

Megiddo Message

“AND GOD SAW...”

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God, Keep Us Awake!

Sleep has been—can be—costly.

When the infamous Caligula was emperor of Rome, it is said that he auctioned off gladiators and slaves to raise funds, and he compelled the aristocrats to attend the sales and bid on his human wares. Will Durant, in his book *Caesar and Christ*, tells of a certain aristocrat who dozed off several times during an auction. The emperor "interpreted his nods as bids" and when the hapless man awoke he was "richer by thirteen gladiators and poorer by nine million sesterces."

Perhaps the costliest sleep on record is that of Sisera, the great Assyrian general whose army was routed by Barak (Judges 4:12-22). Fleeing from the battlesite, Sisera took refuge in the tent-home of Heber and Jael. Jael gave the weary fugitive a drink of milk and he lay down for a much needed rest. While he slumbered, Jael tip toed in and drove a tent peg through his temples with a few heavy blows from a mallet, staking him to the ground. Sisera paid highly for his sleep.

When Samson slept, he was shorn of his power.

In Jesus' parable of the Wheat and the Tares, "the enemy" came and sowed tares among the wheat while the caretaker slept (Matt. 13:24-29).

Did you ever notice how many times in the Bible we are commanded to awake, arise, watch? Through the years God has addressed His message to the wakers, not the sleepers.

The Bible uses sleep to illustrate the state of spiritual unawareness, which can overtake us as easily as natural sleep. Just as danger is most perilous when we are asleep, so sin is deadliest when it catches us off guard.

Needful sleep is vital to health and well being. But danger and death lurk where Christians soldiers are spiritually asleep. The call of Scripture, is "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you" (Eph. 5:14, NIV).

Spiritual sleep invites spiritual death.

Many of the Bible's warnings to those living

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in the end times, in the closing hours of the age, include warnings to keep awake. "But you, my friends, are not in the dark, that the day should overtake you like a thief. You are all children of light, children of day. We do not belong to night or darkness, and we must not sleep like the rest, but keep awake and sober" (I Thess. 5:4-6, NEB).

The warning is not addressed to the world at large but to the believers. To describe the moral deterioration in England at the time Wesley was preaching, one historian wrote that the nation was "asleep in the dark," and the church was "asleep in the light." He meant that the churches were preaching a gospel that was, as described by one contemporary, "dry, methodical, and unaffecting." It had no power to stem the nation's drift toward utter moral collapse. Its hymns, prayers and sermons had become only soothing lullabies inducing deeper sleep.

Spiritual slumber is likewise a danger to us today. Our songs and sermons may be filled with the grand Gospel of the Kingdom of God, the faith of our Fathers, when our lives have neither vibrancy or reality. Our worship services may be faultless, yet our daily schedules include nothing that is either soul-stirring or life-changing. We may preach the highway to life, while we inwardly adapt ourselves to the values and spirit of a godless society on the broad highway to death.

What says the Apostle of God? "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." If we are asleep, not working, not watching, the Day of the Lord will come as a thief. But if we are wide awake and watching, preparing every moment, every hour, it cannot take us by surprise. If we are wide awake and watching, the world's moral night has no legitimate claim upon us. We are children of the Day, we already belong to the Day of Christ that is coming.

At this late hour, we cannot afford to be found sleeping in the paths of sin. Spiritual sleep means certain spiritual death.

God, keep us awake!



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 (II 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 of applying in 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 a new age is coming—is near—when the earth shall be filled with His glory, His people, and God's will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

SOON-COMING EVENTS ...

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.

The Bible pictures all events, all men and all nations moving together toward this one God-ordained climax, when "the kingdoms of this world" will become "the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15), a kingdom in which all who live will enjoy the blessings of peace, equity and prosperity. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants, bringing to reality the promise of our Lord in His prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

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Megiddo Message

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"And God Saw..."

- ◆ More than one murder per day in some of the major cities (Chicago, Washington, New Orleans).
- ◆ Between 1986 and 1992, a 96% increase in murders by juveniles
- ◆ Nearly one million cases of aids reported to the World Health Organization since 1980. But the real toll is thought to be more like four million, plus 17 million others infected with HIV. (U.S. News, August 8, 1994)
- ◆ Annual profits of \$1,000,000,000,000 (\$1 trillion) last year from organized crime worldwide
- ◆ Sales in drug trafficking worldwide: \$500,000,000,000
- ◆ Alien smuggling, arms trading and other such activities: \$500,000,000,000
- ◆ Annual income of world's strongest crime syndicate (Triads): \$202,000,000,000 (70 percent from heroin dealings) (U.S. News, November 28, 1994)
- ◆ Three auto thefts every minute in the United States.
- ◆ 25% of children use illegal drugs before entering high school
- ◆ More than 40 wars raging (1993)
- ◆ Prison population in the United States approaching one million, up 200 percent since 1981. Total number is growing by 1254 per week in the United States.
- ◆ The equivalent of one classroom full of children killed by guns every two days
- ◆ Between 1979 and 1991 firearms took the lives of 50,000 children, about the same as the number of Americans who died in the Vietnam War. (Washington Post Weekly, February 28, 1994)

On the opening page of the Bible, we read seven times: "And God saw...." These words set the tenor for God's watchcare over the earth. Nothing escapes His all-seeing eye. Whatever happens, He sees; He knows.

God saw Adam and Eve hide themselves "from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden," when He called to them and demanded an answer (Gen. 3:8-10).

In the time of Noah, "**God saw** that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). "And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Gen. 6:12). God acted by sending the flood.

A few centuries later **God saw** the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain, "because their sin is very grievous"—He even sent His angels to "see whether they [the people of Sodom and Gomorrah] have done altogether according to the cry" which had come to Him (Gen. 18:20-21). And what did He do? After He had given opportunity to escape to those who would listen, "the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire ... out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities...and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace" (Gen. 19:24-25, 28).

Centuries later **God saw** the plight of His people in Egypt, how they were slaves, mistreated, and afflicted. "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them" (Ex. 3:7-8). He commissioned Moses to be their deliverer.

Again and again, during the days of wandering in the wilderness, **God saw** the wickedness of the people, their waywardness and idolatry; again and again He heard their murmurings and their rebellion. And what did He do? By one means or another the rebels perished in the wilderness, every one that was above 20 years of age when they departed Egypt, except Joshua and Caleb.

God saw also the disobedience of the sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, as they took their censers and "offered strange fire before the Lord, which he com-

manded them not." And what did He do about it? *"There went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord"* (Lev. 10:1-2).

God saw when Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses, revealing the jealousy of their hearts. Again He acted. *"And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam,"* confirming his appointment of Moses, and making Miriam leprous (Num. 12:1-15).

No human eye saw when Achan *"took of the accursed thing,"* after the victory at Jericho, and hid the forbidden booty under the floor of his tent. But **God saw**. And when the armies of Israel were defeated at Ai, everyone knew something was wrong. Not until the offender had been discovered and punished did God continue to fight for Israel (Joshua 7).

During the days of the Judges, when the Israelites went astray, **God saw**, and sent Israel's enemies to chastise them.

When King Saul disobeyed the Word of the Lord and offered the sacrifice contrary to Samuel's instructions, **God saw**. And when after his victory over the Amalekites, he spared the best of the flocks, again disobeying the Word of the Lord, God heard. And when Saul blamed the people, again God heard. And what did God do? Hear His reply: *"Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king....The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine, that is better than thou"* (I Sam. 15:23, 28).

When David sinned with Bathsheba, **God saw**, for we read that *"the thing that David had done displeased the Lord"* (II Sam. 11:27). The Lord sent Nathan to deliver a stinging rebuke to the errant king: *"Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house,...For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun"* (II Sam. 12:11-12).

And so the record runs through all of Scripture. When His people went astray, **God saw** and acted, as it suited His purpose. When they needed help, **God saw**. When they obeyed

and served Him, **God saw**.

And what does God see today? For the eyes of the Lord still *"run to and fro throughout the whole earth"* (II Chron. 16:9). He sees, and He knows. He sees people today running after lust and pleasure. He sees them curse Him, defy Him, deny Him, and wholly disregard His laws of health, morality, and virtue. He sees them as they reject His Word and go their own way, wantonly deriding Him and living without even a thought of the Divine. They say, even if subconsciously, *"The LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it"* (Ps. 94:7).

But **God sees**. And what does God do?

Some people ask: If God is so powerful and all-knowing, why doesn't He do something about all the trouble in the world? Why doesn't He take action against the profiteering, and the hijackers, the drug peddlers, the criminals? Why doesn't He stop the innocent suffering at the hands of the cruel? Why doesn't He control earthquakes and airplane crashes? Why can't He prevent disasters like Rwanda and Bosnia?

At the moment God is silent. But when the time is right, He will act. *"The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake"* (Joel 3:16).

Soon, very soon, His ultimatum will reach to the ends of the earth, *"Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come"* (Rev. 14:7). He will have no evil in His new world. He will have no pity on those who offend. *"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch"* (Mal. 4:1).

In the 1960s there was an active "God is dead" movement. The sponsors claimed that our modern civilization had advanced beyond the need for God. The real origin of the idea, however, could be traced to a philosopher named Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). His father died when he was five years old, and Niet-

zsche grew up in a home dominated by his mother, sister, grandmother and two aunts. By the time he was twelve he had rejected all forms of Christianity, and he continued through life tirading against God and scorned every principle, influence or hint of Christianity. Yet he enjoyed no personal compensation from his beliefs. Spurning Christian morality, his immoral lifestyle brought him to insanity before he was 50 years old. Writing and dreaming of "superman" and eutopia, his personal life was one of dissipation and chaos. His ideas were radical, violent, and disastrous both to himself and society (Adolf Hitler was his great admirer). He made several predictions, one of which was the

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demise of the Bible. In 50 years, he said, the Bible would be "in the morgue." It is somewhat ironic that in 50 years Nietzsche was in the morgue, and his house had become the property of the Geneva Bible Society, and was being used to store Bibles.

Someone commenting on his life penned the following couplet:

*"God is dead." (Signed) Nietzsche.
"Nietzsche is dead." (Signed) God.*

We may say what we please, do what we please, go against God in any way we can contrive; but we shall not change His plans or decrees one iota. Little human beings that we are, we shall hurt only ourselves if we fight against Him. We can disbelieve if we wish, but the facts remain. When the time is right, God will act against *all* who do wickedly.

Let us take His warnings to heart and act upon them, before that great Day of the Lord arrives, that we may be on God's side fighting *with* Him, and not against Him. □



Hands Off, Uzzah!

Have you ever heard the story of Uzzah? About a thousand years before Christ, Uzzah had a calamitous experience, which still makes us tremble today.

Who was Uzzah? What did he do? We find the story in II Samuel 6 and in I Chronicles 13. King David had issued instructions that the ark of God be moved to Jerusalem by ox cart. On the way, the oxen stumbled. It looked as though the ark might fall off the cart. Uzzah, one of the drivers of the cart put out his

hand to steady it, and instantly God struck him dead.

Severe? Extreme? Unfair? Unreasonable, especially when Uzzah was only trying to be helpful? Let us not judge until we know the rest of the story.

First, what was the ark? The ark of the Lord, also called the ark of the covenant (Deut. 10:8), was among the "holy things" which were kept in the tabernacle, and later in the temple. A rectangular box about 4 feet long by 2-1/2 feet wide by 2-1/2 feet high, it was completely overlaid with gold. The lid of the ark, the "mercy seat," was a gold plate surrounded by two cherubs with outstretched wings. The ark served as receptacle for the two tablets of stone which Moses brought down from the mountain, the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod (Heb. 9:4-5). At the ark, in the inner sanctuary, the Lord revealed His will to His servants (Moses—Ex. 25:20; 30:36; Aaron—Lev. 16:2; Joshua—Josh. 7:6).

The ark symbolized the presence of God among His people and the law of God for the government of the people.

Special laws governed the handling of all "holy things." The ark was to be carried by Levites only, and they were to carry it using poles inserted in rings which were part of the ark at its four lower corners. No one was to "touch any holy thing," under penalty of death (Num. 4:15).

A severe law? Yes, but law was made to be respected and obeyed, everyone knew the law and if he or she acted accordingly, all was well. The law was not meant to harm, only to compel obedience and respect.

Now why was the ark on a cart when Uzzah touched it?

After the Israelites reached Canaan, the ark was moved to the tabernacle at Shiloh in the time of the Judges (I Sam. 1:3; 3:2). There it remained until Eli's sons, treating it like a good luck charm, took it into battle to assure their victory at Ebenezer (I Samuel 4). The whole affair proved a disaster, the battle was lost, God was not pleased, and the ark was captured by the Philistines.

For seven months the ark caused havoc among the Philistines until, at wit's end, they decided to send it back to Israel. Not knowing how to transport it, they placed it on a new cart, drawn by two cows. When the ark arrived in Israel, *"the men of Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord"* (I Sam. 7:1). And there it remained.

When David was setting up his kingship in Jerusalem, he felt that the ark should be relocated to its proper place in the temple. So he instructed Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, to bring the ark from their house to Jerusalem. We are not told who arranged the means of transportation, only that *"they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab...and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart"* (II Sam. 6:3). Ahio walked ahead of the ark, and Uzzah followed it while David and *"all the house of Israel"* supplied the appropriate ceremonies. We read that *"all the house of Israel"* played *"before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals."* All went well until they came to *"Nachon's threshing-floor,"* where the oxen shook the cart, and *"Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it"*—

And that was the end of Uzzah, for *"God smote him there for his error, and there he died by the ark of God"* (vs 7).

Imagine the effect on King David and all those in the procession! Imagine the fear in David's heart, as he prayed to God with trembling lips, *"How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?"*

Let Uzzah speak to us of the firmness of God, that God indeed means what He says. And He means that we should take Him seriously. When He says, "Don't do it," He doesn't mean "Do it a little," or "Use your own judgment as to how much you do," but simply "DON'T."

God has given us many laws, and over time these laws may lose their force with us. Or we may think that we can pick and choose as we please, or alter them to suit our wishes. Whatever our situation, let us take a lesson from Uzzah, and realize that God does indeed mean what He says.

Let Uzzah speak to us of the mercy of God to us, for truly *"He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities"* (Ps. 103:10). We who have so many times done the worse when we knew the better; we who have been stubborn and recalcitrant when we should have been humble and yielding, *let us thank God* that His mercy is still outstretched, but remember that as truly as God lives, *"the day of the Lord will come,"* and *"all that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch"* (II Pet. 3:8; Mal. 4:1). The wages of sin will be paid.

Let Uzzah speak to us of the profound humility and reverence we need before God. We need to remember that He is supreme, that it is His place to command and ours to obey. We are not to set our judgment against His, or our opinion against His, or our way against His. He has been, is, and always will be supreme; we are, and always will be subject to Him.

Let Uzzah speak to us the warning that he gave to the king and all Israel, that religious zeal apart from obedience is not acceptable to God. Obedience must always come first.

Let Uzzah speak to us that good intentions do not justify forbidden actions. However noble Uzzah's intention, he disobeyed, and for that disobedience he had to pay with his life. *"The anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah."* Well

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meaning does not mean right. It was a grim reminder that the law was firm: "They shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die" (Num. 4:15).

Let Uzzah speak to us of the treachery of the familiar. Had Uzzah been directly commissioned to care for the ark for a short time, he might have done well by it. But when he had grown up with the ark in his home, had seen it every day, every day, year after year after year, it had become an article of ordinary furniture—complacency had grown out of familiarity.

Just how long the ark rested in the house of Abinadab we cannot be certain. 1 Samuel 7 gives the time as 20 years, but the total time may have been more than 80 years. (After the ark was captured by the Philistines in the time of Eli, Samuel judged Israel for 40 years, Saul was made king and ruled 40 years, and David came to the throne.) Abinadab, Uzzah's father, may have respected the ark highly. But as the responsibility was passed on to the next generation, his son apparently lacked respect for it—or

perhaps did not even know what the law said. In any case, he did not take it seriously. In punishing Uzzah, God was showing the nation that His laws were still binding; though forgotten, they were not obsolete. The sacred, however neglected, was still sacred. The ark was still the symbol and pledge of His living presence, which should be regarded with reverence.

Uzzah's lesson is on the record to teach us that God means what He says. He may wink at sin for a time, but He will not overlook it in the end.

At whatever point we are tempted to disobey the law of God, let us see ourselves as modern day Uzzahs putting our hand to the ark, and realize what the consequences will ultimately be.

What God wants from us is obedience, nothing more and nothing less. We are not free to pick and choose as we please. Once we promise, we must obey.

God help us to submit to Your law, and withhold our hand from doing any evil. □

Are You WordPerfect?



This letter from a member, who is a medical transcriptionist, has a singular lesson for all of us. (WordPerfect is the registered trademark of a common word processing product.)

I have not gone on line yet at the hospital, but I expect to very soon.

Learning WordPerfect 6.0 has been a real adventure. As I have been absorbed in the learning process, I have also thought of my spiritual life. If only we can be totally consumed with our responsibilities to God, and keep the "perspective of eternity" in mind, then our progress will be much greater. In order to be on guard every moment, we must have our mind in the right place. It is a matter of the "thoughts and intents of the heart." David prayed that God search him and know his heart, and see if there might be any wicked way in him. We must constantly be searching our hearts in the same way.

Today my husband asked me if I was "WordPerfect" now. My reply was, "No." But as I thought about his question, I immediately drew a comparison with learning the Word of God, which will indeed make us "perfect" as we apply it to our lives. As I read feverishly the manuals and try to understand them, I think I am doing quite well. But when I actually try to create a document, I find out that I'm not really "WordPerfect" after all. We can read instructions all we want to, but unless we understand the concept and put it into practice, we will never be proficient in most tasks. In the same way, we can read the Word of God all we want to, but unless we understand its principles and then put them into practice, we will never become truly "Word-Perfect."

And this is our greatest desire. We must really practice everyday what we know to be true and right. And the more we practice, the easier it will become, until at last we can say we are "WordPerfect"—perfect in the Word of Life. □

*In the Bible we're told
Of the scoffers so bold
Who refuse to believe what they've heard;
Or to let themselves learn
More about His return
That was promised by Christ in His Word.*

*So they say in their pride,
"Since the fathers have died
Nothing changes while centuries roll."
They're forgetting that God
Made the earth, sent the flood,
And o'er all He is still in control.*

*And we know that our Lord,
Who is true to His word,
Counts a thousand years only a day;
Though our years slowly creep,
And our footsteps grow weak,
In His plan there shall be no delay.*

*No, the Lord is not slack;
He is sure to come back!
To this earth He is coming again!
Though the hour He delays
Let us echo His praise
Ere His judgments descend upon men.*

*For the day of the Lord
Told about in His Word,
When the rulers of earth pass away—
It will come with such power
And such fear in that hour,
Everyone will be forced to obey.*

*Seeing then what shall come,
And what things shall be done,
Oh! how careful we all ought to be,
That our lives may be pure
And our confidence sure,
Till the day of the Lord we shall see.*

*He has promised for all
Who are heeding His call
A new home on the earth to provide,
Where His goodness shall flow
And all people shall know
That on earth He has come to abide.*

He's Sure To Come Back



Brian's Accident

Fifty-five, fifty-six, fifty-seven, fifty-eight. Five dollars and fifty-eight cents." Brian was counting the money he

had been saving in his bank. "Mom," he called out, "how much do I need to buy this wagon?"

Mother appeared in the kitchen doorway. She glanced at the catalog as her six-year-old held it up to her. "About fifteen dollars, Dear."

"Fifteen dollars," Brian repeated. "Will you help me count the rest of my money, Mom?" He was anxious to see if he had that much in his bank.

Mother and Brian sat down to count. Brian had been saving money toward a new wagon for a long time. It had been so long that Brian was sure he must be nearing his goal. So this morning he had pulled out all the catalogs and looked and looked until he found just the kind of wagon he wanted. It was bright red, and sturdy-looking.

For a few moments he sat on the floor watching his mother count his dimes and quarters. Then he picked up his polar-bear bank and gave it another hard shake—polar bears could hold a lot of money, and Brian wanted to be sure the very last coin was out.

"You have just seventeen dollars and thirteen cents." Mother smiled as she added the last coin to the stack.

"I have enough! I have enough!" Brian shouted and jumped with glee. "I can have my wagon now! I have enough!"

"Your patience and careful saving has really paid off, Brian. That's the way dimes and nickels add up, when you save them." Mother was happy for her young son.

"Can we write out the order now? I can take it to the post office," Brian offered.

Mother smiled. "Later, perhaps. Just now we had better hurry or we'll be late. Remember our outing this afternoon?"

"Where are we going?" For an instant Brian had forgotten. "Oh, I know! Sledding!"

Soon Brian and his little sister Tina were in the car with their mother and on their way to Aunt Linda's. There they found her two eager boys and two of their friends all ready to go.

"Can Marie ride with us?" asked Tina.

"Marie can ride with us, and Tim can ride with Aunt Linda and her boys."

The Hanson's lived on a high hill out in the country, and the children always looked forward to visiting them in the wintertime. "Mommy, I heard someone say the Hanson's aren't home. Can we still go sledding down their hill?"

"The Hanson's are not at home, Tina, but they left a key to their house with Aunt Linda so we can go in and warm up after sledding. Isn't that nice of them?"

The children all nodded. Soon they were in the Hanson's driveway, and almost before the car had stopped, they tumbled out.

Across the Hanson yard they pulled their sleds, until they came to the crest of the long hill. Then "all aboard!" and six delighted boys and girls went flying down the hill. It was a just-right day. There was lots of snow, and the cold night had made a hard crust on the top of the snow so that the sleds rode well, almost all the way to the weather-beaten fence at the far end of the field. It was a long trek back, but no one seemed to mind—not at first. All

were eager to do it again, and again.

It seemed all too soon when Mother and Aunt Linda called everyone into the house to warm up before going home. But they were delighted to come when they saw the big potful of steamy-hot chocolate that was waiting for them, and a plate heaped with Aunt Linda's crispy nut cookies. Only a few minutes, and there was barely a crumb left.

"Now," suggested Aunt Linda, "you boys can go out and pack the sleds into the cars, and the girls will help us clean up here. Then we will all be on our way home."

Mother was repacking the last of the dishes when they all heard a commotion outside, then a crash and some loud crying.

"Sounds like glass breaking!" Aunt Linda and Mother hurried to the garage to see, and there stood two little boys. Brian was crying, and Tim looked puzzled. All over the garage floor lay the broken fragments of what had been a glass storm-door. Mother and Aunt Linda examined the children closely. "Are you hurt?" Both shook their heads, and Brian wiped his tears with his thickly mittened hands.

"What happened?" questioned Mother, as she rested a tender hand on Brian's head.

"Tim said he's not going home in our car, and I want him to ride with us this time!" Brian wailed.

Mother looked stern. "Were you boys arguing about it?"

"I want Tim to ride with us," wailed Brian again.

"But what happened to the door?"

"I just got so mad, I came running to the house real fast and I couldn't stop, and my arm went right through the glass. I couldn't help it!"

"Now calm down," Mother spoke quietly. "Let's clean up this glass, and then we'll decide who's going to ride with whom. Brian, you should be very thankful you were not hurt. If you didn't have all those warm clothes on, and that heavy jacket, you could have been on the way to the hospital right now. I've heard of children getting hurt severely by going through glass doors."

When they arrived home, Mother told Dad what had happened, and the three sat down in the living room to talk.

"Mother told me what happened today," Dad began, "and we've decided that you should pay for a new glass for the Hanson's door."

Brian looked stricken as the picture of a red wagon flashed through his mind. "Me? With my own money?"

"Yes," said Mother firmly. "After all, you were responsible for breaking the glass."

"But Mommy, it was an accident!"

"I know you didn't do it purposely, Brian. But if you think about it, you will realize that it could have

been avoided."

"But I was running, and I couldn't stop!"

"Brian," asked Dad. "Why were you running in the first place? Wasn't it because you had lost control of your temper?"

"Yes," Brian muttered. He had to agree.

Dad went on. "If you hadn't been angry, you would have been watching where you were going and would have seen the door and opened it. Besides, we are responsible even for our accidents. Somebody has to pay, even when we don't do something deliberately. And Mother and I feel you are old enough to learn this."

"But—" Brian started to cry. "But what about my wagon?"

"We're sorry, Brian," said Mother, "we know you've waited a long time for that wagon. But we hope you will remember this lesson. The wagon will have to wait until you can save up enough money again."

She stood up.

"Just remember, Son," Dad put a loving arm around Brian, "that anger costs, and costs dearly. Some people are never able to make up what they lose in a moment of anger. You will always be sorry for what you do when you are angry. That's why God wants us to learn to control ourselves."

After supper, when the family said verses around the table, Brian quoted Psalm 37:8. Look it up, and you'll know why. □

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What the Bible tells us *About the Angels*

ANGELS ENCAMP: *"The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them." (Ps. 34:7)*

ANGELS MINISTER: *"Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" (Heb. 1:14)*

ANGELS PROTECT AND DELIVER: *"In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old." (Isa. 63:9)*

ANGELS GUARD AND DIRECT: *"I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. Pay attention to him and listen to what he says." (Ex. 23:20-21)*

ANGELS ANNOUNCE GLAD TIDINGS: *"Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:13-14, KJV)*

ANGELS ARE GOD'S FAMILY IN HEAVEN: *"For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name." (Eph. 3:14-15)*

ANGELS SHINE: *"Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever." "The righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Dan. 12:3; Matt. 13:43)*

ANGELS ADMINISTER DIVINE JUDGMENTS: *"Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died." (Acts 12:23)*

ANGELS PERFORM SPECIAL TASKS: *"And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other." (Matt. 24:31)*

ANGELS CANNOT DIE: *"But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead...neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God." (Luke 20:35-36, KJV)*

ANGELS WILL ACCOMPANY JESUS WHEN HE RETURNS: *"For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done." (Matt. 16:27)*

Unidentified texts are from the New International Version

Who Are the *Angels*

The subject of the angels, their origin, their life, their work, their home, is one of the most fascinating and inspiring topics in the Bible.

Who are they? Where do they live? How did they arrive at their level of life?

The answers to these questions are found in the Bible.

◆ Angels are real beings

Many people think of angels as some type of spirit being singing praises around the throne of God in a vaguely blissful existence. The picture is distorted by fears of demons, which are thought to be angels in a "fallen" state. Others credit the existence of angels to the fanciful imagination of descriptive writers, idealists and dreamers.

The dictionary tells us that angels are "spiritual beings superior to man in power and intelligence."

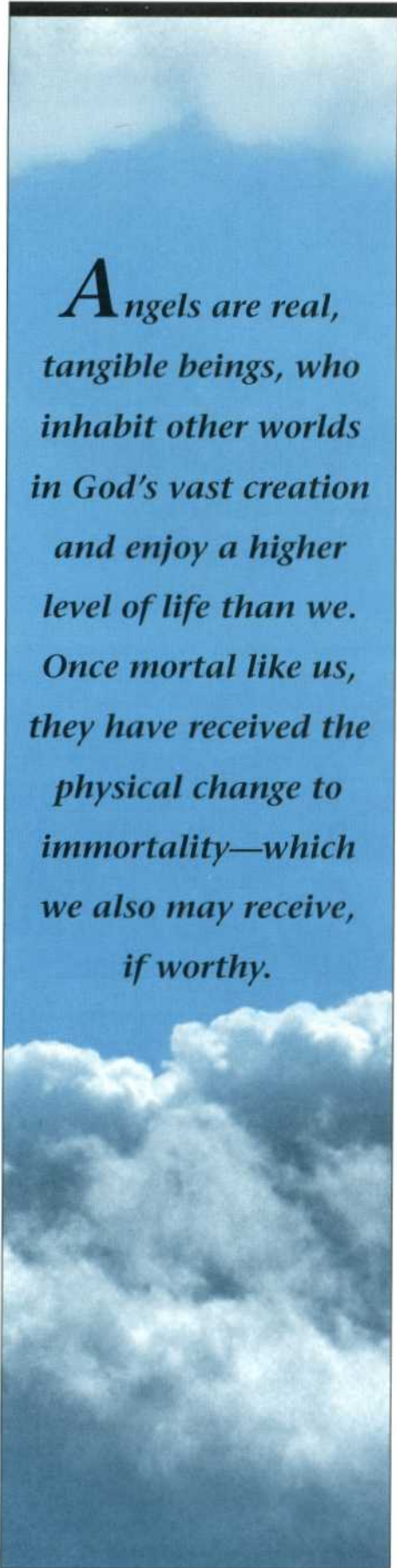
How do we know that angels exist, if they have never been seen by anyone living?

The answer is, they have been seen, but not in our day. The records of their appearances have been carefully documented and preserved for us in the Bible. Abraham and Sarah, Lot, Jacob, Moses and Aaron and the millions of Israelites with them, Joshua, Gideon, Manoah, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, Jesus, Peter and Paul—all saw angels.

◆ Angels called "Lord" or "God"

Many times we read in the Bible that "*the Lord*" appeared, or that "*God came down*," or that "*the Lord spake*." How are we to understand these statements, in view of the fact that "*No man has seen God at any time*"? (I John 4:12; John 5:37).

Angels, being children of God, are called by their Father's name. In Exodus 23, the Lord says about His angel: "*Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for...my name is in him*" (Ex. 23:20-21).



Angels are real,
tangible beings, who
inhabit other worlds
in God's vast creation
and enjoy a higher
level of life than we.
Once mortal like us,
they have received the
physical change to
immortality—which
we also may receive,
if worthy.

◆ Angels are messengers

The Hebrew word translated "angel" means "messenger, envoy." Bearing messages has been a principal function of angels in behalf of the human race. They were God's messengers delivering His message to His human servants; God's envoys announcing special events; God's army sent to protect His people and carry out His will.

The Almighty God does not come down to earth to tend its affairs. He who has hundreds and millions and countless billions of worlds to oversee, works through specially appointed ministers, representatives, messengers—angels!

Usually their appearances were sudden, brief, unannounced. Again and again we read only that *"The angel of the Lord came..."* or *"the angel of the Lord appeared...."*

◆ Angels appear as human

Each time angels are described in the Bible, they are described as being human in appearance. No mention is made of any bizarre shapes or even of the traditional "wings." The idea that angels need wings to fly is carried over from the medieval age when people could not conceive of flying without wings (as a bird). Many present day artists, realizing that this is not valid reasoning, no longer add wings to their drawings of angels.

Occasionally in the Bible angels were mistaken for men. The three angel visitors to Abraham were identified as "three men" upon their arrival, and the two who left Abraham to visit Lot were received by Lot as ordinary travelers in need of food and shelter (Gen. 19:1–2). The angel who appeared to Joshua at Jericho was described as *"a man...with his sword drawn in his hand"* (Josh. 5:13–14).

The angel sent from the presence of God to give *"insight and understanding"* to Daniel about future events was described as having *"the appearance of a man."* Again he was plainly identified as *"the man Gabriel."* We are also told that he *"touched"* Daniel (Dan. 8:15–19; 9:21)—an action we would hardly associate with a spirit being. Years later this same angel appeared to Mary (Luke 1:26).

Revelation 19:10 indicates something shared by mortal (human) and immortal (angel) servants of God. When the apostle John fell at the feet of the angel to worship him, the angel said, *"Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!"* The context of this verse shows definitely that the speaker was an angel, yet he said, *"I am a fellow servant with you,"* emphasizing his likeness to the Apostle. (Compare this passage with Revelation 22:8–9, where the speaker is also an angel.)

◆ Angels radiate light

A number of times in the Scriptures when angels appeared to mortal people they were described as radiating light. When Moses came down from the mountain after spending some time with an angel, his face radiated so much light that the Israelites were unable to look upon him without veiling their eyes. Moses put a veil over his face (Ex. 34:33–35).

The angel at the empty tomb of Jesus was said to be dressed in *"shining garments"* (Luke 24:4). Matthew records that *"his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow"* (Matt. 28:3).

◆ Angels fly

Among the abilities of angels as noted in Scripture is that of flight, and no mention is made of any mechanical aids. We know nothing about the speed with which they are able to travel, but the angel who came to visit Daniel was *"caused to fly swiftly"* (Daniel 9:21). Many times angels were *"sent"* by God, and they appeared quickly and unexpectedly.

The promise of Jesus is that those who obtain the "spirit birth," the change to the immortal state, will be able to travel with the speed and ease of the wind. *"The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit"* (John 3:8). The prophet Isaiah also promises renewed vigor and strength to the righteous, along with the ability to *"soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint"* (Isa. 40:31)—not that they will physically have wings like eagles but they will have renewed vigor and strength.

Do angels have wings? Many medieval artists thought so, no doubt reasoning that if birds fly with the aid of wings, then if angels fly they too must have the aid of wings. They also may have drawn the conclusion from the fact that the cherubims, the figures which God instructed Moses to make to hover over the mercy seat of the ark, had large wings (Ex. 25:18-22). However, nothing is said about the angels having or needing wings. And the fact that angels were sometimes thought to be ordinary men rules out the possibility that they appeared with wings.

John the Revelator describes an angel as flying "in the midst of heaven" (Rev. 14:7), and several times saw angels descending from heaven. Angels carried Jesus to heaven, and they will accompany Him when He returns (Acts 1:10-11; Matt. 16:27).

◆ Angels today?

We have never met an angel. We have never seen one of them on a lightning-swift flight from heaven to earth. Yet there may be within our reach this very moment an angel of God. Though we lack the sight, we have the promise: *"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them"* (Ps. 34:7).

God's angels protect and assist all who will be heirs of salvation. The promise is without time limit or date of expiration. Angels do minister, and will continue to minister. The only qualification is that the one ministered to be an heir of salvation, a God fearer (the fear of the Lord is *"to hate evil"*—Prov. 8:13).

The Bible does not say how or by what means the angels protect and aid. Nor does God promise that they will always be visible.

◆ Shall we believe when we cannot see...?

Can we believe in angels when we cannot see them?

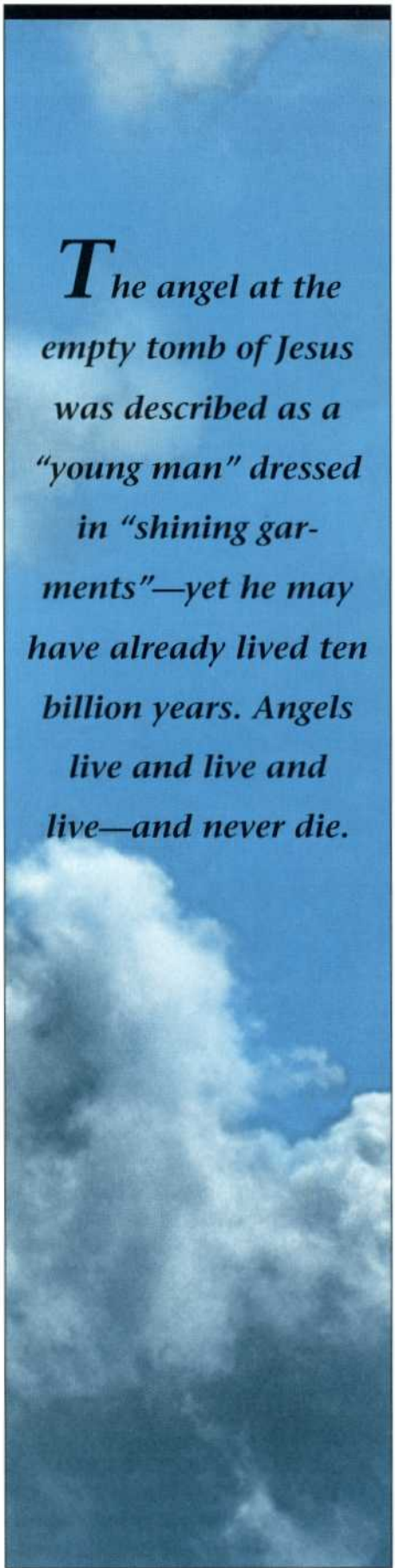
How can we safely judge what is and what is not when we have such limited powers of perception? Take a drop of water from a mountain lake in the palm of your hand. You can see nothing but water. But put that drop under a microscope and it is teeming with life.

We cannot "see" electricity, but when we press a switch we know it is there. We cannot hear radio waves, yet the air around us is filled with them—all we need is the proper receptor to translate them into intelligible sounds.

Bats have a phenomenal built-in radar system by which they can fly safely at night, though they are blind. A dog can hear sounds which to our ears are not audible. Birds have an instinctive sense of direction by which they can cross the ocean and return to the same nest they had occupied the season before!

Isn't it entirely possible that angels may be right around us, all unknown to us simply because we lack the sense to perceive them? And is it not entirely within the power of God to withhold such a sense when He wishes?

In times past, He has. In the book of Numbers is the account of Balaam saddling his ass, and traveling with some princes of Moab. This action of Balaam displeased the Lord, and *"God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him"* (Num. 22:22). The ass saw the angel and turned aside into the field. Balaam did not like the ass' contrariness and tried to turn her back into the road. Balaam could not



***The angel at the
empty tomb of Jesus
was described as a
"young man" dressed
in "shining gar-
ments"—yet he may
have already lived ten
billion years. Angels
live and live and
live—and never die.***

**The Almighty God
does not come down
to earth to tend its
affairs. He works
through specially
appointed ministers,
representatives,
messengers—angels!**



see the angel, which was clearly visible to the ass. Why? Because God had witholden his sight. We read, *"Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he [Balaam] bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face"* (Numbers 22:31). An angel blocking the way was God's method of getting Balaam's attention.

We have other examples in the Bible where God withheld and then granted the ability to see. When the prophet Elisha and his servant were being surrounded by hostile Syrians, Elisha's servant became afraid, and cried to Elisha, *"Alas, my master! how shall we do?"* (II Kings 6:15). Elisha knew and could possibly see what was not visible to the young man, and so he answered, *"Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them"* (v. 16). Then Elisha prayed to the Lord, *"Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see."* The Lord did, and the young man saw that *"the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha"* (v. 17)—angels of God (Ps. 68:17). God could conceal or disclose the angels to mortal eyes, as He wished.

When Jesus walked on the road to Emmaus after His resurrection with two of His disciples, it is recorded that *"their eyes were holden that they should not know him"* (Luke 24:16). They walked and talked with Jesus but did not recognize Him until *"their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight"* (verse 31). The same was true of Jesus' appearance to Paul (then Saul) on the Damascus road. Those who were with him saw the light, but only Paul saw Jesus in the light. We read that *"the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man"* (Acts 9:3-7).

◆ Angels visible

God is temporarily withholding from us the ability to view angels, because this is a time when He is silent. We walk by faith rather than sight. We have only the Bible by which to be guided.

But soon, very soon we shall see that which is at the moment invisible. *Angels are coming and they will be visible.* Angels will accompany Jesus when He returns as King of the whole earth. Jesus Himself said, *"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels"* (Matt. 16:27; Mark 8:38). This age will shortly end in the most dramatic of all events, *"when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels"* (II Thess. 1:7).

From that time forward God's angels will be visible participants in every activity on earth. *"Thousand thousands"* will minister to Christ when He sits as Judge (Dan. 7:10). At the time Moses received the Law (Deut. 33:2), *"ten thousands"* of angels came down upon Mount Sinai. *"Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands"* will be attending when Christ and His co-administrators are inaugurated as the new heads of the universal state (Rev. 5:9-13). When the bride and the bridegroom are united in marriage, the angels will be heard as *"the shouting of a huge crowd, or like the waves of a hundred oceans crashing on the shore, or like the mighty rolling of great thunder, 'Praise the Lord. For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice and honor him; for the time has come for the wedding banquet of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself"* (Rev. 19:6-7, TLB).

◆ Life: First human, then angelic

The facts about the angels are more than cold, lifeless facts to us, because they concern us personally.

The life forms we see are not all there is. Angels enjoy a higher level of life than we experience. We are mortal, flesh and blood beings, what the Bible calls *"earthly"* (I Cor. 15:48). The Bible tells us that the *"earthly"* state is first, to be followed by the heavenly. *"As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly"* (I Cor. 15:49). We believe that the angels were first earthly, or mortal, then were transformed to a higher level of life. They have received the change from mortality to immortality, which we, if worthy, may also experience. This is the hope held out in the Bible.

We can become angels!

The change of state is required because *"flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God"* (I Cor. 15:50). Nothing corruptible can belong to the finished creation of God.

In the Book of Revelation, the holy city, the new Jerusalem is pictured as a city of light. But its light is not coming from the sun. We read: *"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 honour into it"* (Rev. 21:23-24). Isaiah describes this same time when *"the sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory"* (Isa. 60:19).

The prophet Daniel says of God's faithful children; *"Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever"* (12:3, NIV). If the angels which visited men were shining, and if faithful ones from the earth will shine as the *"stars"* or the *"sun"* in the Kingdom of their Father (Matt. 13:43), is it not logical to conclude that mortals can become shining angels of God?

Reinforcing this thought are the words of Jesus in Luke 20:35-36, *"But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God."* The apostle Paul tells us that *"the Lord Jesus Christ...will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body"* (Phil. 3:20-21, NIV), indicating a physical change. Paul described this same physical change in I Corinthians 15, that *"this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality,"* and *"then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory"* (I Cor. 15:53-54).

The apostle John, speaking of the change from mortality to immortality which worthy mortals will receive, says that when Jesus returns, *"we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is"* (I John 3:2).

◆ The Divine Plan

This earth is only one small part of God's vast creation. And when the Bible tells us the *"mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him"* (Ps. 103:17), we know that there have been beings somewhere in His vast creation upon whom He has had mercy in the past ("from everlasting") and upon whom He will continue to bestow His mercy in the future ("to everlasting"). The earth is not the first planet to be created, populated, and prepared for glory. The universe visible to the modern telescope reveals countless billions of shining worlds, where dwell the higher level of life we call the angels—else where do they live? And doubtless many more planets are in stages of development similar to our earth.

The Bible calls our great Creator *"the Lord God of hosts."* He is not dwelling in holy isolation. He has not been sleeping through ages past and only recently awakened. Through countless ages He has been planning, fashioning, expanding and glorifying His creation. When the time is right on any planet, He performs the great change to the worthy inhabitants, transforming them from the mortal level to the immortal—just as He plans to do on this earth (Phil. 3:20-21; I Cor. 15:52-54). It is all according to His *"eternal purpose"* (Eph. 3:11).

The Lord's prayer tells us that God has a finished creation where His will is fully done now: *"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"* (Matt. 6:10). We look forward to the time when His will shall be done just as fully on earth, and we can be made like the angels of God (Luke 20:35-36), free from the fear of sickness, accident and death. This change will come with Jesus Christ (I Pet. 5:4), when He returns to set up His universal Kingdom of righteousness and peace. □

**We do not see
angels now because
during this age God is
silent. We walk "by
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the Bible by which to
be guided. But soon,
very soon we shall see
angels. Angels will
accompany Jesus
when He returns, and
they will be visible.**



Owls: Night-Time Hunters

Did You Know...?

- ✓ ... that there are more than 100 different species of owls in the world – they are native on every continent except Antarctica.
- ✓ ... that owls have the best night vision of any creature known.
- ✓ ... that owls are very useful in keeping small rodents in check – without them we would be overrun with mice and small vermin.
- ✓ ... that it is really hard to get out of the owl's line of vision. The owl can't roll its eyes but it can fix its eyes on an object and turn its head to the right and keep turning it until it is actually looking over its left shoulder.
- ✓ ... that owls fly perfectly noiselessly, because of a special nap on their wings which muffles sound.
- ✓ ... that owls lay between 1 and 4 eggs, per season, depending on the availability of food (rodents and small pests).
- ✓ ... that the average lifetime of an owl is about 20 years.
- ✓ ... that different species of owls make different sounds. Some hoot, others chirp, others whistle, or warble, screech, shriek, chatter, laugh, buzz, bark, growl, or sing.
- ✓ ... that the owl swallows its prey whole. Its stomach automatically separates meat from bones and fur.
- ✓ ... that most owls are not friendly with other birds or with each other. Northern owls prefer to raise their families in December, after other birds have migrated south. They use nests built and abandoned by other birds.

Scientific data in this article is from *The ABC's of Nature, "All About Owls,"* pp. 228–229; *Marvels and Mysteries of Our Animal World*, by Peter Farb; published by The Readers Digest Association, pp. 148–149; also *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th Edition, 15:75–77; and 27:160.

Are you looking for another evidence of your Creator's masterful handiwork? Don't miss the owl.

Do you seldom see an owl? There are probably two reasons. As the sun rises, most owls go to sleep, either in deep shade on large tree branches, in holes in trees, or on the ground. Secondly, they are heavily camouflaged, being mottled in color, to blend with their background. In the far north, many owls have only a faint pattern on a whitish background (like snow); in temperate forests, a bold pattern on a mixed background (like woods); in desert areas, a medium to fine pattern on a field of gray (like sand); in the humid tropics a coarse pattern resembling bark and leaves. (Did the owl decide what color to wear in what habitat?)

The hundred plus species of owls are found in all parts of the world, except Antarctica, and range in size from giants two feet tall down to the size of the sparrow. They utilize virtually all habitats, from grasslands to dense woodlands to rain forests. Most owls feed on rodents, the size of the prey varying with the size of the owl. The smallest owls eat insects and are singularly adapted to catch them. The whiskered owl prefers flying insects, and has been seen performing a unique trick: it will fly up to a large blooming flower and flap its wings to scare out any insects inhabiting the flower, then gulp them down as they emerge. Two species of owls like to eat fish, and are specially equipped to catch them. The bay owl prefers the flavor of bats, and at dusk will station itself at the entrance to a bat cave, ready to catch the bats as they come out to hunt.

Communication. Owls are avid and capable communicators, and depend on their sounds to defend their territories and talk with their mates. Some species of owls chirp, others whistle, some warble, some screech, or shriek, or chatter, or laugh. Some buzz, some bark, some hoot or growl—and some actually sing. A certain type of owl has been observed to repeat a singing phrase 100 times without interruption or pause. The North American screech owls, male and female, when separated, often practice antiphonal singing, each answering the other as the two approach together. When eventually they meet, they sing a duet, the female carrying the higher part.

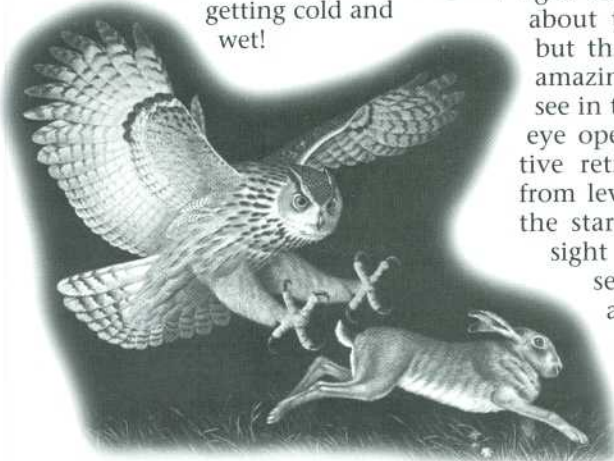
Nesting. In northern latitudes, some smaller species of owls nest a month or two earlier in the spring than most birds. Young owls are frequently covered by several inches of snow. The larger owls native to the colder parts of the Northern Hemisphere prefer to raise their young when other birds have migrated south. They mate in the fall and nest in December, using abandoned nests of other birds (usually crows). Keeping the chicks warm and fed is a full-time job for the parents. But egg laying among all owls is timed so that the young are hatched when food populations are the greatest. Owls have no trouble finding an abundance of rodents, field mice, and other small animals, even in winter.

Feathers. The owl's feathers are part of its special equipment for survival, and are no accident of chance. The wing feathers of most birds are made for flight, with a stiff shaft and tiny barbs that connect one feather to another. The wings of the owl have soft, fuzzy edges, which muffle the sound of their movement and allow the owl to fly silently. What are the advantages of noiseless flight? The owl while in flight can hear its prey moving on the ground without any interference from the sound of its own wings. And the prey is easily surprised, not hearing the approaching enemy.

Owls are also dressed for the weather. In the north, the plumage is soft, dense, and loose; and a thick layer of down provides insulation against the cold. (Did the owls figure out how to grow "down" when they were cold year after year?)

Feet and toes. The owl is further equipped to catch prey—each foot has four talons, needle sharp and exceptionally strong for the size of the bird—just what it needs to grab scurrying rodents. Its talons are another example of perfect design—they operate much like ice hooks. Once they grab, the prey rarely escapes. And if it tries to bite or snap at the owl, the owl's legs and feet are heavily feathered so that the fighting captive can do little or no harm to the owl. (Did the owl decide to grow feathers on its feet after it was bitten many times?) An exception are those owls that live on fish, which have no feathers on their feet and legs—they don't need them.

Besides, they'd be always getting cold and wet!



The owl also uses its sharp talons to lift its prey to its wide mouth, and with one gulp swallows it whole. The owl doesn't have to separate meat from bones, because its stomach is specially constructed to digest the flesh and squeeze the fur and bones into two-inch pellets, which are pushed up its throat and spit out the next day.

Equipped for the Night Shift

Owls are especially prepared to function successfully in the dark.

Eyes. The owl has outstanding eyesight. Each large round eye, encased in a bony socket, is virtually immovable. But this is not a problem, since the owl can turn its head more than 180 degrees in any direction—the owl can look directly backward, forward, straight up, or straight down, or any angle in between without moving its body. (It can actually turn its head a full circle and a half.) In addition, its vision is binocular and three dimensional, which is especially useful for spotting small animals at a distance.

Since most owls are most active at night (a few are daytime hunters), their eyes are especially adapted for the night. Our Creator has truly designed the owl to work at night. Human eyes have both cone cells (for distinguishing color) and rod cells (for gathering light). The eye of the owl is tightly packed with rod cells *only*, resulting in an absence of color vision but a great increase in light sensitivity. Daytime vision is about ten times better than ours, but their ability to see at night is amazing. The owl cannot actually see in the dark, but the pupil of the eye opens wide and its supersensitive retina is able to gather light from levels as low as the light from the stars, giving the owl an actual sight impression where we would see nothing. An owl can see and catch a small animal in light equivalent to that emitted by an ordinary candle 2500 feet away.

Ears. Owls do not depend entirely on their eyesight



to capture their food. More important are their ears. Experiments have shown that the owl can locate its prey solely by hearing. On a dark night, an owl perched in a tree can

hear the rustling sounds made by a mouse underneath grass and leaves on the ground below, can accurately localize the signal and strike and capture the prey without any visual aid. This requires a super-sensitive and complex hearing mechanism, which we can only attribute to our great Creator's design.

What is singular about the owl's method of hearing? The ear of the owl is surrounded by a ruff of papery feathers that serve to concentrate sound. The very large ears (the eardrums are the largest found in any bird in the world) are located on the side of the head, but are not visible because covered with lacy feathers which permit sound to enter easily. A movable flap toward the back of the ear acts as a baffle to focus sound. The feathers on the owl's face are also designed to collect and bounce sound waves into the eardrums. (Did all this just happen to enhance the owl's ability to hear?)

Since the owl has a large head, the ears are far apart. And they are so constructed that the one ear is inverted to the other—the opening of the ear canal is in the upper part of one ear, and in the lower part of the other. This means that the owl receives sound on two planes, and the sound enters one ear a fraction of a second before it does the other. The time lapse difference may seem infinitesimal, but it is sufficient for the owl to know precisely the direction from which the sound is coming. By cocking its head at different angles, it can get different readings, and can pinpoint an origin of sound many feet away. This ability makes the owl an able hunter, by day or night.

How could our Creator provide so lavishly for a small, simple animal of the night?

What can we say, but that the Hand that made them is Divine? □

The Inerrancy of the Bible: *Only In the Autographs*

► *Inerrancy belongs only to the original Autographs-- God did not promise to keep copyists, printers and translators from making any errors.*

SUMMARY

In this article we take the position that the Bible or any part of it is wholly inerrant *only* in the autographs, i.e., the form in which it was written by the original author.

Belief in the inerrancy of the Bible is vital because without it we do not have a sure word of the Lord upon which to stand, nor a sure foundation for our faith. And the inerrancy of the Bible is taught within Scripture. "Every word of God is pure" (Prov. 30:5-6); and "the law of the Lord is perfect" (Ps. 19:7).

But *absolute inerrancy* must be reserved for the *original originals only*. God did not promise to keep copyists from copying inaccurately, or to prevent printing presses from duplicating error, or to keep translators from choosing the wrong word when translating. And the Bible has been through countless copyings and translations. As a result, the copies we have today are not totally without error. They are inerrant only to the extent that they accurately reflect the original originals (the autographs).

However, God in His providence has arranged that His Book did not become so contaminated as to be without meaning or use to us. The science of textual criticism (the branch of Bible scholarship that compares manuscript with manuscript and translation with original) has confirmed, by studying and comparing the great quantity of manuscripts available, that very few errors exist in the Bibles we use, and that these copies are fully adequate for acquiring an accurate knowledge of God's plan and of what we must do to obtain salvation.

DISCUSSION

The idea that only the original Autographs are without error has been ridiculed by critics as an unworthy refuge, a fabricated retreat from an otherwise embarrassing situation. Of course the position is "safe"—who can say what was or was not in the original Autographs when none are available? But a little thoughtful reflection will show that the position is the only reasonable one. Who has any original works of Shakespeare, or Cicero, or Plato, or Aristotle—and hundreds of other secular writers or philosophers? Yet who claims that the works available are invalid simply because no one has originals?

And when we come to assessing the number and quality of the copies of the Bible extant, we find that we have a wealth of consistent, reliable documents, giving us a Bible which is, by its own testimony, *a thorough furnisher unto all good works* (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Only the Original Originals are Without Error

When we say that we believe in the inerrancy of the Bible, we mean that we believe in the inerrancy of the *original writings*, the Scriptures as they were originally written by their original authors. These original writings are often called the Autographs.

This position may seem extreme. Why must inerrancy belong exclusively to the Autographic text, the *original original*? Are we trying to avoid an embarrassing situation by placing the "perfect" text just beyond provability, just beyond everyone's reach? For everyone knows that no *original* originals exist.

A bit of reasoning will show why this position is the only logical one. The inspired

and sacred text, once written, immediately became the property of human custodians. And just consider the possibilities for simple (innocent, unwitting) human error, as various attempts were made to copy and translate the sacred text. What can any human hand do without being subject to human error? Should we make God responsible for human errors? Should we blame Him because we cannot print a book that is absolutely perfect? Should we fault Him with the errors we may make when copying even very carefully many hundreds of thousands of characters?

Commenting upon this point, B. B. Warfield has said: "Would these controversialists have the Church affirm the absolute truth of scribes' slips and printers' errors? They would seem to represent it as easier to believe in the infallibility of compositors and proofreaders than the infallibility of God. Everybody knows that no book was ever printed, much less hand copied, into which some errors did not intrude in the process; and as we do not hold the author responsible for these in any ordinary book, neither ought we to hold God responsible for them in this extraordinary book we call the Bible. It is *the Bible* that we declare to be 'of infallible truth'—the Bible that God gave us, not the corruptions and slips which scribes and printers have given us, some of which are in every copy....

"Are we really to believe that the possessors of 'the wicked Bible' held 'Thou shalt commit adultery' to be divinely inerrant?...or, that those who read in their copies at I Corinthians 15:51 (as the possessors of one edition did), 'We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,' would violently defend 'the Bible as it is' against the claims of the genuine text?"

Now some will say, Why such a limitation? Why would God take such care for His Word, then allow it to be contaminated in the form in which it is to be used? Why could not God keep copyists from making any errors? And why couldn't He keep the presses from printing any errors? And why couldn't He make the translators choose the very best words? Clearly, if such was His purpose, He could. But God has not chosen to make such a promise; He has not overruled the workmanship of human copyists, nor has He designed a press that will

not print errors. Why? We simply do not know; such was not His plan.

Are we then, as a result, left with a book which is at best contaminated, hopelessly corrupted so that it is impossible for us to know what the original text was? By no means. In-depth study of the Bible and comparison with the copies extant (the science of textual criticism) has shown conclusively that the Bible as we have it is basically correct, that it contains very few and minor errors. In fact, a noted scholar has said that copyists' mistakes on record amount to no more than one letter out of every 1580 in the Old Testament and one in 1000 in the New Testament. The current conclusion is that "the great body of the Bible is found in the Autographic text even in the poorest copies extant," and "practically the whole Autographic text is in the best text in circulation; and he who will may read the Scripture without legitimate doubt" (B. B. Warfield).

The copies are good, and wholly suited to their purpose. But when we talk about inerrancy, we mean *without error*. This is why total inerrancy can be granted only to the original Autographs. A statement by Bible scholar John Montgomery summarizes the point: that inerrancy cannot be located in any but the *original* originals. He writes that the translations of the text cannot be totally inerrant, "since these are but approximations of the original"; and that the printed text cannot be totally without error, "for these are but representations of manuscript copies, subject to correction by comparison with them"; and that the copied manuscripts themselves cannot be totally inerrant since "they likewise endeavor with greater or less fidelity to reproduce the manuscripts on which they are dependent." He concludes, then, that unless one wishes to maintain that a given stream of transmission or translation was kept inviolable by God (and Scripture itself nowhere gives ground for such an affirmation), inerrancy must be said to reside only in the original manuscripts written by the Biblical authors, i.e., in the Autographs of Scripture."

Are Copies Usable?

We are not the first to face the issue. Copies were used, quoted, and referred to for centuries before us. Even the Bible writers themselves made use of existing

► *The Word of
God proclaims
its own
inerrancy:
"Every word of
God is pure."*

copies. When the prophet Daniel "understood by the books" that the end of the period of Captivity was near, that the time prophesied by Jeremiah the prophet was nearly expired, it seems unlikely that he had at hand Jeremiah's original writing. Much more likely he had a copy of it, which he believed and accepted as authority.

When David was charging his son Solomon to keep the law of God, he referred to what was "written in the law of Moses as the charge of the Lord thy God" (I Kings 2:3), and we

can be reasonably sure that what David had was not the original written law of Moses but a copy. In the book of Proverbs we read this brief note, that "these are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out" (Prov. 25:1)—the Proverbs were copied legitimately, and were being used as having Divine authority.

When Ezra, scribe and priest to the returned captives, brought "the book of the Law of Moses" before the congregation, when he opened the Book in the "sight of all the people" and "the people were attentive unto the book of the law," we can be sure that it was not the original writing from

Moses' hand but a copy. But Ezra was able to read the Book, give the sense, and caused the people to understand the reading (Neh. 8:1-8). The copy he had of the written Word shared the authority of the original in a practical sense, and the people responded.

Jesus taught that we are to live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4), but He knew that we would not be hearing it directly from

God's mouth. We would receive it in written form, a form which would bear the authority of the original inspired utterance.

Jesus Himself was accustomed to reading from existing scrolls, and treated them as Scripture, though they were not originals (Luke 4:16-21). When He read from the book of Isaiah, He had no original to read, but quoted from Isaiah and trusted its meaning. And surely He had nothing in Moses' handwriting, but again He freely quoted Moses, as well as the other Prophets. And He commanded us to "search the scriptures" to find testimony of Himself (John 5:39). In preaching He made statements such as, "Have you never read...?" and "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" (See Matt. 12:3,5; 21:16,42; Luke 10:26). The common Scriptures available in Jesus' day were in the form of the Septuagint Translation, which had been made some 200 years earlier, and which is known to contain errors; yet Jesus did not hesitate to quote from it and to recommend others to study "the scriptures" from these available copies.

The Apostles used Scripture for discussion (Acts 17:2; 18:28). The Bereans "searched the scriptures daily" (the Old Testament Scriptures) to determine the surety of what had been taught them (Acts 17:11); but none of them had original Autographs to search. They were willing to trust copies.

Already in Paul's day, zealous believers were exchanging copies of the Epistles (see Col. 4:16). When Paul was writing to Timothy, he asked Timothy to bring "the books, but especially the parchments" (II Tim. 4:13)—very likely the coveted "parchments" were his personal copies of sacred writings, part of his treasures—it is again unlikely that he had any originals.

Since Jesus Himself raised no doubts about the adequacy of the Scriptures in the form that they existed at the time (in copied form), and since the Apostles quoted freely from the Scriptures as they knew them (from copies available), we can safely assume that the first century version of the Old Testament was wholly adequate as a medium for teaching the Divine revelation. At least Jesus gave due respect and authority to the copies, and if He could, why not we? By respecting the Old Testament documents then existing, Jesus was expressing confidence

If we compare the present state of the New Testament text with that of any other ancient writing, we must...declare it to be marvelously correct. Such has been the care with which the New Testament has been copied—a care which has doubtless grown out of true reverence for its holy words. Such has been the providence of God in preserving for his church in each and every age competently exact text of the scriptures.... Not only is the New Testament unrivaled among ancient writings in the purity of its text...but also in the abundance of testimony which has come down to us for castigating its comparatively infrequent blemishes. The...wonderful approximation [of the current text] to its Autograph is the undisguised envy of every modern reader of ancient books."

— B. B. Warfield,
Introduction to Textual Criticism

in God's providential care for His Word through the process of copying and translating, saying in another way that the copy was trustworthy, i.e., substantially identical to the original.

What all these believers were looking for was not to verify that every letter and word had been precisely copied but to *obtain the message of the text*, and the inspiration and instruction that was available through the text. Whether that message, that inspiration, that instruction reached them through an original Autograph or through a copy was immaterial.

Copying Recognized

The Bible recognizes that copies of the Autographic text would be made. This fact is disclosed by a warning in the book of Proverbs, "*Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar*" (Prov. 30:6). Also a warning in the book of Isaiah, "*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*" (Isa. 8:20).

The New Testament Scriptures state the same warning in the book of Revelation (22:18-19), placing a woe upon anyone who might be tempted to add to or take from or otherwise contaminate sacred text. Again it is assumed that the books would be copied, and those copying might be tempted to consciously alter it, hence the warning.

The Bible, then, demonstrates two points. First, it demonstrates the need of believers to rely on copies of Scripture without having the original, in confidence that the copies faithfully reflect the original text and therefore carry its authority; and second, that all claims to infallibility and inerrancy must be reserved for the *original* original.

The fact that we cannot say that all copies are fully inerrant does not suggest that our present Bibles fail to be the Word of God. We do not have to have a flawless copy of the original to believe or make use of its content. Someone might have a printed copy of a Shakespearean play. Does he think that because it is not in Shakespeare's handwriting and has not been compared in every detail with the original, that it should not be regarded as a work of Shakespeare? Just so a translation of the Bible may contain mistakes or disputed words, but it is still the Word of God, inspired and inerrant—to the degree that it reflects the *original* original.

There is nothing unreasonable or unfair in holding that inerrancy must belong only to the original Autographic text, and that copies in translations may contain errors. We have no Scriptural warrant for holding that God performed the perpetual miracle of preserving His written Word from all errors as it was handled by every copier, translator, typesetter, or printer. And we should not make such a claim. Absolute perfection is to be attributed to God, not to human scribes, copyists and printers.

Copies: Just How Accurate?

How can we know that our copies of the Bible are substantially correct transcripts of the original? First, we can know it because of the providence of God; and second, as a result of textual criticism.

Because of the large number of copies existing, we have no problem establishing that the Bible text is almost entirely without error. God has planned that the copies should be sufficiently accurate to support our faith and teach us what He wants us to know. This is part of His providence, in making His knowledge available to us, in superintending affairs so that copies of Scripture do not become so corrupt as to be unintelligible, falsified, or convey incomplete or incorrect knowledge. We can be sure of this because Scripture itself promises that the Word of God will abide for ever; corrupted Scripture would be no Scripture at all (see Isa. 40:8; Matt. 5:18; 24:35; Luke 16:17; 1 Pet. 1:24-25).

Furthermore, the copies we now possess are known to be accurate and sufficient in all matters except minor details. It is not possible in a limited space to rehearse the results of textual criticism, however a few summary statements will demonstrate the point. The following is by Frederick Kenyon: "The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand, and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true Word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation, throughout the centuries" (Frederick Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, p.23). Consider also this statement by a recognized textual critic: "We possess the text of the Bible today in a form which is substantially identical with the Autographs." Or this quotation from B. B. Warfield: "The great mass of the New Testament...has been transmitted to us with no, or next to

(Continued on page 26)

► *The Bible as we have it is substantially identical to the Autographs, will support our faith and will teach us what we need to know.*

Great...Majestic... Glorious

"Great are the doings of the Lord, sought out by all who delight in them. Majestic and glorious are His acts, and His righteousness stands forever"—Psalm 111:2-3, Berkeley.

No one who reverences the Eternal God or has any knowledge of His creation would deny that His works are great. Viewed from any angle, they are beyond comparison. Whether seen at close range as the atoms in a molecule, or the particles making up the atom, or viewed at a distance as the galaxies of stars billions of light years away, visible only through the most powerful telescopes, the works of the Lord are great.

Considered from the standpoint of His ability as designer, even of nature's physical laws, His works are far beyond anything we can comprehend. But greater still is His munificence, designing to share His boundless wealth with His worthy human children. He is great, too, in asking nothing more of us than an attainable standard of moral fitness in order to be His associates. He does not demand wealth, or natural ability, or intellect, or good looks. He does not demand that we meet tests of great physical endurance, or that we engage in rituals that are harmful to our bodies. He is great, too, in devising a plan by which the fittest shall survive, where the unworthy may receive temporary blessings but the worthy reap a harvest of eternal life for their efforts.

According to the Creator's worthy purpose at the beginning of His work on earth He placed His Divine

plan of salvation at the disposal of humankind. He showed Divine wisdom in making His communication plain and comprehensible—even though to benefit from it one must diligently search, study and compare (Prov. 2:1-5). He added to the glory of His work by clothing His message in Divine authority, giving unquestionable proof of its genuineness by delegating to His spokesmen supernatural powers to heal the sick, open the eyes of the blind, raise the dead, and foretell future events. His work is great in having arranged the circumstances for the preserving of His Word during the dark ages, that even today His saving knowledge can be in the hands of all who desire it.

His work is great in that He has made it possible for humankind to make something of themselves. His statutes given through Moses the great lawgiver have formed the basis for the jurisprudence of the world's foremost nations. And by applying the principles of His higher law of faith, or "royal law" to their daily living, selfish, narrow-minded human beings can escape the confines of their naturally petty interests and instincts and live on a higher plane. They can expand their horizons to a point where the present will give way to the eternal, the spirit becomes stronger than the flesh, the love of God supersedes the

love of self; until at last they merit the physical change to immortality, giving them the nature of angels.

God's work is great in this respect, too, that from eternity past He has been saving people in other parts of His creation even as He is now doing with the inhabitants of this earth. His mercy has been from everlasting in the past and will continue through all time yet to come. It is His plan ultimately to fill the earth with His glory, with a righteous and holy people. Yet He has seen fit to allow 6000 years to elapse to find the number He has designated as kings and priests to form the ruling group of the new world. Had He chosen to take out this number in a much shorter period, no opportunity would have existed for us in this age.

The Psalmist says further that the work of God is studied by all who take delight in it (Ps. 111:2). Right here is where we as individuals may fit into the picture. Let us take a critical look at ourselves to see if we are seeking a knowledge of God's greatness, or if we are seeking the knowledge of the world around us. Can we truthfully say we hold the knowledge of God above every other interest?

We are not seeking a knowledge of God's greatness when we can find no time to peruse the message He caused to be written for our learn-

ing, and at the same time spend countless hours with radio or television or at the movies. If we take pleasure in contemplating God's great work soon to begin upon earth, we will demonstrate it by our concern for our own readiness, and our preparation for it. We will demonstrate it by thinking about it, talking about it, projecting ourselves into it, and shaping our lives to be a part of it.

"His work is wonderful and glorious." No one in his right mind could attempt to deny the truthfulness of this statement. Every sacrifice God asks of us improves our mental and moral stature.

God's magnificent plan for the earth, that it shall ultimately be filled with His glory and be annexed to heaven, is indeed glorious. It is glorious to know of a certainty that the Lord will cause "wars to cease unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 46:9), and that "all the military academies and training camps will be closed down" (Mic. 4:3, TLB). For He will "arbitrate among the nations, and dictate to strong nations far away. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; nations shall no longer fight each other, for all war will end...everyone will live quietly in his own home in peace and prosperity, for there will be nothing to fear" (Mic. 4:3-4, TLB). For the Lord to institute and enforce a code of laws that will impel all to live according to His righteous mandates will be work that is honorable and glorious. And it is the fiat of the Almighty that one day such a state of affairs shall prevail on earth. "For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). And what will be the result? Again the prophet Isaiah reveals the answer. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isa. 32:17-18).

Such will be the completion of God's great work upon earth, when His will is done here as it is done in heaven above. □



Of Grasshoppers and Men

*The grasshoppers ten, and two men ventured forth
On a journey to spy out the land
That was chosen by God as the best on the earth
For the people whose future He planned.*

*So the grasshoppers hopped, and the other ones walked,
Until Canaan Land came into view.
There they saw the great sights; of its wonders they talked,
While beholding so much that was new.*

*There were mountains, rich valleys, some cities with walls;
A few giants they saw here and there.
There was fruit in the valley where rain often falls,
And abundance of good everywhere.*

*At the end of their trip they returned to the camp,
Bringing samples of fruit they had found,
And reported results of their forty-day tramp,
Saying honey and milk both abound.*

*And they told of the country, the cities, the walls,
Of the people who lived in the land—
Such as Jebusites, Amorites, Hittites, and all
They had spotted on every hand.*

*Then the men of the team who were trusting in God
With assurance spoke out loud and clear,
"Let us go up at once to the land we have trod,
For with God there is nothing to fear."*

*But the grasshoppers ten, with an evil report,
Said, "It's fatal if anyone tries;
For the men are so tall, and to them we're so short,
That we're nothing but grasshopper-size!"*

*So the plan of the Lord was delayed many years,
Till the grasshoppers all died away.
For the Lord uses none who are hampered by fears,
Only those who will trust and obey. — Selected.*

Anne Sorchinski

We have received word of the passing of a long-time friend and sister, Anne Sorchinski, on July 28, 1994, at the age of 84. Sister Sorchinski was born in Poland, and emigrated with her parents to Canada at the age of 8. Since the passing of her husband in 1985, she made her home with her daughter, also spending extended periods of time in Rochester with our Church congregation as long as her health permitted.

The acquaintance of Sister Sorchinski and her husband with the Megiddo Church goes back nearly sixty years. While living in Ontario, Canada, the Sorchinskis made several visits to the Church in Rochester, and corresponded regularly. In 1963, they relocated to British Columbia, seeking a climate more favorable to problems of illness.

Sister Sorchinski is survived by one son Walter of Victoria; and two daughters, Olga Seech, of Leamington, Ontario, and Minnie Svats of Windsor, Ontario.

Rubye M. Simmons

We have received word from Gwendolyn Lawrence (a niece) in New Orleans, Louisiana, of the passing of Sister Rubye Simmons, of Charleston, Mississippi, on November 14, 1994, at the age of 80 years.



Have You Ordered...

your hardcover volume of the *Megiddo Message* for 1994? Price: \$17.00, postpaid.

Orders must be received by February 10, 1995. Volumes will be mailed about March 20th. Address orders to: Megiddo Press, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, NY 14619-1697

The acquaintance of the Simmons family with the Church goes back many years, to the mid-1920s, when her father became acquainted with the Church and wished to instruct his children in the teachings of the Bible. Over the years Sister Rubye made several extended visits to the Church in Rochester, and was a firm believer in the teachings of the Church.

Sister Rubye was a regular correspondent, a subscriber to the *Megiddo Message*, and a regular recipient of all Church publications. We will miss her friendly, spirited letters.

ABIB GREETINGS!



The sacred New Year is coming, as God commanded Moses to measure time.

This year the first new moon after the Spring equinox occurs on March 31 a.m. This means we will observe the beginning of Abib on Friday evening, March 31, continuing through Saturday, April 1, Bible time being counted from evening to evening (Lev. 23:35).

Plan now to join us as we observe the beginning of the sacred New Year and honor Jesus Christ our coming King.

Of all the Simmons children, Rubye leaves only one surviving sister, Lillian, who still resides in Charleston, Mississippi. (Five sisters and four brothers preceded her in death.) She is also survived by many nieces and nephews, great nieces and nephews, and great great nieces and nephews, as well as many cousins.

Letters

Needing More Faith

I went into my local library the other day and just happened to come across your *Megiddo Message* booklets, and I was very impressed with them. They have an excellent message! I also am very interested in studying the Holy Bible and want to have more faith in God.

Maybe the Living God had a hand in my finding your *Megiddo Message* booklets, because it is at a time when I need more faith in God and in His Word. Thanks a lot for publishing such a great booklet!

Ohio

M.A.A.

When God Beats the Time

There has always been music, and there always will be. We read far back in Genesis of Jubal, the father of all that handle the harp and organ (Gen. 4:21); also of singing men and women. Primarily, music should be played or sung in honor of the Lord Most High—songs of praise and thankfulness, of joy and rejoicing for all His loving kindness and marvelous works!

We can be thankful that in these last days God is still calling men and women to be performers, spiritually speaking, in the harmonious and meaningful song He is writing. It is imperative, however, that each performer achieve the high standard God requires, which is: "Be ye holy, for the one which has called you is holy," and "Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Out of the many, many thousands of performers in the most wonderful and "sweetest melody that the earth has ever heard," of which God is the Composer and Conductor, only 144,000 will practice their parts to perfection and be worthy to hear the Master say: "Well done thou good and faithful servant."

Two little girls whom I once knew were both learning to play the piano. The mother of one said that she had to lock her in the room to be sure that she did her practice; while the other one, as soon as she came home from school for her lunch, would rush upstairs, open the window, and sit down to practice. To one it was a burden; to the other, great pleasure. I am reminded of the Bible passage: "God's commands are not burdensome, and those that do them shall abide forever more" (NEB).

So, with ardor of spirit, and with willing heart and hands may we practice each day—while it is called today—to serve God, that we may know what is good, and acceptable, and perfect in His sight.

When God beats the time, life is melody, harmony and peace.

Let us lose no time in practicing our part that we may be among the redeemed ones to sing that beautiful "new song" in the great, final performance where "ever more the notes shall rise, sweet and clear in tones of love / Blessed anthems of the skies glad'ning all the realms of love."

South Wales, G.B.

R.B.

Only in the Autographs

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no, variations; and even in the most corrupt form in which it has ever appeared, the real text of the sacred writers is competently exact; nor is one article of faith or moral precept either perverted or lost.... The defenders of the trustworthiness of the scriptures have constantly asserted that God gave the Bible as the errorless record of his will to men, and that he has, in his superabounding grace, preserved it for them to this hour—yea and will preserve it for them to the end of time." (B. B. Warfield, *The Westminster Confession and the Original Autographs*, pp. 589-590).

By reading the Bible as we have it today, we can obtain all that we need for our salvation. God will not allow His purposes to be frustrated. We do not have the original Autographs, but the Bible as we have it is fully adequate to instruct us in correct doctrine and to guide us in the way to eternal life. □

Live Each Day to the Fullest

Yesterday's troubles are written in sand,
Brushed out of existence by God's own hand—
The things of the future our hearts may fear
Can all be resolved when tomorrow is here...
Out of a lifetime, *these* hours alone—
The hours of TODAY are completely our own.
So as each sun is setting there's reason to say,
"Thanks, Lord, for your gifts—above all,
for this day."

D*are to be true; nothing can need a lie;
A fault which needs it most, grows two thereby.*

T*he man who is fighting the good fight of faith
never lays down his armor.*

H*aving a sharp tongue can cut your own throat.*

T*hose who most need advice usually like it least.*

T*he man who does as he pleases is seldom pleased
with what he does.*

Y*ou cannot raise your own reputation by lowering
others.*



My Lifework

*To acquire a thorough knowledge of my own heart and character;
To restrain my irregular inclinations;
To subdue every rebellious passion;
To purify the motives of my conduct;
To form myself to that temperance which no pleasure can seduce,
To that meekness which no provocation can ruffle,
To that patience which no affliction can overwhelm,
And to that integrity which no self-interest can bribe.*





Divine Majesty!

The Lord our God is clothed with might,
The winds obey His will;
He speaks, and in His heavenly height
The rolling storm stands still.

Rebel, ye waves, and o'er the land
With threatening aspect roar;
The Lord uplifts His awful hand
And chains you to the shore.

Ye winds of night, your force combine;
Without His high behest
Ye shall not, in the mountain pine,
Disturb the sparrow's nest.

His voice sublime is heard afar;
In distant peals it dies;
He yokes the whirlwind to His car
And sweeps the howling skies.

Ye sons of earth, in reverence bend;
Ye nations, wait His nod;
And bid the choral song ascend
To celebrate our God.

—Selected