

PREPARING TO STAND

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“In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord.” SW 3/21/1905

THE SEALING, BEFORE THE SHAKING, BEFORE THE LATTER RAIN

Notice the sequencing in the following quotations. It sounds like the ‘sealing’ happens before the ‘shaking,’ which happens *before* the ‘latter rain!’ And, from the last quote, it looks like the national Sunday law also happens before latter rain. Could it be then that the sealing is happening *now*, before the national Sunday law and the beginning of the time of trouble? At any rate, woe to those who are waiting for, or expecting, the latter rain to seal them. They may just find themselves, like the antediluvians, or the foolish virgins in the parable, knocking on a door that has already been shut.

So for a minute, picture the “foolish virgins” before they left their homes to go to the wedding. (See Matthew 25:1-13.) They *could* have taken *extra* “oil” with them. (Note that “oil” is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. See Zechariah 4:1-6.) But, like the people before the flood who *could* have gotten on the ark, they must not have thought that it was really necessary. Since we are sealed by the Holy Spirit, (see Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30), let’s be sure we are getting our “extra oil” now.

S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 4, page 1161 (MS 173, 1902)

Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God’s people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming.

Early Writings, pages 269-272

The Shaking

I saw some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, pleading with God. Their countenances were pale and marked with deep anxiety, expressive of their internal struggle. Firmness and great earnestness was expressed in their countenances; large drops of perspiration fell from their foreheads. Now and then their faces would light up with the marks of God’s approbation, and again the same solemn, earnest, anxious look would settle upon them.

Evil angels crowded around, pressing darkness upon them to shut out Jesus from their view, that their eyes might be drawn to the darkness that surrounded them, and thus they be led to distrust God and murmur against Him. Their only safety was in keeping their eyes directed upward. Angels of God had charge over His people, and as the poisonous atmosphere of evil angels was pressed around these anxious ones, the heavenly angels were continually wafting their wings over them to scatter the thick darkness.

As the praying ones continued their earnest cries, at times a ray of light from Jesus came to them, to encourage their hearts and light up their countenances. Some, I saw, did not participate in this work of agonizing and pleading. They seemed indifferent and careless. They were not resisting the darkness around them, and it shut them in like a thick cloud. The angels of God left these and went to the aid of the earnest, praying ones. I saw angels of God hasten to the assistance of all who were struggling with all their power to resist the evil angels and trying to help themselves by calling upon God with perseverance. But His angels left those who made no effort to help themselves, and I lost sight of them.

I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people.

I saw that the testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance; all who truly receive it will obey it and be purified.

Said the angel, "List ye!" Soon I heard a voice like many musical instruments all sounding in perfect strains, sweet and harmonious. It surpassed any music I had ever heard, seeming to be full of mercy, compassion, and elevating, holy joy. It thrilled through my whole being. Said the angel, "Look ye!" My attention was then turned to the company I had seen, who were mightily shaken. I was shown those whom I had before seen weeping and praying in agony of spirit. The company of guardian angels around them had been doubled, and they were clothed with an armor from their head to their feet. They moved in exact order, like a company of soldiers. Their countenances expressed the severe conflict which they had endured, the agonizing struggle they had passed through. Yet their features, marked with severe internal anguish, now shone with the light and glory of heaven. They had obtained the victory, and it called forth from them the deepest gratitude and holy, sacred joy.

The numbers of this company had lessened. Some had been shaken out and left by the way. The careless and indifferent, who did not join with those who prized victory and salvation enough to perseveringly plead and agonize for it, did not obtain it, and they were left behind in darkness, and their places were immediately filled by others taking hold of the truth and coming into the ranks. Evil angels still pressed around them, but could have no power over them.

I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth with great power. It had effect. Many had been bound; some wives by their husbands, and some children by their parents. The honest who had been prevented from hearing the truth now eagerly

laid hold upon it. All fear of their relatives was gone, and the truth alone was exalted to them. They had been hungering and thirsting for truth; it was dearer and more precious than life. I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered, "It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel."

Great power was with these chosen ones. Said the angel, "Look ye!" My attention was turned to the wicked, or unbelievers. They were all astir. The zeal and power with the people of God had aroused and enraged them. Confusion, confusion, was on every side. I saw measures taken against the company who had the light and power of God. Darkness thickened around them; yet they stood firm, approved of God, and trusting in Him. I saw them perplexed; next I heard them crying unto God earnestly. Day and night their cry ceased not: "Thy will, O God, be done! If it can glorify Thy name, make a way of escape for Thy people! Deliver us from the heathen around about us. They have appointed us unto death; but Thine arm can bring salvation." These are all the words which I can bring to mind. All seemed to have a deep sense of their unworthiness and manifested entire submission to the will of God; yet, like Jacob, every one, without an exception, was earnestly pleading and wrestling for deliverance.

Soon after they had commenced their earnest cry, the angels, in sympathy, desired to go to their deliverance. But a tall, commanding angel suffered them not. He said, "The will of God is not yet fulfilled. They must drink of the cup. They must be baptized with the baptism."

Soon I heard the voice of God, which shook the heavens and the earth. There was a mighty earthquake. Buildings were shaken down on every side. I then heard a triumphant shout of victory, loud, musical, and clear. I looked upon the company, who, a short time before, were in such distress and bondage. Their captivity was turned. A glorious light shone upon them. How beautiful they then looked! All marks of care and weariness were gone, and health and beauty were seen in every countenance. Their enemies, the heathen around them, fell like dead men; they could not endure the light that shone upon the delivered, holy ones. This light and glory remained upon them, until Jesus was seen in the clouds of heaven, and the faithful, tried company were changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, from glory to glory. And the graves were opened, and the saints came forth, clothed with immortality, crying, "Victory over death and the grave"; and together with the living saints they were caught up to meet their Lord in the air, while rich, musical shouts of glory and victory were upon every immortal tongue.

Early Writings, pages 85-86

On page 33 is given the following: ..."At the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully."

This view was given in 1847 ..."The commencement of that time of trouble," here mentioned does not refer to the time when the plagues shall begin to be poured out, but to a short period just before they are poured out, while Christ is in the sanctuary. At that time, while the work of salvation is closing, trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel. At that time the "latter rain," or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out.

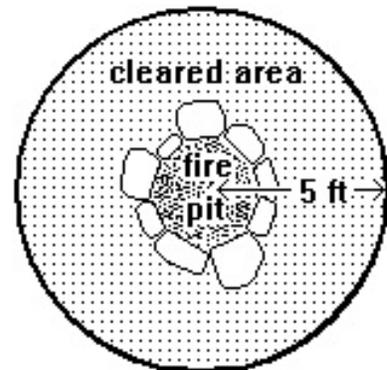
FIRE BUILDING 101

Since every situation is different, fire building is probably the most complex of all wilderness skills. It is also one of the most important skills, as fire is necessary for heat, light, and cooking, for purifying water, and for crafting useful items. The key to being able to build and maintain a good fire is probably just a lot of experience. So take advantage every opportunity to practice fire building.

In most cases, you won't need a large fire. Usually, all that is required is a relatively small yet efficient campfire, with a fire pit about 20-24 in / 50-60 cm in diameter. Keep in mind that *any* fire using wood for fuel is high maintenance, and will therefore require constant tending. This is because the fire will either be building up as new fuel is beginning to burn, or it will be dying down as the fuel it already has is being burned up. You simply cannot just get a fire going, and then expect it to continue to burn well. Excessive smoke is usually the first clue of neglect. So accept the commitment of being a 'fire watcher,' and develop the skill of keeping a fire going at a relatively steady heat. Experiment with various woods, and different fire-starting methods. And, be sure to learn how to get a fire going in wet conditions.

Fire Safety:

Clear a circle down to mineral soil 5 feet out from center of the fire-pit in all directions. Have water and a digging tool close by whenever the fire is burning. When finished, make the fire pit 'soupy' with water to be *sure* the fire is *out*. Coals can keep burning for days under ashes, or under a fire that has just been covered with dirt.



Activity #1

In a safe area, hold a lit match or a lighter to an arm or leg diameter stick of firewood. The flame may blacken the wood a little, but it is quite unlikely that it will start burning. Next, cut or chop a chip of wood off of the same spot where you held the match or lighter to. Now hold a burning match or a lighter up to the chip. Now, the exact same piece of wood burns easily! What makes the difference?

Fire Theory

In order to burn, a fire needs:

- Oxygen
- Fuel
- Heat —think: 'combustion temperature'

Oxygen is in the air all around us, so having enough oxygen is usually not an issue unless the fire is being smothered by sticks that are placed too close together—which can be especially critical when the fire is small. Fuel is also not much of an issue, as long as it is dry. So managing the Heat factor seems to be the biggest problem most people have with starting and maintaining a fire. Again, think: 'combustion temperature.' Just about everything has it's own combustion temperature.

Below this temperature, it will not burn. But, if oxygen is present, once the combustion temperature is reached, it will start burning —whether or not a flame is present to ‘ignite’ it.

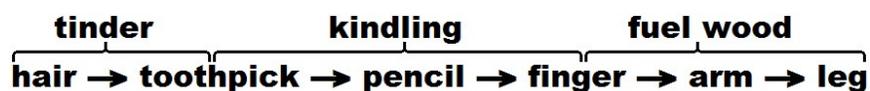
It is also helpful to understand that there are really two parts to a wood fire. As wood heats up, it releases ‘wood gasses’ which are more commonly simply called, ‘smoke.’ When smoke reaches its combustion temperature, it will begin to burn as ‘flames.’ Notice what happens when several new sticks of firewood are added to a small fire that has been dying down. First things get smokier, and you might be tempted to think you did something wrong. But then as things heat up, the smoke suddenly bursts to flames.

After the wood gasses are released, what’s left is primarily carbon, in the form of charcoal. The heat from the flames usually causes this charcoal to burn too, which we typically call, ‘coals.’ If no new fuel is added to a campfire, as the wood gasses are eventually all released, the flames die down, and all that’s left is a ‘bed of coals.’ Some people equate fire, with flames, but these glowing coals are still burning, and can be quite hot! —especially when we add additional oxygen, such as blowing on them, which increases their rate of combustion raising the temperature.

To bring all these ideas together, the lit match or lighter in Activity #1 simply doesn’t have enough heat to raise the more massive stick of fuel wood high enough so that it will start burning. It would take the *collective* heat of a good sized fire that is already burning well to get an arm or leg sized stick going. On the other hand, the match or lighter *does* have enough heat to easily get the smaller chip of wood burning.

To follow out this principle, the increased heat of the burning chip can be used to start other chips burning. The heat of these burning chips can then be used to get something a little larger, say some pencil sized twigs, burning. Then, the burning pencil sized twigs will produce enough heat to get some finger sized sticks going, which will then be able to start some ‘handle’ sized sticks burning, and so on to build up the fire. By *gradually* and *patiently* adding larger and larger pieces of wood to the fire, eventually there will be enough collective heat that an arm or leg sized stick could be added and burned. But if the arm or leg sized stick is added too soon, especially if it is added to the center of the fire, the heat it absorbs can cool the little fire to the point that it will no longer burn well.

This process of starting with very small pieces and gradually building up the collective heat so as to be able to burn larger and larger pieces of wood is especially important when starting a fire with primitive methods. To begin with, there may only be the heat of a small, and short-lived, spark. Thus it is important to start with very fine material and patiently work up. First light a bundle of ‘tinder’ made of hair-fine to smaller toothpick sized flammable material —such as dried grass, shredded bark, pine needles, or fine shavings. Use the burning tinder to ignite some ‘kindling’ which is larger toothpick to smaller finger sized materials —such as larger shavings, and small twigs. Then use the burning kindling to light finger and thumb sized sticks. When they are burning well, their heat will be able to start larger sticks of fuel wood burning.



As you lay these additional materials on a new fire, work to establish a 'central heat core' that will provide the heat that is necessary to keep the rest of the fire burning. This central heat core usually takes the form of a bed of coals in the center of the fire. Seek to build up and then maintain this central bed of coals as you tend the fire. The ring of rocks and bowl shape of the typical fire pit also works to reflect heat back into the fire which, like the central heat core, helps to keep the fire hot enough to keep itself going.

Sometimes, such as when cooking, coals from the center of the fire are pulled off to one side to use for things like making ashcakes or roasting foods. If too many coals are removed, the central heat core will not have enough heat to keep the fire burning well. A similar problem can be caused by placing several pieces of larger firewood on a relatively small fire. These larger pieces can cool the central heat core to the point that the fire stops burning well. In both of these cases, excessive smoke will probably be the first sign of problems. Move the larger pieces to the sides of the fire, or place them against each other over the *top* of the fire where they can warm up without cooling the central heat core. And in either case, add some smaller sticks which will heat up and burn quickly to build the fire back up.

Another consideration is the moisture content of the wood. Green or wet wood will need more heat to evaporate the moisture before it can reach combustion temperature and burn. After a rain, everything laying on the ground can be soaking wet. Look for dead pine needles, that are hanging in the trees and bushes, and pencil diameter or smaller dead twigs that are still attached to the lower branches of trees which may still be relatively dry. Ideally these should 'snap' when they are broken off. If they are pliable and bend rather than breaking, they will probably be too wet to use to start a fire. If everything is soaked, it may be necessary to cut into the middle of a standing dead tree to get some dry wood. Sometimes this is the only dry wood available. Make thin shavings from this wood, as it can even be somewhat moist. As you make these shavings and/or collect these relatively dry twigs and needles, take care to keep them off of the wet ground, or they may soak up additional moisture. Collect, or make, two or three good handfuls of this relatively dry tinder and kindling before lighting the fire.

'Pitch-wood,' or 'fat wood' as it is called in some areas, can be very helpful for starting fires when things are wet. In some regions, when pine trees die, the pitch flows down and saturates the wood at the base of the trunk. After the rest of the tree has rotted and fallen down, this pitch saturated wood remains, looking somewhat like a stalagmite on the forest floor. Chopping into these stumps reveals the sweet smelling pitch-wood. Pitch-wood can also be found in the 'pine knots' at base of pine branches. Look for dead pines which have fallen down. It can also frequently be found in the wood around scars on pine trees.

The wonderful thing about pitch wood is that since the wood is already saturated with pitch, it cannot really soak up water. Thus even if though it may feel moist, it should still burn relatively easily. And although it makes thick black smoke, it will burn considerably longer than a similar sized piece of wood. Slivers of pitch wood can even be burned like 'candles.' When starting a fire with wet materials use shavings or slivers of pitch-wood if at all possible. The straight pitch that oozes out of pine trees can also be used, although it is a bit more awkward and difficult to work with than pitch-wood.

Place chunks of pitch on top of a 'raft' of small twigs over the flame so it will melt, and the twigs can act sort of like a wick.

If you live in an area with birch trees, birch bark is another wonderful material for starting fires under wet conditions. Birch bark contains natural oils so can be used much the same as pitch wood. Fine strips or shredded birch bark make great tinder.

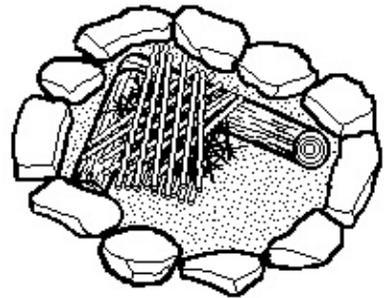
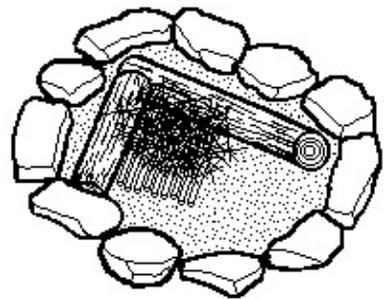
Don't try to start the fire directly on wet ground. A lot of heat will be lost drying the dirt. If the ground is wet, line the bottom of the fire-pit with a layer of finger sized twigs or a slab of bark to keep the young fire off of the wet dirt.

Before you light the fire, be sure everything is ready. Don't let the little fire to die out while you run to get something. Prepare the fire-pit. If you will be using the fire for cooking, if at all possible use rocks that have a flat surface to ring the pit. These flat rocks will be useful as 'kitchen counters' to put cook pots, utensils, and food on, to help keep things clean and out of the dirt. Also collect a bundle of fine shredded tinder, several handfuls of kindling, several handfuls of finger-size stick, as well as a pile of larger, thumb to wrist diameter fuel wood.

Begin by laying a wrist diameter stick along one side of the fire pit, or better yet make a 'V' with a couple of these larger sticks. These sticks will help to reflect the heat back into the kindling, and give you something to lean twigs and shavings on to avoid crushing and smothering the little fire. If the ground is damp, lay a layer of small sticks or a slab of bark in the 'V' to start the fire on.

If you are starting the fire with a modern method, place the tinder on this layer of stick. On top of the tinder, lay a couple layers of kindling —dry pencil size and smaller twigs— and have another handful or two of these small sticks ready to add where needed. Since fire burns 'up,' you will want to light the tinder as close to the ground as possible. This way the initial flames will heat and ignite the kindling as they burn through it. If you are using a primitive or historic method to start the fire, place the glowing ember in the tinder bundle, and blow it to flame. As soon as the tinder bursts to flame quickly place it in the 'V,' and immediately lay a couple layers of pencil size and smaller twigs on top of it.

At this point, any flame escaping out of the kindling is lost heat. All of the available heat needs to be warming more kindling to the point that it too will start burning. So, 'feed the flame.' Carefully add more kindling *on top* of any escaping flames. Because this small kindling burns quickly, it will not last very long, so keep adding more kindling until the fire gets larger. But, be careful not to add it so thickly that it smothers the fire. Keep criss-crossing what you add to allow adequate ventilation. Remember that the fire is dependant on its own heat to keep itself going. Therefore, until the fire is big enough to have 'extra' heat to cook or warm a shelter, you will want as much as possible



of the heat it generates to be reflected back into the new little fire. As the fire grows, and the flames seem to be pushing past your efforts, you can start adding larger and larger sticks.

What to Do with a Smoky Fire

As already mentioned, excessive smoke is frequently the first clue that a fire needs some attention. Since smoke is ‘flames’ that have not reached their combustion temperature, it is usually an indication that the collective heat of the fire has ‘cooled’ too much. This can be caused by: a lack of fuel, such as when the central core burns itself out; fuel placed too far away from the central core to be heated sufficiently, such as after a stick has burned leaving one or both ends out around the edge of the fire area; too much new fuel being added to the fire in such a way that it cools the central core of the fire too much; fuel that is too large being added to too small of a fire; a cook pot tipping over and spilling its contents into the fire; or similar problems. In the case of too much fuel or sticks that are too large being added, carefully remove the sticks. Either place them at the edge of the fire area to be added later or douse them with water so they can be safely placed elsewhere. In almost all other cases, the solution to a smoky fire is to add sticks that are small enough that they will quickly begin to burn, thus bringing the heat of the fire back up.