

*Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election.*

**2Peter 1:10 NIV**

## Store In My Heart

### Revelation 1:3

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

I have always thought this verse should be more prominent in our thoughts. The need to read and retain the message of God is of such great importance that we should keep such admonitions in the forefront of our minds.

The only way that we will ever enjoy the blessings God has prepared for us will be through our study and application of His Word. Even the last phrase of this passage should give us pause. "The time is near." While I realize the specific nature of this warning to those who were addressed, I also understand that none of us has long before we will be called to account for our actions. Read and Heed for Time is Short.



# The Ox In The Ditch

**Robert F. Turner**

"The ox is in the ditch!" So, duty's demands are abruptly dismissed. No one can argue with the "law of the ox in the ditch," can they? But where is that law? The Sabbath law is defined in **Ex. 20:10-11; 23:12-13** and **Deut. 5:12-14**. There is no "ox in the ditch" exemption in any of those passages. Where then is it? It is not there! The appeal is not an argument of rights — of law; it is a plea for mercy. Mercy was the point of Jesus (**Lk. 14:1-5**). The Jew had no "right" to get the ox out of the ditch on the Sabbath day. He plainly violated the law. Mercy — compassion pardoned the violation because of the circumstance. That it was a breach of law is not ignored. Maybe we should think of this before we make our "ox in the ditch" appeal. We plead guilty to the sin and ask for mercy.

"The ox is in the ditch!" Ah yes, but how did he get there? That makes a difference. The appeal assumes an accident — something not anticipated. This surely cannot be used to justify deliberate plans which prevent doing our duty.

"I couldn't be in the assembly — my ox was in the ditch." I find out he had a headache, was groggy-headed, felt terrible, and was in bed all Sunday morning. Sounds sick, right? He was — after staying up with the TV late late show 'til 3:30 in the morning. Another brother got "caught on-the-road" and could not "get to the evening assembly." He did not mention he planned a picnic and a 200 mile sightseeing tour Sunday afternoon. I think I see tracks where the ox was pushed into the ditch. "My ox is in the ditch! I am so busy I just can't get

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## For Our Information

Joyce Venable was not feeling well yesterday. Some of Bill's help in caring for her is out of town.

Jimmy and Annette Gray are safe and staying with Adene Gray after losing their house in a fire Friday.

Several families are still isolating due to the virus concern. Lets make extra effort to keep in touch during this present distress.

**Pray for safety, courage & healing.**

to study and do spiritual work like I ought." And he is not lying! His candle is burning at both ends — he does not have time for anything else. He has two jobs, Lion's Club, PTA, political action committee, little league, and a busy social schedule. No time is left, but it is no accident. Those commitments were all planned. Somebody agreed to every activity. That old ox did not stumble into the ditch; he had help. "I will have to cut my giving — my ox is in the ditch. I can hardly pay my bills." True. New cars, TV, house, boat, etc., takes all the money. It seems the Lord should have been considered first, nevertheless, whose name is at the bottom of those credit applications? I doubt the ox signed a single one of them! Someone asked for every payment. The ox was pushed.

And how long is the ox to stay in the ditch? Is this every Sabbaths plea? That makes a difference. We may foolishly put our ox in the ditch, but we should promptly get him out. A brother explains his job has interfered with his duty — ox in the ditch. He does not mention that this is the ordinary demands of his job and it will be this way his whole working life. Brother, pull the ox out!

Brethren, our plans must be to do what is right — to be dependable in performing our duty. Interruptions should be temporary and unavoidable. Worse than a failure to measure up, is planning to fail.

Joe Fitch

(Though written almost 40 years ago, the lesson taught is for all times. I was reminded of this article by some of the discussions I have read among brethren during our current situation. A fellow preacher linked to it online and after reading it again, I thought it would be good to print it here.

Though this principle of extending mercy might apply to our present situation, we need to keep in mind that it is an unavoidable or extraordinary problem that leads to such a situation. This does not give us a reason to miss assembling. What we are doing in such cases is appealing to God for mercy because we are unable to attend. This attitude will help us avoid unnecessary absence and will keep our minds focused on God's desire that we come together. Let us always seek to please God, no matter our situation or circumstance.

DLH)



We seek only to serve God according to His Will!