



# Is it a Jungle Out There?

Somebody must think so because when you *Google* "It's a jungle out there" you get 10,500,000 "hits." Many think it is a jungle "out there" and also within:

It's ironic, but until you can free those final monsters within the jungle of yourself, your life, your soul is up for grabs. *Rona Barrett*

Man is lost and is wandering in a jungle where real values have no meaning. Real values can have meaning to man only when he steps on to the spiritual path. *Sai Baba*

The forest of a life cannot make sense, for any significant period of time, unless we are seeing, planning, managing, "pruning". . . the individual tress making up this forest; a life without order is simply a jungle. Parents can keep order for small children, but to the extend children grow up, parents lose control; hopefully while at the same time modeling and teaching their children the disciplines of keeping and enhancing purpose and sense in their lives.

**Themes** – forest – the framework in which to understand the trees – individual books, stories, commands, threats, blessings . . . of the *Bible*. And what are the key themes? (I am glad you asked):

## Sovereignty of God Genesis 1 (Creation) - Revelation 22 ("new" and final heaven and earth)

Everything in the Bible is anchored on the premise of God's sovereignty - and all "Christian" error is based on a distortion or perversion of this truth.

We see a steady decline in the Christian Church largely because of the "dumbing down" of the gospel - the common approach is to compare ourselves to other "Christians" (or denominations compared to denominations) – it is easy, in these cases, to be better than many others. But when, instead, we compare ourselves to the truth we will see the problem – being better than others is no comfort when everyone is sliding down the slope of error, hopelessness, helplessness – in short, powerlessness! We are no longer bold in our faith, expecting to see real things happen, rather we judge our being "right" or "better" than others – this is not the model of the Bible! Barnabas went to Antioch "and saw the evidence of the grace of God." *Acts 11:23* Where the real God is working there will be power; conversely, without any real and tangible evidence we are just "whistling Dixie."

The decline of The Church, a church or an individual can be traced to their waning dependence on God (believing He is sovereign) and relying on themselves. Our understanding, depending on (in real daily life– not in a theoretical, "spiritual," way), growing in . . . the Sovereignty of God is the limit to our Christianity. We can play church with words; by attending an hour or so of church each week, praying to some god from time to time, giving a little money to a church . . . and there is still no power – leaving us on our own! "But I don't need God now (or for this) – I can take care of it myself." This just shows our ignorance of the . . .

**Limitations of man** - God made, cares for and controls man. "There is no God apart from me." *Isa 45:21* Jesus said: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." *Jn 15:5*

Isn't this, if we are the least observant and honest about ourselves and others, obvious? We are born into total helplessness, we live in frustration because we remain largely helpless in the face of the pressures of life, others and the world and we end life with the assured hopelessness of death! We are helpless!

No, this isn't how things should be, or how they started, but . . .

Man sinned and was separated from God who cannot and does not "live" with sin. Genesis 3

Who can reasonably deny all people sin? Only the fool or delusional! This leaves us not only helpless, but helpless and bad. But, again, if we believe that God is sovereign (not just "out there," but more importantly within me) we can have hope in our search for . . .

God's way and Person of Salvation – Faith, by Grace, in Jesus Christ is God's only way for temporal and eternal salvation. Jesus said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Jn 14:6 "Receive the Holy Spirit." John 20:22

There are many religions, all of whom believe their way IS they way. There is one religion, the Christian, that challenges people to look for evidence of power to test its authenticity and legitimacy. Elijah did this on Mount Carmel I King 18 and the evidence today should be no less compelling! There is A way and A Person and there is, likewise, . . .

Man's responsibility in this war for his eternal soul and life - becoming disciples (developing disciplines in the instructions of Jesus Christ) . . . growing in knowledge and grace of Him . . . Remembering/not forgetting Him: our earthly purpose, the short length of our life here, the daily need of God . . .

Temporal and Eternal rewards OR punishments for becoming disciples OR refusing to humble ourselves before God (thinking we are adequate to the tasks of life and death).

"Tools" for remembering/seeking/finding God - Bible, prayer, church, development of gifts . . .

"Remember" . . . "Do not forget" . . . are to the spiritual life comparable to sleep to the physical – they are, in themselves, mundane and of slight value; BUT they are foundational for the vital themes they support. Many an otherwise effective and productive life is undercut by a lack of sleep. In the same way, God's sovereignty in our lives will not be effective when we forget Him in the heat of battle . . . Unless we remember, we foolishly depend of ourselves when attacked . . . We will not seek and find God's Person and way for salvation in our present danger (nor our eternal salvation when face with death) . . . We will not be true to our responsibilities, nor find their rewards . . . We will suffer the punishments (rather than having the rewards) of foolishly fighting life on our own . . . Then facing, and failing, in death . . . ALL because we did not develop the discipline of remembering – not forgetting the truths, the themes, of God as laid-out in the *Bible*!

People want to know where to start – we start with the simple, with the mundane – THINK, REMEMBER, DO NOT FORGET . . . and on this foundation we can hope to build a real, effective, powerful life – both here and later.

It is frightening that so much rests on so little (sleep for the physical – remembering for the spiritual), but that is the reality. Then again, this should give us hope that maybe there is some hope we can begin and find the truth! But it won't be done hit or miss, carelessly, slapdash, unplanned, random . . .

I was talking with a young man this week on the verge of finishing College and having to move on into "real" life. My suggestion to him is that, to be successful, he needed to consider and reject the following foolish notions of what makes things happen – things DON'T happen because:

- We talk about and say they will or
- We want them – even **real** bad or
- We are positive or

- We even work hard (hard work in the wrong direction will take us further from success, not closer!) . . .

We can only reasonably expect what we want to occur when we know the truth and then exercise effective disciplines towards these truths.

Like learning to fly in a classroom, understanding these principles is not that difficult, what is impossible, without grace, is applying them to everyday life – from the challenges of the mundane (remembering – not forgetting) to the exceptional (finding eternal life when we die).

But by following the themes we have hope of power – God’s power – to find success in life and death:

**Sovereignty of God**

**Limitations of man**

**Man sinned and was separated from God**

**God's way and Person of Salvation**

**Man's responsibility in this war for his eternal soul and life**

**Temporal and Eternal rewards OR punishments for becoming disciples OR refusing to humble ourselves before God (thinking we are adequate to the tasks of life and death).**

**"Tools" for remembering/seeking/finding God - *Bible*, prayer, church, development of gifts . . .**

Life is more dangerous than a jungle – it is a war! The forest of a life cannot make sense, for any significant period of time, unless we are seeing, planning, managing, “pruning”. . . the individual tress making up this forest; a life without order is simply a jungle. “Christianity” is not a once and for all “finding” God and then returning to ourselves to make sense of and through life – a disciple of Jesus Christ is a permanent, forever, irreversible, for all time . . . dependence on, REMEMBERING, not forgetting . . . so that in the daily, little, mundane trials of daily life we learn how to find MORE and MORE dependence on Him and His grace to fight the war of life; life need not be hell, but it is war!