

Removing the Head of the Serpent

Recently I had a prophetic experience that clearly  portrayed the condition of the church in America. My husband and I take evening walks that sometimes bring us through affluent neighborhoods. We enjoy viewing luxury homes with their beautiful waterfalls and fountains. Sometimes I venture to curiously peer into the backyards of these homes, finding exquisite pools, sports courts, fireplaces, and landscaping that reminds me of a Thomas Kincaid painting.

As we were enjoying our walk one evening, my husband suddenly blurted out, "Snake!" After jumping in the opposite direction, I saw a three-foot-long rattlesnake about a foot away from where we had been walking.

Having been raised on a farm in Georgia, I am familiar with the behavior of snakes, especially poisonous vipers. Snakes react to ground vibration, so I was mystified about why the snake was not hissing or coiling to strike us. To our surprise, the snake ignored us and slowly slithered in the opposite direction. He seemed to be right "at home" in the landscape of the neighborhood.

We decided to alert the homeowner regarding the snake. I rang the doorbell and was greeted by a man in his 40s. I said, "Sir, there is a rattlesnake in your front yard. Perhaps you might want to dispose of him." He froze and didn't respond. Knowing the snake could quickly escape, I continued, "Sir, this is a neighborhood with lots of children."

Finally, after another long pause, he replied, "OK, give me a moment." I could tell he did not want to be bothered, but my last statement provoked him to action. After what seemed like an eternity, the homeowner emerged from his garage with a six-

foot pole that had a huge, razor-like blade attached.

I was amazed to see that the rattlesnake was still moving across the landscape at a snail's pace. The homeowner looked terrified as he cautiously approached the snake from behind. He repeatedly raised his weapon high in the air, practicing his potential strike, yet hesitated to deliver the death blow. Not wanting to embarrass him, I kept silent, but I couldn't help but think, *What is wrong with you? Remove that serpent's head now!*

Serving God or Mammon

At that instant, I realized that the situation with the snake was an analogy for the present condition of the American church. The homeowner represents the church, and the rattlesnake represents Satan.

Sadly, Satan is not intimidated or threatened by the church. In fact, he wanders in and out of the body of Christ often without resistance or consequence. There is no need for Satan to hiss, coil or strike at us because we pose little threat to him. He knows the focus of the church at large is not *Christ*-centered but *self*-centered. We have set our hearts on temporal treasures, in lieu of eternity, seeking the hand of God instead of the face of God. Even our ministers have been deceived, considering the size of their congregations, offerings and buildings as the measuring rod for success. A distorted "prosperity" gospel has taught us to use our faith almost exclusively to obtain larger homes, cars and 401K accounts.

Our spiritual eyes have been encrusted with an infection that has distorted our vision. Blinded by materialism, we pursue mammon while Satan lies quietly at our feet. Our pursuit of pleasure has hardened us to not only the cries of the needy but also the whispers of the Holy Spirit. We don't want to have our routines disrupted in any way. In effect, most of us

are wearing a sign that says, "Do not disturb!" We have to be provoked to emerge from our comfort zones to serve at home, at church or in our communities.

Like the church of Laodicea, the American church has been deceived by riches. We are unaware of our spiritual poverty and blindness. As a result, many American Christians unknowingly worship the idol of mammon. In His mercy, the Lord has used the downward spiral of our nation's economy and monetary system to warn us not to trust in uncertain riches but in Him who freely gives us all things to enjoy (see Rev. 3:15-19; Luke 16:13).

Trampling on Serpents

We are destined to trample on serpents and scorpions, crushing Satan under our feet. However, one key element that enables us to triumph over the works of the devil is the depth of our repentance. Only profound repentance for our spiritual complacency and idolatry will cure our spiritual blindness, enabling us to identify the serpents in our lives. No longer ignorant of Satan's devices, we can shake the kingdom of darkness, cause Satan to flee and erect a "No trespassing!" sign on the landscape of our lives.

Jesus gave us the power to overcome the enemy. "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19, NKJV).

We must become a generation of snake killers because our battle is against principalities, powers, rulers of darkness and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. As soldiers of the cross, we must exchange our cordial passivity for a violent militancy and remove the heads of the serpents in our lives. Indeed, His power working in us can break any yoke and cut through any chain, and His light in us can overwhelm any depth of darkness.

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).

The snakes we encounter will hiss, coil and strike in fear at the Greater One who lives within us. As we exercise our authority and God-given power, many of these serpents will flee in fear. But what about those serpents who resist and refuse to exit our lives? We must say, “Off with their heads!” (See James 4:7; 1 John 3:8.)

About the author: Kay Winters is co-founder, with her husband, Rob, of Prepare the Way International, an itinerant prophetic ministry based in Phoenix, Arizona. The Winters’ mission is to ignite a spiritual revolution and reformation in America through preaching repentance, prophesying restoration and promoting revival. Kay’s ministry emphasis is identifying and mobilizing intercession against spiritual strongholds that prohibit racial reconciliation, revival and the healing of our land. Today’s Prophetic Insight was adapted from Prepare the Way’s newsletter, The Messenger, and is used by permission. The newsletter is available on the ministry’s Web site .