

# Megiddo Message

Spring 2012



*Welcome Home, Lord Jesus!*



## WELCOME HOME, LORD JESUS!

**L**ord Jesus, we need You. More than ever before, we need You! *Your Church needs You.* The secular culture today is pervasive and deadly. Gods of materialism, secularism, technology, and plain old worldliness are taking their toll everywhere. True religion, never popular, is totally out of vogue in this atmosphere of “grab it now.”

But, Lord Jesus, our hearts skip a beat when we realize what we are seeing. We heard You say (in Your Word) that conditions in the time just preceding Your return would be like the days of Noah, and like the days of Lot (Luke 17:26–30), and we believed You. But now, as we see what is happening all around us, our faith soars, and we take new heart in the surety of Your Word! We heard You talk about distress among the political powers of the world (Luke 21:25) and “*men’s hearts failing them for fear*” (Luke 21:26). Again, we believed. But never could we have imagined what we see today in worldwide economic crises, and worldwide political unrest, and worldwide social concern. And as the number of serious believers becomes less and less, we are reminded of what You said we should expect: “*When the Son of man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?*” (Luke 18:8).

Were it not for You coming to the rescue, Planet Earth would lapse into another dark age. It would be only a matter of time, and true faith would be extinct. But Lord Jesus, our hearts thrill with joy when we realize Your plan is on track and everything is working out just as You said. There will be living believers to welcome You when You return (1 Thess. 4:15–17). There will be those keeping the lights on in Your “house,” dressed for service, and ready to give You a royal welcome even if the hour is late (Luke 12:35–36).

***Our nation needs You.*** Our good country, founded on values of faith, integrity and virtue, has long since deserted these principles for the gods of pleasure and self-seeking. They think they can get along without any Divine law or guidance, but in reality they are on a course of self-destruction. The hard facts speak for themselves:

- ✓ A report of child abuse every 10 seconds
- ✓ Six million cases of elder abuse every year
- ✓ An estimated 1.2 million persons in the US living with HIV infection
- ✓ An estimated 600 thousand cases of shoplifting in our stores every day
- ✓ A national debt that has increased an average of \$3.98 billion per day since 2007
- ✓ Over 50 percent of our adults drinking alcoholic beverages regularly
- ✓ Ten percent of all public schools having had one or more serious violent crimes.
- ✓ The highest rate of illegal drug use, also more reported rapes and car thefts than any other country.
- ✓ An annual cost of crime estimated at \$1.7 trillion (1999 figure)
- ✓ One in five US citizens expected to be a victim of crime during the year.

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### 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.



## Megiddo Message

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**DBL**—Swanson, J. (1997). Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains; **EDNT**—Balz, H. R., & Schneider, G. (1990-). Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament; **GES**—Gesenius, W., & Tregelles, S. P. (2003). Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldean lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures; **HAL**—Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M., & Stamm, J. J. (1999). The Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament; **LJS**—Liddell, H. G., Scott, R., Jones, H. S., & McKenzie, R. (1996). A Greek-English lexicon; **LN**—Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : Based on semantic domains; **SHG**—Strong, J. (1997). The new Strong's dictionary of Hebrew and Greek words. **THAYER**—A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (1889).

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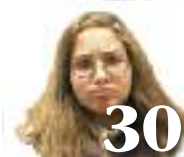
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*Heavenly Father, I want my words today...*

### 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).

### Back cover photo:

Harbor of Coral Island, Gulf of Aqaba.  
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*The end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. —1 Peter 4:7*

## “THE *End*”

There is something ominous about these words. What was Peter thinking? We can be sure he was writing with warmest love and affection to his own children in the faith, those whom he and others had nurtured from spiritual infancy. They were approaching the end of an age during which God had been working mightily and openly through a special dispensing of Divine power. Even as Peter wrote, that “*end*” was perhaps less than twenty years ahead.

Or Peter may have been thinking of mortal life—his and theirs. Life for all is limited. Silently, slyly it steals away. We may live and plan as though it would always continue, but it will not. The truism that “all men think all men mortal but themselves” is dangerous at best; deadly at its worst. Again and again we need to be reminded that “*the end of all things is*”—always—for everyone—“*at hand.*” There is never a good time to procrastinate.

Or Peter may have been peering far into the future and seeing those who would be holding firm at the very end of the age, just before the Master would return. Theirs would be a special test of faith, and God, through His writing apostles, was providing for them... for us! For them literally and truly, the “*end of all things*” is at hand.

Whatever the “*end*” in Peter’s mind, he raises a warning finger at any who might be

tempted by complacency. Well he knew that side of human nature which can placidly close its eyes even in the face of crisis.

To all such, Peter’s trumpet-like words sound an alert. So easily we forget. So easily does religion become a business-as-usual affair, a set of holy habits in which there is no heart.

Peter would have us stirred to the depths of our being, living as on the edge of the new. He would have us take our lives seriously, with a vigilant eye to that which is about to break into our existence with the suddenness of a thunderbolt.

## AT *Hand!*

Yes, the end is at hand! Much as “*all things*” seem to “*continue as they were,*” they do not! This age will NOT go on forever. One of these days “*our God shall come, and shall not keep silence*” (Ps. 50:3). Elijah will arrive (Mal. 4:5). Jesus will follow, accompanied by His mighty host of angels (Matt. 16:27). That time will be both an end and a beginning. It will be the end of the old order and the beginning of all that God has promised of deliverance, and salvation, and “*all things new.*”

That end is indeed “at hand.” We live in the time of fulfillment. The date is fixed, though not revealed. “*He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead*” (Acts 17:31).

## IT MAKES A *Difference*

What difference does this awareness of the end make in our lives? What should we do about it?

This is the focal point of Peter's Epistle. We cannot truly believe and remain the same. An awareness of "the end" will move us to make a change in our attitude toward one another, in our service, in our preaching and teaching, in our lives! Living in the light of the end, we have something to DO.

What does Peter advise us to do, we who find ourselves in this very time? Should we lose ourselves in a simple enjoyment of life and the world around us? Or should we be frightened and panic? Never! How about folding our hands in pious inactivity as we wait for the coming of our Lord? No!

Peter advises the believing Christian to maintain a level, controlled frame of mind; a strictly disciplined and governed lifestyle; sound judgment and clear thinking, because "The end of all things is at hand" (1 Pet. 4:7).

## END-TIME *Christian Conduct*

Peter is very specific to tell us how we should live, and how we should feel toward one another and toward God in this end time.

### 1: END-TIME *Sobriety*

"The end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious..." (1 Pet. 4:7). Be self-controlled, disciplined, as the end approaches more serious about our duty to God, more eager to make any sacrifice, any denial, any offering of ourselves, if only we may be "READY"!

How are we doing? Are these critical days having a sobering effect on us? Do we realize how very final will be "the end" when it arrives, when it will suddenly become too late to change from the old creature to the new, when "he that is unjust" must forever remain unjust (Rev. 22:11)? Here is a thought that should keep us working, sober, watchful, self-controlled.

Another aspect of self-control is "sound judgment." The controlled person is one who is not affected by surrounding conditions. The controlled person can keep sane and sound, mentally and morally balanced whatever tensions or fears may come.

This special kind of balance comes only

from one source: a solid, unshakable faith in God and His Word. With such solid confidence, in light of the nearness of the end, we will not panic—or fall asleep. Rather, we will live every moment in an attitude of expectancy. The disintegrating conditions around us which show themselves in a thousand ugly and disgraceful forms—like child abuse, drug abuse, AIDS, the breakdown of the family structure, and so on and on—we will take as surety, visible reminders that these are indeed the last minutes of the age.

### 2: END-TIME *Prayers*

"The end of all things is at hand...be serious and watchful in your prayers" (1 Pet. 4:7).

Perhaps as Peter wrote he was remembering that night in Gethsemane, when Jesus was so strong, and he, Peter, had been so weak. He could still hear the disappointment in Jesus' reproving voice: "Could you not watch with me one hour?...Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation" (Matt. 26:40–41). It was as though Jesus had said, Peter, you are not as strong as you think you are. You need help—which My Father and I can give you—through prayer.

We in this end-time have this same link with God—through prayer. Indeed, we have no other connection, for God is not working openly among us. But He is working.

Jesus still says to us, "watch and pray." Seek out every opportunity, and respond by meeting it with God, in heartfelt humble prayer. We do not face our tests alone.

The life that is securely bound with God cannot be overpowered by temptation.

"Watch and pray." How we need this admonition, especially at this end time. How we need to keep close to God in our inner citadel of prayer.

There is no situation in life that can prevent the true believer from praying. Without prayer there is no spiritual power—and no victory—because there is no link with God.

### 3: END-TIME *Love*

"The end of all things is at hand... above all things have fervent love for one another" (1 Pet. 4:7–8). Besides our duty to God and to ourselves, we have also a special duty to love one another. Peter says that this duty comes "above all." It must not be slighted.

Why is this love so important? Because it is the only covering which will effectively hide our sins from the view of the Great Judge before whom we all shall have to stand. "Love

*covers a multitude of sins*”—as we forsake them and merit God’s forgiveness (1 Pet. 4:8; Isa. 55:6–7).

What is the nature of the love that will “cover sin”? It is that true Christ-like love that seeks one another’s good, that loves righteousness and hates evil. It is a love that seeks to help one another in a personal way, pointing to the source of cleansing, working together to become pure and clean.

Why such concern for love? Because time is almost gone, and whatever we would do we must do quickly, for *“the end of all things is at hand.”*

Now, forgiveness is the mantle that will effectively cover our sins. What, then, can I do in loving my brother that will bring me forgiveness?

Jesus explained this in His first sermon, that each of us will be forgiven in proportion as we forgive our brother. When I show the genuine spirit of Christ-like love toward my brother, my sins are being covered—because God has promised to forgive me as I forgive my brother. I cannot receive any forgiveness for my sins until I have extended forgiveness to my brother. These are Jesus’ own words: *“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses”* (Matt. 6:14–15). As I forgive another, my own sins are covered by forgiveness.

Would we risk being found with feelings of enmity and strife among us, feelings of bitterness and spite, jealousy and hatred, when *“the end of all things is at hand”* and any opportunity could be our last? Oh, let the thought of it worm deep into our hearts and stir us to get ourselves right with God and with one another. Who wants to be found with a stain on our record simply because we would not forgive another, because we would not extend to another the same spirit of forgiveness we ourselves have so often needed?

If we cannot forgive our brother, we lack just that much of belonging to Christ ourselves.

True love is never vindictive. It never says, “You let me down before so I won’t trust you again.” Nor does it say, “If you can’t do any better than that, you’re not my brother.” Nor does it feel superior or self-righteous. True love is understanding, sympathetic, forgiving, taking the attitude of Paul, who said, *“By the grace of God I am what I am.”*

There is no place in the brotherhood of Christ for any attitude of stomping on one another, or looking down on one another, or being harsh or critical of one another. Whatever strengths we have, we must realize that our brother also has strengths. Whatever weaknesses another has, we must realize we also have weaknesses. And thank God!—our strengths and our weaknesses are not the same as his, or to whom could we look for help!

Some day we will face our last test. Some day will be our last opportunity to help another. Some day the end will arrive, and where will we stand then?

#### 4: END-TIME *Hospitality*

*“The end of all things is at hand...Be hospitable to one another without grumbling”* (1 Pet. 4:7, 9).

Here Peter strikes home. He is not talking about good “company” manners but of the general spirit of hospitality we show one another at home, and among those of *“the household of faith.”* Of course we can give liberally and in good spirit to strangers, but what are we among those most familiar to us? Is there any “grudge” in our giving to them? Well Peter knew that we have plenty of “...kind words for the stranger, and smiles for the sometime guest, but for our own, the bitter tone, though we love our own the best.”

We need to watch, especially when *“the end”* is upon us. Let us check ourselves often. Would I want to be found saying this... when Jesus comes? Would I want to be found doing this... when Jesus comes?

We are not to be kind, says Peter, because we have to be, but because it is the only right way to be, because it is part of our obligation and duty as Christians, because in being kind to one another we are being kind to Jesus. And who would not go out of his way, if he had opportunity, to be kind to Jesus?

There is no place for grudging service among followers of Christ. Grudging service is no service at all.

#### 5: END-TIME *Stewardship*

*“The end of all things is at hand....each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God”* (1 Pet. 4:7, 10).

Peter’s fifth admonition for end-time living concerns the proper use of our bodies and minds. We are not free to do as we please, or think as we please, because nothing we have is



our own. Nothing. All is a trust from God. We are, very literally, God's property, and must use what we have as His. *"If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ"* (1 Pet. 4:10–11).

In the ancient world a slave or steward was totally responsible to the master of the house. A steward might dispense everything, but he owned nothing. Even so we are God's stewards. We do not own anything. How preposterous, then, to take credit to ourselves for anything we do.

## 6: END-TIME *Suffering*

*"The end of all things is at hand...But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters"* (1 Pet. 4:7, 15).

Peter knew that suffering and trial would be the lot of all. For his immediate brethren, it was a trial of persecution, in addition to the normal sufferings of life. But for all there would be suffering and trial. Let them be accepted, says Peter, as a privilege of suffering *"for Christ's sake,"* as sharers with Him. None can escape the *"fiery trial"*—nor would we want to, if we could see the blessing God has in it for us.

This attitude is not natural, but with an eye fixed on the time of the end—and the glory in view—how can we be other than joyful! However difficult the testing, it is but for a moment; the glory will be eternal.

## 7: END-TIME *Commitment*

*"The end of all things is at hand...therefore let*

*those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator"* (1 Pet. 4:7, 19).

Peter was writing to believers who faced physical persecution. Keep looking up, he says. The outlook may be gloomy, but the uplook is glorious. And what matter the trials of the journey, if only it leads to home!

This is not idle dreaming. It is the sure promise of God. The very thought of it should spur us to commit ourselves without reservation, and not fear what may come. God is in control, He is watching tenderly over each one whom He sees will be one of His, arranging so that all things will work together for their eternal good. Is it not a precious thought, that He is concerned about us—if we are truly sincere and earnest about the things He has offered us?

However dark our surroundings, God is still on His throne, still caring for His own, still arranging circumstances so that every true, wholehearted one will have every test he or she needs to become pure and holy like Christ.

With a solemn sense of the end of all things upon us, how can we live even a single moment as we would have had not this saving knowledge of God reached us? How can we forget it for a moment, we who have before us the possibility of living for ever and ever!

Let Peter's message touch our hearts. Let them say to us: Get right with God, get right with one another, and do it now.

Why? because all will soon climax in the return of Jesus Christ to take over the affairs of this earth and transform it into His eternal Kingdom of peace. For that Day let us watch and pray—*"the end of all things is at hand!"* ♦



## BE A GOOD FORGETTER

Life is too short to remember that which prevents one from reaching his goal. *"Forgetting the things that are behind,... I press for the mark,"* said a Christian fighter in the first century. It is only the small man who cherishes revenge. The soldier of Christ forgets past hurts, slights and wounds—the past is irrevocable. So he lets the dead past bury its dead. He cannot afford to look behind and stumble in this battle against sin. His eye is on the victor's crown.

# Two CONSTANTS

## IN THE NEW YEAR

### CONSTANT #1: CHANGE

We seniors have seen so much in our lifetime that we have come to view change as a constant in just about every area of our lives. We see change as we look back, and we see change as we look ahead.

#### *Change, Looking Back*

A postcard could be mailed for 3 cents and you could depend on it being delivered. Wages were a dollar an hour. The fountain pen was giving way to the ballpoint pen, a slow process because the new ball points leaked, leaving big spots of ink on your clothing; after a few years they resolved the problem. The telegraph was still in use across the country. What has changed? Now we have e-mail, voicemail, and VoIP. Now we have iPads, iPods, iPhones,

iTablets...and, and...and these

are on the way out.

Using a connection through the internet you can monitor your child at the day-care center, or your vacation home a

thousand miles away. Now, using Skype, you can see and talk with your family on the other side of the world. If you want to pay the price, you can order from a website and have the parcel on your doorstep the next day. You can network with your friends on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

My father used to tell about traveling by horseback or buggy, and his first model T Ford. If the spark wasn't set just right it could kick back and break your arm while cranking with a hand crank. And once it cranked it might run

over you—like it did my Father, pinning him to the curb. The transmission used belts instead of gears, so it

was never completely out of gear. Lesson: never forget to set the parking brakes. Top speed was about 45 MPH once you got it going. Oh, that was pretty fast considering the big holes in the road.

There was no electricity in rural areas where we lived, and no paved roads. One of the streets in downtown Conyers (Georgia) was still gravel. If you heard someone coming up the road, you couldn't resist running to the window to look. Then came the curse of television.

Today the internet shrinks the globe. You used to think of China as being on the other side of a great big world, now it sits on your desktop, and with GoogleEarth you can view the main street in Shanghai, or Tokyo, or Melbourne. And our next door neighbor is a star—light years away.

This is a lot of change; but the difference is in how much faster change is taking place. Now it is said that our scientific knowledge doubles every five years.

In 1911, the Wright Brothers' Vin Fiz was the first airplane to cross the United States. The flight took 84 days, stopping 70 times. It crash-landed so many times that little of its original building materials were still on the plane when it arrived in California. Fifty eight years later (1969) man was walking on the moon.

Space exploration was the beginning of accelerated change, and now the rapidity of change has become dependent on computer speed. And computers aren't just getting faster; they are getting faster at a faster rate. It is stated that the number of transistors you can put on a microchip doubles about every two years. The electronics that used to require a large room can be carried in your pocket.

And this has occurred during our lifetime.

#### *Change, Looking Ahead*

It is speculated that "within another 30 years, we will have the means to create superhuman intelligence. Shortly after, the human era will be





over, replaced by super-intelligent machines capable of outthinking and outperforming any human—and—reproducing themselves—with each generation superior to the last.”

Scientific research suggests that man can potentially become smart enough to become immortal. Their reasoning?

Every time a cell divides, telomeres (a protective coating on chromosomes inside the cell’s nucleus) get shorter, and once a cell runs out of telomeres, it can’t reproduce anymore, and it dies. However, an enzyme called telomerase actually reverses this process. Researchers at Harvard Medical School announced in Nature magazine that they had administered telomerase to a group of mice suffering from age-related degeneration. Not only did the age-related damages disappear, but they claim the mice got younger.

If you are a skeptic like me, you don’t accept everything just because it is from a prestigious source. You check it out. And you find that what they claim could be true—to a point.

The telomere, located at the ends of chromosomes, protects the chromosomes from deterioration. Each time a cell divides, the

failed to mention that these aging mice had all the symptoms of aging, not because they were old but because the experimenters had removed the telomerase, then simply replaced it. This is much different from naturally aging mice injected with a youth vaccine.

While I would place only limited confidence in the Harvard report, it does show that man may eventually discover a means to slow the aging process—man already lives considerably longer than the last generation in spite of widespread obesity and lack of exercise (and heart disease and cancer).

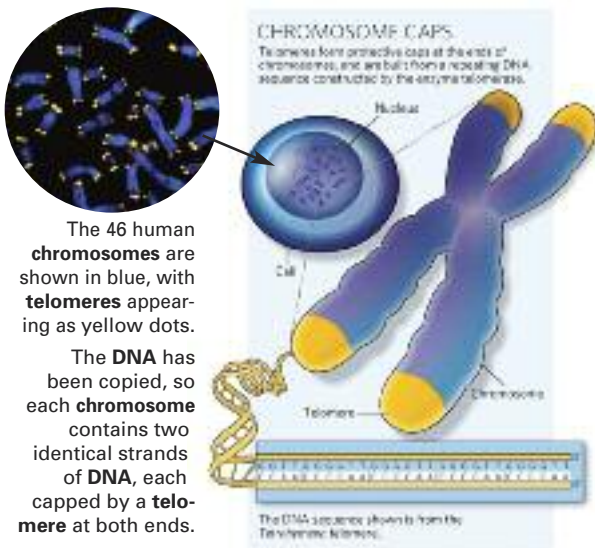
As preposterous as it may seem, this rapid scientific advancement should not come as a surprise to any of us. Daniel 12:4 has been interpreted to mean that “*knowledge shall be increased*” at the end of this age. An alternate LXX text reads “*evil will increase*.” As we know, knowledge and evil have both increased. With such a great increase of knowledge at the disposal of man, deceitful and desperately wicked at heart, the world, as a matter of natural course, will become exponentially more perilous. The tragedy in Japan last year may serve as an example. Had it not been for the discovery of nuclear power and our ability to harness and use it, Japan would never have faced this nuclear crisis. Nor would the world be in danger of a nuclear war. Who can deny that, left to himself, man is likely doomed to self-destruction?

None of us like to be reminded of these things coming on the earth. We can understand the people in Bible history who said, “*Just tell us what we want to hear, what feels good and makes us happy*” (Isa. 30:10, free paraphrase). But their refusing to hear the facts changed nothing; destruction came when God’s time arrived. Only those who listened were within His care.

What has been constant throughout the past century? Change. While the pace of change itself is accelerating, one thing we can be certain of—change as we know it is going to be left behind. But first, change as we know it will make one giant leap forward—with the return of Jesus Christ. And unless we prepare right now, we will be left behind. This change has been forecast in the Bible, and we can put our full confidence in it—which we cannot give to the Harvard report.

The change we are about to witness will not be a result of human knowledge. It is a decree of the Almighty Creator, who holds total control. And His loving care will be extended to everyone

*Refusing  
to hear the  
facts changes  
nothing in  
the plan  
of God.*



<http://srxa.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/telomeres-color1.jpg>

telomere gets shorter, and eventually the cell dies from lack of protection. Telomerase regulates this process by slowing down the thinning process. But on rare occasions, a dying cell may emerge from the crisis, immortalized through telomere elongation by either activated telomerase or ALT. The result is cancer. Other articles from various news sources also

*Our never  
changing God  
will do exactly  
as He has  
promised.*

who will listen and respond as He directs.

Zechariah tells us that as a result of divine intervention, a new God-directed government and the mandating of new laws, two thirds of the world's population will be cut off; only one third will remain (Zech. 13:8). Knowing in advance that such catastrophic change is coming, we want to be ready.

What changes do we need to make to be ready? If changing ourselves is necessary for survival, the answer to this question is critical. Of equal importance is the reliability of the source of the answer.

Does man predict that in another 30 years they will be able to actually reverse the aging process and make man immortal? With a little reflection, one can see the fallacy of such dreams. Even if the aging process could be reversed, one's life could still be taken by either natural or manmade disasters, or by disease or sickness. Not only this, but the Lord God strikes a fatal blow on the very root of any such possibility when He declares that He formed the earth to be inhabited forever by happy immortals—of His choosing! Why is God's plan superior? It is more—much more—than an extended mortal existence. His plan for glorified humans is to give them new bodies like that of Jesus Himself (Phil. 3:20–21), bodies composed of a substance not known to us, superior to flesh and blood (1 Cor. 15:50), that is not subject to pain, or change, or decay. And He is a righteous God, who does all things right.

## CONSTANT #2: GOD

Change is one constant. The other constant is God himself, the One who never changes, who sees the end from the beginning, and for whom the future holds no surprises (Isa. 46:9–10). God has made us a solemn promise: that He will be with His people always (Heb. 13:5). That promise holds wherever they are, and cannot be invalidated by anything unexpected. In whatever circumstance, God has promised to be there for those who are with Him. This places the responsibility on us to make the changes He requires, without regard to what we think those changes should be. Knowing the outcome from the beginning, God is the One who ultimately chooses who will live and never die when the new age begins. He knows. Period.

And our second constant, God, will continue through eternity. He never changes. *"I am the Lord, I change not"* (Mal. 3:6). And for this

we are eternally grateful. Not one individual, not one of His choosing, will ever lose their immortality or joy or glory! He, the God who never changes, will do exactly as He has promised. *"My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips"* (Ps. 89:34). Just as surely as the rain and snow come to water the earth, so surely He will do as He has promised (Isa. 55:10–11).

What has our never changing God promised? Glory, peace, and joy unspeakable, more than anyone can imagine, and eternal life too! (Rom. 2:7). Even the least informed can understand that man, given his animal instincts, can never live in a "perfect" world of total peace, harmony, honesty, order, and brotherly love. Can you imagine this world absolutely free of hatred, greed, lust, immorality, self-aggrandizement, wars, murders and anything that hurts or offends? Nor can I—without radical change!

The Lord declared that *"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."* It predicts that men will be doing *"evil with both hands earnestly..."* (Jer. 17:9; Mic. 7:3). Not one qualifies in his natural state for a permanent place in God's new, glorified world where only happy individuals will live.

Do you remember that *"One of the teachers of the law"* asked Jesus, *"...Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"*

*"The most important one,"* answered Jesus, *"is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart ... and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."*

*"Well said, teacher,"* the man replied. *"You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding, and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."*

What was Jesus' reply? *"You are not far from the kingdom of God...."* (Mark 12:28–34 NIV84).

All authority is from one source, one Almighty, supreme God. This leaves no possible chance of opposing ideas. Every immortal being can and will be in perfect accord with God and the vast number of His family members on myriads of glorified worlds.

But before we can receive that change to the perfect, sinless, immortal state and be made like the glorified body of Christ (Phil. 3:20–21), we must change to be like Him in character (Rom. 13:12–14); and that is our responsibility.

Anyone who does not have a change of heart to match God's pattern cannot be part of this grand and wonderful family.

In times past, God worked directly with His people through the agency of angels and prophets. Then He sent a very special agent: His Son—human and subject to human passions and “*tempted in all points*” as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). His task—and His achievement—was unprecedented. Jesus came to show us by way of example and teach us just what God wanted from each of us who seek an eternal inheritance with the saints. And Jesus did it, giving us that perfect pattern of obedience to the will of God.

Jesus said a resolute, “No!” to temptation every time, and “Yes!” to the will of God every time, and He never once faltered. All the rest of us, who have been honored with such wonderful knowledge from God, have sinned. But God is not looking for those who never sinned. He is looking at the finished product. As Paul, a spokesman for Christ wrote, “*If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*” (2 Cor. 5:17). All things—without exception—all must give way to God's thoughts and God's will.

If we really believe there is only one God,

gracious and all-knowing, and a rewarder of all who obey Him, we can reach the standard of Christ, God's perfect pattern. We can become like Him—first morally, by applying His standard of purity to our lives (1 John 3:3), and then when He comes He will change us physically, placing us beyond the reach of temptation and sin (Phil 3:20–21; 1 John 3:2).

Jesus prayed for all those who believe, “*that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in us*” (John 17:21). In answer to Jesus' prayer, we must be one in mind and purpose with God and Jesus, and with each other—or we are none of His.

There is no greater honor we can give Christ than to lay down our lives as did He and put on the character of Christ. And there is just one way to do this: by exchanging our ways for Christ's.

Our old way of life must be gone. We must be like Christ, our perfect pattern, without sin. Then at His return He will change our corruptible bodies to be made physically like His own, glorious body, never to change, never to decay, never to die but go from glory to glory through all the cycles of Eternity (Phil. 3:20–21; 1 John 3:2–3; 2 Cor. 3:18). ♦

*There  
is no greater  
honor we can  
give to Christ  
than to put on  
His character.*

## WELCOME HOME, LORD JESUS!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

**Our world needs You.** Millions are suffering from oppression, starvation, terrorism, poverty, and the inhumanity of man to man.

Do we not feel like crying out with the Psalmist, “*How long, Lord...how long?*” for to whom does this fair earth belong? Is not the earth “*the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein*” (Ps. 24:1)?

We can only exclaim, “Welcome home, Lord Jesus!”

But are you ready? Am I? The great Day of the Lord will not always wait. The appointed time will come. The time is set, even though it is not revealed. It will come—unexpectedly.

Our task now is to get ready. That is our **Message** in this issue of the Message. Feel the urgency of living ready as you read “*End Time Living*”

(see page 4), taking advice from the Apostle Peter. Get the whole picture of Jesus ascending and returning in a poem, “*When Christ Returns*” (page 24). In *Magnifying the Word* (page 22), take a closer look at a passage from Jesus' final message, the book of Revelation, where John the Revelator declares, “*Behold, he is coming with clouds!*” (Rev. 1:7). Read carefully to discover who “*pierced*” Him and who will be filled with grief when He returns.

And don't overlook the start of a serial called, “*The End of the Age*” (page 12). The first episode depicts the time of Noah, reminding us that our age is not the first to face an end. “*As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man*” (Luke 17:26).

And don't miss the in-depth study of Isaiah 53 (page 16). This chapter is not meant for casual reading. Give it the time and concentration it deserves, and see the prophecies of the Messiah and

His central role in the plan of God in a new light. The prophet Isaiah has loaded this chapter with meaning and significance which can be understood only as it is compared with the rest of Scripture. For this “*servant*” is not the “*suffering servant*” often pictured as the one who suffered in our stead. In this chapter the prophet is setting forth one whom God sent as the perfect pattern for us to follow. **Most despised** in spite of His highest of high achievements, He will be **most exalted** by the God of heaven when He returns to set up His kingdom.

And while you are reading, don't overlook “*Two Constants in the New Year*.” We need them both if we would travel successfully from here into eternity.

Use it all in getting ready for the great Day that is coming, so you are able to be among those who greet Him with an ecstatic, “*Welcome home, Lord Jesus!*” ♦





## SCENE ONE:

# THE END OF THE AGE

*From the Days of Noah*

### Characters:

Jubal: husband – heard Noah preach years ago  
Derka: Jubal's wife – what do neighbors think?  
Eber: Jubal's son – scared  
Dinah: Jubal's sister – her home already flooded

### Narrator:

Have you thought about the end of time, the end of this age, the end of things as we know them? There is something ominous about an end, yet something filled with expectancy. An end means something different lies ahead.

Time as we know it will have an end. From the Word of God, we learn that the end of an age is even now upon us. God has spoken, and what He has foretold will come to pass.

Technology enthusiasts proclaim loudly that they have the solution to the world's ills, that apart from their cause, all things continue as they were from the beginning, but the Word of the Lord shouts louder: All things do NOT continue as they were. We are approaching the end of this age.

This is not the first such end in history. There have been others, lesser in significance perhaps, but no less final to the people living at the time.

Let's go back to the time of Noah, who saw the end of an early age. Noah has a lesson for us, for Jesus said, *"As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man."*

Listen as God speaks to Noah (*sound of thunder, visible lightning, followed by loud, booming voice*).

### Voice:

*"My Spirit shall not strive with man forever.... The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.*

*"Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make*

*rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And behold, I Myself am bringing flood-waters on the earth, to destroy... But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark."* – Gen. 6:3, 11, 14, 17, 18

### Narrator:

Days came, and days passed. Decades came, and decades passed. Suns rose, and suns set, just as they always had. Meanwhile, Noah was building, building, day after day, day after day (*sound effects of hammers on wood in distance*), for we read that Noah *"did according to all that the Lord commanded him."* One hundred twenty long years he labored, delivering God's message of warning to all who would listen. But as we might expect, he had little success.

Let's go now to the Land of the Two Rivers and visit a family who had heard Noah preaching years earlier. In this family is Jubal, his wife Derka, and a young son Eber. When Jubal heard Noah preaching years earlier, he had dismissed it casually. Now it is raining and raining and raining, and Jubal is having second thoughts. Could Noah possibly have been right?

This is no ordinary downpour. For seven days and seven nights now torrents of water have cascaded from the blackened skies, and there is no sign of abatement.

Jubal and his family lived near a small tributary of the great Euphrates which is usually nothing to fear, being a dry bed of sand and stones the greater part of the year. But now it is a raging, frothing, turbulent, yellow monster spreading wider and wider over the fertile valley and already lapping hungrily at the low mound on which Jubal's house is built. Another cubit upward, and the floor will be awash. Indeed, it is time for Jubal to have second

thoughts about Noah and his message!

On the fourth day of the rain, Jubal rounded up all his cattle, sheep and goats and crowded them into the rear of his none-too-large dwelling. Now the thick walls of sun-dried brick are steadily growing thinner. And to make matters worse, the roof is leaking. The outlook is growing steadily worse. Overnight the rising waters have reached the plain behind their ridge, and as far as the eye can see stretches a vast shallow lake. Yesterday, Jubal's sister arrived, cold and drenched, flooded out of her lowland home. Wet, miserable, and frightened, they anxiously wait. And worry. And wish for what they might have done weeks and months and years ago—listened to Noah.

*(Curtain opens)*

**Setting:**

Jubal, Derka, their son Eber, and Jubal's sister Dinah in living quarters of Jubal's home, crowded, damp. Floor and furniture are wet.

Eber: *(kneels center stage pleading)* O god of the rivers, have mercy. Have mercy on us! *(lifts hands)* O ever-shining sun-god, shine! SHINE on us. We have had enough rain. Shine, O sun god. SHINE!

Jubal: Be quiet, Eber! *(sharply)* Do you want to bring us more bad luck? The more you pray, the harder it rains.

Dinah: And the higher the river gets.

Derka: And the more the roof leaks.

Jubal: Well...

Derka: Well, what are you going to do about it? That's what I'd like to know.

Jubal: Me? What can I do? I didn't start this rain.

Derka: No, but you built the roof.

Jubal: You know well enough what I wanted to do a long time ago. If we'd done as I said, we'd be dry and safe now. So there!

Derka: Yes, I know, and it was a long time ago. You know why I wouldn't do it. Do you think I wanted to be a laughingstock of the neighborhood?

Jubal: All right, all right, but we'd better be careful.

Eber: Old Noah will be laughing at us if this keeps up. *(Eber goes over and looks out window, picks up an old coat, holds it up and watches the water drip from it.)*

Dinah: No sense quarreling now. It won't do any good anyway. Take a look at the river now, Jubal.

*(Jubal slips and slides across the muddy, cluttered floor toward a single window and peers out.)*

Dinah: Maybe we're right, and maybe not. If anybody is right, I'd guess it's the man in that ark up there *(points thumb toward higher ground to the north).*

Jubal: That's what I say. You know, at one time, I believed in his God, more or less.

Derka: Yes, I know you did. You were all for joining his band of fanatics and turning your back on the rest of the world. As though he had a monopoly on God. Lucky you didn't stick to it and disgrace the family.

Jubal: Well, I couldn't just see everything his way, but now I admit he had good judgment, to say the least. It's a good ark....

Derka: With a good roof.

Jubal: When I first heard old Noah preach, it made quite an impression on me. I even got rid of some of my household images. I well remember the first time it clouded up for a rain after that. I threw the rest of my gods into the fire and started for the ark. But on the way it cleared up, and I turned around and went home.

Eber: And made you a new set of gods!

Jubal: Yes, but I didn't have much faith in them. Noah did that much for me anyway.

Derka: The results of his work show he's using the wrong method. Here he's preached over a hundred years, and I don't know of a single person in this whole valley who has stood by him very long. Only his wife and his sons and their wives! A miserably small showing, after all these years of preaching. Now if I were doing it ...

Jubal: *(dryly)* Yes, yes, but don't forget this: right or wrong, he's in and we're out. And—

Eber: And the river is still rising. So... *(long silence)*

Dinah: The trouble with this ark business has been the false alarms. People used to get a little excited when it started to rain, but the lowlands have been flooded probably forty times since he's been preaching. How can he expect anyone to take him seriously after all these years? The river has always gone down.

Derka: And it will go down again.

Jubal: Did Noah ever say any of these floods was the big one he was preparing for?

Derka: Well, no-o-o.

Dinah: He would have been in bad trouble if they had been, because it's just in the last month or so that he's gotten the ark finished.

Jubal: That's what worries me. This is the first time that Noah has gone into the ark and shut the door. It looks like he really believes something is coming. Maybe he really has some message from God now.

Derka: Nonsense! Who is he that God should favor him with a warning? There are smarter men than old Noah in

this valley, and good people without number. Why should he be saved and they lost?

Jubal: Never mind why; they are probably drowning now, while he is safe for some time to come.

Dinah: No doubt he does believe something is coming.

Derka: He has preached it for so long he surely must believe it. By now it has gone to his head. He's just a simple-minded old fanatic—with some practical ideas, I admit, but away behind the times. Our race has always lived in this valley.

Dinah: And always will. *(silence again, while Jubal goes to window and peers through the driving rain to watch Noah's strange craft. Watches as flood swirls perilously near his walls. Eber comes over to his side, watches also.)*

Eber: Oh! this water—what if our house slides into the current!

Jubal: *(suddenly)* Come on, folks. Let's get over to the ark while there is still time. Why should we stay here and drown!

Eber: Yes! Let's go! I don't want to die yet.

Jubal: Noah will let us in, I'm sure.

Dinah: *(dubious)* You think so? You know, last month he warned you of this, and you laughed at him.

Jubal: I know, but he won't turn a good neighbor down. I'm going. Nothing to lose! *(starts for the door)*

Derka: *(grabs Jubal by the arm)* Don't be a fool, Jubal! You know what it means to go into that ark. It is to admit that he is right and all the rest of us are wrong! It's out of the question.

Jubal: But what good is it to argue about right and wrong while we drown?

Derka: We're not going to drown. This is just an unusually

wet spell of weather. It has rained before, the river has risen before. We'll be all right. *(long silence)* If we leave here, don't go in with Noah. They think they're so much better than the rest of us. Why can't we wade across the plain to the next ridge?

Jubal: Not a chance in the world. We'd be washed away like everything floating by. You should have thought of that yesterday.

Derka: Well, I didn't see any of the neighbors going, so I wasn't going to be the first to run.

Jubal: And where are your neighbors now?

Derka: You didn't see any trying to get into the ark, did you?

Jubal: They may be glad to get in before this is over. *(Jubal edges toward door)*

Derka: Jubal, sit down! You're not going out of this house. If the river comes up to the door we can take to the house-top. *(very deliberate)* If we ever went into that ark, and the rain stopped, how would we ever face the neighbors? I tell you, I'm not going to make a fool of myself.

Dinah: Let's leave it like this: We are reasonably safe here until night, and if the river is up to the door by that time, we will go over to the ark and ask to be taken in. No use doing anything rashly.

Jubal: *(Jubal sits down resignedly)* I guess that's the best plan. *(strains eyes again to see the ark)* It does *(very slowly)* seem to be getting a little bit lighter, perhaps. Maybe—maybe it is only a hard rain after all. And if worst comes to worst, Noah will let us in.

Dinah: Yes, Noah will let us in.

Eber: I sure hope so! ♦

TO BE CONTINUED

#### ANSWERS FOR PAGE 15

#### JESUS' PROMISES

1. he shall live, shall never die (John 11:25–26)
2. greater works (John 14:12)
3. another Helper (comforter) that He may abide with you forever (John 14:16)
4. I will come again. (John 14:3)
5. Peace I leave with you (John 14:27)
6. shall inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5)
7. by no means lose his reward (Mark 9:41)
8. give you rest (Matt. 11:28)
9. a hundredfold, eternal life (Mark 10:29–30)
10. shall be added to you (Matt. 6:31–33)
11. will be loved by My Father (John 14:21)
12. power over the nations (Rev. 2:25–26)

13. the right to the tree of life (Rev. 22:12, 14)
14. nor can they die anymore (Luke 20:35–36)

#### WHO AM I?

1. Abram (Gen. 11:31; 12:1)
2. Isaac (Gen. 22:1–13)
3. Jacob (Gen. 25:29–34)
4. Judah (Gen. 37:26–28)
5. Rahab (Joshua 2:1)
6. Boaz (Ruth 2:1–16)
7. Ruth (Ruth 2:8–9; 4:13)
8. Jesse (1 Sam. 16:1, 11)

9. David (1 Sam. 18:1–3)
10. Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:3)
11. Solomon (1 Kings 3:6–9)
12. Rehoboam (1 Kings 12:1–11)
13. Asa (1 Kings 15:23)
14. Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 20:35–37)
15. Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:16–21)
16. Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29:1–3)
17. Josiah (2 Chron. 34:1–18)
18. Zerubbabel (Ezra 3:2–10)
19. Mary, mother of Jesus (Luke 1:34–40)
20. Joseph or Jesus (Matt. 2:19–23; 13:55; Mark 6:3)



## JESUS' PROMISES (NKJV)

1. "Jesus said to her, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die; \_\_\_\_\_ . And whoever lives and believes in Me \_\_\_\_\_ . Do you believe this?"*
2. *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and \_\_\_\_\_ than these he will do, because I go to My Father.*
3. *"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ — the Spirit of truth"*
4. *"If I go and prepare a place for you, \_\_\_\_\_ and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."*
5. *"\_\_\_\_\_ , My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."*
6. *"Blessed are the meek, For they \_\_\_\_\_ ."*
7. *"For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will \_\_\_\_\_ ."*
8. *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will \_\_\_\_\_ ."*
9. *"So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive \_\_\_\_\_ now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, \_\_\_\_\_ ."*
10. *"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things \_\_\_\_\_ ."*
11. *"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me \_\_\_\_\_ , and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."*
12. *"But hold fast what you have till I come. And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give \_\_\_\_\_ ."*
13. *"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work...Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have \_\_\_\_\_ , and may enter through the gates into the city."*
14. *"But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; \_\_\_\_\_ , for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection."*

## WHO AM I?

1. This was my name when I left my home in Ur of Chaldea to follow God's direction.
2. My father was going to sacrifice me, but God intervened by providing a ram caught in the bushes.
3. I secured my brother's birthright in exchange for a bowl of lentils.
4. I saved my brother's life by persuading our other brothers to sell him into slavery.
5. Before the siege of Jericho, I gave shelter to two Israelite spies.
6. I showed favor to a Moabitess widow.
7. I met my husband when I gleaned wheat in his field.
8. When Samuel came to anoint a king, I didn't think it was important to call my youngest son to the feast.
9. I became the best friend of Jonathan, son of King Saul.
10. I was the wife of Uriah the Hittite.
11. When I became king, I asked God for wisdom and discernment.
12. I refused to listen to the appeal for easier taxes.
13. I was the king whose feet became diseased in my old age.
14. I made an alliance with King Ahaziah, which resulted in the Lord destroying my ships.
15. I was stricken with leprosy when I went into the temple and burned incense.
16. In the first year of my reign, I opened the doors of the temple and repaired them.
17. When the temple was renovated during my reign, the priest Hilkiah found the Book of the Law.
18. After the captivity I and Jeshua set up the altar of burnt offering, and laid the foundation to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.
19. I visited my relative Elizabeth before her son was born.
20. I was a carpenter from Nazareth.



ANSWERS ON PAGE 14



### Isaiah 53:

*Who has listened to the prophecies about Him and so believed on Him when He came? And to whom is the power of the Lord revealed?*

*For he shall grow up before God and be nourished as a tender plant, from a place of no significance (Galilee), an offspring of the family of David who was not a priest: He seemed totally out of place among His people.*

# MOST Despised...

# MOST Exalted

**A**mong the many prophetic passages of Scripture is the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. Contrary to popular Christian teaching, there is much more here than a prophecy of the physical disfigurement of the “suffering Servant.” This passage focuses the divine spotlight on the character and accomplishments of Jesus Christ, describing His influence all the way into Eternity.

Like many other prophecies of the Messiah, this chapter spans His two advents, having both a near and far significance. Looking at the prophecy’s closer-range fulfillments, within seven or eight centuries, the Prophet saw vivid pictures of what would befall the Messiah when He would come the first time, meek and lowly, a “*lamb led to the slaughter*.” Looking further, to a distance of more than two millennia, the significance enlarges to include His role—and that of His co-rulers—in the whole plan of salvation. The further one looks, the more one sees of the awesome wisdom of Divinity!

The combining of near and far range prophecy, as of Christ’s first and second advents, is common in Scripture. For example, read Isaiah’s prophecy in chapter 9, “*Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given*.” The Prophet is speaking of the Messiah’s first advent, when the child would be born. Then immediately his eye turns to the climactic events more than two millennia hence, when “*the government shall be upon His shoulder...*” (Isa. 9:6–7).

Here is the wonder of the Divine mind, that can see future events at near and distant range with equal clarity, a task impossible for us who cannot see with certainty even the next moment!

### EMPHASIS ON CHARACTER

**T**he prophetic drama in Isaiah 53 tells about many aspects of the Messiah’s career—His life, His ministry, His death, His burial, and His triumph over death. We learn also of the circumstances surrounding His life. Most important of all, we learn how He combined all these in the forming of a character so noble that those who observed Him could scarcely comprehend it.

Isaiah 53 is a study in contrasts. In vivid word pictures we see One who was

- ◆ *most rejected by men AND most extolled and exalted by God;*
- ◆ *most mistreated by men AND most favored and blest by God;*
- ◆ *most despised by men AND most approved and esteemed by God;*
- ◆ *who suffered unjustly—for doing good, for being most compassionate—yet who had only forgiveness for His tormentors. He simply could not—would not return evil for evil.*

What does all this tell us? That nothing matters so much to the heavenly Father as character.

**L**et us look at the drama, verse by verse. It begins in chapter 52, with verse 13. Some actors are speaking, others are



silent. The cast of characters includes three principals, whom we will identify as:

1) **Main character:** “*The Servant*,” usually called “He”... (prophetic of Jesus Christ the Messiah)

2) **Speaker or Narrator:** “*We*”... (spokesmen for those acquainted with Christ, who interacted with Him at His First Advent).

3) **Observers:** “*They*”... (onlookers)  
As the Prophet opens the curtain on this drama, a Divine voice is speaking for God, commending the “Servant.”

**Isaiah 52:13**

*“Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.”*

The first phrase is commending the high character of “My Servant,” the coming Messiah. Because He deals “prudently” (is “circumspect,” i.e., “behaves wisely”—LXX), He will be “exalted and extolled and be very high”—even the very highest, because the great God will exalt Him to the kingship of the whole earth (Zech. 14:9). He will be “*given...a name above every name*,” and all will bow to Him (Phil. 2:9).

**Isaiah 52:14**

*“Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men”*

**Septuagint:** His face was “inglorious among men” and “not honored among the sons of men.”

Contrast the commendation (v.13) with this comment from the narrator about how this servant, highly honored of God, was maltreated by his peers during His life: “*Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men*” (Isa. 52:14).

The Septuagint reads that His face was “inglorious among men” and “not honored among the sons of men.” Jesus was not accepted by the people of His time. “*He came unto His own, but His own received Him not*” (John 1:10).

**Isaiah 52:15**

*“So shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; For what had not been told them they shall see, And what they had not heard they shall consider.”*

**Septuagint:** “Many nations shall wonder at Him; kings shall keep their mouths shut.”

But even though despised by those around Him, His future destiny is sure: “*So shall He sprinkle many nations* [Many nations shall wonder at Him—LXX]. *Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider*” (Isa. 52:15). The nations will be silent in amazement when His destiny becomes known worldwide.

Chapter 53 continues with the narrative. Along with the speaker is a voice representing a group of people acquainted with Christ during His lifetime. They are neither His own followers nor are they total strangers, but obviously persons within His sphere of influence. They see Him, His tribulations, His triumphs, first hand, and make “report.”

**Isaiah 53:1**

*“Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”*

**Fulfillment** cited by John (12:37–38)

The Gospel writers, aided by their knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures as well as the power of the Holy Spirit, cited this passage (Isa. 53:1) and applied it to the ministry of Christ. For example, the Apostle John: “*Although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in*

*Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: ‘Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?’”* (John 12:37–38).

In all His preaching, Jesus made doubly clear that both His message and His work were not His own. “*This is the work of God*,” He said, “*that you believe in Him whom He sent... I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me... I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me*” (John 6:29; 5:30; 8:42).

But true to the prophecy of Isaiah, Jesus’ witness and His words were not believed by those who heard. Jesus Himself said: “*I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me... For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?... But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.... But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe... You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know... You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also*” (John 5:43, 46–47, 38; 6:36; 7:28; 8:19).

The Prophet was right: “*Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?*” Christ was indeed the “arm of the Lord,” an arm destined one day to rule the world with power and earth-shaking authority when He comes the second time. Yet He began His career in a small and obscure setting, little known and less believed.

**Isaiah 53:2a**

*“For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground.”*

Here is another description that



pictures the Messiah rising out of obscurity. The prophecy of Him being as a “young plant” and a “root out of a dry ground” is parallel to another of Isaiah’s prophecies recorded in chapter 11. “There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots...and in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious” (Isa. 11:1, 10).

A tender plant growing out of dry ground suggests the famishing spiritual environment into which the Messiah came. But His growth was “before Him,” i.e, before God—God was watching over this tender plant, nourishing it, bringing it carefully to full maturity. But those who knew Him could not appreciate what God was doing.

#### Isaiah 53:2b

“He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.”

Without comeliness, without beauty by human standards, this precious, tender plant was not recognized for its real worth. It was even despised.

#### Isaiah 53:3

“He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.”

**Fulfillment** cited by John 1:10–11.

This lowly Servant of God, this man who came as an obscure carpenter from Nazareth, quietly withdrew from human goals and competitions. The Septuagint translates, “His form was ignoble, inferior to that of the children of men... he was despised and not esteemed.”

The fulfillment of this prophecy is again affirmed by the apostle John: “He

came to His own, and His own did not receive Him” (John 1:10–11). So fiercely did they despise Him that they went about to kill Him, even very early in His ministry. They would have succeeded, had God not been watching and guiding. Again we read, in words recorded by the apostle John, how Jesus said to those who heard Him: “I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you” (John 8:37). Again He said, “Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?” (John 7:19)

#### Isaiah 53:4

“Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.”

**Fulfillment** cited by Matthew 8:16–17.

Though it is not obvious because of the translation, this text describes Jesus’ ministry of healing and the people’s rejection of Him in spite of His compassionate ministry. This was Matthew’s understanding of the passage, as he wrote under the influence of the Holy Spirit: “When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses’” (Matt. 8:16–17). How strange! how contradictory that He who showered such compassion and mercy on the people of His time, who came with blessing and healing for their physical maladies, should be so grossly unappreciated—even mistreated, “smitten,” and “afflicted”—and finally crucified!

Yet—here is the contrast between what He was and how He was treated, yet He was plotted against (by the Jews), who contrived maliciously against him.

#### Isaiah 53:5

“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.”

**Septuagint:** He was wounded on account of our sins, and was bruised because of our iniquities.

**Fulfillment:** Acts 2:23, 36; 3:13–15; 4:10; 5:29–30; 7:52; 1Peter 2:24.

Instead of appreciating His acts of mercy, the people of His day tried to kill Him. He was “wounded” and “bruised” by their sinful acts against Him. Can we imagine the personal injury one of lesser stature would have felt, going about doing good everywhere, yet being “wounded” and “bruised”? Do we wonder that His persecutors felt their peace “chastised” (checked, restrained) as they afflicted one they knew was innocent? How could they have any peace of conscience in committing such crimes against one who did only good for them? Instead of appreciating His miracles and His compassion, they turned on Him with violence.

And so, just as prophesied, Christ was “wounded” and “bruised” on account of their iniquities. This is the rendering of the text in the Septuagint Bible, which reads: “He was wounded on account of our sins, and was bruised because of our iniquities.” The Gospels record the events. Jesus was forcefully taken and condemned to death by “wicked” men; His suffering was indeed “on account of” or “because of” their iniquity.

The Apostles, preaching after His resurrection, did not hesitate to lay the blame where it belonged: on the people who perpetrated the crime. The crucifixion of Christ was, in their view, a heinous crime committed by “wicked” hands—and overruled by God. Again and again the Apostles emphasized this fact. Wicked hands murdered Him; God raised Him from the dead and exalted Him.

For example, after healing the man

at the Gate Beautiful, Peter again told his audience about Jesus: “Whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses” (Acts 3:13–15).

Again Peter spoke of “Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead” (Acts 4:10). “Peter and the other apostles” said again: “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree” (Acts 5:29–30).

Stephen, in his final defense, irritated his tormentors with these words of truth about the Messiah: “Of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers” (Acts 7:52).

Addressing Cornelius and those who were with him, Peter spoke of “Jesus of Nazareth...who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree” (Acts 10:38–39).

Jesus was “taken,” He was “murdered,” He was condemned and crucified at the hands of sinful men (Luke 24:7)—a direct result of the sinfulness of the people who inflicted it. He suffered on account of—as a result of—their sins, just as Isaiah foretold He would (53:5).

#### Isaiah 53:6

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

**Fulfillment:** Heb. 7:25; 12:24; 1 Tim. 2:5.

Now the narrator is self-condemning as he talks about himself and his peers. We have no problem believing that those who crucified Christ were “astray” and went “every one...his own way.” They were doing what they wanted to do. Their actions were according to their agenda, not God’s.

The Prophet says also: “And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (v. 6). The principal verb in the phrase is “laid,” which means, “by importunity, cause to intreat, make intercession” (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance). With this definition in mind, we might rephrase the text as, “The Lord has caused his servant to intercede before him [God] for the iniquity of us all.” Jesus actually fulfilled this prophecy. He did indeed intercede for His persecutors before the Father, when He prayed at the last: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34), and He continues as our intercessor, our mediator in the presence of the Father (Heb. 7:25; 12:24; 1 Tim. 2:5).

Then the Prophet uses his narrator to describe more of the mistreatment Jesus suffered, and—most important of all—His superior character in that suffering.

## Paraphrase of Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12

### MAIN POINT:

- ♦ To show how opposite are God’s ways and man’s;
- ♦ To contrast how terribly Christ was disesteemed/mis-treated/rejected by men (in return for such favor) yet honored and exalted by God—  
a general pattern of all God’s servants;
- ♦ To set forth Christ as an example to all, of the level of character God esteems, recognizes, and honors

The **speaker (we, us, our)** is a spokesperson for the Jews of Jesus’ time, looking from the “outside” in; at the opening, and occasionally afterward, **God** speaks (**I**) and (**My**).

### FINAL EXALTATION of “My Servant”

- 52:13 Listen! My servant shall deal intelligently and with good judgment.  
He shall be exalted very highly, above everyone.
- 52:14 Even though many were astonished/amazed at Him, His appearance was inglorious among men and they had a vendetta against Him—they wanted Him killed. Yet one day He will put many nations to silence. Kings will be speechless in His presence.
- 52:15 For that which had not been told them they shall hear and acknowledge; and that which they had not heard they shall understand when they see Him exalted.

### At His FIRST ADVENT

- 53:1 Who has listened to the prophecies about Him and so believed on Him when He came?  
And to whom is the power of the Lord revealed?
- 53:2 For he shall grow up before God and be nourished as a tender plant, from a place of no significance (Galilee), an offspring of the family of David who was not a priest: He seemed totally out of place among His people.  
He appeared to them as a nobody. He was too lowly: from an unknown family (Mary and Joseph), from an obscure town (Nazareth), with a lowly trade (carpenter), not schooled by rabbis. When they looked upon Him, they saw nothing to be desired.
- 53:3 He is despised and rejected because He appeared to them as one of low birth, common, inferior.  
He was a man of sorrows and grief, being tempted in all points as we are.  
He was not seeking the honors of this world of darkness. He was despised, disesteemed, not recognized or honored by men.
- 53:4 He went among us, healing our illnesses and sufferings. Yet, for all this we plotted and contrived against Him. We punished Him, dealt harshly with Him and even murdered Him.
- 53:5 He was wounded on account of our transgressions, He was **broken, crushed... slandered, defeated, oppressed, pierced** because of our iniquities: We had no peace because of our guilt in treating Him so terribly; But being in fellowship with Him, we are spiritually healed, turned from our evil and forgiven.



## A CHARACTER SUPREME

### Isaiah 53:7

*"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth."*

**Fulfillment:** Matt. 26:60-63; 27:11-14;  
1 Pet. 2:20-23.

Here is described a standard of character unknown and unmatched outside the ranks of God's family. Who could be oppressed and afflicted, yet open not His mouth? Who could submit to being brought as a "lamb to the slaughter," yet be silent, submissive, "dumb" before His accusers and tormentors, committing all to the justice of God? Yet this is the high quality of character Jesus showed, even in His severest hour of trial. At His first advent He came, humble and obscure, as "a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth."

The Gospel writers record the scene in which His persecutors were seeking witnesses to testify against Him, "yet found they none. At last came two false witnesses," and after they had spoken, "the high priest arose and said to Him, [Jesus] 'Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?' But Jesus kept silent" (Matt. 26:60-63). Again when Jesus stood before the governor, the governor asked Him saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say." And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, "'Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?' But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly" (Matt. 27:11-14).

Here was Christ showing the high character God loves, showing how one can suffer wrongfully with perfect

patience and peace. If Christ could do it, so could any follower of His. This was the point the apostle Peter made. To endure mistreatment for one's wrongdoing is one's duty. But to suffer unjustly, even for doing well, is the supreme in Christlike accomplishment. To accept unfair and unjust hurt without answering back, without maligning, or without any feeling of retaliation—this is what was prophesied of Christ, and what the Gospels record actually happening. It is indeed the highest height of Christlike attainment.

This high quality of Jesus' character impressed Peter profoundly, as he wrote in his first Epistle: "For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Pet. 2:20-23).

It so happened that when Philip came upon the eunuch as he was traveling, this was the passage the eunuch was reading from the prophet Isaiah: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, and who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth" (Acts 8:32-33). The eunuch questioned Philip as to the meaning of the passage: "I ask you," he said, "of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him" (Acts 8:34-35).

Wouldn't we like to have heard Philip's sermon that day? Philip no doubt showed the eunuch how many prophecies had been fulfilled in Christ, and went on to explain Christ's

authority as the Son of God, and His future work and destiny as King of the whole earth.

That sermon proved to be a turning point for the eunuch. These are his words of conviction. Notice how respectful they are of the high character and authority of Jesus: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37).

### Isaiah 53:8

*"He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken."*

**Fulfillment:** Acts 5:29-30; 7:52

The last phrase of verse 8 reads in our Common Version: "For he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken." The prophet is forecasting Christ's death at the hands of His own people ("my people"), the wicked Jews.

The last phrase of this text reads in the Septuagint Bible: "Because of the iniquities of my people he was led to death." His death was "because of their iniquities." Again, the prophet says that their evil conduct resulted in His suffering and death.

### Isaiah 53:9a

*"And they made His grave with the wicked—but with the rich at His death."*

**Fulfillment:** 1) Luke 23:40-41; 2) Matt. 27:57-60.

The Prophet mentions two factors, both fulfilled in Christ: 1) He died "with the wicked." He was crucified between two thieves, who were suffering death "justly," as their own words testify (Luke 23:40-41). And 2) He was literally "with the rich in his death." Jesus' burial was singular. He was



buried *“with the rich”*—in a rich man’s grave. What human eye could have foreseen these two unusual events? We read in the Gospel of Matthew of the day of the crucifixion, that *“when the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus’ disciple,”* who begged to have the body of Jesus, and who *“wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb”* (Matt. 27:57–60).

**Isaiah 53:9b**

*“Because He had done no violence,  
nor was any deceit in His mouth.”*

**Fulfillment:** 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5.

Here is another testimony to Christ’s supreme character. The apostle Peter also pointed out Christ’s supreme achievement in character, rephrasing the Prophet’s words and applying them to Christ: *“Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth”* 1 Pet. 2:22).

**Isaiah 53:10a**

*“Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him;  
He has put Him to grief...”*

**Septuagint:** *“The Lord also is pleased to  
purge him from his stroke.”*

**Fulfillment:** Heb. 2:10; 5:8–9

Is it consistent with the character of God to be *“pleased”* to bruise anyone, especially His innocent and well beloved Son? A God who is *“not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance”* (2 Pet. 3:9), who has *“no pleasure in the death of one who dies”* (Ezek. 18:32)—would He be pleased to cause His own Son to suffer?

The problem is in the translation. The Septuagint is much clearer: *“The Lord also is pleased to purge him from his stroke.”* The meaning of the word translated *“purge”* in the Septuagint is to *“cleanse, purify, render clean.”* This thought is entirely different from the thought of *“bruised”* as it is rendered in the King James Version. The thought of purging, or making clean, purifying, is parallel with Scriptural teaching, which tells us that Christ was *“made perfect through suffering”* (Heb. 2:10). He *“learned...obedience by the things which He suffered”* (Heb. 5:8). Like all of God’s children, Jesus had to undergo trial for His own purifying. He was *“in all points tempted—as we are, yet without sin”* (Heb. 4:15).

This purifying process is not without purpose; the Lord does not *“afflict”* or allow affliction without some good end. We read further in Isaiah 53 (vs. 10–12) of this great purpose of the Almighty for His faithful servant.

**Paraphrase of Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12** CONTINUED

- 53:6 We admit our wrong, we have forsaken God.  
“We have turned every one to our own way,”  
they admit.  
Yet the Lord God in His great mercy caused His servant  
Jesus, to intercede before Him for our iniquity.
- 53:7 He was oppressed, harassed, tyrannized, and dealt  
harshly with, yet look at His character!  
He remained silent before His accusers:  
He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, meek,  
submissive, without complaint or revenge;  
Like a sheep before his shearers He remained silent,  
so he opened not his mouth.
- 53:8 Being physically restrained, He was put on trial  
and judged to be put to death:  
who shall declare lamentations to his people when  
his life was taken, cut off from the living:  
On account of the cruel transgression of **my** [God’s]  
people he was killed.
- 53:9 He died with the wicked, between two thieves.  
And He was buried in a rich man’s tomb;  
But not for any violence he had done,  
Nor did He ever deceive, defraud or do anything  
dishonest.
- 53:10 The Lord also is pleased that He was **cleansed,  
purified, and made perfect** through his suffering

**LOOKING AHEAD...**

- 53:10 When His life-long offering for sin, His life of  
obedience, is complete,  
He shall see His long-lived, even eternal descendants  
(all Ishmael seed are His children)  
And the pleasure of the Lord, everything His Father  
holds in store for Him as king of the earth,  
shall **prosper** in his hand.
- 53:11 He will look back on His suffering and be satisfied  
that it all worked out for good, both for Himself  
and His followers/brethren/descendants  
By His knowledge/teaching/instruction shall Jesus,  
God’s righteous servant, justify/give His approval  
to many, for by His example He shall turn many  
from their sins to righteousness,  
Even though He first had to suffer on account of  
iniquities.

**HIGHEST HONORS TO THE KING!!**

- 53:12 In recognition of His suffering and considering the  
matchless character He attained, I will give Him  
an inheritance with the great. He will have the very  
highest position – only one King to a planet! – and he  
shall divide His inheritance with the “strong,” His  
thoroughly tested and approved co-rulers;  
Because He gave His ALL, was “obedient unto death,  
even the death of the cross” –Phil. 2:8  
He suffered with the transgressors, the 2 thieves;  
yet He forgave the sin of His persecutors (Luke 23:34)  
And makes intercession for the transgressors.

## WHO PIERCED HIM?

Take notice! He is coming accompanied by a host of angels, and every eye will see Him, even they who stab Him. And all races of the earth will beat their breast in grief on account of Him. Even so, let it be.

—Paraphrase of Revelation 1:7

The book of Revelation is John's record of visions He received from Jesus, "*which God gave Him to show His servants things which must shortly take place*" (Rev. 1:1).

As the vision begins, John looks up and catches His breath! "Look!" he shouts. "It's

Jesus! He's coming!"—in vision he sees Jesus in all His grandeur and kingly glory descending from the sky. It is the first sight he has had of His Lord since the day He and the other disciples watched Him disappear into the azure blue (Acts 1:10–11). "*Behold He is coming with clouds!*" It is Jesus, surrounded with clouds—hosts of heavenly angels!

And so John writes with His inspired pen, "*Behold He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him.*"

How can every eye see Jesus when He returns? This statement is probably more understandable to us than to any generation before us, we who have access to sights and sounds delivered by satellite, or transmitted over the internet with lightning speed.

But what about "*they who pierced Him*"? Our

immediate thought is of those who crucified Him. They will not be around when Jesus returns.

But they are not the only ones guilty of *piercing* Jesus. He is being *pierced* right up to the time of His coming. Today He is "*pierced*" by those who despise Him and do not want even His name mentioned in public. He is *pierced* by those who deny His authority, and who never speak His name unless it be to take it in vain. He is *pierced* when a navy chaplain is court martialed for praying "*in the name of Jesus.*" He is *pierced* by those who misrepresent His cause, and treat His words with violence. He is even *pierced* by those who teach that He is "gentle Jesus meek and mild"—loving every one regardless of his or her character.

To all the enemies of His cause, Christ's return will be a time of great distress. This is why "*all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him.*"

But no matter how His coming is viewed—welcomed or rejected—the end result will be universal good. When God's judgments are in the earth and the people learn righteousness (Isa. 26:9), everyone who lives will benefit until the earth is "*filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea*" (Hab. 2:14). ♦

### Isaiah 53:10b

"...when You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand."

**Septuagint:** "If ye can give an offering for sin, your soul shall see a long lived seed."

This part of the passage is also clearer from the Septuagint Bible, where the suffering servant is addressed directly as "*you*": "*If ye can give an offering for sin, your soul shall see a long lived seed.*" Here is the end result of Christ's perfect offering of Himself: "*Your soul shall see a long lived seed.*" Long lived—even eternal! Christ will indeed have a long-

lived seed—it will be His pleasure to save countless millions in the new age; all will be His "*seed*," His children, members of His eternal family on earth. Multitudes will serve Him.

### Isaiah 53:11

"He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities."

**Septuagint:** "The Lord also is pleased to take away from the travail of his soul, to show him light, and to form him with understanding; to justify the Just One who serves many well."

**Fulfillment:** 1 John 2:1

The suffering is not forever. The affliction, trial and testing are not forever. The time will come when the Lord "*takes away*" or removes the suffering, when its work is complete; testing does not go on forever; it has its time and is done. The Lord is merciful and gracious and has purpose in all He allows: to purify and to prepare His servant for eternal blessings.

This Servant, now approved, will be a means of blessing countless others: "*To justify the Just One who serves many well*" (v. 11, Septuagint).



# Who Pierced Him? -Revelation 1:7 NKJV



Gr."siyyon"

amid, association,  
denoting accompaniment-SHG

Gr."idou"

lo!  
see!  
take notice!

Behold He is coming with clouds

Gr."opao"

to see with eyes,  
perceive-LSJ

Gr."kentron"

stab,  
kill,  
goad,  
poison

and every eye will see Him even they who pierced Him.

the physical earth

Gr."ge"

Gr."kopto"

to cut down,  
mourn, wail  
to beat the  
breast in grief.

And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him.

Gr."phule"

kindreds,  
families,  
races,  
clans

Gr."amen"

solemnly declare to you-LSJ  
verily, truly,  
let it be so-BDAG

Even so, Amen

## "clouds"

God's "clouds" are His chariots (Ps. 104:3), and His "chariots" are angels (Ps. 68:17)

Christ will be accompanied by His angels—see 2 Thess. 1:7; Matt. 16:27; Jude 14-15

## General distress at Christ's coming:

Joel 3:16;  
Malachi 4:1-2;  
Haggai 2:7;  
Isaiah 2:19, 21;  
Hebrews 12:26-27;  
Revelation 18:4;  
2 Peter 3:10-12

## Isaiah 53:12

"Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

**Fulfillment** cited by Mark (15:28) and by Luke (22:37); see also Luke 23:34.

Here is another prophecy fulfilled, as the Gospel of Mark records at the time of His death: "So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, And He was numbered with the transgressors" (Mark 15:28). The apostle Paul said of Christ that He was obedient "to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Phil.

2:8), and it is for this reason that "God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

Christ was indeed "numbered with the transgressors" (Luke 23:32), and He made "intercession for the transgressors" when He prayed for His persecutors: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34). And how does He "bear the sin of many"? He will intercede to obtain forgiveness for these "many" with the Father.

What character! What supreme accomplishment! And what blessings the Father has poured out on Him for a

brief moment of suffering and sacrifice, blessings that overflow even to us. ♦

There are over 300 predictions about the Messiah to be found in the Old Testament. According to the law of compound probability, the chance of all these prophecies coming true in one individual is represented by a fraction whose numerator is one, and the denominator eighty-four followed by nearly one hundred ciphers.

One might almost as well expect by accident to dip up any one particular droplet of water in the ocean as to expect so many prophetic rays to converge by chance upon one man, in one place, at one time.

God has put especially upon these prophecies as to His Son the stamp of absolute verity and indisputable certainty, so that we may know whom we have believed.

—God's Living Oracles (Pierson)





# WHEN Christ RETURNS

*Of feats performed by small or great,  
I will one incident relate,  
To me most awe-inspiring:  
I speak of Jesus on the day  
When He was taken far away,  
From mortal scenes retiring.*

*It seems I see a little band  
O'ershadowed by a mighty hand,  
Relying on their Master  
To once again restore to them  
King David's throne, Jerusalem;  
Nor dreaming of disaster.*

*Methinks I hear Him as He speaks,  
"Oh, be not weary as the weeks  
Eclipse while you are waiting.  
You shall receive a wondrous pow'r,  
Just tarry here until the hour;  
Keep watching, working, praying."*

*Then lo, a great phenomenon—  
A wondrous thing to gaze upon—  
Takes place while they're beholding:  
They see their Master start to rise,  
Ascending till the azure skies  
His noble form enfolding.*

*In vain their eyes would pierce the blue  
That hides their loving Lord from view,  
But dimly comprehending  
The thing that now has come to pass,  
And saying to themselves, "Alas,  
Have such events no ending?"*

*While thus they're reasoning, they hear  
A voice beside them, rich and clear—  
"You men of Galilee!  
Why are you gazing into heaven,  
Do you not know to Him 'tis giv'n  
From earth's chains to be free?"*

*"Oh, do not fear, you faithful few  
Who keep His word all pure and true,  
The while your hearts are yearning:  
For this same Jesus whom you love,  
Though gone now to the throne above,  
Some day will be returning."*

*Oh, joyful thought! to think that we  
Shall one day Christ our Saviour see,  
And reign with Him for ever.  
With Jesus Christ—our great High Priest—  
We will attend the wedding feast,  
If fleshly ties we sever.*

*E'en now we hear the chiming bells;  
From sea to sea their music swells  
The glad note of redemption  
To all who, by His Truth made o'er,  
Have conquered self, to sin no more—  
And to them pay attention.*

*Beware, you scoffers who deride  
The thought that Christ at eventide  
Shall usher in the morning:  
Though true that many you deceive,  
God's own elect will still believe  
And heed each timely warning.*

*We look and see the war clouds rise  
Foreboding in the eastern skies;  
And statesmen now acknowledge  
The wind needs but a tiny spark  
To fan to flame the passions dark,  
And so renew the carnage.*

*And oh, my friends, we need not look  
To foreign lands to fill our book  
With signs of Christ's returning;  
For here at home we see distress,  
And men, with apprehensiveness  
Perceive the tide is turning.*

*We see that gangsters rule the land;  
They bribe the politicians and  
Thus judgment is perverted:  
The poor and needy have to strive  
To get enough to keep alive.  
Their rights are controverted.*

*Oh, do not say the bells that on  
The hem of Aaron's garment hung  
No longer ring their story:  
They're pealing forth with vigor now,  
That soon the whole wide world must bow  
Before the King of Glory.*

*Ring out, ye bells, with tidings glad,  
Though heeded not by world gone mad,  
Yet there are some who listen,  
And, as each note falls on the ear,  
Prepare to greet their Master dear  
In garments that will glisten.*

*Oh, what a gath'ring that will be  
Upon the shores of Galilee,  
When bells have ceased their ringing;  
When prophecies are all fulfilled,  
And o'er the earth what God has willed  
Is done with joy and singing.*

*The earth will not with blood be drenched,  
Nor warring nations stand entrenched  
Preparing for the battle;  
Nor will the criminal more roam  
The streets and terrorize the home:  
No more will bullets rattle.*

*In that day ev'ry war will cease,  
There will be universal peace,  
All lands will praise His glory.  
Good will the earth shall overflow,  
And ev'ry one our God shall know.  
The Scriptures tell the story.*

*When Christ returns the lame will leap  
For joy, the dumb will sing, nor weep  
Because of their affliction;  
Yes, all will strength and health enjoy,  
In righteous ways their time employ;  
Nor murmur at correction.*

*Oh, happy day that knows no end,  
Now nearing, as the bells portend  
To those who've read their story:  
One long, eternal day of bliss—  
What more could mortals ask than this  
UNENDING REIGN OF GLORY! ♦*

—Liot L. Snyder

## Abib 2012 – Calendar

This year the members and friends of the Megiddo Church will welcome the beginning of the **sacred New Year** on the evening of Thursday, March 22, and extending through Friday, March 23, 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 20, this year). The first new moon occurs this year on March 22.

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

Services in honor of Jesus Christ our coming King will be held on March 23 and extend through the weekend of March 25. The **memorial of the Lord's Supper** will be on Tuesday evening, April 3, and the **Resurrection Day** on Friday, April 6, 2012.



**Read: Col. 3:22–24**

**Memorize:**

*"Whatever you do,  
work at it with all  
your heart, as work-  
ing for the Lord,  
not for men."  
—Colossians 3:23 NIV*

**How ABOUT You?**

When you dust, do you neglect the corners you think won't be noticed?

When you wash dishes, do you wipe the counter but leave the stove top?

When you mow the lawn, do you skip the grass close to the bushes or in the corners?

Do you sometimes do work just "good enough" to get by?

You may not do it perfectly, but God wants you to do your best.

Only your best is "good enough."

**Read: Phil. 2:14–15**

**Memorize:**

*"Do all things  
without complaining  
and disputing"  
—Philippians 2:14*

## NOT GOOD ENOUGH

"Dad!" Tom exclaimed as he ran into the garage. "I'm ready to help with Ruff's doghouse now."

"You are?" asked Dad. "I thought you had some homework to do for your history class, and we just left the dinner table ten minutes ago. I can't understand how you could do a very good job on your assignment in that amount of time."

"Well, maybe it wasn't the best homework job, but it'll be good enough to pass the class." Tom surveyed the project, then picked out a couple of boards. "Dad, these go together, don't they," he said as he picked up a hammer and a nail. He placed the nail carefully on a board and then carefully pounded it in. "Perfect! Did you see that, Dad? I drove the nail in perfectly straight." He stepped back to admire his work.

"Yes, that's fine," said Dad. "Let's get it done." He picked up a hammer and carelessly pounded a nail, causing it to bend. "Oops!" he said. "Oh, well. I'll just pound it down into the wood so it doesn't show too much."

"What are you doing?" gasped Tom. "I don't want this doghouse to be just thrown together. I want it done right."

"Well, it's just a dog house. This should be good enough," said Dad.

"Dad, you're always telling me that when nails go in crooked they will never hold like well-driven nails will," protested Tom.

Dad smiled. "That's true, and I can't blame you for not being pleased with this," he agreed as he began to pry out the nail. "Grandpa always said, 'Anything worth doing, is worth



doing well,'" he added. "You know, God isn't pleased when we do a job just 'good enough' to get by, either. A hurried, careless job is a poor testimony for Jesus Christ. It's not where we want to go, is it, Son?"

"No," Tom sighed. "You mean my homework, I suppose."

"Well, yes," Dad nodded. "Do you think the homework you did tonight would be a good testimony for the Lord?"

Tom frowned. "I guess not," he admitted. "All right..., I'll do it over, and I'll do my best this time. But will you wait till I come back?"

Dad put down his hammer and grinned. "I'll be right here!" he promised.

**DO YOUR BEST FOR GOD**

## NO LEMON JUICE

Julie felt downright grouchy as she sat on the couch at the home of her Sunday school teacher, Mrs. Watson. She didn't really want to be on what she called "this stupid old Program planning committee." She had to miss her favorite aunt's visit to attend this meeting. Marla and Danny, the other committee members, seemed to be enjoying it, however—or at least they had been at first. They had made several suggestions, but Julie just scowled about all of them. Now the oth-

ers seemed to be losing a lot of their enthusiasm, too.

"Julie," said Mrs. Watson finally, "why don't you help me prepare the snacks? Marla and Danny, I like your ideas. Keep thinking."

Glumly, Julie followed Mrs. Watson into the kitchen and arranged nut bread on a plate while Mrs. Watson prepared hot chocolate. "Maybe I'll add just a little lemon juice to this chocolate," Mrs. Watson said.

"Lemon juice?" Julie was surprised. "Won't



that make it sour? Hot chocolate's supposed to be sweet."

"Do you think just a little bit of sourness would make much difference?" asked Mrs. Watson.

"I think it would ruin it!" Julie exclaimed.

Mrs. Watson looked at the bottle of lemon juice. "You're right, of course," she agreed. "And you know, Julie, just like a little lemon juice can ruin this hot chocolate, a bad attitude from just one person can ruin the special children's program we're planning. We want the program to be a good one, especially since we know there will be many out of town children and their parents attending. Marla and Danny have come up with some good ideas, but you've 'soured' them all—you've cut down everything they've suggested."

Julie bit her lip and stared at the floor. "I'm



sorry," she said at last, and she really was. She had found out it wasn't very much fun being grouchy anyhow!

"You're forgiven," said Mrs. Watson, giving her a hug. "Now...would you like carry the tray in? Let's see if we can sweeten up this meeting."

#### **DON'T BE A SOUR LEMON**

## **UNCHANGING STANDARDS**

Jenna and her friends, Kathy and Anna, stopped at Jenna's driveway to finish the discussion they'd been having on the way home from school. "Well, Joe had better start behaving, or he's gonna get kicked out of school," declared Anna. "Mom and Dad say the teachers don't have to put up with behavior like that."

"Yeah," agreed Kathy. "My parents always tell me that they're the boss at home, and the teacher is the boss at school, so it's my responsibility to do what my teacher says and be respectful to her."

Jenna nodded. "That's what my parents say, too." Remembering a recent Sunday school lesson, she added, "Even the Bible says we are supposed to obey those in authority over us."

Kathy scowled. "I don't see what the Bible has to do with Joe," she said.

"Me neither." Anna shook her head. "Well, I've got to get home," she said with a shrug. "See ya later."

Kathy nodded. "Me, too." With a wave, they were gone.

Jenna told her mother about the discussion. "We all really agreed, but it seemed to bother them that I mentioned the Bible," she said. "Why didn't they want to hear what the Bible says?" Just then her little brother walked into the room. Jenna laughed when she saw him. "Aaron, your shirt's on backward," she said.

"The tag goes in the back, remember?" added Mother.

Aaron grinned at them. "I ripped the tag out," he said. "Now it doesn't matter how I wear it!"

Jenna giggled and Mother sent Aaron to his room to fix his shirt. "The shirt looks just as wrong when it's on backwards, whether the tag is still there or not!" Mother told him. She turned to Jenna. "You know, this reminds me of the problem you had with your friends. Many people don't like to think that there's an absolute standard of right and wrong, or that it's found in the Bible. Even though they admit that something is bad, they don't really want to know what the Bible says about it. It is because they don't want to accept the Bible as a standard for their right or wrong behavior. And, of course, it's easier to see and to pick at other's sin than to admit our own."

"Well, then...." Jenna nodded thoughtfully. "Should I just forget about telling them what the Bible says?"

"No!" said Mother firmly. "Whether they like it or not, the standard is still there. Pray that God will open their hearts to accept His Word instead of trying to ignore it. In the mean time, let your life be a testimony for God's Word."

#### **GOD'S WORD SETS THE STANDARD.**

The above stories are adapted from *KEYS FOR KIDS* 1999

#### **HOW ABOUT YOU?**

Complaining means "muttering, grumbling in a low tone of voice. "Disputing" means debate, conflicting ideas, disagreements.

Do you ever complain when you don't like to do what your mother or your teacher asks you to do?

God is not happy with us when we dispute or complain. He wants "cheerful givers."

**Read: Hebrews 10:22-25**

#### **Memorize:**

*"The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword...it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."*

—Hebrews 4:12 NIV

#### **HOW ABOUT YOU?**

Would you sometimes rather not know what God says about a particular sin? His standards remain the same whether you acknowledge it or not, and it is always right!

God gives many instructions such as "don't lie, cheat, or steal; be kind; love one another; love God." Don't ever try to ignore God's standard.



## Shirley B. Byers

### *Love is...*

*Love is very patient,  
very kind.*

*Love knows no jealousy;*

*Love makes no parade,*

*gives itself no airs,*

*is never rude,*

*never selfish,*

*never irritated,*

*never resentful.*

*Love is never glad when others  
go wrong,*

*Love is gladdened by goodness,*

*always slow to expose,*

*always eager to believe the best,*

*always hopeful,*

*always patient.*

*Love never disappears.*

—1 Corinthians 13:4-8  
Moffatt Bible



Shirley Byers still tooting at 88 years.

On January 18, 2012, we met to pay our last respects to a Friend and Sister, Shirley Berniece Byers, affectionately known among us as Sister Shirley. She was born to Robert Byers and Frances Emmerson in Nipissing, Ontario, Canada, in 1923. The second oldest daughter among nine children, she learned very early in life to take responsibility and look after the well being of others—a quality that she carried through her entire life. She is survived by her sister Elva Byers, who shared her vibrant, living hope and who together enjoyed over 60 years of serving side by side in the Church. She is also survived by three other sisters: Frances, Marjorie (Daubert), and Gloria (Burrows); and one brother, Eugene, all of Rochester; and another brother, Harold, of Colorado.

The family's acquaintance with the Church came through a couple of tourists from the Megiddo Church in Rochester, New York, who were vacationing at the family operated fishing resort on Lake Nipissing in northern Ontario, Canada. The two visitors from Rochester had previously gone to another fishing resort in that area of Canada, and were disappointed that they didn't catch any fish. Someone hearing their story told them that if they would go to Sunset Cove (the name of the Byers' family lodge) on Lake Nipissing, they would get fish! They went to Sunset Cove, and they did indeed get fish—and much more.

It started one evening around the fireplace in the hotel sitting room, where the tourist-fishermen would gather to tell their "big fish that got away" stories. This particular night the conversation turned to religion when the visitor from the Megiddo Church, Brother Sheaven, interposed that the thief on the cross was not saved. This piqued Mr. Byers' interest, because he was sure that, according to his Bible, the thief was saved. The discussion was lively, and ended with Mr. Byers becoming keenly interested in further investigating the teachings of the church. The very next weekend, Sunset Cove had other visitors from the Megiddo Church. The following spring – Abib 1931 – Mr. Byers made his first visit to Rochester, and returned home with a firm persuasion that he should start teaching his family about the Bible.

Four years later, accompanied by an uncle, Sister Shirley, age 12, made her first visit to the Church in Rochester, and returned home, deeply impressed by the Abib drama, "Pilgrims of Light." Six years later the family sold the resort and moved to a farm near Peterborough, Ontario, and four years later, to Rochester.

Sister Shirley's life for the past 66 years has been a life of total dedication to the service of the Church. Consistently loyal, willing, and generous to a fault, she has served in every way possible without concern for herself or her own needs.



Through the years her roles have been many and varied. As a member of the Church choir and band, she could be counted on as one who would be always there, both for rehearsals and Sunday services. I believe she holds the record for longevity in the band—she was still attending every rehearsal and playing her trombone regularly in Church services at 88 years of age, until struck down in mid September.

Whatever the need in the church, she was there to give her best, and with a smile. Was there a need for someone to stay with a sick sister? She was there. Did a young brother need boarding? She was there. If guests arrived unexpectedly, she and her sister were always prepared with food in the larder, beds made, and everything in readiness to make their visit as comfortable as possible. It is hard to think of an area where she did not serve—answering letters, reading proof, shopping, helping with programs and dramas, reading, writing, reciting, encouraging those living at a distance by regular correspondence. She served as Church treasurer and bookkeeper for many years.

Sister Shirley had very strong convictions about the truths of the Bible. She often commented that she could never believe in hell fire. She could never believe that God would actually torture anyone through eternity, whatever they did in their life time.

She was blest with exceptionally good health; but when stricken with serious illness in recent months, she accepted it without complaint and held firmly to the Bible hope of a bodily resurrection. Convinced that Jesus is coming soon, she wanted above all to finish her work so as to be among those who will live again when *“there shall be no more sorrow or crying, neither shall there be any more pain”* (Rev. 21:3–4). This is the promise of the Word of God, and she believed it. Her faith and confidence in God carried her through days that would have made many people despondent.

Her suffering is over; her record is in the hands of a just God who will give to each according to what they have done. The Bible is very clear that there is no consciousness in death. *“The dead know nothing”* (Eccl. 9:5). But the Bible is equally definite that this life is not all there is. God has promised that every one of His sleeping loved ones will live again. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, *“Those who belong to God shall live again. Their bodies shall rise again! Those who dwell in the dust shall awake and sing for joy!”* (Isaiah 26:19 TLB). Also the words of the Psalmist: *“God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave”* (Psalm 49:15).

With such a sustaining hope, even deadly disease loses its terror—for every faithful one, death will be swallowed up in victory! ♦



## THE Dash

*I read of a man who stood to speak  
At the funeral of a friend.  
He referred to the dates on her tombstone  
From the beginning...to the end.*

*He noted that first came her date of birth  
And he spoke the next date with tears,  
But he said what mattered most of all  
Was the dash between those years.*

*For that dash, it represents the time  
That she spent alive on earth...  
And now only those who knew her know  
What that little line is worth.*

*For it matters not how much we own;  
The cars...the house...the cash,  
What matters is how we live and learn,  
And how we spend our dash.*

*So think about this long and hard...  
Are there things you'd like to change?  
For you never know how much time is left,  
That can still be rearranged.*

*If we could just stop long enough  
To consider what's true and real,  
And always try to understand  
The way other people feel,*

*We'd be less quick to criticize,  
And would show our gratitude more,  
And we'd love the people in our lives  
Like we've never loved before;*

*We would treat each other with respect,  
And more often wear a smile.  
Remembering that this special dash  
Might last just a little while.*

*Someday your record will be read,  
Your life's actions to rehash...  
Will you be pleased with what it says  
About how you spent your dash...?*

—by Linda Ellis







## **THE Grumble FAMILY**

*There's a family nobody likes to meet;  
They live, 'tis said, on Complaining Street  
In the city of Never-Are-Satisfied,  
The River of Discontent beside.  
They growl at that and they growl at this,  
Whatever comes there is something amiss;  
And whether their station be high or humble,  
They always are known by the name of Grumble.*

*The weather is always too hot or too cold,  
Summer and winter alike they scold;  
Nothing goes right with the folks you meet  
Down on that gloomy Complaining Street;  
They growl at the rain and they growl at the sun,  
In fact, their growling is never done.  
And if everything pleased them, there isn't a doubt  
But they'd growl that they'd nothing to grumble about!*

*And the worst thing is that if any one stays  
Among them too long, he will learn their ways,  
And before he dreams of the terrible stumble  
He's adopted right into the family of Grumble.  
So it's wisest to watch and keep our feet  
From wandering into Complaining Street;  
And never to growl, whatever we do,  
Lest we be mistaken for Grumblers, too!*



*If you wake up in the morning  
With your hardest job to do,  
Don't start the day with grumbling—  
That won't help to see it through;  
Be glad for work that's difficult,  
For tasks that challenge you.  
Workers find a thousand blessings  
The idle never knew.*

## **COMPLAINERS, BEWARE!**

by Gerald R. Payne

*Then they despised the pleasant land;  
they did not believe His word,  
but complained in their tents,  
and did not heed the voice of the LORD.  
—Psalm 106:24-25*

Most of us do our share of complaining but few see it for what it is. Do we excuse our own murmuring as nothing more than an honest stating of the facts?

God doesn't view it that way. To Him, murmuring is a serious offense—whether in others or in ourselves. One example of its seriousness is in Numbers 13, when the people refused to enter the Promised Land because of unbelief. These obstinate people chose to believe 10 of the 12 spies who brought back a negative report, instead of Joshua's and Caleb's good report. The whole congregation complained: "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt!" (Num. 14:2-4).

Joshua and Caleb pleaded, "Do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them" (Num. 14:7-9).

The Psalmist is succinct:

- 1) They *despised* the blessings of the Promised Land.
- 2) They *believed not* God's Word that all would be well there.
- 3) They *heeded not* His directions.
- 4) They *sat in their tents and complained*.

We certainly don't want to be like the Israelites. So what should you and I do when things are not to our liking or go wrong to our way of thinking? Remember God's way, and *don't complain*.

If you're a grumbler, or if you are selfish, start today and change.

It's a sad thing to impoverish ourselves with what we think we need, when God has blessings unmeasurable in store for those who believe and obey! ♦

*If you want to travel light and contented, take off all jealousies, selfishness, and fears.*

*Contentment consists not in greater wealth,  
but in fewer wants.*

*You cannot change yesterday, that is clear.  
Or begin on tomorrow until it is here.  
So the best thing left for you and me,  
Is to make today as good as can be.*

*Encouragement is oxygen to the soul!  
No one ever climbed spiritual heights without it.  
No one ever lived triumphantly without it.*

*There is no revenge so complete as forgiveness.*

### UPLIFTING

It was 9 a.m. on a gloomy Monday and the elevator was filled with grumpy office workers. As the car started up, the elevator man began humming a little tune. "You seem to be happy today," said one passenger glumly. "Yes, Sir," was the reply, "I never lived this day before."

*Life becomes tragic to him who has plenty to live on  
but little to live for.*

*Happiness grows at our own firesides;  
it is not to be picked in strangers' gardens.*

### SOME PARENTS SAY...

"We will not influence our children in making choices and decisions in matters of religion." Why not?

The ads will!  
The press will!  
The movies will!  
The neighbors will!  
The schools will—!

We use our influence on our flowers, vegetables, and cattle. Shall we ignore our children?

*I heard the old year talking, and he seemed to say to me,  
"I'm just what you have made me, not what I hoped to be;  
I did not bring the failures, my days were bright and new,  
I was the time allotted, the work was yours to do.  
And so will be this New Year, which soon will follow me:  
Pray God for help to make me the BEST that I can be."*

### NEVER TOO SOON

It's never too soon to act upon a good resolve.  
Never too soon to end a quarrel.

Never too soon to start doing your part to heal the breach and apologize if you've been unreasonable, mistaken or unwise.

It's never too soon to say the word that puts right what is wrong.

Never too soon to make a kindly gesture.

Don't delay too long, for life goes on relentlessly and time can never wait.

It's never too soon to make amends, but sometimes it's too late!

### TODDLER'S CREED

If I want it, it's mine.

If I give it to you and  
change my mind  
later, it's mine.

If I can take it away  
from you, it's mine.

If I had it a little while ago,  
it's mine.

If it's mine, it will never belong  
to anyone else, no matter what.

If we are building something together,  
all the pieces are mine.

If it looks just like mine, it is mine.





*Heavenly Father,*

*I want my words today to be honest,  
my heart pure,  
and my actions fit for You to see.*

*Help me not to do anything today that I would wish  
to keep from You,  
or that I would be ashamed to have others know about.*

*Lord, keep me humble.*

*Help me to think not of how much I know  
but of how much I need to learn;  
not of what I have done, but of what I have yet to do;  
not of what I am but of what I can become.*

*Whatever happens today, help me keep cheerful,  
a beam of sunlight to those near me.*

*I am resolved:*

*never to grumble when things go wrong;  
never to be discouraged when things are hard,  
or annoyed when I cannot have my way.*

*Help me today, O God,  
to keep my temper and control my tongue.*

*Come hail, or rain, or shine, I would look up in faith  
knowing You are watching,  
and that if I stay with You I cannot be lost.*

*Amen.*