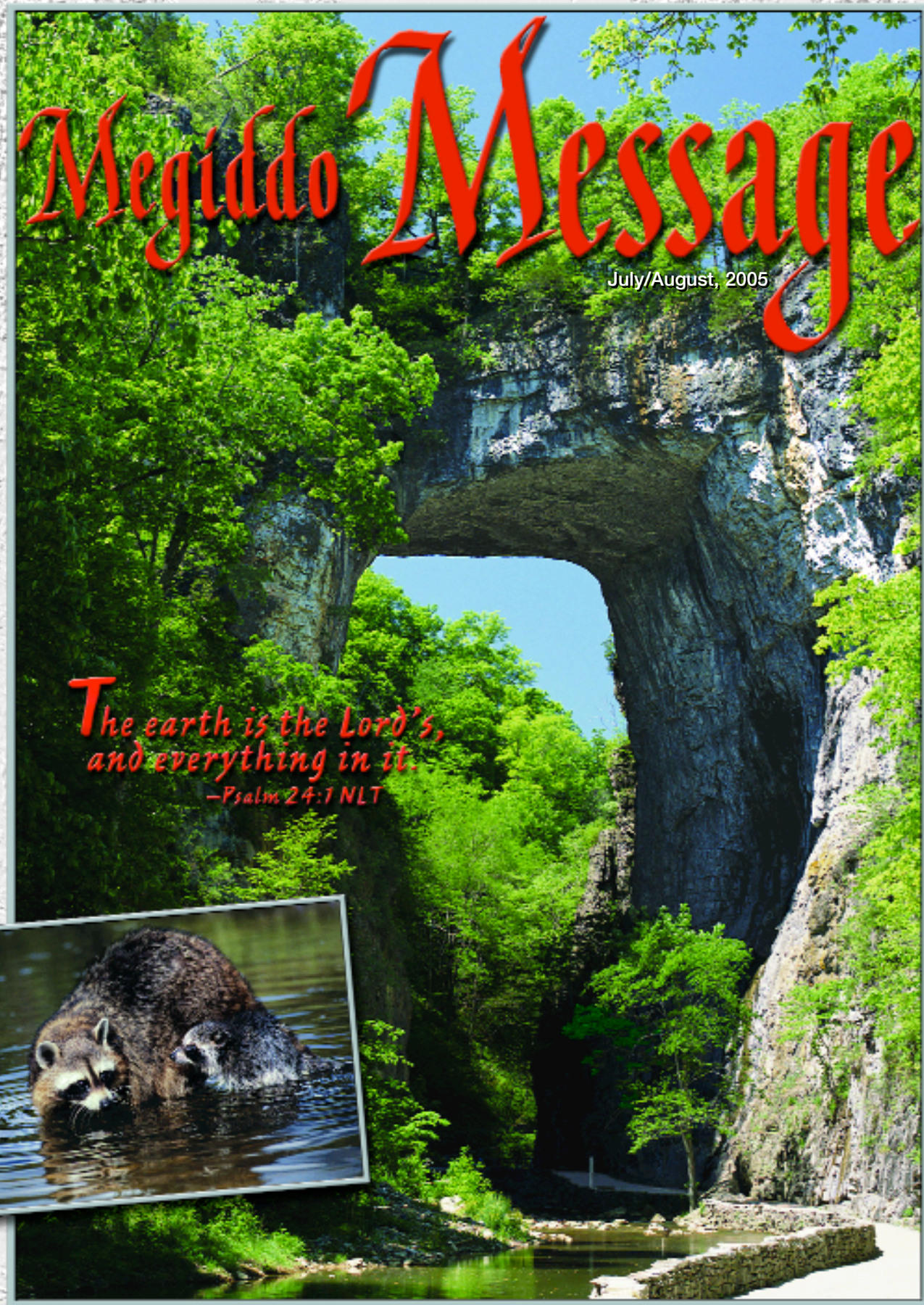


Megiddo Message

July/August, 2005

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





CAUTION: NEWS OVERLOAD

Whenever I see people reading the newspaper on their lunch hour, or while waiting for an appointment, or for a meal to be served, something inside me cries out. Isn't there something better to put into one's mind? Isn't there a better refreshment for one's few minutes of relaxation? What in the newspaper can lift one's spirits, or satisfy those inner hungers for wholeness?

We live in an age of information overload, especially with the world and local news. We are constantly baraged by the traffic of news. What do we do with it?

I'm not advocating ignorance of current events. We need to be informed about what is going on in the world around us.

At the same time, what we are seeing and hearing every day is substantially affecting us because what we experience becomes a part of us. The constant negative

between men and women, we may come slowly to tolerate, then accept those actions as "not all that bad." If we watch government, corporate, and religious corruption, we may become cynical and skeptical of all leadership. As our values change, others experience these shifts in our behavior—less patient, more aggressive.

We don't have to allow the news to shape us in this way. We don't have to let the present world frame our values. But to escape its influence, we have to be diligent in applying the advice of king Solomon, who said, "*Guard your heart,...for it affects everything you do*" (Prov. 4:23 NLT). He goes on to say "*Avoid all perverse talk; stay far from corrupt speech*" (verse 24).

What can we do? We can receive the news with a guarded heart and a deep sense of our commitment to God. If we do, we won't be hungry for all the details. We will be content with basic information, and will trust the operation of this world—and our own survival—to the keeping of a God who has a definite plan, who shortly will send His Son to intervene and summon all people everywhere to respect His authority and submit to His righteous and just rule.

In the meantime, we need to keep focused on our personal obedience to the law of God. "*Whatever you do,*" says the Apostle Paul, "*do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.... Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*" (Col. 3:23; 1 Cor. 10:31).

Instead of trying to keep informed on all the news of this world, why not be refreshed by reading about *God's good news*—the coming of Jesus, the New Kingdom, and the worldwide changes He will bring! Read Psalm 72, and Psalm 145 for a picture of that great Day. Then read the prophecy of Daniel 7 to get some perspective on the world picture, from the time of Daniel right through to our own day. Then read the last chapter of Revelation, Jesus' final words to us after He had gone to heaven.

That new worldwide Kingdom will be just as surely as you and I are breathing today. It is the promise at the heart of the Lord's prayer: "*Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven*" (Matt. 6:10).

God's good news is news worth pondering, because some day soon, it will be *the news*!

Are you ready? ♦

*What we see and
hear becomes a part of
our being.*

images of war, murder, child abuse, spouse abuse, violence and crime have the potential to change us inside without our hardly knowing it. For example, if we watch violence on TV, we are more likely to be quick to anger and slow to forgive. The tender side of our conscience becomes calloused, and we have less feeling for those who suffer. If we hear profanity used day after day, we may find ourselves adopting an attitude of mental acceptance, or even thinking a swear word in a moment of aggravation—instead of suffering in horror because our best Friend's name is being dragged in the muck. If we choose to be entertained by immoral actions

The Captured Apostle—Paul of Tarsus

Following the ministry of Christ, God had work to be done—He had people over a wide area of the Roman Empire to be enlightened with His saving knowledge. Who should go and find them?

On the road that led into the city of Damascus in Syria, God designated His man—a young Jewish firebrand, a man from Tarsus. Even when God called him, this zealous crusader was bearing papers authorizing him to root out the Christian community in the city of Damascus and drag them to Jerusalem in chains to be tried before the Sanhedrin.

But Saul never carried out his plans. A flash. A light *“above the brightness of the sun,”* and Jesus struck him to the ground, terrified, speechless, blinded. From that moment forward Saul’s planning was over. Now he was Christ’s man, ready to do what Christ wanted done. To use his own words, he had been *“captured by Jesus Christ.”*

There was never any question as to whether he was the right man for the new venture.

God knows how to find the man to do the work He wants done.

A Man from Tarsus

Paul saw many cities of the Roman Empire, but always he retained a connection with his roots—*“he was Paul of Tarsus.”* By his own testimony he was *“a citizen of no mean city.”* Tarsus was the capital of the province of Cilicia. A Roman town with a Jewish colony, it lay about 12 miles from the Mediterranean and about 80 miles from Antioch of Syria.

But what interests us most about Paul is not where he came from but his extraordinary achievements for the cause of Christ—his insights, his character, his courage, his all-out devotion to Jesus Christ. He was a man totally captured—everything about Him belonged to Christ.

Apart from Jesus Christ Himself, no one shaped the history of the Christian Church like the Apostle Paul. No one can truly question whether or not he lived. Paul left an indelible stamp across a wide area. Arrested by Jesus on the road to Damascus, he could never go back.

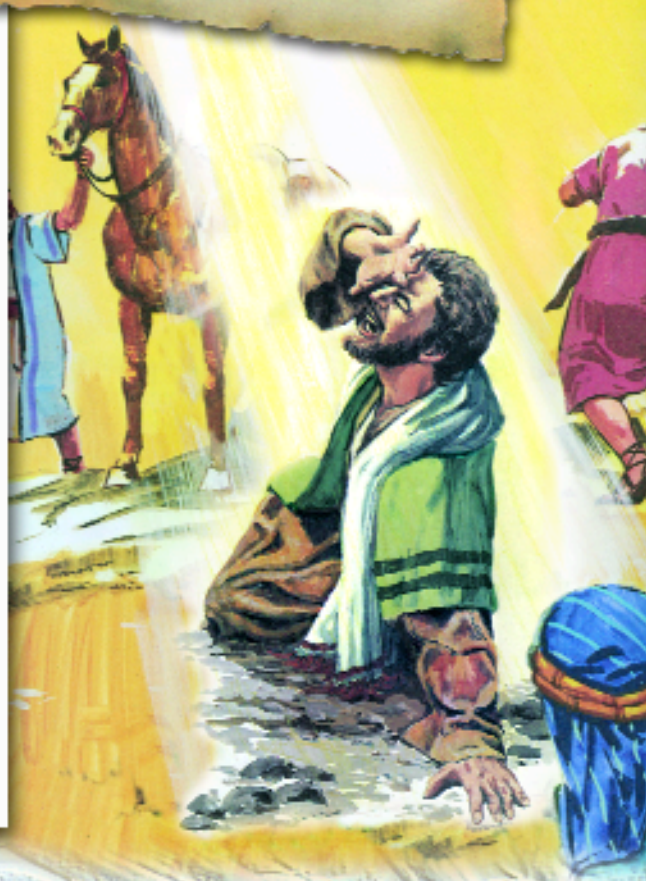
What about you and me? Have we been captured too?

“I am a real Jew if there ever was one!... I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. And zealous? Yes, in fact, I harshly persecuted the church. And I obeyed the Jewish law so carefully that I was never accused of any fault.

“I once thought all these things were so very important, but now I consider them... all as garbage, so that I may have Christ and... learn what it means to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that, somehow, I can experience the resurrection from the dead!

“Not that I have secured it yet, or already reached perfection, but I am pressing on to see if I can capture it, because I have been captured by Jesus Christ.”

—Phil. 3:5–11 NLT and Goodspeed



(continued on page 5)

EDITORIAL

- 2 **Caution: News Overload** by Ruth E. Sisson

FEATURE ARTICLE

- 3 **The Captured Apostle—Paul of Tarsus**
Are You Captured?

BIBLE DRAMA

- 10 **Pressing On!** (Part 1)
Introducing the Great Apostle

KNOW YOUR BIBLE?

- 13 **Queen Esther • Who Said It?**

SPECIAL FEATURE

- 14 **Voyage Through the Sky**
An imaginary space journey

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

- 16 **Eternal Life Now?** by Gerald R. Payne
Day and night without the sun?

ARTICLE

- 17 **He Holds the Rope**

SERIES

- 18 **History of Megiddo Church**
Chapter 1, Part 3: A Nation at War
Chapter 2, Part 1: Searching

AWESOME DESIGNS

- 22 **Pigeons are E-Birds!**

YOUTH IN CHRIST

- 23 **Cure for the Jitters**
Why Worry? by Erling Nicolai Rolfsrud

ARTICLES

- 25 **Glad to Grow Older!**
26 **Watch Out for Growth-Stunters!**

BACK COVER POEM

I've Learned—

The **Megiddo Message** (USPS 338-120) (ISSN 0194-7826) is published bimonthly by the Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619. Telephone: 585-235-4150. Periodicals postage paid at Rochester, New York.

Publication Staff: Ruth E. Sisson, Editor; Gerald R. Payne, Executive Editor. Art and design by Margaret A. Tremblay; Subscriptions Manager, Donna R. Mathias.

Subscription Rate and Renewals: One year (six issues) \$5.00. Send to Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619-1697. Or call 585-235-4150. **Note:** For the protection of our subscribers, we do not sell, rent, lease, publish or distribute our mailing list.

Address Changes? Be sure to notify promptly of any change in your address. Please include your old mailing label and your new address. Send to Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619-1697. **Postmaster:** Send all changes of address to Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, NY 14619.

URL: www.megiddo.com

E-mail address: megiddo@megiddo.com

Manuscript Policy: Unsolicited manuscripts for publication are not accepted.

The **Megiddo Message** is the official organ of the Megiddo Church, Inc., founded in 1880 by L. T. Nichols. Publication was begun in 1914. Maud Hembree, Editor-in-Chief (1914-1935); Ella M. Skeels, Executive Editor (1935-1945); Percy J. Thatcher, Editor (1945-1958); Kenneth E. Flowerday, Editor (1958-1985); Newton H. Payne, Editor (1985-1997).

The **Megiddo Message** is available in microfilm from Bell & Howell Information and Learning, Serials Acquisitions, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

Indexing: The **Megiddo Message** is indexed annually, in December. Combined indexing available, 1944-1996.

Bible Quotations: Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version or the New King James Version. Other versions are identified as follows: NEB—New English Bible; NIV—New International Version; NASB—New American Standard Bible; RSV—Revised Standard Version; TLB—The Living Bible; JB—The Jerusalem Bible; Phillips—The New Testament in Modern English; Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation; NRSV—New Revised Standard Version; NLT—The New Living Translation; NCV—The New Century Version; NJB—New Jerusalem Bible.

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

WE BELIEVE...

- ♦ in God, the Creator and sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life, in whom we "live, and move, and have our being."
- ♦ in the Bible as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.
- ♦ in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to

heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be King of the whole earth.

- ♦ in the Holy Spirit, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.
- ♦ in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- ♦ in humankind as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.
- ♦ in ourselves as capable, with the help of God, of applying to our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

- ♦ in the promise of God, that Jesus Christ will soon return to rid the earth of all sin and suffering and inaugurate an eternal and worldwide Kingdom of peace and righteousness, until God's will is done here as it is now done in heaven.

THE HERALD AND THE KING

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

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

The Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians made this very positive and aspiring statement about his personal commitment to Jesus Christ and his great hope of salvation. He wrote:

"Not that I have secured it yet, or already reached perfection, but I am pressing on to see if I can capture it, because I have been captured by Jesus Christ. Brothers, I do not consider that I have captured it yet, only, forgetting what is behind me, and straining toward what lies ahead, I am pressing toward the goal, for the prize to which God through Christ Jesus calls us upward" (Phil. 3:12-14, Goodspeed).

"To see if I can capture it...because I have been captured." Paul was not his own commander in charge of his own life. His goals were not those of Mr. Average Citizen of Rome. He was living in captivity to a nobler purpose because he had been captured by Jesus Christ.

God is still seeking willing captives for His cause. Who today will be captured by that same glowing hope that captured Paul? Who is ready to say to anything and everything God allows, *"Your will be done"*? Who is ready to do or suffer or give or be anything, if only the final outcome be life with Christ?

God is still calling people. Are we so captured by it as Paul was?

Such was the commitment of the Apostle Paul, but it was not his point of beginning. As he began, he was a man of his times. A descendant of Israel, he belonged to a notable tribe, the tribe of Benjamin. As for the law, he was a Pharisee—and he prided himself on belonging to the strictest sect of the Pharisees. Judged by the law of Moses, he was faultless. Did he oppose the followers of the cause of Jesus Christ? He went further and actively persecuted them.

...It Is All Garbage

Then, with one stroke he wiped out all these "advantages."

"For the sake of Christ I have come to count my former gains as loss. Why, I count everything as loss compared with the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (vs 7-8). "I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ" (Phil. 3:8 NLT). Everything that meant so much and that he had worked so hard to achieve—his education, his temporal advantages, his family heritage, his prestige, his social station, all that fired a young man of ambition—he gave it all up.

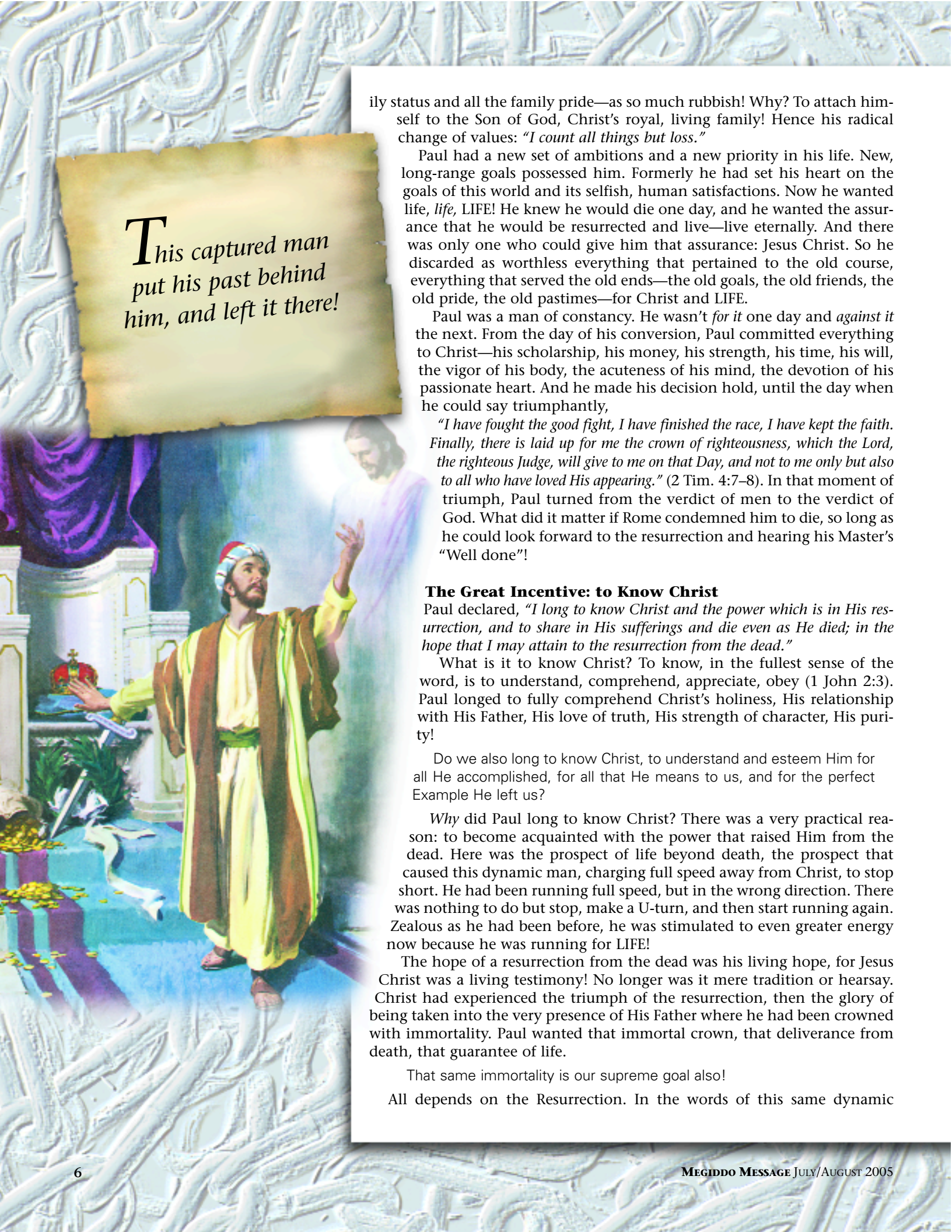
For what? "Why," he answers, *"I count everything as loss compared with the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have let go of everything—I call it all 'rubbish'—in order to gain Christ and be united to him."*

Paul had a realistic view of life. He knew the Scriptures. He had read the solemn truth, that the end of man is to go to the generation of his fathers and never, never through all eternity, see light (Ps. 49:19). He knew that this was the fate of all good, honorable, educated, even wise and astute men of this world. For *"A man who is in honor, yet does not understand, is like the beasts that perish"* (Ps. 49:20). But Jesus Christ was alive, eternally victorious over the human race's most formidable enemy death. Here was a way out. What a fool he would be not to take it!

Paul's decision had the rare quality of consistency. He aspired to the very highest goal; and when he learned that the way was not adherence to the rituals of Jewish law, he left it immediately to accept the higher call. In so doing he renounced the heritage he once considered noteworthy—the fam-

Who is ready to do or suffer or give or be anything, if only the final outcome be life with Christ?

Who today has Paul's depth of conviction?



This captured man
put his past behind
him, and left it there!

ily status and all the family pride—as so much rubbish! Why? To attach himself to the Son of God, Christ's royal, living family! Hence his radical change of values: *"I count all things but loss."*

Paul had a new set of ambitions and a new priority in his life. New, long-range goals possessed him. Formerly he had set his heart on the goals of this world and its selfish, human satisfactions. Now he wanted life, *life*, LIFE! He knew he would die one day, and he wanted the assurance that he would be resurrected and live—live eternally. And there was only one who could give him that assurance: Jesus Christ. So he discarded as worthless everything that pertained to the old course, everything that served the old ends—the old goals, the old friends, the old pride, the old pastimes—for Christ and LIFE.

Paul was a man of constancy. He wasn't *for it* one day and *against it* the next. From the day of his conversion, Paul committed everything to Christ—his scholarship, his money, his strength, his time, his will, the vigor of his body, the acuteness of his mind, the devotion of his passionate heart. And he made his decision hold, until the day when he could say triumphantly,

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." (2 Tim. 4:7–8). In that moment of triumph, Paul turned from the verdict of men to the verdict of God. What did it matter if Rome condemned him to die, so long as he could look forward to the resurrection and hearing his Master's "Well done"!

The Great Incentive: to Know Christ

Paul declared, *"I long to know Christ and the power which is in His resurrection, and to share in His sufferings and die even as He died; in the hope that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."*

What is it to know Christ? To know, in the fullest sense of the word, is to understand, comprehend, appreciate, obey (1 John 2:3). Paul longed to fully comprehend Christ's holiness, His relationship with His Father, His love of truth, His strength of character, His purity!

Do we also long to know Christ, to understand and esteem Him for all He accomplished, for all that He means to us, and for the perfect Example He left us?

Why did Paul long to know Christ? There was a very practical reason: to become acquainted with the power that raised Him from the dead. Here was the prospect of life beyond death, the prospect that caused this dynamic man, charging full speed away from Christ, to stop short. He had been running full speed, but in the wrong direction. There was nothing to do but stop, make a U-turn, and then start running again. Zealous as he had been before, he was stimulated to even greater energy now because he was running for LIFE!

The hope of a resurrection from the dead was his living hope, for Jesus Christ was a living testimony! No longer was it mere tradition or hearsay. Christ had experienced the triumph of the resurrection, then the glory of being taken into the very presence of His Father where he had been crowned with immortality. Paul wanted that immortal crown, that deliverance from death, that guarantee of life.

That same immortality is our supreme goal also!

All depends on the Resurrection. In the words of this same dynamic

Apostle, "If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise" (1 Cor. 15:13–15). What is there for anyone without the surety of the resurrection?

But Paul saw also that this was no automatic achievement. There was a goal to be reached.

What was he doing about it? Was he just hoping that someday, somehow, the crown could be his? Far from it! This man of action was *pressing*, "if by any means" he might "attain" to the resurrection from the dead. If by any means, he said, and he meant it!

...I Want to Share His Suffering...So...I Can Experience His Resurrection

Along with knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection, Paul wanted also to share in Christ's suffering. Is it possible that when he said this he was wanting to compensate, in some small way, for the suffering he had caused Christ's followers? Whatever his motive, it was a small price to pay for the eternal crown. "So that, somehow, I can experience the resurrection from the dead!" (Phil. 3:11 NLT). What mattered that beatings, peril and afflictions lay between? What mattered that he should suffer disgrace, ignominy, shame, be ostracized as "the filth of the world,...the offscouring of all things"? (1 Cor. 4:13). What mattered the personal losses, the intense inner struggles—if only he could "attain to the resurrection of the dead!"

This captured dynamo shared the unshakable confidence of Job: "For as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he will stand upon the earth at last. And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God" (Job 19:25–26). He said with the Psalmist, "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me" (Ps. 49:15). When he mused on the prophecies of Daniel, it was again with the thought of what he himself might share. When he read, "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt," he pictured himself among those awakening to the glory of "everlasting life," and set his heart to lie down at his life's end with the same comfort and assurance that the angel gave to Daniel: "But go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days" (Dan. 12:2–3, 13).

The resurrection of Christ was the victory message of the Apostolic Church, first heard through the voice of the angel: "He is not here, he is risen!" (Matt. 28:6). Then the triumphant message echoed from Christ Himself, "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore" (Rev. 1:18).

This was Paul's quenchless hope. The means? By following Christ fully, becoming like Christ in character, suffering with Christ, dying with Christ.

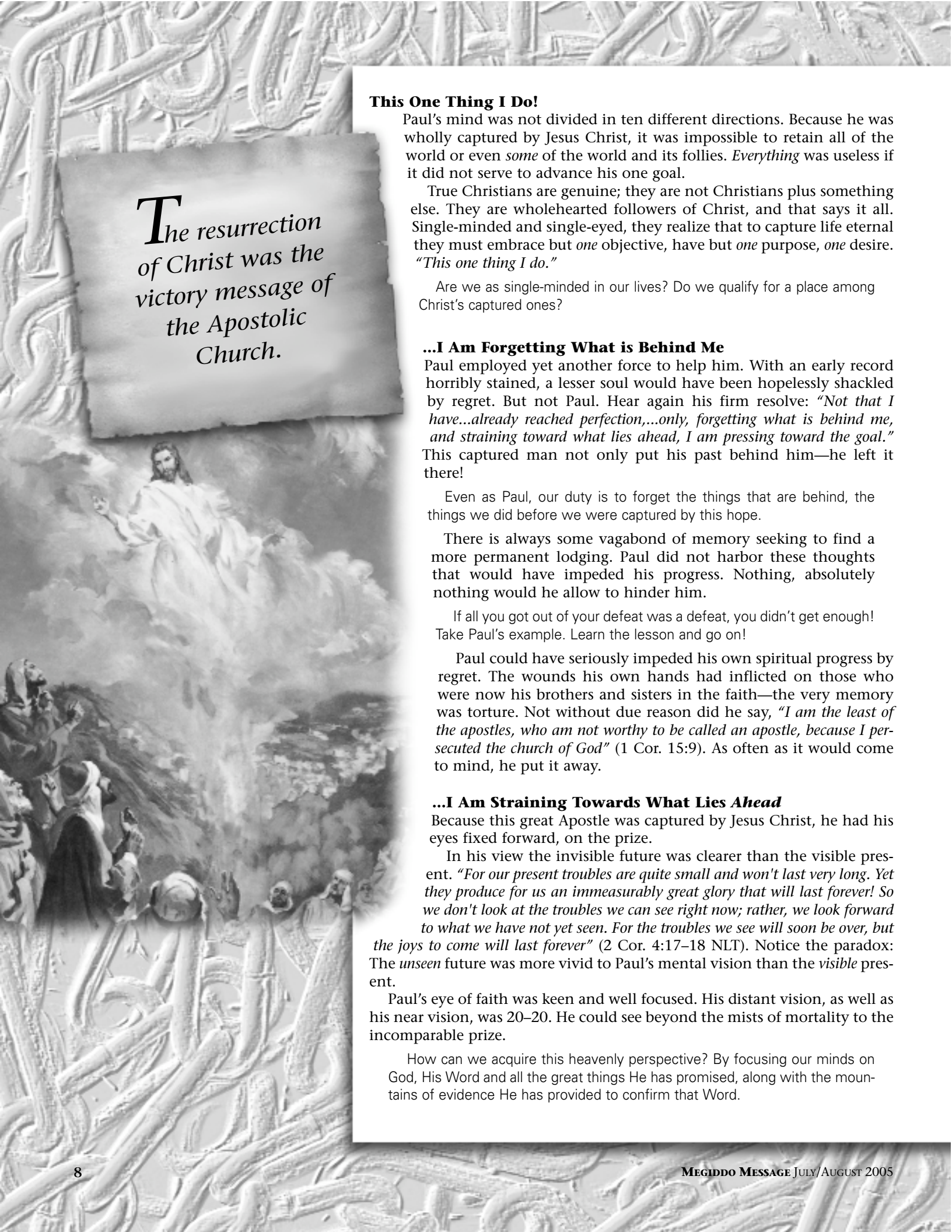
Captured—Why?

"Because I have been captured by Jesus Christ." Paul was not only captive, but felt himself Christ's servant (Rom. 1:1; Philemon 1); not only a servant but a willing slave and prisoner (Eph. 3:1). He was completely subject to his Lord. This is why he wrote, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called" (Eph. 4:1). Every aspiration of his life was dominated by Christ and his new missions.

What can we do to "walk worthy" of our calling in Christ Jesus?

Paul wanted to share Christ's suffering so that he could share Christ's resurrection.





**The resurrection
of Christ was the
victory message of
the Apostolic
Church.**

This One Thing I Do!

Paul's mind was not divided in ten different directions. Because he was wholly captured by Jesus Christ, it was impossible to retain all of the world or even *some* of the world and its follies. *Everything* was useless if it did not serve to advance his one goal.

True Christians are genuine; they are not Christians plus something else. They are wholehearted followers of Christ, and that says it all. Single-minded and single-eyed, they realize that to capture life eternal they must embrace but *one* objective, have but *one* purpose, *one* desire. *"This one thing I do."*

Are we as single-minded in our lives? Do we qualify for a place among Christ's captured ones?

...I Am Forgetting What is Behind Me

Paul employed yet another force to help him. With an early record horribly stained, a lesser soul would have been hopelessly shackled by regret. But not Paul. Hear again his firm resolve: *"Not that I have...already reached perfection,...only, forgetting what is behind me, and straining toward what lies ahead, I am pressing toward the goal."* This captured man not only put his past behind him—he left it there!

Even as Paul, our duty is to forget the things that are behind, the things we did before we were captured by this hope.

There is always some vagabond of memory seeking to find a more permanent lodging. Paul did not harbor these thoughts that would have impeded his progress. Nothing, absolutely nothing would he allow to hinder him.

If all you got out of your defeat was a defeat, you didn't get enough! Take Paul's example. Learn the lesson and go on!

Paul could have seriously impeded his own spiritual progress by regret. The wounds his own hands had inflicted on those who were now his brothers and sisters in the faith—the very memory was torture. Not without due reason did he say, *"I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God"* (1 Cor. 15:9). As often as it would come to mind, he put it away.

...I Am Straining Towards What Lies Ahead

Because this great Apostle was captured by Jesus Christ, he had his eyes fixed forward, on the prize.

In his view the invisible future was clearer than the visible present. *"For our present troubles are quite small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us an immeasurably great glory that will last forever! So we don't look at the troubles we can see right now; rather, we look forward to what we have not yet seen. For the troubles we see will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever"* (2 Cor. 4:17–18 NLT). Notice the paradox: The *unseen* future was more vivid to Paul's mental vision than the *visible* present.

Paul's eye of faith was keen and well focused. His distant vision, as well as his near vision, was 20–20. He could see beyond the mists of mortality to the incomparable prize.

How can we acquire this heavenly perspective? By focusing our minds on God, His Word and all the great things He has promised, along with the mountains of evidence He has provided to confirm that Word.

When we are convinced that God has a plan for this earth, that He is indeed offering an eternal prize for a life of faithful service, we—like Paul—will be captured. However stressful the present, our every action will be dominated by this electrifying hope. We will know that however good or bad the present hour, it is *“but for a moment”* compared with the *“far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”* (2 Cor. 4:17) that can be our very own.

...I Am Pressing Toward the Goal

Paul was a man of pressure. Just as a runner in a race presses into action every ounce of strength in his being to reach his goal, Paul “pressed,” straining every nerve—to arrive.

Is not that a suitable simile for us in our quest for eternal life?

Captives of Jesus Christ have iron-hard moral muscles that will not yield to an easy threat, or even a formidable one.

Reflection: God Calls Me Upward—to the Prize

Because he had been captured by the resurrected Christ, Paul told himself what he would think about, and *that was that!* He put his past behind him and went about the business of forgetting it.

Do we long to be like Paul in character? Do we yearn for that indomitable will, that unshakable faith, that solid strength, that holy purpose? Like him we must give it our full concentration, our whole mind and might and strength.

God’s call is always “upward.” Higher! This upward direction distinguishes those who, like Paul, are captured by Christ. *“Seek the things that are above”; “set your mind on things above”* (Col. 3:1–2). Christ’s captives dwell with Christ *“in heavenly places”* (Eph. 2:6). Sin is earthy. Sodom and Gomorrah were cities that thrived on the lowest level. By contrast, Christ and all that pertains to Him is heavenly. Christ is even now seated at the right hand of God (Acts 2:33). Here is the ultimate, the highest of heights, the Presence into which every winner will one day be ushered.

Have we been captured by the goals Christ sets before us? Is our ear attuned to the high calling of Christ Jesus? Is the *“hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began”* our inspiration (Titus 1:2)? Is that glorious lifting to endless life our shining goal?

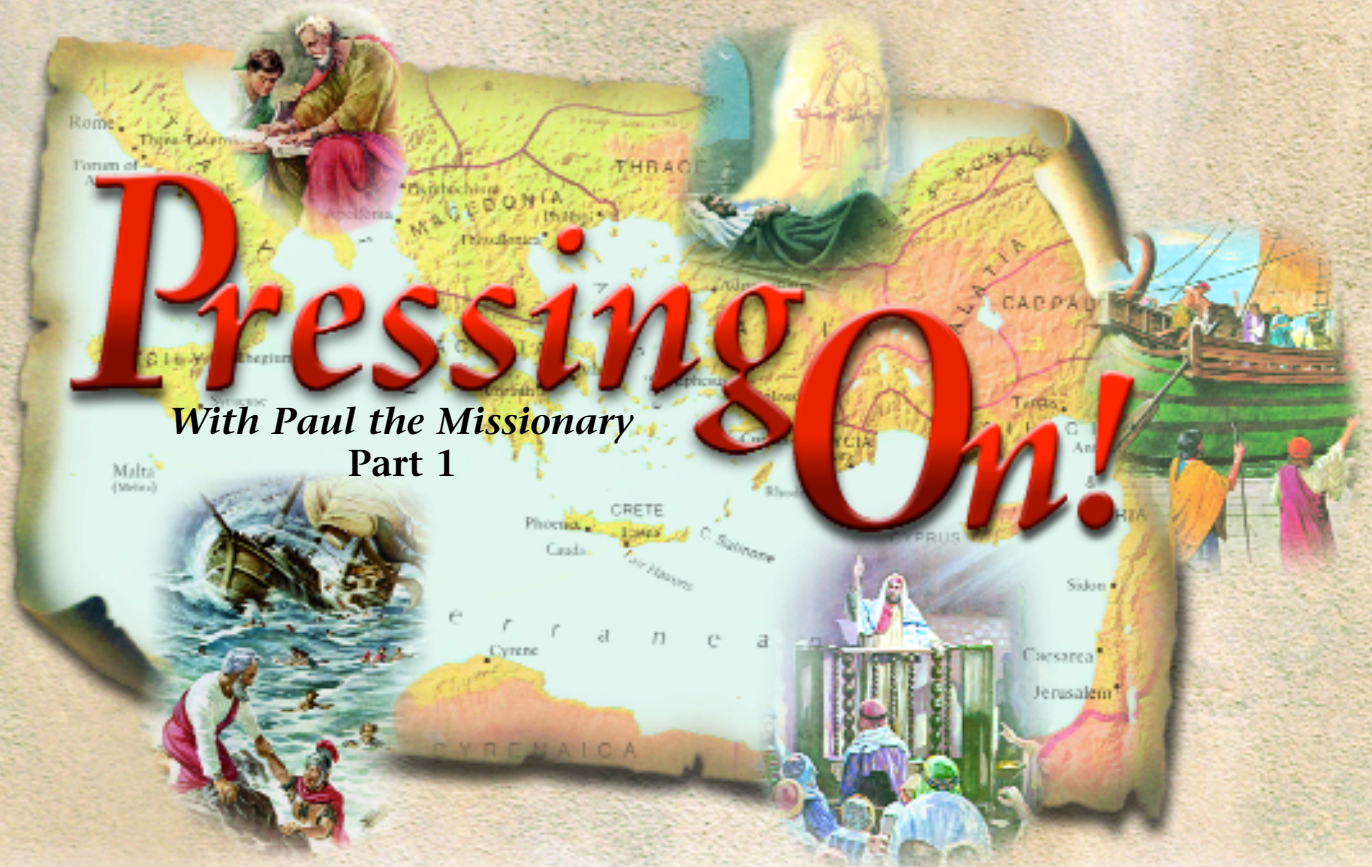
Christ Jesus can dictate only to those whom He has captured, and their ears are tuned constantly to hear His voice. All other ears are turned downward to earth sounds. Upturned ears are on upturned heads whose gaze is *forward*, whose whole mind and body are set toward the goal of eternal life!

Are you one of these? Are you living, as it were, in another world, because you belong to Him, because you have been captured by Jesus Christ? Are you so totally His that you cannot breathe or move except within the Divine will? Is your whole goal the attaining of life?

If so, you shall surely arrive and be honored with all who have been CAPTURED BY JESUS CHRIST—now and forever! ♦

*Christ’s captives dwell
in “heavenly places.”*

*Wholehearted
followers of Christ
are single-minded,
single-eyed.*



INTRODUCING THE GREAT APOSTLE PAUL

We owe a large part of the New Testament to the Apostle Paul. What can we imagine of his life and character, and particularly his impact on his contemporaries? The following story depicts some of his impact as it might have been, building on what we are told in his writings.

As our story opens, the Apostle is not present, but we see him through those who knew him, as well as some of the problems and challenges confronting the new faith—Christianity.

Outside, a late winter storm lashed the countryside. In the glare of the lightning, the Via Appia gleamed black, rain-swept and deserted. In the huddle of buildings which marked the crossroads known as The Three Taverns, only a few faint lights shined murkily through the downpour. It was no night for man or beast to be out of doors.

But in the common room of Milo's Tavern, there was warmth and good cheer. A fire crackled on the hearth, and the homelike smell of food and wood smoke filled the air. Strings of drying red peppers, onions and fat sausages hung from the time-blackened beams of the ceiling. It was after supper and the guests, satisfied and relaxed, chatted amicably by the dim light of the bronze lamps. It was a worldly group of travelers, such as chance might bring together any night at any wayside inn. Milo, the genial landlord, was bustling about, attending to his guests' comfort.

In the chimney corner, Arbaces sat, wrapped in a voluminous brown cloak. He was a grizzled sea-captain reporting to Rome after a tour of duty. Opposite him sat a massive, clean-cut centurion in the livery of the Fifth Legion. His name, he said, was Manlius. He was outward bound, having been transferred to Syria.

At a small table to the left sat a young Roman, Carbo. A salesman for a pottery firm, the host bantered that he had "been everywhere, seen everything, and knows most everything." Carbo, busily padding his expense account, drink in hand, did not deny it.

From the other side of the room, a richly dressed, middle-aged Greek gentleman arose, and abandoning his reading drew nearer the fire to join the captain and the centurion. He was Philistus of Alexandria, a building contractor seeking business in the wake of Nero's great fire.

Just then the outside door opened, admitting Curio, a young porter carrying an armload of wood.

"That storm out there!" he interjected, backing against the door to close it, "It's getting worse by the minute. We'll wash away if this keeps up."

"Well, Captain," spoke Philistus to Arbaces, "you've seen a good amount of rough weather in your time. Doubtless, worse storms than this."

The captain scoffed. "This is nothing. We have them bigger and better at sea."

Carbo looked up from his tablets.

"Yes? Well, what was the worst storm you ever weathered, Captain?"

The corner of Arbaces' mouth raised as he replied to the salesman.

"The worst storm I ever saw was the one we *didn't* weather."

"Ah, a shipwreck."

The captain nodded. Needing no urging, he arose and took the floor.



"It was two years ago—no, two and a half, to be exact. I was master of the *Silver Trumpet* then. It was one of those trips where everything went wrong. Everything. We had gotten a late start, and still the owners wanted to get one more cargo through before winter. One thing after another delayed us. We had a full load of wheat and a

big list of passengers, and then at Myra—that's a little seaport in Lydia—we got orders to take on a lot of prisoners and their guards, out of Syria, bound for Rome. It really crowded the old ship, believe me!—276 people on board, besides cargo.

"Well, bad luck followed us all the way to Crete, and by that time I knew we'd never make Rome before winter, so we looked for winter quarters. I didn't know what I was going to do with that many people for three months. To top it off we were at Fair Havens—no place to winter. It was dirty and provisions hard to get. I wanted to get to Phenice if I could."

With wry faces the contractor and the salesman nodded. Evidently both had been to Fair Havens.

I was conferring with my officers and Julius Didianus, a centurion—"

"Julius Didianus?" Manlius interjected "Why, he's an old comrade of mine—we trained together and served together in Gaul. But go on with the story."

"Of course, you got me started. As we were debating the question of moving on, one of the prisoners—a Jew—named Paul, approached us. He was a sort of privileged character; Julius had taken a liking to him and he had the run of the ship." At the mention of the name, the landlord had started visibly. Now he spoke.

"Paul, did you say?"

"Yes, what about him?"

"Nothing. I'll tell my story later. Go ahead."

"Well, this Paul, without being asked, stepped up and told us we'd better stay, or we risked the ship, and our lives too!"

"You liked that, I imagine?" was Carbo's dry comment.

"Not a bit. I thought, Who are you, dry-land sailor, telling me how to run my ship! But to get ahead of my story, before we were through I was glad to have his help. *There was a man.*

"Well, we didn't listen to him. When we got a favorable wind we started to crawl up the coast to Phenice, when with no warning at all the wind swung round and a roaring northeaster drove us out to sea. I've seen storms and I've seen storms, but never before nor since did I see a storm like that. Lasted for fifteen days without a break."

"Did you know where you were?" asked Philistus.

"No! After two days we were hopelessly lost, and lucky to be right side up. No sun, no stars, nothing but rain and wind that would blow the hair off your head."

He ran his hand over his bald pate, then stared in confused surprise at the laughter which arose, along with a mocking "indeed" from Carbo.

With an eyebrow raised at Carbo, the captain continued.

"We were on the watch all the time, sleeping only when we couldn't help it and eating what was still edible—raw wheat mostly. Nearly every man was seasick. We had given up hope and were working the ship from force of habit. But that man Paul, he was the coolest man on board and the only cheerful one."

Curio leaned back in his chair. "Did he say, I told you so?"

"No. But he had a right to. He told us to cheer up, because the God he served had told him we would all be saved, although the ship would be lost. Somehow that made us feel better. Didn't make sense at all, and he was a prisoner. But we didn't know Paul yet.

"A couple nights later, we heard breakers, so we anchored until morning. We were on a strange coast, with a sheltered bay just ahead. I gave command to make for it. We had almost made it, too, before we piled up on a sand bar. The old *Silver Trumpet* went to pieces in less than an hour."

"So this Paul was right about the ship." Milo's tone was that of a man impressed but not at all surprised.

"He was, and he was right about our lives being saved, too. We didn't lose a man. Not one. We were wet and cold and full of salt water, but we were all alive. But the remarkable part of the whole thing was how this Paul came to the top in the emergency. Before it was over he was giving orders to me, and to Julius, and the soldiers; in fact, he more or less became captain: and it was just as well. If not for him, I most likely wouldn't be alive today."

With that, the tale was ended; the captain sat down. Manlius nodded appreciatively. "Well, you know the old saying—you can't keep a good man down. I've seen it a



thousand times—it's the emergencies that separate the men from the boys."

The captain slapped the table and said slowly, "He was a man, all right. He's got something most men don't have. He's got judgment; he's got wisdom; he's got leadership. You can't help liking him, admiring him, and looking up to him. At least I couldn't."

"What was he in for?" Curio asked curtly.

"In?"

"Yes, in prison."

"Why, some religious trouble in Jerusalem—a riot or something, and the leaders of the Jews pressed charges against him. He knew he couldn't get a fair trial there, so he appealed to Caesar."

"He must be a citizen, then," Philistus observed.

"He is—born free."

"I thought you said he was a Jew," Carbo objected.

"That's right—born a high-caste Jew and a leader among them, but now he's become a leader of the Christians. That's why the Jews turned against him."

The salesman's voice was heavy with cynicism and scorn. "Christians! Bah! That insignificant tribe of fanatics, slaves and laborers?"

"Paul was no slave!" the captain shot back. "He was well educated. I don't know much about his religion. He used to talk about it a good deal, but it was mostly over my thick ol' head. But I know a good man when I see one, and he's a good man. He's founded Christian churches all over Asia and Greece, and they are growing. There are Christians even in Rome—a lot of them."

"What gods do they worship?" asked Philistus.

"He says there is only one God—the same God the Jews claim to believe in, but he's got a different slant. On the whole, the Jews are good people, too. But they don't have the mission or the drive that Paul does. Yes sir, he can tell you all about it. And pretty soon you begin to believe him; it all sounds so reasonable."

"Nonsense!" sneered Carbo. "All religions are alike. Perhaps the gods exist, perhaps not. But one thing is sure, the priests exist and they get a good living out of it. They're all in it for money and they'll take it from anyone. This Paul—he probably is a good man, as you say—a good salesman. Maybe, he could outsell me. But he's no different from any other priest. Religion is his racket, just as pottery is mine."

Curio spoke from where he was tending the fire. He was thoroughly annoyed with this 'city slicker'. "You're sure about that—are you?"

"Why, certainly! I don't believe—"

"You don't believe in nothin', do you?"

"No, not very much—nothing but what I can see, and not all of that. I've been around, and I've learned to be on my guard."

"Well, you're still young—salesman" said the captain, "if



you'd seen what I have you'd *have* to believe some things about Paul."

"What do you mean, Captain?" Philistus asked.

"Well, back to the wreck of the *Silver Trumpet*—when we got ashore we found we were on Malta. I'd been there, of course, but on the other side of the island. The natives helped us ashore and built a big fire to dry us out. Paul was helping to pick up sticks, when a deadly viper bit

him on the hand. The people all expected to see him turn black in the face and fall down dead, but he just shook the snake off into the fire and went on about his business, as though it were nothing more than one of Malta's many mosquitoes."

The captain turned on Carbo with a challenge in his smile. "So, my skeptical friend, what say you to that?"

"Harmless snake, probably," Carbo was unruffled; he too was enjoying this.

"No such thing." The captain was annoyed. "I know a viper when I see one. We had them by the hundreds where I was born and raised. But the next day we went to call on the governor of the island—matter of courtesy and business—and Paul came along. The governor's father was very sick—at the point of death. Paul went in to him and prayed and laid his hands on him, and the old gentleman got up and walked, as well as ever. That was 'eye-see,' not hearsay. What about it, good salesman?"

"Most likely he was just ready to get better. It has happened lots of times."

"All that winter they were bringing sick people to Paul from all over the island, and he never failed to heal them."

"Mass hysteria!"

"You think so?"

"Certainly! There are lots of clever fakers in the world. It's a very interesting story, but it will take more than a sailor's yarn to convince me."

There was a minor uproar. Fed up with the salesman's persistent needling, Arbaces leaped to his feet and turned on the young man.

"Are you calling me a liar?" he roared.

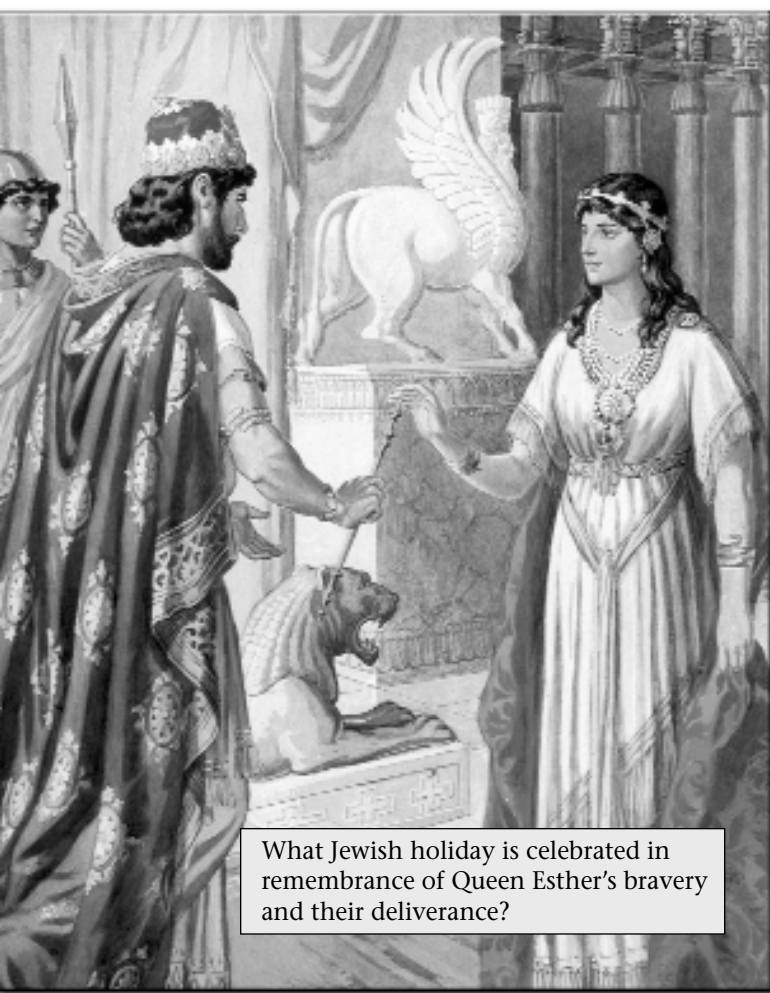
A table and a couple of chairs overturned with a crash as Carbo backed away, to all appearances still cool, collected and highly pleased with the success of his sarcasm.

"Not at all, Captain, not at all. If I've offended you, I apologize." He extended his hand, which the sailor ignored. "It's just one of those things I'd have to see to believe."

"Would you believe if you saw?" Milo put in from behind the bar.

"Well...that depends...Say, this is quite a storm we're having tonight, isn't it?...Outside—I mean." ♦

(continued next issue)



What Jewish holiday is celebrated in remembrance of Queen Esther's bravery and their deliverance?

WHO SAID IT?

Choose your answer from the following persons:

a. The Psalmist b. Solomon c. Isaiah d. Jesus

1. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."
2. "I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine."
3. "I will make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth."
4. "Envy is rottenness to the bones."
5. "Your law is my delight."
6. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."
7. "Riches are not forever."
8. "Do not worry about tomorrow."
9. "Better not to vow, than to vow and not pay."
10. "Rejoice because your names are written in heaven."
11. "I will extend peace to her like a river."
12. "Remember how short my time is."
13. "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news...who say to Zion, Your God reigns!"

QUEEN ESTHER

1. What Persian king made Esther queen?
2. Who was his first queen?
3. In the third year of his reign, Xerxes became very angry with the queen. Why?
4. All agreed that the queen must be punished. What bad thing would happen if the queen got away with her crime?
5. Whom did Xerxes choose as his new queen?
6. Who had adopted Esther as his own child? What relation was he to Esther?
7. What information did Esther keep from the king?
8. Why did Haman want to kill the Jews?
9. How did Haman plan to have the Jews killed?
10. What was Mordecai's reply to Esther when Esther told him she might be put to death for approaching the king without being summoned?
11. What did Esther do prior to approaching the king?
12. Once the king had issued the edict against the Jews, it could not be ignored. How was Esther able to prevent the massacre of the Jews?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

QUEEN ESTHER

1. Ahasuerus also called Xerxes. (Esther 2:16-17)
2. Vashti (Esther 1:1-9)
3. She refused to exhibit herself to his male guests during a feast. (Esther 1:10-12)
4. The women of the kingdom, following her example, would refuse to obey their husbands. (Esther 1:13-18)
5. Esther (Esther 2:1-17)
6. Mordecai, daughter of Mordecai's uncle—a cousin. (Esther 2:7)
7. She was Jewish. (Esther 2:5, 20)

Picture: Feast of Purim

8. Mordecai (a Jew) refused to bow down or pay homage to Haman. (Esther 3:1-6)
9. Haman maneuvered the king into issuing an edict that all the Jews in the kingdom be killed. (Esther 3:8-9)
10. Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this? (Esther 4:14)
11. She fasted for three days and nights. (Esther 4:16)
12. Esther and Mordecai in the name of the king issued another edict allowing the Jews to defend themselves. (Esther 8:1-11).

WHO SAID IT

1. (d) Jesus (Matt. 6:28-29)
2. (a) The Psalmist (Ps. 50:10)
3. (a) The Psalmist (Ps. 89:27)
4. (b) Solomon (Prov. 14:30)
5. (a) The Psalmist (Ps. 119:77)
6. (c) Isaiah (Isa. 30:15)
7. (b) Solomon (Prov. 27:24)
8. (d) Jesus (Matt. 6:34)
9. (b) Solomon (Eccl. 5:5)
10. (d) Jesus (Luke 10:20)
11. (c) Isaiah (Isa. 66:12)
12. (a) The Psalmist (Ps. 89:47)
13. (c) Isaiah (Isa. 52:7)

Voyage Through the Sky



In 1927, the Megiddo Message published an imaginative article called "Voyage Through the Sky." Drawing on the latest scientific data available at the time, the author attempted to show a correlation between science and the Bible, at the same time inspiring reality thinking about God's creation.

Riding on a beam of light, the author described an imaginary journey across the solar system and beyond.

The following is another imaginary journey taken some 70 years later. For the text of this journey we are indebted to the late Dr. Richard Rioux who often lectured to recovering addicts at Rehabilitation Centers. Dr. Rioux was trying to give his audience some perspective on the size of their problem in the scope of the creation. His key thought is "Surrender is good for the soul," and he names his vehicle "Spaceship Surrender." Somehow, he said, it is easier to surrender "when you face the awesome size of the universe."

Dr. Rioux's thoughts should give us more perspective on our Creator's handiwork, along with a reality check: Who am I, in the view of the God who guides the galaxies?

The author is speaking as the leader of a group of travelers:

"We're on Spaceship Surrender, just leaving earth and headed out of our solar system. Look out your window. You'll see Mars and Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto, too.

"As we pass Pluto and exit the solar system, we accelerate to near light speed. The speed of light is 186,000 miles per second. At that speed we could go all the way around the earth in less than two tenths of a second. Now, you'll have to admit that that's awfully fast.

"We've set our course for the nearest cluster of stars. But sit back and take it easy, because it's going to be a while before we get there.

"Alpha Centauri is more than four light years from our solar system. What is a light year? It is the distance that a particle of light travels during one year. That's many trillions of miles. Our sun is 93 million miles away from earth. It takes light about eight minutes to travel from the sun to the earth. When you feel the sun's warmth on your body, the light touching you is eight minutes old. When you look up at the cluster of three stars called Alpha Centauri, the light entering your eyes is over four years old.

"So let's move on past Alpha Centauri and head out across the huge spiral of stars astronomers call the Milky Way Galaxy. Are you ready for this? Most of you are around 30 years old. If you reach the age of 80 and you've been traveling at the speed of light for 50 years, how far do you think you will have gone across the Milky Way Galaxy? I'll give you the time it takes to go around the earth at light speed to figure it out. Well?

"Here's the answer. In fifty years, and traveling at the speed of light you will have scarcely started to travel across the galaxy. The Milky Way Galaxy has 200 billion stars in it, and it would take 100,000 years to cross it from one side to the other, moving at the speed of light....

"Let's assume we've lived long enough to cross the Milky Way Galaxy (that means we are now about 100,000 years old)....

"We're out of the galaxy now, in open, dark space with our course set for the galaxy nearest us—the Andromeda Galaxy. We'll get there in a couple of million years. [There are a few small galaxies nearer, but most are satellites of the Milky Way Galaxy.]

"And what is after Andromeda? How about 100 billion more galaxies? Yes, one hundred billion galaxies with some two hundred billion stars in each of them. Yes, at least one hundred billion galaxies, billions of light years apart, expanding from the center of the universe at enormous speeds across an infinity of space where earth-time makes no sense, and where we are by comparison really not much at all, not even a particle of sand. Let's get back to earth.

"Our egos would have us believe that we are the most important things in the universe. How many of you think at this moment that you are the center of the universe? How many?

"That's right, no one."

The above article by Dr. Richard Rioux originally appeared in The Signal newspaper of Santa Clarita, California.

**No eye has seen, no ear has heard,
and no mind has imagined
what God has prepared for those
who love him. –1 Cor. 2:9 NLT**

**The heavens tell of the
glory of God. The skies display his
marvelous craftsmanship.
– Psalm 19:1 NLT**

**The Lord is the true God;
He has made the earth by His
power,...and has stretched out the
heavens at His discretion.
–Jeremiah 10:10, 12**

In 1927, the idea that there might be life on other planets was thinking outside the box. Edward Hubble, peering through the biggest telescope of the time, the 100-inch reflector atop Mount Wilson in California, had only recently recognized that the Milky Way was not the only galaxy. After announcing that fact to the world on New Year's Day 1925, Hubble went on to photograph hundreds of distant galaxies.

Now, seven decades later, as the Hubble Telescope photographs thousands of galaxies so distant that the light reaching our eyes left them several billion years ago, where do we stand? What do we know? The facts revealed in the Bible remain unchanged, while our growing sense of awe at the greatness of the Creator and the magnitude of His creation leaves us speechless. Now the statement of the ancient Prophet Isaiah, that nations are viewed by the Creator as "a drop in the bucket," seems almost flattering...and what are we as individuals!

Yet hear this challenge, also through the voice of the divinely commissioned Prophet:

"To whom will you compare me? Who is my equal?' asks the Holy One. 'Look up into the heavens. Who created all the stars? He brings them out one after another, calling each by its name. And he counts them to see that none are lost or have strayed away'" (Isa. 40:25–26 NLT).

Would you like to live when the Lord's Prayer is fulfilled and our earth is annexed to heaven? Would you like to get acquainted with God's vast family? Would you like to see with your own eyes the splendors of other worlds and soar to them? If so, then "Seek the Lord and live...Do what is good and run from evil—that you may live! Then the Lord God Almighty will truly be your helper" (Amos 5:14 NLT).



"It is estimated that our Universe contains around two hundred billion galaxies, each containing an average of four hundred billion stars.

"In December 1995, the Hubble Space Telescope was used to create a spectacular image called the Hubble Deep Field. This image shows a small section of the sky (about the size of a grain of sand held at arms length) that appears empty in Earth-based telescope images. The Hubble Telescope was aimed at this region of sky for 10 consecutive days. In a series of 342 photos it was able to capture the faint light from distant galaxies (about 1500) and shows that even a small area of space contains many galaxies of different sizes, shapes, ages and colours."

<http://www.museum.vic.gov.au/planetarium/stars/universe.html>

ETERNAL LIFE NOW?

Why does Paul say we must all be judged, when Jesus said that if we believe in God we have everlasting life “and shall not come into condemnation, but have passed from death into life”?

You are right that Paul says we must all be judged. “So then each of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12). “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). Why a judgment if we have already “passed from death into life” when we first believe?

The passage you quote from Jesus is in John 5:24, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”

What did Jesus mean? If He meant us to take His statement literally, that those who heard His words and believed on Him physically received eternal life right then, are we not also obliged to think that before they believed they were physically dead—because He said “He who ... believed...has passed from death into life”?

Also, if Jesus meant us to take Him literally, He was contradicting His own statement: “He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matt. 24:13). “Shall be saved” not is saved now.

Again, if the one who heard Jesus teaching and casually professed to believe had literally passed “from death to life,” how should we understand the parable of Jesus, where the seed fell in different types of soil—some into stony hearts, some among thorns, some in good ground? If some of the seed sprouted and withered away, how would that align with Jesus’ saying that the one who heard and believed had already passed into eternal life?

According to the Bible, each must appear “before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). Only at the Judgment will it be determined whether one receives eternal life or eternal death. Those who have died will be resurrected (brought back to life) for this purpose, as the Prophet Daniel said, “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:2). Only then will they be given everlasting life if faithful.

How, then, does a believer “have everlasting life” now? There is only one way, and that is by promise. “And this is the promise that He has promised us, even eternal life” (1 John 2:25). Paul said that believers “become heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:7). We live “in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Titus 1:2). Why? “For we are saved in this hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for

why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance” (Rom. 8:24-25).

The Apostle Paul also spoke of Jesus being “our hope” (1 Tim. 1:1), and the Apostle John said that “everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:3). Hebrews expresses the same thought, that “Christ as a Son over His own house; whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end” (Heb. 3:6). There is no avoiding our responsibility. If we belong to His house, we have eternal life as our hope “if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.”

What did Jesus mean in saying that one who has believed has “passed from death into life”? Jesus was describing the changed outlook of the believer. He has passed from hopelessness to hope. He has left the road that leads to death and is on the road to life. The one who hears and believes God’s word knows the way to eternal life. It is not that he already has that life but he is on the right road, and if he continues on that road to the end he will receive the prize.

Some people have a fear of judgment, believing that to be judged is to be condemned. This idea is not supported in Scripture. Paul said “we must all” be judged—he included himself and all who promise to serve God—to receive “according” to what “we” have done, “whether good or bad.” All who are judged are not condemned. Those judged faithful will be given eternal life. Such will truly “not come into condemnation.” Every faithful one will not be condemned to death at the judgment seat of Christ but will be given eternal life as promised. Paul at the time of his death was actually looking forward to that time, when he would receive the “crown of life” (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

Jesus Himself confirmed this plan: “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Rev. 22:12). To those who seek for glory and honor and immortality He will give eternal life (Rom. 2:7)—a future gift.

□ Day and night without the sun?

If God made day and night (light and dark) the first day, how does this make sense if God made the sun, stars, and moon on the fourth day? How was day and night different, or how could you tell the difference? I’m doing a project for school, and would like to prove creation is the answer, but I need help. Thank you for your time in helping me.

You raise a question which has puzzled many thoughtful people, and which we would very much like to address with you. If you would send us your address, we would be glad to forward you a copy of one of our publications which will give

you a different view of the Genesis narrative and we believe will help to answer your questions: *"God's Spiritual Creation."*

Because of space limitations we cannot fully explain the subject here, but let us give a brief overview.

For the very reason that you mention, we believe that the first three chapters of Genesis describe not the literal creation of the earth and the heavens but a *spiritual* creation. They outline a plan by which God is developing (creating) individuals to compose His Heavenly Kingdom on earth.

As for the creation in which we live, we firmly believe that God is the Creator. We do not accept the theory of evolution as an explanation for the origin of the earth, life, or the various species on earth. Neither do we believe that the earth was created a mere 6000 years ago. The evidence of scientific studies of the rocks, the fossil records, the dinosaurs, coal, and many other formations, all add evidence to the point which the Bible does not contradict: that the earth is many millions of years old. God does not tell us about its creation, only that

He is the Creator. *"The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens"* (Prov. 3: 19). *"Says the Lord, your Redeemer...I am the Lord, who makes all things, who stretches out the heavens all alone, who spreads abroad the earth by Myself...I have made the earth, and created man on it. I—My hands—stretched out the heavens, and all their host I have commanded....For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens, who is God, who formed the earth and made it, who has established it, who did not create it in vain, who formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord, and there is no other....Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand has stretched out the heavens;"* (Isa. 44:24; 45:12, 18; 48:13). The Prophet Isaiah also said, speaking to apostate Israel, *"You forget the Lord your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth"* (Isa. 51:13).

The same God is our Maker. *"It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture"* (Ps. 100:3). ♦



PHOTOS COURTESY OF "BIBLE PLACES.COM"

One of more than twenty monasteries in Meteora, Greece built atop stratified rocks eroded away by wind and rain.

HE HOLDS THE ROPE

"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." —Matthew 6:25, 33

An ancient monastery sits on top of a cliff in the beautiful countryside. Visitors to this lofty retreat are rewarded with a magnificent view. But, as the story goes, the only way to reach the monastery is by being hoisted up a cliff in a wicker basket by an aged monk.

One day as a visitor prepared to leave, he turned to his guide and asked nervously, "How often do you replace this rope?" The gray-haired monk said matter of factly: "Every time the old rope breaks."

Is that the way we put our trust in God? Do we push and shove our way through each day worrying when the old rope will break? Fear, doubt and worry can be paralyzing. We mistakenly think that this is the way it has to be. We forget that God holds the rope of the life of everyone of His children. Nothing is strong enough to break it. He knows our every move and our deepest needs. Jesus reminds us of this as He tells about our needs and how they are met. *"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'...For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things"* (Matt. 6:31–32).

God has special care for every one of His children. Not one will be lost. The angel gave assurance to Paul on the ship the night before the shipwreck. *"Last night the angel of the Lord stood by me"* (Acts 27:23). The angel told him not to fear, that not one of them would be lost, only the ship. The angel had the formula for removing anxiety.

Next time you are worried and anxious, stop and remember that God is in control. Nothing escapes His notice and nothing slips from His hand. Whatever comes, He has allowed it and He can turn it to good. ♦

History of

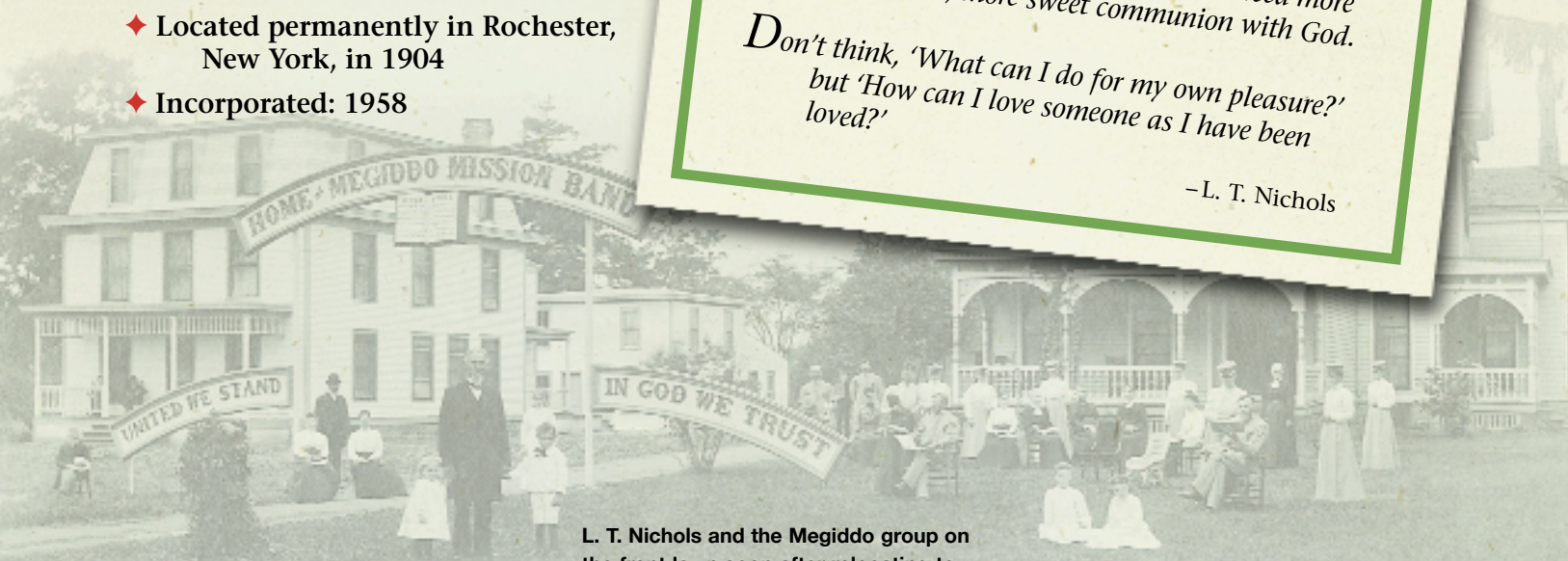
Megiddo CHURCH



- ◆ Founded in 1880 by L. T. Nichols
- ◆ Located permanently in Rochester, New York, in 1904
- ◆ Incorporated: 1958

I lift up my heart in thankfulness to God...
Let us believe the Bible. If it comes against our ideas, we must throw them away.
Show by your life that you believe what Jesus says.
If you can't read it in the Bible, don't believe it.
There must be no compromise with error.
I would rather have one year in the Kingdom than a thousand here.
I want you to read your Bibles more. You need more meditation, more sweet communion with God.
Don't think, 'What can I do for my own pleasure?' but 'How can I love someone as I have been loved?'

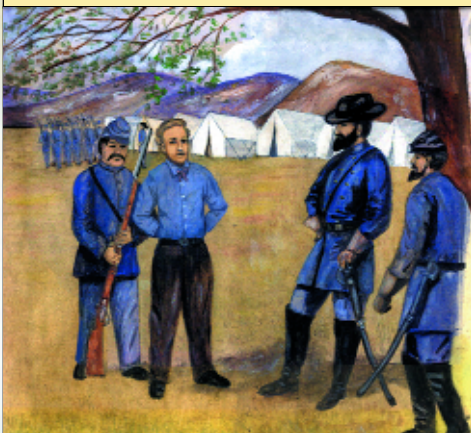
—L. T. Nichols



L. T. Nichols and the Megiddo group on the front lawn soon after relocating to Rochester (about 1906)

Key Dates in the life of **L. T. Nichols**,
founder of the Megiddo Church

- 1844:** Born in Elkhart, Indiana
- 1849:** Nichols family relocates to frontier state of Wisconsin, where life was rugged and difficult.
- 1854:** Young L. T. (age 10) attends Christmas party, where Santa Claus' false face falls off, revealing Deacon Graves—starts him questioning fundamentals of religious beliefs.
- 1855:** L. T. is carrying Bible to school, studies and talks to classmates during recess. Vows that he will never lie or steal, or take the name of God in vain, or use tobacco or alcoholic beverages
- 1864:** Is married to Harriet Griffis
- 1864:** Is drafted into the army only weeks after marriage; refuses to kill his fellowmen based on convictions of Bible teaching; when his life is threatened for his stand, he appeals to President Lincoln and is allowed to serve in the military hospital.
- 1865–1875:** Studies Bible intensely, seeking correct understanding of it
- 1869:** Debates publicly in Wrightstown, Wisconsin. Subject: The resurrection
- 1868–1874:** Settles in Fon du Lac, Wisconsin, circuit preacher for nearby towns
- 1870:** Debates publicly at Kasson, Minnesota. Subject: The Bible is all one harmonious teaching
- 1874:** Relocates to McMinnville, Oregon, for opportunity to preach; holds annual camp meetings for followers
- 1877:** Debates with Professor Campbell at Salem, Oregon. Subjects: Is man mortal or immortal by nature? Is the resurrection physical? Will there be a literal kingdom on earth? Maud Hembree (his successor-to-be) is converted.
- 1878:** Publicly debates at Salem, Oregon. Subject: Is the sabbath observance



Major Brown to the rescue



CHAPTER 1, PART 3: A NATION AT WAR

While L. T. and Harriet Nichols were busy planning their new life together, the Civil War was raging. And only two short weeks into their marriage, L. T. received orders to report for military duty.

At that time, the Civil War was at a standoff; troops were badly needed to replace the dead, wounded and those whose time had expired. Without a decisive victory, many had long ago grown weary and were petitioning for peace. Lincoln knew that such an ending would amount to many lives lost and nothing gained. To use his own words, "Suppose you go to war, you cannot fight always; and when, after much loss on both sides, and no gain on either, you cease fighting, the identical old questions, as to terms of intercourse, are again upon you." President Lincoln was determined to see it through to victory, if at all possible.

At an early age Nichols had the conviction that, according to the Bible, to take another's life without a command from God was wrong. "*Do violence to no man*" (Luke 3:14) was John the Baptist's advice to the soldiers, men whose lives were dedicated to violence. And Jesus said, "*All who take the sword will perish by the sword*" (Matt. 26:52). He would not have entered the army by choice, but the draft was in force; and when Nichols was drafted in October of 1864, he had no choice but to report for duty.

How would the military receive this young man of faith and vision? If his life were threatened, would his convictions hold?

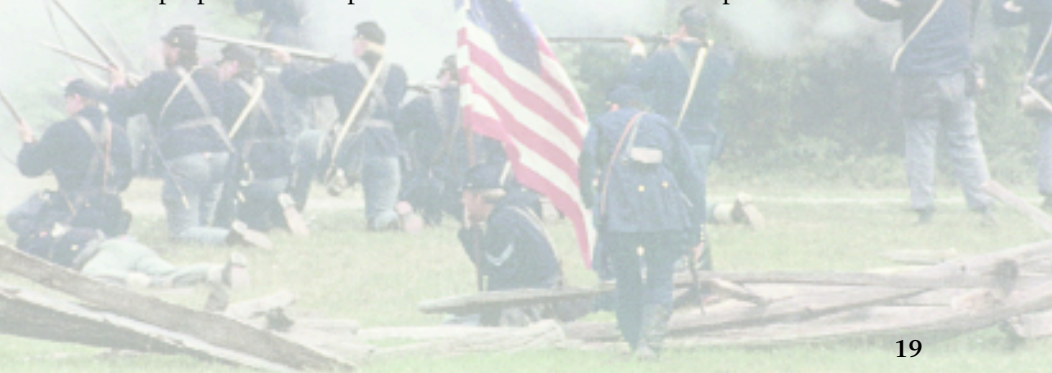
Were there any alternatives? The law provided that one could be exempted from military service if they paid a fee of \$300, but when Nichols offered to pay the fee, he was refused. When he explained his convictions to the commanding officer, it was to no avail.¹

Nichols explained his position that he would not kill another person even if ordered to do so, but the commanding officers refused to accept it. A hated conscientious objector, he was immediately branded a coward, a traitor, and unfit to live. More than once a certain "Major Brown" came to his rescue and stopped someone who was pointing a rifle to his head. But Nichols would not back down. Finally, he was placed before a firing squad. It was Major Brown who rescued him from execution—again.

At this, he appealed to President Lincoln who, after hearing his situation, granted his request, and Nichols was assigned to work in a military hospital.

At the Military Hospital

During the Civil War, there were more deaths from disease than from combat, and measles was a major problem. The disease usually ran its course in three or four weeks, and under normal circumstances, the patient would recover with no lasting ill effects. But in army camps the childhood disease often proved fatal, because improper care and poor sanitation often led to complications such as





President Lincoln granted Nichols' request to do civil service instead of killing his fellow man.

*Some discount this claim. Was it even a possibility?

Consider the following: the War began in April of 1861, Nichols was drafted in October of 1864, and the war ended the following April—approximately 6 months after he was drafted. A draftee's obligation for military service was three years. Evaluating the data that can be substantiated, it seems that the troops drafted during the beginning of the war were leaving for home in droves about that time because their military obligation had expired.

So, when Nichols was drafted there would be a period of time when the new draftees were "put through the measles," and it was during this time that, according to Nichols' statements, not one life was lost where he was serving.

Something of this magnitude would not go unnoticed. Also, the patients trusted their belongings to Nichols more than to others. No doubt this was observed.

Nichols described his hospital position as superintendent. Though he may not have been given the title officially, the military officers, recognizing his natural leadership ability and level of responsibility, may easily have given him some of their work, especially the administrative duties. It is reported that in the military hospitals at the time, there was a large turnover of doctors, and it is mentioned that "medical officers did not know how to requisition drugs and medical supplies." (<http://www.civilwarhome.com/medicinehistory.htm>). If Nichols was a mainstay at the hospital, he could easily have known how to go about requisitioning drugs and medical supplies. With the war over, it is also likely the officers were anxious to get home, or perhaps some just wanted a bit of leisure, and turned responsibility over to one willing to take it.

One must also bear in mind that the hospital of his day was nothing to compare to today's hospital. The science of medicine was woefully, incredibly imperfect, so that the combat soldier got the worst of it in two ways: when he fought because of the precision weapons (some were also rapid fire), he was likely to be hurt pretty badly; when he stayed in camp, he lived under conditions that were very likely to make him sick. In either case he had almost no chance to get the kind of medical treatment which a generation or so later would be routine.

pneumonia. The disease was so common and disruptive that new units were held back from active service until they had been "put through the measles."

While Nichols was not a doctor, it is said that in an epidemic of measles he devised improved methods of treatment for the sick so effective that not a single life was lost among those under his care. We are not told what this change in treatment may have been, but knowing his familiarity with the Bible and the strict sanitation laws given to the Hebrews, it seems likely that his main weapon against disease was better sanitary conditions.²

While Nichols was tending to the soldiers' physical ailments, he did not slacken his zeal for their spiritual needs. Gathering his comrades around him, he taught them from the Bible, urging them to turn to God and prepare to meet Him. Many challenging meetings were held on the parade field and in barracks 54. Some lively discussions arose when "orthodox" chaplains disapproved of this "strange gospel."

Describing his war experience years later, Nichols said that he was made "superintendent" of a hospital.*

Sometime after the war ended, Nichols was honorably discharged and returned to the rigors of farming, which he shared with his wife in the frontier state of Wisconsin. But times were very difficult. He was in poverty, and the nation was unsettled, depressed and in the grip of inflation. But, as he said later, "I lived better than those around me because I never wanted things I could not have."

At the age of 24, we find him on a farm of his own near Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, spending all the time he could spare from his work preaching. He had many interested at this time and made a circuit of several towns, with occasional trips to other districts and distant States. He was not a man to waste precious time. While doing his farm chores, he was studying and writing; and late into the night his studies continued. Sometimes the sun would rise, and he would still be studying.



CHAPTER 2, PART 1: SEARCHING

At an early age L. T. Nichols was shocked to discover that in many so-called Christian circles, error was knowingly taught for truth; didn't old Deacon Graves prove that point? And early in Nichols' studies he discovered that there was a broad diversity of beliefs—a thousand plus faiths all professing to be built on the Bible. Why should that be? If there was one God, and the Bible declared that this is true, then there should be only one faith, with all believing and teaching the same. Nichols reasoned that in its original writing either the Bible is all true, or none of it is reliable. It does not matter what you think, or what I think. What our Creator, the author of the Bible, has stated is true, and you and I have no power to change it. We may reject it, or we may read into it what we want it to say, but God's Word does not change. Facts remain facts. Such was the reasoning that young L. T. Nichols followed as he avidly pursued his study of Scripture.



A stoneboat served as a carriage until the Nichols could afford to buy one.



He quickly met opposition and charges against the Bible for which he had no answers. The great teachers of the day, those trained in the theological seminaries, could not meet the challenges of the infidels. The time honored creeds had no defense against the infidels. "If all others failed, what could I do? I trembled at the magnitude of the undertaking," he wrote in later years.

Through anxious days and weeks of study, to use his own words, "I prayed to God for light upon bended knees and with falling tears." The example of others who encountered opposition gave Nichols the courage and the resolve to put heart and soul into his studies. Sir Isaac Newton, for example, ascribed his success, not to superior genius but to superior industry. Newton developed the habit of holding his mind steady for long periods of time to an involved and difficult subject. His reason for success? "Earnest devotion to a cause held dear."

Nichols later wrote of these early years:

"One day while carefully reading, my eye caught a striking testimony in Prov. 2:3-5, 'Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding, if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.' How the reading of these testimonies impressed my mind! I must search as for hid treasures to ever find the knowledge of God. If that were so, what had covered it up? I sought for the answer, and found it in the sayings of Paul:

"...the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables' (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Man-made fables had obscured true religion, sound doctrine; and Paul told us of it over eighteen hundred years ago, that we might be able to dig beneath the rubbish and find the hidden truth. How mighty seemed the undertaking, to dig deep beneath the rubbish of centuries and find the gold!"

The ability to read and an honest heart were all he needed to uncover the treasures of knowledge. And Paul, in Eph. 3:4 said, "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ." Understanding would come through reading. "But what must I read? Would this knowledge come from catechisms, prayer books, commentaries, the writings of the church Fathers, or could I obtain it by reading the decrees of the councils, or the formulated creeds of men?" The 5th verse (Eph. 3) tells to whom this knowledge was revealed. "Which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."

Here was the answer: this knowledge of God was revealed to His holy Apostles and Prophets, and by reading, one could understand. Nichols was reminded of the scathing words of Jesus, "Woe unto you, lawyers! For ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered" (Luke 11:52). False teachers of the day had taken away the key of knowledge, and Nichols was determined to find it. As he devoted his full attention to studying the Scriptures in Hebrew and Greek, as well as English, his focus was forward.

The Bible Only

Nichols' point of departure was the Bible. Either the Bible was the work of men, and thus false and unreliable, or it was the veritable, inspired Word of God, and should therefore be understood and followed completely. There was no half-way ground.

He decided upon the latter, and set out to discover its teaching. He did not claim any supernatural power, nor any direct communication from God or any divinely given Holy Spirit. All he had was the Bible itself, the lexicons and dictionaries available to him, and his God-given powers of reason, coupled with a solid confidence that God would hear and help every honest, sincere, whole-hearted seeker (Jer. 29:13). When the Bible said, "Come, let us reason together, saith the Lord," he listened.

However, the true teaching of God's Word did not come in a dazzling burst of

continued on page 24

PIGEONS ARE E-BIRDS!

You see us all over, especially in cities. We love to nest high up on buildings or around chimneys—it reminds us of the cliffs to which we are native.

We're pigeons. You may also know us by the name "dove."

Doves and pigeons are actually the same bird. (Noah's dove was probably a homing pigeon!) Although we might look plain and drab, our Designer has given us amazing abilities that we've been using to help our fellow humans for thousands of years. I want to share some of these with you today in praise of our Creator!

Our homing instinct is one of our most famous and most useful gifts. This instinct allows us to find our way home even when we've been taken far, far away and released in a strange place. How do we do it?

A whole lot of amazing attributes come together to allow us to navigate so well. Let me mention just a few of them.

First, our Designer gave us our own built in Global Positioning System! And He gave it to us thousands of years before you people had any instrument that could come close to it! Amazing? Yes, we can actually sense the Earth's magnetic fields. I can't tell you how, but we instinctively know north, south, east, west, and all the directions in between. And we don't require any complicated tracking device to make our Global Positioning System work.

Along with this, we have a spectacular visual memory. We can file away upwards of 300 images and retrieve them for many years.

Another navigational gift is our ability to fly long distances at fast speeds. We've been known to fly more than 600 miles per day while averaging around 50 mph. Those

O Lord, what a variety of things
you have made! In wisdom you have
made them all. —Psalm 104:24 NLT

of us that have been bred for speed can travel even faster.

But what your scientists have found most incredible about our navigating instincts is that we aren't migratory. When left to ourselves, we mate for life and stay in a relatively small area. Why did our Designer give us such an elaborate navigational system? Maybe He knew you would need us!

Long ago people discovered our God-given abilities and started to use us to carry important messages. During WWI and WWII, we were able to save countless lives. Pilots and

You have e-mail, and snail-mail,
and sneaker-mail. Well, long before
any of these, there was **pigeon-mail!**

soldiers would carry us a long distance, then release us with critical information to return to the base, and we would do it—every time! Some of us have been decorated with the highest animal awards given by the military of the various nations we've assisted.

We also have very good eyesight that allows us not only to see farther than people, but to see ultraviolet light. We've also been used on rescue missions, because our sharp eyesight and good memory allow us to spot things like lifejackets at sea, and humans against camouflaging landscapes.

And when we come home from any work or flight, we're thirsty! One singular trait I might mention: we're the only bird that doesn't have to tilt its head back to let a trickle of water drip down its throat. We pigeons can suck up water through our beaks like you suck liquid through a straw.

We are also unique when it comes to raising our chicks. Not only do we lactate, but both Mom and Dad can produce the 'crop milk' out of a pouch in their throats to feed our young. Isn't that unique!

Have you ever wondered why a flock of pigeons will take off in a flurry of feathers for no apparent reason? Maybe we heard something you didn't. Our Designer gave us excellent hearing. Not only can we hear sounds miles and miles away, but we can also hear super low frequencies. This special ability allows us to detect major events like earthquakes and electrical storms before people can.

I've been told our 'head bobbing' behavior is a curiosity. Although we get along quite well with each other, we aren't just perpetually affirming our mutual agreement. Actually, the appearance that we're bobbing our heads is an illusion. Seem strange? Imagine walking past a door and seeing something interesting. Your feet keep walking but your head stays behind to continue looking through the door, to give your eyes time to focus and your brain time to comprehend. Then you quickly bring your head forward to realign yourself properly. That's basically what we're doing all the time. We use this motion to stabilize the image in our minds, so we can file it away for future retrieval.

We pigeons are pretty amazing. Don't you agree? Yet we can't take any credit for our talents or abilities! We only want you to praise our Creator for His amazing and awesome designs. ♦



CURE FOR THE JITTERS

It's Not About Me

The moment Stephen had dreaded now came. His Sunday school teacher, Mrs. Reynolds, turned to him and said, "Now, Steve, we want to have your report on Solomon's temple."

Stephen's knees wobbled as he stood up. His back was moist with perspiration. His throat felt dry. When he opened his mouth, the words he had planned to say just didn't come.

He glanced hastily at his notes. Then he tried again. He was careful not to look at the girls in the class, but talked instead in the direction of his best friend, Carl Storm.

Somehow, he managed, in a jumble of words, to tell something about Solomon's temple. And to show the pictures he had found for this report. Then, weakly, he sat down.

Later, he told his family as they drove homeward, "Say, was I all jitters! I'd rather do all the barn chores for a week than stand up in front of that class again!"

Dad chuckled. "Did anyone in your class bite you while you were giving the report?"

"Well, no."

"Anybody make faces at you? Boo you?"

"No."

"Well, Son, what should give you the jitters—just to stand and tell friends of yours what you learned from a Bible encyclopedia?"

"Well, they all look at you, for one thing."

"You wouldn't want them to be looking away from you, not paying attention to your report, would you?"

"No."

Dad laughed. So did Mom.

But Stephen could not understand why they should be amused. He had seen each of them stand up before people in church, at the schoolhouse, or other community gatherings—but neither of them ever got the jitters while talking to a crowd of people. Yet, even the mayor of Woodridge would stammer and get red in the face whenever he had to say something in front of many people.

"Dad," asked Stephen, "how come you're not nervous about getting up in front of people and speaking?"

"Hmm. I used to get plenty of jitters. That is, until Someone showed me what was the matter with me."

"What was the matter?"

"I got the jitters because all the time I was standing up there trying to say something I wasn't thinking as much about what I was trying to say as I was thinking about *me*. I'd stand there, getting redder in the face by the minute, wondering what people were thinking about that skinny farmer standing up in front of them."

"And then—what took it away—the getting jittery?"

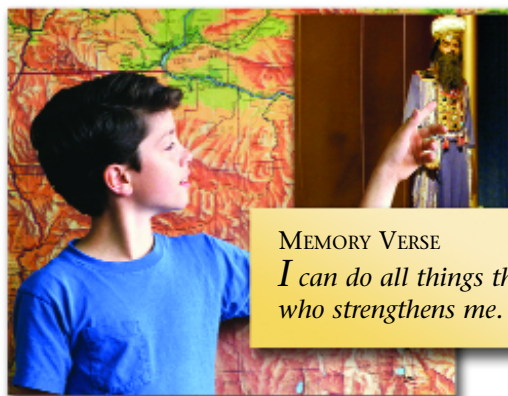
"I learned that I can '*do all things*'—even public speaking—'*through Christ which strengthens me*' (Phil. 4:13). When we learn to do all things as unto the Lord (Col. 3:17), we forget about me, myself and company. Then we lose fear, and don't get so jittery. Fear, you know, doesn't do us any good. That is why '*God hath not given us*

the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind'" (2 Tim. 1:7).

"But," said Stephen, "you couldn't—just learn to forget about yourself—all at once—could you?"

"No, indeed," replied Dad. "We lose our fleshly pride only as we grow in grace (2 Peter 3:18). Everyone may not be the same but there wasn't anything that helped as much before I was to speak as to pray. God knows our every need—and if we ask His help—there just isn't any more powerful help that you can get."

Mom nodded her head. "Yes, Stevie, when you have to give another talk or report, remember, first of all, to do your part by preparing carefully what you are to say. Then pray. And when you speak—keep in mind that it is your report, or your message, that is most important, not you." ♦



MEMORY VERSE

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. –Phil. 4:13

Let's talk about this:

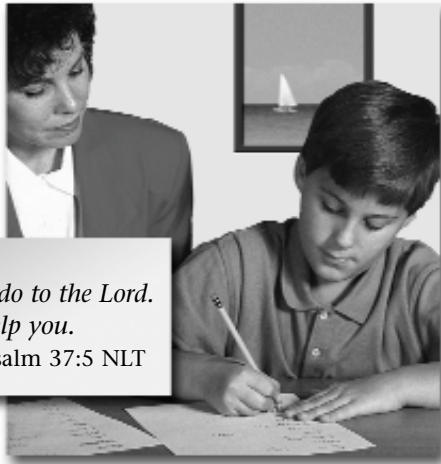
1. Do *you* get nervous when you are going to take part in a church or school program? What do you think makes you nervous?
2. Does Jesus want us to be nervous when we speak in His honor? If we are nervous, who might we be thinking about?
3. What is the best thing can do *before* we speak to a group?
4. Even before we pray, what should we do if we are to speak before other people about Jesus? (2 Timothy 2:15)

WHY WORRY?

It was time for Stephen to be in bed, but he still sat at the dining table, his school books spread before him. In a few days, he would be writing his eighth grade examinations. So Mom had been going through his history text with him, asking him questions.

Stephen ran his fingers nervously through his hair. "I

Commit everything you do to the Lord.
Trust him, and he will help you.
—Psalm 37:5 NLT



sure hope I don't flunk that history test! Math doesn't bother me much. Or science. But history! I get scared just thinking about a history test. So many things to remember. Dates, names, places—"

"You *are* worried about it, aren't you, Son?"

"I surely am!"

"Then I think it would be a good idea to forget about this history book, and get your Bible instead. There's a verse in your Bible that I think will help you with your history exam."

Stephen looked at his mother, questioningly. She always had a Bible verse handy. Usually, she would just say what the

verse was. This time she wanted him to find it himself.

He fetched his Bible, then sat down with Mom again. "Alright, Mom, what's the good word this time?"

"Look in Paul's letter to the Philippians. Somewhere in the fourth chapter, and you'll read a verse that starts: '*In nothing be anxious.*'"

Stephen ran his finger down the page, and stopped at the sixth verse in the fourth chapter. "O, yes. Here it is. '*In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*'"

"If we are Christians, and follow God's Word in our lives, we don't need to be anxious about anything. God wants us to let Him take care of anything that worries us" (1 Peter 5:7).

Stephen was puzzled. "I can see that I should pray about this test. But *just* praying about this history test—and not studying for it—well, that wouldn't seem right."

"No," replied Mom, "that wouldn't be right.

The Lord expects you to study, so you are prepared for your test. But He does *not* want you to *worry*. Just worrying about something has never yet helped anybody. Remember what Jesus said: '*Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his stature?*'" (Luke 12:25).

"I think I get it now," said Stephen. "Stuff as much history as I can get into my head. But no use biting my nails, worrying." ♦

The above stories were reprinted from *Happy Acres* by Erling Nicolai Rolfsrud. Published by Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois.

continued from page 21

light. It came by the travail of a mind wrestling with problems which seemed overwhelming. It came by sleepless nights and days of study, analysis and research; by the single-minded efforts of one groping and praying for the light, and accepting it as it came.

The idea of being completely honest in today's culture may seem strange and unachievable. But honesty is at the heart of Biblical teaching. Without it one cannot hope for salvation. Paul believed it is possible not to lie (Col. 3:9). And Jesus said those who lie will not be admitted to the Kingdom (Rev. 21:1–5, 27; 22:12, 15). ♦

(to be continued)

¹ It seems evident that Mr. Nichols was unaware that on July, 1864 (3-1/2 months prior to his being drafted) the Conscription Act was replaced with a different sort of exemption. The new rule was that if you were drafted, you could only be exempted from service if you could pay someone else to serve in your place (they expected the change in the law to considerably reduce the number of exemptions). This probably explains why the military refused his \$300. Some areas were having difficulty finding enough eligible men to fill their draft quota. Also, hustlers had entered the business of finding substitutes...at a price: \$600, \$1,200 and as high as \$1,500—a clear indication that substitutes were difficult to find.

² See <http://www.wtv-zone.com/civilwar/measles.html>

This website gives some insight regarding the improved care methods that Nichols may have provided. It also affirms the deadly impact of measles on the Civil War. Numerous reports confirm that disease claimed more lives than the war itself for several reasons:

1. Men being drafted from rural areas had little resistance to disease.
2. Inadequate and unsanitary conditions caused complications such as pneumonia.
3. Living in close quarters.
4. Little or no knowledge of how disease was transmitted.

Elsie Trachsel

On June 10, 2005, our oldest member, Sister Elsie Trachsel, fell asleep in death at her home at the age of 107. Though afflicted with the normal limitations of aging, she enjoyed relatively good health to the end. For the last several years she was lovingly looked after in her own home by her daughter Judith, who several times reported that her mother was "a delight to care for."

Sister Trachsel probably holds the record for being the longest time subscriber to the Megiddo Message on record: 73 years (since 1932). She also holds the record for the longest companionship in our church. She was married in 1916 to Paul Trachsel, and together they shared the joys and sorrows of life for 82 years, until his death in 1999.

Sister Trachsel was active in the Iowa Megiddo fellowship during the early 1950s, in which she was Bible School teacher for the children. She made Bible reading and study a consistent part of her daily life.

She was kindly and even tempered. She took her religion seriously, and was always looking for ways to apply it in her life. I remember visiting her more than once when her most earnest question was, "Tell me what I am doing wrong, because I want to be ready when Elijah comes."

Whenever she had visitors from the Church, she was the ultimate in hospitality. She had a remarkable way of preparing in advance so that when you arrived at her home, she received you into her home and had her time with you totally uninterrupted. Then when mealtime came, she went to the kitchen and pulled plate after plate of home-prepared foods from every corner of the kitchen—and in a matter of minutes had a bountiful spread!

She is survived by her daughter Judith Schmidt of Milton, Iowa, and a son, Russell Trachsel, also of Milton; eight grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. ♦

Viola R. Sutton Taylor

We have received word of the passing of Sister Viola Taylor, of Mount Vernon, Iowa, on June 16, 2005.

Sister Viola was born in 1916. She was married to Floyd Taylor in 1944, and enjoyed 30 years of companionship, until his death from cancer in 1974. She took part in the meetings of the Iowa Megiddo fellowship, and visited Rochester a number of times before relocating. She remained in Rochester until, due to failing health, she returned to Iowa in 1999 to be cared for by her daughter.

She is survived by her daughter, Virginia (Eugene) Kurtz of Lisbon, Iowa; a granddaughter Denise Zahradnik of Mount Vernon, Iowa; two great-grandchildren, Gabrielle and Blake Zahradnik; and two brothers, David and John Sutton of Rochester, New York. ♦



Elsie Trachsel (left) with her niece Florence Burkett. Photo was taken 1981.



Judith holds her mother's 107th birthday cake.

you would start out as a senior and end up in the first grade.

Tottering old age has its drawbacks, but being a tiny baby is a lot worse—when you're getting younger. At this point you could only look forward to losing everything and ending up a helpless infant. Finally, you would just fade away into nothing!

No, I would rather grow older, gain by my experiences, keep up with progress and look forward to a world where I may continue to live. The Lord knew what He was doing when He arranged our lives as He did. Each day our life grows richer in insight and understanding. Each day we add a little more to our store of holiness, purity and righteousness. Each day we know a little more, our experience widens, and we come a little nearer to life in God's coming, bright new world.

I am glad I'm getting older, because it means that I can be growing toward a place in Christ's Kingdom. It means that my life can be like "the path of the righteous" which "shines brighter and brighter until it is full day" (Prov. 4:18, RSV).

Who would want it any other way! ♦



*There is a day of peaceful rest
To Christian pilgrims giv'n;
There is a joy for souls distressed,
A balm for every wounded breast;
'Twill come with Christ from heaven!*

*There is a home for weary souls,
By sin and sorrow driven;
When tossed on life's tempestuous shoals,
Where storms arise, and ocean rolls,
It comes with Christ from heaven.*

*There fragrant flowers incessant bloom,
And joys supreme are given:
There rays divine disperse the gloom;
And saints triumphant o'er the tomb
Bask in the smiles of heaven!*

—Selected



Watch Out for Growth-Stunters!

Here are eight growth stunters to watch out for.

1) *"I've been planted, I'll grow."*

Every plant needs nourishment, the right kind and in the right amount. Growth is *not* automatic. The Bible says it as a command: *"Grow in grace"* (2 Pet. 3:18).

2) *"My family disagrees with my decision."*

Family ties can be helpful, but they can also be paralyzing. The Apostle Paul said, *"I leave the past behind"* (Phil. 3:13 Phillips). Paul's family had given him the best they knew, but without doubt, they were not eager to hear about His decision to leave the Jewish traditions and follow Christ. But Paul's mind was set. He said, *"This one thing I do...I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 3:13-14).

3) *"I don't want to disappoint my friends."*

The Bible says, *"Bad company is the ruin of good character"* (1 Cor. 15:33 Moffatt Bible). Friends can either hinder or help us. The wrong friends can be sarcastic. They can tie us to trivia, and pull in the wrong direction.

4) *"I like easy, no-think answers."*

God gave us minds to use, to ponder deep, spiritual truths from His Word. Like the new believers in Berea in Paul's day, we need to *"search the Scriptures daily"* (Acts 17:11), read the Bible to know what we believe and why. If we are too easily satisfied, we won't keep learning.

5) *"I keep making the same mistakes over again."*

Don't waste your blunders.
We stunt our growth when we resist the lessons that we could learn from our mistakes. Teachability is a prerequisite for growth.

6) *"I like the easy way."*

Some people say, *"Go with the flow."* But the *"flow"* may not be going in the right direction. The Bible says, *"Make the very most of your time"* (Eph. 5:16).

7) *"The hurt is too deep, I can't forgive."*

We hurt ourselves when we hold to a resentment, or anger, or a feeling that someone hurt us. Unforgiveness is spiritually deadly. Jesus said, *"If you forgive men, your heavenly Father will forgive you."*

When we refuse to forgive, or when we make our growth depend on someone else's change of heart, we hurt ourselves.

8) *"I want to keep all my options open."*

In Jesus' parable of the sower, some good seed of the Kingdom fell among thorns—the cares, riches and worries of this world—and could not grow. Too many options open stunts growth.



Sin as a caterpillar is dangerous, but sin as a butterfly is a thousand times worse. If sin in its ugliest form is dangerous, who can know its unmeasured power and influence when it puts on robes of beauty!



To get through the hardest journey, take just one step at a time, but keep stepping.

If you take "God" out of "Good" nothing but (o) remains.

Make the most of your time, for it is life itself.

The Christian isn't one who never goes wrong. He is one who can pick himself up after he stumbles and go on.

REALLY SATISFIED?

The story is told of an elderly Quaker who, to teach his neighbors a lesson, put a sign on a vacant piece of property he owned that read, "I will give this lot to anyone who is really satisfied."

A wealthy farmer read it as he rode by and said to himself: "Since my Quaker friend is going to give this piece of land away, I might as well have it as anyone else. I am rich and have all I need, so I am well able to qualify." He went up to the Quaker's door and, when the aged man appeared, the farmer explained why he had come.

"And art thou really satisfied?" asked the owner of the lot.

"I surely am," was the farmer's reply. "I have all I need, and I am well satisfied."

"Friend," said the other, "if thou art satisfied, then what dost thou want with my lot?" The question revealed the covetousness that was hidden in the man's heart.

Most of us spend a great deal of effort crossing bridges to which we never come. In effect, we are pulling tomorrow's cloud over today's sunshine.

TRUTH

Truth will prevail, though men abhor
The glory of its light;
And wage exterminating war
And put all foes to flight.

Though trodden under foot of men,
Truth from the dust will spring,
And from the press—the lip—the pen—
In tones of thunder ring.

Beware—beware, ye who resist
The light that beams around,
Lest, ere you look through error's mist,
Truth strike you to the ground.

—Selected

DISCIPLINE BROTHER DONKEY

One of the early church leaders referred to his body as "Brother Donkey." Like that hardy animal with a reputation for being stubborn, his body served him well as long as he kept it under firm discipline. "I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest I myself should become disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:27).

Lord, take control of my life today,
Let Your will be also mine,
Through each thought and word I say
May Your glory ever shine.

He who fails to pray does not cheat God. He cheats himself.

I've learned—

that it takes years to build up trust,
and only seconds to destroy it.

I've learned—

that it's not what happens to you
but what you do with it that counts.

I've learned—

that you can get by on charm for about fifteen minutes.
After that, you'd better know something.

I've learned—

that you shouldn't compare yourself to others.

I've learned—

that your background and circumstances may have influenced
who you are, but you are responsible for who you become.

I've learned—

that you can do something in an instant
that will give you heartache for life.

learned—

that you should always leave loved ones with loving words.
It may be the last time you see them.

learned—

that you can keep going long after you can't.

learned—

that you are responsible for what you do,
no matter how you feel.

learned—

that either you control your attitude or it controls you.

learned—

that heroes are the people who do what has to be done
when it needs to be done, regardless of the consequences.

I've learned—

that maturity has more to do with what types of
experiences you've had and what you've learned from them
and less to do with how many birthdays you've celebrated.

I've learned—

that no matter how good a friend is, they're going to hurt you
every once in a while and you must forgive them for that.

I've learned—

that it isn't always enough to be forgiven by others.
Sometimes you need to learn to forgive yourself.

I've learned—

that no matter how bad your heart is broken
the world doesn't stop for your grief.

