savior, and of course most people hadn't even heard about it - it was so new. And as a brand new baby Christian, this former U.S. Sailor stepped up and gave his testimony. And then the Master of Ceremonies said, "Would you two brothers like to shake hands?" And Curley reached his hand across first and grabbed the hand of that Japanese pilot, and they shook hands as brothers in Christ.

They had been sworn enemies but now they were united and they learned to love each other as brothers in the Lord. They learned a lesson that if you live, you can't live a good life, or a happy life, or a meaningful life unless you're living for Jesus. Now that's possibility number one, young people - you may live, but if you live, you need to be living for Jesus. You need to accept him as your Lord and Savior. You need to obey him. You need to be a member of His Church. Every day you need to be telling others you love Him, too.

**But there is a second possibility.** You may not live; you may die. We don't like to think about it, but it may happen. You may die, and it may not be in war, either. Maybe we won't have another war that you'll be killed in. But, that's no protection against airplanes, or automobiles that have accidents; it's no protection against cancer, or heart attacks, or tuberculosis, or many of the other things that can take our lives. You may die, and you may die as a young person. But as Paul said in Philippians 1:21 "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." And in Psalm 23:4 "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me ...". So if you die, you need Jesus. And if we die in Christ, there's nothing to be afraid of. If we're Christian, and this body dies, we know that we can die and go right on to be with our God and our Savior in the heavenly home where we shall live forever.

**There's a Third Possibility.** You may not live and you may not die. Now you say, "That's impossible; you've got to do one or the other." No, there's a third possibility that I can think of. It's possible that Jesus may come again and he may come at any moment. And when He comes again, those who are not saved will weep and wail and gnash their teeth. It will be too late. A description of this is given very vividly in Revelation 6:15-17 "And the kings of the earth and the great men and the rich men and the chief captains and the mighty men and every bond man and every free man hid themselves in the dens and the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us; hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb for the great day of His wrath is come and we shall not be able to stand."

Now what would you say and what would you do if Jesus would come right now? Would you look up and rejoice and say, "Even so, come Lord Jesus; praise the Lord, He's coming for me." Or would you start weeping and crying and say, "Oh God forgive me; I'm not saved. I've waited until it's too late."

### **AN UNUSUAL CHURCH SERVICE**

I heard of a most unusual church service that was conducted. The preacher preached on the second coming of Jesus Christ and explained to the people how according to the scriptures when Jesus comes again the dead in Christ shall be resurrected; the living Christians shall be caught

up to meet them in the air and so shall they ever be with the Lord. He explained how the unsaved would be left behind. It would be too late. There would be no opportunity for them to be saved because they had put it off until it was too late. And as the preacher came to the close of his sermon he said, "Now, I want those who are saved to stand up and form a circle around this auditorium, and you who are unsaved remain seated." The saved people stood and they formed a circle and now here they all were - the saved looking at the unsaved. The unsaved were looking at all those who had accepted Jesus. And the unsaved people were embarrassed.

The preacher said "Now that's just how it's going to be when Jesus comes again - there'll be a great separation." When the service was over some of the unsaved people came to the preacher and they protested. They said, "You embarrassed us. You'll never know how humiliating it was to have to sit there and admit that I was not saved and here were all the Christians, looking at us. Why that was terrible of you to do a thing like that." And the preacher said, "If you were embarrassed, think how much more embarrassed you're going to be when the Day of Judgment comes and God looks at you and says, "Why didn't you accept My Jesus as your Savior?" And you won't have an excuse to offer Him.

Think about it, my friends - you may not live and you may not die. Jesus may come again. Are you ready?

**There is a Fourth Possibility. WAR MAY COME AGAIN.** God forbid that we will have another war - that our boys will have to go off and fight. But if war should come, I thank God that I have a refuge and that our family has a bomb shelter. I am thankful that all of my family has accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. And that no matter what happens - if we live - or die - or Jesus comes again - or there's war - that we have nothing to worry about. I am thankful that Jesus has promised a home in heaven where we can live forever and forever and forever.

In 1972 our family had the privilege of going to Africa for three months of evangelistic meetings. During that three months there were 3,785 souls who accepted Jesus as their Savior and were buried with Him in Christian baptism and raised to walk in newness of life. It was a tremendous harvest as a testimony to the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We came to the close of those three months and we were in Bulawayo the last night. We were working with the old African preacher, Brother Sitoli, and we finished off that campaign with a great closing baptismal service.

Following the baptismal service that last night, Brother Sitoli made a farewell speech to our family and the other workers who had gone with us. He thanked us for coming and sharing with them in the preaching of God's Word. He praised the Lord for all the souls that were saved. It was really a beautiful speech that he made, and then at the close of his speech, Bro. Sitoli had us stand over against the wall. The building was packed with hundreds of African people who had come out that final night.

They had a big choir; They were over in the corner; we were standing over against the wall. The choir had learned this song in English and they stood up and sang it for us. As they sang their eyes filled with tears,

"Goodbye brothers, goodbye sisters,  
If I don't see you anymore,  
I'll meet you in heaven in that blessed Kingdom,  
If I don't see you anymore.  
We'll part in the body, we'll meet in the Spirit,  
If I don't see you anymore.  
So now God Bless You, now God Bless You  
If I don't see you anymore."

I don't hesitate to confess that my own eyes filled with tears as I stood there looking at the choir and listening to those words of song, but I honestly don't think that I was crying for the same reason they were. I really believe that those African people loved us and they hated to say

goodbye. Please don't misunderstand, we loved them, too - very dearly, and hated to say goodbye to them. But, I could not weep saying goodbye to Christians, because I believe the words of the song. If we never see them again here, we're going to meet them in heaven. I was thinking about the others. We had been there for three months and we had preached to multiplied thousands of people. Now while it was great that the 3,785 souls had been saved, I was thinking about the many, many more thousands that were lost. They had not accepted Jesus and without a Savior we will not be able to see them in heaven. That is still my concern.

As I have tried to plead with you using this unusual theme, "horses chariots or Jesus," who are you trusting? If you have not put your trust in Jesus, Oh I plead with you to come and accept Him right now as your Savior so that you can be sure that you can spend that eternity in heaven and not hell.

Shall we bow our heads and pray.

"Our Father, we are thankful for this unusual text of scripture from the Old Testament, for all the thoughts that come to mind when we think about people trusting in the weapons of warfare, we pray that our trust will be in the Lord. We pray for those in this audience who have not proven their trust by accepting Jesus publicly; for those who have never obeyed him by turning from their sins and being buried in Christian baptism there to meet his blood to have their sins forgiven. We pray for those who may be members of a church elsewhere but need to place their membership here, and for those who may have backslidden and need to return to the Lord. May this be a great time of decision for these souls. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen."

Shall we stand and sing the hymn and will you step down right on the first verse and yield yourself to Jesus?

"Where He Leads Me I Will Follow"