

# Megiddo Message



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## Can You Take It?

So much of life is give and take. We often think about the giving, but at times it may be harder to *take* than to *give*.

There are things in life which, like it or not, we have to *take*. It may be sudden illness, the loss of a friend, a severe disappointment, a financial setback, a life dream collapsed. How do we respond? Can we take it?

The answer, broadly stated, lies in where we have set our affections. If our hearts are bound up in this world, then when this world falls apart we are in trouble. But if we have trusted our lives to God's guidance, nothing that He allows can trouble us unduly. We will accept all as part of our discipline and know that He is allowing whatever is to our best spiritual advantage. In His strength we can surely take it—whatever the “it” may be.

The “it’s” may be large or small. Sometimes the little knocks of every day strike without warning. Are we prepared to take them?

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*At times it may  
be harder to take than  
to give.*

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Suppose, for example, we go out of our way for someone, and he or she seems not even to notice, much less appreciate our kindness. Can we take it without any feeling of ill?

Suppose we invest considerable time, effort or money in a seemingly worthwhile project—that fails. Can we take it? Can we take it without begrudging what we gave, knowing that the Lord will give proper credit in due time?

Suppose we do or say something unkind without thinking. A friend calls our attention to it. Can we take it without any feeling of animosity toward that person, without any resentment or feeling of bitterness? Can we take their thoughtfulness graciously—and gratefully?

We may do the very best we know, and it turns out wrong. When someone tells us, can

we take it patiently, without the least feeling of “You don’t need to rub it in?”

Suppose someone tries to amplify our wrong to put us down, instead of “restoring” us, as Paul advised, in the “spirit of meekness.” Can we take it?

Perhaps we give our wholehearted support to a project and feel inwardly satisfied that we did well. Someone comes along and offers suggestion upon suggestion of how we could have done so much better. Or they just criticize, and criticize, without any regard for our feelings or the effort behind our sacrifice. Can we take it? Can we take it all graciously without any desire to return evil for evil?

The apostle Peter spoke knowingly about all this. Apparently some of his brethren had wondered just how much they should have to take of undue criticism. Peter’s reply is soul-stretching. He says, “There is nothing meritorious in taking a beating patiently if you have done something wrong to deserve it. The merit, in the sight of God, is in bearing it patiently when you are punished after doing your duty” (1 Pet. 2:20, JB). Of course we should take a rebuke in good grace when we have done wrong! The real credit is taking it when we have done well!

How about this? Can we take it?

Perhaps we feel slighted. Can we take it, even *dismiss* it, without carrying any offense toward that person?

Suppose another’s opinion is preferred—and accepted—above ours. Can we take it, even offering our *support*?

Can we take it, *you* and *I*? A searching question, for the answer depends upon where we have set our hearts’ affections. If our first concern is for the fair speeches of others and our own gratification, we will find many things hard to take. If our whole concern is to give ourselves to the Lord and leave with Him “whether shall prosper, either this or that,” we should have no problem taking whatever comes.

God will be our shield and buckler, and the greater share of the taking will be done by Him. □



## MEGIDDO MEANS ...

"a place of troops" (Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon); "a place of God" (Young's Analytical Concordance). Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, strategically located, and the scene of frequent warfare. In the spiritual parallel, it is a place where soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare gather to renew their strength and courage (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

## WE BELIEVE ...

- in God, the Creator and sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life, in whom we "live, and move, and have our being."
- in the Bible as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.
- in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be King of the whole earth.
- in the Holy Spirit, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.
- in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- in humankind as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.
- in ourselves as capable, with the help of God, of applying to our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.
- in the promise of God, that Jesus Christ will soon return to rid the earth of all sin and suffering and inaugurate an eternal and worldwide kingdom of peace and righteousness, until God's will is done here as it is now done in heaven.

### The Herald and the KING

OUR PLANET will soon witness the greatest events in its history. For centuries God has been silent. But that silence will soon be broken by the arrival of Elijah the prophet, who comes to herald the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: ... lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:5-6).

Then shall follow the King of kings and Lord of lords, to begin His momentous work of transforming our world into the glorious and eternal Kingdom of God.

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## Megiddo Message

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*Note: If you wish to remove label on cover, warm with hair dryer and carefully peel off.*





# Let There Be Light

BY GERALD R. PAYNE

**L**ight is a subject so wide and its associations are so numerous that it is difficult even to summarize it in a few words. We see, because of light. We comprehend our surroundings largely because of light. A beam of light can convey information from one place to another. Some forms of communications depend wholly on light. In the form of laser, light has become a very precise tool for the field of medicine.

Though we are usually more concerned with the light than with its source, light cannot be understood apart from its source. For us, that source is the sun. Think of the sun, only a small orbiting mass compared to some other celestial bodies in space. Yet look at the energy it disperses in the form of light. It is estimated that one square inch of the sun gives off continuously enough light for about 400 average sized rooms (54 horsepower or 40,500 watts). The sun's surface is more than 10,000 times that of the earth. Were it reduced to the size of the earth without losing any power, one square inch would light 4 billion average rooms!<sup>1</sup>

One unique property of light is that energy in this form is always moving. In fact, it is moving very rapidly. At its full, unhindered speed light travels at 186,000 miles every second. It can circle the globe seven times at the tick of a clock. Are our fastest conveyances approaching this? Compare the space shuttle, at a mere 290 miles per second top speed.<sup>2</sup> It has been said that if we were to develop a means of travel faster than light we would have to utilize a means of measurement of which we have no knowledge.



Yet in the not too distant future, worthy men and women, empowered by their Creator, may be soaring much faster than even the speed of light. The Scriptures state that the reward of the chosen will be abundantly above all the human mind can imagine (1 Cor. 2:9), and space travel is well within the reach of our imagination today. In fact, angels were already accomplished space travelers more than two thousand years ago. From what distant world might the angels have come who visited Moses, Daniel, Peter, Paul? We are not told. But the promise is, "... the people who trust the Lord will become strong again. They will rise up as an eagle in the sky; they will run and not need rest; they will walk and not become tired" (Isa. 40:31 NCV).

### Light in Scripture

Is it any wonder, when light is so important to life, that the writers of Scripture placed so much emphasis on it, so much that it occurs 272 times in the King James Version?

#### ★ Two Kinds of Light

Light is of two principal types: physical light, which illuminates the physical creation; and spiritual light, which illuminates the heart or mind.

The Bible frequently uses light as a symbol of Divine knowledge. This knowledge frees from evil, ignorance, and the darkness of superstition.

When used in its symbolic sense, light has several applications that parallel its physical uses.

#### ★ Light Reveals

Jesus said that He was the light of the world (John 8:12), meaning that He possessed the true knowledge from God.

Just as physical light is often necessary to reveal treachery, danger, and uncleanness, so spiritual light reveals hidden evil and makes it possible to discern between good and evil.

The Lord God sent a prophet in the person of Christ to bring the light of Divine knowledge into the world. He came as an example to all who would pattern their lives after His, but few paid attention to this very bright Light. They even resisted it and tried their best to destroy it. Jesus Himself said: *"Their judgment is based on this fact: The light from heaven came into the world, but they loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. They hate the light because they want to sin in the darkness. They stay away from the light for fear their sins will be exposed and they will be punished. But those who do what is right come to the light gladly, so everyone can see that they are doing what God wants"* (John 3:19-21 NLT). Paul also spoke of the revealing properties of this spiritual light when he wrote:

*"For God, who said, 'Let there be light in the darkness,' has made us understand that this light is to reveal the brightness of the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6 NLT).*

Christ referred to Himself as *"the light of the world."* He is our revealer, a light sent from God. *"Jesus said to the people, 'I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't be stumbling through the darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life. I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the darkness'"* (John 8:12; 12:46 NLT). If we do not trust Christ, if we do not believe and obey His words, we will remain in darkness and perish, as will all the wicked. But we do not need to remain in the dark shadows of death, for God has given His Word, a light in a dark world.

#### ★ Light Bearers

Christ gave spiritual light to His disciples, along with the responsibility that accompanied enlightenment. *"Let your light so shine before men,"* He said, *"that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matt. 5:16). It is our duty also to be light bearers, bearers of the light.

What kind of light bearer are you?

*Do you conceal your light—  
or let it shine?*



#### ★ Light Protects

The sound of an owl or the rustling of leaves nearby is hardly noticed during the day. But during the hush of a dark, cloudy or foggy night, if you are alone on a lonely path, the same sounds can be frightening. Somehow, you don't feel safe any more. But turn on a dazzling bright light, and how different everything seems. This feeling of fear would be especially frightening if you knew there were wild dogs, lions and bears, such as where David lived.

Do we wonder why David wrote: *"The Lord is my light and my salvation—so why should I be*



*afraid? The Lord protects me from danger—so why should I tremble?*" (Psalm 27:1 NLT). From the context it seems that the Psalmist was surrounded by enemies. It was only natural that he feared and trembled. The thought of God being a light to save and protect him from danger was more than just a casual thought that came to his mind, it was a real presence that he valued as much as life itself. More than once the Lord had delivered him from Saul (see 1 Sam. 18:11; 18:25, 29; 19:1, 10, 11; 23:8, 14; 24:2; 26:2). David sought God's guidance and protection and was never disappointed. Neither will we be if we keep within its protection.

### ✧ *Absence of Light as Death*

The absence of light is the absence of life. In the parable of Job the grave is compared to darkness: *"A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness"* (Job 10:22). If the sun suddenly stopped shining, it would

*rescue us from all our enemies.' But you have no idea what you are wishing for. That day will not bring light and prosperity, but darkness and disaster"* (Amos 5:18 NLT). In that day the ungodly will perish; there will be no light or prosperity for them. As Jesus said, *"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out"* (Luke 13:28). This is a calamity that we can avoid. We need not be caught in the darkness when that day arrives.

### ✧ *Light and Darkness as Enemies*

From the very beginning when the Lord first began working with the inhabitants of this earth, He gave laws to teach them how to worship Him and live in peace and harmony with each other. He acquainted them with Himself and told them how they could become pure as He is pure. *"Let there be light"* He said, *"and there was light"* (Gen. 1:3).

But very soon, light and darkness were struggling against each other. Eve gave in to temptation and ate the forbidden fruit, the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Not long after, when Cain saw the shining light in his brother Abel he became jealous and killed him. He hated the light which revealed his own evil intents. This is just what Jesus said: *"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil"* (John 3:19 NIV).

Wouldn't we think that when light came into the world, everyone would be clamoring for the light? But such was not the case, then or now. Humankind love darkness, they love their own evil ways more than the ways of God. They want to lie, they want to cheat, they want to have their own way, they want to hate. They hate the light that tells them what they must do and be. As Jesus said, they *"love darkness...because their deeds are evil."* And John adds, *"Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness"* (1 John 2:9 NIV).

Men and women hated Christ because He said of Himself, *"I am the light of the world"* (John 8:12). They hated God because *"God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all"* (1 John. 1:5 NCV).

And since the light cannot be separated from the lightbearers, those living in the dark often hate the true lightbearers. Not realizing that darkness leads to eternal death and light is a guide to eternal life, they see the righteous as a threat to their evil way of life and wish to be rid of it. Those who killed the prophets of old were in the dark. They crucified the Lord who came as a light from God. Paul solemnly warned, *"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light*



*God has given  
His Word, a light in a dark world.*

only be a matter of hours until the earth would begin to freeze and all life would soon cease. So it is without the guiding light which comes from God.

There can be no spiritual life without spiritual light, and where there is no spiritual light there will be no continuing life. *"The light of the wicked will be snuffed out. The sparks of their fire will not glow"* (Job 18:5 NIV). The day of the Lord will bring justice. Not one evil will survive. *"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory [light] of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea"* (Hab. 2:14; see also Isa. 11:9).

The day of the Lord will mean "light" (happiness, good, prosperity, blessing) to the righteous but darkness (deprivation and death) to all evildoers. The prophet Amos warned all who would experience *"the day of the Lord"* to remember the finality of His judgments: *"How terrible it will be for you who say, 'If only the day of the Lord were here! For then the Lord would*



have with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14 NIV).

Do you want to face the risks of being a lightbearer, or should you conceal the light so others will not see it? Should you risk being injured by the insults, jeers, possibly even physical force against you for letting the light shine in a dark world and "giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light" (Col. 1:12 NIV)? Yes! A thousand times, Yes! Said Jesus, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16 NIV).

You who are standing in the light that comes from the Father of Lights and are earnestly serving God with all your heart have no reason to fear or draw back because "you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Pet. 2:9 NIV). Paul said, "In the past you were full of darkness, but now you are full of light in the Lord. So live like children who belong to the light" (Eph. 5:8 NCV). "Believe in the light while you still have it so that you will become children of light" (John 12:36 NCV). Paul included himself when he wrote, "[we] belong to the light and to the day. We do not belong to the night or to darkness" (1 Thess. 5:5 NCV).

### ✱ Fruit of light

Referring to Paul, a professor once said, "To myriads of men and women in every age and nation the letter written in a dungeon at Rome, and carried along the Egnatian Way by an obscure Christian messenger, has been a light Divine and a cheerful guide along the most rugged paths of life" (*Easton's Bible Dictionary*). Without physical light the tree would bear no fruit. Just as vital is spiritual light to spiritual fruitfulness. If we have no light in us, we will bear no fruit of righteousness. Only as we are filled with the light will we bear its fruit. "For the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them" (Eph. 5:9-11 NRSV).

### BE the Light

Remember that Jesus in His first sermon said, "You are the light of the world." He did not say merely "You carry the light" but "You are the light." Think what responsibility that places upon us as individuals, to be lights in this dark world, lights shining with Jesus' message of hope and salvation!

Have you ever noticed how a gloomy meeting can be turned into a cheerful one when the speaker has a cheerful personality and a

bright countenance? Like a light in a corner, cheerfulness can radiate light to others. The light we radiate influences others around us. Do you enjoy meeting others who greet you with a smile? Then be sure to greet others that way, and you are almost certain to receive smiles in return. If we feel others are gloomy and unhappy, could it be that our countenance just may be partly to blame?

Get off to a good start. Don't let that first person you see every morning get you down. When you look into the mirror, be sure the one looking back is not harboring bitterness or hatred or some hurt feeling, but has a smile of contentment and thankfulness. Before you meet the dark world, thank God that you are alive and ready to shine. Impossible you say?

Look into a smelly, damp prison cell in first century Philippi (Acts 16:19-40). You see two men, beaten and bleeding, their feet bound tightly in stocks. But look at their faces, and you see no sign of hatred, not even any indication of sadness. Why? Because hope is glowing in their hearts. Their voices are sounding a joyful song. The other prisoners and the jailer hear. There is ...in that prison cell, light shining in a dark place, and it is lighting the hearts of others, too.

That night an earthquake shakes the prison and all the doors fly open. The jailer, desperate, is about to take his own life, fearing the prisoners have escaped. But a cheerful, loving voice sounds through the night, "Do not harm yourself! We are all here!"

That night Paul and Silas were lights, and the jailer became the apostles' prisoner, a prisoner glowing with love and joy. He was a prisoner of the light. □

<sup>1</sup> Calculations are from the following: "If you were to mark off one square yard on the sun you would find that it is giving off 70,000 horsepower of energy continuously. There are a tremendous number of square yards on the sun's surface: more than 10,000 times the number of square yards on the surface of the earth."—Tan, Paul Lee, *Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations*, (Garland, Texas: Bible Communications, Inc.) 1996. One horsepower is the equivalent of about 750 watts.

<sup>2</sup> 17,322 mph—the shuttle's highest speed—Scott Colloredo at <http://quest.arc.nasa.gov>. Emission speed may be about 25,000 mph (Ency. Britannica). This does not include weight or mass of the rocket which must be taken into consideration for the rocket speed.

GERALD R. PAYNE, together with his wife Barbara, is finding a rewarding ministry in Bible study, research and writing. He is associate pastor of the Megiddo Church.





# Living with a *SENSE* OF *URGENCY*

BY RUTH E. SISSON

**S**hortly before the outbreak of the Civil War in this country, a thoughtful observer named David Potter wrote a book which he called "The Impending Crisis." In this book Mr. Potter pointed to numerous factors which he saw building toward the inevitable: Civil War. His purpose was to awaken people to a sense of urgency. The danger was not far off but imminent; it was a time of crisis, a time that called for everyone's patriotic best.

Our world today is facing another time of impending crisis, a crisis unequalled in the history of the world. While it will affect all people worldwide, the national or international aspects of it are not so much our concern as the consequences that it will bring upon each of us personally.

Never before in the history of God's people has the arrival of the Great King been so imminent. Never before has any one lived so near the glorious reality of the great things God has promised. Never has the dawning of God's New Day been so near as it is this very

moment. Our time has been truly called the time of the "end"—it is the end of an age, the end of a dispensation in the plan of God, the end of the era of man's misrule upon earth.

It is a momentous time, bringing as it does the closing of the first phase of God's great plan for this earth.

It is a solemn time, for the arrival of this "end" will bring the hour when those who are accountable shall be called to stand in the presence of Him whom they call Lord, to receive for the things which they have done or failed to do (2 Cor. 5:10).

God has provided an abundance of evidence that we are in this end time. He has not left us to wonder or guess. As Paul the apostle said, we are not in darkness that that

Day should find us unprepared (1 Thess. 5:4). God has warned, and warned, and warned. If we have not heard and heeded the warnings, we have only ourselves to blame.

This is one of the outstanding features of God's fairness in dealing with His human family. He punishes; He judges; He removes from the scene of action those who oppose His plans. And ultimately He will do away with all who offend, to make room for the new and better order, those who are eager to submit themselves to His righteous laws.

## God's Warnings

There is something very special about warnings. They carry a message of concern, of caring, even of love. Enemies do not warn. Someone who warns us is on our side and is looking out for our best interests. A warning tells us that there is something unfavorable ahead that we might not be aware of—and which we *can avoid*. By warning us, they are saying that disaster is not inevitable, that there is a way out—if only we will take the proper course of action.

Warnings are for our safety. Parents warn children against countless dangers of which they are unaware—things too hot, too hard, too sharp, too cold, too high, too deep. Highway signs warn drivers. There are signs that absolutely forbid a specific action, such as "No Parking," "No Standing," "No Left Turn," and "No Stopping Except for Repairs." There are other signs that alert to danger, such as "Caution" or "Slow Down," "Dangerous Crossing" or "Blind Drive," "Sharp Curve" or "Falling Rock Zone." No safe or sane driver will disregard the message of these signs.

Warnings are meant to be appreciated. A warning sign of "Bridge Out" will be welcomed by the driver who wants to arrive home safely. The warning sign tells him there is another way than to plunge into the rocky abyss. Just so do God's warnings

*If we learn to stand in the strength of Jehovah, our faith and courage will not fail.*



inform us. They tell us we need not meet disaster. There is another way, a better way—a way of escape.

Warnings also tell us that someone knows more than we do, someone is more aware, more informed, or more perceptive—else how could they warn us? In accepting a warning we are recognizing this fact. We are saying, in effect, "You know more than I do, and I'm thankful that you do—I'll listen."

This should be our response to God's warnings. And whatever means He uses to deliver His warnings, we should appreciate.

Delivering God's warnings has been the special mission of God's spokesmen through the ages; each has had a divinely appointed duty to "hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me" (Ezek. 33:7).

From the writings of the apostle Paul we know how diligent he was in performing this part of his ministry. Take, for example, his first letter to the Corinthian brethren. Some among them were deep in sin. They needed to be warned of the error of their ways and of the grievous end of sin, that "the wages of sin is death." This is why Paul wrote these entreating words: "I write not these things to shame you," he said, "but as my beloved sons I warn you" (1 Cor. 4:14). Notice how warmly he addressed them: my "beloved sons." Paul cared for them with a tender, fatherly care. He wanted to see them have the best, but he knew also that if they were to have it they would have to change. If they continued on in their present course, they would come to ruin.

Each God-appointed prophet, apostle, pastor and teacher through the ages has shared in this responsibility. Each has been divinely commissioned to "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isa. 58:1). Their duty was to alert to the consequences of disobedience, to warn of approaching judgments upon sin, to stir to action. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Micah; even Jesus, Peter, Paul and John—all delivered warnings from God. All announced that disaster was approaching but that its dreadful consequences were not inevitable. There was still opportunity to escape; something could still be done—if it was done immediately.

## "A Time of Crisis"



by Kenneth E. Flowerday

The present time is a time of crisis. Long ago the inspired writers warned of the crisis at the close of this age, days of desperation, days of difficulty, days of stress. "You must realize that in the last days the times will be full of danger" (2 Tim. 3:1, Phillips). Or as it is worded in the New English Bible, "The final age of this world is to be a time of troubles."

The prophet Daniel was divinely pre-informed of this same critical age. When he asked to learn more, the angel replied, "Ask no more, Daniel, for the revelation is to be kept secret and closed, till the crisis at the close" (Dan. 12:9, Moffatt).

The word "crisis" has a significant history. In Chinese the word is made of two pictures. One means danger; the other, opportunity. Thus a crisis in Chinese is a "dangerous opportunity." In French the word is *krinein*, which means "to separate." In Greek, the word for crisis is *krisis*, meaning "judgment." A crisis is a time of judgment, an examination, a proving time.

A crisis is a testing time, a time of separation, a time in which we are tried by dangerous opportunities. As free moral agents we are free to make either the right or the wrong choice.

Are we standing ready, at such a time as this? Today we have before us this challenging question. Today, while momentarily expecting the arrival of Christ's forerunner, Elijah, and Christ Himself, in this the tarrying time, could there be an era of more complete abandon to wickedness, immorality

(Continued on page 11)

*Let us choose  
our opportunities,  
and watch our  
choice!*

KENNETH E. FLOWERDAY, who pastored the Megiddo Church from 1958 to 1985, was a lifelong student and teacher of the Word. His personal commitment to holiness was a constant inspiration to those who knew him.





Which brings us to the most important aspect of any warning: *urgency*. Any warning, to be of value, must incite a feeling of urgency. A warning without urgency is no warning at all. If the meteorologists discov-

## Triumph

*If you can sing,  
When there is no song in your heart;  
If you can keep on being loving, lovable, and lovely,  
When those who should be loving you are blind;  
If you can hold a lifted brow,  
Despite the weights your shoulders cannot bear;*

*If you can carry on dry-eyed  
While your heart is drowning in a deluge of tears;  
If you can keep on going,  
When the pain in you is just too great,  
And your soul is shaken with hopeless anguish,  
And your suffering, ache-filled body wants to slump;*

*If you can keep on going—  
And keep on going...  
When nerves and blood and muscle scream and sob  
With the injustice and unholy ways  
Of those who should be warm and just, but aren't,  
Because the abyssal holds for them more lure  
Than the celestial, and they say,  
Why, God?*

*If you can tilt your cheeks sunward,  
Keeping your eyes filled with spiritual light and hope  
Reflected from the heavenly lands ahead,  
And lift your best foot forward,  
On the path of faith and prayer—  
Keep going, 'till you see beyond this world  
To sites eternal which your God has built:  
Keep going on and on—  
He has boundless wealth and bliss eternal  
For you to share.*

—Selected

ered a hurricane over the Gulf of Mexico rapidly traveling toward the coast of Texas, and made only a casual statement of its existence, their announcement could hardly be called a warning. A warning to be effective must tell of danger and *demand response—immediately*; something needs to be done, and done quickly, because time is limited.

Why is this sense of urgency hard to develop? Why is it hard for us to feel the urgency of the time? It is because we are so bound to our world of sense. We tend to be confident of what we see, and to think that it will always be. When it is sunny and warm, we forget entirely the feel of drenching rain. The same is true of circumstances—when they are favorable, we do not concern ourselves with the reverses that may come.

We are so accustomed to judging by what our senses tell us, as though that were all there is. But is this right? Does it not occur to us that there are realities *beyond* the reach of our senses? Can we not be just as sure—even more sure—of the things that are not seen—which God has promised—simply because *God has given His Word*? In fact, the things not seen are a thousand times *surer* than the things known to our senses—can we not believe it?

The decision is ours. God does not force us to believe. But let us not think for a moment that our unbelief will change His plans or save us from facing the events that are coming—any more than the unbelief of ancient Israel changed His plans for them. The apostle Paul pointed up this fact in his Epistle to the Romans: “What if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid” (Rom. 3:3–4).

We are free moral agents, masters of our own destiny. We may close our eyes and ears to the evidence that is fairly screaming at us, and say blithely that “*all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*” Or, worse still, we may join with those who say “*My Lord delays his coming.*” But whatever we think will affect only ourselves. The Day of the Lord is coming.

Always, in all ages, God wanted His people to live with a sense of urgency. Though He clearly revealed that the Second Advent would not be at that time, the New Testament is filled with admonitions to act and act immediately. There was no time to lose.

What are our thoughts on the second coming of Christ? Is it an event that we casually accept, or is it a certainty that is with us constantly, a part of our very being?

We are aware, of course, that only God knows the day and hour, but Jesus described in some detail the conditions that would prevail just before His second appearing. He said, among other things, that His coming would be in a time such as it was in the days of Noah. What was the attitude of the people before the flood? What were they doing? We do not know a lot of particulars, but we do know they scoffed and ridiculed Noah.



Are not the majority very much the same today? In Noah's time they went right on living in their own routine, worldly ways, giving no thought to the impending end of their world. Are not people today doing the same?

### **The Test of Not Knowing**

One point always observable in God's warnings is this: that never does He disclose exactly *when* a judgment will come. We might feel that His warnings would have had more effect if He had told *when* to expect judgment. Why does He withhold information that would seem so useful?

Perhaps He means in this way to separate real believers from those who give only casual assent. Perhaps He means to distinguish the wholehearted, obedient ones from those who might respond only to save their life at the moment. Again, it may be that He wants His people to be constantly on the alert, ready *whenever* He may choose to act.

Through the ages God seems to have used the anxiety of not knowing to instill a sense of urgency in His people. No one in the antediluvian world knew *exactly when* the flood was coming. No one in Sodom knew *exactly when* the fire would fall. No one living in Judah in the days immediately before the captivity knew *exactly when* or how the terrible predictions of Jeremiah would meet their vivid and awesome fulfillment. Nor did they concern themselves unduly about them. No one living in Jerusalem in the first century knew *exactly when* the city would fall, or how it would happen. All were warned, but no details were available as to exactly *how* or *when*. Consequently, the majority chose to disregard the warnings, to take their chances and live in the bliss of forgetfulness.

But human forgetfulness or human disregard did nothing to alter the Divine plan, and in each case the predicted calamity came—in due time—exactly as predicted.

We look back upon these people and denounce them for their folly. How needless for all those thousands to perish in the destruction of Jerusalem—when they could have escaped so easily in advance! How foolish were those Israelites in the days before the captivity, to pay no heed to God's prophets,

(Continued from page 9)

ty and vice? Hippolytus, a teacher during the second century, stated that the great Prophet would come at a time of "*surpassing wickedness and impiety*." Isn't this just such a time?

We cannot deny that these are fear-filled days, even perilous times spoken of by Paul in his second letter to Timothy. Facts and figures prove it. The hours of the day of salvation are fast running out.

States of mind are infectious, and we shall do well not to be affected by those of this age. One of our greatest dangers in this age is the slow attrition of time, the waiting for a sign from heaven. People have waited expectantly; and when the day lengthens, an inner voice whispers, "*My lord delayeth his coming*."

But such an attitude will never prevail in the heart of the true believer. A time of crisis calls for a greater degree of faith, a fuller consecration and an unrelenting endurance. But great tests promise great reward. God has provided some better thing for us. Said Jesus: "*Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*."

Times never have been and never will be "just right" to work out our salvation, not until the Millennial reign of Christ ushers in a new age. To wait for a more favorable time and condition is to die waiting. The saints of old never waited for times to improve but used the time available to improve themselves. They realized the need of improving the time. Good living—even the best—is possible in the worst of times, as the history of God's chosen eloquently proves.

In a time of crisis Queen Esther dared go before the king to seek deliverance for her people, even though she knew very well that her life was at the caprice of the king. What if she had thought the time not "just right" to appear before him?

And what will become of us, if we do not think our time just right to serve our God?

If our life, our will, has been completely surrendered and we have learned to stand in the strength of Jehovah, our faith and courage will not fail. "*He only who has clean hands and a heart unstained, who never sets his mind on what is false, who never breaks his word; he gains a blessing from the Eternal*" (Ps. 24:4-5, Moffatt).

We are in a dangerous crisis today. At any time we may find ourselves facing an external crisis, a dangerous opportunity. To try to avoid such crises by setting up our own defense is as useless as seeking shelter under a tree in a hard summer shower. This life and this time is meant for testing.

At such times we must remember to seek the help of God. There are times in life when the dangerous path is the only path, and there is nothing to do but follow it through. But however dangerous may be the path over which God sends us, we have one never failing consolation: that He goes with us,

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*Times never  
have been and never  
will be "just right"  
to work out our  
salvation.*



and continue as though nothing could happen! What willful blindness! What savage unbelief!

But—how much different is *our* situation today? How mindful are we of the warnings that have been given us? Ahead of us is a time of trouble the like of which has never been since there was a nation. Are we living as though we believed it? In the words of the book of Hebrews (2:1-3), "*How shall we escape*"—any more than those of other

ages—"if we neglect so great salvation," if we turn a deaf ear to the warnings we have received!

*Ahead of us  
is a time of trouble  
the like of which has  
never been seen on earth.  
Are we living as though  
we believed it?*

Was prophecy ever any more definite than that which concerns the events which have been predicted for *our* day—the Second Advent of Christ and His auspicious herald, the resurrection of the dead in

Christ, the judgment of the covenant-makers, and the inauguration of a new worldwide government on the earth? Did the things written aforetime ever apply more precisely than they do right now?

For whom did Zephaniah speak when he wrote, centuries ago, "*The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly*"? (Zeph. 1:14). Or for whom were these words of Habakkuk ever more meaningful: "*Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth.... For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry*" (Hab. 2:2-3).

There is just no escaping our responsibility. And there is just no escaping the impending crisis. Never has time been so precious—or so short. Never has our obligation for right attitudes, right thoughts, right feelings, right doing been more urgent than at this very moment. We have no time for any side-tracks, back-tracks, or off-tracks. Why? Because we are at the time of the end, and it is a matter of life and death; eternal life and eternal death.

What is a feeling of urgency? One of the best illustrations of urgency comes from the military world. When young enlistees are learning to become military parachutists, it is said that they tell them a little story.

"When a plane is flying along at twelve hundred and fifty feet and you jump out," they say, "if your parachute does not open in eight seconds you will die. Right there they get your attention. And they say that for the normal person it takes something like four seconds to realize that something is amiss with the parachute. Eight minus four equals four. And then they say that for the normal person it takes about three seconds to activate the reserve parachute. Many people imagine that if one parachute doesn't work, you just pull a cord and the other one pops out and saves you. Well, that's not the case. You've got to reach down in there and get that reserve parachute, throw it out, and hope that it opens. And that takes three seconds. So eight minus four minus three equals one. The moral of the story is that you have one second to lose!"

This is the kind of urgency we need as we think about the condition of the world today, and—most important—about the condition of our own lives in the sight of God.

A feeling of urgency generates concern, and concern leads to action.

As we face each extended day of opportunity, the question should be constantly upon our minds: What can I do *today* to prepare me for the Day that is coming? What can I do to increase my chances of being accepted when I must stand before Him?

Yes, what does God want me to do? What does He see that I must do? How can I correct that which is lacking in my faith? What can I do to overpower the sins that beset me? How can I build up where I am weak?

God is just, but His justice will not allow Him to overlook any imperfections in us. His justice means that He will compare us with the standard He has fixed. If we measure up to that standard, we will win. If we fail to measure up to it, we will lose. But in either case, His judgment will be final; there will be no second chance and no appeal.

Should we not feel the urgency of this hour? As someone has said, we will have all eternity to enjoy the fruits of our victory—but we have only one short hour before sunset to win it!

We do not know what tests lie ahead for each of us, but know we will be tested. There can be no pure gold without the refiner's fire; there can be no steel without the heat of the blast furnace; there is no statue without the harshness of hammer and chisel; there can be no diamond without the keen edge of the cutter's tool; and there can be no character for the ages without the intense heat of



tribulation. But when we are victorious and look back upon it, who would will it otherwise?

Oh, let us seize the opportunities with which the present hours are laden, and be desperately serious each and every day about our own spiritual growth. Let us tell ourselves over and over and over again that these things are real. These things are true, these things are sure, that the only uncertainty lies with us. God will give us the strength, the opportunity and the time we need, but we cannot expect Him to extend our time indefinitely while we dally along, or put off the really intense work of self-mastery.

When the time is right, He will break the long silence and act. Let us pray God that we may be ready when that Day arrives. □

RUTH E. SISSON  
pastors the Megiddo  
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small group Bible Study,  
which focusses on how  
to apply the Bible in  
everyday life. Ruth  
enjoys using the many  
available resources to  
defend the Bible.



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and with Him every step becomes an opportunity—an opportunity to walk closer to God.

*"You know what this Crisis means, you know it is high time to waken up; for Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. It is far on in the night, the day is almost here; so let us drop the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of the light; let us live decorously as in the open light of day—no revelry...or sensuality, no quarrelling or jealousy. No, put on the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, and never think how to gratify the cravings of the flesh" (Rom. 13:11-14, Moffatt Bible).*

*"Some year will be the last year,  
Some day will be the last day,  
Some hour will be last hour  
Of this appointed time;  
Christ with the holy angels  
Will come in clouds of glory—  
And ev'ry eye shall see Him—  
Oh! advent hour so nigh!  
Be ye therefore ready!  
Be ye therefore ready!  
If it be at morning or in midnight gloom,  
For ye know not the day nor the hour  
When the Son of man shall come!"* □

## DAILY INVENTORY

When evening comes, go off into a quiet place and review the day.

Have I been kind and thoughtful, or mean and thoughtless?

Have I kept an even temper, or did I lose my temper when things went wrong?

Have I been pleasant, or grouchy?

Have I inspired those whom I have met, or have I depressed and discouraged them?

Have I done something creative and worthwhile, or have I wasted the day with petty things?

Have I been square and fair in what I've done?

Have I increased the happiness—moments in the lives of others, or have I thought only of self?

Have I enlarged my mental horizon, expanded my personality—have I grown larger, or shrunk smaller?

What we do day by day determines what we become. Hour by hour we build our lives for better or for worse.

Take inventory daily—it will help to keep you on the right track, headed toward your highest ideals.

—Selected



# Know Your Bible?

## FORGET

1. Complete the sentence, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not \_\_\_\_\_".
2. Who speaks to us of forgetting the things that are behind and reaching toward those things that are before?
3. Complete the verse: "\_\_\_\_\_, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen."
4. Who said, "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord?"
5. Whom does the writer of the Hebrew letter tell us not to be "forgetful to entertain"?
6. What day was meant when Moses said, "Remember this day"?
7. Who was it that did not remember Joseph, but forgot him?
8. To what was Jesus referring when He said, "Remember Lot's wife"?
9. Who said and to whom "Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son"?

## FIVES

1. What parable tells the story of two groups of five women?
2. Who once demanded five loaves of shewbread from Ahimelech the priest?
3. What little boy was five years old when his nurse dropped him and caused him to become lame for life?
4. Who said: "Five times received I forty stripes"?
5. What young lad gathered five smooth stones, and put them into a shepherd's bag, then used one very effectively?
6. In the parable of the talents, what did the man who received five talents do with them?
7. In what story did a man use as an excuse the fact that he had just bought five yoke of oxen?

## I KNOW!

1. "I know whom I have believed." Did Paul address these words to the Galatians, Timothy, or the Ephesians?
2. "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Are these words in the Old Testament or New Testament? Who spoke them?
3. "Now I know that thou fearest God." Who received these words of assurance from God?
4. "I know that he can speak well." Of whom was it said?
5. "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." The speaker was Jesus, Paul, or John?
6. "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Of whom was Martha speaking?
7. "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ." Who said this? Mary, Anna, or the woman of Samaria?
8. "I know thy works." To which of the seven churches was this said?
9. "I know that ye all...shall see my face no more." To whom was Paul speaking?
10. "I know it, my son, I know it." Who said this and to whom?

## EVERLASTING

Fill in the blanks with the correct words.

1. "He that believeth on me hath everlasting \_\_\_\_\_."
2. "I will make an everlasting \_\_\_\_\_ with you, even the sure mercies of David."
3. "Underneath are the everlasting \_\_\_\_\_."
4. "The Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting \_\_\_\_\_."
5. "In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting \_\_\_\_\_."
6. "This shall be an everlasting \_\_\_\_\_ ...to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year."
7. "Be ye lift up, ye everlasting \_\_\_\_\_."
8. "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting \_\_\_\_\_ upon their heads."
9. "Thy kingdom is an everlasting \_\_\_\_\_."
10. "Search me, O God,...and lead me in the \_\_\_\_\_ everlasting."



## FRUIT

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Cain brought of the fruit of the \_\_\_\_\_."
2. "The fruit of the \_\_\_\_\_ is love, joy, peace, etc."
3. "A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his \_\_\_\_\_."
4. "The fruit of \_\_\_\_\_ is sown in peace of them that make peace."
5. "The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy \_\_\_\_\_."
6. "With the fruit of her \_\_\_\_\_ she planteth a vineyard."
7. "But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my \_\_\_\_\_."
8. "The fruit of the \_\_\_\_\_ is a tree of life."
9. "Ye have eaten the fruit of \_\_\_\_\_."
10. "Shall I give...the fruit of my \_\_\_\_\_ for the sin of my soul?"
11. "I have chosen you, that ye should go and \_\_\_\_\_."

## HALF

1. Who said, "The half was not told me"?
2. In what story is it said, "A certain man" was left "half dead"?
3. In what book of the Bible are these words, "Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days"?
4. Who decided a court case by saying, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other"?
5. Which king promised his wife anything—even half of his kingdom?
6. Who showed his true spirit of repentance to Jesus by saying that he would give half his goods to the poor?
7. On what occasion did Rebekah receive a jewel of half a shekel weight?
8. To what king did a man of God say, "If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee"?
9. Whose men had half their beards cut off (a great indignity) when they were sent to console a young king on the death of his father?
10. In which book of the Bible are these well-known words: "There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour"?

(Answers to questions on page 26)



*I have to live with myself, and so  
I want to be fit for myself to know,  
I want to be able, as the days go by,  
Always to look myself straight in the eye;  
I don't want to stand, with the setting sun,  
And hate myself for the things I have done.*

*I don't want to keep on a closet shelf  
A lot of secrets about myself,  
And fool myself, as I come and go,  
Into thinking that nobody else will know  
The kind of a man I really am;  
I don't want to dress up myself in sham.*

*I want to go out with my head erect,  
I want to deserve all men's good respect;  
But here in the struggle for fame and pelf  
I want to be able to like myself.  
I don't want to look at myself and know  
That I'm bluster and bluff and empty show.*

*I can never hide myself from me;  
I see what others may never see;  
I know what others may never know,  
I never can fool myself, and so,  
Whatever happens, I want to be  
Self-respecting and conscience free.*



# DWARF or Giant?

When David went forward to meet Goliath "in the strength of the Lord," armed with his slingshot against the giant's mighty spear, who was the giant, and who, by comparison, was a dwarf?

When the youthful David met King Saul, who was a head taller than anyone else in Israel, who was the giant, and who was the dwarf?

The Bible defines stature in terms other than normal human judgments. David in each case was the giant, even though physically he was dwarfed by the man he faced.

When Jesus stood in Herod's court, and the chief priests fiercely mocked and accused him, who was the giant, and who was the dwarf?

When the apostle Paul, a prisoner, stood before King Agrippa, who was the giant, and who was the dwarf?

When Elijah stood before King Ahab, a man who could take his life at a whim, who was the giant, and who was the dwarf?

When the youthful Daniel stood before King Nebuchadnezzar, a man who had conquered kingdoms and ruled with an iron hand, who was the giant, and who was the dwarf?

The Bible calls Daniel a man "greatly beloved." That's big!

When Paul had his sight restored after being blinded on the road

to Damascus, Ananias repeated the words of the Lord concerning him, "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." He was called to be "a chosen vessel"—that's big!

When Jesus said to His disciples on the night before His crucifixion, "I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain," He had a special task in mind for them. They were to be His witnesses, His representatives. Those were big shoes to fill. But Jesus knew their potential, and when He sent them out with His power, they accomplished His work. They were giants in a world of dwarfs.

We too have been called to be spiritual giants. The world is full of dwarfs masquerading as giants, but with God's power we can be big in character, big in goodness, big in all the qualities that the great God of heaven is seeking in His children.

Don't let circumstances dwarf you. Don't let compromising shrink your character. Stand your ground. God has given you the ability to grow. Be a giant—a giant of goodness! □







A minister once told of taking a job at a church where his predecessor had been almost universally beloved. Never would he speak out against anyone, or take any action which offended anyone. The result: A mess. Decisions which should have been made years earlier had been pushed off into a corner. Issues which needed to be settled for the good of the church had been ignored for fear of causing disagreement. "Now it all descended upon me," he said, "for time had caught up with us. I remember thinking to myself that in the future I hoped my predecessor would be a man who might have made some mistakes but at least had made some decisions. Deliver me, O Lord, from a man who has won his popularity at the expense of personal responsibility."

To try to safeguard one's popularity by avoiding decisions is disastrous, whether it be for a church, a community, a corporation, or a nation. But it is especially serious at the individual level, and this is where all of us face the crisis. To do *nothing* is often worse than doing the *wrong* thing.

It is the old story of the donkey starving to death between two stacks of hay, because he couldn't make up his mind which stack to eat first.

The same problem confronts each of us. It may be simple issues such as, What shall I do with my time?

It is the tragedy of indecision. Psychologists tell us that sometimes people hover between different decisions in agony and finally remain in the middle, neutral, unable to decide.

How can history measure what

has been lost by too little interest and too much hesitation? If one who has only a single talent uses it with all his might, he is sure to come out ahead of the one who has ten talents but never applies himself to use them.

Blessed is the one who is able to make up his mind what he should do, then has the willpower and discipline to go ahead and do it.

When Paul argued so eloquently before King Agrippa, you recall that the king finally said, "*Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*" In that little "*Almost*" is the tragedy of many lives. Presented with great possibilities, they almost—but not quite—decide. Most of us can recall sometime in our lives when we "*almost*"—but not quite—took a step which would have opened the door to a great opportunity.

There is no regret like that which comes from indecision. There is no decision worse than the decision not made.

Again and again comes the time for decision; not to decide is to decide to fail.

Perhaps one of the greatest issues needing our powers of decision is in the use we make of our time.

Life is too serious a matter to be treated with anything less than a full-time commitment. When we begin to think about the meaning of our time, it comes down to what we stand for, and what we do—not what we think about but never act upon.

Our lives are a combination of things physical, mental, and spiritual. No part can be split off and made supreme while the others are ignored. All must be used together

in the service of God, if we are to achieve the goal He has set before us. We sing about the "Land that is fairer than day," and look at it through eyes of faith. But we are not there, and we never will be unless we are each day taking steps toward that land. We cannot merely think about it, sing about it, talk about it, and expect to get there. We must *become* the type of people God will accept to enter that land.

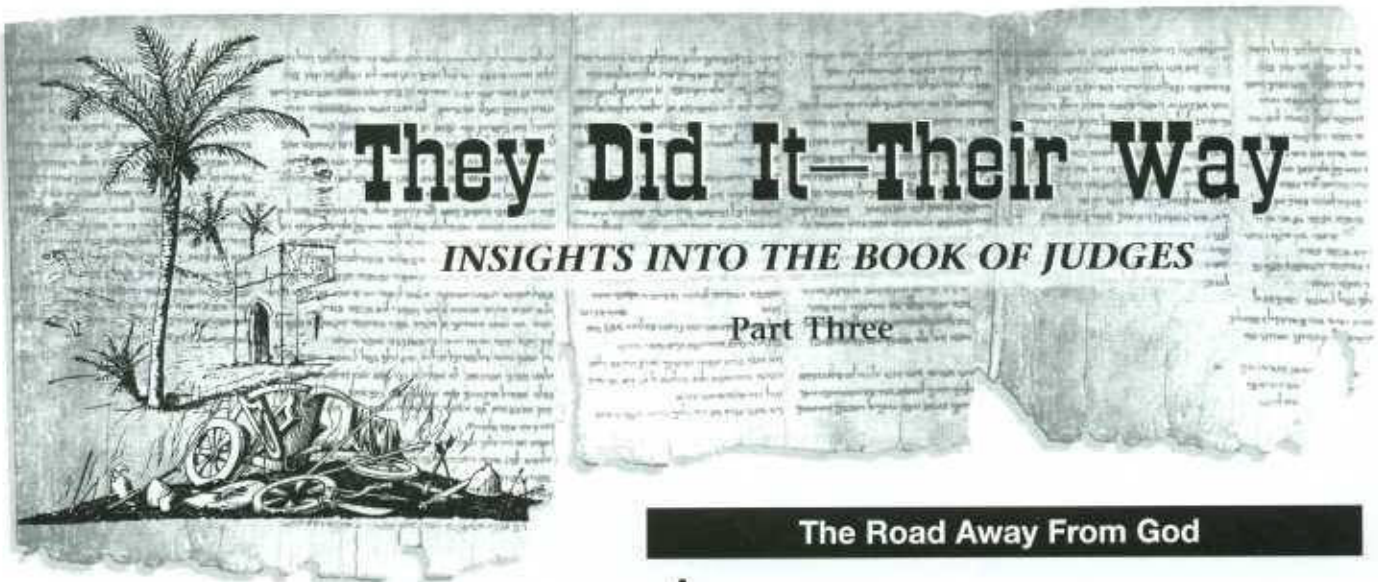
Let us seek God's help to be decisive in our commitment, and never to hold back from taking the steps we need to take because of some fear of offense or unpopularity. To fail to step is to stand still—and lose everything. Reaching the goal means keeping our eye on it and going straight for it, with decision in every step.

Some day soon the trump of God will shock us from our smug complacency, and things as they are will disappear in the sweep of things that shall be. Are we ready for that awesome, thrilling, terrifying moment? Are we prepared mentally, morally, spiritually? Are we getting ready so that that Day will not take us unawares?

These are the thoughts we need to keep fresh and active in our minds. Such thoughts are the motivators that will keep us living at our best, and taking every possible step to be ready when Jesus comes. Why? Because we have His promise: "*The things no eye has seen, and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him*" (1 Cor. 2:9).

Here is the commitment that will free us from the tragedy of indecision. □





#### STATISTICS:

##### **Primary Message of the Book:**

Sin has consequences; disobedience and apostasy end in death.

##### **Key Verse:**

"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes."—Judges 21:25

##### **Setting:**

Palestine (Canaan), later called Israel.

##### **Time Period:**

About three centuries, ending near the 10<sup>th</sup> millennium BC.

##### **Author and Date:**

An unnamed prophet, about 1000 BC. Probably Samuel. If not Samuel, a contemporary of Samuel or someone else living during the reign of the Kings, because the book says in four places, "in those days there was no king in Israel" (Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25)—there was a king in Israel at the time of writing.

##### **Place in history:**

"Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass ..." (Judges 1:1). Immediately following the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan by Joshua, and before the establishing of Israel as an independent monarchy.

##### **Meaning of Title:**

"Judges," Hebrew *shophetim*. Not judges as we know them today; these leaders were Divinely appointed rescuers who delivered the nation from its enemies, then governed the people during the era of peace that followed.

## The Road Away From God

**A**fter the death of Joshua, almost the next sentence is: "After that generation died, another generation grew up who did not acknowledge the LORD or remember the mighty things he had done for Israel. Then the Israelites did what was evil in the Lord's sight and worshiped the images of Baal. They abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They chased after other gods, worshiping the gods of the people around them. And they angered the LORD. They abandoned the LORD to serve Baal and the images of Ashtoreth" (Judges 2:10–13 NLT).

"They abandoned the Lord, ... and chased after other gods." People in all ages have had a choice of masters. Jesus said it in these words: "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money" (Matt. 6:24 NIV).

No one can do it, but most will try. This is the experience of the human race repeated over, and over, and over again. They try to entertain two masters, two loves, two prime interests at the same time, hoping to get the best from each.

But it doesn't work.

When the people abandoned the Lord, what did He do? We read: "In his anger against Israel the Lord handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist" (Judges 2:14 NIV). Wherever they went, the Lord was against them, as He had said.

The result: They were greatly distressed. And the Lord, in His mercy, "raised up judges which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them" (v. 16 KJV).

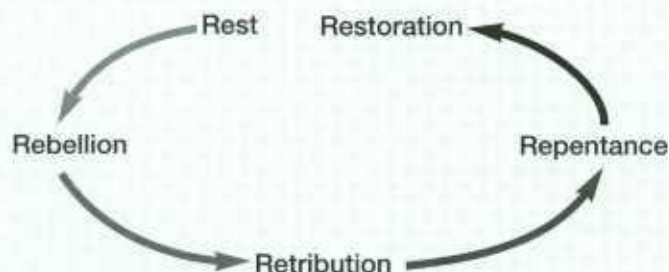
It was a circular pattern. The Lord raised up the judge, the Lord was with the judge, the Lord delivered the people, and the people followed the judge. But when the judge was gone, they turned again to their corrupt practices, and served other gods, until the Lord again allowed them to fall into the hands of their enemies, and they cried to the Lord, and He raised up another judge.

This, in short, is the story of the Judges.

There are many details from which we can gather lessons. Recall the underlying cause of all this round of grief: They did not drive out all the inhabitants of the land. They let



## Israel's Pattern of Apostasy



some remain. And given time, those remaining enemies became so strong that they could overcome their Israelite conquerors. Thus time after time Israel found themselves in bondage to the results of their own failure.

How spiritually disastrous is it to allow even a small amount of a temptation to remain in our midst? Judges gives us the answer: there can be no freedom from danger until the enemy is gone—entirely driven out—from the portals of our mind. As long as he remains at all, he is a threat. As long as small pockets of resistance remain, they have the potential of becoming big pockets, spoiling all the good work we have done. Perhaps they are just little things like a bad temper, an overly critical spirit, a taste for the wrong kind of books or pictures or music. Perhaps it is a selfish attitude, a peevish disposition, or a spirit of greed or retaliation. The list could go on and on. The end result is the same for all: sin in the heart.

The initial excitement of settling in the land pushed any concerns about exact obedience to the Lord into the background. They were thinking about having their own fields, their own flocks, their own buildings, everything their own—and all ready for them to use. The command of God seemed not to matter so much—if they had what they needed, what harm could a few natives do?

But God knew what Israel overlooked: that the natives would retain their pagan, idolatrous practices, like so much poison in the midst of the land; and the presence of *any* poison is a dangerous thing, and sure to contaminate. The pure faith of Israel could not remain pure when side by side with pagan worshippers.

In the same way we may be tempted today to compromise with evil. So easily we go back to old habits, old ways, old interests, if we cherish any remembrance of them within the sphere of our lives—and forget God.

With the Israelites at this time, God didn't matter—until they got into trouble. Then, suddenly, He was very much on their mind. What a sad, sad story!

Is there an enemy in your life? Is there some part of your life that you are not willing to yield to God's control? Remember, it can have just as devastating effects as the enemies which were allowed to remain in Canaan.

## Deliverers: Judges

What did God do to rescue Israel when they fell into enemy hands? He raised up a judge, one who would

work with Him to liberate Israel. When God raised up a judge, we read that *"the Lord was with the judge"*—note that He was with the judge, not the people. God found someone who would trust Him, on whom He could depend. The people at large lacked the commitment needed for such responsibility.

The judges came from all walks of life, and all types of backgrounds. Only one qualification was necessary: a willingness to obey God.

## The First Judge: Othniel

The first judge to rule over Israel was a man named Othniel. Othniel was the son of Caleb's younger brother, so may have been a servant of God. We read, *"The spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war,"* and the Lord delivered the enemies into his hand, and he prevailed against them. *"And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died"* (Judges 3:10-11).

Four verses—that's all we know about this judge, who seems to stand out among the rest. The people wanted to serve other gods, but one who was loyal to the true God was sure to be blessed.





Then the story repeated itself. The Israelites had rest for forty years, they forgot God, and again they found themselves in the hand of their enemies.

This time it was Eglon, king of Moab, along with Ammon and Amalek, who came against Israel. For eighteen years the people suffered in bondage to the Moabites—until they remembered God.

Then what happened? *"When the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite"* (v. 15).

When they cried, the Lord answered. This is the theme of the book of Judges. When they got into a situation where everything seemed hopeless, as a result of their own stupid behavior, they eventually realized that the only answer was God.

### **Ehud Delivers Israel**

There are several full-length stories in the book of Judges.

The first of these is found in Judges 3:12-31. The judge's name is Ehud. This account is a fast-moving drama of how one man delivered his people from their bondage. The hero is Ehud, and his name means "the strong man." The villain is a monster of a man called Eglon.

When the story begins, the children of Israel are subject to Eglon, king of Moab, and to the children of Ammon and Amalek. These three tribes had conquered Israel. The crowning insult and degradation was when the enemy captured Jericho. When Joshua was conquering Canaan, one of the highlights was the conquest of

## *Who is on the throne in your life?*

Jericho, where the Lord fought for Israel and won a glorious victory.

But now all the victory and glory were gone. For eighteen years they had been in bondage to this enemy. Through all these years they had been forced to pay tribute to Eglon. Time after time they had sent caravans bearing rich treasures to this man. The galling thing was that he now sat on the throne of Jericho, a throne that once belonged to Israel.

At last the children of Israel woke up, and sought help from God.

Until we realize that our problems are the result of our own foolishness, and that we ourselves, with God's help, must take the steps to overpower them, we will only go deeper into sin.

Ehud is a man of courage and cunning. He delivers Israel's present of tribute, then comes back and asks for a private audience with the king. He raises his right hand to salute the king, while his left hand conceals a double-edged dagger. When the time is right, he uses the dagger and Eglon is no more. Ehud then escapes, rallies all available forces, and attacks the enemy in

their moment of weakness. Then he leads the people in a march to victory saying, *"Follow after me: for the Lord has delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand"* (Judges 3:28).

The result: *"So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. The land had rest fourscore years."* Eighty years of freedom and peace followed this strong man's victory for his people.

How could Ehud do it? Because the government of the people was directly in the hands of God, and when God raised up a judge, that judge had absolute power to enforce God's will. But the people did not appreciate this close working relationship with God, and soon turned again to their evil ways—and once again found themselves in the hands of their enemies.

### **A Lesson for Us**

Are we tempted to condemn their consistency in foolishness? Let us be sure we have looked to ourselves. What happens when we go our own way? What happens when we do right in our own eyes and forget God? We may not ruin our homes, or bring ourselves under the bondage of our enemies, but who would risk God's displeasure? When the end of this age arrives, we shall want nothing more than to have His favor. When health and life fail us, we shall need His power. Only as we stay with Him, only as we place ourselves on His side now will He keep us then.

There are several important lessons we can learn from the story of Ehud. First, he dealt with the cause of the trouble. He could have raised an army and fought a long drawn out battle against the tribes in an effort to break their power. Such a procedure would have been costly in time, money, and human lives. Instead, he went to the source of their suffering, the man on the throne, and brought about his death, which brought about deliverance.

If we would always go to the source of our problems, we too could be victors. Our real problem is often the man on the throne, our old nature, the big "I." Perhaps it is something we refuse to give up easily.

Who is on the throne in your life? When we allow Christ to reign and we yield to His will, we will not be overpowered by our lower nature.

If we allow the "enemy," our old nature, the lusts and desires of our hearts, to rule us, then Eglon is on the throne with all his ugliness. The only way to remove him is to nurture an overmastering desire to be right with God, to give Christ full control of our lives. This will have far-reaching demands. It will mean no more pride, no more selfishness, no more bitter feelings, no more resentments, no more holding of grudges, no more envy, no more hatred, no more gratifying of the flesh. All these old traits belong to Eglon, and will hold on as long as we let them.

There is only one way to deal with the wrong man on the throne—our own selfish will in all its ugliness—and that is to subdue it by applying the power of God's law. Then we can enjoy a rest from sin, and that rest will continue as long as we keep Christ on the throne of our hearts. □



# Preparing A Place

**"If Christ is going to prepare a place, how can you say the place is here?"**

Jesus in His last discourse to His disciples the night of the Last Supper said to them, "...Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you" (John 13:33).

Such a direct statement was enough to cause concern. Their beloved Lord and Master was to be taken from them, and where He was going they could not come! And so, to comfort them, He continued, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

To those who believe that at death the spirit, soul or intellect goes to heaven to be with Jesus, these words seem to picture the home-in-heaven concept admirably. However, Jesus did not identify the location of the "place" to be prepared. Though it is widely assumed, He did not say "I am going to heaven to prepare a place for you there," nor did He say "I am going to take you to be with me there."

On the contrary He said, "I will come again..." suggesting a return to where He was at that moment, i.e., on the earth.

This is a fact which Jesus stated many times in various ways. In the third beatitude He promised the earth as the eternal abode of worthy mortals: "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). In the prayer He taught His disciples are these words, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Observe the wording: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Jesus never prayed for His faithful followers to be taken from the earth, but for His kingdom to come to earth to form a suitable abode for them.

The closing book of the Bible is a message from Jesus after He had ascended to heaven and was seated at His Father's right hand. The book is introduced as "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come

to pass" (Rev. 1:1-2). What is its teaching regarding the place where the righteous will abide? "And they [the righteous] sung a new song, saying, Thou [Christ]...hast made us unto our God king's and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10). Earth, not heaven, is pictured here as the abode of the righteous. The righteous "shall reign on the earth."

Revelation 6:15-16 pictures the earth as the base of operation of Christ's Kingdom: "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men...hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains." Revelation 14:1 describes the meeting of Christ and His bride, the 144,000, on Mt. Zion—a location on earth. "And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads" (ASV).

The Revelator describes the heavenly Jerusalem; the new super-government that will one day take the place of the multiplicity of governments that now compete for authority. The following statement identifies the location as the earth: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the

kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it" (Rev. 21:23-24).

In view of the foregoing, could Jesus have meant that the place He was preparing was in heaven?

Other Scripture authors confirm that the future home of the righteous is to be the earth. Six times in Psalm 37 the fact is repeated, in various words, "The righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever"; "the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace" (Ps. 37:29, 11 NIV). Psalm 15, after describing the ideal character that God honors, says, "He that doeth these things will never be moved."

When God's work on earth is complete, His house or seat of authority will be established right here on earth. Isaiah 2:2-4 (NIV) is specific: "In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains...Many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.' The law will go out

**"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.**

**"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.**

**"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."**

—John 14:1-3 KJV



## Preparing A Place

from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." Hebrews 3:6 pictures the house of the Lord as His people, the "saints" which shall one day rule the world: "Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we [the church] are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast."

The Authorized Version of the Bible employs the word "mansions" in describing the parts of the "Father's house." Variants in the newer and other of the older versions are, "rooms," "homes," "abodes," "dwellings," "dwelling places." The word "mansions" is from the Greek *mon-ay'* and is defined as: "a place where one may remain or dwell—place, dwelling place" (Strong's Lexicon).<sup>\*</sup> It is translated "our abode" in John 14:23. Viewed from the angle of God's new ruling order as a composite authority, Christ and His associate rulers, this "house" could be said to have many parts or seats of authority. Or should we approach the problem from the standpoint of the Father's house as a place, Christ's heavenly kingdom upon earth, it will actually provide a home for each of God's faithful children.

But if this be the case, why did Jesus say, "I go to prepare a place for you"?

Jesus' ascension to the Father's right hand was a very important link in His preparation for the great work He is to accomplish at His Second Coming. The most gifted person today could not properly administer the government of one of the smallest political entities without training. Jesus' work at His Second Coming is to be King of the entire earth. At the close of His earthly career He had formed a perfect character. He had "learned obedience by the things which he suffered" to the point of doing "always those things that" pleased His heavenly Father (Heb. 5:8; John 8:29).

But to reorganize and administer the affairs of an entire planet such as the earth needs much more than a perfect character. Special training is essential.

In His parable of the nobleman who goes into a "far country" to receive an official appointment and to return, Jesus is picturing in a different simile His work of preparing a place for worthy Christians. During the days of the Roman Empire a nobleman wishing to become tetrarch or governor of a local province had to go to Rome, present his credentials, receive accredited authority, and be given special instruction for the post he wished to fill. This parable points up the need for Jesus to go away and prepare for the making of a place for His faithful followers, so that they can be co-administrators with Him when He returns.

### How long does it take for Christ to prepare a place?

We are not told directly how long it will take for Christ to "prepare a place." However, from His statement, "I go to prepare a place for you," made at a time when there were about 2,000 years remaining before He would return, it would seem that the allotted time would be about 2,000 years. (Four thousand years is an accepted approximate length of time from Adam until the birth of Christ and another 2,000 before His return to earth gives a total of 6,000 years (see our booklet—*God's Spiritual Creation*.) We are confident that we are living during the closing hours of this period of time.)

Two thousand years seems like a long time to us. But what is 2,000 years compared to eternity? Nonetheless let us investigate and see if we can determine something about what is involved in this preparation.

Let us cite again Hebrews 3:6 to

see who are the individuals being prepared as part of the house: "Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we [the church] are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast." Paul termed his faithful followers again as the "temple" of God: "You are God's building" (1 Cor. 3:9). Worthy Christians will be the "mansions" or abodes, the patterns of godly living when the Father's house is established upon earth. And there will be many of these mansions. And since God's plan is to give to each according to his works, the "abode" or "mansion" prepared for each will be different.

This fact is also illustrated by Jesus in several of His parables. In the parable of the Talents, the man of wealth placed into the hands of his three servants varying amounts of money: five, two, and one talents, according to their several abilities, and each received according to what he did with the trust given him (Matthew 25). The parable of the Sower also showed a difference in rank. The seed, or Word of God, which fell into the good ground sprang up and brought forth fruit—thirty, sixty, or a hundredfold—again suggesting that there will be different levels of authority given the saints.

Jesus helps prepare us for our place or position in the Kingdom by acting as our High Priest, interceding for us, acting as our mediator (Heb. 4:14-16; 1 Tim. 2:5). Place means position, office, rank, as well as geographical location. Our place or position in the government of God will depend on the office we hold. All the members of Christ's "bride" or Church will have secondary places, positions under Him, He being the "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:16).

The places or positions—the responsibilities of office—are being prepared as prospective "heirs of salvation" are trained to fill those



*Prepare and prevent rather than  
repair and repent.*





offices. Jesus, as our High Priest, has been calling, justifying, and perfecting all who are willing to be perfected, for a place in His kingdom. When the Kingdom of God comes to this earth (Matt. 6: 10), each position or place in it will be fully prepared by having a suitable candidate to fill that office.

Revelation 21 employs the term "prepared" in the sense of Christ preparing individuals to fill a place: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The new Jerusalem, the new authority, Christ and His one hundred forty-four thousand faithful ones (Rev. 14:1), will be fully "prepared" through self-purification for the high position they will hold. Revelation 14:4-5 (NIV) fittingly describes their superior quality: "They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless."

God will never permit one to rule others until he has been prepared, until he has first learned to rule himself. A passage in 2 Samuel (23:3-4 NIV) describes these God-prepared statesmen: "...When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God, he is like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that brings the grass from the earth."

Jesus went to heaven to be fitted for His position as King of the earth. There He would remain until the time was right for Him to return and establish His everlasting Kingdom on earth. Peter's words in Acts 3:19-21 give us an insight into this part of the Divine plan. "He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets."

As mentioned earlier, Jesus' parable of the Talents (Luke 19) reveals this plan. He pictures Himself as going away to prepare a place for a future kingdom. The people of Jesus' time were familiar with

the formalities required of one seeking an office, such as governor of a province or tetrarchy. He must go to Rome, the seat of government, to have his credentials and qualifications examined and to receive his commission. So Jesus went into a "far country," into heaven itself, where He has been judged, accepted, and commissioned, and at the Father's right hand He awaits the day when He shall return with authority to rule as King over the entire earth.

There was definite purpose in Jesus' being given immortality some two thousand years in advance. He needed education and preparation for Himself, and to prepare a "place" for His "bride" or Church. He went away to become qualified to justly administer the laws and establish a heavenly regime here on earth, and in that way prepare a place for all who are worthy to live and reign with Him.

To have a kingdom, there must be subjects. Zechariah gives us a telescoping account of events leading to the developing of the popu-

(Continued on page 26)



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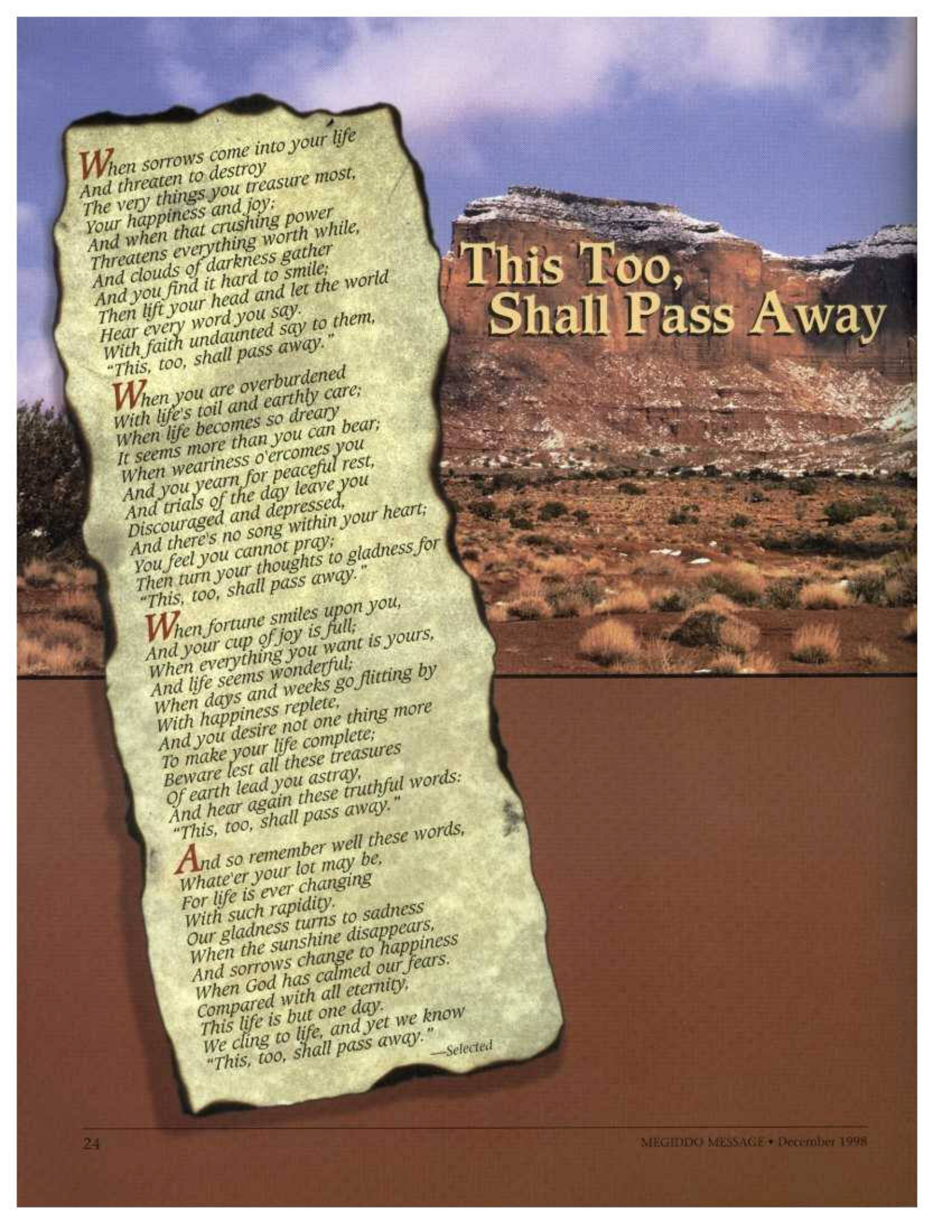
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**W**hen sorrows come into your life  
And threaten to destroy  
The very things you treasure most,  
Your happiness and joy;  
And when that crushing power  
Threatens everything worth while,  
And clouds of darkness gather  
And you find it hard to smile;  
Then lift your head and let the world  
Hear every word you say.  
With faith undaunted say to them,  
"This, too, shall pass away."

**W**hen you are overburdened  
With life's toil and earthly care;  
When life becomes so dreary  
It seems more than you can bear;  
When weariness o'ercomes you  
And you yearn for peaceful rest,  
And trials of the day leave you  
Discouraged and depressed,  
And there's no song within your heart;  
You feel you cannot pray;  
Then turn your thoughts to gladness for  
"This, too, shall pass away."

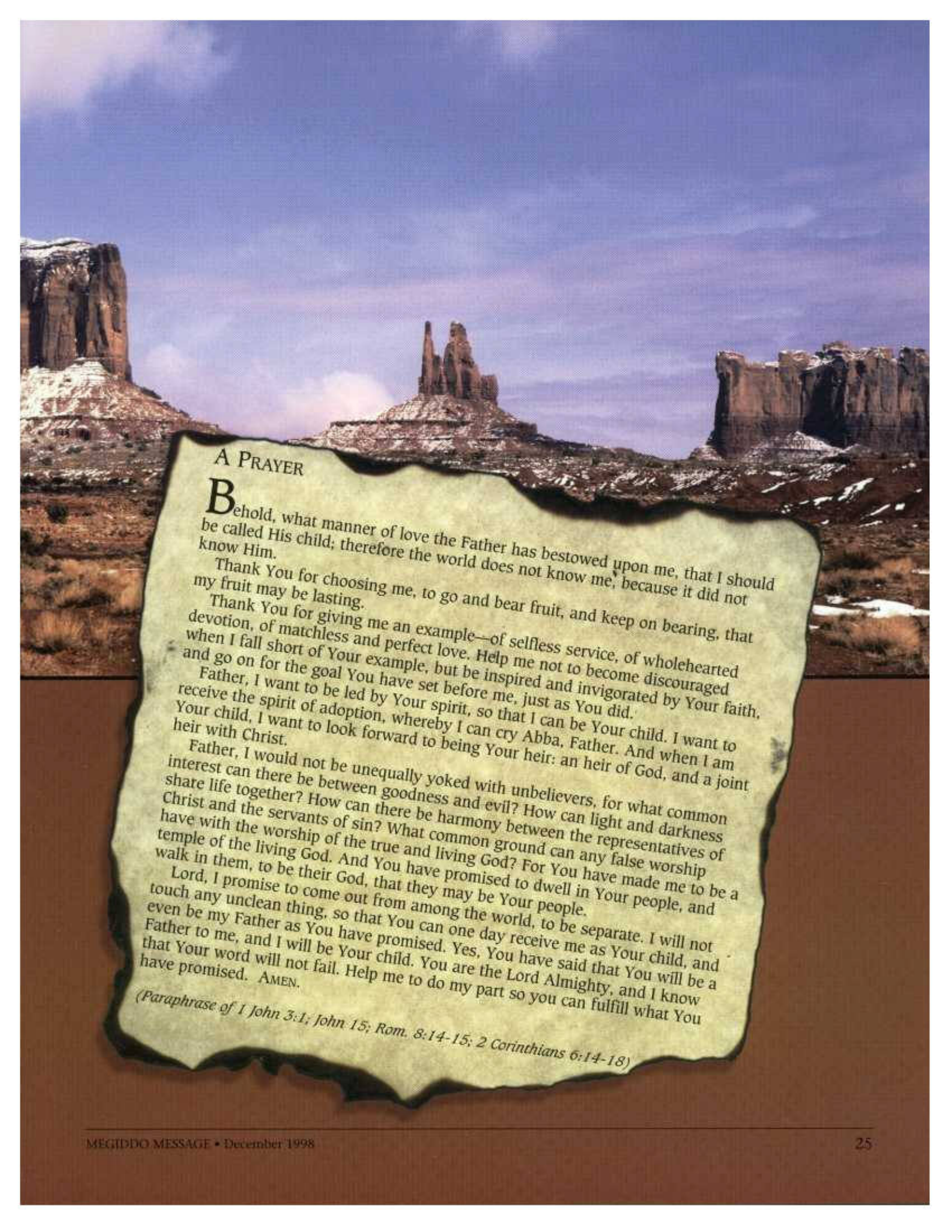
**W**hen fortune smiles upon you,  
And your cup of joy is full;  
When everything you want is yours,  
And life seems wonderful;  
When days and weeks go flitting by  
With happiness replete,  
And you desire not one thing more  
To make your life complete;  
Beware lest all these treasures  
Of earth lead you astray,  
And hear again these truthful words:  
"This, too, shall pass away."

**A**nd so remember well these words,  
Whate'er your lot may be,  
For life is ever changing  
With such rapidity.  
Our gladness turns to sadness  
When the sunshine disappears,  
And sorrows change to happiness  
When God has calmed our fears.  
Compared with all eternity,  
This life is but one day.  
We cling to life, and yet we know  
"This, too, shall pass away."

—Selected

## This Too, Shall Pass Away





### A PRAYER

**B**ehold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon me, that I should be called His child; therefore the world does not know me, because it did not know Him.

Thank You for choosing me, to go and bear fruit, and keep on bearing, that my fruit may be lasting.

Thank You for giving me an example—of selfless service, of wholehearted devotion, of matchless and perfect love. Help me not to become discouraged when I fall short of Your example, but be inspired and invigorated by Your faith, and go on for the goal You have set before me, just as You did.

Father, I want to be led by Your spirit, so that I can be Your child. I want to receive the spirit of adoption, whereby I can cry Abba, Father. And when I am Your child, I want to look forward to being Your heir: an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ.

Father, I would not be unequally yoked with unbelievers, for what common interest can there be between goodness and evil? How can light and darkness share life together? How can there be harmony between the representatives of Christ and the servants of sin? What common ground can any false worship have with the worship of the true and living God? For You have made me to be a temple of the living God. And You have promised to dwell in Your people, and walk in them, to be their God, that they may be Your people.

Lord, I promise to come out from among the world, to be separate. I will not touch any unclean thing, so that You can one day receive me as Your child, and even be my Father as You have promised. Yes, You have said that You will be a Father to me, and I will be Your child. You are the Lord Almighty, and I know that Your word will not fail. Help me to do my part so you can fulfill what You have promised. AMEN.

*(Paraphrase of 1 John 3:1; John 15; Rom. 8:14-15; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18)*



# Preparing A Place

(Continued from page 23)

lace of the kingdom. All who oppose Christ (two thirds of the earth's population) will perish. The remaining one third will be purified, and these will "call on my name" and will say, "The Lord is our God." The passage reads, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, the man who is my partner, says the Lord Almighty. Strike down the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn against the lambs. Two-thirds of the people in the land will be cut off and die, says the Lord. But a third will be left in the land. I will bring that group through the fire and make them pure, just as gold and silver are refined and purified by fire. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'These are my people,' and they will say, 'The Lord is

our God'" (Zech. 13:7-9 NLT).

The mortals living during this time will be closely supervised. "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it'" (Isa. 30:21 NIV). At the close of the thousand years there will be a second resurrection and judgment. Those judged worthy will receive eternal life and live on the earth. "For this is what the Lord says—he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited—he says: 'I am the Lord, and there is no other'" (Isa. 45:18 NIV).

Training for this utopia, when the earth will be filled with immortal beings, is being done right now. We can be a part of it if

we choose. Or we can be among the number who will perish. The choice is ours.

During the next millennium those who survive the purifying judgments will receive intense training, preparing them for the next stage of God's plan when the earth will be annexed to God's vast, glorified creation. And "after everything has been put under the Son, then he will put himself under God, who had put all things under him. Then God will be the complete ruler over everything" (1 Cor. 15:28 NCV). □

\* Louw, Johannes P. and Nida, Eugene A., Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains, (New York: United Bible Societies) 1988, 1989.

## ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 14-15

### FORGET

1. All his benefits (Psalm 103:2)
2. Paul (Philippians 3:13, 14)
3. Keep thy soul diligently (Deuteronomy 4:9)
4. David (Psalm 13:1)
5. Strangers (Hebrews 13:2)
6. The day Israel left Egypt (Exodus 13:3)
7. Pharaoh's butler (Genesis 40:23)
8. His second coming (Luke 17:20-33)
9. The widow of Zarephath to Elijah the prophet (1 Kings 17:8-18)

### FIVES

1. The parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)
2. David (1 Samuel 21:3)
3. Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 4:4)
4. Paul (2 Corinthians 11:24)
5. David killed Goliath with one (1 Sam. 17:40)
6. He made five other talents (Matthew 25:16)
7. The parable of the great supper (Luke 14:19)

### I KNOW!

1. Timothy (2 Timothy 1:12)
2. Old Testament, Job (Job 19:25)
3. Abraham after his willingness to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22:11, 12)
4. Aaron (Exodus 4:14)
5. Jesus (John 5:19, 42)
6. Her brother Lazarus (John 11:14-24)
7. The woman of Samaria (John 4:9, 25)
8. All of them (Rev. 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15)
9. The elders of the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:17-25)
10. Jacob said it to Joseph (Genesis 48:18, 19)

### EVERLASTING

1. Life (John 6:47)
2. Covenant (Isaiah 55:3)
3. Arms (Deuteronomy 33:27)
4. King (Jeremiah 10:10)
5. Strength (Isaiah 26:4)
6. Statute (Leviticus 16:34)
7. Doors (Psalm 24:7)
8. Joy (Isaiah 35:10)
9. Kingdom (Psalm 145:13)
10. Way (Psalm 139:23, 24)

### FRUIT

1. Ground (Genesis 4:3)
2. Spirit (Galatians 5:22)
3. Mouth (Proverbs 12:14)
4. Righteousness (James 3:18)
5. Works (Psalm 104:13)
6. Hands (Proverbs 31:16)
7. Labor (Philippians 1:22)
8. Righteous (Proverbs 11:30)
9. Lies (Hosea 10:13)
10. Body (Micah 6:7)
11. Bring forth fruit (John 15:16).

### HALF

1. The queen of Sheba when she visited Solomon (1 Kings 10:1-7)
2. The parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-33)
3. The Psalms (Psalm 55:23)
4. Solomon (1 Kings 3:15-25)
5. Ahasuerus (Esther 2:16; 5:3)
6. Zacchaeus (Luke 19:8)
7. When Abraham's servant came to seek her as a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24:10-29)
8. Jeroboam (1 Kings 13:1-9)
9. David's men (2 Samuel 10:1-4)
10. Revelation (8:1)



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**T**he WORD is solemn – *don't trifle*;  
The TASK is difficult – *don't relax*;  
The OPPORTUNITY is brief – *don't delay*;  
The PATH is narrow – *don't wander*;  
The PRIZE is glorious – *don't faint*.

**T**he prayers a man lives on his feet are just as important as those he says on his knees.

**W**hen everything goes dead wrong, look and see if you are not facing the wrong direction.

**I**t is much easier to form good habits than to reform bad ones.

**M**ost people do not stumble into failure. They think their way into it.

**S**team does the most work when it makes the least noise.

**T**he best way for Christians to grow is to eat the bread of life.

**T**here is magic in the power  
Of a strong, unbending will  
That makes us stronger every hour  
For greater efforts still.  
Then banish from you ev'ry "can't,"  
And show yourself a man,  
And nothing will your purpose daunt,  
Led by the brave "I can!"

**I**n ev'ry heart there's a temple,  
And there enthroned is a king,  
Some choose their self to be honored,  
There all their tributes they bring.  
Some give their soul to win riches,  
Others seek honor and fame,  
But I have enshrouded one greater than these,  
He is living, The Lord is His name!

**I**n ev'ry heart there's a temple,  
Someone is ruling within;  
You make the choice of the monarch  
Who is to reign as your king;  
Why choose to follow the broad way?  
Why live to seek worldly gain?  
Come open your heart to the Master of Men,  
Let His truth be your bulwark and stay!

**L**ive each day as if it were your last—it could be!

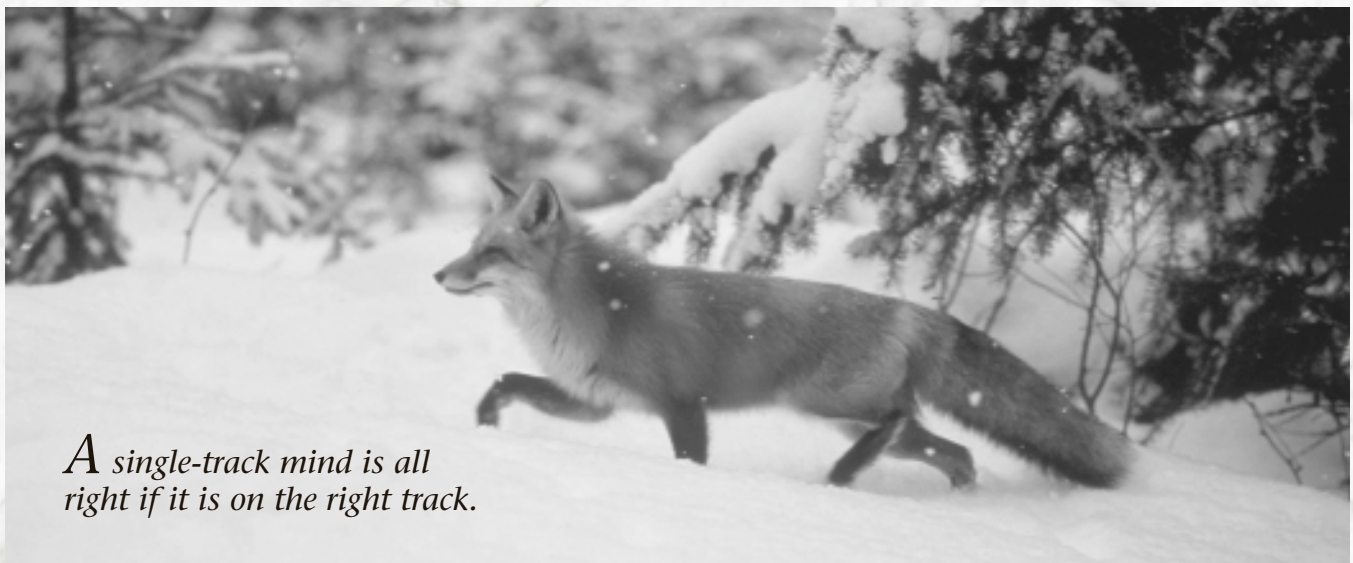
**T**o FORGIVE heals the wound, to FORGET heals the scar.

**N**o rule of success will work if you don't.

**O**ur bad habits make us prisoners, and our false pride is the jailer that keeps us there.

**G**od's work must be done GOD'S way.

**H**ow wise we are when the chance is gone,  
And a backward glance we cast,  
We know just the thing we ought to have done  
When the time to do it is past.



**A** single-track mind is all right if it is on the right track.



# How to Be Perfectly Miserable

**F**eel sorry for yourself.

- ◆ Trust no one to do a job right but yourself.
- ◆ Be suspicious of others.
- ◆ Talk about yourself, using “I” at every opportunity.
- ◆ Talk others down, especially if they are making a point.
- ◆ Expect favors from others—it is your just due.
- ◆ Demand the attention of everyone when you speak.
- ◆ If you do something wrong, speak up quickly to blame the other person.
- ◆ If someone criticizes you, be irritated by it.
- ◆ Expect to be appreciated.
- ◆ Be critical of the work of others—it will help to draw attention to your own.
- ◆ Be sensitive to slights.
- ◆ Envy the ability and talents of others.
- ◆ Never forget an injury you receive.
- ◆ Do as little as possible for others.
- ◆ Compare yourself with others whenever you can.
- ◆ Demand that others agree with your viewpoint—after all, it’s the only right one.
- ◆ Sulk if others don’t give you the praise you deserve.
- ◆ Insist that others respect you.
- ◆ Shirk your duty whenever you think it won’t be noticed.

**Note:** *This recipe has been tested, and is guaranteed to be successful.*

