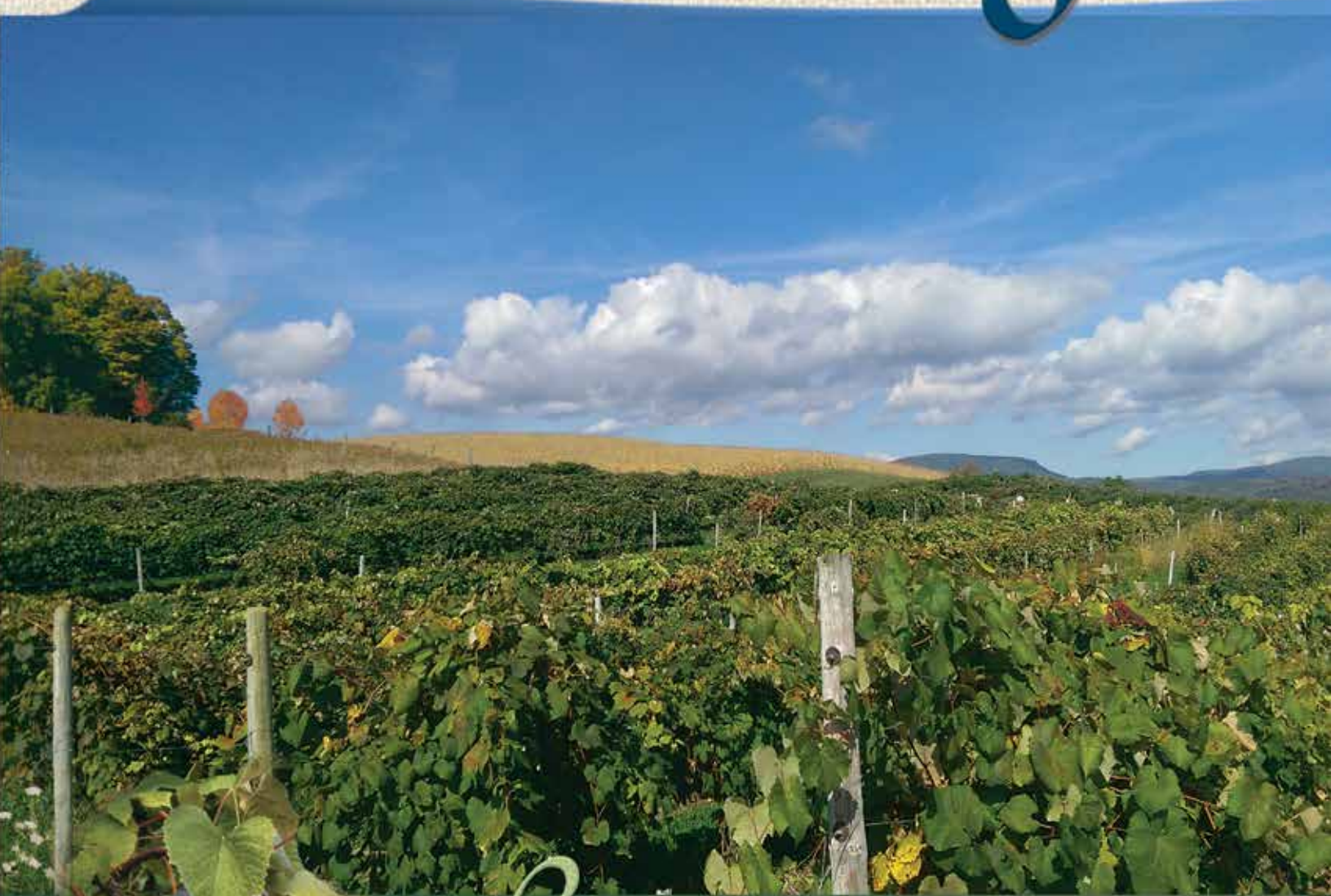


FALL 2015 • VOLUME 102, No. 3

# Megiddo Message



*My Father is glorified...  
when My disciples bear much fruit.*  
—paraphrase of John 15:8





## The Wonder of SMALL

It doesn't take a lot of immensity to totally boggle our little minds. Just think about needing upwards of 100,000 years to travel to the very nearest star—a mere 4 light-years distant—by any means of travel known today.

Or think about boarding the fastest rocket known and still needing quadrillions of years to cross the Milky Way.

Or try to comprehend how Hubble's powerful eye has picked up light from some 2000 galaxies from an area of the sky no larger than a grain of sand at arm's length!

But immensity is only half the picture. Have you thought about the wonder of small?

The word atom is from the Greek *atomos*, which means "indivisible...that cannot be cut in two or divided." When the ancient Greeks discovered what they called the atom, they thought they had arrived at the smallest possible particle in the universe. We now know that each atom is a tiny universe in itself, composed of a nucleus and one or more orbiting electrons.

Take, for example, a single atom of copper. An atom of copper has 29 electrons orbiting the nucleus. The 29th electron, unlike the other 28, is orbiting in a path far from the nucleus and is therefore termed a valence or "free" electron. Being "free," it combines with other free electrons forming a vast cloud of electrons that move freely within the copper.

Within one cubic centimeter of copper there are  $8.5 \times 10^{22}$  free electrons (literally 85 thousand million millions, or 85,000,000,000,000,000,000,000)! Imagine what this piece of copper might look like if we could magnify it large enough to see its structure. It would no longer look like a solid but more like the steel skeleton of a skyscraper with the wind passing through it.

Just how small is an electron? One electron weighs  $8.999 \times 10^{-28}$  grams (0.000 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 899 9 grams). Our small minds are baffled by the minuteness of this number.

Who said that the atom was the smallest existing structure?

The particles that compose the atom may be beyond our understanding, yet our Creator has used them as the building blocks of the substances we recognize as a copper wire, a glass of milk, a candy bar, a flower, or a bit of earth. As far as we know, all material objects share the same basic atomic structure. Do we have some idea of that structure? Yes. Do we understand it? No. It is the wonder of small.

Where does small end? How small is small? Doesn't it seem that the limit of small is the limit of our ability to measure or observe? Could what we are able to observe in the atom be the pattern of the universe? Could an entire galaxy be as a tiny nucleus with other galaxies orbiting around it to form an even larger mass, which may in turn be a nucleus for even greater expansion, and so on and on? We can only exclaim with the Psalmist, *"How great is our Lord! His power is absolute! His understanding is beyond comprehension!"* (Psalm 147:5 NLT).

Doesn't our Creator intend us to be awed by things beyond our ability to comprehend, whether small or great? Should we not feel to say with Job of long ago, *"I was talking about things I did not under-*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

Our awesome  
Creator can  
use smallness  
to make great.

### Front cover:

Jerome's Vineyard in Naples, New York. In the beautiful grape country around the Finger Lakes.  
By Margaret Tremblay

### Back cover:

Flower strewn meadow with a view in Utah.  
By Patricia Fleming

## 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).

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## Megiddo Message

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A 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**—Koehler, 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).



# WHO'S In CONTROL?

by RUTH E. SISSON



The Naval Institute magazine published a story about two battleships that were at sea on maneuvers in heavy weather. Because the visibility was poor, with patchy fog, the captain stayed on the bridge to keep an eye on all activities.

Shortly after dark, the lookout on the wing of the bridge reported: "Light bearing on the starboard bow."

"Is it steady or moving astern?" asked the captain.

"Steady, captain," came the reply from the lookout, which meant that the ship was on a dangerous collision course with another battleship.

The captain issued an order: "Signal: We are on a collision course, advise you to change course 20 degrees."

Back came the signal, "Advisable for you to change course 20 degrees."

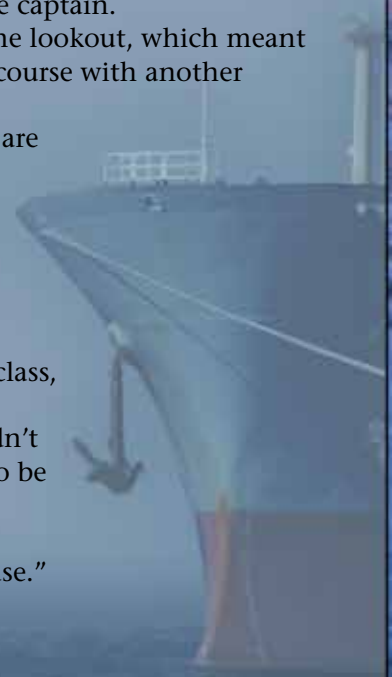
The captain was annoyed. "Send: I am a captain. Change course 20 degrees."

Came the reply: "I am a seaman second class, you had better change course 20 degrees."

By that time the captain was furious. Didn't anyone know that a captain's orders were to be obeyed? Angrily he shouted: "Send: I am a battleship. Change course 20 degrees."

Back came the message: "I am a lighthouse."

*continued on page 5*



# WHY Armageddon

(Psalm 2)

Psalm 2 gives us a graphic picture of the resistance Christ will encounter, and how God will deal with it.

When Christ returns, He will come with every blessing imaginable, yet millions will resist Him. Why? Why... when He will bring an end to crime and terrorism; an end to fear and danger; an end to pain and disease; an end to hunger and starvation; an end to poverty and oppression;...when we will not need any more policemen, or doctors, or lawyers, or guards;...when we will not need any more hospitals, or prisons, or military academies?

Why will anyone resist Him? Because He will demand, first of all, total allegiance. It will not be an option, all will have to acknowledge His authority. And second, they will have to obey His laws. No exceptions.

Will they do it? Some will. But many others will do just as they have done in every age when something displeased them. They will rebel.

Psalm 2 opens with a prophetic description of that rebellion—in Revelation called Armageddon. An unnamed on-the-scene narrator, who is obviously on God's side, is speaking.

*"Why do the nations rage? Why do the people waste their time with futile plans? The kings of the earth prepare for battle; the rulers plot together against the Lord and against his anointed one. 'Let us break their chains,' they cry, 'and free ourselves from this slavery'"* (NLT). The "nations," the kings and rulers of earth, assume a deliberately hostile position. Together they hold a high level conference and literally plot a coup. Unanimously they agree that they should unite their forces and go out against the new Ruler who has recently invaded Planet Earth. Of course their combined resistance can overthrow Him!

*continued on page 6, column 2*



**W**e all like to feel that we are in control;  
But are we really?

## The Problem of Authority

The subject of authority is always a sensitive issue. We like to feel that we are in control, that, within sensible limits, we can do as we please with our lives. Let others take care of themselves, I have the last word about what happens to me. I refuse to be subject to anyone. At least under my own roof, I'm in control.

But am I really?

Who is really in a position of complete control? If a hurricane or an earthquake strikes our town, are we in control?

If our sources of food and water are suddenly cut off or contaminated, are we in control?

If we find out suddenly that we have a serious, incurable disease, are we in control?

If our nation goes to war, are we in control?

If our country's leaders act irresponsibly, are we in control?

If our children grow up and decide to deny and defy everything we have taught them, are we in control?

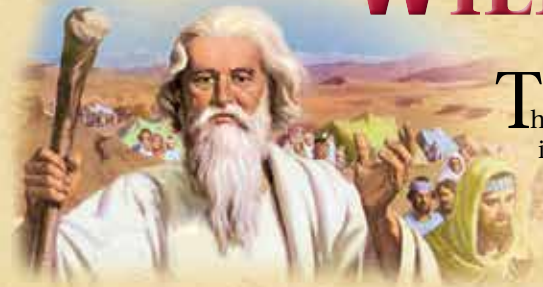
Major areas of our lives lie beyond our control. If we put our hand in a fire, the laws of matter and energy dictate that we will get burned. If we jump from a 10-story building, the law of gravity dictates that we will get hurt. If we go too long without food or water, the laws of health dictate that we will die. We can deny and defy these laws, but we will only harm ourselves. The laws of nature are absolute.

The same is true of the authority of God. Brazen men and women may deny and defy Him, and live without regard for Him, but when He wants them out of the way, He will not ask their permission. And when the time is right for God to bring in His new government and take control of activities on this planet—as He will in the very near future—He will do it. No one will stop or even hinder Him. He will have the last word. ♦





# REBELLION In The WILDERNESS



The human problem with accepting authority is not new. This was a lesson that God demonstrated many times when He was working openly with His nation on earth. His purposes were never thwarted. Let's see what we can learn from some people who lived about 3 millennia ago. It was the time when Moses was leading the Israelites out of Egypt. What were people like then? They were surprisingly—shockingly—similar to us.

Let's look in on the time that Korah, Dathan and Abiram rebelled against Moses and Aaron, and see what happened, and who had the last word.

The story is recorded in Numbers 16. There are two incidents here, both examples of the same problem. One was instigated by Dathan and Abiram, two descendants of Reuben; the other by a man named Korah.

The Bible does not tell us where or when these rebellions took place, but because of their proportions, it seems probable that the Israelites had been in the wilderness some years before these rebellions erupted. Someone has speculated

Now realize that this saber rattling is not against some human military dictator but against "the Lord" and His "anointed" ones.

Why will people resist? Because they hate restraints, absolutes, and accountability. They want to be able to say, "I'm the commander of my ship. You aren't going to tell me what to do!" No rulers of any nation will want anyone, not even the Lord or His Son, telling them how to run their government. And so they attack. It is a frontal attack on Divine authority.

Little do they realize that their resistance is doomed from the onset.

***When we resist God, we harm only ourselves.***

Is the new King concerned that the crown of sovereignty is slipping from His brow? Is there turmoil in heaven because of the turmoil on earth? Not at all! The Divine informant reports: "He who sits in the heavens is laughing" (verse 4).

***When God laughs, beware! It is a laugh of scorn. He scoffs at their threats; so easily He can bring them down.***

There is no change in the Eternal's plans; no delaying of His strategy, no commotion, concern or turmoil, only a simple reply. "In anger he rebukes them, terrifying them with his fierce fury" (Ps. 2:5). Their fiercest opposition poses not the slightest threat.

"Yet," says God, speaking of Christ, "yet [in spite of your attempt to frustrate My plans], I have placed my chosen king on the throne in Jerusalem, my holy city." Yes, this King is My choice, says God, and no petty human force is going to displace Him. "The king proclaims the Lord's decree: 'The Lord said to me, "You are my son. Today I have become your Father."'"

These words, first spoken at Jesus' baptism, when He began His public ministry, are repeated as He commences His earth-wide Kingship.

So certain is the success of His reign that it is stated—prophetically



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*The only true authority is God's.*

that it was during the fall of the year, at festival time. But we can only guess; sin knows no season.

Let's think first about the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram. These men were not the rebel type. If you could have met them, they would have looked like reputable, intelligent, well-mannered men, the kind you would expect to have



in present tense. In the view of heaven it is an accomplished fact. It is as if He said, Make no mistake about it. In the words of the hymn writer,

*Jesus shall reign where e'er the sun  
Does his successive journeys run;  
His kingdom spread from shore to  
shore,  
Till moons shall wax and wane  
no more.*

What about the extent of His domain? "Only ask," He says, "and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, the ends of the earth as your possession. 'You will break them with an iron rod and smash them like clay pots'" (Ps. 2:6-9, NLT).

It is a situation unprecedented in the history of the earth. Picture all the powers of earth, with all their high-tech weapons, their missiles and bombs and mega-missiles and mega-bombs, their armaments on land and sea and air—altogether they are as threatening as so many *clay pots*, which can be smashed to shivers with a single blow!

What bit of history does this imagery bring to mind? Recall the vision of Nebuchadnezzar which Daniel interpreted, where he saw a great image representing the kingdoms of men. And what happened? A little stone, "cut out of the mountain without hands," struck the image's feet of "iron and clay, smashing them to bits....The pieces were crushed as small as chaff on a threshing floor, and the wind blew them all away without a trace" (Dan. 2:34-36 NLT).

What does the Psalmist say of the nations at this point? What options are open to them? For the first time in history, they are totally at the mercy of the new Power. They have only two choices: Submit or perish. The heavenly Voice recommends that they submit, show reverence, do homage.

*"Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; take warning, O judges of the earth. Worship the Lord with reverence, and rejoice with trembling. Do homage to the Son, lest he become angry and you perish*

positions in the community. Sons of Eliab, great-grandsons of Reuben, surely they knew right from wrong. And surely they knew that God was working through Moses and Aaron. They had seen the plagues in Egypt and the night of the miraculous deliverance. They had been among those who had walked across the Red Sea on dry ground. They had even looked back to see Pharaoh's pursuing army drowned. Surely they knew.

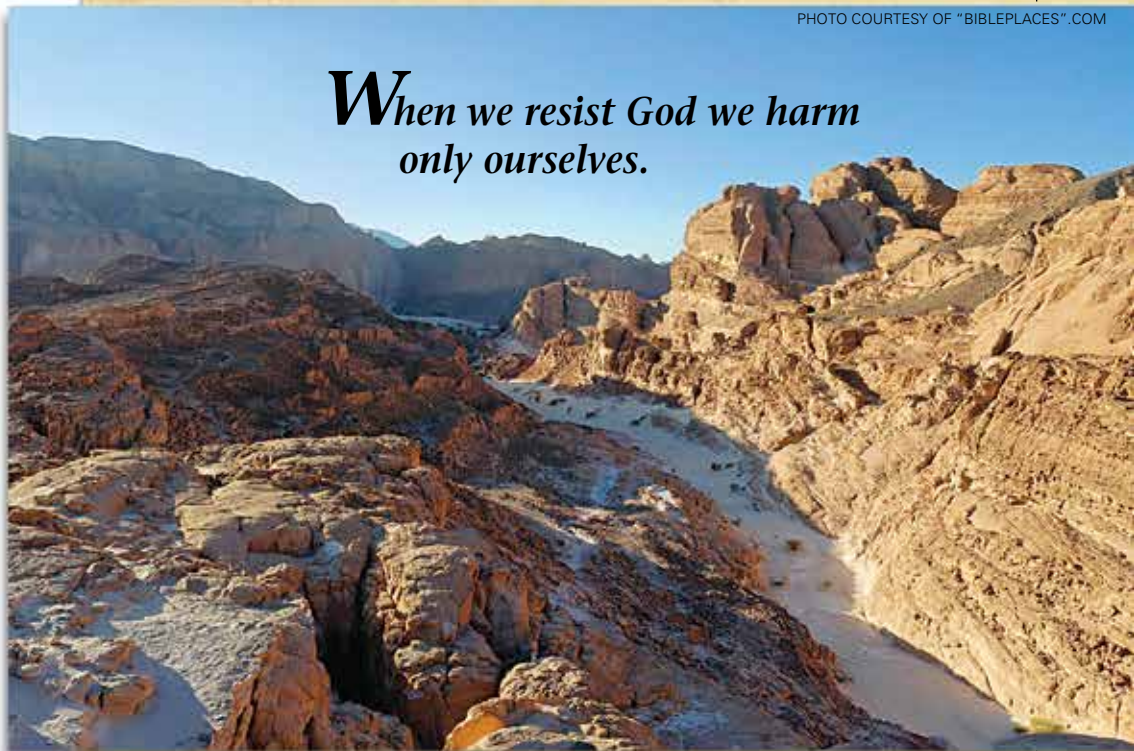
But they forgot.

There was one more leader with them, a man named On. But he is mentioned only at the beginning of the story. Did he come to his senses before the final showdown?

Moses, apparently aware that there was trouble brewing, asked Dathan and

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## *When we resist God we harm only ourselves.*



Abiram to come and meet with him. They refused flatly: "We refuse to come."

Why? They had their reasons. "Isn't it enough that you brought us out of Egypt, a land flowing with milk and honey"—notice that in their view, Egypt, not Canaan, was the "land of milk and honey"! They said, "you brought us out of Egypt...to kill us here in this wilderness, and...you treat us like your subjects." Weren't these men rebels!

"What's more," they continued, "you haven't brought us into the land flowing with milk and honey or given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Are you trying to fool us? We will not come" (Num. 16:13-14 NLT). Was it Moses' fault that they hadn't entered the land of Promise?

Dathan and Abiram felt safer staying in their tents. What they forgot was that God could reach them as easily in their tents as in front of the tabernacle.

How did Moses react to their contempt? Did he answer their railing with more railing? Did he threaten and retaliate in kind? Not at all. This noble man took his problem to God. "Pay no attention to an offering from them," He prayed, "...I have not taken so much as a donkey from them." God knew. Moses' record was clean.

But Moses was not placid. Three times it is recorded that Moses was angry. It is said in connection with Pharaoh, when Pharaoh refused to let the people leave Egypt. It is said in connection with the Israelites' sin in worshipping the



golden calf (Ex. 32:19), and it is said here. What was this anger? Was it rage, or out-of-control behavior? It was more likely indignation in the face of wrong, as Moses took God's side against flagrant sin, for God condemns anger, and there is no indication that he condemned Moses here.

***God does not want us to be complacent with wrong. Complacency in the face of wrong is sin*** (Jas. 4:17).

Then what did Moses do? The Lord had obviously told Moses what He was going to do, so Moses ran through the camp. "Quick!" he said. "Get away from the tents of these wicked men, and don't touch anything that belongs to them, lest you be consumed in their sins."

There was no hesitation. The people fell over each other as they hurried away.

All but the rebels themselves. We read, "Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the entrances of their tents with their wives and children and little ones" (Num. 16:27 NLT). Can't we see Dathan and Abiram standing brazenly in their tent doors, stubbornly holding their ground? In their opinion, they were right, and they weren't about to repent, recant, or run. Surely they weren't afraid of anything Moses would threaten—when they weren't even willing to acknowledge that Moses was God-appointed!

Then the voice of Moses boomed through the camp: "If these men die naturally like all others...then the Lord has not sent me. But if the Lord brings about something unheard of, something entirely new, and the earth opens her mouth and swallows them up, with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the grave, then you can know that these are men who have treated the Lord with contempt" (Num. 16: 29–30 various translations).

Scarcely had Moses finished speaking, when there was a loud rumble. The earth shook violently, and the people screamed. And the "ground split open beneath them, the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their houses,

in the way" (Ps. 2:10–12 NASB). It will be literally, "Obey and live," or "Disobey and die." No more will any be able to do as they please. All will be compelled to give homage to King Jesus. All who refuse will die. Isaiah said it this way: "The nations that refuse to be your allies will be destroyed" (Isa. 60:12 NLT).

Do you get the picture? Do you see the angel standing there, pleading, pleading with them to submit? No, not now. Now it is the image of the angel of God with a drawn sword in his hand. It is the moment of truth. These rulers of earth have had their time to rule as they pleased. Now they are under orders, and God will have the last word.

But, as always, there is blessing for the humble, the penitent, the obedient: "What joy for all who find protection in him!" (Ps. 2:12 NLT).

God's plan is all for good. Let us not think of His control in a negative way. When Christ comes and takes over the governing of this

earth, when He calls upon all to submit to His rule and begins to enforce His just and righteous ways worldwide, He will be opening the door to universal progress. There will be opportunities for service and growth and expansion beyond anything we can imagine. There will be eternal blessings of peace and health and prosperity and life for all who submit. His rule will extend from one end of the earth to the other; no hidden pockets of evil will remain. He has given His word: "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14:21).

God is going to carry out His plans. We do not know when, but this earth is His, and one of these days the time of transformation will begin. Elijah will arrive, Christ will follow, and all the great and wonderful things that God has promised will begin to happen. Don't we want to be part of it!

The sooner we submit to God's authority, the sooner we decide to

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## ***God does not want us to be complacent with wrong. Complacency in the face of wrong is sin.***

and all who sided with them, and all their goods, and all their households and wealth, and everything they owned went down alive into the pit. And the earth closed upon them. And all the Israelites around fled at their shrieks, thinking the earth might swallow them also" (16:31–33 various translations).

These men could defy the Lord, but God had the last word. Wasn't it a lesson never to be forgotten?



cooperate with His plans, the sooner we join His cause and pledge ourselves to a complete and full surrender of ourselves, the better for us. He has an infinite wealth of blessing to give, far, far beyond our ability to fathom, but it is reserved for the humble, the contrite, the obedient, the submissive; those who are willing to let go of the little they have in exchange for the measureless benefits He is offering.

Why not make that exchange now? Why not go for the very best He is offering... now! ♦

## GREAT... MAJESTIC... GLORIOUS GOD!

*The Lord's deeds are great, eagerly awaited by all who desire them. His work is majestic and glorious, and his faithfulness endures forever.*

—Psalm 111:2–3 NET Bible

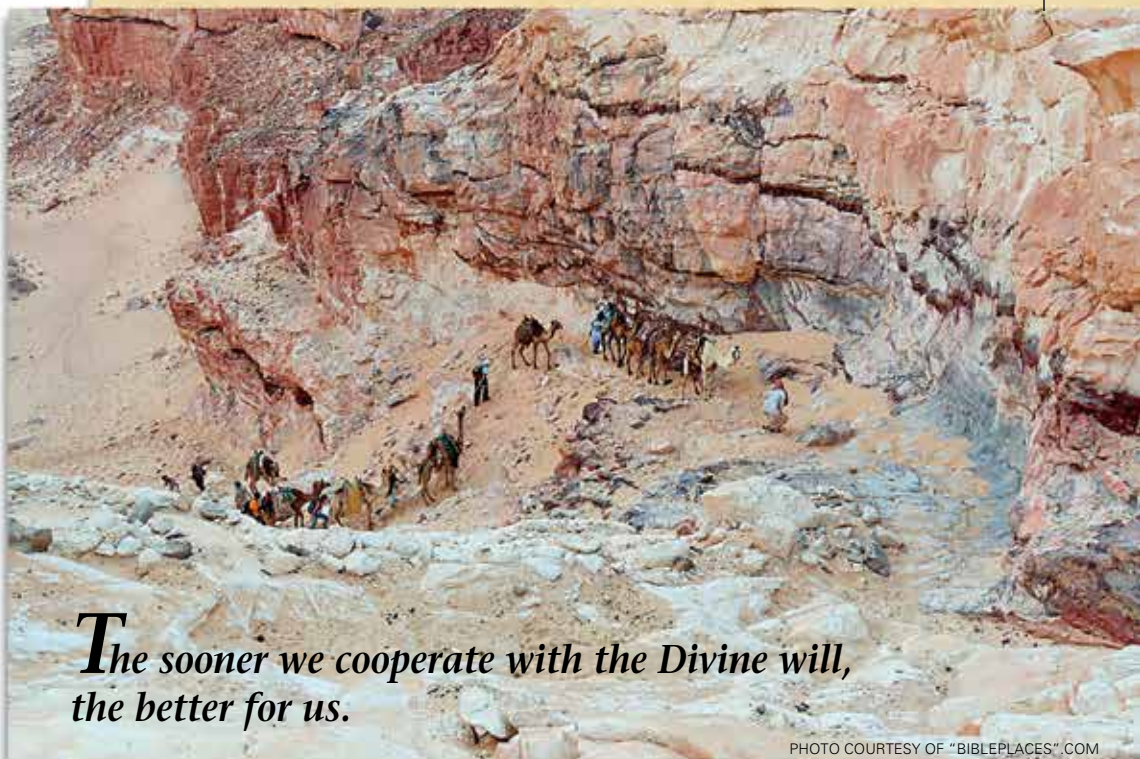
In the early 18th Century, France had a proud ruler on the throne for seventy-five years. The nation was at its height of grandeur, and this man, who called himself Louis the Great, lacked nothing money could buy. He even hired flatterers to come to him every day and tell him how good and beautiful he was. His court was the most magnificent in all Europe; and even his funeral—by his own plan—was to be spectacular, for Louis wanted to be great even in death. Bishop Massillon, esteemed orator of the time,

### Another Lesson on Rebellion

There is a second incident in this chapter, and this time the instigator is Korah.

Who was Korah? Actually, he was a cousin of Moses and Aaron. Their fathers were brothers, sons of Kohath, who was a son of Levi.

Korah had 250 prominent Levites on his side, men who shared his feeling that they should be first- and not second-rank leaders.



*The sooner we cooperate with the Divine will, the better for us.*

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Now Korah and Company came as a group to confront Moses and Aaron: "You assume too much authority," they said. "For each and every member of the community are holy," and "the Lord is in their midst." Why do you "set yourselves above everyone?" "You have gone too far" (various translations of Num. 16:3 ).

When Moses heard their charge, did he immediately use his authority to condemn them? No, he humbly took the matter to God. We read that he "threw himself on the ground and prayed" (Good News Bible). He would let the Lord tell him how to deal with this problem.

God responded so quickly that Moses could answer the opposition immediately. God had a plan. He would let the rebels themselves show their colors. He would even make a way for them.

***Isn't this how God often works with us? When we challenge His authority, He opens the way for us to ruin ourselves, if that is our choice. Or we can take the better route and see our mistake, repent, and ask His forgiveness.***

But there was no repentance in the heart of Korah and his company.

What was God's plan? Moses relayed God's words: "You, Korah, and all your followers are to do this: Take censers and tomorrow put fire and incense in them before the Lord. The man the Lord chooses will be the one who is holy. You Levites have gone too far!" Hear the ringing judgment in those words: "You Levites have gone too far!"

The 250 Levites were to bring their censers and come to the Tabernacle, and act as priests right along with Aaron—just as they wanted to do! (This was



before the discovery of matches, and censers were bronze firepans which would hold glowing coals.)

Wouldn't you think those 250 Levites would have had second thoughts about what they were doing when they heard those words: *"The man the Lord chooses will be the one who is holy. You Levites have gone too far"*? The Lord also told them to bring their own fire—Aaron was instructed to use the fire from the altar. Wouldn't you expect them to be nervous, at least a little? Did any of

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***There is no force—human or otherwise—that will hinder Christ and God's Plan to glorify Earth.***

them even think about what happened to Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, when they *"offered strange fire before the Lord"*? (Lev. 10:1–4).

Then Moses tried to reason with them. Didn't they realize they were already privileged Levites? *"Now listen, you Levites! Isn't it enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the Israelite community and brought you near himself to do the work at the Lord's tabernacle and to stand before the community and minister to them? He has brought you and all your fellow Levites near himself, but now you are trying to get the priesthood too. It is against the Lord that you and all your followers have banded together. Who is Aaron that you should grumble against him?"* (Num. 16:8–11 NIV).

Moses was right. It was their privilege to handle and work with the holy things. They were supported by the tithes of the people. They were to receive an inheritance in Canaan without having to fight for it.

But right now, all they could think about was what they *lacked*, not what they had. They didn't have Aaron's authority, and they resented it. Couldn't Moses see they were just as qualified? If only they could be given a chance, they would show everyone that they could officiate at the Tabernacle just as well as he!

The day came, and the 250 pseudo-priests took their places in front of the Tabernacle, each with his censer full of live coals, right along with Aaron, each ready to present his offering of worship to the Lord.

Meanwhile, Korah was out stirring up the community to assemble *"at the*

was engaged to preach the sermon.

The great king died, and his body lay in a golden coffin. To dramatize his greatness, orders had been given that the cathedral should be very dimly lighted, the only visible light to be a special candle set above the coffin. The hour of the funeral arrived, and thousands waited in hushed silence. Then Bishop Massillon rose to speak. His first sentence consisted of four words. Standing on a platform behind the coffin, he slowly reached down and snuffed out the candle, saying, "Only God is great!"

No one who reverences the Eternal God or has any appreciation for His creation will deny that God is great. Yes, in the words of the Psalmist, *"His greatness is unsearchable!"* (Ps. 145:3).

## **GREAT DEEDS**

Viewed from any angle, His works are beyond comparison. Whether at close range as the atoms in a molecule or the particles making up the atom, or at a distance as galaxies of stars billions of light years away, visible only through the most powerful telescopes, the works of the Lord are great. Think about this: *"He counts the number of the stars, He calls them all by name"* (Ps. 147:4)—when there are billions of galaxies, and billions of stars in each galaxy?!

Considered from the standpoint of His ability as designer, even of nature's physical laws, His works are far beyond anything we can comprehend (Rom. 11:33).

But greater still is His munificence. Consider that He has designed to share His boundless wealth with His worthy human children.

God is great, too, in asking nothing more of us than an attainable standard of moral fitness in order to be His eternal associates (Eph. 4:13; Rom. 13:13–14). He does not ask wealth, or natural ability, or intellect, or good looks. He does not demand that



we meet tests of great physical endurance, or that we engage in rituals that are harmful to our bodies.

He is great, too, in devising a plan under which the unworthy may receive temporary blessings but the worthy reap a harvest of eternal life. *"The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works"* (Psalm 145:9).

## GREAT WISDOM

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

## GREAT JUSTICE

God's work is great in that He has made it possible for humankind to make something of themselves. His statutes given through Moses the great lawgiver have formed the basis for the jurisprudence of the world's foremost nations. And by applying the principles of His higher law of faith, or "royal law" to their daily living, selfish, narrow-minded human beings can escape the confines of their naturally petty interests and instincts and live on a higher plane. They can expand their horizons to a point where the present will give way to the eternal, the spirit will become stronger than the flesh, and the love of God will supersede the love of self; until at last they merit the physical change to immortality, giving them the nature of the angels that Jesus promised those *"accounted worthy"* (Luke 20:35–36).

God's work is great in this respect, too, that from eternity past He has been saving people in other parts of His creation even as He is now doing with the inhabitants of this earth. His mercy has been from everlasting in the past and will continue through all time yet to come (Ps. 103:17–18).

*"His work is majestic and glorious."* Yes, God's plan for this earth is magnificent! Ultimately our little planet will be filled with an all-upright, all-righteous people (Isa. 60:21), and annexed to heaven as Jesus promised in His prayer, *"Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"* (Matt. 6:10). This is glorious!

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

### Tabernacle entrance"

(Num. 16:19 NIV). It is likely that he was telling them something like, "Today it's our turn to serve. You've got to come and see the Lord put Aaron in his place and exalt us!" The people came, and came, and came. Hosts of them.

Suddenly, as all eyes were fixed on the Tabernacle, the glory of the Lord appeared in that fearful cloud that had appeared before when they had refused to enter Canaan (Num. 14:10). A breathless "Oh!" rippled through the crowd. This was not normal.

Then the voice of the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron: *"Separate yourselves from this congregation that I may consume them."* Not only the 250 pseudo-priests were in danger of judgment, but all who were gathered.

Unselfish Moses and his brother Aaron fell down before the Lord and pleaded for God to spare the bystanders. God consented, but said that any who would live must separate themselves. So Moses shouted in a stentorian voice: *"Separate yourselves from this company, says the Lord, so that I can consume them in an instant."*

There was no hesitation. The people hurry-scurried everywhere.

And then we read that *"there came out a fire from the Lord, and devoured the 250 men that offered incense, even all the followers of Korah"* (16:35). A flash, and it was all over.

What a lesson! Who could ever forget it! Wouldn't it seem that this would have ended rebellion once and for all, at least for that generation?

No, we read that the very next day *"the whole Israelite community railed against Moses and against Aaron, saying, 'you are the ones who have caused the death of the Lord's people'"* (16:41). Couldn't they see that Moses was only God's instrument? Did Moses open the earth and swallow up the rebels? Did Moses bring fire from the altar and devour the 250 pseudo-priests?

The people were serious in blaming Moses. But God had the last word, and before the rebellion was over, 14,700 had died in a plague, in addition to the rebels.

Wouldn't it seem that the lesson should have been learned for all time? What would be the reaction now, if such judgment were seen? Wouldn't multitudes hear, and fear God?

When Christ returns and begins to dictate new laws and set up His new government, He will have those who resist Him. Jesus pictured it in His parable as those who say, *"We will not have this man to reign over us"* (Luke 19:14). It is that same rebellious spirit: *"We will not."* But they will meet the same fate as the rebels of old.

No human force will hinder Christ. ♦



A model of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness



**F**ruit-gathering was a time of great joy in Israel. To the ancient people, the worth of the harvest was directly related to the fortune or misfortune of the people. The greater the harvest, the greater the nation's security against famine, the greater their wealth, and the greater their strength in siege or disaster.

We today may not depend on the harvest as directly as in former times, but the grower who plants an orchard has just one objective: fruit. What would motivate him through all the tiring days of planting and cultivating if he could expect no harvest! He may admire the healthy young trees, their vigorous growth, their abundant blossoms. He may spend many hours watering, cultivating, pruning, spraying. But all has one objective: fruit. When the summer is spent and the work is done, there must come a harvest. Healthy

branches, abundant leaves, sturdy trunks cannot make up for the lack of fruit. And to be profitable these trees must produce fruit not for just one or two years but on and on, year after year after year.

Can't we see why the Lord compares His people to fruit-bearing trees? Why are we here? What is the purpose of our lives? It is all told in these words of Jesus: to produce fruit. *"My true disciples produce much fruit"* (John 15:8 NLT).

Just as the produce of the tree is its fruit, so the virtues we grow in our lives are our "fruit." God wants fruit. More emphatically, God *must have* fruit. Being a living tree is not enough. He wants fruit. Year after year may go by, but if we are not bearing fruit, we cannot expect any eternal place in God's garden. It is a positive course of action in our lives. It is not merely refraining from doing wrong, it is actively

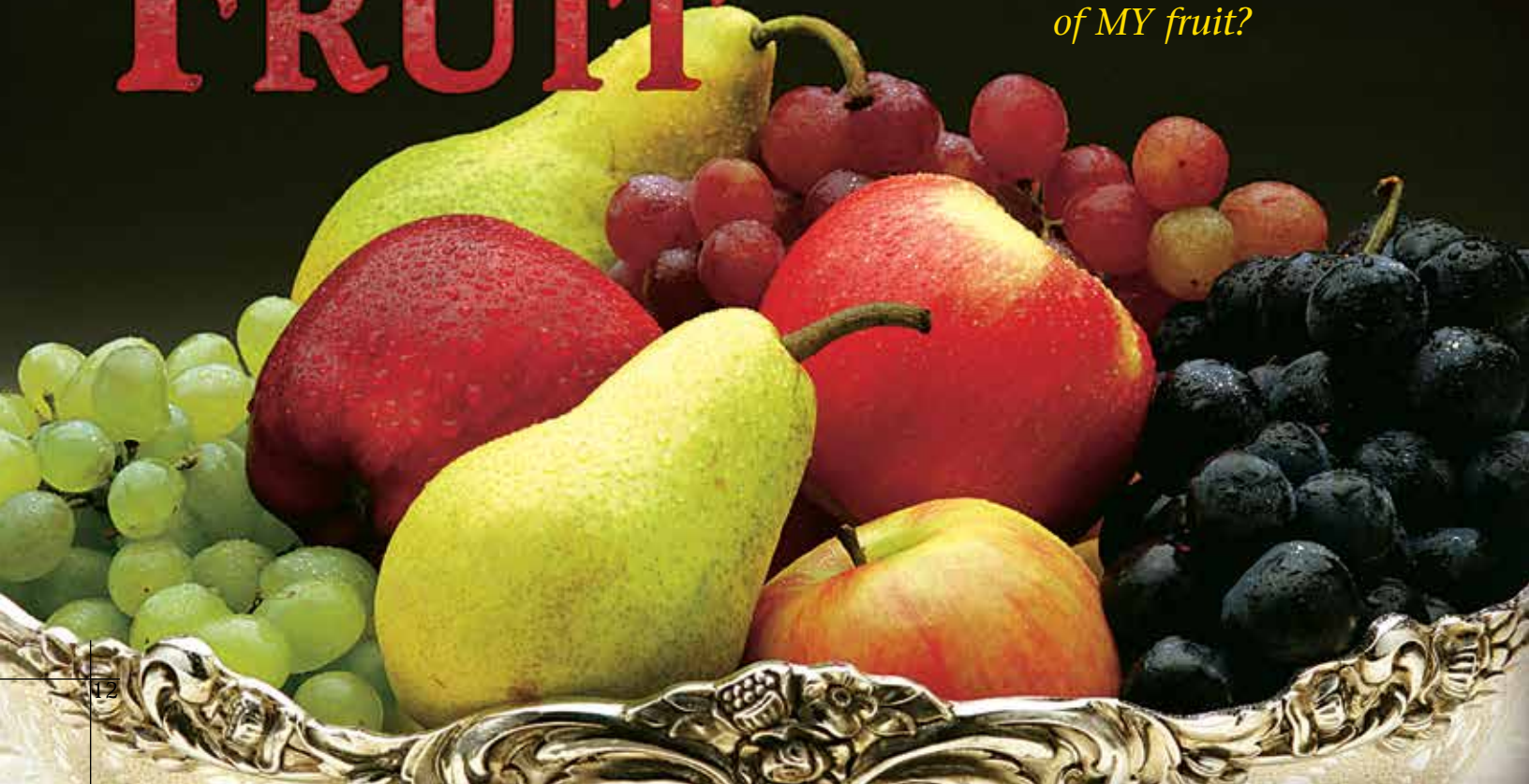
doing right. To bear good fruit in word, in action, in thought, in feeling, we must speak right, do right, think right, feel right in any and every situation as it arises.

The Sacred Record speaks often of this fruit-bearing. The Psalmist compared the godly man to a tree, *"planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season"* (Ps. 1:3 NLT). The prophet Jeremiah makes a similar comparison but lets us know also that this fruit-bearing is not a short-term project: this special tree shall never *"cease from yielding fruit"* (Jer. 17:8). Day in and day out, whatever the season, whatever the circumstances, this tree will bear fruit.

John the Baptist was keenly aware of the need for fruit-bearing. *"Produce fruit in keeping with repentance"* was the central note of his gospel (Matt. 3:8 NIV). And this was not a gentle request but a command upon which was suspended the entire weight of

**KNOWN BY OUR  
FRUIT**

**W**hat is the quality  
of MY fruit?





the law. For *“every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire”* (v. 10).

What was the fruit which John demanded? John saw life as God-given for accomplishing our God-ordained task. He disciplined his own life to this holy end. A stern realist about matters of right and wrong, he saw all fruits of life as either good or bad. There was no such thing as mediocre, half-good/half-bad fruit. In an effort to appear as good as possible, we might be inclined to judge our conduct as “partly” or largely acceptable, but to John it was either good fruit or bad.

Jesus’ message was the same, requiring the sternest and most exacting standard in everyday life. Well He knew how we try to evade the real facts about ourselves. Well He knew how easy it is to condemn others and justify ourselves. And so He set the criteria for judgment in plain black and white—as plain as fruit on a tree. *“Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.”* And then, in case there should be any doubt as to the need for fruit-bearing, He states even more clearly His standard of judgment: *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven”* (Matt. 7:17–21 NIV).

The fruit reveals the tree. As our founder so aptly illustrated, if you wonder what kind of tree you have, you do not scrape the root, or peel off the bark, or eat the leaves—you simply look at the fruit. In the same way we can judge: by the type, quantity and quality of the fruit.

What was the lesson in the Parable of the Sower? Was the ground judged by the number of plants that germinated, or by the abundance of leaves that grew, or by the number of the blossoms, or even the depth of the root? All these may have been factors, but the final judgment of its worth was

this only: its fruitfulness. *“And the seed that fell on the good ground is like those who hear God’s teaching with good, honest hearts and obey it and patiently produce good fruit”* (Luke 8:15 NCV). The seed that fell *“on good ground...grew and made a hundred times more”* (v. 8). The seed that fell by the wayside, or on the rock, or among thorns *germinated*, but it was condemned because it did not bear fruit.

And if the fruit be lacking, the entire effort is lost.

Jesus gave yet another lesson on fruit-bearing. *“... Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together”* (John 4:35–36 NIV). Much more than the literal harvesting is meant, for what literal harvest was ever *“for eternal life”*? He was speaking of the spiritual fruit that must be grown and ripened for the eternal harvest.

The apostle Paul also exhorted his brethren to fruit-bearing. There are two kinds: fruit unto death, and fruit unto life. Every life yields one fruit or the other. These are Paul’s words: *“What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life”* (Rom. 6:21–22 NIV).

Should we not be glad and anxious to bear fruit unto “everlasting life”!

Fruitfulness qualifies us for all the blessings and benefits, both present and future, of belonging to Christ. *“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples”* (John 15:8 NIV).

What type of fruit is God seeking? What can we learn about the fruit

which our lives should produce?

First, we need to realize that God does not ask what we cannot give. Yet we know at the same time that He asks our all—else how will He, or we, ever prove our worth? And God wants our best. If we will not give it, He will find others who will.

*If you wonder what kind of tree you have, you do not scrape the root, or peel off the bark, or eat the leaves—you simply look at the fruit.*



Second, we must continually bear fruit. God does not place any age limit on fruit-bearing. We are responsible for bearing good fruit to the limit of our ability as long as we live. Natural trees may decrease in fruitfulness as they increase in age; God’s trees *“still bear fruit in old age,”* good fruit. Fruit-bearing is a very serious and individual matter. Each is personally responsible for the fruit of his life. Others can help us to plant and water, others can nourish and



## OF VINES AND BRANCHES

Jesus illustrated the importance of fruit-bearing graphically in His last sermon on the night before He was crucified. His illustration was simple, yet how appropriate: a vine, branches, and fruit. Years earlier God's prophets had compared Israel to a vine, but the vine had proved unfaithful, "an empty vine" (Hos. 10:1), non-fruit-bearing, fit only to be cut off. Perhaps to make a point of contrast, Jesus identified Himself as the "true vine." "I am the true vine," He said, "and my Father is the gardener" (John 15:1 NIV). Again He said, "I am the vine, you are the branches."

What is the duty of the vine? The vine is the support, the strength, the source of nourishment for the plant.

And what is the duty of the branches? Grape vines do not make suitable shade trees. And the branches are of no worth for lumber. They would not even make good kindling. The leaves likewise are worthless except as they give nourishment to the vine. The one task of the branches is to *bear fruit*.

Christ is the Vine; and each earnest disciple is a branch. These branches—you and I—must bear the fruit. This means that we show the love; we demonstrate the peace; we be the long-suffering ones; we be meek and humble, gentle, good, full of faith; we show by our lives what it means to be temperate, disciplined, self-controlled. The branch bears the fruit.

And if we do not bear fruit...? "He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit"—it is forcefully removed. And if we *bear fruit*? "While every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful" (John 15:2 NIV). When a branch bears fruit, there will be purging, pruning, tearing away the useless leaves and wild growth. But always there is but one objective: more fruit.

What if a branch should decide that it does not need the vine, that it can grow better on its own? These are the words of Jesus: "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me" (v. 4). Unless we abide in the vine we cannot bear fruit; and unless we bear fruit we cannot abide in the vine.

God will not have His good vine eternally cluttered with worthless, non-fruitful branches. If we would abide in the vine *we must bear fruit*.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (v. 5)—nothing, because unable to bear fruit. ♦

*Christ is the  
Vine; each  
earnest disciple  
is a branch.*

encourage us and tell us how to grow. But the task of using all this help in actually producing the perfect, fully ripe fruit is a task we ourselves must do.

We need to review carefully our own fruitfulness. How much fruit am I bearing to life eternal? What is the quality of my fruit? Is it the very best I am able to produce? These are difficult questions to answer, and we should review our lives carefully, frequently, earnestly, in the fear of

God. For someday we shall have to answer for what we have done, or failed to do. His command is unchanging: "...bear much fruit."

It is not how much we read, or meditate, or talk about the glories of the coming Kingdom that will make us acceptable to God. It is not even how much we resolve to do, or intend to do, but how much actual fruit unto holiness we are bearing—how patient, how kind, how forgiving, how self-controlled we are in the everyday situations of our life.

### FRUITS TO LOOK FOR

We should call to mind Jesus' parable of the tree upon whose branches the owner did not find the expected crop of fruit. The parable is recorded in Luke 13:6–9 NLT. The owner's immediate response was, "Cut it down. It's taking up space we can use for something else." But the caretaker interceded: "Let it alone another year yet. I will dig around it, fertilize it, water it, and maybe next year it will do better." Haven't we more than once been this fig tree, in need of another chance to do what we should have done long ago? How grateful each one of us should be to the merciful God who gives us another, and another, and yet another opportunity to bear fruit. But let us not deceive ourselves—opportunity is not forever.

How is our fruitfulness, yours and mine, right here and now? As the



Master Gardener surveys the fruit of our lives, what does He see?

The Apostle Paul mentions a number of outstanding fruits which grow on every Christian tree (Gal. 5:22–23).

First, there is the fruit of **love**, love toward God and toward our brother in the faith. This love is not a sentimental feeling but a genuine commitment to obey God along with true brotherly kindness and concern for our brother.

Rare indeed is the fruit of love that is always patient, always kind; that knows no jealousy, makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful; never glad when others go wrong; love that is always gladdened by goodness; always slow to expose; always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient (1 Cor. 13:4–7 Moffatt).

How much true **love** do we show our brother? Have we the love to tell our brother of a fault in a true and kindly spirit of love, not critical and faultfinding but mutually helpful and upbuilding? Is our first concern always his best spiritual interests? Are we long-suffering with his weakness? This is another fruit we must bear. Do we try to help him overcome his weaknesses? Or do we assume an attitude of, If he's any good at all, he'll come along by himself. Why should I waste my concern on someone who won't do any better than that?

How is our crop of **peace**? How abundant is this fruit on our vine? When someone challenges our opinion, or our judgment, or our intentions, is our perfect peace undisturbed, save for the fact that our anxiety to see ourselves as we are is aroused? And do we still maintain a true feeling of brotherliness toward that person?

How about our fruit of **temperance**? Have we the inner stability, the self-control to keep ourselves always firmly “in hand,” so that we are ready for any emergency with all our senses intact? How much does it take to upset us? It has been said that one sure measure of our inner stature is the size of the issue that it takes to disturb us. It is possible that by such a scale we some-

times find ourselves frightfully small!

The fruit of **patience** has several varieties, all of which we need to bear in abundance. First, we need patience with ourselves, to keep trying when we have failed. Then we need to extend this same patience to our brother—in super measure—when we think he has offended us.

We also need patience with circumstances. Why should we waste our energy fighting against that which is beyond our control—when we could be investing that same energy in building character?

### QUALITY FRUIT

Loyal and devoted Israelites did more than voice their gratitude to God in celebration and song. They demonstrated it in sacrifice and free-will offerings. The law required certain sacrifices, but above and beyond the requirements of the law were the completely voluntary sacrifices and offerings which the truly grateful could bring and offer to the God they loved. Then, as now, God valued the deed above the word. Gratitude expressed in sacrifice and service meant more to Him than mere words.

What about the quality of the voluntary offering? Might we assume that since the offerings were not required, the grateful person could offer just about anything and it would be accepted and appreciated? Since the offering was a “bonus” gift to God, might not anything look like gracious generosity and genuine love?

The answer is no. Anything offered to God, whether by law or voluntarily, had to be perfect. Just anything at all was *not* better than nothing. Poor animals were no more acceptable as thank offerings than as any other type of offering.

God demands the best—first, last and always. The law was explicit: “When any one of the house of Israel or of

the sojourners in Israel presents his offering, whether in payment of a vow or as a freewill offering, which is offered to the Lord as a burnt offering, to be accepted you shall offer a male without blemish, of the bulls or the sheep, or the goats. You shall not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be acceptable for you” (Lev. 22:18–20 RSV). Why was this the rule? Because *anything less than the best dishonored God*. Anything less than the best was an expression of insult and base ingratitude. ♦

*God demands  
the best—first, last  
and always.*





Edward Shayler tells a personal experience from when he was a Canadian Prisoner of War in a Japanese prison camp during the Second World War.

# Burdensome Treasures

*Most of us never had it to lose. But Daveraux had it. He had all this world could give. Yet in a time of crisis he found he had nothing.*

Daveraux's material life centered on the banking profession in a British colony. His success gave him a beautiful home, servants, money, plenty of leisure time, and many enjoyments that were part of the office of a Bank Governor, along with boats, race horses, a private chauffeur, and, of course, a life of high social standing that belonged only to the elite. His self-esteem thrived on the constant attention, and a servant dealt with anyone who did not fit into that class. One might say that he enjoyed being seen on the "Society Page."

When I came into contact with him, he had already experienced the height of his success. I remember our first meeting. At that time he, like myself, had been made a Prisoner of War and had to accept a new living situation, which was for him a disaster, and his attitude made him a difficult man to deal with. Even his stature was against him, as he was tall (over six feet) and heavy (about 275 pounds). In addition, he had a very dominant personality. One could readily see that he was a man of affairs who had been accustomed to having everything he wanted.

He approached me looking for help with his daily living problems and felt that I, being Canadian like himself, would be eager to assist him and that my group would be a good source of servants. We would be reimbursed after the war ended. I tried hard to explain the gravity of our situation, and I also told him that he was free to approach anyone he wanted with his plan, and at that point I quickly made my exit. I did hear some of the superlatives that the men used to explain why they were refusing. This man even wanted the names of some of them so that he could bring justice to bear when the war ended. He just did not understand that his money had little value in these circumstances.

*What sorrows await you who are rich,  
for you have your only happiness now.*

—Luke 6:24 NLT

As time progressed he continued to make himself unpopular by being selfish in his associations. He never seemed to let up on his demands of increasing his inventory over others. He even had a large group of local citizens outside the prison camp that catered to his demands and brought items



for his use even at their own peril. These he displayed as a show of importance. One of his distinguishing points was his weight, which made him look odd and out of place. He was also known to be continually searching throughout the prison camp for anything of value so that he could acquire more. His passion was "gold," and if he knew of anybody with some he would pester them with offers that eventually they could not refuse.

It is not difficult to barter food to a hungry man for his possessions. At one point I intervened when I found out that he had convinced some of my comrades to part with the gold in their teeth. He in turn countered by signing my name to a letter to someone in the Colony that he knew and in it he included many statements that were forbidden by our captors. This action caused me a severe beating. From then on he kept his distance from me, and I seldom saw him, but I did hear some stories of his maneuvering. It was said that he was able to bribe some of the guards to help him in his dealings, and was living quite well.

*If anyone has material possessions  
and sees his brother in need but has  
no pity on him, how can the love of  
God be in him? —1 John 3:17 NIV*

One day we were both notified that we were being taken to Japan. My thoughts were far from our banker, but suddenly he appeared. He offered a sincere apology for the trouble he caused me. As I had been spending any spare time trying to understand the reasons for our situation and had come to the conclusion that God is a forgiving God, I felt that I should offer him the same privilege. So I tried to be as convincing as I could be, all the while living in the hope that a great hole would open and swallow him. He looked frightened and worried, and finally confessed. Why? Because he needed my help. He told me that he had been able to secure a



quantity of valuables, including gold, and needed help to transport it to wherever our destination was to be.

I told him that I would not involve myself in helping with it, also that I would inform my comrades of the possible danger ahead if they were found concealing gold from our captors. I told him of the military principle involved, where it became the responsibility of each Guard Unit put in charge of our journey to completely search for these items and also weapons, and that we could encounter as many as seven different groups. He became more worried, and asked me what decision I would make. I told him I would change as much as I could for food. At least it would be unlikely that punishment would be applied for having food, and the worst that could happen was that it could be confiscated. He left with a look of a man who had just won a lottery.

*Just as the rich rule the poor,  
so the borrower is servant to the lender.  
Those who plant seeds of injustice  
will harvest disaster, and their reign  
of terror will end. —Proverbs 22:7–8 NLT*

As time was a factor, he created quite a parade of interested purchasers of his booty. He had a network of Japanese guards working nights. I was interested from the point of view that not many Japanese had faith in the Japanese yen. He came back! His bartering had been successful. And now he had another dilemma: he had acquired so much tinned and dried food that he couldn't carry it all. He needed help, and he asked me if I and my men would be willing to help him. Because we Canadians had been made prisoners during combat, we had very few possessions. I told him it was up to the individual men to make that choice. So he began to canvass each of the sixty-five men who were part of our group of three hundred and sixty. He offered each man a share of whatever that man agreed to carry, and began to ration out his goods, making a careful inventory of what he entrusted to each person. I thought to myself, "What a stupid mistake!" Imagine a man who was being starved for two and a half years being handed a tin of corned beef to look after for a month, and then wait for his rightful share? Yet, on the other hand, what else could the banker do with it?

Our vessel of transport turned out to be a filthy old cargo ship and our quarters were the aft hold. During our twenty-eight-day trip, the area we occupied became littered with empty tins that had once contained food. It was easy to get suspicious of where they were coming from.

We finally reached our destination near Sendai, Japan, and we witnessed our work before us: Coal Mine. Almost immediately our banker friend came complaining to me that he could not recover the foodstuffs he had distributed among the men, and while I offered sympathy I could only tell him that he might get reimbursed when the war ended, so he should keep his accounts as a record. He then went into a tirade about values. I reminded him of his generous offer when we first met.

The coal mine was a new venture for us all, and we soon discovered our captors' methods. They divided us into par-

ties of usually four workers each, according to our military origin. Each party was given specific duties, i.e., shoveling, pushing coal cars, working the coal face, and was assigned to a certain mine shaft and rotated. Each group was also given "car-tags" that had to be attached to each coal car that was filled. This identification was tabulated, and when the tags ran out your day's labor ended. When all of the tags were accounted for, then we were allowed back at camp under the supervision of guards.

*Pull for the shore sailor, Pull for the shore,  
Heed not the rolling waves. But bend to the oar,  
Safe in the Life-boat, sailor, Cling to self no more,  
Leave the poor old stranded wreck,  
And pull for the shore.*

The Banker was having trouble again, mostly because of his own actions. One party group after another refused to have him as a member of their party because they said he was lazy. As a result, our captors were treating him badly.

He fell ill and began to lose weight, and it became obvious that he was going downhill fast. Again he approached me, asking for help. I took this request to the men of our parties. There was some resistance, but I offered an argument for our banker. They had eaten his share of the food that he had given them to carry for him, and certainly they owed him something. The result was that our men agreed to include him in our parties, providing that he tried to honestly share in the work. The men realized that a Banker would have difficulty doing manual labor, and to make it fair for them all, he was to rotate from one party to another. It was understood that if a hardship was planned he would be automatically expelled from our work parties. He did give us an honest effort and was finally accepted by all the men for the remainder of our time as prisoners of war. His health held up and he was no longer abused by his captors any more than anyone else. He became friendlier and almost fitted into the routine of life we experienced, though his attitude of superiority still separated him from most conversations. He lived a lonely life indeed.

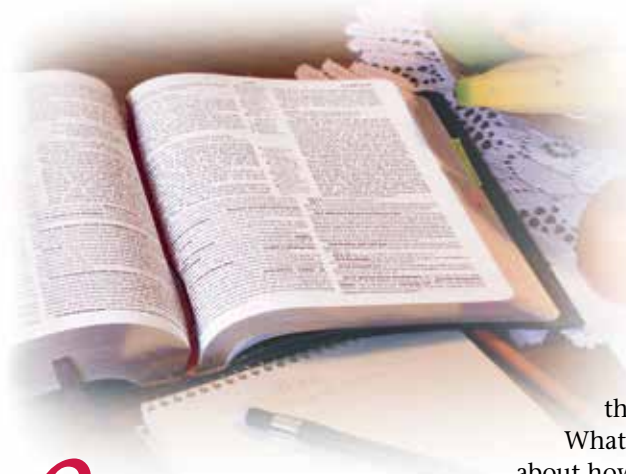
When the surrender came and we were preparing to leave the Prisoner of War Camp, and each group, according to origin, was being escorted out, I said a final goodbye to the Banker at Sendai, Japan. He did thank my comrades and me for the help we were to him. I explained that he should also be grateful to God, but he said that "God had not helped him much." Apparently he did not see any purpose in his life.

But all his efforts were not in vain. He had left a vivid impression on my mind of what *Not To Do* when those around you are seeking refuge from the injustices of the world.

*God has given us both his promise and his oath.  
These two things are unchangeable  
because it is impossible for God to lie.  
Therefore, we who have fled to him  
for refuge can take new courage,  
for we can hold on to his promise  
with confidence.*

—Hebrews 6:18 NLT ♦





# On the Authority of the NEW TESTAMENT

**Q:** I may be way out of line here, but I'm wondering how the others, present at Christ's crucifixion, got the idea that Christ was giving himself for the sins of man.

**A:** NONE of the apostles had the idea that Christ was giving himself to take away the sins of man, nor did they teach it in their writings. There are verses in the New Testament that would give this idea if one only **surface reads**, but when the passage is studied in context and compared with the other writings in Scripture, and the original text is examined, it is clear that the intent of the writer was not to teach salvation by Christ's literal death. The whole idea of the vicarious, atoning death of Christ came into the church after the church apostatized from the true teaching of Jesus, after Jesus was taken to heaven. The apostle Paul saw it starting even during his lifetime, calling it the *"mystery of iniquity"* that he saw already working (2 Thess. 2:7). Also he said that *"grievous wolves"* would enter in among them, and false teachers arise from their own number who would *"draw away disciples after them"* (Acts 20:29-30).

Augustine, often credited as being the "father" of the church, did great harm by combining his strong bent toward pagan philosophy (Greek), with what he learned from the Scriptures, producing a "new" way of thinking totally foreign to the teachings of Jesus. The idea that Jesus died to atone for man's sin, or to reciprocate a God

demanding justice, or to pay a debt that man owed (to whom?) were among those false teachings.

What were the apostles teaching about how we get rid of sin? Read the words of Paul in Titus 2:11-12, that *"the grace of God"* teaches us to deny *"ungodliness and worldly lusts,"* and *"live soberly righteously and godly in the present age."* How do we *"seek for glory, and immortality?"* *"By patient continuance in doing good"* (Rom. 2:7). How do we conquer evil? Paul also answers this: *"Overcome [over-power, conquer, be a victor over] evil with good"* (Rom. 12:21).

The apostle Peter taught the same. *"For he who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it"* (1 Peter 3:10-11).

**Q:** Before Jesus' death, he told them that he was going to be killed, but He never said that He was giving himself for the sins of man. He asked that the cup be passed, but his Heavenly Father's will was the only thing Jesus ever wanted to do. It was for God, not for mankind.

**A:** Your statement is exactly right. That is what the Scripture writers teach, including the apostles who were writers (Peter, John, Paul).

There are certainly passages that, upon surface reading, would appear to contradict this basic teaching of Scripture. That is why it is necessary to study the subject in depth, and carefully compare with an open mind, to discover what is the meaning intended by the author. The issue is very serious, because our prospect of eternal life

depends upon it. (For further study see our booklet, *"The Atonement...Is It Biblical?"*)

**Q:** I believe the Bible contains God's Word, but question is, how much of it is man's word?

**A:** The variety of people writing over 1500 years of time on 3 continents could in no way devise the harmonious, unified plan and teaching that we find from Genesis to Revelation without higher guidance and the instruction they received from God.

**Q:** What about the errors that have been found in the Bible?

**A:** Small errors have been discovered, but most are small errors made by copyists, such as a word misspelled, or a wrong pronoun used, or a letter omitted, etc. Occasionally there is an instance where a copyist wrote a personal comment in the margin, and a later copyist put the note into the actual text of the Bible. Most of these are easily identified by comparing later and earlier manuscripts, this being one reason the earlier manuscripts are the most accurate. Errors and significant additions, however, are a minuscule part of the whole text of Scripture. And none of the differences found have altered any major teaching of Scripture.

In more recent years copyists and translators have taken more liberties in adding to the thought of the original text, and this is one reason we cannot endorse any of the new translations totally. One must remember that a translation is always to some extent an interpretation made by the translator,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25



# When Did God's Kingdom Begin Ruling?

**Q:** "My niece is a Jehovah's Witness and she brings me their Watchtower magazines to read. Two recent issues contained parts 1 and 2 of an article entitled, "When Did God's Kingdom Begin Ruling?" To be honest, I do not understand what they are trying to prove. Does any part of it make sense to you? Personally I think they are off course, but maybe I am. Your thoughts on this will be appreciated. Even my niece said she couldn't understand it, and she is a Witness."

**A:** The articles you refer to discuss Daniel chapter 4. Daniel 4 tells of Nebuchadnezzar's second prophetic dream. In his dream he saw a huge flourishing tree. Then suddenly the tree was cut down. The dream troubled him. He must have surmised that it had meaning, because he consulted his wise men and astrologers. When they were unable to tell its interpretation, the king remembered Daniel. When he told Daniel the dream, Daniel knew its meaning, but hesitated to tell the king (Dan 4:19). But because the king wanted to know, Daniel told him its meaning.

Daniel told the king that the tree in his dream represented the king himself, who was then the ruler of a strong and mighty empire. God was telling him that he would be cut down and made to live like an animal for a period of time identified in the dream as "seven times." After that he would be restored to his kingship, and know that "*the Most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He chooses*" (Dan 4:25).

The Watchtower article makes the point that Bible prophecies often have two applications, one immediate and one to take place in the more distant future. This is true with many Bible prophecies.

The Witnesses' article explains that the dream is prophesying an interruption in Nebuchadnezzar's rulership, after which the kingdom is restored to

him. They see its greater application/fulfillment as it might apply to "*the kingdom of the Lord*" (the name given to the kingdom of Israel and Judah—see 1 Chron. 28:5) being interrupted by the destroying of Jerusalem and its temple in 607 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar invaded the city.

How long is this interruption? They see it extending through 2520 years, which is their interpretation of the "*seven times*," one time being 360 years (in Revelation 12, verses 6 and 14, three and one half times is said to be 1260 days). Applying the biblical rule for prophetic time that one day represents a year (Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6), seven times equals 2520 years. The article goes on to explain that just as Nebuchadnezzar's kingship was interrupted by the seven times, which they suggest may be 7 days literally, during which he lost his mind and lived as an animal, so "*the kingdom of the Lord*" would be interrupted by Nebuchadnezzar overthrowing Jerusalem in 607 B.C., and not to be restored until Christ returns to take the government of the earth. For this reason they add their interpretation of the "*seven times*" or 2520 years to 607 B.C., and arrive at 1914 as the date when Christ would return to start the rulership of the kingdom once again. Since this did not occur, they claim that He is ruling from heaven.

While their view of calculating prophetic time may be sound, we cannot go along with their application of the prophecy or their claim that Christ began ruling in 1914, for a number of reasons:

## 1. Why 607 B.C. for the interruption?

The kingdom of Israel was truly called the kingdom of the Lord (1 Chron. 28:5). But why choose the date of 607 B.C. for the interruption of the rulership of the kingdom of God?

What reason do the Witnesses

have to conclude that the prophecy applies to the interruption of the kingdom of Israel when Nebuchadnezzar first invaded? The Bible tells us that Jerusalem fell not in 607 B.C. but when Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem when Jehoiachin was reigning, which was about 586 B.C. (see Daniel 1:1; 2 Kings 24:1–2; 2 Chron. 36:6).

In 607 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar took the vessels of gold and silver from the temple. He took also the choice youth from the royal families along with the king himself. But the government did not fall. Jehoiachin replaced Jehoiakim on the throne and became a vassal of Babylon paying tribute. But the city and the temple were not destroyed at this time.

In about 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar came again against Jerusalem and took more captives. It was about 11 years later in 586 B.C., when he again besieged the city, destroying it and burning the temple. This was the end of that rulership of the kingdom of God. The prophet Ezekiel foretold this, saying, "*Overthrown, overthrown, I will make it overthrown! It shall be no longer, until He comes whose right it is, and I will give it to Him*" (Ezek. 21:27).

To establish the first invasion of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar as an interruption in the rulership is an arbitrary choice without foundation. And to make this the start of the "seven times" is again without Bible support.

## 2. 1914 not a relevant date.

If we assume that 607 B.C. is the proper starting date for the prophecy and add 2520 years to that date, we arrive at 1914. But what is that number? It is the result of an arithmetic calculation but in no way does it equate to 1914 on our calendar. We today have no way of knowing how



our dates correspond to the dates on the calendar in use seven centuries before Christ. Governments have changed, calendars have been changed, days have been added and subtracted. All we can say is that if the 1914 date is indeed the right figure, it is a representative figure not an actual date on our calendar.

### 3. Jesus will rule “on the earth,” not from heaven.

According to the Witness’ claim, Jesus is now ruling from heaven. What scriptural basis is there for this position? Nowhere does the Bible say Jesus will reign from heaven when He returns. The psalmist pictured Him on His throne in heaven until He returns, at which time He will “rule in the midst of [His] enemies” (Ps. 110:2). The saints are said to reign with Christ “on the earth” (Rev. 5:9–10). Jerusalem itself will be the “City of the Great King” (Matt. 5:35). He will “dwell among men” (Rev. 21:3). Nothing is said about Him reigning from heaven.

### 4. Jesus did not begin reigning in 1914.

Who saw Jesus take His throne in 1914? The Bible tells of the visibility of Christ when He comes, “that every eye shall see Him” (Rev. 1:7). His coming will be “as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west” (Matt. 24:27). Isaiah says “your eyes will see the King in His beauty” (Isa. 33:17). The apostle John says “we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2). Jesus Himself said that He will “come in the glory of His Father with His angels” (Matt. 16:27)—a spectacular sight. The angels who spoke to the sorrowing disciples when Jesus was taken to heaven said that He would come back just as He went away. They saw Him go; they will see Him return (Acts 1:10–11).

### 5. What is Jesus doing, if He is in control?

If Jesus took the throne in 1914 what is He doing? What positive changes do we see taking place in

our world today? Do we see peace, justice, and goodwill anywhere?

The Bible tells many striking changes that will come with Jesus’ appearing and taking the rulership:

◆ **He will call on all nations to submit to Him.** They will be given an ultimatum, “Fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment is come” (Rev. 14:7). In other words, submit or perish.

◆ **The nations will go out to fight against Him.** They will not like His new authority and the new rules. Revelation describes this conflict: “These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those **who are** with Him are called, chosen, and faithful” (Rev. 17:14).

◆ **Jerusalem will be the headquarters of law and order for the whole world.** “The law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Micah 4:2–4). It will be the chosen metropolis of the world, the “city of the Great King” Jesus (Matt. 5:35; Zech. 2:10–12).

◆ **The nations of earth will resist His righteous rule.** Those who resist Him will be taken down, and Christ’s kingship will last. Psalm 2 is a dramatic telling of the earth shaking events that will accompany Christ’s return and taking the rulership of earth’s governments. “His name shall endure forever; His name shall continue as long as the sun. And **men** shall be blessed in Him; All nations shall call Him blessed” (Psalm 72:17). This certainly is not happening now!

◆ **The end result will be worldwide peace, safety, righteousness and security.** After a massive destruction of the rebellious, “The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places” (Isa 32:17–18). We are far from

worldwide peace and security now.

◆ **Christ’s kingdom, when established, will endure forever.** Nothing will take it down. “He shall reign forever and ever” (See Daniel 7:13–14; 7:27; 2:44; Luke 1:33; Rev. 11:15; 22:5).

No, we cannot agree that the calculations of the Witnesses are right, or that Jesus began His rulership in 1914. We are looking for Jesus’ return to bring earth shaking, worldwide changes, “when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power” (2 Thess. 1:7–9).

When He comes, everyone on earth will know! “For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matt. 24:27).

### IS ELOHIM THE NAME OF GOD OR THE ANGELS?

**Q:** “My niece criticizes that we don’t use God’s name as Jehovah. Is Elohim a name for God Almighty, or does it refer to angels?”

**A:** The Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that worshipers should honor God by addressing Him only by His “personal name” Jehovah. We agree absolutely that we should give the very highest honor, respect and reverence to our Great Creator, and there are many, many passages of Scripture telling us how to hearken to His words, keep His commandments, obey His laws. But where are we once commanded to call Him by a certain name only?

The term **elohim** is often translated “God” and is used more than 2600 times throughout the Old Testament. It is also used of the angels of God. One example is in Exodus 3, where God spoke to Moses, and the root word



for God is *elohim* (See Ex. 3:6,14). Yet in the second verse of the same chapter, we read, “*And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed*” (Ex. 3:2). Note that “*the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses...*” Stephen, preaching by the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of God, confirmed this fact many years later, saying that “*an angel of the Lord appeared to him [Moses] in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai*” (Acts 7:30).

How do we account for the fact that *elohim* is a noun referring to God Almighty, yet is used of angels?

When we understand who the angels are, the answer is obvious. Angels are God’s family members, people who have lived by His laws and met His standard and have been accepted as His children. The same promise is extended to us if we comply with His laws (see 2 Cor. 6:17–18). As His children, angels go by God’s name. This fact was communicated to Moses in the wilderness. Exodus 23:20 reads, “*Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him*” (Ex. 23:20–21). Note: “*My name is in Him.*” They have the family name, just as our children carry our name.

So when Moses asked God (*Elohim*) what he (Moses) should say when asked who sent him, God (*Elohim*) replied, “*I am who I am.*” And He said “*Thus ye shall say to the children of Israel ‘I am has sent me to you’*” (Ex. 3:14). “*I AM*” was God’s representative, bearing God’s name.

*Elohim* is a term often used in the Old Testament referring to the angels of God who speak for God and minister in His behalf. Being a plural term for deity, it is also used of false gods. The meaning must be determined by the context. For example, Psalm 86:8–10 uses *elohim* with both meanings, as is clearly indicated by the context.

“*Among the gods [elohim, referring to false gods] there is none like you, O Lord; nor are there any works like Your works. All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name. For You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God [Elohim, referring to the true God].*” The following verse uses Yahweh, which is translated Lord or God in common translations: “*Teach me Your way, O Lord [Yahweh] I will walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name*” (Ps. 86:11). In Psalm 8:5, the word *elohim* is translated angels, “*You have made him a little lower than the angels [Elohim].*” This may seem like an uncertain translation in Psalm, but Hebrews 2:7–9 quotes this passage and definitely uses the word angels (Greek: *angelos*). \*

God works through His angels, as the book of Hebrews explains: “*Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*” (Hebrews 1:14). This makes God’s whole plan understandable and reasonable. Can we picture the great God of the universe coming down to talk to Moses on our little tiny planet earth—when He has billions and billions of galaxies throughout His vast creation? How belittling that would be to the great God of Heaven. But when we realize that He uses messen-

gers at all levels just as our government does, it makes so much sense. Angels are His agents sent to help those who will be heirs of salvation. They are sent just as one day we may be sent on such missions, once we have attained the likeness of Christ and been transformed into His image and made like the angels never to die (Luke 20:35–36). This is the promise of God. This is how God continues to provide opportunities for His new creation, by showing love and mercy to all who “*keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandment to do them*” (Ps. 103:17–18). ♦

\* The definition of *Elohim* as given by Gesenius’ Hebrew Lexicon explains the diverse use of the word in Scripture: “Used mostly of the true God... in a plural sense—(1) of gods or deities in general, whether true or false;... ‘the gods of the Egyptians,’ Exod. 12:12. ‘strange gods,’ Gen. 35:2, 4; Deut. 29:18; ‘new gods,’ Deut. 32:17. Sometimes, from the more common popular usage, Jehovah and idols are comprehended under this common name; Ps. 86:8, ‘there is none like unto thee among the gods, O Jehovah!’ Ex. 18:11; 22:19. Elsewhere the idea of divinity is altogether denied to idols, and is attributed to Jehovah alone. Isa. 44:6, ‘besides me there is no god,’ Isa. 45:5, 14, 21; 46:9. Idols are even called *elohim* 2 Ch. 13:9.”

The Lexicon then adds this note: “Not a few interpreters, both ancient and modern, have regarded ‘*Elohim*’ as also denoting angels (see Psa. 8:6, the LXX. and Ch.; Ps. 82:1; 97:7; 138:1).... [But Hebrews, chaps. 1:6 and 2:7, 9 shew plainly that this word sometimes means angels, and the authority of the N.T. decides the matter.]”

## The Wonder of SMALL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

*stand, things far too wonderful for me?”* (Job 42:3 NLT). Little wonder the prophet Isaiah exclaimed, “*Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust*” (Isa. 40:15 NIV). Just how small are we, anyway!

Yet this same Creator is able to use smallness to make great. He has done it in the past, and He will do it again. It is His immutable promise: “*A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. I, the Lord,*

*will hasten it in its time*” (Isa. 60:22).

In the prophetic dream in the book of Daniel, a small stone, representing the Kingdom of Christ, grew and grew until it had filled the earth (Dan. 2:34–35, 45).

Jesus said smallness was the way to real greatness when He promised, “*he who is least among you all will be great*” (Luke 9:48). “*He who humbles himself will be exalted*” (Luke 18:14). The strait gate and the narrow way—all small—open into the most expansive life imaginable, even *eternal* life! (Matt. 7:14).

When God is working with the small, small is great! ♦



## OBITUARY

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

### FLORENCE EVELYN BURKETT

We have received word of the passing of a long-time Friend and Sister, Florence Evelyn Burkett, of Winterset, Iowa, at the advanced age of 97.

Sister Florence's acquaintance with the Church goes back many years to when her parents, Brother and Sister Hendricks, were members of the Iowa ecclesia.

Sister Florence was married to Charles Burkett at the age of 20, and had three sons (Clarence, Dean, and Joe) and one daughter Janet. During these years, Sister Florence lived, according to her own report, with only a passive interest in God or her faith—until her father, to whom she was very devoted, died. Suddenly she was impressed with the seriousness of putting her faith into action, saying that if she did not, she would never see her father again (at the Resurrection).

At that point she changed her direction as she began corresponding with members of the

Church and rearranging her busy life. She was living on a large farm and making pies daily for a local restaurant. Her new schedule included daily devotions and Bible study, making use of the recorded Church services and Bible studies from the Church. Several members of the church visited her during this time, and she also visited the Church when she had opportunity. After the death of her husband in 1982, she relocated to join our Rochester congregation. An active member, she gave generously of her talents and energy in the service of others. A happy, buoyant person by nature, she especially enjoyed baking pies and other "goodies" for church dinners and special occasions. Though she was never trained in music, her ability to play the piano "by ear" was appreciated at daily services. She was also a member of the Church's musical organizations, joining the choir and playing a synthesizer with the band.

When her health began to fail in the summer of 2002, her daughter, Janet Parker, took her back to Iowa to care for her. She passed away on October 2, 2015.

Sister Florence is survived by her children, Clarence (Pat) Burkett of Apache Junction, AZ; Dean (Christine) Burkett of Earlham, IA; Janet (Larry) Parker of Winterset, IA; and Joe Burkett of Conroe, TX; also ten grandchildren, ten great grandchildren, six great great grandchildren, extended family and a host of friends. ♦



**G**od is not unfair;  
he will not forget what  
you have done, nor the love  
you have shown...  
to the saints.

Heb. 6:10

#### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 23

##### ANIMALS FROM THE BIBLE

1. horse (Ps. 33:17)
2. lion (1 Pet. 5:8)
3. Lamb (Rev. 19:9)
4. dog (Eccl. 9:4)
5. foxes (S. of Sol. 2:15)
6. oxen (Luke 14:19)
7. wolf (Isa. 11:6)
8. camel (Matt. 23:24)
9. mule (2 Sam. 18:9)
10. cattle (Ps. 50:10)
11. Lion (Rev. 5:5)

##### MIRACLES

1. east (Ex. 14:21-22)
2. bitter water became sweet (Ex. 15:23-25)
3. oil, meal (1 Kings 17:10-16)
4. stretched himself out on the child three times (1 Kings 17:17-24)
5. servant, paralysis (Matt. 8:5-13)

6. blasphemy (Matt. 9:1-7)
7. See that no man know it (Matt. 9:27-30)
8. 5 loaves and 2 fishes (Matt. 14:15-21)
9. Peter (Matt. 14:26-29)
10. one (Luke 17:11-19)
11. rebuked them (Matt. 20:29-34)
12. had to awaken Him from sleep (Mark 4:35-41)
13. Four (John 11:38-44)
14. Peter (Acts 9:36-41)
15. bitten by a viper (Acts 28:1-6)

##### PROPHETS

1. Jonah (Jonah 1:1-2)
2. Nathan (2 Sam. 7:1-5)
3. Joel (Joel 2:28)
4. Zechariah (Zech. 4:1-3)

5. Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:1,3, 6, 8, etc.)
6. Elisha (2 Kings 2:19-22)
7. Nehemiah (Neh. 6:3)
8. Ezekiel (Ezek. 4:4-8)
9. Daniel (Dan. 2:35, 45)
10. Amos (Amos 7:14)
11. Jeremiah (Jer. 20:1-6)

##### Errata

The USA map on page 10 of the Summer, 2015 issue of the *Megiddo Message* had Arizona and New Mexico reversed—as were Oklahoma and Arkansas. We apologize for the errors.





## ANIMALS FROM THE BIBLE

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a vain thing for safety.
2. The devil, as a roaring \_\_\_\_\_, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.
3. *"Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the \_\_\_\_\_."*
4. A living \_\_\_\_\_ is better than a dead lion.
5. The little \_\_\_\_\_, that spoil the vines.
6. I have bought five yoke of \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ also shall dwell with the lamb.
8. Blind guides strain at a gnat, and swallow a \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Absalom rode upon a \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Every beast of the forest is mine, and the \_\_\_\_\_ upon a thousand hills.
11. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the tribe of Judah will open (bring to pass) what has been promised (sealed).

## MIRACLES

1. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong wind from the \_\_\_\_\_ so that the Israelites could cross over.
2. When Moses cast a tree into the water at Marah, the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. According to the prophet Elijah, the widow's cruse was kept miraculously full of \_\_\_\_\_ and the barrel of \_\_\_\_\_ wasted not.
4. Elijah restored the widow's son to life when he \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Jesus healed the centurion's \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.


6. When Jesus healed the paralytic and forgave his sins, the scribes accused Him of \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The two blind men that had their sight restored were admonished by Jesus to \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Jesus fed the multitude of over 5000 with \_\_\_\_\_.
9. When Jesus walked on the sea, \_\_\_\_\_ asked to come to Him on the water.
10. When Jesus healed the 10 lepers, only \_\_\_\_\_ returned to thank Him.
11. When the two blind men cried out to Jesus for mercy, the crowd \_\_\_\_\_.
12. In Mark, before Jesus calmed the storm, his disciples \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Lazarus had been dead \_\_\_\_\_ days before Jesus raised him.
14. Tabitha (Dorcas) was raised from the dead by \_\_\_\_\_.
15. The Maltese decided that Paul was a god when he survived despite being \_\_\_\_\_.

## PROPHETS

1. What prophet prophesied to the city of Nineveh?
2. Who was the great prophet of David's time?
3. What prophet foretold the time when *"Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions"*?
4. What prophet had the vision of the gold lampstand and the 2 olive trees?
5. What prophet is repeatedly called *"son of man"* in his own book?
6. What prophet rendered a spring healthful by putting salt into it?
7. Who said, *"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down"*?
8. What prophet was bidden to lie on his left side 390 days and on his right side 40 days, each day for a year of his nation's iniquity?
9. What prophet saw the vision of a stone cut out of the mountain without hands?
10. What prophet was *"a herdman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit"*?
11. What prophet was beaten and put in the stocks, and uttered a prophecy against the governor who put him there?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 22





# FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS!

(and not “when all else fails”)

by SPENCER KINCANNON

**S**ome time ago I saw a sign which pictured an open Bible. Under the Bible was a caption which read, “When all else fails, read the instructions.”

Certainly it is always good to read the instructions. But as with everything, there is a right time, and a time when it is too late. God gave us the instructions to save us the grief and pain of blundering—what message do we send to Him when we do not care enough about His instructions (the Bible) to even read them!

God gave us His instructions to be read first, not to be turned to as a last resort. What God says should always come first.

If we fail to read and follow God’s instructions, we will someday find ourselves in tragic circumstances, as some Bible characters have.

“Remember what happened to Lot’s wife!” warned Jesus (Luke 17:32 NLT). We learn about Lot’s wife in Genesis 19:26 NLT, “Lot’s wife looked back as she was following along behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.” Lot and his family had been given clear instructions by the angels, “Run for your lives!” and, “Do not stop anywhere in the valley. And don’t look back!” But Lot’s wife disregarded the instructions, and lost her life.

We don’t really know why Lot’s wife looked back. Perhaps her heart was still back in Sodom, and she impulsively took one last look. Or maybe it was just a careless and unintentional mistake. Perhaps it was both of these reasons.

What can we learn from her fatal

mistake? First, that when God gives instructions, He means what He says. Our disregard, or forgetfulness, or negligence or carelessness does not change His instructions.

And second, He has told us what to do and it is up to us to stay focused. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Isa. 26:3). To stay focused on the goal, eternal life, we must keep our minds focused on obeying the Divine instructions. If we get careless about what we read, what we think about, where we go and who we associate with, it will only bring us down. We will take our eyes off the prize and become absorbed in the things of this world. And in the end we will reap destruction.

**L**et’s take a brief look at **Saul**, who was anointed to be Israel’s first king. His story covers more than half of the book of 1 Samuel. Saul certainly got off to a good start. He was picked by the Lord Himself! But, he soon headed downhill.

One day Saul had some very specific instructions. On this occasion he was instructed to prepare the burnt offerings and peace offerings and then wait for Samuel the prophet. Saul made the preparations, but then he became impatient and went ahead and made the offerings himself. Just as he was finishing up, Samuel arrived. Samuel rebuked him saying, “You have disobeyed the command of the Lord your God. Had you obeyed, the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forev-

er. But now your dynasty must end, for the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart. The Lord has already chosen him to be king over his people, for you have not obeyed the Lord’s command” (1 Sam. 13:13–14 NLT).

After this Saul went on to more disobedience. The instructions from the Lord were to go and destroy the nation of Amalek. Men, women, children, animals—everything that pertained to Amalek was to be destroyed. Nothing was to be spared. What did Saul do? “Saul and his men spared Agag’s life and kept the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything, in fact, that appealed to them. They destroyed only what was worthless or of poor quality” (1 Sam. 15:9 NLT).

When he was found out, Saul tried to justify his actions to the Prophet Samuel by saying that he had spared the best of the animals to be sacrificed to the Lord. But Samuel replied, “What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Obedience is far better than sacrifice. Listening to him is much better than offering the fat of rams. Rebellion is as bad as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as bad as worshiping idols. So because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you from being king” (1 Sam. 15:22–23 NLT). This was the end of Samuel’s dealings with Saul.

Pride, jealousy, rebelliousness, stubbornness, anger—these all contributed to Saul’s downfall. Self-justification also played a major role in his life. In his mind his intentions were always good, his motives always pure, even when he was blatantly disobeying the Lord. It

never occurred to him that he needed to change his way of thinking. He never attempted to do better, but steadily sank into the jaws of destruction.

I also want to mention **Solomon**. Of all the people in the Divine record, probably no one fell so far as Solomon. At the beginning of his reign he prayed to the Lord for wisdom. In answer to his prayer he was given greater wisdom than anyone before him. In addition he was given riches and honor above all

kills its victims. But the end result was the same. By the time Solomon realized what was happening, he had reached the point of no return. All he could do was express regret for the way he had lived, and leave us some good advice on how not to follow in his footsteps (Eccl. 12:1, 13–14).

What a different man was **David**, whose reign came between that of Saul and Solomon. David did not live a perfect life from the beginning to the end.

## NO TIME IS MORE OPPORTUNE THAN THE PRESENT.

the kings of the earth at that time. But, in violation of the Lord's commandment, he married many foreign wives. His wives led his heart away from God.

From reading the book of Ecclesiastes, it seems that Solomon came to his senses late in his life. Finally he was ready to heed the instructions! But by then it was too late. Hear his sad lament: *"Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished"* (Eccl. 4:13). When we read these words, we cannot help but think that Solomon was speaking of himself. In the book of Ecclesiastes he recounts his many accomplishments, and concludes that it was all vanity. He was a success in this world, but he threw away the opportunity to gain eternal life.

When we read the accounts of the first three kings of Israel, it is amazing what a contrast in character they were. Actually it's not amazing, because there are still people like them today.

Saul, stubborn and rebellious almost from the beginning of his career, was a spiritual wreck who seemed to have no desire to do better. Solomon was somewhat different. He allowed corrupting influences to creep into his life and ruin him slowly, just as cancer slowly

He committed some terrible sins. But when he was confronted by the Prophet of the Lord concerning his misdeeds, he was always humble and penitent. How different from Saul, who thought only of justifying himself!

In the end David's life became the standard by which all the later kings were measured. A few such as Hezekiah and Josiah followed in the footsteps of David and served the Lord with all their hearts. There were others who followed the way of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart. But most were evil.

We are fortunate today that we have the records of these people. We don't have to try everything first. We can read God's instructions. By reading and taking to heart the lessons of others' experiences, we can grow spiritually. We don't want to be careless and lose the prize, as Lot's wife lost her life when she forgot the warning of the angels and looked back toward Sodom. We need to keep looking forward, not backward. Only by looking ahead can we secure that eternal future.

We don't want to be like Saul, too blind to make any spiritual progress. And we don't want to be like Solomon, who was blind also. He did not realize his condition was getting worse until it was too late to change. We don't want to be like King Amaziah, who served the Lord, but not with a perfect heart (2 Chron. 25:2). Amaziah grew in the Lord but he did not grow enough. He ran the race but did not reach the finish line. We don't want to end up the same way.

We want to be like David and the others who were wholehearted in their dedication to the Lord. A job done halfheartedly will only be half done, and will never meet the approval of the Great Judge. If we want to be approved at the Judgment, we need to be wholehearted now.

Let us read and follow completely God's Book of Instructions FIRST, *before* all else fails.

We will be eternally glad if we do. ♦

### On the Authority of the NEW TESTAMENT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

because the translator must choose the appropriate definition of the original word used. And naturally the translator is going to choose according to his own belief or understanding of the passage.

The most powerful evidence for the truthfulness of the Bible is

the internal evidence, i.e., the fact that the Bible presents one plan of salvation, and one Almighty God from Genesis to Revelation. The Bible is a self-interpreting book. However, all of this is a separate study, not within the scope of this article. ♦





# INPUT/OUTPUT

*What goes in is what comes out.*

Glenda was upset with herself. She couldn't remember ever using bad words before. But lately whenever things didn't go her way, the first thing that came to her mind was terrible, foul language. One evening as Glenda was helping her mom do the dishes, she dropped a glass and broke it. Out slipped a swear word.

Mom looked at her in shock! "Why, Glenda! Whatever has gotten into you?"

Glenda was so embarrassed she felt like crying. "I—I don't know! I know it isn't right, but lately I can't seem to control what I say."

Mother was quiet for a moment. "Honey, sounds to me like you're being programmed wrong."

"What do you mean?" asked Glenda.

"Well, do you remember the saying, 'garbage in—garbage out.'?"

"Yes," Glenda answered. "It's like the computer

What about your TV viewing? or the talk at school? Where are you hearing those bad words? Non-Christian talk is everywhere. What you let into your mind will eventually come out in your speech. If you read the wrong kind of literature, watch TV programs with foul language and go with people who swear, that's the way you are programming your mind."

"Oooh," said Glenda thoughtfully. "I don't want garbage in my mind. At school Shawna is my best friend, and she often uses bad words."

"That is the kind of company you want to avoid. You don't have to go with her, do you?"

"No, it's just that she always thinks of lots of 'fun' things to do. But I guess it would be better to skip the fun if there is a bad influence," mused Glenda thoughtfully. "I can't imagine Jesus using bad words."

"That's the idea," Mom said, smiling. "If you don't listen to bad words you won't be tempted to use them. You won't even think of them. It's the lesson of 'Input/Output, What goes into your mind is what comes out of your mouth.'" ♦

***Feed your mind good things  
and the output will be good also.***

### **Think About It:**

Do you find yourself saying (or thinking) bad words? Jesus said that our words reveal what is in our hearts. If we only let good and wholesome things into our minds (hearts) then only the kind, truthful and God-pleasing will come out.



*"Input, output. What goes in is what comes out."*

song Noah's class sang." Glenda tapped her foot and sang, "Input, output, What goes in is what comes out. / Input, output—That is what it's all about. / Input, output—Your mind is a computer whose / Input, output Daily you must choose."

"Exactly!" smiled Mom. "What goes in is what comes out." So how has YOUR mind been programmed lately? What have you been reading?



# Where Are Your Thank You's?

**T**he day after Mr. Haglund's visit, the Johnson children still found it hard to forget their grumpy Grandad's ways. "Why," said Melissa, "I didn't hear him say 'Thank you'—not once!"

"Every one of us tried to be nice to him, but do you suppose he could even smile at us?" asked Ann.

"Well, do you remember when Christ healed the ten lepers?" questioned Mom. "How many of those lepers—who had been so very sick and wretched and outcast—how many of them bothered to say 'Thank you' to Jesus after He had entirely healed them?"

"Only one of them thanked Jesus," said Mark.

"That's right. And each of you may as well learn now that you are going to be disappointed in life if you expect folks to actually thank you every time you do something for them. Even though a lot of folks will appreciate what you do for them, not many of them will say so. Maybe they intend to say thank you, but they just never get around to it. So, it's a good idea not to expect to be thanked. And yet we should remember to thank others even though they may not thank us—that's part of the Golden Rule" (Matt. 7:12).

Mom pulled several trays of cookies from the oven. Six pairs of eyes lit up with delight at the sight of those fresh-baked cookies.

"Those who would like a cookie form a line to my right," announced Mom.

In a twinkling, six young Johnsons stood in a row. Then, with Mark at the head, they marched up to the

cooling cookies, each one reaching for a cookie. As they happily munched cookies, they pranced around the big kitchen. The cookies eaten, Mark winked at his mother, then headed his sisters and brothers for the cookies again. When each had finished a second cookie, Mark headed his company back to the counter for a third time, but Mom shook her head. "One dozen cookies will take care of you until supper!"

"Say, I could eat a dozen all by myself between now and supper," Mark told her.

For a few moments, Mom stood quietly watching the beaming faces of those who had enjoyed her cookies. Then she said, "I'm waiting!"

Six Johnson's looked at her, wonderingly.

"Waiting for what, Mom?"

"Waiting to hear just one cookie-gobbler say 'Thank you.'"

Sheepishly, the children glanced at one another. Then there was a whole chorus of "Thank you's."

"Hmmm," said Mom, winking one eye, "seems like I heard some young folks around here finding fault with a certain old man because he didn't say 'Thank you'. Reminds me of a verse in the Bible that says, '*Judge not that ye be not judged*'" (Matt. 7:1).

Paul looked up at her, his freckled face puckered in thought. "Guess we aren't any better'n ol' Gramps—and he doesn't have a Mom to teach him to say 'Thank you.' ♦

Taken from "*Happy Acres*,"  
by ERLING NICOLAI ROLFSRUD





# Water Wonders

## PART TWO

### Did You Know...?

- ✓ ...that the giant redwood tree can use 160 gallons of water per day and transports it as high as 379 feet?
- ✓ ...that you can survive about 3 to 4 weeks without food, but only about 5 to 7 days without water?
- ✓ ...that water is our greatest cleanser and detoxifier?
- ✓ ...that each year, nearly 10,000 cubic miles of water flow along the world's rivers to the oceans?
- ✓ ...that 97.5% of all water on earth is salt water, leaving only 2.5% as fresh water, and less than half of that 2.5% is accessible for direct human use?
- ✓ ...that water regulates the earth's temperature?
- ✓ ...that water regulates the temperature of the human body, carries nutrients and oxygen to cells, cushions joints, protects organs and tissues, and removes wastes?
- ✓ ...that about 77% of the human brain is water?
- ✓ ...that about 50% of a living tree is water?
- ✓ ...that ice floats because water expands by 9% when it freezes, making it less dense than in its liquid state?
- ✓ ...that a loss of more than 10% body water can prove fatal?
- ✓ ...that blood plasma, our body's natural waterway, is 92% water?
- ✓ ...that we exhale about 20% of our water intake?

## LIFE AND WATER

Water is a critical resource. We can't live without a regular supply. Without water, the forests would dry up, the grass would die, agriculture would fail and there would be no food for our tables. The oceans would evaporate away and the many creatures that live in them would die. Take just a tiny drop of water and view it under a microscope, and you will see many little creatures moving about in it. Of course, they, too, would perish. Even creatures of the desert, some of which never drink, would die because their food supply would be gone, and they depend on the food they eat to give them the water they need.

A quick look at the quantity of water required to produce various products will help us understand the value of water.

PRODUCT	ESTIMATED VOLUME OF WATER REQUIRED TO PRODUCE
a ton of milk	113 tons (7,060 gallons)
a ton of meat	480 tons (30,000 gallons)
a ton of beet sugar	2,208 tons (138,000 gallons)
a ton of textiles	4,656 tons (291,000 gallons)
a ton of aluminum	6,560 tons (410,000 gallons)
a ton of synthetic rubber	7,392 tons (462,000 gallons)
a ton of paper	8,688 tons (543,000 gallons)

Everything living must have water to survive. It might be said that water is even more important than food. It is estimated that one can live about 3 to 4 weeks without food, whereas one would die in about 5 to 7 days without water.

But this only concerns the water we drink.

Have you ever considered the water we *breathe*—does it surprise you that humans breathe water? Each breath we inhale contains water—it can be as much as 100% relative humidity by the time it enters the lungs.

It is said that the human body is about 60% water, the brain 77 to 78%, blood 82% and the lungs 90%. Water is basic to all life forms, plant and animal. Were it not for water's unique ability to dissolve so many different substances, our cells could not use the many nutrients, minerals and chemicals needed to support life. Its ability to transport these vital nutrients to all parts of the body is due to its “stickiness” (from surface tension). By a very complex process water carries the metabolized carbohydrates and proteins our bodies use as food to every part of our being.

Also due to this stickiness, water is one of nature's best cleansing agents. After dropping off its load of nutrients, it sticks to waste products, picking them up and carrying them through our arteries to the lungs or kidneys for disposal.

This “stick-ability” property of water makes it a useful cleansing agent,

from the simple washing of our hands to the cleansing of the earth's atmosphere by complex weather systems which produce precipitation. Is it any wonder Christ used the term "water" as a symbol of the cleansing power of the words He spoke?

Rarely do we even think of the drink we are enjoying when we add to water a little lemon and sugar and call it lemonade, or pour it over tea leaves or ground coffee beans and call it tea or coffee. Even the fruit juices we drink are primarily water.

Water is a vital resource, rarely thought about unless you are responsible for providing a clean supply to your community or city, or if you are one of the millions who do not have ample access to it. According to Paul Simon, about 9,500 children die every day because of lack of water or, more frequently due to polluted water. Some areas just have too many people for the amount of available potable water. For example, some years ago the head of China's Environmental Protection Agency stated that the ideal population for China's water supply is 650 million. In 2003 the nation had more than twice that number (1,357,000,000) and the number is still climbing.

The United States is not exempt from water shortages. Because its abundant supply is claimed for irrigation of arid lands, the Colorado River disappears<sup>1</sup> shortly after it crosses the Mexican border.

Aquifers, nature's large water storage tanks, are being depleted. Farmers that were depending on irrigation for their crops are turning more and more to dry farming, resulting in more expensive produce.

Sometimes just diverting water-flow can cause great harm. Some years ago Senators Paul Simon and Harry Reid visited Usbekistan. While there they visited what had been a port city on the Aral Sea, reported to have been the third<sup>2</sup> largest inland sea in the world. About 1960, Russian engi-

neers had convinced Nikita Khrushchev and other leaders that they could increase cotton and rice production by diverting the waters flowing into the Aral Sea for irrigation purposes. The idea was that once the fields were saturated the water would again begin to flow into the sea. What the visitors found instead were hulks of large boats marooned 50 miles from water. The irrigation idea did not work as planned.

Aralsk was once a major fishing port on the Aral Sea. By 1998 it had shrunk to 60% its original size; by 2007, it was down to 10%.

Today one would have to travel about 100 miles from there to reach the very small body of water.



**Ships and boats abandoned miles from the diminishing Aral Sea.**

In order to sustain life, the Everlasting God made abundant provisions for humankind and all creatures on earth. When these provisions are studied, their complexity and delicate interdependence and balance give strong testimony to the wise Master Designer.

But we must not limit our vision to the here and now. The discerning eye sees design with purpose—pointing to the *purpose* of the Master Designer. There must be more, and there is! Through His written Word the Creator has given us a far vision, a glimpse into eternity. And this view includes short-lived human beings changed to immortal beings. This earth will be filled with joyful individuals who will never suffer the agony and fear of death, pain or sorrow, where the water of life will flow freely, abundant to all.

Do you want to be there when *"the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea"*? (Hab. 2:14). Do you want to drink from the *"fountain of living water"*? You can! if you choose to serve the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind. ♦

<sup>1</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colorado\\_River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colorado_River)

<sup>2</sup>Other sources put this figure at the fourth largest inland sea, now the eighth.

#### **Additional sources:**

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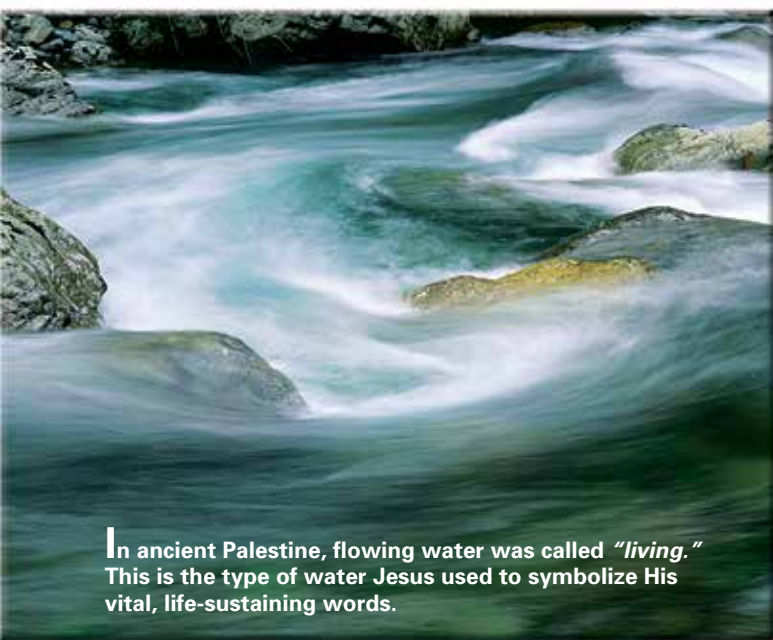
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**In ancient Palestine, flowing water was called "living." This is the type of water Jesus used to symbolize His vital, life-sustaining words.**



## **How Salty Are You?**

*"Ye are the salt of the earth."* —Matt. 5:13

**I**f you were to evaporate a ton of water from the Pacific Ocean, someone has calculated that you would get approximately 79 pounds of salt. A ton of Atlantic water would yield 81 pounds. From the Dead Sea the same amount of water would yield 500 pounds. As these statistics demonstrate, the earth's bodies of water vary greatly in their degree of saltiness.

So do Christians.

Jesus said we are to be the salt of the earth. But we all have different levels of salt content and that is something within our control.

How salty are you?

Let's look at a few Scripture references to see what it means to be salty.

**Salt enhances flavor.** *"People complain when there is no salt in their food. And how tasteless is the uncooked white of an egg!"* (Job 6:6 NLT). The

Israelites were commanded to *"Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings"* (Lev. 2:13 NIV).

**As a preservative, salt was symbolic of covenants.** *"Whatever is set aside from the holy offerings the Israelites present to the Lord I give to you and your sons and daughters as your regular share. It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the Lord for*

*both you and your offspring"* (Num. 18:19 NIV).

**Salt signifies keeping a promise.** In Arab countries an agreement was sealed with a gift of salt to show the strength and permanence of the contract. Jesus said, *"You are the salt of the earth"* (Matt. 5:13 NIV). Believers are called to actively preserve and live out the Word.

**Salt is a symbol of goodness.** *"Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? You must have the qualities of salt among yourselves and live in peace with each other."* (Mark 9:50 NLT).

**Salt indicates purity in speech, in good taste or good flavor, acceptable, appealing.** *"Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt"* (Col. 4:6).

Check your salt content. Are you keeping your covenant with God faithfully? Are you the kind of person others like to be around? Is your conversation pure, upbuilding, stimulating? Do you keep your promises? Are you characterized by goodness? The unbelieving world is watching and listening. What do they see and hear? How salty are you? Perhaps you need to add more salt today.

Look to God's Word for guidance. Study Jesus' pattern of life. As you follow Christ's example, others will see what it means to be seasoned with salt, and some will want to taste for themselves. ♦

**A**bility is of little value without dependability.

**L**ife is like a bank. You can't take out what you haven't put in.

**O**nce a sinner always a sinner? It does not have to be. Forgiveness and improvement by change are avenues open to the life seeker at all times up to the very end of his/her day of probation. Winners and losers in the race for LIFE are determined by their status at the end of the course, not during their running.

**W**e can't stay at "see" level and ever see God.

**K**ee your head and your heart going in the right direction and you'll not have to worry about your feet.

**W**e increase our ability, stability, and responsibility when we increase our sense of accountability to God.

**A**ll of us need a faith that will not shrink when washed in the waters of affliction and adversity.

**I**t's easy to make excuses when we ought to be making opportunities.



## GOD FIRST!

*In my bedroom hangs this motto,  
And its place is near the door,  
Yes, it hangs there to remind me  
God must always go before!*

*Never do I cross the threshold  
But the motto seems to say  
"Just a word with God, your Father,  
Before you hurry on your way."*

*When I'm dressing in the morning,  
As I see it hanging there,  
It reminds me of my duties,  
Bids me to seek help in prayer.*

*Duties, burdens, worries, troubles,  
All may come to me this day;  
How can I prepare to meet them?  
How, I ask, except I pray!*

*When I plan fresh undertakings,  
Then the motto seems to say,  
"Don't in your own strength begin it;  
First ask God! Kneel down and PRAY!"*

*When I'm ready, dressed for walking,  
With so little time to spare,  
Still I cannot leave my bedroom  
Till I've seen that motto there—*

*Till I've stopped for just a moment,  
And in earnest, secret prayer  
Placed myself and all my doings  
In my Heavenly Father's care.*

*When the busy day is over,  
And for rest I would prepare,  
Once again I hear its message,  
"First go meet your God in prayer!"*

*Yes, "God First!" must be my motto  
If I would succeed each day;  
Do you wish your ways to prosper?  
Then you must kneel down and pray.*

*Yes, let "God First!" be your motto,  
He'll your joy and trouble share;  
All life's duties, cares or pleasures,  
Take them to your God in prayer.*

—John Standing

*Time **WAS** is past;  
you can not it recall.*

*Time **IS** you have;  
employ this portion well.*

*Time **FUTURE** is not,  
and may never be:*

*Time **PRESENT** is the  
only time you have.*

*We determine our future by how we use the present.*

*No one has an enemy worse than himself.*

*To know God's will is our greatest treasure;  
to do His will is our greatest privilege.*

*All want to succeed, but some want to succeed so much they're  
willing to work hard to achieve it.*





## *The Happy Man*

In this vain world, gone mad with speed,  
We seldom think of what we need.  
Instead, our minds are all engrossed  
With pleasures that we covet most.  
We have no time to be content  
With all the blessings God has lent,  
With food and raiment, strength and health—  
We crave the luxuries of wealth.

We do not seem to realize  
That the Creator, who supplies  
Mankind with breath, with sun, and rain,  
Can see our happiness, our pain.  
And we are loath to grant His right  
To give what pleases in His sight—  
The things He knows to be the best—  
Satisfied to let go the rest.

He is a happy man indeed,  
Who, thinking only of his need,  
Is thankful when that is supplied,  
Though other things may be denied.  
So let us more contented be,  
Nor long for everything we see,  
And I am sure that happiness  
More frequently our lives will bless.

—Liot L. Snyder

*True  
godliness with  
contentment is itself  
great wealth. After all, we  
brought nothing with us when  
we came into the world, and  
we can't take anything  
with us when  
we leave it.*

—1 Tim. 6:6-7