



SCC Message by John Aldax, April 21, 2013

Part 3

Masada, My Rock and My Fortress

The history of the Jewish people, after Jesus' life, is a sad story. It climaxed with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and the last battle against Rome at the desert fortress of Masada.

David stayed in the wilderness strongholds and in the hills of the Desert of Ziph. Day after day Saul searched for him, but God did not give David into his hands. (1 Samuel 23:14)

¹ *I love you, Lord, my strength.* ² *The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock in whom I take refuge.* (Psalm 18:1 & 2)

LESSONS FROM MASADA

1. The lesson of David's Masada

God was his _____ of _____ and _____.

*"To you, Lord, I call; you are **my Rock**, do not turn a deaf ear to me. For if you remain silent, I will be like those who go down to the pit."* (Psalm 28:1)

*"Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be **my rock** of refuge, a strong fortress to save me. For you are **my rock** and my fortress; and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me"* (Psalm 31:2 & 3)

*"He alone is **my rock** and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken."* (Psalm 62:2)

Only God is an unshakable rock and fortress, we must have the **courage** and **confidence in God** to abandon the fortress mentality and live our **faith** in every area of life.

2. The lesson of the Zealots

Give _____ totally to God, holding _____ back

*Romans 12:1 – ¹ And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. ² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by **changing the way you think**. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (NLT)*

3. Another lesson from the Zealots

We cannot _____ . . . it will eventually find us, and destroy us, and those around us.

There are choices to be made in every age. And who we are depends on the choices we make. What will our choices be? What **boundaries** will we uphold to **make it possible for people to say with certainty that moral atrocities are truly evil?** Which side will we . . . which side will **you** . . . be on?

(Francis A. Schaffer, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, The Complete Works of Francis Schaffer, vol. 5, p. 281 & 282)

QUOTES FROM MASADA, MY ROCK AND MY FORTRESS

Francis A. Schaffer, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaffer*, vol. 5, Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois

“There is a ‘thinkable’ and an ‘unthinkable’ in every era. One era is quite certain intellectually and emotionally about what is acceptable. Yet another era decides that these “certainties” are unacceptable and puts another set of values into practice. On a humanistic base, people drift along from generation to generation and the morally unthinkable becomes the thinkable as the years move on.

There are for such people no *fixed standards of behavior*, no standards that *cannot* be eroded or replaced by what seems necessary, expedient, or even fashionable.

The thinkables of the eighties and nineties will certainly include things, which most people today find unthinkable and immoral, even unimaginable and too extreme to suggest. Yet—since they do not have some *overriding principle* that takes them *beyond* relativistic thinking—when these become thinkable and acceptable in the eighties and nineties, most people will not even *remember* that they were unthinkable in the seventies. They will slide into each new thinkable without a jolt.”

(Francis A. Schaffer, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, *The Complete Works of Francis Schaffer*, vol. 5, p. 282 & 283)

Our view of morality and the value of human life was based on the Judeo-Christian world-view, which dominated the West for hundreds of years.

This view did not come out of a vacuum; it came from biblical doctrine being preached by the Church, not as A truth but as THE truth. This teaching and world-view formed not only the religious foundation of society but the cultural, legal, and governmental foundation as well.

As a world-view, the tenants of the Christian Faith answer the major questions people have always asked. It not only deals with questions about God . . . it also gives answers to questions about the nature of humanity, the world, and the meaning of human life.

(Adapted from, Francis A. Schaffer, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, *The Complete Works of Francis Schaffer*, vol. 5, p. 283)

“Judeo-Christian teaching was never perfectly applied, but it did lay the foundation for a high view of human life in concept and practice. Knowing biblical values, people viewed human life as unique—to be protected and loved—because each individual is created in the image of God. This stands in great contrast, for example, to Roman culture. The Roman world practiced both abortion and infanticide, while Christian societies have considered abortion and infanticide to be murder.

Until recently in our own century, with some notable and sorry exceptions, human beings have generally been regarded as special, unique, and nonexpendable. But in one short generation we have moved from a generally high view of life to a very low one.

Why has our society changed? The answer is clear: the consensus of our society no longer rests on a Judeo-Christian base, but rather on a humanistic one. Humanism makes man ‘the measure of all things.’ It puts man rather than God at the center of all things.”

(Francis A. Schaffer, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, The Complete Works of Francis Schaffer, vol. 5, p. 284)

“Who decides what are the grounds for discard? (*Speaking of discarding human embryos created in laboratories*) What if there is another recipient available who wishes to have the otherwise unwanted embryo? Whose embryos are they? The woman’s? The couple’s? The geneticist’s? The obstetrician’s? The Ford Foundation’s? Shall we say that discarding laboratory grown embryos is a matter solely between a doctor and his plumber? . . . We have paid some high prices for the technological conquest of nature, but non so high as the intellectual and spiritual costs of seeing nature as mere material for our manipulation, exploitation and transformation. With the powers for biological engineering now gathering, there will be splendid new opportunities for a similar degradation of our view of man. Indeed, we are already witnessing the erosion of our idea of man as something splendid or divine, as a creature with freedom and dignity. And clearly, if we come to see ourselves as meat, then meat we shall become.”

(Dr. Leon Kass, University of Chicago biologist as quoted by George F. Will “Discretionary Killing,” *Newsweek*, September 20, 1976, cited in, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, The Complete Works of Francis Schaffer, vol. 5, p. 304 & 305)

“The Christian world-view provided a foundation and a framework for our society to have freedoms without those freedoms leading to chaos.”

(Francis A. Schaffer, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, The Complete Works of Francis Schaffer, vol. 5, p. 286)

OPENING OF, *WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE HUMAN RACE?*

“Cultures can be judged in many ways, but eventually every nation in every age must be judged by this test: how did it treat people? Each generation, each wave of humanity, evaluates its predecessors on this basis. The final measure of mankind’s humanity is how humanely people treat one another.

The great dramatic moments of history have left us with monuments and memories of compassion, love, and unselfishness, which punctuate the all-too-pervasive malevolence that dominates so much human interaction. That there is any respite from evil is due to some courageous people who, on the basis of personal philosophies, have led campaigns against the ill-treatment and misuse of individuals. Each era faces its own unique blend of problems. Our own time is no exception. Those who regard individuals as expendable raw material—to be molded, exploited, and then discarded—do battle on many fronts with those who see each person as unique and special, worthwhile, and irreplaceable.

The reason we are writing this book is that we feel strongly that we stand today on the edge of a great abyss (note: C. Everett Koop, M.D. and Schaffer wrote this in 1979). At this crucial moment choices are being made and thrust on us that will for many years to come affect the way people are treated. We want to try to tip the scales on the side of those who believe that individuals are unique and special and have great dignity.

Yad Vashem is the monument in Jerusalem to the six million Jews and others who were killed in the Nazi Holocaust. It is one of the many memorials that are scattered over the world in tribute to those who have perished in upheavals of rampant evil—evil that swirls in on people when they no longer have a basis for regarding one another as wonderful creatures worthy of special care. Yad Vashem is a fitting place to begin, for it reminds us of what, unhappily, is possible in human behavior. Those who were murdered were people just like all of us. More important to realize is that those who murdered them were also people just like all of us. We seem to be in danger of forgetting our seemingly unlimited capacities for evil, once boundaries to certain behavior are removed.

There are choices to be made in every age. And who we are depends on the choices we make. What will our choices be? What boundaries will we uphold to make it possible for people to say with certainty that moral atrocities are truly evil? Which side will we be on?”

(Francis A. Schaffer, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, The Complete Works of Francis Schaffer, vol. 5, p. 281 & 282)