

Megiddo Message



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*O magnify the Lord with me, and
let us exalt his name together.*

—Psalm 34:3



I'll *Think* About It

“Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think on these things” (Phil. 4:8).

Have you ever suggested that someone take a certain course of action, when their reply was, “I’ll think about it”?

By the tone of their voice you probably knew what they meant. Perhaps they were inferring that they had already pre-judged the idea and set it aside. Or maybe they were suggesting that it was not of any present interest, but if the idea should surface sometime in the future, they might give it thought.

Or perhaps they were saying, “Thank you, I intend to consider it seriously.”

What did Paul mean when he said *“Think on these things”*? Was he giving take-it-or-leave-it advice, or was he seriously telling us what to do?

I believe the latter, because the Apostle Paul had credentials. Paul was a spokesman for God, commissioned by Jesus Christ Himself (see 1 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Gal. 1:1)—his words had authority behind them.

A closer look at the word translated *think* in Philippians 4:8 will show us that Paul meant much more than a passing thought. The Greek word is *logizomai*, which is translated “to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over” (*Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*). To “think” as Paul meant it is to calculate the cost of committing oneself to those words in action.

What does this mean? It is good to think about things God approves, but the real value lies in application. The moral or spiritual truth of our faith becomes visible only when it transforms human nature, only when it changes living persons—like you, like me. Abstract it from life, leave only high-sounding words (like purity, honor, loveliness, excellence), and you rob it of power.

Each term Paul used is a quality of life that is known only as it is lived. Paul confirms this thought

in the sentence that follows: “What you have seen...in me, do.”

How can we do this?

One way is to keep bringing to mind those dynamic personalities from Scripture who moved others to action: Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jesus, Peter, Paul, John. Over and over again we need to renew the moving power which reaches us through their words recorded in the Word of God, which is sharper than any two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12). We must renew it, and use it to transform ourselves.

When we are confronted with an unwelcome suggestion, our unconscious thoughts quickly take control of our will. That is why it is important to discipline our minds by *“thinking on these things”* until they become automatic. If we discipline our minds to think wholesome, constructive thoughts as Christ did, they will become such a part of our nature that in any given situation we will automatically respond as Christ would have.

The Greek word for *think* that Paul used also means calculate. It describes the thought process of a worker who makes careful calculations before beginning a task. Paul means for us to have right standards of action and to apply those standards in every situation.

As he advised Timothy, *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee”* (1 Tim. 4:16).

Is it possible? Some say it is not, but God says it can be by the very fact that He asks it. He would not ask it what we cannot do.

What does the Psalm-

ist, inspired by God, say? *“I enjoy living by your rules as people enjoy great riches. I think about your orders and study your ways. I enjoy obeying your demands, and I will not forget your word”* (Ps. 119:14–16 NCV).

Want to think about it? Certainly!—provided that thinking means ACTION! ♦

Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right.

Think about things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine, good things in others.

Think about all you can praise God for and be glad about.

—Philippians 4:8 TLB

Thirty years ago *Christianity Today* published an article on Jesus' resurrection which they called "Hope in the Midst of Horror." Today this title has added meaning as we ponder the same sure promises of Jesus in the midst of present horrors. —Editor

Hope in the Midst of Horror

by RUTH E. SISSON

All of us instinctively fear a thousand things to a lesser or greater extent. People fear they will lose their companions, their friends, their children, their health, their food, their job, their money, their investments, their home. And while in a time of health and prosperity these forebodings recede into the background, they are never completely gone. Many people also fear the loss of their good name and reputation. Almost everyone has some unspoken dread of the loss of love, the breakup of their family, crippling illness or death.

Right now another fear is frightening many people: it is fear of terrorism, which is really fear of the unknown.

Here serious Christians have a precious privilege. They do not have to live in suspense or fear—because they have read the final chapter of the story and know how it will all end! And that end will not be annihilation but a new order that will fill the earth with happiness and peace, joy and abundant love!

Why are we thinking about this?

First, to build up our faith by noting a striking fulfillment of prophecy for our very day and time.

Second, to appreciate our unique freedom from fear, knowing that no power in human hands, whether terrorism or any kind of malicious warfare, will ever get "out of control" because our God is always "in control" and "*he who watches over Israel never tires and never sleeps*" (Ps.121:4 NLT).

Third, to be alerted, warned, stimulated in our Christian effort, lest we fall short of receiving the fullest benefits of our faith.

What is the prophecy that the present-day fear brings to mind? It is Jesus' *continued on page 5*

We are saved by hope...But if we look forward to something we don't have yet, we must wait patiently and confidently. —Rom. 8:25 NLT

7 Reasons Why We Have Hope

The Bible gives Christian believers solid basis for hope. Even in a time of peril and terror we can live triumphantly.

*We have hope because
God is.*

We are not alone. We have a Friend, a Protector, a Creator, a Provider. Nature abounds with complexities for which there is no other explanation. Open your eyes and acknowledge that *God Is!*

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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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own words, found in Luke 21:25–26 (NCV), *“There will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars [political entities—see Isa. 1:2, 10]. On earth, nations will be afraid and confused because of the roar and fury of the sea. People will be so afraid they will faint, wondering what is happening to the world.”*

Can we imagine a more striking fulfillment than we are seeing at the present time? These words of Jesus were no broad, indefinite conjecture but a clear description of a situation unique to the last days. Could any human being without the aid of Divine knowledge have foreseen nearly 20 centuries in advance the fear and perplexity that would be gripping the hearts of men and nations at the present time?

We have hope because

2 God is a loving God.

God has plans for Planet Earth. As He said through His prophet Jeremiah, *“I have [plans] for you,...plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”* (Jer. 29:11 NIV). He made this planet not to be destroyed but to be inhabited (Isa. 45:18). When the task is complete, it will be filled with His glory (Num. 14:21).



The word “fear” is translated from phobos, which means: “dread, terror, that which strikes terror; intense concern for impending pain, danger, evil.”

Doesn't it strengthen our faith in the God who knows the future as well as the past?

What could fulfill such a prophecy more precisely than the conditions we see today?

What is Jesus' attitude in this prophecy? And what is to be the attitude of His people? Are they to be all alarmed, frightened, worried, nervous, anxious for their lives and families and homes in this fright-filled age? No, Jesus' words convey only composure, confidence and faith—even glad anticipation. True, the world would be filled with “fear,” and this fear is a strong term. The word “fear” is translated from *phobos*, which means: “dread, terror, that which strikes terror; intense concern for impending pain, danger, evil, etc., or possibly by the illusion of such circumstances; a state of severe distress, aroused by fear.” Still, He said, do not fear but “look up.”

We have hope because


3 God is sovereign.

God is in control. Is He really? Then why didn't He intervene and stop those planes crashing into the Twin Towers? He could have, if that was His purpose. But He has bigger purposes than we can imagine. In fact, His thoughts are as far above ours as the heavens are above the earth (Isa. 55:8). Now is not the time for Him to intervene. But when the time is right, He will act, and everyone on earth will know it.

It is reported that Bryant Gumbel, the liberal-minded modernist, asked Billy Graham's daughter, “Why didn't God stop this disaster or do something about it?”

Billy Graham's daughter replied: “For years we have told God we didn't want Him in our schools. We didn't want Him in our government and we didn't want Him in our finances. God was being a perfect gentleman in doing just what we asked Him to do. We need to make up our mind — do we want God or do we not want Him? We cannot just ask Him in when disaster strikes.” Bryant Gumbel was silent.

God is sovereign. He has plans, and when the time is right He will intervene.



When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near. —Jesus

FEAR NOT!

When there is dismay and foreboding all around, when fear has filled the hearts of men and their only thought is to gather all the pleasure they can from the present moment—*“Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we shall die”*—what should the alert Christian do? Listen to the words of Jesus: *“When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near”* (Luke 21:28 NIV). Following the darkest prediction, His message is one of hope! Hope in the midst of horror!

Above all the gloom today, the words of Scripture come ringing through: *“Fear not.”* If we are sincerely serving God, we need not fear. The present terrors are but a message from heaven shouting at us to *run* in our commitment to God. Never has the dawning of the better Day been so near, so imminent, or so sure. Prophecy upon prophecy has been confirmed, and God’s promises *will* be fulfilled.

What should be our reaction to the fear around us? The prophet Isaiah describes what it should be in these words: *“Don’t be afraid of what they fear; do not dread those things”* (Isa. 8:12 NCV).

Even in the face of the most frightful dangers, we can trust because we know God is in control. However hopeless or dangerous or horrifying the situation may seem, His plan is going forward, there is no cause for alarm.

This was the message Isaiah received from the Lord centuries ago, and it is a message we need today. Hear the tender, loving message from the Eternal as He speaks confidently to His loyal people: *“But as for you, Israel my servant, Jacob my chosen one, descended from my friend Abraham, I have called you back from the ends of the earth so you can serve me. For I have chosen you and will not throw you away”* (Isa. 41:8–9 NLT).

Though the terror of the present time is unprecedented, times of turbulence are not new. Times were turbulent in ancient Israel, in the days before the Captivity. And they were destined to get worse. But

We have hope because

God has made us free to do good or evil.

We are creatures of choice, and we must choose: good or evil. We can choose how foolish or how wise we will be. He gives us the tools—the minds—to use. This gives us the potential for achievement, for work, for friendship, for ideals, for challenge, for creative growth. We can love or hate. We are free moral agents. This gives us hope, because our destiny is in our own hands.

We have hope because

God is patient.

God is patient. As bad as our world is, He could have said long ago, “I’ve had enough. I’m going to take command and change it.” But He *“is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to perish, so he is giving more time for everyone to repent”* (2 Pet. 3:9 NLT).

God’s longsuffering gives us hope.

faithful, believing, God-fearing Israel had no ground for fear, only trust. Their source of strength was in God, with whom they had entered into a unique covenant relationship. God might be silent for a time, but He was not asleep. So while fear was haunting the nations around, true Israelites could enjoy peace and security in God.

Hear the rich, warm promise from the heavenly Provider, He who is *"the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel"*:

"Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my victorious right hand. I am holding you by your right hand—I, the Lord your God. And I say to you, 'Do not be afraid. I am here to help you. Despised though you are, O Israel, don't be afraid, for I will help you. I am the Lord, your Redeemer. I am the Holy One of Israel'" (Isa. 41:10, 13–14 NLT).

Can we not claim this same promise today? Would God save His people from their enemies in ancient Babylon and then allow them to perish two and one-half millennia later, just before the culmination of all that He has promised? No, a thousand times NO! God never allows anything which would be to the detriment of His people or His cause. Whatever happens, His watchful eye is over His own and He personally accompanies and sustains them in it.

And this is no idle feeling or dream. He does not say, "You shall feel that I am with you." Feelings come and go; they are affected by many factors—health, circumstances, even the weather. God wants His people to build their confidence on *fact*, not feeling. They are to trust not in their changing moods but in God's fidelity. God has promised, and they can depend on it.

It is so easy to concentrate on our fears and leave God out of the picture. We forget the invincible Power of the universe who is behind us, above us, underneath us and around us. We see the perils, the obstacles, the present troubles, and that is all we can see. We forget that God is working all things together to bring about eternal good.

And anything that cannot be worked for good does not happen! It is this silent, Divine activity which lifts the believer out of the realm of happenstance and into the sphere of God's tender, loving concern. This is what David was thinking about when in the midst of danger he exulted, *"The Lord is my light, and my salvation: whom shall*

We have hope because

God has promised to be with any who are His.

God will be with His people. This is His promise: *"I will never leave you nor forsake you"* (Heb. 13:5), and "never" is a long time, plenty long enough to incorporate our little lives. As long as He has work for anyone, He will see that they are safe.

Think of the many stories that filtered out of the September 11 disaster, of people who normally would have been there but on that day they were not. Were some of these people in His future plans? Only God knows.



It is so easy to concentrate on our fears and forget the invincible Power of the universe.

I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?" (Ps. 27:1).

Hear the ringing confidence in this message from the Lord which Isaiah recorded for our learning: *"I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles"* (Isa. 42:6 NIV). Just picture the intimate care of God, calling us in righteousness, holding our hand, protecting us, keeping us—if we are His people. And then see what He purposes to do *through us*—we are to be *"a covenant for the people,...a light for the Gentiles,"* to open blind eyes and bring those who sit in spiritual darkness out into the glorious light of day (v. 8).

In addition to all this, there are magnificent promises for the future. A correct reading of the past and the present prepares us for God's further and final advent in victory. And oh, the glory, the joy, the triumph the Prophet sees as he looks toward the climax of the ages! *"Everything I prophesied has come true, and now I will prophesy*

We have hope because

All things work together for good to them who love God.

God can bring good out of evil. Many times in the past He has turned adverse situations around and brought good out of them. When the nation of Israel was in captivity, He brought good out of it. When treated cruelly and sold into slavery by his brothers, Joseph himself said later, *"God meant it to good."*

"God turned into good what you meant for evil" (Gen. 50:20 NLT). He isn't the perpetrator of evil, but very often He restrains evil and makes it work for long-term good.

*If we have God
on our side, we do
not need to fear.*

again. I will tell you the future before it happens. Sing a new song to the Lord! Sing his praises from the ends of the earth!" (Isa. 42:9–10 NLT).

"Don't be afraid" is perhaps the most frequently repeated phrase in the book of Isaiah. *"Don't be afraid, because I am with you. I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will tell the north: Give my people to me. I will tell the south: Don't keep my people in prison. Bring my sons from far away and my daughters from faraway places. Bring to me all the people who are mine, whom I made for my glory, whom I formed and made"* (Isa. 43:5–7 NCV).

FEAR OF FEAR

The prophet Isaiah would agree with the philosopher who said, "Nothing is so much to be feared as fear." Fear is atheism,

We have hope because

God has given us the code in His Guidebook.

God has told us what we need to do to be free—free from hopelessness, free from sin, and ultimately free from mortality. *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32). It is a great freedom, and it gives us hope.



*He made the
world to be lived in,
not to be a place
of empty chaos.*

—Isaiah 45:18 NLT

utterly incompatible with trust in an all-powerful, all-faithful God. If we have God on our side, we do not need to fear.

To some, the outlook for the future of human governments looks bleak. Some wonder if our children perhaps won't even have a world in which to live.

But in the Divine picture, things have never been so bright! Never have we been so near to the reality of our glorious hope.

Whatever the predictions of the wise of this world, we are assured by God Himself of what will be. And a worldwide victory of terrorism is not in the picture. *"For the Lord is God, and he created the heavens and earth and put everything in place. He made the world to be lived in, not to be a place of empty chaos. 'I am the Lord,' he says, 'and there is no other'"* (Isa. 45:18 NLT).

How timely are these words today! *"He made the world to be lived in, not to be a place of empty chaos."* What kindness on the part of God to cause these words to be recorded for us, we who would live in these fear-filled days.

A passage from the book of Nehemiah also reassures us of the watchcare of our God. Nehemiah cries unto the Lord, *"You alone are the Lord: You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You"* (Neh. 9:6). God is not going to allow their destruction—*"You preserve them all"*—the earth, the seas, and everything in them.

Yes, God has plans—great and wonderful plans—for Planet Earth.

We have hope because

*9 God has revealed that what we are seeing
is prophecy fulfilled.*

It is no surprise to God. He knew it all in advance, and voiced it through the words of His Son. It is no surprise that there is peril, fear and perplexity in this time just before the Second Advent of Jesus. God saw it nearly 2000 years in advance (Luke 21:25–27).

To what extent must the prophecy be fulfilled before He comes? We do not know. We have no knowledge of God's timetable. But seeing the fulfillment gives us hope, because we know history—the plan of God—is going forward.

We have hope because

10 We have read the last chapter...

...and we know how the story is going to end!

Did you ever pick up a book, skim over the table of contents and a bit of the first chapter, then skip forward and read the last chapter? Your first thought is, how did it end? How did it come out? You want to know what happened, before you labor through all those pages between.

That is our situation with the Book God has given us. We are still in the midst of the action, but His book tells us the whole story, and we have looked ahead and read the last chapter. We know how it is going to end. So we don't have to worry. While we're going through these intervening chapters, even though they are as real as life, horrifying at times, and things look dark, we are not afraid, because we have read the last chapter. It's been written. Whatever comes between, we can say, It is all right, we'll get there, because we know the last chapter.

What is the last chapter? God has promised to fill the earth with His glory. He is going to have a glorified earth, filled with happy immortals. He is going to have His will done here on earth as it is in heaven. This is the last chapter.



*Jesus' words
convey composure,
confidence and
faith—even glad
anticipation.*

The book of Ecclesiastes has a special promise for our time that shows God's creation will not be wrecked by human hands. We read: *"I know that, whatever God does, it shall be for ever: nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it"* (Eccl. 3:14). No matter how many weapons, or how powerful these weapons may be, even if men have the capability of destroying all life on the earth it will not happen. God's plans will not be altered—because *"nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it."*

There is yet another fear from which we are spared if we are serious in our effort to please God. Many people fear illness, disease, injury or premature death. By nature, God's people are no exception. But if we are sincerely serving God, we have a promise that frees us from this fear: *"holding promise for both the present life and the life to come"* (1 Tim. 4:8 NIV). He has promised that nothing will be beyond our strength to meet—with His help. This assurance removes all fear of what life may bring because we know that God will allow nothing to make it impossible for us to complete our work for Him. God's promise to Jeremiah is to us also: *"I am with you to protect you"* (Jer. 1:8 NCV). This places us entirely within the care of God.

And so the big question: Am I living so that God is concerned with me?

Is my faith strong and growing daily stronger? Is it sufficient to carry me through any test I may encounter?

Has He marked me for a place in His glorious coming Kingdom?

Am I living so as to be worthy of His loving protection through this tumultuous time and on into the eternal age?

Am I walking as circumspectly as these times demand?

Am I prepared for any trial I may be called upon to meet—with God?

Am I making an all-out effort, or am I going along in a half-hearted, half-leisurely, half-thoughtful way?

Let us be alerted that our days are numbered. The times are literally screaming at us to "Wake up! wake up!" The Judge is at the door!"

With fulfilled prophecies shouting on every side, we need to be making every moment count in getting ready.

It is the only way that we can claim this glorious hope—hope in the midst of horror. ♦

Prayer **O** Lord our strength and our fortress and our refuge in the day of affliction, the Source of our hope and our strong support in a world of turbulence and distrust, we approach You with confidence and faith. We come to You, knowing You alone are able to save. You alone can give life. In You alone can we place our confidence and know that it shall not be disappointed.

God of all things large and small, to whom the future is as clear as the past is to us, we pray You to keep us safe in this time of fear. Be our stay in trouble, and may we have no fear except the fear of doing wrong.

Grant to each of us the courage to crucify in our own lives the vanities, the immaturities, the conceits that separate us from You. Give us a sense of holy purpose that no petty annoyances, disappointments, sorrows, or crosses can obscure. In You may we discover the power to be master in every situation we confront. In You may we live each day triumphantly.

We pray that You will watch over Your children wherever they may be. Watch also over those who are not yet Your children but of whom it will soon be said, *"These are the children of the living God."*

Father, we seek Your help that we may live by faith and not by fear.

We seek Your love and guidance, that we may be strong in faith, pure in mind and steadfast in character. We ask only that the tests of life may make us bigger in soul, nobler in character, and stronger in purpose. We pray for Your coming Kingdom, in Jesus' name. AMEN.

The Blessed Man of Psalm 1

Your Bible is your "owners manual" to tell you how to maintain the life God gave you.

"Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with scoffers.

But they delight in doing everything the LORD wants; day and night they think about his law.

They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season without fail. Leaves never wither, and in all they do, they prosper.

But this is not true of the wicked. They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind. They will be condemned at the time of judgment. Sinners will have no place among the godly.

For the LORD watches over the path of the godly, but the path of the wicked leads to destruction."

—Psalm 1:1–3 NLT

In this Psalm we find a mini-sermon on the blessedness of the life that is totally committed to the Lord.

At the very beginning we are confronted with the need for self-examination. The Psalmist points out that the happy man must make some strong refusals and also some strong affirmations.

Actually, this Psalm presents the difference between the life of the righteous man and the life of the wicked man. But first it tells why he is blessed of God.

First, he is blessed *because of what he will not do* (verse 1). There are certain things he simply will not allow himself to do. No weak-willed drifting will characterize his life.

For example: The blessed man refuses to walk by, stand with, or take his

by RUSSELL HAMBY

seat in the presence of those who will pull him down. Three situations are described.

1) He *walks right by* a questionable place without any intention of going in to sin.

2) Next he *refuses to stand* around where evil might take hold of his heart and mind.

3) And third, *he will not sit* with a group of scorners and ask for membership in their group.

Giving in at any point would lead to more compromise. When you begin a life of sin, the road is all downhill.

David Copperfield was cast into the streets at an early age. All around him were the vilest associations and the greatest temptations. But in all his wandering, he kept pure—because he carried in his mind a picture of his mother. He kept that picture before him day and night. Let us firmly establish a spiritual picture of Jesus Christ in our hearts. Then when temptations come, we will have the power to withstand.

Then the man of Psalm 1 is blessed because of what he thinks about (verse 2). He delights in the law of the Lord and meditates on that law day and night. His delight is in the Word of God.

If every professing Christian would learn to delight in the Bible, how

many lives would be transformed!

Why delight in the Bible? If you were to buy a new automobile, you would be given an owner's manual. This manual would describe the various instruments on the vehicle and explain how to operate and care for it. In the same way God has provided an owner's manual—the Bible—for the maintenance of the life He has given you. It teaches you how to live the abundant life.

The Bible tells about Jesus Christ. Knowing Jesus will give us the strength to refuse temptations.

The man the Psalmist describes is blessed because of what God does for him (verse 3). This blessed man has vitality, fruitfulness and prosperity because of his love for God. God is the one who gives this blessedness.

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water." His roots are deep. Anchored in the soil, he is able to ride out the storms. This blessed man *"brings forth his fruit in his season."* He never dries up. He is rich in life. His fruitfulness is the result of his relationship with God.

Does the blessed man of Psalm 1 describe you? Have you discovered the rich benefits of delighting in God's Word? Do you enjoy the spiritual prosperity of heart that comes from God? ♦

Why No Dinosaurs in the Bible?

by GERALD R. PAYNE

"I consider myself a man of science, and wish to be a man of God, however, I cannot find a way to believe the Bible, for nothing in it is certain. Man continues to prove it wrong.

So I set a threshold. I will once again restore all faith in God and the Bible if anyone can point out where it explains the dinosaurs. The Bible says man was first, why does science say these massive lizards [were even earlier,] that the Bible never mentions?"

Your observation is well founded. Science and what many religions claim the Bible teaches about the order of the creation are contradictory. However, I believe that a large part of the problem is caused by religious theories that are not supported by the Bible.

To address this subject, it might be helpful to define a few terms:

- *theory*: any hypothesis that has not been sufficiently tested; unproven speculation.
- *erroneous theory*: any theory not proven and still subject to speculation, and contradicting Scripture.
- *scientifically confirmed*: any theory or observation that has been thoroughly tested and confirmed accurate using approved methods in an approved setting.
- *scientific fact*: any theory which has been scientifically confirmed, as well as Biblically validated.

After many years of Bible study, I have confidence that the Bible is in agreement with that part of science that is scientifically confirmed. Much science, as I am sure you will agree, belongs to the realm of theory and unproven speculation. However, I am convinced that there is no contradiction between the Bible properly understood and scientifically confirmed observations.

Unfortunately, much religion, like

science, is also built on theory, and this fact is responsible for some (probably most) of the confusion. One prominent theory, for example, claims that dinosaurs must have lived no more than 6000 years ago because they believe the entire universe, including the earth and all on it, was created during a literal 6-day period about 6000 (or 10,000 or 20,000) years ago. However, if we recognize that the Bible does not assign a time or give us any details about the literal creation of the earth or the universe, we do not have to believe that Adam and Eve were the first humans on the earth, and we can easily believe that the earth is far more than 6000 years old. So there is no contradiction to say that dinosaurs and many other prehistoric creatures could have predated Adam and Eve by perhaps millions of years.

While I am not trying to harmonize the Bible with science, it seems important to realize that many religious theories have been advanced that are not supported by the Bible. When the Bible is properly understood, and if your knowledge of dinosaurs parallels what I have read about them (that they existed much longer ago than 6,000 years), I think you probably already have your answer regarding dinosaurs. And the Bible does not contradict. However, if you are looking for the Bible to "explain the dinosaurs," you are looking in the wrong place. The Bible is not a book of science. Nor is it a book of scientific theory. However, it does mention certain facts that science has verified as being accurate.

I do not claim to know a lot about science, only what I need to know to satisfy my own needs regarding the Bible. So further discussions will be limited to the Bible, its people, and the languages in which it was written.

When studying the Bible, one must bear in mind that the author is God. Though His messages were recorded by

human hands, He was the Mind behind the message. The Bible explains it by saying that *"holy men of God spoke as they were moved on by the Holy Spirit"* (2 Pet. 1:21). He is a supreme Being in every aspect of supremacy. So when we read the Bible, we are obtaining information from One who knows infinitely more about His creation than any humans.

Also, the Westerner has an additional disadvantage in understanding the Scriptures because of the differences between the way Westerners think versus the way the Easterner thought during the time the Bible was being written. They thought in metaphors and symbols, while we think along the line of details, numbers, and statistics.

For example, we hear the Psalmist saying that his God is a rock (Ps. 18:2). He does not mean that God is a literal rock. The desert dweller often took refuge under rocks for protection against high winds and swirling sands, and for a hiding place from the enemy. Therefore "rock" was a symbolic figure of speech for protection. So the Psalmist was really saying that his God was a protector (Ps. 31:2). Similar symbols are used among the English-speaking people. For example (and this is probably borrowed from the Bible), "apple of my eye," is used to mean "one highly cherished" (Deut. 32:10).

The people who wrote the Bible were not strangers to parables, allegories and the like. As a matter of fact, it is said that Christ taught the multitudes in parables only (Matt 13:34). But many of His hearers having their own preconceived ideas, which they were not willing to give up, did not understand. We are very grateful that He sometimes explained these parables to His disciples later, and that these explanations were recorded. By reading, we, too, can understand.

So it is with much of the Bible. But

to understand it, we have to pay attention to the language of their time, a detail which many Bible students, even scholars, are not willing to do. However, the symbols used are explained in the Bible so we can understand. The Bible interprets itself, if we let it.

When we read a passage in the Bible, we may or may not come to a correct conclusion—we cannot know until we have carefully compared it to other passages of Scripture. We must be sure that our conclusions are in harmony with the general teaching of the Bible. As a man of science, you surely feel at home with testing hypotheses. Actually, the Scripture tells us to do this in so many words: *“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good”* (1 Thess. 5:21). So when we discuss a Bible topic we try to consider it in light of all the Bible has to say on that topic, not just the one isolated text, though this process may not always be obvious. And once a theory has been thoroughly tested we must adjust our thinking to harmonize with what we have learned.

To understand the dinosaur problem, let’s look briefly at the creation account in Genesis, a much-debated topic of Scripture. We believe that the Genesis creation account is more understandable when taken as an allegory. Why do we say this? One of the reasons is that taking it literally does not make sense, as you have observed (the dinosaurs lived less than 6000 years ago?). A second reason is that we

find contradictions when the Bible is understood literally in every instance. Another reason is that when we consider the explanations given in the Bible text for the terms used, all fall into agreement with the general teachings of the Bible, and—yes—even agree with the facts of science.

For example, take the word *“day,”* (used in Gen. 2:4), which is translated from the Hebrew word *yom*. Chances are you were taught that this was a 24-hour earth-day (it is generally assumed). And thus God created everything in 6 literal days. But if we look at the meaning of the original word translated *“day,”* we find something very different. We learn that these 6 days together are referred to as a day, *“in the day,”* an indefinite time period (see *A Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains: Hebrew Old Testament*, and other sources). We use *“day”* similarly in English (e.g., the day of the horse-and-buggy is long past). According to the Hebrew definition, it is sometimes used without reference to a specific length of time.

It is further explained that this day consisted of *“generations”* (Gen. 2:4). Now we have generations in one day. And again, this *“day”* is further defined when Peter tells us that *“one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day”* (2 Pet. 3:8). Using Peter’s definition, the 6 days of creation become 6000 years.

Further study will disclose that this 6000-year day of creation is not about a literal creation at all but about a

process of spiritual creation that is still in progress, nearing completion. The Psalmist tells us that God has been engaging in this special creation process through an eternity past and will continue through an eternity future. There have always been individuals somewhere in God’s vast creation to receive His mercy and to keep His covenant. As we read, *“But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them”* (Ps. 103:17–18).

Now where does this put our dinosaurs? Wouldn’t you say they are pretty insignificant in God’s total plan for this earth? Is this perhaps a good reason why He was not interested in telling us about them? He has something in store for His people in the future that is far more grand.

And this is what the Bible is about. It is about God’s plan for the future of the earth and its inhabitants, and how God is guiding, supporting and developing those who will be given eternal life. This is the creation process we refer to as the *“spiritual creation”* of Genesis.

Some teach that the earth will be destroyed. Isaiah, speaking for God, said, *“For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited.”* God did not create the earth in vain, He created

continued on page 17



A Special Time

Here we are at this special time of year when we have the opportunity to thank God for all the many blessings He has showered on us in the past. We can also thank Him for His great and precious promises. These promises are what give us real hope.

If all we had to look forward to were more of what has been occurring down through

history, life would be very discouraging. Man’s track record has not been very good. In spite of all the modern wonders that have been developed in the last century, there is a widespread decay of conditions in the world. The natural health of the earth is being damaged. The people of the earth are on a downward spiral physically, mentally, and morally. Who would have any hope were it not for the promises of God in His Word?

What a privilege is ours to have the truth about God’s plan for the earth! To know the earth will abide forever, that there will be no sickness, death and sorrow in the Kingdom, and that when Christ rules the earth it will be in justice.

What I see happening in the world doesn’t really bother me much, I don’t like it or approve of it, but I don’t let it affect me

because I can’t change it. The only thing that I am responsible to change is myself. And I can only pray that as I change my character to be more Christ-like I may influence someone else for the better.

When we start counting our blessings and give thanks to God for them we are giving credit where credit is due. We have many examples in the Bible of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. Thanksgiving needs to be an integral part of our lives too. How counting our blessings lifts us up! For then we realize that we are cared for and that there is hope for this world and us.

I pray that each day our goal of salvation may be nearer. The Day of the Lord will come, and we all want to be able to take part in it with joy!

P. Fleming, Texas

Know Your Bible?



BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Name the twelve tribes of Israel.
2. For what is Anathoth most remembered?
3. Name Noah's three sons.
4. Elijah's mantle was used in what miracle?
5. How many times in Christ's life did a voice from heaven testify to Him?
6. How was the man sick with palsy brought to Jesus?
7. How long a rain made Noah's flood?
8. Among what heathen tribe did David take refuge when he was fleeing from Saul?
9. What did Adonijah do against his father?

WHAT

1. What mountain is a Sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem?
2. What did Moses call "that great and terrible wilderness"?
3. What were the Hebrew names of Daniel's three friends?
4. What was Daniel's Chaldean name?
5. What did Christ do for His mother just before He died?
6. What Bible book has for its sub-title, "The Preacher"?
7. What was the ancient name of Bethel?
8. What did two cows without drivers bring back to the Israelites?
9. What was the appearance of the Holy Spirit at Christ's baptism?

WHO

1. Who was Jehoshabeath? Who was the baby prince she saved? What was her husband's name and occupation?
2. Who said that Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit?
3. Who used his ingenuity to rescue Jeremiah from a pit?
4. Who was the distinguished son of Elisabeth?
5. Who put singers in front of his army which sang "Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever"?
6. Who gave water rights to Achsah?
7. Who wrote, "The just shall live by faith," and in what Book is it found?
8. Name two of Nehemiah's chief enemies?
9. Who in the Bible lived the longest, and how long did he live?

WHERE WAS...

1. Anna, the prophetess, when she first saw Jesus?
2. Saul slain in battle?
3. The temple of Diana located?
4. Jesus when He prayed, "Not as I will but as Thou wilt"?
5. The Pharisee of Christ's parable when he praised himself?
6. Peter's mother-in-law when healed of her fever?
7. Moses when the angel spoke to him from the burningbush?
8. Gehazi, Elisha's servant, when he became leprous?
9. Jesus when He healed the man of his infirmity which he had for thirty-eight years?
10. John the Baptist when he sent two of his disciples to Jesus?
11. Mary when she sat at Jesus' feet?
12. Noah's ark when the waters of the flood receded?
13. King Belshazzar when he saw the handwriting on the wall?
14. Lazarus (parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus) when the dogs licked his wounds?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 16



What Does an Angel Voice Sound Like?

by ALICE A. CUMMINGS

Often we hear someone describing the voice of a person as pleasant, and frequently the descriptive words used are, "They have the voice of an angel!" Hearing such a comment, we might well ask, "What does an angel sound like?" It is an interesting question. When we do some Biblical research on the subject we may be amazed to find that the voice of an angel often was heard at a time of acute danger and sounded like, "Hurry up...Get busy...Do something."

We all remember Abraham's experience with God's angel when he was ninety-nine years old. *"I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect"* (Gen. 17:1). This was no ordinary person speaking, and the message was no ordinary message. *"Walk before me, and be thou perfect."* The voice delivered a command of great magnitude. It sounded loud and clear. *"Do something."* Abraham spent the rest of his life carrying out the command.

Lot is another person who heard the voice of an angel. And what did that angel voice say to him? *"Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city"* (Gen. 19:14). The voice carried a tone of immediate urgency: "Hurry up." The message proved to be the right message in every respect, for as soon as Lot and his family were out of Sodom the Lord destroyed that wicked city, along with Gomorrah and the cities of the plains around them.

Moses was another of the privileged few who heard the voice of an angel. The first time he heard the voice it came from the midst of a burning bush as he kept watch over the flocks of his father-in-law on a Midian desert. The first words, *"Do not come any closer...Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground"* required immediate action. The words which followed also required action—of far greater dimensions. *"Now, go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You will lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt"* (Ex. 3:5, 10 NLT). For Moses, these words meant one thing—"Get busy."

Often the angel's message was

"Hurry up..."

"Get busy..."

"Do something"

"Go..."

We know from the record that Moses obeyed the voice of the angel. There were many trying circumstances during the years when Moses was leading those rebellious people through the wilderness.

Moses inquired of the Lord often, and the voice of God's angel instructed him what to do.

In the book of Judges we read of Gideon, who was also privileged to listen to the voice of an angel: *"Go...and save Israel out of Midian's hand"* (Judges 6:14 NLT). When we read the entire account, Gideon had quite an extensive conversation with God's angel, but the message was clear, "Hurry up...get busy." Gideon did get busy. He obeyed the voice of the angel. Gideon called volunteers to make

up an army to fight the enemy. Not once but twice he was told that his army was too large. The shrinking of his army could have been disheartening to someone of lesser character. Was Gideon guaranteed a victory over the Midian host when he could have only a very small army, only 300 men? Yes, but advancing toward a formidable army with that mere handful took great faith. But that was what the angel told him. Gideon obeyed, and won a great victory.

Elijah spoke with an angel who told him, *"Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, Is it because there is no God in Israel, that you are going to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?"* Elijah was a man of action, and when the angel spoke to him (2 Kings 1:3), Elijah hurried to obey. The outcome of his actions furthered the work of the Lord whom he loved to serve.

God's angels did not always speak face-to-face with people. When Jesus was an infant, the angel spoke to Joseph in a dream, *"...Arise, and take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word: for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him"* (Matt. 2:13). The voice was heard only in a dream, but the message still emphasized urgency. "Hurry up." Joseph showed by his actions that he had indeed heard the voice of God's angel.

"Go quickly" were the words spoken to the women who visited the tomb on that glorious day of resurrection. These are the very words which the angel spoke, *"Fear not...He is not*

here: for He is risen...Go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead" (Matt. 28:5-7). It was exceptionally good news, and they were commanded to "Go quickly...and tell." How the word spread that glad day from one person to another. Soon all Jerusalem and the surrounding area were buzzing with the news. To some people the news was a resurgence of a glorious hope; to the perpetrators of the heinous crime the news came as a stark reality of the dismal failure of their conspiracy.

Acts 10 relates a time when an angel spoke in a vision. Cornelius was a devout man who feared and prayed to God. In his vision Cornelius saw an angel who told him, "Send men to Joppa, and send for...Peter:...he will tell you what you must do" (Acts 10:5-6). Here again the message was, "Do something." Cornelius followed the instructions of the vision, and in only a few days Peter arrived to show Cornelius the true and right way.

These are only a few of the many instances recorded when angels spoke to humans. Today it is not God's plan that we have that privilege, but we can take heed to the things that "were written before...for our learning." If we could hear the voices of the angels today, their message would be the same: "Hurry up...Get busy...Do something." We can almost hear them say, "Hurry, hurry, hurry! Time is growing shorter; time is running out."

We need to use the time left us to the very best advantage. We must press and push onward with every ounce of strength in us. Hurry, hurry, hurry. Seize every opportunity. Probation day will soon be over. We have no time to dawdle and waste trying to get something worthwhile out of this life.

Let us take the words spoken by angels in past ages as though they were spoken to us personally and let us "Hurry up...Get busy..." and do the things that will gain for us that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). ♦

OBITUARY

Gladys Urtz

On October 27, 2001, we were saddened by the passing of a long-time friend and sister, Gladys Urtz, in her 90th year.

Sister Gladys was of a gentle, kindly disposition, amiable, good-hearted, and a real lover of life. She was the epitome of kindness. Her acquaintance with the Church was almost lifelong, her mother having purchased the Megiddo literature from missionaries traveling in the area of Boonville, New York, sometime during the late 1920's, when Gladys was still a girl at home. During subsequent years she made many visits to the Church with her mother,

later with her children and her mother.

Sister Gladys spent the first part of her life in the area of West Leyden, New York, where she and her husband operated a small farm together. Shortly after his death in 1960, she relocated to live among our Rochester congregation, where she made a serious effort to study and apply her religion, and to let it influence her life. She made an outstanding effort to commit Bible verses to memory, and even during months of failing health and severe dementia, she could still recall and repeat them.

We have a motto, "Not for ourselves but for others." Sister Gladys was strongly an

"others" person. Many people—church people, family, visitors, neighbors—were blessed through her unselfishness. Understanding and sympathetic by nature, she always wanted to encourage and help. Whatever the need, her name was on the list of volunteers.

She went on many missionary trips, and also corresponded regularly with members who live at a distance, sharing her faith and good cheer.

Sister Gladys is survived by her son, Russell, of Verona, New York, and her daughter Lurene Lallier, of Boonville, New York, plus many grandchildren, nephews and nieces. ♦

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 14

BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, and the two half tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh. (Ex. 1:1-5; Num. 1:33-34)
2. It was the birthplace of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:1)
3. Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Gen. 6:10)
4. When Elijah smote the Jordan with it, a passage was opened up through the water (2 Kings 2:7-8)
5. Three times: at His baptism, (Mark 1:9-11); at His transfiguration, (Luke 9:28-35); and when the Greeks sought Him in Jerusalem (John 12:20-28)
6. He was let down through a hole in the roof of the house where Jesus was staying (Mark 2:1-4)
7. Forty days and forty nights (Gen. 7:11-12)
8. The Philistines (1 Sam. 27:1)
9. He led an insurrection against his father David (2 Sam. 3:2-5; 1 Kings 1:5)

WHAT

1. Olivet (Acts 1:12)
2. The wilderness between Horeb and Kadesh-Barnea (Deut. 1:19)

3. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (Dan. 1:6)
4. Belteshazzar (Dan. 2:26)
5. He committed her to the care of John (John 19:25-27)
6. Ecclesiastes (Eccl. 1:1)
7. Luz (Judg. 1:23)
8. The ark of the covenant (1 Sam. 6:1-15)
9. That of a dove (Mark 1:10)

WHO

1. The wife of Jehoiada the priest. She hid her baby nephew Joash six years to save his life from his grandmother Athaliah (2 Chron. 22:10-12)
2. John the Baptist (Mark 1:6-9)
3. An Ethiopian eunuch Ebedmelech pulled Jeremiah from the dungeon (Jer. 38:7-13)
4. John the Baptist (Luke 1:5, 13)
5. Jehoshaphat after a prophet promised God would fight the battle (2 Chron. 20:13-23)
6. Caleb gave Achsah his daughter the upper and lower water springs (Judg. 1:12-15)

7. Habakkuk (Hab. 2:4). Paul quoted it (see Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38)
8. Sanballat and Tobiah (Neh. 4:1-3)
9. Methuselah; 969 years (Gen. 5:27)

WHERE WAS...

1. In the Temple in Jerusalem (Luke 2:36-37)
2. Mount Gilboa (1 Samuel 31:1-6)
3. In Ephesus (Acts 19:35)
4. In the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-39)
5. In the temple (Luke 18:9-14)
6. In the house of Peter in Capernaum. (Matt. 8:5, 14-15)
7. Mt. Horeb (Ex. 3:1)
8. Samaria (2 Kings 5:3, 25-27)
9. At the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem (John 5:1-9)
10. In prison (Matt. 11:2-3)
11. In her home in Bethany (John 11:1; Luke 10:38-40)
12. On Mount Ararat (Gen. 8:1-4)
13. At a feast in the king's palace (Dan. 5:1-5)
14. Lying at the gate of the rich man (Luke 16:19-21)

Bible Questions & Answers

continued from page 13

it to be inhabited. And Isaiah ends this phrase with a challenge and a warning to any who dare to discredit these words, *"I am the Lord and there is none else"* (Isa. 45:18). Just in case you may have thought we were implying that God is not a literal Creator, I think you will see from these last statements that He really is!

If you are interested in more in-depth study of this subject, see our booklet, *"God's Spiritual Creation."* We would really like to help you believe and become a man of God.

☆ Why "Tell No Man"?

"Why did Jesus say to someone He had healed, 'Tell no man what was done,' as in Luke 8:56?"

The fact that Jesus instructed several people whom He had healed to *"tell no man what was done to you"* does seem puzzling. Why would He want to keep it quiet? He certainly had nothing to hide.

Any answer to this question is speculative because the Bible does not give us a direct answer. But I think we have some good evidence from which we may draw some reasonable conclusions.

First, I think we can reasonably say that Jesus did not intend to keep people from coming to Him to hear Him preach the Gospel. This was the purpose for which He was sent. As He quoted from the prophet Isaiah about Himself, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel..."* (Luke 4:18).

Then why did He command that they not tell? I think we can get a pretty good idea from the following incident: Jesus had healed a man with leprosy and told him, *"See that you say nothing to anyone....However, he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction"* (Mark 1:44-45). It seems that He really did not want any one spreading the news about His healing because, as is men-

tioned here, it limited His freedom to teach the Gospel. The people were more interested in the immediate benefits (being healed, or in another instance, fed).

While Jesus was compassionate and really wanted to help others, it seems clear that the end result of healing the ten lepers must have been a disappointment: *"So Jesus answered and said, 'Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?'"* (Luke 17:17-18). He was not pleased when crowds flocked about Him just because they wanted to be fed or healed; i.e., *"Jesus answered them and said, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled'"* (John 6:26).

It wasn't that He didn't want more people to hear His teaching, but the miracles were for a distinct purpose: to demonstrate His authenticity. So those *"spreading the matter"* were really hindering Jesus' teaching ministry. We read in Mark 9:30-31: *"Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. For He taught His disciples and said to them...."* The New Living Translation reads: *"Leaving that region, they traveled through Galilee. Jesus tried to avoid all publicity in order to spend more time with his disciples and teach them...."* It is understandable that Jesus would need time alone with His disciples. Mark 4:33-34 reads: *"And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it. But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples."*

Not only this, the clamoring crowds were really making it difficult for Jesus. He could hardly get away for any rest. The fact that He could sleep on a boat during a raging storm when the others feared they were about to drown,

might indicate how tired He was at times. *"Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, 'Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?'"* (Mark 4:36-38).

Not only were He and the Apostles seeking a private place to rest, but it seems that even then they had little opportunity. *"Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, 'Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.' For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat"* (Mark 6:30-31).

But there was no rest for the weary. *"So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things."* Even though He had had only a short rest, He was still compelled to immediately teach the people when He reached the shore. Later the same day, we are told, He fed the 5,000 of them (Mark 6:32-34).

It seems that the spreading of the news about His healing hindered His primary purpose—that of preaching the Gospel.

Any healing He might do for the sick was a small and short-term benefit compared with the long-range value of the Divine plan He was presenting. He healed so that some might believe and obey His teachings, and become a part of the eternal Kingdom He would one day return to set up on earth. ♦

To speak kindly does not hurt the tongue.

I Stand In Awe

I STAND IN AWE

*I stand in awe, Great God,
When I see what You have done.
As I behold the stars, I know
That You know every one.*

*You put them all in place,
And gave a name to each,
And placed them far above us all,
Way out of earthlings' reach.*

*This tiny little plot of space,
That we humans call "Home"
Is nothing when compared
To all that You have done.*

*We wouldn't be of worth to You,
Without Your truth to share;
And only as we keep Your law
Can we expect Your care.*

*Oh, Father, we give thanks today
For blessings from above.
May we always do Your bidding,
And be worthy of Your love.*

by MELVA WALTON

MIND BOGGLING

Light travels at the rate of 186,000 miles per second. If we were to travel at this speed, it would take four years to reach our nearest star! Jesus ascended to heaven and was glorified in His Father's presence within ten days. If Jesus went to our nearest star (which is highly unlikely) He would have had to travel the entire ten days at 144 times the speed of light.

If you take a piece of paper and put dots for the earth and sun one inch apart, the location of the nearest star at the same scale would require a piece of paper ten miles long.

There is no doubt that a vastly superior method of travel and communication is known to immortals. Might that not be part of the "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"? (1 Cor. 2:9 NIV).



As long as we live in this world, we will be in conflict with evil within and without.

*If for a tranquil mind you seek,
these things observe with care:
Of whom you speak, to whom you speak,
and how, and when, and where.*

God put work into your life; He expects you to put life into your work.

Follow God's signboards—they lead to the celestial City.

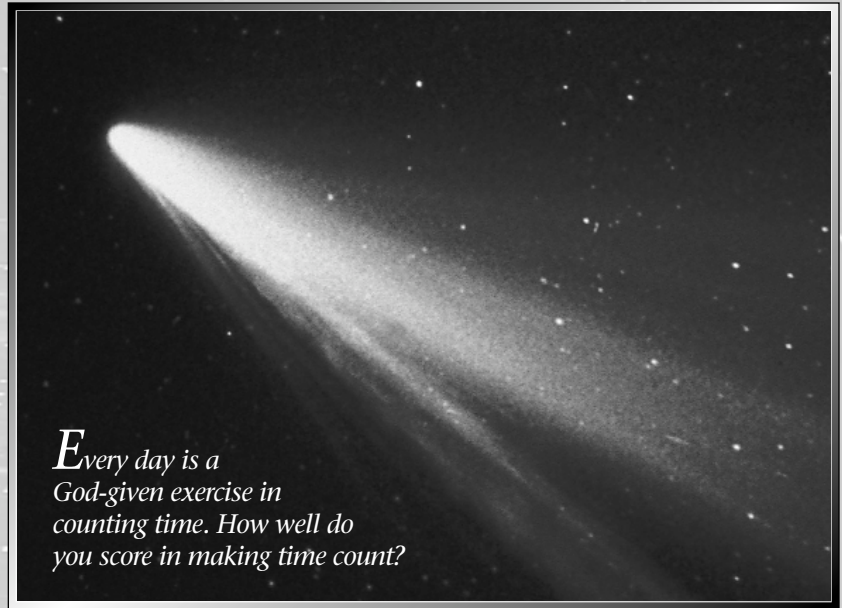
Don't look at the tree and forget the forest!

The largest room in the world is room for improvement.

Very precious things are ruined by keeping old grudges, resentments, and vexations in mind.

There are hundreds of languages in the world, but a smile speaks all of them.

God does not want those who are fearful, whose faith fluctuates according to the demands placed upon it. He wants those with great faith.



*Every day is a
God-given exercise in
counting time. How well do
you score in making time count?*

Make the most of your time, for it is life itself.

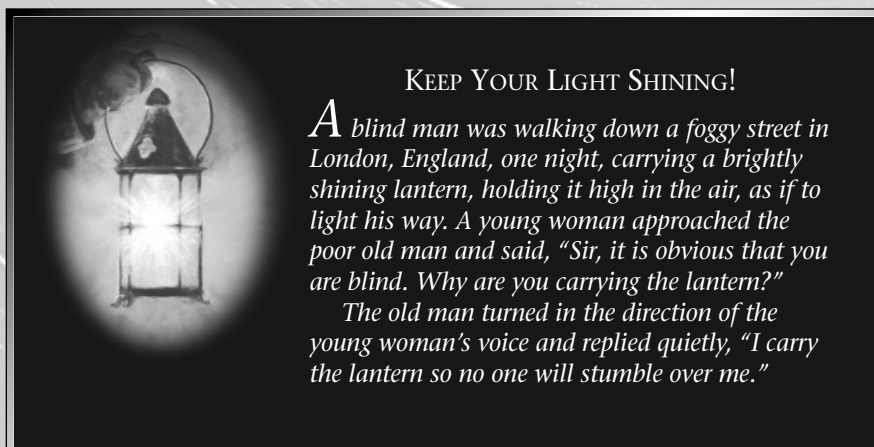
Disappointments that make us wait on His appointments are blessings in disguise.

What a different world if everyone tempted to point a finger would instead hold out a helping hand.

No sin is ever forgiven until we forsake it.

Be like the willow tree—able to bend without breaking under the pressure of the storms that come your way.

People remember how *well* you did a job long after they have forgotten how *fast* you did it.



KEEP YOUR LIGHT SHINING!

A blind man was walking down a foggy street in London, England, one night, carrying a brightly shining lantern, holding it high in the air, as if to light his way. A young woman approached the poor old man and said, "Sir, it is obvious that you are blind. Why are you carrying the lantern?"

The old man turned in the direction of the young woman's voice and replied quietly, "I carry the lantern so no one will stumble over me."

You will have no regrets...

*For doing good to all.
For speaking evil of none.
For hearing before judging.
For thinking before speaking.
For holding an angry tongue.
For being kind to the distressed.
For being patient toward everybody.*



The Time

This is a thrilling time:

Far-reaching questions, mighty important,
Concern the mind of statesman and of sage;
The issues of the ages by consent
Focus their climax on this last day page.

This is an awful time,

Of blood and war and strife and secret shame;
The truth of God is turned into a lie;
In wrathful tones men despite do His name,
As rebels bold his government defy.

This is a needy time—

Brave hearts are needed, loyal for the right
To stand for God and truth 'gainst sin and wrong,
With courage bold to battle with their might
Till conflict fierce shall end in victor's song.

This is a weary time;

Sad hearts are loaded down with pain and care;
The toils of earth in never-ceasing round
Banish fond hope, the joys of life outwear;
In this old world but little rest is found.

This is a solemn time;

For soon the Judge of earth and sea and sky,
Shall sit upon his throne in lofty state
And hold his court, the sons of earth to try;
On His decision hangs their every fate.

This is a cheering time;

The signs of God point to the glorious day
When He shall come whose rule shall be by right;
New hope illumes the rugged, darkened way
That leads to joy from pain, to morn from night.

—Selected