

# Megiddo Message

A full-page background image of a winter landscape. In the upper half, there are jagged, snow-covered mountain peaks against a clear blue sky. Below the mountains, a layer of white mist or snow partially obscures the lower slopes. In the middle ground, there is a line of trees, some evergreen and some deciduous without leaves, all covered in a thick layer of white snow. The foreground is a vast, flat expanse of snow. In the bottom center, a small, dark-colored animal, possibly a moose or a large dog, is standing and facing right.

*The earth is the Lord's, and  
everything in it...*  
—Psalm 24:1; NIV

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# Are You Asking for Trouble?

**N**o one knowingly invites problems or walks into situations which will strain their endurance. But there are certain types of “trouble” which we should welcome, even seek. Jesus did not say, “Follow me, and you will never have any trouble.” He said, “Take up your cross and follow me.” If we decide to follow Christ, we are, in one sense, asking for trouble—not the trouble that results from having our own way but the trouble with our lower nature that comes when we insist on being controlled and directed by the new Christ-like nature.

Christ, the great Teacher, was never complacent with evil. Never did He agree to a policy of peaceful coexistence. Wherever there is evil, there must be trouble, the kind of trouble that results in the evil being expelled and replaced with good. It is really the task of displacing the old nature with the new.

And this inevitably means trouble. You can keep out of this kind of trouble by avoiding any serious commitment to doing right. You can avoid it by never trying to do anything. You can keep out of this kind of trouble by always holding to your own opinion and your own way. Or you can keep out of it by never saying anything on a question. Eyes closed and mouth shut—that is the program that some follow! It avoids all trouble—except the greater trouble of not counting for anything in this life and not laying up anything for the future.

Think what the world owes to those men and women who went straight against the trend of their times, who asked for trouble—and made it work for them. Didn’t the great apostle Paul deliberately walk into trouble when he was immediately obedient to the heavenly call? Were not many of the early Christians clearly asking for trouble simply by professing belief in Christ and loyalty to His principles? To have lived passively and prevented all trouble would have meant desertion, denial, and eternal oblivion. Was not the prospect of eternal life worth the trouble?

We may not be actively persecuted for our faith—God be praised! Still there are times when we must invite trouble by standing firmly for what we know to be right and true. It may be in the form of the hostility of former friends or neighbors. It may be conflicts with our own old nature, caused by the demands of the new and higher nature. There is sure to be conflict, for *“the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want”* (Gal. 5:17 NIV)—a sure formula for trouble.

Whenever we strive to maintain in our daily lives an example of dedicated Christianity, we are asking for trouble. It is much easier not to care, to be satisfied with ourselves as we are. But self-satisfaction is not the way to self-improvement. And it is not the way to a character acceptable in the sight of God. The path to the heights of Christian character is sometimes steep.

So trouble can actually be beneficial—if it’s the right kind of trouble, if it is transforming us from what we naturally are into the likeness of Christ.

Go ahead. Ask for trouble—the right kind.





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## MEGIDDO MEANS ...

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

## WE BELIEVE ...

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

### The Herald and the KING

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

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

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# Megiddo Message

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# SALVATION—

## What, When, for Whom?

By GERALD R. PAYNE

FULL Salvation means:

◆ **ETERNAL LIFE**

*"He will pay every man for what he has done, To those who pursue glory, honour, and immortality by steady persistence in well doing, he will give eternal life" (Rom. 2:7 NEB).*

◆ **STRENGTH, INCREASED FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT, FLIGHT USING OWN POWER, NO WEARINESS.**

*"But the people who trust the Lord will become strong again. They will rise up as an eagle in the sky; they will run and not need rest; they will walk and not become tired" (Isa. 40:31 NCV).*

*"The wind blows wherever it pleases;...that is how it is with all who are born of the spirit" (John 3:8, JB)*

◆ **NO SORROW**

*"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:17).*

◆ **NO SICKNESS**

*"And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick" (Isa. 33:24).*

◆ **NO PAIN OR DEATH**

*"And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4).*

Who has all of these wonderful blessings today?

CONCLUSION:

**FULL SALVATION IS FUTURE.**

**S**alvation is the most important subject that can concern us, because salvation means life, and without the gift of life no other gift or possession has any value. All life and the ability to create and sustain life comes from God.

Without salvation, this brief life is all we can expect. But it does not matter what we or anyone else believe pertaining to this most important subject unless our belief is supported by the Word of God. For God alone is able to give life. All hope of future life depends upon Him. And for our knowledge of what He will give we are dependent upon His written Word; we have no other means of discovering His thoughts today.

### WHAT IS SALVATION?

Salvation is literally a deliverance. The Greek word translated "save" in the New Testament is "sozo" and means, "to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction" (*Thayer's Greek English Lexicon*).

The Bible uses the term to describe different types of deliverances.

**1) One is "saved" who is delivered or rescued from danger, bondage or servitude.**

The Lord "saved" or rescued the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt (Jude 5).

Eight persons in Noah's ark were saved from destruction (1 Pet. 3:20).

When Paul was shipwrecked, he described those who would survive as being "saved": "except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 27:31).

**2) One is "saved" (as a new believer) who is delivered from his former way of life with its inevitable end and is set on the way to a new and eternal life.**

Paul speaks of the believers being "saved" from their former way of life that ended in death (2 Tim. 1:9). The new believer is also saved in the sense of being delivered "from error and corrupt notions, in moral purity, in pardon of sin" (*Thayer's Greek English Lexicon*).

The Corinthians experienced such a salvation. After describing their former way of life in sin, he says, "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11).

He speaks of this type of salvation yet again in Titus 3:5: "According to his mercy he saved us." What were they saved from? Read the passage immediately preceding (Titus 3:3 NIV): "At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another." This was the type of life they had known when the gospel message came to them. "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us." Truly it was God's "mercy" that "saved" them, i.e., rescued them from such desultory living.



**3) One is "saved" who is changed physically, i.e., delivered from mortality and its encumbrances, to enjoy a higher level of life eternally.**

When we think about this salvation, we are speaking of *a perpetual state of life*, i.e., life that does not end in an anticipated number of years. It is the "everlasting life" Jesus spoke of (John 6:27), which is the end result of drinking the spiritual water He has to offer (John 4:13-14).

When we think about salvation, we are also speaking of *a higher level of existence*, i.e., a life not dependent on physical food and drink and not beset with sickness, suffering, misery and finally death.

- ◆ *A saved body is not flesh and blood.* The apostle Paul said that "*Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*" (1 Cor 15:50). Immortal bodies are of a different substance, a material superior to "flesh and blood" as we know it.
- ◆ *A saved body is not corruptible.* It is a state of incorruptibility. Again quoting the apostle Paul, "*This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality*" (1 Cor. 15:52-53).
- ◆ *A saved body is a glorified body.* To be saved, in the language of Scripture, is to have our "*vile [mortal] body*" changed to be like the glorified body of our Lord (Phil. 3:20-21).
- ◆ *A saved body cannot die.* It is like that possessed by the angels of God, of whom Jesus said, "*neither can they die any more*" (Luke 20:35-36).
- ◆ *A saved body does not suffer hunger, thirst, pain, sorrow, sickness, or any type of mental or physical discomfort.* God has promised to take away all "*sorrow [and] crying, neither shall there be any more pain*" (Rev. 21:3-4; see also 7:16-17).

**SALVATION: WHEN?**

There is no evidence in the Bible that anyone today has this last type of salvation, i.e., the new and incorruptible body, eternal life. This salvation will be "*brought... at the revelation of Jesus Christ*" (1 Pet. 1:13). It is the "*crown of glory*" that will be given every faithful one "*when the Chief Shepherd shall appear*" (1 Pet. 5:4).

The apostles spoke of having eternal life by "hope" also "by promise" also by right of inheritance. None of these are a "present" possession, though each has a sure prospect for the future.

- ◆ Paul wrote to Titus: "*In hope of eternal life, which God who cannot lie promised before the world began*" (Titus 1:2).
- ◆ John to fellow-believers: "*And this is what he promised us—even eternal life*" (1 John 2:25 NIV).
- ◆ Peter to fellow-believers: "*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time*" (1 Pet. 1:3-5 NIV).

**WHAT SAYS THE BIBLE?**

Since the Bible is the revealed word of God, we must study carefully to be sure we understand its message correctly on every point. So the crux of the question is: What does the Bible say about salvation?

If one wants to learn about government, he can consult any number of reliable books on the subject and he will learn the author's ideas and opinions.

If one wants to learn about medicine, he can consult the writings of those who have years of experience in the field and learn what has been and is being done.

Where can one learn about salvation—what it is and how we can

*(Continued on page 9)*

## Some Common Beliefs about SALVATION

In most fundamental Christianity, salvation is believed to be a need because the race is universally guilty as a result of Adam's sin and that sin was passed on to all his posterity. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* describes this very basic idea that is accepted throughout Christendom: "According to this doctrine through seminal identity with Adam, every human being must partake of the guilt of Adam's sin. And even at birth a child is already deserving of God's wrath for its share in the original sin of humankind and before it acquires the guilt of its own actual sins. Moreover, because each individual inherits the nature of fallen humanity he has an innate predestination to sin. This doctrine of man means that no person can, by his volition and effort, save himself but depends absolutely upon the saving grace of Christ." (*Encyclopaedia Britannica CD 99*)

Again we read from the same source, "The basic tenets of Christian soteriology may be summarized as follows: man is deserving of damnation by God for the original sin, which he inherits by descent from Adam, and for his own actual sin. But because sin is regarded as also putting man in the power of the devil, Christ's work of salvation has been interpreted along two different lines. Thus His crucifixion may be evaluated as a vicarious sacrifice offered to God as propitiation or atonement for human sin. Alternatively, it may be seen as a price paid to redeem man from the devil. These two ways of interpreting the death of Christ have provided the major themes of soteriological theory and speculation in Christian theology. Despite this fluidity of interpretation, belief in the saving power of Christ is fundamental to Christianity and finds its expression in every aspect of its faith and practice."

**Baptist**

From the Independent Baptist, Baptist Bible fellowship, International (BBFI), the BBFI Handbook Statement of Faith, under the heading "Of Grace In The New Creation" we read:

"His [Christ's] death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the just dying for the unjust." How are we justified? From the BBFI Handbook under "Of Justification" we continue to read, "We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him

*(Continued on page 9)*



## WHAT SAYS THE BIBLE?

### Definition

**saved:** *sozo* (Greek)

- 1) to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction...
- a) to save one (from injury or peril); to save a suffering one (from perishing), i.e. one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health; ...to preserve one who is in danger of destruction, to save (i.e., rescue)
- b) to save in the technical biblical sense; negatively, to deliver from the penalties of the Messianic judgment; ...to save from the evils which obstruct the reception of the Messianic deliver-

ance; ...positively, to make one a partaker of the salvation by Christ. ...Since salvation begins in this life (in deliverance from error and corrupt notions, in moral purity, in pardon of sin, and in the blessed peace of soul reconciled to God), but on the visible return of Christ from heaven will be perfected in the consummate blessings of *ὁ αἰὼν ὁ μέλλων*, we can understand why *τὸ σωθῆναι* is spoken of in some passages as a present possession, in others as a good yet future.  
—Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.

## Salvation: Now or Future?

### Salvation PRESENT

#### **An initial deliverance from a sinful way of life:**

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). They were saved from their old ways of sin and error.

"And he said to the woman [washing his feet with tears and anointing them with perfume], Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luke 7:50). She was saved from her old way of life by her faith which she had demonstrated.

#### **Being saved (now) is not a completed action but an ongoing process:**

"I know very well how foolish the message of the cross sounds to those who are on the road to destruction. But we who are being saved recognize this message as the very power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18 NLT).

"Our lives are a fragrance presented by Christ to God. But this fragrance is perceived differently by those being saved and by those perishing" (2 Cor. 2:15).

### Salvation FUTURE

#### **A new body, immortal, undying, incapable of sinning; free from all sorrow, pain, sickness and suffering.**

Peter: "You...are kept by the power of God through faith unto **salvation ready to be revealed** in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5).

Paul: "**We wait eagerly for...**the redemption of our bodies" (Romans 8:23).

Paul: "For this **corruptible must put on incorruption**, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:53).

Paul: "**In hope of eternal life** which God that cannot lie promised..." (Titus 1:2).

Paul: "[God] will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing **seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life**" (Rom. 2:6-7).

Jesus: (to His Apostles): "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that **endureth to the end shall be saved**" (Matt. 10:22; Mark 13:13). They were not saved then. And only eleven of the original number endured to the end. Judas betrayed Him and then hanged himself.

Paul: "For we must be content to **hope that we shall be saved**—our salvation is not in sight, we should not have to be hoping for it if it were—but, as I say, **we must hope to be saved since we are not saved yet**—it is something we must wait for with patience" (Rom. 8:24-25 JB). The verb, *saved* is in the aorist tense<sup>1</sup> (without reference to either past, present or future). The Jerusalem Bible seems to have the right sense since it agrees with the general teaching on the subject.

Paul: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, **shall give me at that day**: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8).



## USES OF "SAVED" IN SCRIPTURE

**"SHALL BE saved"** (future tense, passive voice, indicative mood)<sup>1</sup>

- one who "endures unto the end **shall be saved**" (Matt. 10:22; 24:13).
- one who "calls on the name of the Lord **shall be saved**" (Romans 10:13 NLT).
- one who confesses Christ's name and believes "that God hath raised him from the dead...**shall be saved**" (Rom. 10:9).
- "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord **shall be saved**" (Acts 2:21).
- one who "believ[e]s on the Lord Jesus Christ...**shalt be saved**" (Acts 16:31).
- "He that believeth and is baptized **shall be saved**" (Mark 16:16).
- one who enters in through the door [Christ] "**shall be saved**" (John 10:9).
- Peter's words to Cornelius: "thou and all thy house **shall be saved**" (Acts 11:14).
- "Being now justified by his blood [word], **we shall be saved** from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:9).
- "Being reconciled, **we shall be saved** by his life" (Rom. 5:10).
- Though Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, only "a remnant **shall be saved**" (Rom. 9:27).
- "All [spiritual] Israel **shall be saved**" (Rom 11:26).
- "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself **shall be saved**; yet so as by fire." The NLT has a clearer translation, the "builders themselves will be saved, but like someone escaping through a wall of flames" (1 Cor. 3:15).

**"CAN BE saved"** (aorist tense, passive voice, infinitive mood)<sup>1</sup>

- When Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," His disciples asked "Who then **can be saved**?" (Matt. 19:25; Mark 10:26; Luke 18:26). They did not speak as though they themselves were already saved.
- Peter and John said of Christ's name the only name whereby we "**must be saved**" (Acts 4:12).
- In Christ's name "Except ye...ye **cannot be saved**" (Acts 15:1).
- "We...**shall be saved**" (Acts 15:11).
- Paul about the opposers: They did not receive the love of truth "that they **might be saved**" (2 Thess. 2:10).
- God "will have all men **to be saved**" (1 Tim. 2:4) —but they do not wish to be.

**"CAN BE saved"** (aorist tense, passive voice, indicative mood)<sup>1</sup>

- Christ, speaking of the great tribulation, stated that "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" (Matt. 24:22; Mark 13:20). Eternal life is something hoped for. "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:24-25).

**"SAVED"** (aorist tense, active voice, indicative mood)<sup>1</sup>

- "But saved Noah the eighth person" (2 Pet. 2:5) —from water, not for eternal salvation.
- "He [Christ] saved others...let him save himself" (Matt. 27:42; Mark 15:31; Luke 23:35).
- "According to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:5). This verse is used by nearly all Christendom to support the belief of being saved now. But in light of all the other passages regarding salvation, is this a safe stand? First, notice the subject of this passage: "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another" (Titus 3:3). This is what they were saved from, their old ways of sin. The passage continues to explain that they were saved by the "washing of regeneration." Washing means "cleansing and regeneration, a new life consecrated to God, a radical change of mind for the better"—*Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. If Paul had intended we not have works of righteousness ourselves, then why did he go on to say, "be careful to maintain good works"? (Titus 3:8). Eternal life is still ahead, "we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (previous verse, Titus 3:7).

**"Thy faith SAVED thee"** (perfect tense, active voice, indicative mood)<sup>1</sup>

Note: this is used of a saving from physical or mental illness, not of eternal salvation.

- "Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee" (Luke 18:42). This person had been saved (restored) from blindness.
- To the sinful woman kissing Jesus' feet, He said, "Thy faith hath saved thee" (Luke 7:50). Before understanding this verse, it is necessary to look at the circumstances involved: The Pharisee and guests were thinking that if Jesus was a prophet, He would know the woman was a sinner and would stop her from touching Him immediately. To show that He was a prophet, He told the Pharisee what he was thinking and then, speaking prophetically, said to the woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee." He

(Continued on page 8)



knew that the woman had faith to be saved and therefore would go from His presence that day living a dedicated life as a godly woman, such a change the Pharisee could see in the future and perhaps believe himself. F. F. Bruce seems to think along these same lines: "we believe (so as) to be saved"—Green, Joel G.; McKnight, Scott; Marshall, I. Howard; editors, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*.

**"Should BE SAVED"** (aorist tense, passive voice, subjunctive mood)<sup>1</sup> —a request for the conditions of salvation.

- "Lest they should believe and be saved" (Luke 8:12).
- "Might [or may] be saved" (John 3:17; 5:34; 1 Cor. 5:5; 10:33; 1 Thess. 2:16).
- "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30).

**"BE SAVED"?** (present tense, passive voice, participle mood)<sup>1</sup>

The Greek participle (corresponding to our *ing* words) should be considered in understanding these verses. The sense would be "*being saved*," as it is translated in the newer translations.

- "Are there few that be saved?" (Luke 13:23). Jesus' answer was, "*many...will seek to enter in, and shall not be able*" (v. 24) —something to occur in the future.
- *The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.* (Acts 2:47) —something to occur in the future.
- "*But unto us which are saved [being saved NIV]*" (1 Cor. 1:18). "Which is taking place now (1 Cor. 1:18)" —Hawthorne, Gerald F.; Martin, Ralph P.; and Reid, Daniel G.; eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press) 1998,

## ERRATA

In our January issue, on page 8, column 2, we published this subheading in error:

**"ARE BEING SAVED"** (Perfect tense, passive voice, and participle mood) followed by the text, "*By grace are ye saved through faith*" (Eph. 2:5, 8).

The section should read:

**"HAVE BEEN SAVED"** (Perfect tense, passive voice, and participle mood)<sup>1</sup>

In this verse Paul discusses the progress the Ephesians had made. Like others, they had been living to gratify the cravings of their sinful nature (Eph. 2:1–3). But a loving, caring God had had mercy on them, even when they were still dead in sin, and "quicken[ed]" them (made them alive) with Christ (Eph. 2:4–5). This *being made alive* was not literal but spiritual. They had been dead in sin, alienated from God. But now, by the grace (favor) of God, they were spiritually "alive" under the watchful and caring eye of the Lord.

Paul calls this change being "saved by the grace of God," and this deliverance came about, not through their own "works" but as a "gift from God" (Eph. 2:8). It was His good pleasure to enlighten them; it was not their own doing, lest they would boast. But enlightenment brought obligation, says Paul. For "*We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do*" (Eph. 2:19 NIV). *Good works* in this verse refers to character that is (1) of good constitution or nature; (2) useful, salutary; (3) good, pleasant, agreeable, joyful, happy; (4) excellent, distinguished; (5) upright, honourable, of good constitution or nature" (*Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*).

Paul is telling the Ephesians that they have been saved (rescued) from their former, godless way of life, but eternal salvation is not yet. They must continue in that way to receive eternal salvation. ♦

- "*Them that are saved*" [*being saved*, NIV] (2 Cor. 2:15).
- "*Them which are saved shall walk in the light of it.*" The newer translations read: "*By its light the people of the world will walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it*" (Rev. 21:24 NCV). There is no mention of them "*which are saved*," in the newer translations.

**"WOULD BE SAVED"** (present tense, passive voice infinitive mood)<sup>1</sup>

- Only example in New Testament. Said at shipwreck: "*all hope that we should be saved was then taken away*" (Acts 27:20).

**You "ARE SAVED... IF"** (present tense, passive voice indicative mood)<sup>1</sup>

- "*Ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you*" (1 Cor. 15:2).
- "*If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*" (1 Pet. 4:18).

**"ARE BEING SAVED"** (perfect tense, passive voice, and participle mood)<sup>1</sup>

- "*By grace are ye saved through faith*" (Eph. 2:5, 8). It is an ongoing process. You are *being saved* through faith.
- **"HATH SAVED"** (aorist tense, active voice, participle mood)<sup>1</sup>
- God; "*Who hath saved us*" or "who has saved us and called us to a *holy life*" (2 Tim. 1:9 NIV). In other words, we were saved from a former way of life.
- The Lord "*having saved the people out of the land of Egypt*" destroyed the unbelievers (Jude 5).

ⓂE:

re—The passive voice represents the subject as being the recipient of the action.

Ⓜ—The active voice represents the subject as the doer of the action.

ⓂD:

itive—The indicative mood is a simple statement of fact. If an action really occurs or has occurred or will occur, it will be rendered in the indicative mood.

tive—The Greek infinitive mood in most cases corresponds to the English infinitive, which is basically the verb with "to" pre-  
ed, as "to believe."

active—The subjunctive mood is the mood of possibility and tentativeness. The action described may or may not occur, pending upon circumstances.

ple—The Greek participle corresponds for the most part to the English participle, reflecting "ing" or "ed" being suffixed to the basic verb form.

bove definitions are from: *Tense Voice Mood*, (Ontario: Goodside Bible Fellowship) 1994. ♦



(Continued from page 5)

obtain it? Only from the One who can give it: God Almighty. And how can we learn from Him? Only by going to His written Word, the Bible.

What says the Bible? This is a critical question, and we must be careful how we understand what it says. If the popular teaching about salvation is correct, i.e., that simple open confession of one's faith in Christ is all that is necessary to obtain salvation, that is what we want to believe. But if that is the correct understanding, why do we find so often in the Bible that God's favor or rewards or salvation or eternal life depend on one's personal obedience, conduct, character, or virtue?

Either we must say the Bible contradicts itself and teaches two plans of salvation, or we must look for the teaching of the majority of its statements, then find a way to harmonize what seems to conflict.

Just consider a few points. According to the Bible,

- ◆ **One must do the will of God to enter Christ's kingdom.** Said Jesus, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).
- ◆ **One must hear and do Jesus' sayings to be saved.** Said Jesus, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man" (Matt. 7:24-25).
- ◆ **One must "do his [Jesus'] commandments" to be saved.** Jesus said only those who obey His commandments will be granted the right to eat of the tree of life and enter into the celestial city (Rev. 22:14).
- ◆ **Each child of God will be judged according to what he has done at Jesus' return.** Jesus said that He would return, bringing with Him a reward, which He would give to every man "according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).
- ◆ **Jesus judged the worthiness of each of the seven churches of Asia (Revelation, chapters 2-3) by their works.** He said to each of the seven churches, as a point of supreme importance, "I know thy works," and pronounced a threat of judgment upon them if they did not repent.
- ◆ **Jesus promised the "crown of life" to believers on condition that they remain "faithful unto death."** The Church at Philadelphia would be worthy or unworthy according to how they stood up under testing: "Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10 NIV). Would not this indicate that to obtain the crown of life one must be faithful (obedient, committed, righteous) all the way to the point of one's death?
- ◆ **The apostle Paul, after many years in the service of Christ, still feared lest he should be a "castaway."** He wrote, "I therefore so run, ... so fight I, ... I keep under my body, ... lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:26-27). Why did he need to be concerned about being disqualified if his eternal life was already within him?

He said also that he had not yet attained but was pressing on for the prize of "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14). This does not sound like he already had eternal life.

- ◆ **Jesus repeatedly promised eternal blessings "to him that overcometh"** (Rev., chapters 2 & 3), and this was after He had already died and been resurrected. If His death had saved them, why did they need to overcome in order to inherit blessings?
- ◆ **Being a "slave of sin" ends in eternal death. Being "servants of righteousness" will result in receiving eternal life.**

But the service precedes the result. Paul wrote, "Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks

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is Justification; that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done; but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood, His righteousness is imputed unto us."

In other words, we are righteous, they say, not because of our own deeds or character, but rather it is a free gift given us as a sacrificial substitute in the person of Jesus Christ: His righteousness becomes our righteousness.

Under the heading, "Of Grace In The New Creation" we read:

"In the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature, and receives eternal life, the free gift of God."

The *BBFI Handbook*, sub-heading "Of The Righteous And The Wicked" states:

"We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and sanctified by the spirit of the Lord God are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under the curse. And this distinction holds among men, both in and after death, and that the everlasting solicitude of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost." In other words, faith in Christ—righteousness, whereas no faith in Christ—wicked and under the curse, and destined to suffer everlastingly in the fires of hell.

Does this mean that those millions of people of both past and present, who live in remote areas of the world where the Christian message has never been heard are to be punished in everlasting fires of hell for not believing in Christ? Does this mean that those who do not obey the laws of Christ are to be saved because they ascribe to a belief in His "atoning blood" as a substitute for our obedience, while those who may be living a more upright life, but not having heard of Christ, will suffer in flames of fire for eternity?

#### **Roman Catholic**

"God became a man, taking upon himself the guilt and slave-condition of a criminal sinner. He then accepted the appropriate punishment, death. Because this sacrificial victim was God, His death was of infinite value. He perfectly atoned for all our sins" (Father Mateo, from <http://www.cin.org/m920729c.html>).

According to Father Chrysostomos, sins "can be forgiven after death."

#### **Church of God**

According to the Church of God, salvation "is the gift of God, by grace through  
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be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted" (Rom. 6:16-17, NIV). Paul makes the distinction: they could be slaves of sin, which leads to death or slaves of obedience which leads to righteousness and eternal life.

◆ **Salvation (eternal life) is promised to those who persist in doing good.**

Why did Paul say that God would give "To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality,...eternal life" (Rom. 2:7 NIV) if right doing was not essential to salvation?

And why did Paul write, "I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good" (Titus 3:8 NIV), if there was no serious obligation upon the believers to obey?

And why did Paul write to the Corinthians that they had heard the Gospel, and received it, and by it they would be saved if they kept in memory what he had preached to them—otherwise their belief would have been in vain? (1 Cor. 15:1-2). Why would they have to keep it in memory if a single act at the time of their conversion assured them of salvation?

**"NOT OF WORKS..."—WHAT WORKS?**

Some will protest that Paul said "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). They will go on to say that we can't be saved through anything we can do, that anything we do makes no difference whatever to our salvation, that the only faith that God saves through is His grace.

But let us ask: is it fair to Paul to take his words in verse 8 alone without regard for what he continues to say in the very next verse? "For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life" (Eph. 2:10 NRSV). "Good works," says Paul, are to be our way of life.

How can we reconcile the two statements of Paul?

What works are condemned? What works are commanded?

The whole matter is clarified when we realize that the Bible writers talked about three totally different types of "works."

1) The works required by the law of Moses, to which the Jews still gave allegiance.

2) The works which might be self-dictated, as though I could prescribe my own course of "right" conduct and God would save me for following it. Such works are self-congratulating and a cause for pride, and are not the "works" God either requires or rewards. The Bible calls them variously "the works of the flesh" and says "every way of a man is right in his own eyes" (Prov. 21:2).

3) The "good works" that are done in obedience to Christ's law, which He Himself stated was the condition for having His friendship. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15, NRSV).

Speaking of the works required by Moses' law, which

cannot bring salvation, Paul says, "Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders by birth. You were called 'the uncircumcised ones' by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts" (Eph. 2:11 NLT). Paul is pointing out the differences between the Jews and the Gentiles. He speaks of those "works" which were specific acts required by the Law of Moses, the civil law governing the nation of Israel. (It was also a "teaching law" showing "things to come" —Heb. 10:1). To this law the Jewish rabbis through the years added a multitude of petty laws and ordinances, so that by the time of Jesus it was a law far removed even from Moses. Jesus also condemned the "works" required by this law saying, "Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long," etc. (Matt. 23:5-7 NIV). Obedience to such a law only led to unlawful boasting.

By contrast, obedience to Christ's laws is humbling. Jesus' law was a law of cross bearing, self denial, and self-surrender. To quote His words, "Anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matt. 10:38-39 NIV). The law of Moses had nothing to compare with this. Again Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15 NRSV). There is no cause for boasting in these words. And is not the inverse of this statement also true, that one does not love Christ if he does not keep Christ's commandments?

**JESUS' WAY TO SALVATION**

We of the Megiddo Church believe that we must obey all of Jesus' commandments to be eligible for salvation. It cannot be earned—all that one could do in a lifetime could never be said to be an equivalent exchange for the unending life of supreme happiness and blessing which God is offering. It is rightly called "a gift" (Rom. 6:23). But neither has He promised it to all irrespective of character. The Bible teaches that Jesus will return to judge and reward His servants (1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 22:12), and that He will give eternal life to those He finds faithful and will grant them a place in His everlasting Kingdom (Rev. 3:21; 1:6). His Kingdom will extend to the far reaches of earth; not one living being will be out of reach of the authority of Christ (Rev. 15:4; Ps. 72:7-9).

We can be thankful to God for opening the way to salvation. Jesus showed us that way, and what is it? In His own words, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23 NIV). This requires individual concentration and effort. This means that if one would follow Jesus he must:

◆ "deny himself." This means forgoing what one would naturally like and is able to have for the sake of Christ's cause.

◆ "take up his cross daily." Not occasionally but "daily" there is a cross to carry, something painful to endure, something to give up, something to suffer, something contrary to one's natural instincts and desires.

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## *Lord, Help!* *-my mind*

**F**ather, my mind is a muddle, and I need Your help to bring it under control.

You, Lord, designed this marvelous mechanism that I call my mind, so You know how it works. You know how it gets me into trouble. You know all my thoughts, and the attitude of my heart.

Lord, You gave me Your Word as a weapon with which to fight my impure and unholy thoughts. I want to concentrate on Your truth, goodness, and righteousness. I would fill my mind with thoughts that are pure and good, then I know that You will be pleased with me.

Lord, I thank You for giving me the helmet of salvation to guide my mind. I need a constant defense against the corroding evils around me. Help me to commit Your Word to memory, so that I will think more and more like You, and guard against all that is unhealthy or common.

I do not want to give any unhealthy thoughts lodgment in my mind. It is my highest desire to take on the mind of Christ, and, like the apostle Paul, make all my thoughts obedient to Him.

Lord, I want a renewed mind, a mind renewed in Your knowledge, vitalized with Your spirit.

May my spoken words and my unspoken thoughts be pleasing in Your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. AMEN.



◆ *“and follow me.”* Whatever Jesus did, His loyal follower had to be willing to do also. One should be ready to follow Him in any service, any suffering, any sacrifice for His sake, even if it means giving up one’s life rather than to deny the faith. As the apostle Peter wrote, *“For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps”* (1 Pet. 2:21). Here was set the highest standard for all. Especially was it meaningful for those who would suffer physical persecution.

The apostle Paul said we must be willing to die with Christ—not literally, but in a spiritual sense (2 Tim. 2:11), making a full commitment of our life goals, ambitions and interests to Christ. According to the apostle Paul, this death rather than the one on Calvary was the more significant to us as believers. Paul said of this death of Jesus, *“In that he died, he died, unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Rom. 6:10–11). Jesus died completely to sin and all sinful tendencies. Many people have suffered physical death, but few are willing to suffer the complete resignation of their will as did Jesus (Heb. 10:7–9).

Jesus’ sacrifice of Himself and His own will were the opening of the door to salvation. As we read, *“Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal sal-*

*vation for all who obey him”* (Heb. 5:8–9 NIV). In this way Jesus showed the way to salvation through complete obedience to the will of His Father. As He said, *“Not my will, but thine, be done”* (Luke 22:42).

### **IS IT ALL RIGHT TO BE DIFFERENT?**

Is it right—safe—wise to take a position contrary to what is believed and accepted throughout Christendom? Let us plead: Don’t reject it until you have looked at the evidence with an open and honest heart.

We would be very happy to accept the common teaching, i.e., that simple faith in Christ is all that is necessary to obtain salvation if we could be convinced that such is the teaching of the Bible. But when we find so much in the Bible that says directly that God’s favor or rewards or salvation depend on our obedience, conduct, character, virtue, etc., what should we believe?

There is a saying that “Fifty million Frenchmen can’t be wrong.” But we all know that the majority *can* be and often *are* wrong. A review of Bible history shows that God’s prophets and God’s people were always in the minority. They were ignored, despised, persecuted, killed. Why? Because they taught a way of life that did not suit the mass mentality. A small portion of Stephen’s address to the Jews bears this out. *“Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—you who have received the law that was put into*

## **HOW DOES ONE BECOME A CHRISTIAN?**

**T**o answer this question we must first define what a Christian is. The phrase was first coined in Antioch. Barnabas and Saul, for a whole year, *“assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch”* (Acts 11:26).

*Holman’s Bible Dictionary* says of the word Christian, “The Greek *Christianos* originally applied to the slaves belonging to a great household. It soon came to denote the adherents of an individual or party. A Christian is an adherent of Christ; one committed to Christ, a follower of Christ. The word is used three times in the New Testament. 1. Believers ‘were called Christians first in Antioch’ because their behavior, activity, and speech were like Christ (Acts 11:26). 2. Agrippa responded to Paul’s witness, ‘Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian’ (Acts 26:28). He spoke of becoming an adherent of Christ. 3. Peter stated that believers who ‘suffer as a Christian’ are to do so for the glory of God (1 Pet. 4:16). A Christian is one who becomes an adherent of Christ, whose daily life and behavior facing adversity is like Christ.

How does one become a Christian?

### **1. Learn what the Bible teaches about all matters vital to our salvation.**

Knowledge is fundamental. Jesus said that everyone that would come to Him must be taught of Him. *“It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me”* (John 6:45). Again He said, *“If ye know these things...”* (John 13:17).

One must learn not only what is revealed in the New Testament but in the whole Bible. *“All scripture ... inspired by God ... is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work”* (2 Tim. 3:16–17 NRSV). This is the knowledge we must acquire.

### **2. Accept and believe the gospel message, as contained in the Bible.**

Knowledge not taken to heart, not internalized, is of little value. Along with knowledge must come belief, faith, and trust. Faith is the essence of



*effect through angels but have not obeyed it" (Acts 7:52-53 NIV).*

Read the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> chapters of Acts, and you will have to agree: the minority (the apostles and their followers) was right, while the majority (the Jews and unbelievers) was on the side of wrong.

Read the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> chapters of Genesis, and you will have to agree: the minority (Noah and his family) was right, while the majority (the people of that time) was on the side of wrong.

Read the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> chapters of Genesis and you again will agree: the minority (Lot and his daughters) was right, while the majority (the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain) was on the side of wrong.

In our beliefs about salvation we are not concerned whether they agree with any creed or catechism or opinions of any group or individual, but only that they are supported by the Word of God.

We are not trying to be different for the sake of being different. Our whole point is, What says the God of heaven? For we cannot save ourselves, and if we follow any teaching, even if it be popular, if it is not according to the plan of God, it is worse than worthless.

### IN SUMMARY

There are certain passages in Scripture which seem upon surface reading to support some theory of salvation apart from obedience. But we are convinced that Jesus will give eternal salvation only to those who comply totally with His teaching. One can find support for just about any idea from an isolated text taken out of context. But when one considers all that is said, there is no other conclusion that can be honestly drawn. Our salvation depends on our obedience.

For further discussion of this topic, see our booklets, *"The Atonement"* and *"What Must We Do To Be Saved?"* ♦

Christianity. *"Without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"* (Heb. 11:6).

Since the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), the gospel must be heard and believed.

### 3. Apply that gospel to one's life and conduct, to become morally like Christ.

The final step is obedience. The Christian has one goal in life, and that is...more life, even eternal life. The Christian belief is that God has promised a life which will never end, a life free from all the undesirables we experience now, from pain, disappointment, sorrow or loss. He has promised *"more than all we can even ask or imagine"* (Eph. 3:20 NIV). But that life is not for everyone irrespective of character. It is for those who have applied the knowledge of God to the transforming of their lives. Our life in public and in private must show that we belong to Christ, that the message of Christ has changed us. Obedience to the law of Christ is not long prayers in public, or carrying a Bible so everyone can see it, or talking to everyone about our faith. It is rather a change in our conduct, so that we become more like Christ, i.e., forgiving, patient, humble, honest, upright, developing in our life all the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). ♦

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faith in Jesus Christ, not earned by personal merit or good works. God gives salvation, not only for the present life, but for eternity, to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

"Grace is the free, unmerited favor God bestows on a sinner who repents. In its broadest sense, grace is expressed in every act of God's self-disclosure. By grace, a person comes to know God and Jesus Christ, is justified, and is saved. Through faith in Christ, the Christian remains always under grace.

"From the time sin entered the human race through Adam and Eve, humanity has been under its yoke—a yoke that can only be removed by God's grace through Jesus Christ." (The Plain Truth Magazine, <http://www.bible.ca/cr~PlainTruth.htm>)

### Jehovah's Witnesses

"All mankind inherited imperfection from Adam and Eve and, hence, are sinners." After Christ returns the dead soul can live again "only through the ransom sacrifice of Christ Jesus." (from [http://www.watchtower.org/library/br78/what\\_they\\_believe.htm](http://www.watchtower.org/library/br78/what_they_believe.htm))

### Mormons

According to their published "Articles of Faith," the Mormons believe that the remission of sins is through baptism. "As stated by Joseph Smith, the first principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ are, "first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost." (from [http://www.mormons.org/basic/articles\\_faith.htm](http://www.mormons.org/basic/articles_faith.htm))

### Methodist

Their doctrinal statement regarding salvation is as follows:

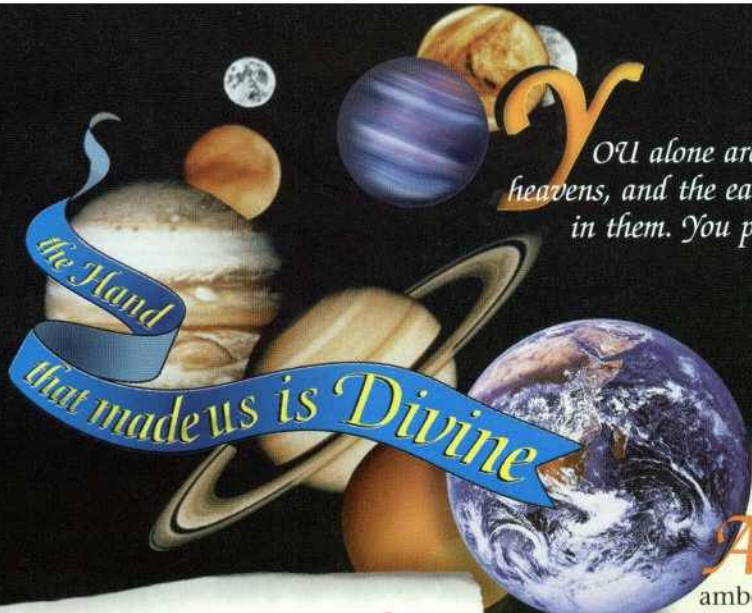
"[We believe in] The utter depravity of human nature in consequence of the Fall; and the necessity for repentance and regeneration. (3.3)

"[We believe in] The justification of the sinner solely by faith, through the shed blood and imputed righteousness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (3.5)

"[We believe in] The necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, conversion, and sanctification, and in service and worship." (3.6) (from <http://www.genesis.net.au/~feca/declaration.html>)

It seems from all of the above quotations that God created man perfect in His image, and somehow man disobeyed by eating of the forbidden fruit of "good and evil." Therefore God got Himself in a predicament. So He decided that the best way He could get Himself out was to sacrifice His "only begotten Son" in the place of punishing men for their sins. ♦





YOU alone are God. You have made...the heavens, and the earth and the seas, and everything in them. You preserve it all. —Neh. 9:6 TLB

the Hand  
that made us is Divine

## An "Eel-ectrical" Wonder

### Eel-ectricity came first

Around 600 BC, the Greeks found that by rubbing amber (a hard petrified resin) against a piece of fur it would attract particles of straw. This strange effect remained a mystery for over 2000 years. Then, around 1600 AD, Dr. William Gilbert coined the word "electric" in a report involving investigations of the reactions of amber and magnets. His experiments led to a number of investigations by many pioneers in the development of electrical technology over the next 350 years.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, in 1745, it was discovered that electricity could be stored in a Leyden jar (a jar partly filled with water with a wire inserted through a cork into the water). The cork was used to seal the jar. The exposed wire was then brought into contact with a friction device, which produced static electricity and charged the jar. The jar was later coated with sheets of metal foil. This became the first prototype for capacitors, widely used in electronic devices today.<sup>2</sup>

A few years later began the pioneering efforts involving the practical use of electricity, which we now take for granted.

However, thousands—perhaps millions—of years earlier, electricity was being used very efficiently in the Amazon basin of South America and elsewhere. It was being used for communication, navigation, self-defense and weaponry.

No, this is not about aliens from some other planet, but rather a long-time resident of planet earth: the electric eel (*Electrophorus electricus*).

A member of the carp or catfish family,<sup>3</sup> the electric eel is one of over 200 species equipped with a bioelectric organ for making electricity.<sup>4</sup> The nearest high-voltage record holder in the group is the electric catfish, which can discharge up to 450 volts of electricity.<sup>5</sup> The electric eel can produce currents of one ampere at 600 to 1,000 volts<sup>6</sup>—sufficient power to operate a toaster!

Long, long before the world's first hydroelectric central station at *Vulcan Street Plant, Appleton, Wisconsin* in 1882,<sup>7</sup> this long, cylindrical, scaleless, gray brown creature was fully equipped with no less than three highly efficient generating plants. (If there be no intelligent design behind creation, how is this possible? How did the electric eel even know how to begin to equip itself with the

### Did You Know...?

- ✓...it wasn't until 1745 that the first prototype capacitor was built while electricity was being used for defense, navigation and weaponry in prehistoric times?
- ✓...there are over two hundred species of aquatic creatures that use electric signals for self-defense and hunting?
- ✓...the electric eel can discharge up to 1,000 volts of electricity at one ampere, enough to kill small animals outright?
- ✓...that while the adult electric eel cannot see, it has no problems finding its way around and catching fish?
- ✓...the electric eel can discharge over 600 volts at will, several times per second in 3-millisecond bursts and recharge all the electric cells in one millisecond?
- ✓...that a person can withstand one of these electrical discharges, but not several?
- ✓...that the electric eel is not an eel but a fish?
- ✓...that the electric eel, though a fish, must surface for air no less than every 15 minutes or it would drown?

By GERALD R. PAYNE



right devises to actually make electric power in its body? What unguided chance could produce such eel-ectric wonders?

### The eel-ectric system

The eel's electrical system is composed of three parts. The main voltage plant is called the *large electric organ*. Another organ, called the *organ of Hunter*, is still somewhat of a mystery, although scientists believe that in some way it works with the large electric organ. A third organ, called the *bundle of Sachs*, is the power plant for the eel's radar transmitters.<sup>8</sup>

Why does the eel need a radar system? Actually, it would be quite helpless either to navigate or hunt food without it, because the adult electric eel is blind. But even if it could see, visibility in the muddy<sup>9</sup> waters of the Amazon basin, where the electric eel is native, is very near zero. So the Creator has equipped the eel with a remarkable radar system making it possible for the eel to navigate safely and find food without the aid of sight.<sup>10</sup>

How does it locate and capture the frogs, fish and crustaceans that are its main source of food? The electric eel generates low voltage pulses from its *bundle of Sachs*. The electrical pulses strike any nearby object and bounce back to several special electroreceptors located on the forward part of the eel. By processing these signals, the eel can know precisely where objects are located and what they are. Is a tasty meal, such as a fish, within range? Boom! The eel emits a large burst of electrical energy, and the prey is either killed or stunned. Then, using its radar system, it quickly swims to the location of its meal and swallows it whole.

It is reported that even horses have been stunned by the eel's electrical discharge, falling into the water and drowning. Smaller animals have been killed outright.<sup>11</sup> It is said that a human can withstand one electrical pulse but will succumb if the charge is repeated.

### Eel-ectric organs-how they work

The eel's vital organs are located just behind the head, and just behind the vital organs lies its electrical equipment. Not surprising, the electric organs make up most of its forty-plus pounds and about four-fifths of its length (eels can be up to 9 feet long).<sup>12</sup>

How does the eel generate so much electricity? The large electric organ contains many thousands of tiny cells called *electroplates*. These cells are said to be similar to battery cells. Each tiny cell stores a potential of 150 millivolts. To generate 1,000 volts would require more than 6500 cells connected in series. To generate 1 amp

would require more than 50 of these series circuits connected in parallel.

Do you want to try building a replica of the eel's electrical equipment so that you can truly appreciate what "evolution" produced? To begin, you will need about 700,000 tiny flashlight batteries with small wires, being careful to connect plus to negative. If you used a common D size flashlight battery, your chain will be nearly 2000 feet long—excluding wire length! (If your assembly is to be a size suitable to fit inside the adult eel, you will have to reduce the size of each battery to less than the diameter of a human hair.)

You now have a replica of the eel's basic single series circuit capable of emitting 1,000 volts. However, your miniature circuit will not have nearly enough current to equal the eel's. To increase the current to one amp you must construct another of these assemblies





identical to your first one (having 10,000 battery cells), then connect the two together, positive end to positive end and negative end to negative end. Now you have what circuit designers call a "series-parallel circuit," i.e., two series circuits connected in parallel. Continue building and connecting these circuits until you have added 68 more assemblies to your replica.

You now have a battery pack similar in capability to that which the Creator has enclosed in the tail section of the healthy adult electric eel (i.e., 700,000 tiny cells connected in a series-parallel circuit capable of producing 1,000 volts at 1 amp).

Of course, your replica is very much over simplified, and would hardly touch the complexity of the electric organs of the amazing creature of the Amazon.<sup>13</sup>

*Now think: if you were to set up such an electrical system, composed of 700,000 tiny cells all connected and able to generate power, wouldn't you want some credit for your work? And will you say that the lowly eel was able to develop all this marvelous mechanism on its own, unaided, by blind chance?*

It would be simple enough to connect a few thousand batteries or capacitors in a series-parallel circuit. But you have a lot more "wiring" to do before you have an electric eel. If you would approximate the eel's capability, you must design and connect to your setup a special charger device so that you can recharge this "battery pack" in a thousandth of a second without overheating or short-circuiting. Then you need thousands of electronic switches that are required for charging and then discharging at a desired rate (several times per second). Sound complicated? You still need to design and wire a central station to control all this maze of circuitry, as well as a very sophisticated radar system which works with the system.

Are we ready to give credit to God for a work of engineering far surpassing our understanding?

### ***The eel's radar system***

The adult electric eel, though blind, has no problems finding its way around and locating food in the murky waters of the Amazon because our Creator has equipped it with a state-of-the-art radar system. The radar system consists of a smaller "battery pack" for generating radar pulses. The eel sends out radar pulses at will, the pulses bounce off any object in the vicinity of the electric eel, and are received back by several electroreceptors along the top and forward part of the eel. Even the eel's head is optimally shaped for this task—the head is slanted downward at such an angle as provides good reception from three directions—above, front and both sides (was this special design left to the eel?). When the electrical pulse strikes an object, the signal reflected back to the eel is processed so precisely that the eel is able to know exactly where an object is, its size and construction, perhaps even more precisely than it would know if it could "see" it.

The electrical pulses are also used for communication with other eels. The dominant males make the loudest and most frequent emissions.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Who designed it?***

Assuming we had the technology to design and build such a system as the electric organs and their controls inside the electric eel, how many accumulated years do you suppose it would take for a team of chemical and electronic engineers to design, build and test a prototype that would equal the capabilities of the electric eel? (Hint: it requires months of accumulated time to turn out a prototype for just a rechargeable emergency light capable of regulating battery discharge and recharge with brownout capability.) This does not consider the

months invested in the development and assembly of the individual electronic and mechanical components that the engineers already have at hand.

When the engineers are given an assignment, they have lots of theory already in mind about how to design and build the prototype. An intelligent designer is required to put it all together and make it work. The evolutionist, on the other hand, claims that the earth and all life evolved, that is, came into being by natural selection, by ever so slight hereditary changes. Look again at the electric eel. How did it get all those thousands of tiny electric cells with the electronic switches and nerve fibers connecting them? How is it that all those tiny cells can be recharged in a fraction of a second without failing? Where did it get its navigation system, the radar system and the powerful processor to keep all these parts working in harmony without overheating or short-circuiting—a major problem in designing power supplies today? This same processor also collects data from the various muscle and nerve cells in the eel's body and processes it to incredible accuracy and, in turn, sends signals to all the various parts, all automatically without any effort on the part of the electric eel! And if the electric eel did not have radar equipment by which it could know up from down it would drown in about 15 minutes<sup>15</sup>—because, though a fish, it must surface for air due to the low oxygen content of the murky waters where it lives.

Did it all just fall into place by selective hereditary evolution? What did the eel do while its electrical system was being perfected? How was the direction for development kept on course for all the billions of years claimed to develop such a marvel? Random chance seems to dictate that it would not stay on course. Would even billions of years be enough time for such a thing to occur?



I think our question regarding the electric eel has only one answer: there is an intelligent Creator who designed it, formed it and gave it life.

It is said that it can't be proved that there is a God, an all-powerful, omniscient Creator. Yet, when we look about us, the evidence speaks for itself. There is a God, a Creator, an organizer, an intelligent being over all! And, turning to the Bible, there is another witness: His Word. He told us of things long ago that would come to pass that we might believe there is one God of all creation. And thus stands history as the silent witness to the fulfillment of thousands of these prophecies, just as they were prophesied, giving surety that those yet unfulfilled will be fulfilled in their appointed time. God is far greater than the scientist's laboratory. Yet, even there, if one looks close enough, they can see evidence of His creative genius in complexity, design and harmony far beyond our ability to understand.

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert's experiments led to a number of investigations by many pioneers in the development of electricity technology over the next 350 years -Code Check ©1998 by Redwood Kardon, [http://www.codecheck.com/pp\\_elect.html](http://www.codecheck.com/pp_elect.html)

<sup>2</sup> © 1994-1999 *Encyclopædia Britannica*

<sup>3</sup> Moody Bible Institute of Science Video

<sup>4,5,6</sup> Copyright 1994-1999 *Encyclopædia Britannica*

<sup>7</sup> Vulcan Street Plant, 1882- September 30, 1882, the world's first hydroelectric central station began operation, [http://engine.ieee.org/history\\_center/general\\_info/programs\\_and\\_projects/milestones/milestones\\_list.html](http://engine.ieee.org/history_center/general_info/programs_and_projects/milestones/milestones_list.html)

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Erwin Moon (1959), Moody Institute of Science Video

<sup>9</sup> <http://203.96.60.104/amazon/index.htm>

<sup>10</sup> © 1997 *Virtual Science Centre Project Team*, [http://www.sci-ctr.edu.sg/ScienceNet/cat\\_life/cat\\_zoo00588.html](http://www.sci-ctr.edu.sg/ScienceNet/cat_life/cat_zoo00588.html)

<sup>11</sup> Small animals within range are killed outright, while large mammals may become dazed and drown, Pittsburgh Zoo Wildlife, [http://zoo.pgh.pa.us/wildlife/electric\\_eel.html](http://zoo.pgh.pa.us/wildlife/electric_eel.html)

<sup>12</sup> Copyright 1994-1999 *Encyclopædia Britannica*

<sup>13</sup> "There are about seventy columns of electroplates along each side of the body and each column contains from six thousand to ten thousand plates," a total of 420,000 to 700,000 electroplates or electroplaques. "As most of the electroplates are connected in series, their charges, like those of a series of batteries, add up to produce a large voltage. Each electroplate contributes 150 millivolts.

Like all-powerful electric organs, those of the electric eel produce brief bursts of pulses, each pulse lasting three milliseconds, the bursts being repeated several times in one second. The nerves supplying the electric organs are fired by a command center in the brain, so releasing the charges of the electroplates"-The Creationist Zone, <http://www.intelligentdesign.org/menu/creation.htm>

<sup>14, 15</sup> © 1997, *Virtual Science Centre Project Team*, [http://www.sci-ctr.edu.sg/ScienceNet/cat\\_life/cat\\_zoo00588.html](http://www.sci-ctr.edu.sg/ScienceNet/cat_life/cat_zoo00588.html) ♦



## BROTHERLINESS

*Don't speak evil against each other, my dear brothers and sisters (James 4:11 NLT).*

If something good you cannot say  
Of brother, foe, or friend,  
Then take the better, silent way,  
Lest you in word offend.

-Anonymous

If there is a person to whom you feel dislike, be sure that what you dislike is not a reflection of your own flaws.

*Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of malicious behavior (Eph. 4:31 NLT).*

## LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH

*Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.  
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.  
With God as our Father, brothers all are we.  
Let me walk with my brother in perfect harmony.*

*Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now.  
With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow:  
To take each moment, and live each moment in peace eternally!  
Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.*

-Sy Miller and Jill Jackson





## He's Coming!

*"He's coming!" said the 'Prophets, "and the glory of the Lord  
Shall be revealed and all shall see the Christ, the living Lord."  
Yes, He will come, Earth's sovereign, our 'Redeemer, Savior, King,  
To fill the world with truth and make eternal praises ring.*

*"He's coming!" said two angels as He disappeared from sight,  
Borne up by holy ministers sent forth from heaven's height;  
Yes, two stood by to strengthen those who watched Him go away,  
To give the sweet assurance that He would return one day.*

*Meanwhile their comrades flashed through space, to bear Christ to the throne,  
The Highest Throne, where in the Father's presence He was crowned!  
But what of those who stayed behind in Galilee that day—  
Whence came they? Did they just "drop in," Their word from heav'n to say?*

*Or had they camped close by our Lord through all His days of stress,  
Unseen, yet lending help and aid in loving tenderness?...  
We only know that they were there when greatest was the need.  
How God provides! nor once forsakes those who are His indeed.*

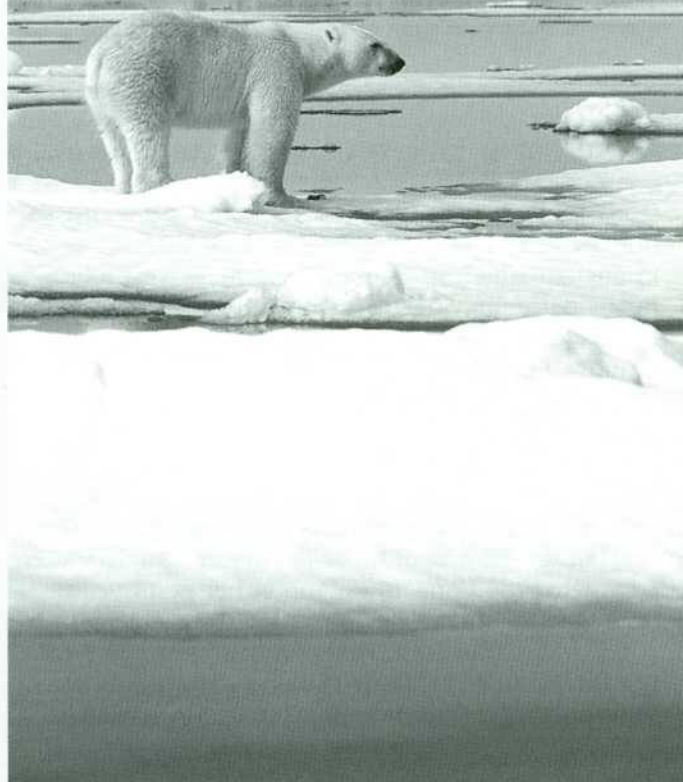
*"He's coming!" taught the faithful ones, apostles of our Lord,  
As they proclaimed His kingdom and His vibrant, living Word;  
All pressing, fighting, struggling as they lived from day to day  
Reflecting Christ their Lord and King in each and ev'ry way.*

*"He's coming!" rings the message still from loyal heart to heart,  
As we prepare, our spirits tense, to see our living Lord.  
'Though nineteen centuries have passed, His word stands firm and true:  
"I'm coming!" echoes back His voice. He comes to make all new.*

*"He's coming!" Yes! Lord Jesus, come! with longing heart we pray,  
Bring in the Age of Peace and Truth, and glad eternal Day!  
Your chariots gather, Lord, and come! Come quickly to Your home!  
Bring in the grand millennium, and make our world Your own!*



# Know Your Bible?



## LIES AND LIARS

1. What couple were stricken dead for lying to God?
2. Who said in his haste, *"All men are liars"*?
3. Who lied about the whereabouts of his brother, saying, *"I know not."*?
4. Who lied, saying, *"I know not what thou sayest"*?
5. Who told his friends they were *"forgers of lies"*?
6. Who obtained a vineyard for her husband by means of a lie?
7. Who is known as *"the lying prophet"*?
8. Whom did Jesus call *"a liar, and the father of it"*?
9. Who did Jesus say would be outside the eternal city?
10. How do we know God cannot lie?

## JOURNEYS

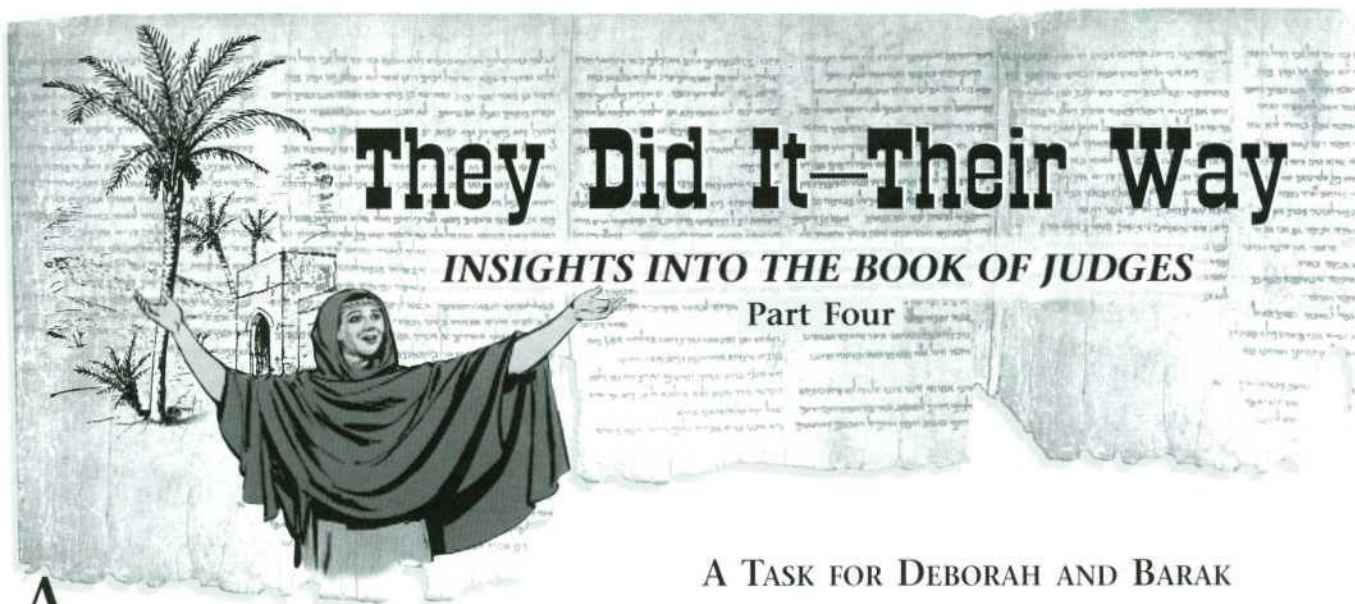
1. Who journeyed from Haran to Egypt?
2. Who journeyed from Bethlehem to Egypt?
3. Who journeyed from Jerusalem to Jericho?
4. Returning from Jerusalem, how far did Mary and Joseph journey before they realized Jesus was not with them?
5. Who journeyed from Egypt to the land of Canaan?
6. Who journeyed toward Tarshish instead of Nineveh?
7. Who journeyed to Damascus bent on destroying the Christians?
8. Who journeyed into a far country and wasted his substance?
9. Whose servant journeyed from Canaan to Mesopotamia in search of a wife for his master's son?
10. Who *"went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem"*?

## GOLD

1. In what Bible story are mice of gold mentioned?
2. Who brought about Israel's defeat in Ai by taking a wedge of gold and other booty?
3. Who made a graven image from, the golden earrings of the people of Israel?
4. Who gave Solomon much of the gold for the two wonderful houses he built?
5. What famous queen brought *"very much gold"* when she came to visit Solomon?
6. What wicked king made *"two calves of gold,"* and set them up to be worshiped, one in Bethel and one in Dan?
7. What does Solomon say is like a jewel of gold in a swine's snout?
8. What king made a golden image, and having set it in the plain of Dura, ordered all the people to worship it?
9. What ruler put a gold chain around Daniel's neck and made him the third ruler in the kingdom?
10. The ark of the covenant was *"overlaid round about with gold."* What was in this golden ark?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 26





After an enthusiastic revival, followed by two wanderings away from God, two repentings, two rescues, and two periods of prolonged peace, the children of Israel once again forsook the Lord.

And once again true to His word, God turned them over to their enemies.

One would think that the experiences of one generation would teach the next the wisdom of serving

## A TASK FOR DEBORAH AND BARAK

God and the folly of going after idols. But such is not the usual human experience, either in our day or in ancient Israel, so stubborn and perverse are our hearts naturally. So slowly do we learn from the experience of others—until it becomes our own.

Judge Ehud had brought 80 years of peace to Israel, but after he was dead we read: *"The Israelites again did what was evil in the Lord's sight,"* and *"the Lord handed them over to King Jabin of Hazor, a Canaanite king"* (Judg. 4:1–2 NLT).

Who were the chastising enemies this time? The Canaanites. How could that be? Hadn't the Israelites conquered the Canaanites, and either destroyed or evicted all of them? Far from it. Disregarding the command of the Lord, Israel had allowed many to remain. So now, fulfilling the prophetic words of their great leader Joshua, the Canaanites were becoming *"a snare and a trap,...a pain in [their] side and a thorn in [their] eyes"* (Josh. 23:13 NLT).

Jabin, king of Canaan, was holding sway from his capital in the northern city of Hazor, and his forces had invaded and were occupying the possessions of Naphtali, Zebulun, and Issachar. His general Sisera was headquartered at the chief military post, Harosheth (see map). Little by little his large army was pushing southward. Already the oppression was dreadful. Only a little more time, and all Israel would be in the grip of this mighty king.

After suffering twenty years under this oppressor, the Israelites finally woke up. They needed *help!* They needed help from the only source that was able to help them: God.

But not until the bondage of their enemies became unbearable. When they were blessed and prospering, they dallied with their enemies and the things God had forbidden. But when they could see



**King Jabin is Defeated:** Deborah traveled from her home between Ramah and Bethel to march with Barak and the Israelite army against Hazor. Sisera, commander of Hazor's army, assembled his men at Harosheth Haggoyim. In spite of Sisera's 900 chariots and expertly trained army, Israel was victorious because God was with them.



themselves losing, and losing, and losing, they finally turned to God.

Do we see the lesson in this for us today? How often do we dally with habits, appetites and temptations which are as dangerous to our spiritual progress and peace as were the Canaanites to Israel—only to wake up and find ourselves in the grip of our enemy? We have seen the trouble of those before us, who made the same mistakes, who refused to be warned, and reaped the consequences. Do we think that God will make an exception for us?

The Bible tells us a little of how King Jabin brought such suffering on Israel. His forces were highly mobile and strong—he had 900 chariots. Chariots were the tanks of the ancient world. But his chariots were more than the ordinary—for his people had mastered the art of smelting iron and overlaying the chariots until they were invulnerable to any weaponry of the time. Pulled by one or two horses, they were the most feared and powerful armaments of the day. It is said that some of these chariots even had razor sharp knives extending from the wheels, designed to mutilate helpless foot soldiers who might dare to approach them. With such military might, the Canaanites were unconquerable—until Israel sought help from God.

#### **"Israel Cried Unto the Lord"**

Those are the next key words of the story: Then *"the children of Israel cried unto the Lord"* (Judges 4:3). And God heard.

Previously when the Israelites cried for help, God found a man whom he could use to save them. This time God found a woman—one who was already working actively for Him as a judge in the southern part of the nation. We read:

*"Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth, was a prophet who had become a judge in Israel. She would hold court under the Palm of Deborah, which stood between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came to her to settle their disputes"* (Judg. 4:4–5, NLT).

What do we know about this dynamic, brave woman God used?

First, Deborah was a **prophetess**. One of six women called "prophetess" in Scripture, she stands among Miriam, sister of Moses and Aaron (Ex. 15:20); Huldah in the days of the kings (2 Kings 22:14, 2 Chron. 34:22); a woman in the time of Nehemiah named Noadiah (Neh. 6:14); the wife of Isaiah (Isa. 8:3); and Anna, who prophesied in the Temple when Mary and Joseph brought Baby Jesus to present Him to the Lord (Luke 2:36).

Deborah was also a **judge**: *"She judged Israel at that time."* Her authority over the nation was recognized. It was further augmented by the fact that she served in a dual role of judge and prophet. She and Samuel were the only two judges to do this.

#### **Deborah, Woman of Leadership**

During a time of spiritual apathy and economic hardship, Deborah was living a godly and consistent life, and when God needed a woman, she was ready. As God's servant, she acted promptly and obediently. When word came from the Lord, she was ready to serve with her whole heart.

#### **Deborah, Woman of Courage**

Did Jabin, king of Canaan, rule with an iron hand? Had these Canaanites mastered the art of iron smelting and built 900 chariots overlaid with iron? Weren't they the obvious masters of the valley and plains, putting down the slightest uprising with merciless speed? The Israelites had almost no weapons, no training, and no organization. But they had God. What more could they need!

#### **Deborah, Woman of Obedience**

When word came from the Lord, Deborah did not hesitate. She did not stop to think about what action she should take. She acted immediately and obeyed, and started the movement which resulted in the conquest of the enemy.

#### **Deborah, Woman of Character**

Did Deborah seek or take any credit to herself? No, and she even warned Barak that the credit for victory would not be going to him. In her song of triumph, she ascribes all glory to God and prays for the successful conquest of the enemy. She was the instrument ready to be used. So long as God's cause prospered and God was honored, she was content.





Deborah was also a strong *spokeswoman for God*. There was no hesitation in her delivering the Word of God. *"This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, commands you,"* she said. She was not giving her own opinion, or telling what she thought should be done. The Lord was directing, and she was the willing channel for His Word.

Do we wonder why God used Deborah?

### **Deborah WITH Barak?**

Does anyone question Deborah's readiness to go with Barak into battle? Was it an ethical dilemma? Wasn't she married to Lapidoth? Wouldn't someone talk about the scandal of these two going off together and spending so much time with each other? Would not the purity and consistency of their lives be held in jeopardy, by those who delighted in pointing out moral infractions?

If they did, they were finding fault with what God had arranged. Both Deborah and Barak were serving God, and we can believe that their families and acquaintances knew their principles. They were not going off for pleasure. They were on a mission, to rescue a nation, and they were going at the command of God.

And it was a dangerous mission, one that might easily result in their death. They did not know God's strategy for victory, or how they might be used. They were only ready to serve as the call came. Had they failed to respond, they would have been disobeying God.

There is no reason to suspect any selfishness or lust on the part of either of them. They were servants in the high cause of heaven, and were ready and eager to do their duty for God.

God was her counselor in judging, her source in prophesying. She was the one person in all Israel whom God could rely on to do what He wanted done at that time.

### **The Lord's Directions to Deborah**

Did Deborah have a vision? see an angel? hear a heavenly voice speaking to her in the dead of night? We aren't told, but by some means the Lord instructed her to instigate a plan of action against the Canaanite oppressors.

Now Deborah's judgment seat was not next door to Sisera's army camp. Deborah was located in the southern part of the country, near Bethel. The city of

Harosheth, where Sisera and his forces were stationed, was in the region of Mount Carmel, near the river Kishon, some seventy miles away. This is one of the most famous places on earth. It includes the Plain of Megiddo, where many battles already had been fought, and where the greatest decisive battle of all will yet be fought—Armageddon. Toward the east, it merges into the fertile plain of Jezreel. Surrounding the valley of the Kishon are hills which are called "mountains" in Scripture (Mount Carmel, Mount Tabor).

Responding to the command of the Lord, Deborah sent a summons to a man named Barak, and disclosed the action plan God had outlined. Barak, who was then in the area of Kedesh-Naphtali (see map), was to go to Mount Tabor, not far from Harosheth, with an army of ten thousand men. There he would find Sisera assembled with his forces at the river Kishon. From the heights of Mount Tabor he was to come down upon them in a surprise attack, and God would deliver the Canaanites into their hands.

Can we imagine Barak's shock in receiving such a message from a woman some ninety miles away? Deborah didn't *ask* Barak to do the task—she commanded him.

And can't we see the character and courage of Deborah, this woman of God, who would instigate such a plan at the command of God? Talk about risk! Talk about going out with almost no weapons against a general who had 900 chariots of iron! Without God's help, the plan would have been suicidal.

But this was no time to question, only to obey.

### **Only One Condition...**

Barak gave his consent, because of his great respect for Deborah and his faith in her God. But Barak stated one condition: Deborah must accompany him. *"If you will go with me, then I will go: but if you will not go with me, then I will not go."*

Do you see the picture? Here was a tough, hard-bitten fighter from the north, every inch a warrior, fearless and unafraid. He was speaking to a married woman whose age we do not know, but probably her children were grown and she would be middle aged. He says to her, "If you will go with me, I'll do it!" What respect, what



tremendous faith he had in his leader! And notice he wasn't asking for her blessing, he wanted her *presence* on the battlefield!

### **Was Barak's Response a Lack of Faith?**

Did Barak show a lack of faith by asking Deborah to go with him? The writer of Hebrews places him among the great heroes of faith (Heb. 11:32).

It seems likely that what he wanted most from Deborah was her spiritual influence in rallying the people to God's cause. Deborah had been serving as God's agent (a Judge), and the people identified her with her God. Israel was in a state of apostasy. Barak knew the situation as no one outside the nation could ever understand it. If God was to give Israel victory, the people had to show that they were ready to serve God. If they were disobedient, God could withdraw His help and they would all perish together. Barak needed Deborah's help to get the people on God's side. Then he was ready to do his part.

Notice her reply: *"I will surely go with you."* There was no hesitation, no asking for time to think it through. She was more ready than Barak was! She would go. But, she told her chief general Barak, if he was going because he wanted the honors of the victory, they would not be coming his way, for Sisera would be slain by a woman.

### **To Kedesh...**

The next thing we learn is that *"Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh."* Can't we picture Deborah mounting her donkey for the ninety-mile journey from Bethel up to Kedesh? She and whoever might have made up her official entourage? There is so much effort in those few words—a solid week of hard-pressed travel riding on the back of a stumbling beast. Or else she took it on foot. In either case, the journey was long and dangerous. The highways were infested by robbers, and Sisera's men might appear at any moment.

Yet this was the journey Deborah took.

### **Who Were the Kenites?**

**T**he Kenites (literally "smiths") were a tribe inhabiting the desert lying between southern Palestine and the mountains of Sinai. Jethro was of this tribe (Judg. 1:16). And since he is called a "Midianite" (Num. 10:29), it is likely that the Kenites were Midianites.

The Kenites showed kindness to Israel in their journey through the wilderness, accompanying them as far as Jericho (Judg. 1:16), then returning to their old haunts among the Amalekites in the desert to the south of Judah.

Barak's next task was to obey the Lord's command to assemble soldiers from the two tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali. Ten thousand came, and *"Deborah went up with him."* Deborah was there as the men reported for duty—one woman among ten thousand men, and she was commander in chief.

From Kedesh to Mount Tabor was another trek of some 30 miles over rough, mountainous roads. Just picture this dauntless, middle-aged woman marching at the head of her troops for several days, then giving orders as they took their strategic positions on Mount Tabor?

**H**ow did Deborah get this message to Barak in Kedesh-Naphtali, some ninety miles to the north? And how was Barak able to mobilize ten thousand men to carry out his effort? How was he then able to take the army to Mount Tabor? We don't know all the details, but we know that God was behind it, and that it happened.

It is not surprising that Sisera's spies picked up the details of the movement. When Sisera heard of it, he surely laughed at an army of ten thousand men taking orders from a middle-aged woman. He'd show them!

Skillfully he moved his nine hundred iron chariots and his entire fighting force from Harosheth to the river Kishon, then spread them in formation across the valley.

Picture the scene: On the plain the forces of Sisera. The rattle of chariots and the neighing of a thousand or more horses would sound fearsome to men waiting on the hillside. Then they would see the glitter of the sun on helmets, shields and weapons, all reminding them of their own dreadful

Jael, a Kenite, was friendly to the Israelites after they were settled in Canaan (Judg. 4:11, 17-21; 1 Sam. 27:10; 30:29). The Rechabites belonged to this tribe (1 Chron. 2:55) and in the days of Jeremiah (35:7-10) are referred to as following their nomad habits. Saul asked them to separate from the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:6) when, in obedience to the Divine commission, he was about to "smite Amalek." And his reason is, *"for ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt."* The last mention of them in Scripture is in 1 Sam. 27:10. ♦



lack of weapons. All the Israelites had to offer was a good position on the slopes of Mount Tabor. But do not underrate the value of this position: the Israelites were

### **Jael: Criminal or Hero?**

Was Jael right in the action she took? Wasn't this an example of deception and a horrible act of treachery?

There are two points to consider here:

1) That God was directing the maneuvers and designing the strategies and

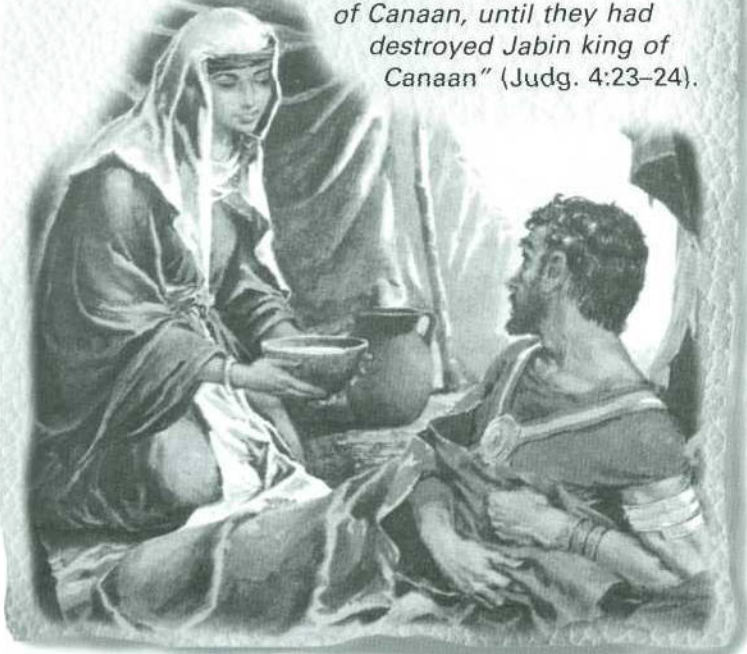
2) He was using human agents or instruments.

Was it cruel for Jael to take the life of one who had *"mightily oppressed Israel"* for twenty years? Was it cruel for her to act in God's behalf, when God was fighting openly for His people?

Remember that the Israelite people, deprived of their freedom and at the brink of economic ruin, had been living in despair and daily fear for 20 years. Jael's willingness to become involved—when she herself was living in peace and luxury as a result of her husband's treaty with Jabin—is to be commended. Her action in taking Sisera's life was only what God had foreknown and arranged.

What if Jael had allowed Sisera to escape, raise a new army, and renew his oppression of God's people? Wouldn't she have shown herself to be on the side of the enemy that God was working to defeat?

There is no question, because the Bible gives credit for the victory to God. *"So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan....And the hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan"* (Judg. 4:23–24).



safe. Sisera with his nine hundred chariots of iron would never think of launching an attack uphill! The Israelites were strong: they had their hillside position—and they had Deborah and Barak—and Deborah and Barak had God.

Deborah watched carefully the movements of Sisera from the hillside, then when the time was right she said to Barak, *"Get ready! Today the Lord will give you victory over Sisera, for the Lord is marching ahead of you!"*

What faith! What courage! What confidence in the God of victory!

So Barak and his ten thousand warriors rushed down the slopes of Mount Tabor toward the enemy. And what happened? We are not told what means God used to defeat Sisera, but it was likely a thunderstorm or an unusual downpour of rain. The river Kishon, normally quiet and insignificant, very quickly swelled above its banks and spilled across the plain, bogging Sisera's armies and chariots and horses in a sea of mud. The warriors' attention would quickly have switched from fighting the battle to fighting the elements. Suddenly those heavy iron chariots, powerful instruments of warfare, became instruments of defeat.

At the very moment when Sisera had planned to claim victory, the Lord *"threw Sisera and all his charioteers and warriors into a panic"* (Judg. 4:14–15 NLT). Seeing his army defeated, Sisera leaped from his chariot and *"escaped on foot."*

Barak's army, instead of having to defend themselves against the enemy, was able to chase them on the run, all the way to Harosheth, and *"not a single one was left alive."*

Except Sisera.

### **A Task for Jael**

General Sisera found his way to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. For some unknown reason, Heber had sided with Jabin, perhaps because Jabin's army looked invincible and Israel's looked weak. This was a change of loyalties, because the Kenites had historically been allies of Israel. Hobab (Moses' father-in-law) was a Kenite. It is likely that Sisera knew of Heber's support and that is why he felt comfortable in Jael's tent.

But although Heber was on Jabin's side, his wife Jael was siding with Israel, heart



and soul. She may have been silent about her loyalties, but when the opportunity came to be an instrument in God's hands, she was ready.

Jael went out to meet Sisera and invited him into her tent. Tired and thirsty from his exhausting trek, Sisera lay down. Jael gave him some milk and covered him. When he had fallen asleep, she quietly crept up to him with a hammer and tent peg, and *"drove the tent peg through his temple into the ground, and so he died"* (Judg. 4:21, NLT).

What was the result? *"So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan....And the hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan"* (Judg. 4:23-24).

### **God Was—IS—Able**

Does it sound more like a story than a real account? Never discount the power of God. He is able to deliver, when His people seek His help. When they wandered away, God used the enemy to chastise them. Then, when they called for help, He raised up a deliverer.

This victory over the Canaanites was a very important one. So utterly was their power broken that as a race they never again attempted to regain their independence. After this, Israel seems to have pushed northward, conquering the country occupied by the Canaanites.

While God's people suffered oppression when they turned away from Him, when they cried to Him in repentance of heart, He delivered them. For this deliverance Deborah sang, *"Lord, may all your enemies die as Sisera did! But may those who love you rise like the sun at full strength!"* (Judg. 5:31, NLT).

When it was all over, well might Deborah say "Mission accomplished!" The enemy was defeated, the general deceased, the king destroyed.

The last phrase of Judges 5:31 gives the happy ending: *"And the land had rest forty years."*

### **Deborah's Song of Victory: Honor to Whom Honor Is Due**

Deborah's song of victory, recorded in Judges 5, shows her great character and her profound humility.

First she gives all honor and glory to the Lord. She ends her song with the same sublime and beautiful tone.

In between she gives honor where honor is due. She commends the leaders who did their part to motivate the people. *"My heart is toward the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people."*

Then she commends those who rallied around Barak, who answered the call and placed their own lives in jeopardy to gain freedom for the nation. Three tribes were involved in the battle, and Deborah gives each of them high praise: Issachar, Zebulun

and Naphtali. *"Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeopardized their lives unto the death in the high places of the field."* When the challenge came, they responded with willing hearts. As they stood on the slopes of Mount Tabor, they were risking their lives. They knew nothing of the coming rain storm, and were likely prepared for the worst. They would give everything they had, in hand-to-hand combat if need be. They set no limits on the price they were prepared to pay to obey the call of God.

## **Do we set limits on our obedience?**

Are we ready to do as well?

Do we set limits on our obedience? Do we say, in effect, *"Yes, Lord, I'm willing to serve You, and do what You want me to do. But don't ask me to give up this, or do that, or go to such-and-such a place?"*

Or are we ready to say, *"Anything, Lord, for You—anything, if only I can obtain the eternal life You are offering?"*

Unfortunately, there are always some who, for one reason or another, fail to answer the call. The opportunity for service passes them by, and they are among those in *"Reuben, Gilead, Dan, Asher, and Meroz."* The task gets done while they are rehearsing their excuses for not helping, and covering themselves with a cloak of their own selfishness.

Overall, the story is encouraging, a bright window in a dark period of history. It is bright because it shows God's will being done by willing, human

## **God does not need super experts, only willing servants.**

instruments. It shows how God works with those who are committed and obedient and makes them heroes of faith. And it shows how we, too, can be heroes of faith.

God does not need super experts, only willing servants. He needs those who are willing to give of themselves, who set no limits on the price of the service they are prepared to give to obey God.

Let's take Deborah for our example, and be willing to act in faith even before we can see the outcome of our work.

When it is for God, it is sure to succeed! ♦





## The Most With The Least

*I saw him sitting in his door,  
trembling as old men do;  
His house was old, his barn was old,  
and yet his eyes seemed new.*

*His eyes had seen three times  
my years, and kept a twinkle still,  
Though they had looked at birth and  
death and three graves up a hill.*

*"I will sit with you," I said, "and  
you will make me wise;  
Tell me how you have kept the joy  
still burning in your eyes."*

*Then, like an old-time orator,  
impressively he arose.  
"I make the most of all that comes,  
and the least of all that goes."*

*The jingling rhythm of his words  
echoed as old songs do;  
Yet this had kept his eyes alight  
till he was ninety-two.*

—Selected

The everlasting King is coming soon.  
All earthly things are passing away. Let  
us make the most of what is coming and  
least of what is going.

**Announcing... Abib** This year the members and friends of the Megiddo Church will welcome the beginning of the sacred New Year on the evening of Friday, April 16, and extending through Saturday, April 17, Bible time being measured from "evening to evening" (Lev. 23:32). The ancient Hebrews, according to the law God gave to Moses, marked the beginning of the sacred New Year with the month "Abib," which is the month beginning with the first new moon following the spring equinox (March 21 this year). The first new moon occurs this year on April 16.



This day has double significance as we commemorate the beginning of the sacred year and also the birth of our great coming King.

Distant members and friends, plan now to join us for this sacred season. New Year services and programs will be held on **April 16 and 17**. The anniversary of the Lord's Supper will be on **Wednesday, April 28**, and the Resurrection on **May 1**.

## Self Denial Week

The week of February 7, will be the annual observance of self-denial week for the Megiddo Church congregation and all scattered members and friends who wish to observe it with us.

During this week we will limit ourselves to three articles of food at each meal. Selection will be made from simple, plain, common foods, varied each meal as desired. We shall refrain from all specialties, all cookies, pastries, desserts, and fancy foods.

The Christian life is a life of discipline and self-control. If we cannot control our natural appetites, how will we perform the inner denials of the spirit life that will bring us to the stature of Christ?



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### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 19

#### LIES AND LIARS

1. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10)
2. David (Psalm 116:11)
3. Cain (Genesis 4:9)
4. Peter (Matthew 26:69-70)
5. Job (Job 13:4)
6. Jezebel (1 Kings 21:7-16)
7. Hananiah (Jeremiah 28:15)
8. The Devil (John 8:44)
9. "Whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. 22:15)
10. God, who "cannot lie" (Tit. 1:2)

#### JOURNEYS

1. Abram, Sarai, and Lot (Genesis 12:5, 14)
2. Joseph, Mary, and baby Jesus (Matt. 2:13)
3. The man in the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:30)
4. A day's journey (Luke 2:43-44)
5. The children of Israel (Exodus 3:14-22)
6. Jonah (Jonah 1:1-3)
7. Saul (Paul) (Acts 9:1-2)
8. The prodigal son (Luke 15:13)
9. Abraham's servant (Genesis 24:1-10)
10. Jesus (Luke 13:14-22)

#### GOLD

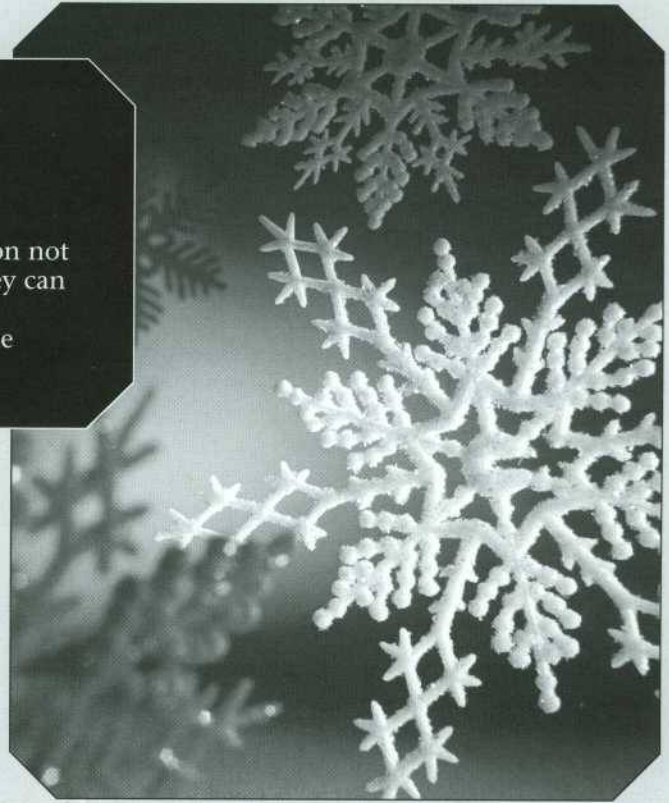
1. The return of the ark to Bethshemesh (1 Sam. 6:1-11)
2. Achan (Joshua 7:20-21)
3. Aaron (Exodus 32:1-7)
4. Hiram, king of Tyre (1 Kings 9:11)
5. The queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:2, 10)
6. Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:26-29)
7. A fair woman without discretion (Proverbs 11:22)
8. Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3:1-5)
9. Belshazzar (Daniel 5:29)
10. A pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant (Ten Commandments) (Hebrews 9:1-4)



### *Our Extravagant Creator!*

Consider each tiny snowflake—  
its beauty and intricacy of design,  
its sparkling whiteness,  
the delicate pattern of *each* flake—yet in its season not  
just a few flakes fall but vast quantities. In mass they can  
cripple the most sophisticated societies.

Yes, stand in awe of the Creator of the lowly little  
snowflake!



*Our chief difficulty in the formation of upright character  
is that we do not put enough effort into it.*

*When we truly give ourselves to the Lord, all other  
giving comes easy.*

*There is no traffic congestion on the straight and narrow  
path to life.*

*If Wisdom's way you wisely seek,  
Five things observe with care;  
Of Whom you speak, To Whom you speak,  
And How and When and Where.*

*Do not be discouraged because of your imperfections;  
always rise up bravely from a fall. Determine to make a  
daily new beginning. There is no better means of progress  
in the spiritual life than by continually beginning afresh.*

*Life gets scorched and lumpy when we forget to stir  
it with earnest prayer.*

*Busy persons are seldom busybodies.*

*Whatever beclouds our vision of God impairs our  
service for Him.*

*O make me patient, Lord  
Patient in daily cares:  
Keep me from thoughtless words  
That slip out unawares.*

*And help me, Lord, I pray,  
Still nearer to Thee to live;  
And as I journey on,  
More of Thy goodness give.*

### *What I Need*

*My trial seems a fearful blow:  
It's what I need.  
It's brought me down so very low  
It's what I need.  
It forces me to God to go  
With all my want and all my woe,  
It's what I need.*

*I don't enjoy it—to be frank,  
But it's what I need.  
What child enjoys a well-placed "spank"?  
It's what I need.  
My Lord from His cup also shrank....  
But yet His Father's will He drank,  
And for His will, I too, give thanks;  
It's what I need.*

*So, in Thy mercy, Lord, chastise;  
It's what I need.  
I know each blow is kind and wise;  
And what I need.  
Thy purpose I'll not criticize....  
Within me Christ to realize.  
I'm longing for that Heavenly prize,  
It's ALL I need!*

*In trying times, don't quit trying.*

*If you would not fall into sin, do not sit by the door of  
temptation.*



# All Things Work Together

*"All things work together for good to them that love God." —Rom. 8:28*

**I**n a factory building there are wheels and gearings,  
There are cranks and pulleys, beltings tight or slack—  
Some are whirling swiftly, some are turning slowly.  
Some are thrusting forward, some are pulling back.  
Some are smooth and silent, some are rough and noisy,  
Pounding, rattling, clanking, moving with a jerk—  
In a wild confusion, in a seeming chaos,  
Lifting, pushing, driving—but they do their work.  
From the mightiest lever to the tiniest pinion;  
*All things move together for the purpose planned;*  
And behind the working is a controlling mind,  
And a force directing, and a guiding hand.

**S**o all things are working in our God's great plan,  
Some things may seem hurtful, we may not understand;  
Some might seem to hinder, some might draw us back;  
But they work together, and they work for good;  
All the thwarted longings, all the stern denials,  
All the disappointments, hard to understand.  
And the force that holds them, speeds them and retards them,  
Stops and starts and guides them, is our Father's hand.

