



September 27, 2009

It's What's Under The Hood

Moment of Manna

Leo Pete

I used to like James Bond movies; the early ones with Sean Connery. I always thought those were the best; the most imaginative. The part I liked best was the car. Bond always had an amazing car, and what made it amazing was the power under the hood. It was made special for him, and even Bond didn't know how much power was there. All he knew was that when he needed it, it was there. He'd push the pedal and the car would take off, snapping his head back, and he'd smile and say, "Whoa!" I always looked forward to that part of the movie when Bond would need all the power he could muster, and that power was always there under the hood to bail him out.

In Genesis 18: 16-33 God is speaking with Abraham about destroying Sodom. God knew that Abraham would be opposed to it, and He wanted to prepare him to accept it. But Abraham wasn't ready to accept it, and he pleaded with God to reconsider. God said their sin was grievous and they must be destroyed. Then Abraham said, "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" And God said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake." But Abraham didn't stop there. He said what about just forty-five, and God said He would spare the city. And Abraham pushed further and said, what about forty, or thirty, or twenty? God said He would not destroy it for their sake. Abraham said, "What if only ten can be found there?" And God answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it."

I don't think God really wanted to destroy Sodom or its people. I think He was looking for some way to be able to spare them. And He knew that Abraham loved the people and would present the strongest arguments for God to be able to use to spare them. But why was God looking for a "righteous man"? He could have chosen any criteria to justify sparing Sodom, but He chose finding a "righteous man". Why?

You can sit down to study Bible passages with your Concordance, and commentaries, and various translations, and Greek and Hebrew lexicons, and still not be able to find the answer you're looking for. You'll find plenty of opinions, but sometimes the question still nags at you. The answers just don't seem to fit. Then one day you're just reading the Bible for pleasure, not studying it, and the answer just jumps right off the page at you. I found it in James 5:16.

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” Another translation says, “The fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” God was looking for a righteous man because of the power of his prayer. I’d like to find a righteous man and get him to pray for me. Better yet, I’d like to be a righteous man so I could pray for you. Even better, I’d like all of us to be righteous men and women, and pray for this city, and turn it upside down. So what is a righteous man?

The Bible defines righteous as being upright, just, straight, innocent, true, moral and sincere. Being righteous means being right, doing right, and putting things right. Mark tells us that Jesus came to the world to address the needs, not of the righteous, but of sinners. And Matthew tells us that righteousness, like the Kingdom of Heaven, is God’s gift through faith. Paul says there are only two ways to achieve righteousness: through the Torah, the law of Moses; and through faith in the atonement made possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul goes on to say that the Jews did not attain the law of righteousness because they sought it not by faith, but by works. He emphasizes that faith is the only way.

Anyone who accepts the atonement offered by Jesus is righteous. It is God’s gift through grace. **DO YOU REALIZE WHAT THAT MEANS?** We don’t need to look for a righteous man or woman. **WE** are righteous men and women.

Our prayer has power! As righteous men and women our prayer has the power to move mountains; but more importantly, it has the power to move God. Why do we think our prayer is not effective? We are not told to come meekly before the throne, but to come boldly. 2Corinthians 5:21 says, “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” We are the righteousness of God. We need to realize the power that’s under the hood and begin to use it; to know that when we need it, it will be there.

Get ready to push that pedal, feel our head snap back, and say, “Whoa!” We need to begin praying boldly, with our God-given authority. We have the power! Now, let’s use it and turn this world upside down.