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Megiddo Message

Great and marvelous
are Your works,
Lord God Almighty!

— Revelation 15:3



Do You Have The **ULTIMATE APP?**

In today's high tech world, if you have a smart phone and a connection to the internet you can do just about anything—if you have the right app. The Apple Store boasts "hundreds of thousands of endless possibilities... for work, and play, and everything in-between," and adds, "The more apps you download, the more you realize there's almost no limit to what your iPhone can do." You can pay your bills, plan your vacation, tone your muscles, discover the news that is just breaking, pick up the latest weather forecast, do your homework, or run your business—all by having the right app.

But there is an app that Apple does not have on its shelf, and it is the Ultimate app. What is it? Let's call it the Salvation App. It is an app—yes, a spiritual application—authored by the God of heaven that shows how to live now so as to live forever.

Is it real? Yes, it is real, genuine, and available. Where is it found?

If you start searching for an application that shows how to obtain eternal life, you will find there are thousands of "salvation" apps extant.

Every minister of the gospel has some kind of salvation app to offer. The app is usually free, and often popular. But check further, because you may find that its code has not been verified. What if it is just another man-made app designed to say what "itching ears" want to hear to make the people feel good about themselves? (2 Tim. 4:3–4). The app may tell you that God loves you and accepts you just the way you are—but doesn't the Bible say you must be "transformed by renewing your mind"? (Rom. 12:2). Or the app may say that if you are "saved" and you die tonight, you will go straight to heaven—another point you want to verify with the Bible, because the Divine code says "The dead know not anything" (Eccl. 9:5). Checking with the Divine code is supremely important. If you don't, you may not get the eternal life and happiness you seek.

Most salvation apps begin with an invitation package of 3 or 4 short confessions one must make in order to be "saved." The statements are simple. First, admit that you are a sinner. Second, express your desire to be saved from your sins. Third, repent of your sins; and finally, accept that Christ died to pay the penalty for your sins and give you eternal life. At this very moment, they say, you become a new person, from the inside out.

Now no matter how sincerely you believe it, does this app line up with the Divine code? Are you at the precise moment you are "saved" made "like Him [Jesus]" as John said (1 John 3:2–3), your mortal body changed to be like His glorious body? (Phil. 3:20–21). Read this passage and you will see this change is promised to take place *at the return of Jesus*.

If you carefully check the Book of secure code (the Bible), you will find, as I have, that the above three or four steps fall far short of the stated requirements, which means that the above app cannot deliver on its claims.

But God has provided a genuine, guaranteed-to-work salvation app, one that is very old. Adam and Eve were given it at the very

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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.

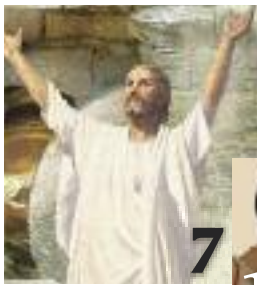
MEGIDDO MEANS...

"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).

There is an app that Apple does not have on its shelf—it is the Salvation App.

Front cover photo:
Right here at home—
West Sawyer Place,
Rochester, New York.

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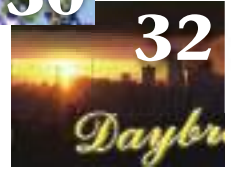
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Megiddo Message

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Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature; 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 Chaldee lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures; HAL—Koechler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M., & Stamm, J. J. (1999). The Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament; LSJ—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).

“I Know...”

Divine Certainties

“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth.” (Job 19:25)

Death is in the world. Every day wars are being fought. Planes crash. Terrorists do their deadly work. Auto accidents claim hundreds of lives... not to mention the steady toll from sickness, disease and old age.

If you should die tonight, what do you have to look forward to? Do you believe that you will go to heaven because you have been “saved” and trusted Jesus Christ, because you have been a basically “good” person? These beliefs are widespread, almost universal. But does the Bible support them?

Is there hope for the future? Yes, indeed! There is hope through a physical, bodily resurrection. God can restore life. This is His promise. We can say with certainty, “I know...” because Jesus Christ died and is alive. God brought Him back from the dead by a physical, bodily resurrection, and these are His words to His disciples “*Because I live, you will live also*” (John 14:19). The fact that Jesus lives is proof that a physical, bodily resurrection is a possibility for every true disciple of His. If we are His disciples, we share this hope.

“This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast” (Heb. 6:19).

The writers of the Old Testament Scriptures, knowing that death was a state of unconsciousness, often called death a sleep. They knew also that God was able to restore them to life by a physical, bodily resurrection. The Psalmist wrote, speaking prophetically of the resurrection of Christ: “*Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption*” (Ps. 16:9–10).

The prophet Isaiah was very confident about a physical resurrection, even including the surety that he himself would experience it. He wrote, “*Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who*

dwell in dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead” (Isa. 26:19).

The prophet Daniel was just as sure when he wrote, “*And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt*” (Dan. 12:2). The prophet Hosea spoke for God Himself: “*I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction!*” (Hosea. 13:14).

The Bible is very clear on the state of the dead, and it tells us “*the dead know nothing*” (Ecc. 9:5). Nothing. In fact, it says more: “*... there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going*” (Ecc. 9:10).

In the natural course of time, every one of us will die. No one but Jesus Christ can yet say, “*O Death, where is your sting? O Hades [the grave], where is your victory?*” (1 Cor. 15:55). Everything around us—including the people—are temporary, transitory, soon to pass away (2 Cor. 4:18).



The Old Testament prophets were sure of God's ability to restore them to life.

Job's Confidence

The patriarch Job looked forward to a physical, bodily resurrection and based his confidence on the fact that his "Redeemer," Jesus Christ, would first be resurrected. Some two millennia in advance, Job wrote prophetically of Jesus Christ, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth" (Job 19:25). There was no wavering, no faltering, no questioning, but only, "I know...."

There are two points in this passage. First, Job was not expressing his belief in an event which had already happened. He had absolute faith in God. In Job's time, the Redeemer had not yet been born, much less resurrected. Yet Job exclaimed, "I know that my Redeemer lives."

Then, too, Job spoke with confidence that he himself would experience a physical, bodily resurrection. "And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God" (Job 19:26). Looking ahead nearly two millennia, Job knew his Redeemer would be living, and able to bring Job himself back to life. It was another positive "I know," for Job had already said, "If I wait, the grave is mine house" (Job 17:13).

How can we know absolutely that Jesus is alive? What makes the resurrection of Christ an unshakable reality? Just one word: evidence.

WHAT EVIDENCE?

Does secular history support Christ's resurrection?

Most secular historians use one of two methods. One is silence. After mentioning the crucifixion of Jesus, they immediately shift to the growth of the early Church in Jerusalem, leaving the reader to wonder what the church had to "grow on." Their second method is to qualify the report of the resurrection so as to withhold any personal endorsement. For example: "Jesus rose from the dead on Easter morning, so his followers confidently believed." Or, "according to the claims made in the Gospels....," etc. Much Christian literature refers to Jesus' resurrection and the empty tomb as phenomena that can be approached only by faith, not through history. And so they avoid any reliance on the Bible as a source of evidence.

Why rule out the Bible as the number one best source of evidence when it records the testimony of those who were eye witnesses, who saw Jesus personally, who knew Him and those He appointed and sent out?

The Bible is the one source of evidence that we can trust absolutely, being confirmed and cross confirmed by its own internal teaching; not to mention the confirmations of its unity, harmony, and Divine authorship. (For further information on the authority of the Bible see the *Megiddo Message*, Fall 2012, pages 9–14.)

The Tomb Was Empty

One powerful evidence for the resurrection of Christ is the phenomenon of the empty tomb. Both the Gospels and the early Church affirmed, "He is not here" and then imme-

diately added, "He is risen," with this additional thrust: "Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. 28:6).

Do you realize that the Christian church was born in the very city where Jesus had been crucified? Jerusalem is the very last place the church could have started if Jesus' tomb had remained occupied, since anyone producing a dead Jesus would have driven a stake through the heart of any belief based on a "supposed" resurrection.

What happened in Jerusalem seven weeks after the Resurrection could have taken place only if Jesus' body were missing from Joseph's tomb. Otherwise His enemies would simply have aborted the movement by producing the body. They did not do this, however, because the tomb was empty. Their "official" explanation—that the disciples had



*The Bible is the
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stolen the body—was an open admission that the sepulcher was indeed vacant.

But even if an empty tomb may not solidly prove a resurrection, a resurrection would require an empty tomb. Its occupancy, indeed, would have effectively disproved it.

And why shouldn't the tomb have been empty! At the time of Jesus' crucifixion, when the body of Jesus was being laid in the tomb, the chief priests and Pharisees requested a guard. Pilate told them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how" (Matt. 27:65). "Make it as secure as you know how"—how pitifully weak and feeble was such surety! How sure can anything be which has only human power behind it—and the God of heaven against it? What strength had those guards against the mighty angels of God who came to resurrect Jesus? The Bible record tells us the guards were "like dead men."

The End of the Story

The one solid reality undergirding the Christian's hope of future life is the Resurrection of Christ. "Now is Christ risen" (1 Cor. 15:20, 23).

There is an old-fashioned story of a gentleman who stood looking one day into a store window. Standing next to him and also looking in was a little boy. It was near the time of the traditional Easter, and in keeping with the sea-

son the shopkeeper had arranged a setting of the Crucifixion. After a while, the boy turned to the man. "Them's Roman soldiers," he explained. The man said nothing, but kept studying the window. "And there's Jesus," the boy continued. Still no response. "They killed Him." By this time the man, having satisfied his curiosity, started to walk away. Then he heard the patter of young feet behind him and felt a tug on his sleeve. It was the boy. "Mister," he said, "I forgot to tell you the most important part. He's alive again!"

This most important part is indeed the focus of the whole event—the fact that God brought Jesus back to life.



*The only hope
of life after death
is through a
physical, bodily
resurrection.*

Had it not been for that Resurrection, death would have ended all and Jesus would have been as other men. But for Jesus, death was not the end. The road that led Jesus to the cross did not dead-end there. It kept right on to a triumphant reversal, to risen life, power, victory and immortality. Jesus is alive by His own living testimony. *"I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore!"* (Rev. 1:18).

SOLID CERTAINTIES OF THE APOSTLE JOHN

Christian believers have even more solid certainties on which to stand. In his First Epistle, John expressed several of these. He had no hesitancy saying *"We know."* And Christ's followers in the Twenty First Century can echo those words with the same certainty that His followers had in the First Century.

Nothing in the whole world is as outspoken as the Word of God. Philosophers have always taught people to question, to doubt, to think for themselves and draw their own logical conclusions. This type of thinking is based on the premise that no one knows. The Scriptures on the opposite end of the scale declare in no uncertain terms, *"We know."*

This positive assertion occurs again and again in Scripture.

The apostle John noted three important points of certainty and made them part of his own personal testimony. The first is his opening description of Jesus Christ:

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life" (1 John 1:1). John's experience with Jesus was still a vivid reality in his mind. To this aged Apostle, the memory of his days with Jesus were as real as if they were but yesterday. Now he realized that as they heard, saw and looked upon the living Christ, they were looking upon the living Word of God in action, so completely did Jesus exemplify that Word in His daily life.

John wrote further: *"... the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us"* (1 John 1:2). *"We know,"* John was saying, because we have seen for ourselves.

Then John for the third time in his introduction repeats the certainty underlying his conviction: *"That which we have seen and heard we declare to you"* (1 John 1:3).

This is not all John says about the certainty of his hope. Three other vigorous certainties follow.

The First Certainty

"We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him." (1 John 5:18)

John's certainty is in the power of God's Word to keep us from sin as we truly keep it in our hearts and apply it in our lives. The thought is the same as that in 1 John 3:9, which reads: no one born of God *"will continue to sin"* (NIV). Why? Because *"His [God's] seed remains in him."* God's seed is His Word (1 Pet. 1:23), His laws, His commandments will keep us from sin as we let it govern our actions and words (1 Thess. 2:13).

John is not saying that it is impossible for the child of God to stumble or fall. If such were true, he would not have needed to give frequent warnings all through his Epistle. It is a process of learning and growing. As Jesus said, *"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit"* (Matt. 7:18).

The Second Certainty

"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." (1 John 5:19 KJV)

Here again the Elder does not say *"we think"* or *"we hope we are of God"* but *"We know."* *"We know that we are of God."*

It is a bold and daring statement. Who are the *"we"*? They are no self appointed class who make the law they keep. In another chapter of his Epistle, John states clearly the condi-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Jesus Is Alive!

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the single most important event in the history of the world to date. Were it not for the resurrection, we would have no Christ to follow. Without it we have no hope of future life.

Jesus Christ resurrected is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. How can we know positively that Jesus is alive?



What does the resurrection of Jesus mean to me?
Because He lives, I, too, may live!

CONSIDER THESE FIVE “E’s”

1. EYE-WITNESS REPORTS.

The apostles and many others were eye witnesses of the resurrected Jesus (see Matt. 28:16–18; Luke 24:13–15, 36–53; Acts 1:3,22; 2:31,32; 4:33; 1 Corinthians 15:3–8). The disciples had no reason to propagate this event if it did not occur, much less be willing to die for proclaiming it.

2. THE EMPTY TOMB.

Is this singular? Look and compare: Confucius’ tomb—occupied. Buddha’s tomb—occupied. Muhammad’s tomb—occupied. Jesus’ tomb—empty! Why is Jesus’ tomb empty? The enemies of Christ would not have allowed His body to be stolen—they requested a guard to avoid such a scandal. Would the friends of Christ have risked an encounter with a squad of soldier-guards to steal a dead body—when they were so frightened the night He was arrested that they all fled?

3. THE EMERGENCE OF THE EARLY CHURCH.

The disciples went from scared, anxious, and without hope (Luke 24:21; Matt. 26:56; Mark 14:50), to courageously proclaiming the risen Jesus—even at the risk of their lives (Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15, 26; 4:10; 5:30, etc.). Without the literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus, there would have been no Early Church, no Gospel of Jesus Christ, and no Roman Catholic Church that survives even to this day. The historic record is continuous from New Testament times to the present.

4. EARLY WRITTEN ACCOUNTS OF THE RESURRECTION.

Was the story legendary? Legends take time to develop and take hold. Paul’s letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15) testified to the accuracy of the eye witness accounts of the resurrection even while some of the witnesses were still alive (1 Cor. 15:6). Lee Strobel (once an atheist) quoted a historian who said, “I challenge anyone anywhere to come up with any example in history where legend grew up that fast and thoroughly destroyed or distorted solid, historical belief.” Strobel commented, “It has never happened that any one has been able to find.”

5. EXTRA-BIBLICAL EVIDENCE.

Even non-believers made statements that confirm the resurrection of Jesus. Altogether, more than a hundred such statements have been found. Together they corroborate the Bible documents.

PLUS...

- ◆ The **words of Jesus Himself**, as He foretold His resurrection
- ◆ The **record in all four Gospels** of His appearances after His resurrection
- ◆ The **fact that women** were the very first eye-witnesses recorded—no fabricator hoping to sell a story would have been so unwise!
- ◆ The **ministry of the apostle Paul**, converted by the risen Christ, who left marks throughout the Roman Empire as he preached the gospel of the risen Christ
- ◆ The **character of the witnesses**—upright men of character, not frauds or deceivers
- ◆ The **impossible** (and absurd) **alternatives** that have been suggested in place of a physical resurrection
- ◆ The **numerous Old and New Testament prophecies** regarding Christ’s death and resurrection.

tions. We belong *"when we love God, and keep his commandments"* (1 John 5:2-3).

In dreadful contrast John says that *"the whole world lieth in wickedness."* It is not struggling against it but lying quietly as if content. What is this *"world"*? John himself defines it in chapter 2 as all that pertains to *"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life"* (John 2:16).

John wastes no words, neither does he blur the issue. Everyone belongs either to God or to the world. He makes no distinction between the civilized and uncivilized, between the educated and the uneducated. Whether they be

who is true," and the giver of eternal life through Jesus Christ (John 5:26, 21; 1 John 2:25).

THE SOLID CERTAINTY OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

The confident tone of *"I know"* is sounded again by the apostle Paul in his letter to Timothy. He writes: *"For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day"* (2 Tim. 1:12). He was absolutely certain that God was able to *"guard"* what Paul had *"entrusted to him until the day of his return"* (2 Timothy 1:12 NLT).

Paul knew he was not traveling down a dead-end road. The cause to which he was giving his life was not going to fail. He knew whom he had believed, he knew whom he served, and he knew he would be rewarded for all that he was doing when Christ returned. There was no other cause or purpose or career that could give him even a fraction of the benefit He would receive from serving Christ.

Is it not our sacred privilege today to share this same confidence? We also know whom we have believed, and that if we endure to the end (Matt. 24:13), that same future is secure for us. Why? Because it is the promise of God Almighty.

The question with us, are we living each day so that we can claim this positive assurance? Are we living so as to build a record of good works that will be accepted by Christ when He returns and judges and rewards

His servants according to what they have done? (2 Cor 5:10).

Almighty God, who orders the universe and has given life to billions and quadrillions of shining angels, is able—abundantly able. He can do *"exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think"* (Eph. 3:20)—and He will, if we do our part. Those who will be counted worthy *"to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead,...they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection"* (Luke 20:35-36).

Let us add to our confident hope a positive determination that we can say with the apostle Paul, *"I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus is calling us"* (Phil. 3:13-14 NLT). ♦

"He [God] will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

He who was seated on the throne said, *"I am making everything new!"* Then he said, *"Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."* —Revelation 21:4-5



the refined Ephesians or the wild Parthians, if they have no interest in the plan of God, they are of *"the world."*

Were John among us today, he would make the same judgment: *"The whole world lieth in wickedness."* Wouldn't he urge us as he urged his own people, to *"not love the world or the things in the world"*? (1 John 2:15) He would also be telling us to separate from it for the same reason, because *"the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever"* (1 John 2:17).

The Third Certainty

"And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true [God]." (1 John 5:20)

Here is another absolute certainty. John knows of an absolute certainty that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the long prophesied Messiah, has come, and that God is true.

While his fellow Jews were still doubting and others were claiming Christ came as a spirit, John proclaimed the absolute facts. Jesus Christ had come, speaking the words of His Father, witnessing to the truth of His Word. As Jesus said, *"If you had known me, you would have known My Father"* (John 14:7). Christ showed the way to God, who is *"Him*

Soliloquy of a CARBON COPY

*The only **Original** is Jesus Christ*

Many years before email, the computer, the copier, the fax, texting, instant messaging, and all the rest, how did people communicate with distant friends? With the advent of the typewriter came the original, and the carbon copy.

Some time during the 1930s, a zealous brother in our Church fellowship who wanted to help distant believers decided to utilize the carbon copy method. A full schedule did not allow him all the time he wanted to communicate spiritual truths, but being of a creative sort, he had a solution. Was the carbon copy a step downward? Not at all.

Wanting his friends afar not to feel slighted by the idea of receiving "only a carbon copy," he composed this Soliloquy of the Carbon Copy to introduce his plan. Don't miss his central point: to give honor to the real Original.

—The Editor.

Well, here it is the eighth day of March, and I am under construction at last. It's about time, I should say. The master typist has been promising to send me for weeks—I hope I get in the mail tonight.

You see, I am just a Carbon Copy, but I believe I am different from most carbon copies, for most people would prefer to have the Original. However, since I have been converted and am carrying a message to a distant Brother in the faith, I am sure he will not mind having been sent a carbon copy. For in this way my master is able to remember a number of the distant fellowships at the same time. He has been so busy of late he has been putting me off for quite a while. But what if he had to send an original to each? It wouldn't happen.

Really, do you believe it, I feel somewhat honored to be "just a carbon copy," seeing I could not be the original. For there can be but one original. However, if I am an exact duplicate of the original, what is lost?

Yes, every Christian must be a carbon copy of the pattern, in one sense of the word. Didn't Brother Peter say, "Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the

flesh has ceased from sin"? (1 Pet. 4:1). And, Christ also suffered "for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (1 Pet. 2:21).

Just as I receive every impression received by the original, so all Christians must receive every impression sent out by the "high and lofty One who inhabits eternity" through His Word (Isa. 57:15).

Another way in which I resemble the Christian life is that it takes a harder punch to make me than it does to make the pattern. It took but a gentle touch for the Original to receive the impression, for Christ, having once known the law, never disobeyed (Heb. 4:15). But how about the rest of us? Our instructors have to hammer and hammer away at us to get the impressions on our minds, and sometimes, the more they hammer the worse the copy looks! Sometimes I feel like I am fit only for the wastebasket! Yes, I must learn to be easily entreated, and always accept the evidence.

Again, the Original always looks clear, and no wonder. For while He was tempted in all points like we are, yet He was "without sin," for "sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Heb. 4:15; 1 John 3:4–5). As soon as He knew the law, He kept it, while we have broken the law times without number, even after having learned better.

Quite often the carbon copy has a number of smudges on its face because of unguarded contact with some foreign object. We as Christians, while being in the world, must not be part of it, or be influenced by it. We must keep the pattern of the Original. To be a respectable carbon copy, all blemishes must be carefully erased with tears of repentance, and repetitions of those blemishes avoided.

Yes, it takes more than a tack hammer to make impressions on us copies, for "Is not My word like a fire? says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23:29). Our hearts, hard and stony, must be broken by the hammer by God's divine law, so that we can receive every impression of the Original.

Well, well, it looks like the master typist is going to finish me tonight at last. I hope each one will be glad to receive me, as I know the heart of my master typist goes with me to each of you. And he'll be waiting to hear from each one.

Maranatha!

Signed: **CARBON COPY**



CHECK YOUR FOCUS!

BY GERALD R. PAYNE

When a child, I remember asking my mother how she got a particular scar. She explained that when she was just a little child, she was climbing up the shelves of a kitchen cabinet and the cabinet fell on top of her. She didn't seem too eager to dwell on her childish escapade, which wasn't like her, but it told me that children have something in common: a strong determination to get what they want.

Do you remember, as a child, wanting something so badly that you would do anything to get it?

Brian Bier, full-time father, husband and author, has written the following homey experience. It tells us that a child's determination is something we can learn from.

"I want a fruit snack," I hear my 2-year old say. He just had one and he wants another. Being the good parents that we are trying to be, we say no. He pleads a little and we explain that he can't have another one right now. A few minutes later, we hear this crashing sound coming from the kitchen pantry! We run in and what do we see? Matthew standing there surrounded by fallen items, with a package of fruit snacks in his hands! My wife and I look at each other in amazement, being that the box of fruit snacks was on the 4th shelf, 5 feet off of the floor!

How does a 2-year-old reach a box of fruit snacks on the 4th shelf, 5 feet up? He was focused on the fruit snack!

How many times have you seen something that you wanted and then saw the obstacles in front of you and gave up? How many times have you said, "That can't be done." Have you ever settled for something less than what you wanted because the challenge was just too tough?

You see, Michael wasn't looking at the shelves. He didn't know that the height of the box of fruit snacks was more than twice his height. Michael was not aware that obstacles were in his path. He saw what he wanted and he did what he had to do to get it!

We are here this morning because we, too, have a focus. But just how focused are we?

Let me test you...

I want you to really imagine each step in your mind. Close your eyes and visualize it. Imagine that you're maybe in your 20s. See yourself doing each step. Are you ready?

Imagine a board about 12 feet long and 12 inches wide.

Place it on a flat surface and walk across it. Now, that was easy, wasn't it?

Next, I want you to imagine that same board resting on two blocks several inches off the floor. Now, walk across it again jumping up and down as you go. You want to really test this board. There is no doubt—it is strong and it will support you. No challenge at all, was it?

Next, imagine that board is placed across two desks. Now, walk across it. Probably just as easy. No problem for a young person to do, right?

Now, for the real test: I want you to imagine that same board that you have walked across three times already, at a height of 110 stories; the height at which the World Trade Center Towers stood. You know, at this height people look like tiny ants down below. Let's imagine using the board to bridge across a span of ten feet between two buildings. Now, walk across that board!

How do you feel now? Did you make it? Did you even try? Why not? It's the same board; you've thoroughly tested it; and you've crossed it three times without a problem. What happened? Why didn't you walk across the board? Are you concerned about, oh, let's say, falling!?

Wait a minute; haven't you walked across the board three times already? Were you concerned about falling those three times? Probably not.

The child in the story was focused on the fruit snack. Guess what, he got it! You were focused on falling. Guess what, you didn't get it!

Now suppose you see flames coming through the roof of that building and then you notice your child on the roof. How would you feel about crossing the board now? Would you even think about it? Now, hardly anything would prevent you from crossing that board to save your child. What made the difference?—*Your focus.*

Comment

How does all of this relate to our Christian life as we strive to meet Christ's standard? Well, quite simply, what are you focused on? I'll tell you what you're focused on. You are focused on what you want. And if you want the great goal of everlasting life in Christ's Kingdom, then your focus will be that of the great apostle Paul.

Paul's first encounter with Christ was dramatic; and it changed his focus just as dramatically. The rest of his life

was focused on Christ. Never would he be Christ's enemy again, but one of his most devoted followers.

In Philippians 3:12–14 Paul gives us some guidelines as to how we can stay focused and achieve the spiritual growth that God desires. Paul is telling us how to focus our energy and press on toward the goal of our high calling in the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, *"I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection! No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on **this one thing**". I do concentrate on this: I leave the past behind and with hands outstretched to whatever lies ahead **I go straight for the goal**—my reward the honour of being called by God in Christ. I'm off and running, and **I'm not turning back**.* (Various translations).

Did you notice the phrases, *"this one thing"* and *"I go straight for the goal"*, and *"I'm not turning back?"* We are not looking at these different translations to determine which is best but rather to see what they all have in common—*focus*. Paul has only one thing in mind, reaching that high standard Christ calls us to achieve. It is the only way to realize that goal Christ set before Paul: to be sure of a part in *"the resurrection of the dead"* (Phil. 3:11).

If we are to reach the goal for which we have been called, then we must be focused. None of the thousand-and-one things calling for our attention will be able to stop us.

The apostle Paul was **devoted** to his high calling, he had **direction** (never looked back), he was **determined** to

reach his goal. Every word, act and thought were **deliberate** and **intentional**. Did he make mistakes? Yes. He said he had not reached his goal yet, but he was not letting anything stand in his way.

How can we keep our focus on Christ?

1. Making time to read and study and meditate on God's word.
2. Making time to pray and seek the help of God.
3. Making time to attend church in order to worship and praise God and be instructed in His word.
4. Making time to fellowship with one another so that we can encourage each other to stay focused.
5. And never forget to always have a spirit of thankfulness and the joy of the prize that is just ahead.

Think of the day when you stand before Christ, approved! No more sorrow or pain or disappointments (Rev. 21:3–5). Think of joining the Saints praising God for such great salvation as this! Hear the angels singing with joy, their voices like great swelling tides roaring against the shore, or as thunder rumbling on the nearby hills. And there will be no time table for our departure from this new life, if ... if we keep our focus on the *"well done, good and faithful servant"* of Christ.

So, what is the one thing you are focused on? What is the focus of your life? Choose the highest goal, and go for it with all the determination of that two-year-old.

It will be worth it! ♦

Abib 2013 – Calendar



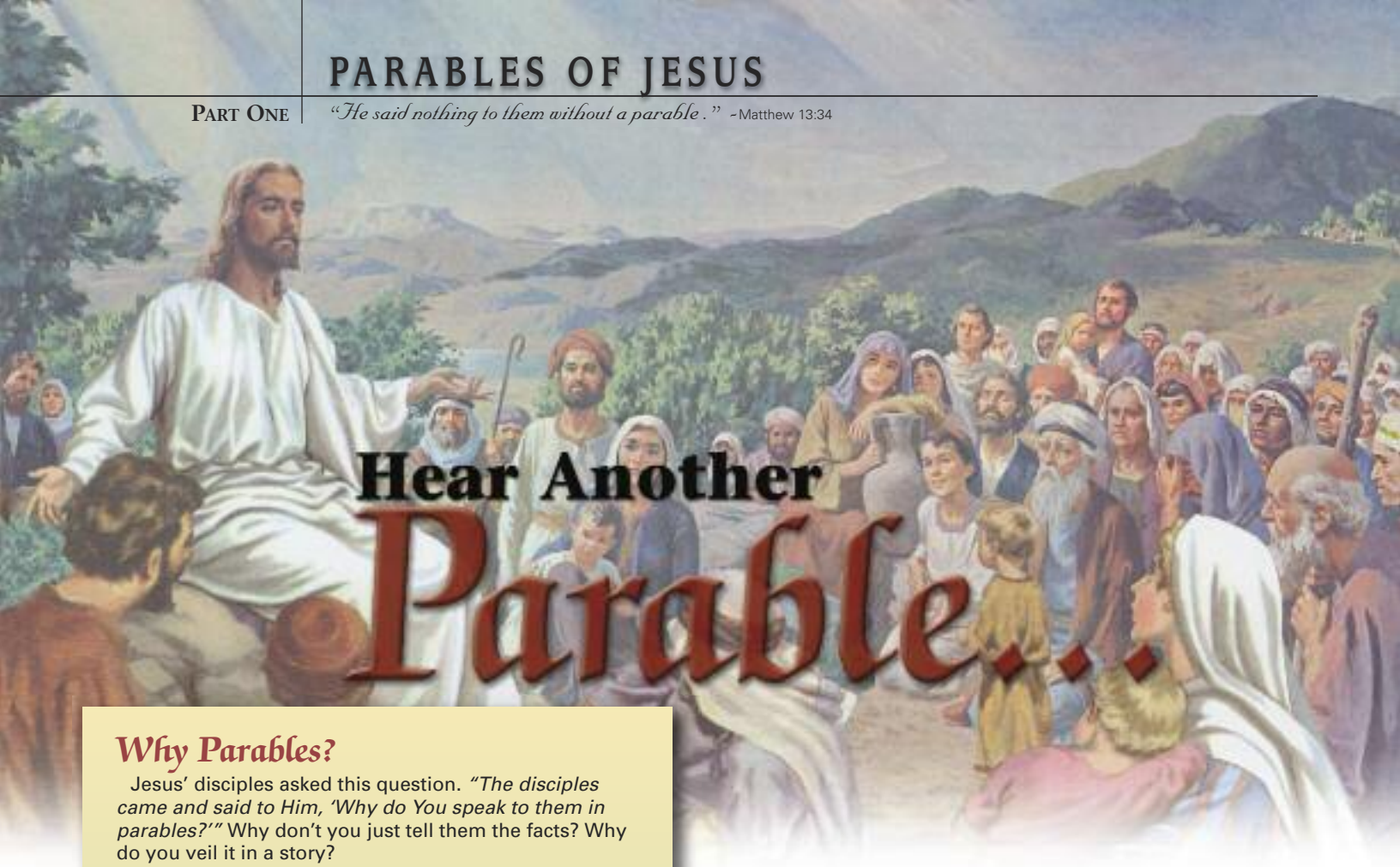
Alleluia!

The NEW YEAR is coming, the sacred NEW YEAR as God commanded Moses to measure time.

According to Biblical records, the ancient Hebrews began their sacred year with the new moon of ABIB, or Nisan (see Ex. 12:2; 13:4). ABIB is the first new moon following the spring equinox. The equinox this year occurring on March 21, and the first new moon following on April 10, the Megiddo Church will observe the beginning of the month ABIB on **Wednesday evening, April 10**, continuing through **Thursday, April 11**, Bible time being counted from evening to evening (Lev. 23:35). The day will be observed in recognition of its double significance—as the beginning of the sacred New Year and also as the anniversary of the birth of Christ.

Thirteen days later (Abib 13, this year on **Monday evening, April 22**), we will commemorate the anniversary of our **Lord's Supper**, and Thursday morning, **April 25** (Abib 15) will be observed as the anniversary of Christ's **Resurrection**.

Fifty days later on **June 13** will be the anniversary of the day of **Pentecost**, when the power of the Holy Spirit descended upon the assembled disciples.



Hear Another Parable...

Why Parables?

Jesus' disciples asked this question. *"The disciples came and said to Him, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?'"* Why don't you just tell them the facts? Why do you veil it in a story?

Jesus could have replied in many ways, but He chose to make a point that we would never have guessed. *"He answered and said to them, Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given"* (Matt. 13:11). In other words, you have knowledge they do not have because you want knowledge and listen. They get only the story form because they do not thirst after knowledge as you do. They could understand if they really wanted to know, but some are even hostile against My teaching.

In a sense, the parable was a means of choosing whom He wanted to teach based on their response. It was a means of separating those who really wanted to know from those who were uncaring, or even opposed.

Why didn't the multitudes understand as easily as His disciples? Quoting from the prophet Isaiah He gave the real reason: *"Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive. For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, and I should heal them"* (Matt. 13:13-15). Why their lack of perception? They lacked the interest, the appetite, and for that reason the knowledge. But to Jesus' disciples He says, *"Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear"* (Matt. 13:16). They were eager learners, taking in every one of Jesus' words.

Jesus Spoke in Parables

Who can resist a story, especially if it comes from a credible source? Real life captures our attention. We listen carefully to discover the subject, the characters, and the action. We follow from point A, to point B, to point C, and anticipate the outcome. We grasp a concept or principle much more readily from a visual—a picture, an example, an illustration—than from plain words. If there is a lesson, we remember it better because when we think of the story, we think of the lesson.

Perhaps this is why, when Jesus came preaching, He put His messages into story form, i.e., parables.

A parable has been given the simple definition of "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning." This is especially true of Jesus' parables. He used earthly settings to reveal knowledge from heaven and teach about the Kingdom of God.

Look Deeper

Jesus' parables often have a surface lesson that is good, pertinent and beneficial. But if this were the whole meaning, why did Jesus' disciples, on several occasions, ask Jesus to explain His parable? Because they knew His parables had more meaning than they had comprehended.

There is always a temptation to be satisfied with the obvious. Why not stop there? Because Jesus did not come to teach us what we can learn from our own experience.

For example, take the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders. Was Jesus teaching in this parable how to build a house with a good foundation? No, He was telling the results,

in symbolic language, of hearing and doing (or not doing) what He taught (Matt. 7:24–25).

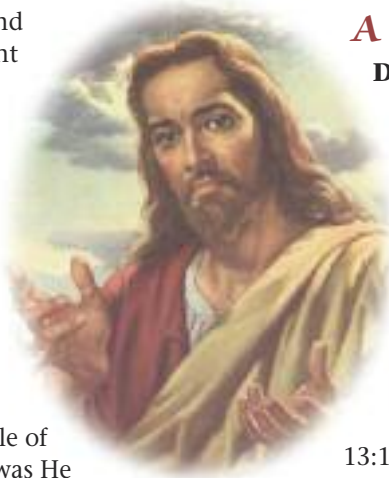
When Jesus told the Parable of the Sower, was He telling us how to plant seed, and to be sure we plant in the right kind of soil or we will not get a good crop? No, He explained that the seed was the Word of God and the soil was the human heart in which that seed must be planted to grow and bear fruit (Luke 8:5–8).

In telling His disciples the Parable of the Net that was cast into the sea, was He telling them how to fish? Or in the Parable of the Vineyard, was He teaching how to operate a vineyard?

In the Parable of the New Cloth and Old Garment, was He telling us how to mend our clothes?

Jesus did not come to teach what we could learn from our parents or from our own observation. Always He was revealing some deeper lesson, some otherwise hidden truth. Jesus was not informing men and women how to get through this world successfully but how to prepare for the next, for unending life in His coming Kingdom.

Jesus came to reveal His heavenly Father's knowledge and plan. He came to make known what He called *"the mysteries of the kingdom of God"* (Luke 8:10); that is, knowledge that could not be learned from human sources. His focus was on eternal life, and how one can obtain it. This is why He spent His ministry, as Luke recorded, going through *"every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God"* (Luke 8:1).



A Mystery?

Definition:

μυστήριον *mustērion* [one initiated]) in class. Grk. a hidden thing, secret, mystery: ... plur. generally mysteries, religious secrets, confided only to the initiated; ... a hidden or secret thing, not obvious to the understanding: (Thayer).

μυστήριον *mustērion* - A secret, secret rite, secret teaching, mystery; ... the unmanifested or private counsel of God, [God's] secret, the secret thoughts, plans, and dispensations of God (BDAG).

Why did Jesus call His teachings a *"mystery"*? (Matt. 13:11). The New Testament uses the word mystery to describe knowledge that can only be learned by divine revelation. To learn God's knowledge we have to go to His written Word, our only source in this age when God is not speaking openly through visions, angels, or His Holy Spirit.

Another definition of mystery as used in Scripture is *"a spiritual truth couched under an external representation or similitude and concealed or hidden thereby unless some explanation is given"* (Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*).

Jesus calling His teachings a *"mystery"* tells us several things:

- 1) That the knowledge He is giving is not available from nature; nor can it be from the universities, the schools, or any other human source;
- 2) That the meaning will not be obvious or on the surface;
- 3) That the only source for a correct understanding of it is the Word of God.

The Kingdom When?

Jesus went everywhere *"preaching the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God"* (Luke 8:1), and most of His parables are about the Kingdom. Was it to be a spiritual Kingdom? No, the kingdom He preached was a government in which He Himself would be the king, and the entire earth would be its territory (Zech. 14:9). Was it to be a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of the believers? No, His kingdom would have administrators, people, and laws. (For more on this subject, see our booklet, *The Kingdom of God*).

When would the Kingdom come? Was it present then? Or was it to be set up in the First Century? No, Jesus said when in the presence of Pilate that His destiny was to be a King. *"This is why I was born,"* He said, *"this is why I came into the world"* (John 18:36). But His Kingdom was *"not of this world"*—it did not belong to the present *"kosmos"* or present arrangement, He said, or His servants would be fighting for His release.

In another of Jesus' parables He compared Himself to a nobleman going into a far country *"to receive for himself a kingdom and to return"* (Luke 19:12). Not until He went to heaven and returned would He set up His kingdom.

The Kingdom of God was the heart of the prayer Jesus taught His disciples to pray: *"Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"* (Matt. 6:10). When the Kingdom comes, God's will shall be done everywhere on earth as it is now done in heaven.

Later in Jesus' teaching, He said, after relating many prophecies about the time just before His Second Advent, *"When you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near"* (Luke 21:31). He said the same again in Matthew 24, again after a long series of prophecies leading up to the time of His return: *"...when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors"* (Matt. 24:33).



Who Is My Neighbor?

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" So he answered and said, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'" And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" And he said, "He who showed mercy on him."

Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

—Luke 10:25–37

THE PARABLE OF The Good Samaritan

One of the most known, most loved, and most often told of Jesus' parables, the Good Samaritan has much to teach us.

What was the occasion when Jesus gave this parable? "A certain lawyer stood up and tested Jesus" by asking Him a question. These lawyers—doctors of Jewish law—were always challenging Jesus with their questions. They could have been either Pharisees or Sadducees. This man was probably a Pharisee because he was asking about eternal life. Sadducees did not go there because they did not believe in the resurrection.

"What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" the lawyer asked.

The parable of the Good Samaritan is Jesus' answer.



Road to Jericho

This man is traveling the notorious road which goes down from Jerusalem to Jericho through the Wilderness of Judea. It is still used today.

The setting: On the Jericho Road

The setting of Jesus' parable is the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, near the Dead Sea, which lay well below sea level. The road descended some 3600 feet in little more than 20 miles. Even in modern times, the road is notoriously dangerous.

The characters

Jesus' parable has four main characters.

The Lone Traveler: "*a certain man.*" Who was this "*certain man*"? His identity did not matter, though he was likely a Jew. But all we are told is that he was a lone traveler on a dangerous road.

The inevitable happened: he "*fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.*"

The Priest. During the time of Jesus, there were so many priests that they were divided into 24 courses. Each course served in the temple for two separate weeks in a year. When they were not on duty, many stayed in Jericho.

The lonely road between Jerusalem and Jericho that ran above this rocky and dangerous gorge was a road haunted by marauding robbers and therefore unsafe for travelers. However, this route was one of the few between Jerusalem and the Jordan River and Jews avoiding Samaria often took this route.

Also, Jericho being a Levitical city had a large population of priests and Levites.

The priest in Jesus' story took one glance at the injured man and passed by *"on the other side."* Since he was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho, it is likely that he had served in the temple and was on his way home. What reason might he have had for passing by *"on the other side"*? Though he knew the law, this man, professedly consecrated to God, had neither time nor compassion for the injured man.

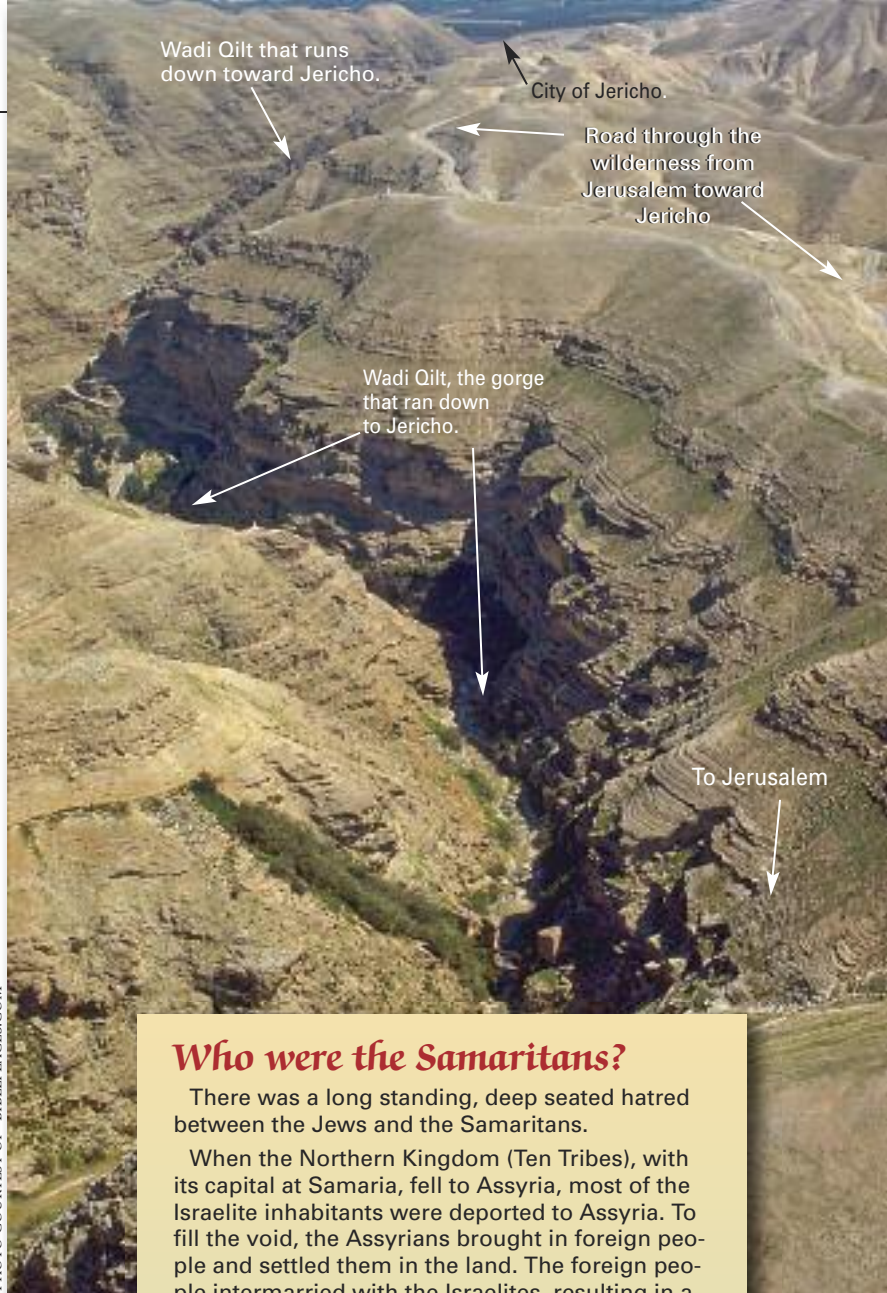
The Levite. Along came another traveler, of the same tribe as the priest, though from a lesser branch. The Levites were servants at the Temple and ministers of religious worship. Shouldn't this Levite have been eager to assist the stricken one? But no, he too, left the man without help.

Perhaps he was fearful: Were robbers still lying in ambush? Was that apparently wounded man lying by the road acting the part of a decoy? The risk was too great.

There is another possible reason for the attitude of the priest and the Levite. Some Jews believed that those in trouble deserved their problems because they were not following the Law, and were therefore under God's judgment. Such an attitude might have led either the priest or the Levite to avoid the man.

The Samaritan. Now Jesus introduces His hero: a Samaritan who had compassion on the injured man

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Who were the Samaritans?

There was a long standing, deep seated hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans.

When the Northern Kingdom (Ten Tribes), with its capital at Samaria, fell to Assyria, most of the Israelite inhabitants were deported to Assyria. To fill the void, the Assyrians brought in foreign people and settled them in the land. The foreign people intermarried with the Israelites, resulting in a mixed Israelite population who were called Samaritans.

At this time the Israelites were already an apostate people, and were not serving the true God (see 2 Kings 17:25). The people who moved in among them were totally pagan, and brought with them their many gods. The result was a melting-pot of paganism with a small amount of the knowledge of God. The Chronicler records that *"they feared the Lord, and from every class they appointed for themselves priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places"* (2 Kings 17:32). So *"they feared the Lord, yet served their own gods – according to the rituals of the nations from among whom they were carried away"* (v. 33). In essence God Almighty was abandoned (see 2 Kings 17: 34–41). Rejected by any loyal Jews, both for losing their racial purity and above all for their apostasy from the faith, the Samaritans established their own temple and held their own religious services. Their sacred mountain became Mt. Gerizim.



when he saw his plight.

Did a Samaritan feel natural kindness toward a Jew? Normally Samaritans tried to hinder Jews. This makes Jesus' story even more outstanding, because *"the Jews had no dealing with the Samaritans"* (John 4:9). Recall that when Jesus' enemies wanted to call Him an insulting name, they called Him a Samaritan (John 8:48).

Why did Jesus make a Samaritan His hero? Two points are possible: First, Jesus wanted to teach that God has no favorites. In His view, a Samaritan was as acceptable as a Jew or a barbarian. Second, Jesus was teaching that the Jews were not right in discriminating against the Samaritans; nor were they right in feeling superior to them. The Divine plan is that *"in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him"* (Acts 10:35).

What did the Samaritan do that the others did not do? He *"had compassion on him," "bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him."*

Then comes Jesus' question to the Jewish doctor: *"So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?"* Jesus made the lawyer answer his own question. And notice that the lawyer could not bring himself even to acknowledge that the compassionate man was a Samaritan. He said only, *"He who showed mercy on him."* Then Jesus said to him, *"Go and do likewise"* (Luke 10:37).

Who Is Our Neighbor?

When Jesus said, *"Go and do likewise,"* He was giving every one of us the responsibility of being a "good Samaritan," and showing compassion to our "neighbor."

This brings us to another question, Who is our neighbor? What did the law say, the law that the priest and Levite in Jesus' parable should have been living by? The Old Testament passage that first stated this command to *"love your neighbor as yourself"* told also who that neighbor was—not anyone everywhere who might need help but those of the same background or loyalty. For the Jews it was their fellow Israelites. In Leviticus 19 were a number of commands.

They were not to *"cheat, or rob, or lie to one another"* (Lev. 19:11).

If one owed wages to another, they were to pay up the same day (Lev. 19:13).

They were to pity one with handicaps, not make it difficult for them (Lev. 19:13).

They were to be strictly fair in passing judgment, not



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There was also a narrow road running down through the Wadi Qilt toward Jericho. And this one was treacherous indeed. Which road Jesus had in mind we do not know.

being lenient to the poor or showing favor to the wealthy (Lev. 19:15). All judgment was to be *"righteous."*

They were not to spread gossip (Lev. 19:16).

Then, after all these commands about how to treat their people, Moses says, *"You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him."* He uses the terms *"brother"* and *"neighbor"* interchangeably. The *"neighbor"* is the *"brother,"* one who shares the same common loyalties. *"You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people."* Each had a responsibility to the other, to help where help was needed.

Then follows the phrase Jesus quoted: *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

If the lawyer had been paying attention to his own laws, He would have sensed immediately how Jesus' parable condemned him and his self-serving kin. It immediately drove home the lesson that God despised their smug, self-righteous, hypocritical attitude that had no care for a brother in need.

The apostle Peter taught the same in his Epistle, of the love and compassion the brotherhood should have for one another. *"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous"* (1 Peter 3:8). In the same spirit Paul said if one member suffers, all suffer (1 Cor. 12:26). And John wrote, *"Whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?"* (1 John 3:17).

"To Inherit Eternal Life"

The lesson in compassion for one's brother is one that all can take to heart. But is this all the parable is teaching? Might there be more that one must do to *"inherit eternal life"*? For remember, this was the lawyer's question that Jesus was answering.

Look first at the wounded traveler. Aren't we all travelers on the road of life? Think about how many times the Bible compares the Christian life to a way, a path, or a journey. *"Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path"* (Psalm 119:105). Jesus said that each of us makes choice of the broad way or the narrow path (Matt. 7:13–14).

We choose which road we will travel, whether God's way or our own. In Jesus' parable, the traveler made a bad choice. He chose a spiritually dangerous road, one that threatened his very life. On that road he fell among thieves *"who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead"* (Luke 10:30).

Who are these thieves who threaten would-be followers? Jesus spoke of them in John 10. He identified the sheep as His followers. *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow me"* (John 10:27). Who are the thieves and robbers who do not enter by the door into the sheepfold but *"climb up some other way"*? (John 10:1-2). They are enemies who do *"not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy"* (John 10:10). Jesus was comparing himself, the true shepherd, to the false teachers who constantly threatened the true followers, teaching an unauthorized way of salvation which is deadly because it cannot result in eternal life.

The apostle John called them deceivers and anti-Christ. He said that *"many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist"* (2 John 1:7). He said again, *"test the spirits [teachers], whether they be of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world"* (1 John 4:1).

Jesus spoke of these *"robbers"* again when addressing a statement to the lawyers, the religious teachers of that day.

*Whoever has this world's goods,
and sees his brother in need, and shuts up
his heart from him, how does the love
of God abide in him? -1 John 3:17*

He said, *"Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered"* (Luke 11:52). What are they stealing? They are stealing away *"the key of knowledge,"* the key that would unlock the door to eternal life. These *"robbers"* are still active today, taking away the *"key"* that God requires obedience to His laws, and that He will judge each one according to what he has done (Rev. 22:12, 14), teaching a strange doctrine, one that Christ could not support. In Jesus' day, they were teaching that one could live by the outdated law of Moses and be saved. Today they are teaching that all we need to do is to trust Christ, and we can be saved by His blood. This is taking away *"the key of knowledge"* that will unlock the door to the Kingdom and eternal life.

If we associate this type of *"thieves and robbers"* with a traveler on the road of life seeking eternal life, we have the picture Jesus is creating in His parable. The traveler starts out seeking eternal life (like the lawyer whose question Jesus was answering: *"what do I do to inherit eternal life?"*) Someone comes along and convinces him that there is an easy way, that one need not keep the commandments of God to be saved. Another comes along and says he need only think positive thoughts, or believe whatever *"feels good,"* that he be careful not to put anyone else down, or condemn anyone, even himself. This kind of teaching is destructive; in the language of Jesus' parable, it is falling *"among thieves and robbers."*

Lessons from the Action

The man in Jesus' parable was wounded. The thieves had treated him harshly, stripped off his clothing, and departed leaving him half-dead. David spoke of this type of wounds when he said it was because of his sins that he had been wounded.. *"For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds are foul and festering because of my foolishness"* (Ps. 38:4-5). Here is another spiritual lesson that is deeper than the surface.

The half-dead traveler in Jesus parable needs help. He cannot go further on his spiritual journey until he has assistance — the right kind of assistance.

Now look at Luke 10:31: *"...by chance a certain priest came down that road."* Might not a priest be able to help him? No, because the priest has that same kind of message. He would tell the traveler that he is under the curse of Adam's sin by nature, and needs the sacraments to be saved. With such teaching the priest can do nothing at all to help the traveler. The same is true of the Levite. Sharing the fears and feelings of the priest, he, too, passes by on the other side, having no real help to give the traveler in dire spiritual distress. Now comes a certain Samaritan, an outcast, one not recognized among the established religions, one who has no part in what is generally taught and accepted. The Samaritan has compassion on the man. He yearns to help the man in his spiritual plight.

The apostle Paul said of the Christians that they were a little *"sect that everywhere were spoken against"* (Acts 28:22). This *"Samaritan"* shows true concern for the wounded traveler, and takes serious steps to help him. He comes with the oil and wine of true Bible faith, and applies them to our spiritual wounds. Here again we must take the Bible in its own symbolism. The Psalmist said, *"He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions"* (Ps. 107:20). Pouring in *"oil and wine"* is as the Psalmist said in Psalm 141:5 *"Let the righteous strike me; it shall be a kindness. And let him rebuke me; it shall be as excellent oil; let my head not refuse it."* This Good Samaritan tells us what we must do to reach the end of our journey and the great goal of eternal life

We have all needed that Good Samaritan. Were it not for the Good Samaritan, where would we be? Thieves and robbers are everywhere, stealing away the hope that God offers through the knowledge of His Word, saying we need not keep His commandments, but only depend on Christ for our righteousness. Yet the Scriptures plainly tell us, *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever"* (1 John 2:15, 17).

What is Jesus' message to us? BE that good Samaritan. Help your neighbor, one who is seeking the spiritual remedy for his life, the healing ointment of the Word of God. Use it to heal yourself, and share with others wherever you go. ♦

THE PROOF SHEET

By Minnie Branham
Published in the Megiddo Message, June 19, 1932

The Proof Sheet

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BY MINNIE BRANHAM

This article was written back in the days when type for printing was cast by the line using a Linotype machine. The Linotype was the industry standard for newspapers, magazines and posters from the late 19th century through the 1960s and 1970s. The Linotype operator entered text using a keyboard. The machine assembled matrices, which were molds for the letter forms, in a line. The assembled line was then cast as a single piece by a process known as "hot metal" typesetting. The bars were lined up in a tray. A tray filled with bars of lead was called a galley.

The printer spread ink over the top of the bars and, by pressing a sheet of paper against the bars, made a galley proof. The long proof sheets were then read and carefully compared with the original copy to check for accuracy.

The author of this article, Minnie Branham, was also the mother of the two young men who in 1914, (then 12 and 14 years of age) "published" the first Megiddo

Message, the elder being the "editor" and the younger the "publisher." The printing process was tedious and limiting, because the printed "copies" of their two-page magazine were all typewritten originals, but it was a beginning.

—The Editor.



As one of the proof readers on the MESSAGE staff for a number of years, I have been very forcibly impressed that there is far more to this business of reading the proof sheet than simply scanning the lines for mistakes. In fact, I see the task as my teacher, disciplinarian, and spiritual assistant.

Let us take the proof as it comes from the galley. I once read an article called, "Advice to Proof Readers." It said the beginner should read the proof several times. He should read first to "get the story." Once his interest is satisfied, he can concentrate on mechanical matters of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spacing, alignment, and typographical errors. In the second reading these are located and marked in the margin. The first reading may be done rapidly, but the second reading must be word by word, syllable by syllable, yes, almost letter by letter. Even then, a third reading often reveals overlooked errors. The writer of the article then advised a quick scanning of the right margin to see that all words are properly divided at the end of lines. The proof is then ready to be returned to the printer for correction, after which another reading is necessary to see that no new mistakes were made in correcting the old ones, as sometimes happens.

One day while scrutinizing the proof sheet, I took myself to task: If I am as intent on finding all the mistakes in my life and am as careful in correcting them as I am those on the proof sheet, I shall surely be ready for the scrutiny of the One who reads the proof sheet of our lives and who knows even the thoughts and intents of the heart.

As we must first read the proof sheet to get the thoughts of the author, that is also the first step in our spiritual work. We must read to learn the mind of Christ, to know just what the Pattern requires. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim. 4:13). These are divine commands and we need to heed them.

Having learned the great plan of the Omnipotent Author, it is then our business to "follow copy." It sometimes happens that the copy given us to follow in our temporal work contains errors overlooked by the copy editor,

for no one is beyond the possibility of making mistakes. But the Author under whom we are now working has not only furnished us a perfect Copy in His written Word but has also given us a concrete example of a perfect proof sheet in the life of His dear Son, He who was made in all things *"like unto his brethren,"* and was *"in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"* (Heb. 2:17; 4:15). He *"followed copy,"* always doing the things that pleased his Father (John 8:29).

If we at all times made the Bible our copy and then followed it implicitly, our proof sheet would be free from marks. But even as it is unheard of for a printer to make a perfect proof at his first "setting," so it will be with us. Being carnal by nature, with a mind at variance with the Copy (Rom. 8:7), we shall in our first reading find our page marred by many errors. With continuous practice the printer becomes more skillful; and we, too, may by consistent effort and practice make each succeeding page show improvement.

Let us examine the proof sheet of our lives for one day. Here we find a word misspelled; the letters are all there but misplaced. Ah! we were too sure of ourselves and did not follow the Copy. Perhaps we thought it such a simple word that we did not need to look to the Copy for help. We could manage a little thing like that without help! So we went ahead in our own way. How frequently this occurs, and how often we might be spared a correction by first consulting the Copy. Well, there's nothing to do but mark it and go on.

Here we find a word omitted, causing confusion in the thought. What important duty was omitted in our life today? Perhaps *"a word fitly spoken"* to a brother or sister, which *"is like apples of gold in pictures of silver,"* or like *"cold waters to a thirsty soul"* (Prov. 25:11, 25). Or we may have omitted a season of prayer or holy meditation which would have given us serenity under trial and a clearer vision of our duty to God and to each other. Or was it the letter we did not write, which might mean so much to one who is looking for it?

The sins of omission are quite as frequent and pernicious as the sins of commission. Perhaps it is our lack of moral courage to uphold the right and denounce the wrong; to separate the precious from the vile, or the bitter from the sweet; or to speak the word of warning or reproof. How prone we are to justify ourselves with the excuse that the time was not opportune or the circumstances favorable! These are all omitted words in our proof sheet and must be marked as such. And let us remember that an omission leaves a blank in our day which might have been filled with beautiful words and deeds.

Here we find the spacing between the words is very poor, some running together, others widely separated. We compare

this with the times when the temporal duties of life crowd one upon another in such rapid succession that the spiritual thoughts are separated far and wide. When the evening comes and we begin to look over the page, how chagrined and ashamed we feel that we have allowed the trivialities to crowd out the higher, nobler, sweeter things of life which are ours for the taking. This is the most common error we are called upon to mark.

Oh, horrors! Here are several whole lines out of order, making havoc of the thought intended to be conveyed. Before lucidity is possible, these lines must be properly arranged. This may be compared to a time when a trial came upon us suddenly. We were *"misunderstood."* Our intentions were right; blame was attached to us which we feel is unjust; we are not given due credit for our actions; we are sure we know how we felt and what our thoughts were, and so on, and on. We protest, we justify, we get impatient and feel hurt, and the *"old man"* is doing his deadly work. It may take the entire day, or perhaps two of them, for us to see ourselves as others see us. In the meantime the whole line of our life is badly disarranged and nothing can be made of our proof sheet until the right order is restored. Line by line we must adjust ourselves *"according to copy"* before the page will be acceptable to the Author.

Another point which is quite important is the proper placing of capital letters. Have you noticed how incongruous certain words look when written with a lower case initial letter which should be capitalized, or vice versa? For instance, *"i can Do all things through chrisT which Strengtheneth me."*

I wonder if in our daily contacts we are capitalizing some things that do not deserve it. Perhaps we are placing a capital letter on some fancied slight or grievance. Or we may attach undue importance to financial matters, and in our minds be overanxious about our chance of loss in these times of depression, wondering whether we shall have sufficient to eat or to wear, forgetting those comforting words of the Psalmist: *"I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread."* (Ps. 37:25). Perhaps we are too much absorbed in our work or daily business, or we talk too much about the temporal things of life, or even spend too much time reading the newspaper and not enough on *"things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another"* (Rom. 14:19). And let us remember that every sensitive or hurt feeling puts a capital letter on the word *"Self."*

On the other hand let us not omit the capitals where they rightly belong, for, if



A Mergenthaler Linotype machine was industry standard for setting type until the advent of phototypesetting in the 1970s.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

OBITUARY

"The dead in Christ shall rise" - 1 Thessalonians 4:16

HILDA FREIDA HILDERLEY

We have received word from Brian Hilderley of the passing of his mother, Hilda Freida Hilderley. Sister Hilderley was a long-time subscriber to the Megiddo Message and made a number visits to the Megiddo Church. Her son Brian has written the following about his mother:

"She was born on May 19, 1928, in Good Hope, Alberta, the youngest child of six. Her parents, Emil Balewski and Lydia Myen, were German immigrants who had fled Europe following the first World War in search of a better life...."

"Hilda was raised in the Lutheran Church from an early age. Fortunately, her brother Arthur saw an advertisement in a newspaper offering free Bible information from the Megiddo Church in Rochester, New York. Arthur sent for this information and, after receiving it, was very impressed with the Bible truths that this information contained. He decided to share his newfound knowledge with his sister Hilda. This was the beginning of a change in her religious beliefs from the Lutheran faith to one that was based on Biblical facts and the teachings of Jesus...."

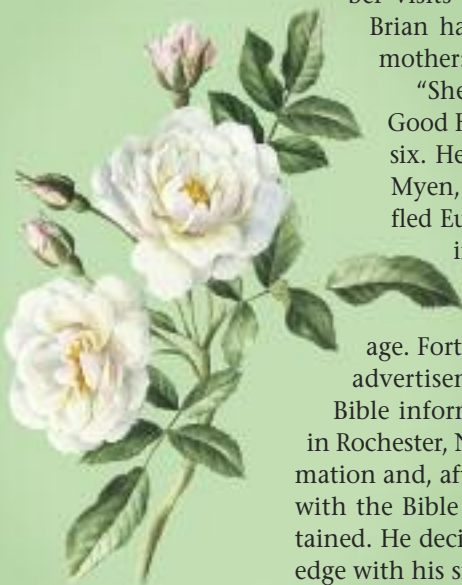
On May 19, 1954, she was married to Russell

Hilderley, and "in 1963 they had a new house built in Roseville. Hilda's first son Brian was born in 1962, and a second son Bradley arrived in 1965.

"Hilda was a dedicated wife and mother who loved her garden and flowerbeds. In 2004 Russell and Hilda celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. Unfortunately, Russell died in 2006 and Hilda grieved greatly at his loss. After living in Roseville for 46 years, Hilda could no longer manage on her own and moved in with her son Brian and his family in Laurel. On December 5, 2012, Hilda passed away to await the return of our Lord Jesus and the coming resurrection. Until then, may she rest in peace for she was a kind and gentle woman who is dearly missed." ♦

"For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love you have demonstrated for his name, in having served and continuing to serve the saints. But we passionately want each of you to demonstrate the same eagerness for the fulfillment of your hope until the end."

—Hebrews 6:10–11 NET



ANSWERS FROM PAGE 21

WILDERNESS WANDERING

1. Because they rebelled against the Lord and against Moses after the 10 spies brought back an evil report and the people complained that the Lord had brought them into the wilderness to kill them and their children. They would have to wander in the wilderness one year for each of the 40 days that spies checked out the land of Canaan (Num. 14:33–34).
2. A pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. (Ex. 13:17–22)
3. The Lord told Moses to cut down a certain ree and throw it into the water and the water would be sweet. (Ex. 15:22–25)
4. Bread and quail. (Ex. 16:11–15)
5. Manna (Ex. 16:31)
6. He told him to put an omer (about 6 pints) of manna in a pot so that it could be kept for generations to come. When the ark was built, the pot of manna was placed in the ark. (Ex 16:33–34)
7. Moses struck the rock at Horeb and it brought forth water. (Ex. 17:1–7)
8. Moses' hands were held up by Aaron and Hur. (Ex. 17:11–12)
9. Moses' father-in-law, Jethro (Ex. 18:12–26)
10. At Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:23; 24:12, 18; 31:18)

11. Peculiar treasure (Ex. 19:5–6 KJV; "special treasure" –NKJV; "personal possession" –NJV; "treasured possession" –ESV)

12. A sanctuary or tabernacle (Ex. 25:8–9)

13. The breastplate was to have 4 rows each of 3 stones set in gold on which were engraved the names of the each of the 12 tribes of Israel; also two rings of gold one on each side of the breastplate, with a chain of gold in each ring (Ex. 25:7; 28:17–24, 28–30).

14. Moses broke the stone tablets (Ex. 32:19). He took the calf which they had made, burned it in the fire, ground it to powder, and scattered it on the water and made the children of Israel drink it (Ex. 32:20).

15. The Lord told Moses to make a serpent of brass, put it on a pole, and when the people looked at it they would live (Num. 21:4–9).

16. Joshua and Caleb (Num. 13; 14:6–9)

17. Because Moses disobeyed God by striking the rock instead of speaking to it (Num. 20:7–13; Deut. 32:48–52).

18. Joshua (Num. 27:22–23)

BROTHERS AND SISTERS

1. They offered strange (profane) fire before the

Lord (Lev. 10:1–3). They did not regard God as holy (Lev. 10:3).

2. They were not to mourn for them. Also they were to stay in the tabernacle (Lev. 10:6–7).

3. A great wind blew the house down on them (Job 1:18–20).

4. Ishmael (Gen. 16:15; 17:19–21)

5. "I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant and with his descendants after him (Gen. 17:19).

6. "Behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes and I will make him a great nation" (Gen. 17:20).

7. Ruth and Orpah (Ruth 1:4); Orpah went back to her own people and to her gods (Ruth 1:14–15)

8. Miriam (Num. 26:59)

9. Esau (Gen. 25:9–34); he was a "fornicator", an immoral person, and "profane" meaning godless or worldly-minded (Heb. 12:16).

10. Benjamin (Gen. 43:29–34)

11. Rebekah (Gen. 25:20)

12. Adonijah (2 Sam. 3:2–5; 1 Kings 1:5,13)

13. Mary and Martha (John 11:1–2,19,41,44); Martha (John 11:24)

14. Andrew and Peter, James and John (Mt. 4:18–21)



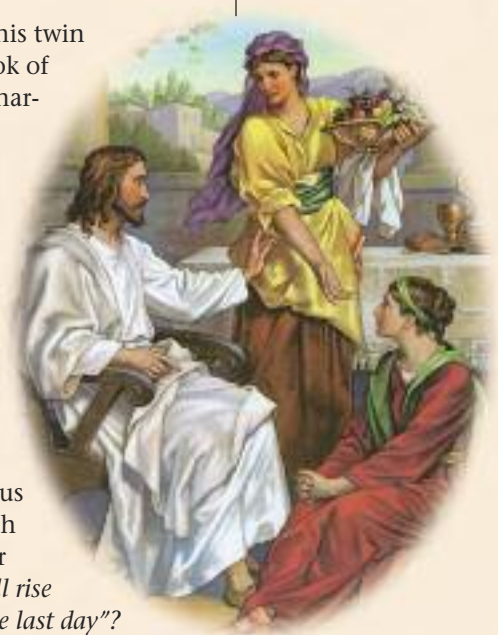
WILDERNESS WANDERING

1. Why were the children of Israel made to wander 40 years in the wilderness?
2. How were the children of Israel led through the wilderness?
3. After the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, they complained that the waters at Marah were bitter. What did Moses do to sweeten the waters?
4. When the Israelites complained that God had brought them into the wilderness to kill them with hunger (Ex. 16:3), what did God send them?
5. What did the children of Israel call the bread?
6. What did Moses tell Aaron to do to perpetuate the memory of the manna?
7. How did the children of Israel get water to drink at Horeb?
8. When the army of Amalek fought with the Israelites, what action of the Israelites made the army of Joshua victorious?
9. Who advised Moses to delegate his responsibilities as sole judge of the Israelite people?
10. Where did Moses go to receive the Ten Commandments and the laws to govern Israel?
11. The Lord covenanted with Moses at Mt. Sinai: *"If ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then you shall be a _____ unto me above all people."*
12. What structure did the Lord command the children of Israel to build to worship in?
13. What special items were included in Aaron's breastplate as high priest? What was inscribed on the breastplate?
14. When Moses came down the mountain and saw the people worshipping the golden calf, what did he do with the tablets of stone he was bringing down with him? What did he do with the golden calf?
15. When the Israelites were going around the land of Edom, they complained against God and Moses. As a punishment, the Lord sent *"fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people"* and many died. What was the "antidote" for the venom of the serpents?
16. When the 12 spies were sent to spy out the land of Canaan, who of them brought back a good report?

17. Why was Moses not allowed to go over Jordan into Canaan?
18. Who succeeded Moses in his position as leader of the children of Israel?

BROTHERS AND SISTERS

1. Why were Nadab and Abihu slain by the Lord?
2. What command did Moses give immediately to Nadab's and Abihu's father and surviving brothers?
3. In the parable of Job, what happened to his sons and daughters while they were feasting in their oldest brother's house?
4. Who was Isaac's half-brother, born to Sarah's maid servant Hagar?
5. What long-term promise did God give Abraham concerning Isaac?
6. What long-term promise did God give Abraham concerning his older son?
7. Who were the two daughters-in-law of Naomi? Which one decided to go back to her own people and her gods?
8. Who was the sister of Aaron and Moses?
9. Who sold his birthright to his twin brother? What does the book of Hebrews tell us about the character of Esau?
10. Which of Joseph's eleven brothers was his favorite?
11. Who was the sister of Laban and Isaac's wife?
12. Which of Solomon's brothers made himself king just before Solomon was coronated?
13. Who were the sisters of Lazarus, the man whom Jesus raised from the dead? Which sister said to Jesus about her brother, *"I know that he shall rise again at the resurrection of the last day"*?
14. What two sets of brothers did Jesus call to be his disciples by the Sea of Galilee?



ANSWERS ON PAGE 20

AWESOME DESIGNS

"Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God." ~ Job 37:14

THE SAGUARO CACTUS:

Designed to Survive

In the Sonoran Desert of Southern Arizona, Southern California, and Northern Mexico live and grow some truly awesome cacti. The Saguaro (pronounced "sah-wah-roh") cacti start life as tiny seeds and grow very slowly for, perhaps, the next 150–200 years to become the largest cacti in the United States. When the Great Creator designed these amazing plants He incorporated into them all the features they would need to survive in a hot and arid landscape. They are fully equipped to collect, store and conserve the precious water needed to survive in the harsh desert conditions. Their flowering and reproductive process is also fine-tuned for desert life. Considering the factors built into these desert giants, we must conclude that they are no product of chance but are another evidence of the Divine architecture of Almighty God.

Its blossoms...

A mature cactus blooms every year, April through June. The buds of the 3" creamy white flowers form around the top of the arms, high off the ground. The petals surrounding the 4" tube are thick and strong to support the weight of the bats and birds that are attracted by fragrance and sweet nectar of the night and early morning blooming flowers.

Its pollination...

As the bats, birds and bees reach into its tubular flowers for the sweet nectar, they become covered with the pollen from the dense mass of stamens filling the opening (the saguaro flower has more stamens than any other desert plant). When they fly off to another blossom, they carry that pollen to the next flower. The flowers depend on these creatures to do the very important work of pollination. As the day heats up the flower closes and seed development begins. Another interesting note is that the amino acids in the flower's pollen help support the bat's lactation—a co-beneficial relationship that was planned by their Creator.

Its growth...

In the first 10 years of its life the Saguaro Cactus seedling may grow only 1½ inches! Over the rest of its life span it grows from the apex, or top, about 1 inch per year to become a 40-60 foot giant with a trunk 18-24 inches thick, making them the largest cacti in the United States.

Its fruit...

Very edible ruby-red fruit is 3" long and if left on the plant will split open dispersing thousands of tiny seeds.

Fruit lobes
with tiny
seeds

Its seeds...

The saguaro cactus grows only from seed. The seed may be deposited in the fallen leaves under a desert tree or shrub. When conditions are right this tiny seed will germinate and begin its very slow growth in the protected environment of the nurse tree.

Water storage

For such a tall plant the saguaro has an amazingly short tap root, only about 2 feet long. But it grows a large mass of fine shallow roots extending out around the cactus as far as it is tall. These fine roots are its water collectors.

When the seasonal rains arrive, the water is absorbed by the widespreading, near-surface roots and then stored in the sponge-like tissue filling its inner cavity. As it fills with water the outer ribs expand like an accordion. At full capacity one foot of cactus may weigh as much as 90 pounds.

The outer coating of the ribbed surface is thick and waxy, making it water-proof. The ribs are lined with aureoles of 1 to 2 inch spines which originate from the apex of each arm. These spines help keep the cactus cool during the hot summers.



Home for animals

The saguaro makes a home for many small animals. The Gila woodpeckers make their nest holes in the trunk of the plant. Sometimes they make several holes before they are satisfied. The saguaro then forms a callus around the damaged tissue to prevent fluid loss. The calloused pockets are called "saguaro boots." The woodpecker uses a hole only for one season. After that his holes are used by flickers, wrens, small owls, sparrows or mice.



Building material

The strong, straight skeletal ribs from the dead cacti have been used in building and fence making. In the desert where strong straight wood is scarce, these ribs were valued by the Indians and early settlers.



Learning about the many specialized attributes of creatures and plants in the world around us deepens our awe for the Almighty Creator and causes us to exclaim, "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!" (Rev.15:3-4). ♦

References:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saguaro>
www.desertusa.com/july96/du_saguaro.html
www.desertmuseum.org/.../Saguaro%20Cactus.php

The Proof Sheet CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

anything, that error is more serious than the other. In our lives we must learn to capitalize the things which count most in our progress toward the Kingdom. The Great *God* we worship, *High Calling in Christ Jesus*, our *Privilege* of living quiet and peaceable lives in these troubled times which grow ever more perilous; our Responsibility to God and man. Above all, let us place large capitals on the unlimited *Patience and Longsuffering*, the untiring *Zeal*, the unwavering *Faith*, and the sublime *Courage* of those who have given us examples to follow in the Lord.

Lastly, let us scan the margin of our proof sheet for words wrongly divided. A duty left over for another day which should have been done today, or crowding too much into the present day, not leaving sufficient time for "first things," are examples of this error. Though seemingly unimportant, this fault, if not marked and corrected, may become serious, causing the page to be rejected for lack of diligence and accuracy in our work.

The discipline and education which comes with this important work of proof reading is invaluable. If the same faculty of close observation and accuracy required by the proof reader is applied in the spiritual life, we shall surely become sensitive to the touch of sin. It will not have to stand out in boldface type for us to see it. We will feel its influence in a word or a glance.

There is ample opportunity in this work for the cultivating of humility, a quality not found in nature. How many times we have faithfully read our proofs and felt sure that no errors had escaped our eye, only to find that another, reading our proof sheet, has discovered one, or perhaps several, that we overlooked! Worse yet, we pick up the finished, printed sheet only to see a very obvious mistake stare us in the face. Humiliating! Yes, and as an ego reducer it cannot be surpassed. But these are much needed lessons.

But of how much less consequence are the errors on the proof sheet than those in our characters, and how much more important that we see and eliminate them! Sometimes we even resent having our errors pointed out to us, and try to make others believe they are mistaken, that no error exists; but the proof sheet reveals all, and unless we see the errors ourselves we will never make the corrections.

Only a short time remains in which to rid our proof sheet of all errors, to make it conform in every particular with the Copy. Let us work with diligence to make all corrections now that when the Day comes for *our* work to be inscribed on the final record it may meet with the approval of the Author because we have implicitly "followed copy." ♦

O Lord, Give Me A GLORY

An interesting story came to my attention through a book by the Reverend A. Reuben Gornitzka, "IT'S YOUR LIFE" published by the Dennison Company. This story presents the positive attitude in a common task.



"A traveler aboard a stern-wheeler on the lower Mississippi was wandering about the ship to look over the captain's bridge and the engine room. He covered the ship like an inspector. Then one day what a surprise! His eyes widened as he stood in the doorway to the engine room. Here, where in the past he had usually found a dirty, greasy hole, he now looked at the most shining, the most sparkling engine room he had ever seen. He wondered about it. What had happened? Then he spied the engineer sitting on a stool in that engine room humming a tune and whittling on a stick of wood. The man expressed his amazement in regard to such a clean engine room. In a cozy drawl he heard these words, 'Well, sur, you see, sur, Ah gotta glory.'"

Here was an engineer who wanted to be an engineer, not governor of the state, not chairman of a board, not even captain of the ship, but the best engineer on any ship on the Mississippi. "Ah gotta glory!"

Well, friend, how about you? In your life, is there something of value, of meaning, of worth, that makes life worth living?

The Master, Jesus Christ, had that glory. He spoke of it, too. He spoke of the glory of the Father, and the glory of a perfect character. Then speaking of His followers, he added in His prayer: "*The glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one*" (John 17:22).

I wonder if Berton Braley had taken Rutledge's story of the engineer and then wrapped it around that prayer of Christ's in order to produce this bit of verse. Listen to it, if you will:

*Ya' gotta get a glory in the work you do,
A hallelujah chorus in the heart of you.
Paint, or tell a story; sing, or shovel coal.
But ya' gotta get a glory or your job lacks soul.*

*The men whose shining armor make our pulses throb
Were the men who got a glory in their daily job.
The vision might be gory and the odds unfair,
But the men who got a glory never knew despair.*

*O Lord, give me a glory; Is it much to give?
For ya' gotta get a glory or ye' just can't live.
When you get a glory, it is like the sun
And you can see it shining in the work you've done.*

*Fame is transitory, riches fade away,
But when ya' get a glory, it is there to stay!
O Lord, give me a glory and a workman's pride
'Cause ya' gotta get a glory or you're dead inside! ♦*

*Jesus' Salvation App
requires a total commitment
of one's time, energy,
and strength.*

Do You Have The **ULTIMATE APP?**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

beginning of His work on this planet, and God Himself is the author of it. Because this app comes from God Himself through His Word, it differs from the common apps on the market in every way. It does not offer immediate satisfaction. It does not say, "DOWNLOAD" then "INSTALL," and then "LAUNCH" and you are instantly into the salvation you want. The app that I refer to has a price on it, a very high price. This *"in Christ"* app must supercede all others. Downloading this app requires a total commitment of one's time, energy, and strength (Mark 12:30-31), yes, even one's will. Jesus said it this way, *"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me"* (Luke 9:23). Jesus' follow up statement says even more: *"Whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple"* (Luke 14:33). Did Jesus mean it? He did. If you go for Christ's salvation app, you need to be prepared to give up everything He forbids, because this app will not work with conflicting applications running!

That is why it is the *ultimate* app. It is the one and only of its kind. It is available, and it offers genuine, *"everlasting salvation"* (Isa. 45:17). This app is found only in the Bible, the written word of God, where the reader is challenged with these words: *"Who is he that desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good?"* (Ps. 34:12). But you must follow the download instructions precisely and run the app, or it will crash. The instructions are these: *"Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it"* (Ps. 34:13-14).

How does this ultimate app work? Think of the Bible as the source of the code (set of instructions). The code must be downloaded into our device (our mind), then installed and run in our environment (our everyday activities). If our understanding is incorrect we can't run it. And if we don't guard the code against viruses (outside influences), the code will become corrupted and could even destroy the computer (the individual). But linked to its Author (God) and source (the Bible), this app will deliver on its promises and give life—life without end!

What should you do? Forget the cheap, counterfeit apps, sell all you have and buy this one Ultimate app direct from the Author who wrote the code. Follow the instructions and run it to the end.

You will find it is worth all it costs.

PS: Read Mark 10:28-30. ♦

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YOUTH IN CHRIST

"Remember your Creator in the days of your youth." -Ecclesiastes 12:1

Read: Isaiah 46:3-4, 8-10

Memorize:

"The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness."

-Proverbs 16:31

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Do you value old people? Never 'throw them away' just because they can't do all the things they once could. Use every opportunity to show them that you do love and appreciate them.

Read: Psalm 19:7-14

Memorize:

"Let no sin rule over me." -Psalm 19:13

I Can't Throw Him Out

Charles ran into the house and slammed the door. "Mom!" he called. "Is it true what Beth said? Is Grandpa coming to visit again?"

"Yes, your sister is right," replied Mother as she sorted through a small box. "Dad is going to get Grandpa on Saturday morning. You can probably go along if you like." She sighed. "My watch is broken," she added, "and I was hoping one of my old ones would still work. Look, Charles." She held up a small, gold wristwatch. "This is my high school graduation present from Grandpa and Grandma. This one with the leather strap was my official nurse's watch. And this lovely one I've been wearing...Dad bought this for me on our first wedding anniversary."

Charles nodded, but he went back to the matter at hand. "I don't want to go get Grandpa," he whined. "Why does he have to come again? He spills things and talks funny. Why can't he just stay home?"

"I thought you loved Grandpa," Mother said quietly.

"I do," Charles said, "or I did before he had that old stroke. He used to do lots of fun things with me. But now he just sits around and...and gets in the way."



Mother looked hurt. "I'm sorry you feel that way, Son." She picked up several watches as she continued. "These watches served me well for years and bring back precious memories of happy times, but none of them will run. I'm fond of them and hate to throw them out, but at least they don't have feelings...." She looked at Charles. "...like people do." Charles looked at the floor. He knew she meant Grandpa. "My heart is very full of memories of growing up with Grandpa and Grandma," added Mother. "Grandma is gone now, and age and illness have injured Grandpa. But he is still my same wonderful father. His aim was to model Paul's life of cheerful service to others. Now that he can't serve...I don't want to 'throw him out.' I love him too much." Mother brushed away a tear.

Charles threw his arms around his mother. "Oh Mom, I don't want to 'throw him out,' either," the idea shocked him. "I'm sorry. I—I was being selfish. I'll go with Dad to get him." He looked at the watches. "Keep these," he said. "Don't ever throw them away."

RESPECT OLD PEOPLE

Drilling Out the Decay

Jim clenched the arms of the dentist's chair, hoping Dr. Johnson was nearly done. He always dreaded going to the dentist even if he was a family friend. It was a relief when the buzzing of the drill stopped and Dr. Johnson checked the tooth. "Are you finished yet?" Jim asked anxiously.

"Just a little more drilling, Jim," replied Dr. Johnson. "I know this isn't pleasant, but we want to make sure the tooth won't continue to decay underneath the new filling." He began drilling again. "This is a little like drilling sin out of our lives, isn't it?" he added. Jim was glad he couldn't talk while Dr. Johnson was working. He wasn't at all sure how he should answer that question.



"If we don't get every bit of the decay out of this tooth, it will get worse," continued Dr. Johnson. "Even a little decayed material left in the tooth would cause lots of problems later

on—even to losing it. It's that way in our lives, too. If we don't completely get rid of a sin, it will also cause problems later on." Jim's mouth was still wide open, so he just nodded numbly. "For example," continued Dr. Johnson, "if I find myself thinking wrong thoughts about someone, I tell myself 'No, that's not right,' and I ask God's help to drill out those ungodly thoughts." The buzzing stopped again, and Dr. Johnson grinned at Jim. "Well, that takes care of drilling." The doctor had more to say. "Jim, if there are any cavities of sin in your life, be sure to get them drilled out, too. And, brushing well daily with the Word of God, you'll have a whole lot less decay."

Jim felt more relaxed now that the drilling was finished, and he thought about what Dr.

Johnson had said. He remembered a recent discussion with his parents about his habit of putting off work he needed to do. He had been trying to get things done more promptly, but occasionally he still told his mom that his homework or his chores around the house were all done when that wasn't quite true—it was almost true, but not entirely true. He also remembered that he used bad language once in a while. As the dentist put in the new filling, Jim thought about the "drilling" that needed to be done in his life. He liked the analogy that daily brushing with God's Word would help keep his mouth healthy.

GET RID OF SIN

The "White" Pillowcase

Julie quickly ran to answer the telephone. It was her friend Shauna.

"I'm sorry, Shauna, but I can't come over now," said Julie after listening for a few minutes. "My mother has work for me to do. She needs my help with the laundry." Julie hung up the phone and began helping Mom fold clothes.

"Why, Julie," Mother said in surprise, "I never mentioned needing help with the laundry. Why did you tell Shauna that I needed you?"

"Don't you want me to help you?" Julie asked.

"It's nice having you help," agreed Mother. "However, what you told Shauna wasn't really true."

"In a way it was true, even though you hadn't asked for my help," argued Julie. "If you needed me to help I would. Besides, a lot of people say things that aren't completely true, so is that so bad?"

Mother frowned. She held up a couple of pillowcases. "What color are these?" she asked.

Puzzled, Julie looked at the pillowcases. "They're white, Mom," she replied promptly.

"Now, Honey, please get that new pillowcase that's on the top shelf in the linen closet," said Mother. Julie looked puzzled but did as she was

told. "What color is that one?" asked Mother.

Julie looked at it. "It's white, too," she said, "but when it's next to these others, they look yellowish-white."

"That's right, Julie." Mother nodded. "Until you had a really white pillowcase, you couldn't tell that the first ones were actually old and yellow. It's the same with our lives. If we compare our lives with the lives of people around us, we may think we're doing all right. But when we compare ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, we see how we look to God.

People may think it's all right to tell what they call 'little white lies,' but God says, '*Don't lie to one another.*' Period! Jesus, never lied or sinned in any way even though He was tempted just like you and me. He stayed focused on doing God's will. That's why He's the perfect example for us to follow.

We want to use the Lord Jesus as our example instead of watching how others live. Following Him will lead us right into God's eternal Kingdom." ♦

FOLLOW JESUS' EXAMPLE

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

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Are there some things in your life that you know aren't quite right? Maybe just a little lying, a little cheating, or a little talking back to parents or teachers? Get rid of those things completely before they grow bigger and become much harder to stop. Ask God's forgiveness and His help to drill the sin out of your life.

Read: 1 Peter 2:21-25

Memorize:

"Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps." —1 Peter 2:21

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Do you try to live like Jesus? Don't compare your life with anyone else. He is the only perfect pattern to shape your life by.



"Always" Dying?

Four Different Deaths

The Bible speaks of death with more than one meaning.

The **first** and most common is the reference to physical death, which is the cessation of the life processes, which according to the Bible is the end of consciousness. *"The dead know not anything"* (Eccl. 9:5). *"The dead do not praise the Lord, nor any who go down into silence"* (Psalm 115:17). *"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going"* (Eccl. 9:10). *"In death there is no remembrance of You"* (Ps. 6:5).

A **second** use of the word death in the Bible is **death in sin**. One who is *"dead in sin"* has no consciousness of God or knowledge of His plan. Paul says all believers were formerly *"dead in trespasses and sins"* (Eph. 2:1), and have been *"made alive"* by receiving a knowledge of God and His plan. All believers are in this state of death in sin before being enlightened, being *"without hope and without God in the world"* (Eph. 2:12). Lacking the knowledge of God, we were *"dead,"* with no sensitivity to the will of God, His law, or what He has for believers.

A **third** type of death as used in the Bible is *"death to sin,"* i.e., as in putting to death our natural desires for anything God forbids. Paul speaks frequently of this *"death to sin,"* even saying that it is the death Christ died: *"In that He died, He died unto sin once"* (Rom. 6:10).

A **fourth** death mentioned in the Bible is penal death, or death that is final because it is a punishment from God for unfaithfulness or covenant breaking. This is a death from which there is no release. It is the death Paul spoke of in Romans 6:23, *"for the wages of sin is death"*—not that we die when we sin, but death is the final outcome of sin. As James said, *"When desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death"* (James 1:15). Jesus, spoke of this penal death when He said, *"If anyone keeps My word he shall never see death"* (John 8:51).

"I am looking at 2 Cor. 4:10 and wondering what it means. The passage reads, 'Always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.' Would you please explain it? As I look at the context, Paul seems to be talking about the physical suffering and persecution that he is enduring for Jesus' sake."

It is difficult to draw a clear line between suffering that is "only" physical and the suffering that is the experience of everyone who takes on the challenge of putting to death our old sinful nature. Why? Because every experience in the life of a believer becomes part of his or her opportunity to become more like Christ. There are constantly lessons to be learned, whether the moment is painful or pleasant. Those believers who faced physical persecution also had special inner tests of patient endurance and steadfastness.

The apostle Paul in his Epistles frequently mentioned the physical suffering he was enduring as part of His service to Christ. Everywhere he went he was opposed, most often by fellow Jews, who looked upon him as a traitor to their cause. Yet, having been commissioned by Jesus Christ Himself, he would not be stopped. That is why he says of himself and his brethren, just ahead of the passage in question, *"We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed"* (2 Cor. 4:8–9). Is this an account of only physical suffering? Notice how he includes their response to each type of persecution. Even while they were enduring suffering, they were building an inner strength of character. They were *"not crushed... not in despair... not forsaken... not destroyed."* These statements show the spiritual battle Paul was winning as he faced the persecution in the right spirit. Even physical suffering was *"for Christ,"* just as he called himself a *"prisoner of the Lord"* (Eph. 4:1).

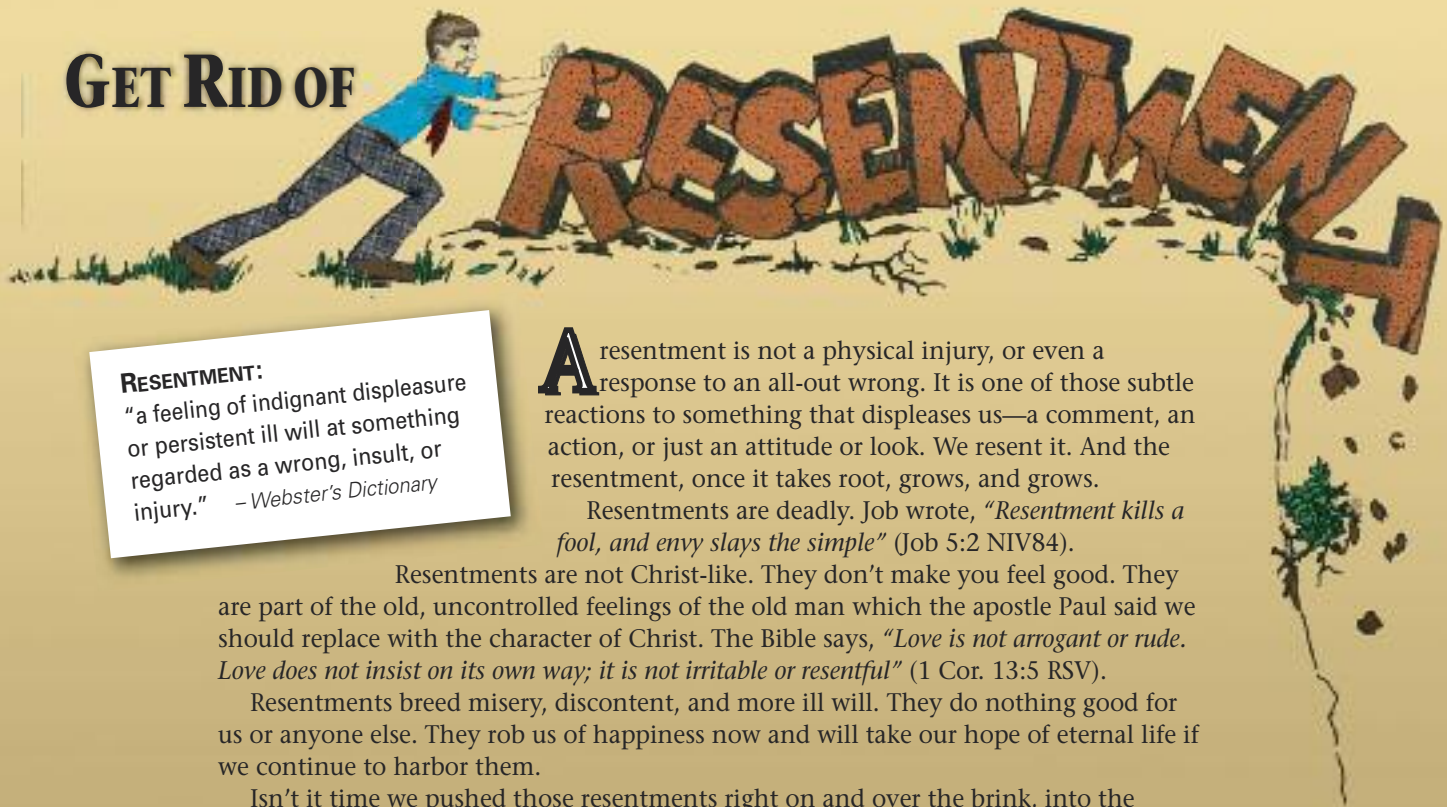
Physical suffering was part of Paul's service to Christ, for hadn't Christ told him how much he would have to suffer (physically) for his sake? (see Acts 9:16). Had Paul been unwilling to endure persecution for the cause of Christ, he would have been disobedient, even disloyal. Christ knew that Paul's zeal would arouse the wrath of the Jews, just as Paul himself had been stirred against the followers of Christ before he was converted.

But what did Paul mean when he said he and his coworkers were *"always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body"*? (2 Cor. 4:10).

When Paul said he was *"always ... dying,"* was he describing his total commitment to Christ as a *"death,"* it being a commitment which brought both physical and mental suffering? This is one possibility. But sometimes Paul used the term *"death"* to refer to the death of his lower nature and not physical dying. For example, he spoke of:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

GET RID OF



RESENTMENT:

"a feeling of indignant displeasure or persistent ill will at something regarded as a wrong, insult, or injury." – Webster's Dictionary

A resentment is not a physical injury, or even a response to an all-out wrong. It is one of those subtle reactions to something that displeases us—a comment, an action, or just an attitude or look. We resent it. And the resentment, once it takes root, grows, and grows.

Resentments are deadly. Job wrote, *"Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple"* (Job 5:2 NIV84).

Resentments are not Christ-like. They don't make you feel good. They are part of the old, uncontrolled feelings of the old man which the apostle Paul said we should replace with the character of Christ. The Bible says, *"Love is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful"* (1 Cor. 13:5 RSV).

Resentments breed misery, discontent, and more ill will. They do nothing good for us or anyone else. They rob us of happiness now and will take our hope of eternal life if we continue to harbor them.

Isn't it time we pushed those resentments right on and over the brink, into the oblivion of forgetfulness? ♦

"Always" Dying?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

- Death as an ongoing process: *"I die daily"* (1 Cor. 15:31)
- Death *"with Christ"* (Col. 2:20)
- Crucifixion *"with Christ"* (Gal. 2:20)
- Death and suffering *"with Christ"* (*"If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him"* – 2 Tim. 2:11)
- *"...our old man was crucified with Him"* (Rom. 6:6)
- *"...reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin"* (Rom. 6:11)

The apostle Peter used this same terminology when he said that Christ suffered *"leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps"* (1 Pet. 2:21). If we were to take this as literal suffering, we would have to be crucified as Christ was, but this is not Peter's point. Peter was speaking of Christ's character which showed in the way He took the suffering, as the following verses explain (1 Peter 2:22–23).

In 2 Cor. 4:10, Paul says that the result of this constant dying is the Christ-life being demonstrated in our mortal bodies. What kind of death has this result? Physical death does nothing to make us like Christ. Only our imitating Christ in that *"dying of the Lord Jesus"* that was His death to

sin, giving up His own will to do the will of His heavenly Father (Rom. 6:10–11) can result in our showing the new "life of Christ" in our own lives.

In the next verse (2 Cor. 4:11), Paul said it another way. Instead of saying that he was *"carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus,"* he said that *"we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake."* *"Always delivered to death for Jesus' sake"* was only another way of saying that his obedience was constant. There was no "time out" from His service to Christ. His life was totally committed. *"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's"* (Romans 14:8).

Whether his lot was physical or spiritual suffering or both together, all was for Christ's sake, to share Christ's sufferings and ultimately to share His glory (Rom. 8:16–17). All was for the prize to which Christ had called him (Phil. 3:13–14). Paul was using every experience to follow Christ, to become like Christ, to suffer with Christ, and put on the character of Christ in his everyday life and conduct.

A hardship? a cause for complaint? Never! Altogether it was only *"light affliction"* which was preparing him for that *"far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"* (2 Cor. 4:17). ♦

LINES TO LIVE BY

"Act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God" - Micah 6:8

*Help a brother that's in trouble;
 Help a sister that's depressed;
 Give a little bit of comfort
 To a soul that's in the test;
 For it doesn't take a fortune,
 Nor a sermon great and grand
 Just to show a little kindness,
 Or to lend a helping hand.*

*This may be the thing that's needed
 More than money from your purse,
 More than words of criticism
 That could make the person worse;
 Or a scorn that is unspoken,
 Or a harsh and stern command,
 In the end it may be better
 Just to give a helping hand.*

*Many favors which God gives us ravel
 out for want of thanksgiving.*

*There will always be a bumper crop
 of food for thought from God's Book.
 What is needed is people that take the time
 to harvest it.*

THE CHOICE YOU MAKE MAKES YOU

*There is a choice you have to make
 In everything you do,
 And you must always keep in mind
 That the choice you make makes you.*

*If your mind should go blank,
 don't forget to turn off the sound.*

*Learn to bear, and to forbear,
 and forget and forgive; for this is the way
 all Christians should live.*

*Your future begins today.
 Spend your time in that which*

- ◆ *will make you happy tomorrow;*
- ◆ *you would like to ask God to bless;*
- ◆ *you can review with satisfaction at the
end of the day;*
- ◆ *you would want to be found doing should
Jesus come and surprise you.*

INTENT OR DEED?

A young boy asked his father to solve a riddle. He said, "There were three frogs sitting on a log. One frog decided to jump off. How many were left?" Dad replied: "Two, of course."

"Wrong," said the boy gleefully. "There were three frogs left. The one frog only *decided* to jump off—he didn't jump."

This story has a really good lesson for us, because we can decide to do something but if we don't go ahead and do it, it isn't done.

There's a big difference between deciding to do it and actually going through with the decision. Nothing changes until we *do* what we say. It is the difference between intention and action, between the resolve and the deed, between professing and acting, between hearing and doing.

"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22).



Ho-hum. What can "I" do?

HIS LIFE COUNTED

*Although His years on earth were few,
And ended at age thirty three,
Still in that short amount of time
He made life count eternally.*

*He showed us if we take God's Word
And always follow carefully,
One day we can receive a crown
And live to all Eternity.*

*It's not the years you live that count—
It's what you do with each new day
To follow Jesus and delight
His ev'ry precept to obey.*

*This world and those who live for it
Will soon in nameless dust be lost;
But Jesus will reward the few
Who follow Him whate'er the cost.*

— by Melva Walton

A STANDARD TO LIVE BY

"Think on these things." —Philippians 4:8

The Christian life is not a collection of do's and don'ts, but a daily walk with a destination; and God is with us to help us set good standards for our behavior. He gives His word for our instruction.

An example of this may be seen in a statement by J. Wilbur Chapman. He said, "My life is governed by this principle: Anything that dims my vision of Christ, anything that takes away my taste for God and His word, anything that cramps my prayers or makes my Christian work more difficult, is wrong for me. And I must, as a Christian, turn away from it."

This is really what Paul was saying under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit when he summed it up: "Whatsoever things are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report. If anything is worthy of praise, meditate on these things." With those things on our mind we can develop guidelines for our lives that will honor God. This will liberate us from the tyranny of "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). Our appetite for these things will go away because our standard is God's Word.

No matter what trials may threaten, or what temptations may come, we will have a standard to live by.

*Take control of my life today—
Let Thy will also be mine,
That in each thought and word and deed,
I shall be Thine.*



If you want to feel rich, just count all the things money can't buy.

*If it doesn't affect your hands, feet and heart,
it isn't Christianity.*

Having your name on the church roll does not make you a Christian any more than owning a piano makes you a musician.

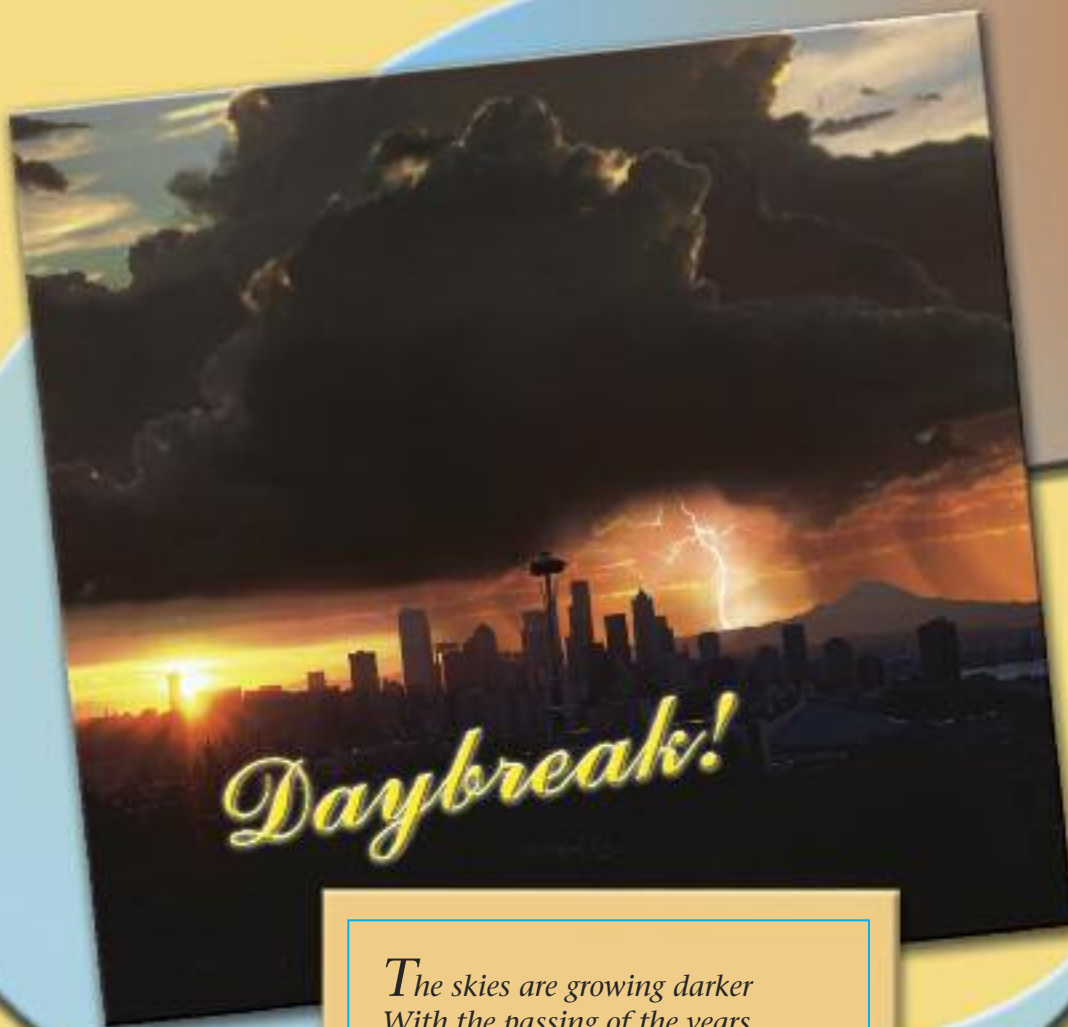
*Knowledge is knowing a fact.
Wisdom is knowing what to do with that fact.*

It is impossible to do anything that is worthwhile that does not influence others.

*Moses and Abraham were not great in
the beginning, they were made great by the
discipline of their faith.*

A goal is a dream with a deadline.

*Repentance without amendment is like
continually pumping without mending the leak.*



*The skies are growing darker
With the passing of the years
As life becomes more restless,
And on ev'ry hand are fears.*

*People know not what is coming,
Yet feel something lies ahead
And it fills them with foreboding,
With a solemn sense of dread.*

*But Christian, we are waiting
For the breaking of the Day;
We are certain Christ is coming—
He may now be on the way!*

*Deeper still will grow earth's darkness,
Still more awful grow its night,
But true Christian, be not fearful,
Soon will come the world's true Light!*

—Sel. and alt.

*“Watch...,
for you do not
know what hour your
Lord is coming.”*

—Matthew 24:42