

# Megiddo Message

MAY/JUNE, 2003

He has made  
Everything beautiful  
in His time. Ecclesiastes 3:11





## *That Most Important Command:* **All-out Love**

Jesus tells about a proud Pharisee who stood by himself and prayed this prayer: *"I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else, especially like that tax collector over there! For I never cheat, I don't sin, I don't commit adultery, I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income"* (Luke 18:11–12 NLT). The Pharisee seems to be living a pretty good life, doesn't he?

Have you ever felt smug, like the Pharisee, after examining your own conscience? No major sins come to mind, not even a little one? Do you feel like you're living a pretty blameless life? Before answering this question, read Deuteronomy 6:5, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength"* (NIV). Then read where Jesus repeated it. And notice the importance He put on it. Someone asked Him to name the most important commandment in the law. *"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength'"* (Mark 12:28–30 NIV).

Think about it, and how do you feel? Still secure? Do you think maybe this is being a little extreme? But remember, these are Jesus' words: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."*

What did Jesus mean: *"With all your heart and...with all your mind"*? Was Jesus saying the same thing twice? When I looked up the original words translated "heart" and "mind," I found they are really interchangeable, though "heart" suggests more of the emotional part of our thinking while mind is more the intellectual part (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*).

To love the Lord with all our heart, soul and mind is another way of saying we must love Him with all we have and are. We must love Him with our heart (emotionally), our soul (the whole being, actions and deeds), and our mind (the thinking processes). Put all these together and—nothing is left to the imagination. Jesus is asking for our all. No half-love here!

It is also interesting to note that in the original Greek the three words heart, mind and soul are preceded by the word whole, as our whole heart, whole mind, whole soul, whole strength (*Nestle Aland 26th Edition Greek New Testament with McReynolds English Interlinear*). Can we miss the point of just how inclusive these words are? And Jesus says that all—including our salvation—hinges on our obedience to this command.

Now what about those leisure times when we may have

absorbed ourselves in a novel, or a questionable TV program, or a pointless game, or just plain idle conversation? If we love God with all our heart and mind, where can we find ANY leisure time to waste?

I am thinking, also, of how it affects our understanding of Jesus' other command, to *"do unto others as we would have them do to us."* If we love God first and completely, we will have a whole new perspective on how we work, how we spend our money, how we relate to our families, and how we train our children. We will also be anxious to encourage and help our brothers and sisters in the faith to do the same.



*Are you ready  
to love God with  
your whole heart,  
whole soul,  
whole mind, and  
whole strength?*

So how does one apply the most important command? Maybe you don't do anything that draws your mind away from God, but have you ever let your mind dwell on things that were not spiritually uplifting? Were you loving God with all your heart and all your soul at such times? Maybe this is a time to re-evaluate your life and see what direction it is going. Consider David's prayer: *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life"* (Ps. 139:23–24 NLT).

We should never take any Divine command lightly. If we love the Lord with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind and with all our strength, we will have no time to waste. None. How many hours have you wasted this week, or even this day, that you could have been pondering some verse of Scripture, or searching the Scriptures to have a ready answer for those who ask you? (Acts 17:11; 1 Pet. 3:15).

Is God asking too much? This same God who is asking for this all-out love is giving life and opportunity to better ourselves by serving Him. And to this He has added the glorious promise of eternal life to all who truly love Him.

Now what about that self-commending Pharisee? Did he go home justified? Read Luke 18:9–14 and find the answer. ♦



# What Are the Benefits?

All of us like benefits. A major issue in considering a new job is often the benefit package, also when the benefits begin.

Christians have benefits, too. In fact, God gives us very individualized benefit packages. What determines the makeup of our benefit package?

When we think about the benefits of serving God, we usually are thinking about the eternal benefits, but there are also present benefits. The songwriter was thinking about these benefits when he wrote, *"My cup's full and running over."* This was how David felt when he wrote *"My cup overflows"* (Ps. 23:5). The Apostle Paul said it also in Romans 5: *"We have confidently entered into this new relationship of grace, and here we take our stand, in happy certainty of the glorious things he has for us in the future. This doesn't mean, of course, that we have only a hope of future joys—we can be full of joy here and now even in our trials and troubles"* (vs. 2–3 Phillips). We have joy, says the great Apostle, even in the midst of our trials and troubles.

When we first decide to serve God, we ask, What are the benefits? Jesus does not condemn us for asking. In fact, He advises it. We need to know what we have to do, and what we will get from it. If I apply for a job, I want to know what is required. Can I meet the standard? Can I do what is asked of me? Can I produce what my employer is looking for? If I can't, I am not going to be in a very good situation very long.

The same is true when we decide to serve God. We ask ourselves, Can I do what the Lord requires? Is this really what I want to give my life to? We also want to know the other side: What am I going to get from all this? What are the benefits?

In one of His parables, Jesus talks about someone who was about to undertake a large building project. He said, *"For which of you,*

*continued on page 5*



## Why follow Jesus?

*"I assure you that everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, will receive now in return, a hundred times over, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property—with persecutions. And in the world to come they will have eternal life."* – Jesus (Mark 10:29–30 NLT)

# Megiddo Message

May/June 2003  
Volume 90, No.4

## EDITORIAL

- 2 **All-out Love** by Gerald R. Payne

## FEATURE

- 3 **The Hundredfold: What Are the Benefits?**  
WE ASKED...YOU SAID...  
Bright and Glowing by Edward Shayler  
What Is the Hundredfold? by Samuel Newray  
A Hundred Times Over by Patricia Fleming

## ARTICLE

- 10 **Be Not As the Cockatoo** by Eva Goertzen  
11 **The Heavenly Kingdom on Earth** Part Four by Ruth E. Sisson  
STEPS LEADING INTO THE KINGDOM  
Step #5: The Judgment of God's Servants  
Step #6: Jesus Is King!

## BIBLE STUDY: THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

- 14 **Respite and Change in Peter's Ministry** (Part 13) by Ruth Sisson  
An Emergency at Joppa • Approaching Change • Opening the  
Door of Faith to the Gentiles • An Angel Prepares Peter to Meet  
Cornelius • Visitors from Caesarea • At the Home of Cornelius

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- 20 **Keeping What Law?** by Gerald R. Payne

## YOUTH PAGE

- 22 **Eileen's Cookies**  
**What You Plant Will Grow!** by Margaret A. Tremblay  
25 **Know Your Bible?**  
Last Words • Sheep and Goats • Quakes

## AWESOME DESIGNS

- 26 **I'm an Underwater Wonder!** (Underwater Spider)  
Praise to My Maker!

## BACK COVER

- Drop a Pebble in the Water** by James W. Foley

FRONT COVER: PHOTO BY DAVID AND MARIE SUTTON.

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](http://www.megiddo.com)

**E-mail address:** [megiddo@megiddo.com](mailto: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.

*Note: If you wish to remove label on cover, warm with hair dryer and carefully peel off.*

## 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.



# What Are the Benefits?

continued from page 3

intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost?" The builder looks at his resources, and what he is going to need, "whether he has enough to finish it—lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'" (Luke 14:28–30). The sensible person wants to avoid this embarrassment.

If we follow Jesus' advice and "count the cost," compare the cost with the benefits, we will find that the benefits far outweigh the costs. In fact, serving God is all gain if we see it through to the end. God has promised not to forget any work or labor of love we have showed toward His name (Heb. 6:10). He is generous, gracious, full of mercy, and has promised an abundance of eternal blessings to every faithful one (Rom 2:7; Eph. 3:20; 1 Cor. 2:9).

## How Do We Get the Benefits?

When we decide to serve God, our first task is to learn what God is offering, and how we can be part of it. We need to know what we believe, and why. We need to be able to say, This is what the Bible teaches, and I believe it. We need a solid foundation for our faith, and a firm grasp of the evidence that supports it. Many people have a certain religion or faith because it was the faith of their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. We may take many qualities from our forebears, but there is no true hand-me-down faith. There are no second-generation believers. Every one of us must know for ourselves what we believe, and why. If our faith is only a hand-me-down, it is not worth anything. Someone has said that "Fifty million Frenchmen can't be wrong," but history has proven that they can be, and often are. Jesus said, "Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life," and almost everybody is going that way? No. He said, "Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matt. 7:14). If we are going to travel the narrow way that leads to life, we know what to expect: a narrow, restricted way with few travelers. It will not be the popular way. It was not popular in Jesus' day, and it is not popular now.

Why is it not popular? Because it is, as Jesus said, narrow and difficult.

continued on page 7

## A Hundredfold—Plus!

Key Bible passages that describe the Hundredfold:

### CONTENTMENT:

"Now godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. 6:6).

### A MIND AT PEACE:

"Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble" (Psalm 119:165).

### VIRTUES THAT MAKE FOR HAPPINESS:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness" (Gal. 5:22).

### NO GOOD DENIED:

"For the Lord God is a sun and shield;  
The Lord will give grace and glory;  
No good thing will He withhold  
From those who walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11).

### SUFFICIENT OF PRESENT LIFE:

"... Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8).

### FREEDOM FROM WANT:

"The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing" (Psalm 34:10 NIV).

### FREEDOM FROM WORRY:

"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt. 6:31–33 NIV).

### FREEDOM FROM STRIFE, RIVALRY, AND COMPETITION:

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself" (Phil. 2:3).

### FREEDOM FROM FEAR:

"So we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Heb. 13:6).



WE ASKED...

YOU SAID...

Jesus said,  
"And everyone who has  
left houses or brothers or  
sisters or father or mother or  
wife or children or lands,  
for My name's sake, shall  
receive a hundredfold, and  
inherit eternal life." — Matthew 19:29

# Message

## What is the Hundredfold?

A few months ago, Russell Hamby of Texas asked for input for a study on the subject of the "hundredfold." Key questions were:

*What is the increase?*

*Who is worthy?*

*Is it spiritual or literal?*

*When is it given?*

*How is it given?*

The following are extracts from some of the responses.

### A HUNDRED TIMES OVER

In Mark 10, Jesus is teaching a lesson about giving up the things of this world. The rich young man wanted to know how he could inherit eternal life. But he was not willing to give up his possessions, or the thing that stood between him and God. Jesus then said that it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into the Kingdom of God. "*Peter said, 'We've given up everything to follow You.' And Jesus replied, 'Let Me assure you that no one has ever given up anything—home, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, property—for love of Me and to tell others the Good News, who won't be given back, a hundred times over, homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and land—with persecutions! All these will be his here on earth, and in the world to come he shall have eternal life'*" (verses 28–30 TLB).

Jesus has assured us that we will receive ample compensation, both in this life and through eternity, for anything we give up for Him. We have to give up many things if we would be true followers of Christ. Once we give them up we realize that they really did not make us happy, they were weights that slowed us down. For everything we give up we receive a much better replacement. When our lives have been wholly given to God, the things of this world will be of no value to us, and they will be replaced with the things that will bring us closer to God. Then our lives will be filled with peace and contentment. This is part of the hundredfold Jesus promised.

Why must we give up these things? It is not necessarily that the things or people we must give up are wrong but the fact that we put them ahead of God and His work. If these things are getting in the way of our service to God they must be given up. But we can be assured that the replacement for whatever we give up will be far, far better than we could have imagined. Yes, we will also get "persecutions." Because we refuse to be like the world, we will stand out from the crowd. We will be questioned, and looked upon as odd because we will not do as they do. At times people may even become hostile toward us because we stand for the right. But none of this makes any difference to the follower of Christ because Eternity with all its blessings will be the reward. —PATRICIA A. FLEMING

*continued on page 7*



# What Are the *Benefits?*

continued from page 5

## Not All Difficulties

In Mark 10, the Apostle Peter was looking at the difficulties in his life and wondering if he had made the right decision. He said to Jesus, "See, we have left all and followed you." That "all" they had left behind included some real sacrifices. They had given up their business. They had given up their homes. They had given up many friends, and likely many family members besides. They had given up all that to follow Jesus.

How did Jesus answer Peter? "Assuredly, I say to you..." and He acknowledged the things they had given up. He wanted to be sure they understood. He said, Yes, I know, but... I promise you, that whatever you have left behind for My sake and the gospel's, you are going to receive—no question about it—you will receive "a hundredfold now in this time," and He lists the same blessings they had given up—"houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life" (Mark 10:28-30). So what is the loss, Peter? Yes, you have given up something, but you are getting it back larger, richer, better than ever before. Yes, it comes back "with persecutions," but the persecutions are only for the moment. The compensation will go on and on and on, and it will be far beyond anything you can imagine. And besides all the present benefits, He says, you will have "in the age to come, eternal life."

There is no loss in serving God, not even when there is sacrifice.

## Present Benefits? Compare...

Most people have heard the name Elvis Presley. During the 1960's, he captured the young people with his music. But he became disillusioned, overdosed on pills, and ended his life when he was only 42 years old. That was in 1977. He had attained notoriety, but it all ended very unhappily, and prematurely.

Another name in this world's hall of fame was that of Howard Hughes. Counted among the most successful in this world, he was financially a billionaire, but he lived the last 19 years of his life as a recluse without any real happiness or friends. He had no friends because he had made his money by stepping on other people and taking advantage of others. His employees hated him, and his story is

continued on page 8

## BRIGHT AND GLOWING

Man somehow has always wanted to feel in control of his own life and destiny. To this end he has spent much of his time, working and studying methods and ways to make life easier, better, more secure, and more protected. Satisfaction comes to many when they are finally able to reach a pinnacle that seems to suit their ambitions. Others never reach it, and still others are never satisfied regardless of their success. Some use a method of seeking help and support, others simply take without regard for circumstance.

Some terrible and heinous incidents have taken place on this earth because of these attitudes. Most often man then declares, "Things will be different" but somehow a worse scenario follows, and it becomes very difficult to understand why man cannot see his own folly.

For generations, people on earth have been trying to build a Utopia.

Some have seemed to succeed for a

## The Hundredfold

*Behold! what gracious words He speaks, the gentle Master there,  
To wisdom give His little flock and teach them godly fear.  
They ask "What wilt Thou give to us from out the Father's store?  
We left our all, dear Lord, for truth, what shall we have therefore?"*

*The Master said "I'll give to all My faithful ones and true,  
A right to in My Kingdom live, and share My glory, too;  
For all who to the end endure, shall go thence out no more,  
But reign with Me in righteousness, and rule the nations o'er."*

*His promise true, "A hundredfold," they do with joy now reap,  
Who leave earth's fleeting pleasures all God's holy law to keep.  
A hundredfold in this brief life His faithful ones procure:  
A hundredfold of home, and friends, and pleasures good and pure.*

*And when He comes to call His own and claim His chosen bride,  
Those who have left all earthly loves and in His love abide,  
His spotless ones to them He'll give an endless life replete  
With glory, might and majesty, and every pleasure sweet.*

brief period, then decayed into oblivion, always because of lack of principle. Over time, mankind has arrived at the position where he feels no longer responsible for his actions and declares himself liberated from rules that might apply any purpose to life, and has closed his mind to the consequences. This attitude has perpetrated a creed of "anything goes" as long as he is having "fun." He will complain bitterly about any obstacle even if it is self-induced.

Is it any wonder that such do not share in the HUNDREDFOLD Jesus promised? Can any think it is rightfully theirs when they have made no effort to be deserving, and have used every excuse to defend their deficit?

Let us reflect on the reason and purpose of our life on earth. God created the earth to be inhabited by people, from among whom He will choose some to live in a Kingdom that He will establish on earth. God has given man all kinds of wonderful devices and help to succeed in this process, and allowed him to use all freely, unhindered. He has also sup-

continued on page 8



plied a Book of instruction (the Bible), along with visible evidence, and hosts of promises to all of those who will dedicate themselves to this cause. Even those who have no interest in following His instructions can benefit during their lifetime. But the “promises” apply only to those who make a concerted effort. To obtain them one must read; one must learn, one must study, and one must live according to His words.

I can only speak for myself in understanding the “hundredfold” that is promised. But for me it began only after many upheavals in my life, when I had found myself without a purpose, and asked for God’s help. I had established a lifestyle contrary to His Word and had spent most of my time trying hard to fit myself into the proposition that success was a bank full of money. In all this I had failed miserably and found myself destitute.

At that point I began to receive instruction on what God required. I learned that I had to be truthful, and change my attitude, and that my future was up to me, but there was a lot of work to do. Pleasant things began to happen, I was accepted back into my family, we purchased our first house, I slept well every night, I tried hard to follow honest instruction, banks began to trust me again, I became free of debt, serious illnesses were overcome, and I found myself in a position of comfort.

At last with a free mind I was able to dedicate my life to the words of instruction presented by God and Jesus Christ. Then I began to see the hundredfold everywhere I turned. The most impressive fact is that I was led to a place that showed me how to put what I learned into practice, and proved all things by His Word. These dedicated people give me abundant help in following and understanding the Scriptures. With this encouragement the future is bright and glowing with the promise of a continuing “Hundredfold.”

—EDWARD SHAYLER

### ONE THOUSAND TIMES ONE HUNDRED

**T**he hundredfold, as Jesus explained it, seems to be something more than a rich person has who has not led the life of a Christian. I don’t recall seeing where the Bible calls it a reward, but Jesus said that if we lead a righteous life, we will receive a hundred times more blessings than our needs. Jesus in Mark 10:30 tells us that the hundredfold is now, and our eternal reward is “*in the world to come*.”

I for one can certainly say, without reservation, that my blessings in this life would seem to be more like *one thousand times* one hundred, and then some!

—EMANUEL BOYER

### WHAT IS THE HUNDREDFOLD?

**G**reat and eternal rewards are promised the righteous and the faithful Christians. These are to be reaped by those who live worthy of His calling, who seek always to please Him by their actions and thoughts, and strive to keep His commandments. It calls us to put our problems, hardships, frustrations, etc. in God’s hands and look up to Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith.

Today, many people believe that by merely becoming a Christian or belonging to a local church, all will go well with them, forgetting that the Christian race is a rough one. Jesus Christ did not promise freedom from hardships but He did promise blessings. He said those who will

## What Are the Benefits?

*continued from page 7*

a miserable picture of misused privileges. When he died, he had all kinds of money, but nothing else—no happiness, no friends, no peace of mind. He had everything the world could offer, but died a wretch.

Marilyn Monroe is another name in this world’s hall of fame. Rising quickly from a very obscure childhood into fame as a Hollywood star, she was extremely unhappy. At 36 years, she overdosed on pills and died.

The stories could go on and on, of people who had everything in this world but who had nothing—because they did not have God and hope. They proved that this world’s fame is misery.

Now compare their stories with those who chose to serve God. Hear the Apostle Paul at the end of his life, as he looked forward to an untimely death at the hands of his persecutors. Was he despondent? downcast? depressed? disillusioned with his life? Not for a moment! Hear his words of triumph: “*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). Hear him saying at another time, “*If God be for us, who can be against us?*” (Rom. 8:31). There is no situation, person, or authority that can defeat us if we have God for us.

Hear Jesus at the point of death, praying for His persecutors: “*Father forgive them, for they do not know what they do*” (Luke 23:34). Was He sullen? bitter? angry? Not for a moment!

What are the benefits of serving God? Some think that when they turn their lives over to God, they can look forward to perfect health, plenty of money, and no problems. If God offered His children immunity from sickness and accidents, if believers could escape getting old and sick and dying, if their children were always healthy and happy and had everything they could want, people would come into the Church just for the good life, with no thought of love for God, or any desire for future life.

But Christian living is not an escape from problems; it is a promise of help through problems. ♦



leave behind them homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, children and fields (riches, property) for the sake of the gospel will receive a hundredfold of blessings now in this life (Mark 10:28-31) and in the end, eternal life.

It is popularly believed if you become Christian, you will never encounter or experience any hardships, trials, illness, financial breakdown, persecution, etc. However, as Christians, we always do have problems with us. God does not offer immunity from illness, accidents, troubles, disappointment. If we were actually guaranteed these things as Christians, there wouldn't be enough benches or seats in the church to host the congregation. People would just come in purposely for acquiring good and happy living without the least thought of love for God or desire for the eternal life.

We can see today that many so-called Christians claim to know God, but deny Him by their actions (Titus 1:16; 2 Tim. 3:5). These are people who lack self-control, who are boastful, proud, and unloving. If we practice to remove these ungodly traits from our lives, we will reap the hundredfold now in peace and happiness, and the biggest reward will be eternal life promised to those who endure to the end.

Many people go to church today and accept Christ, thinking that they will have everything they need at their disposal since indeed they are now followers of Christ, and yet tomorrow quit the church when faced with unbearable situations. If they would trust God, He would help them bear those situations. This is part of the hundredfold of blessing promised.

As Christians we can find joy in every difficulty knowing it is meant to test our faith in God, and it helps us trust Him more and more. This also is part of the hundredfold.

I want to strive hard to obtain the eternal reward at the end when Jesus returns to establish His Kingdom here on earth.

—SAMUEL K. NEWRAY

## Thinking Deeper...

1. What are spiritual blessings? Why are the blessings of the "hundredfold" Jesus promised spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ and not all physical blessings? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What spiritual blessings have you received? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What spiritual blessings have you missed because you were unaware of how to recognize them? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What changes can you make in the way you think so that you can receive more spiritual blessings (a hundredfold) in the future? \_\_\_\_\_
5. In what way was the "hundredfold" experienced by the Apostle Paul different from that experienced by us today? Why was it different? \_\_\_\_\_
6. In what way was the "hundredfold" that will be received by people serving God during the Millennial reign of Christ be different from that we experience today? \_\_\_\_\_

I have always felt that living right and making progress in improving our character has a reward now. It is more a spiritual blessing now, the hundredfold, and after Christ returns we will be given eternal life if faithful.

We are to take the persecutions now with patience and good will, because Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps.

As we learn to die to sin now as Christ died to sin, we will find a spiritual blessing. Then at the Judgment the reward of eternal life will be given.

—BARBARA CRUM



# BE NOT AS THE Cockatoo

by Eva Goertzen

When Jesus lived in Palestine, He pointed out to His followers many lessons from the common scenes of everyday. He drew illustrations from nature and from various objects which the people understood. If He had been living in Australia, He might well have said at some time to His disciples, Be not as the cockatoo.

Cockatoos are birds confined chiefly to Australia, but are popular at aviaries. They attract attention by their grotesque movements, by their exceeding love of approbation, and their repeated mention of their own name. Wherever two or three of these birds are found in the same apartments, however silent they may be when left alone, the presence of a visitor excites them to immediate conversation. They erect their crest, ruffle their plumage, and the air resounds with "Cockatoo! Pretty Cocky!" in all directions, diversified with an occasional yell if the utterer is not noticed immediately.

In their love of approbation these birds demonstrate a trait that is very human. The cockatoos are excused for their showy demonstrations. But humans—we who have minds and wills and know God—ought to worship Him. The approbation of God should be fairer to us than the praise of ten thousand men. Indeed, we should desire praise from none other than God. When we count God's approval our only gain, we will have characters that are genuine, pure, noble and holy.

When we seek the praise of our peers, we are being like the birds who call, "Cockatoo! Pretty Cocky!"

Jesus was deeply concerned about this deep-seated human weakness. It was repugnant to Him. So much of the so-called righteousness of His day was done to be seen of men. Jesus warned His disciples against all such display: *"Take care! Don't do your good deeds...to be admired....Don't sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do"* (Matt. 6:1-3 TLB). Jesus was teaching them that those who inherit the Kingdom will not be courting attention from their fellowmen.

It may be amusing to see the cockatoo solicit attention, but what of us? Our apparel may be modest, but is our deportment modest too? When we give to another, is our whole desire to help or do we secretly wish to display our generosity and hear



sweet words of gratitude and praise from someone?

Is our daily work done for God, or do we keep in mind our own prestige?

Of course, when we speak, we speak for others to hear, but do we speak for God and to His glory?

Do we use our powers to draw others to God—or to ourselves?

Are we always ready to tell what God has done and will do, or do we, like the cockatoo, erect our crest, ruffle our plumage and make the air resound with "Cockatoo!" "Pretty Cocky!"

When the cockatoo is not noticed as quickly as it wants to be, it lets out a yell. Are not humans very often like that? They do not utter a yell. Of course not. But often when they do not receive the publicity that they expect, they become sadly disgruntled and life loses its zest for them. Their actions emit a strident yell!

May our love for God grow so strong that the greatest zest of our life may be found in those things which only God knows and sees. May our chief joy be those moments when we gain a victory over our lower nature, those moments when our souls are gathered in—not to ourselves but to God—and the door is closed against all distractions. Yes, "be not as the cockatoo." ♦





# The Heavenly Kingdom on Earth

## STEPS INTO THE KINGDOM (continued)

Let us look further at the plan of God to bring in the Heavenly Kingdom on earth. What must happen immediately when Jesus returns?

Jesus has arranged to have co-rulers. He will not be a one-man government. He has planned to share His authority with those who have served God during the previous six thousand years between Adam and Christ's second advent and who have proved faithful under trial. In the Bible these very special people are variously described as the Bride of Christ, the Saints, the Isaac seed, the faithful, the winners. But they must be chosen out of a very much larger group of called-out ones. The process of choosing the winners is the Judgment. That is why the apostle Paul said, *"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).

Jesus' first major task when He returns is the Judgment of His servants. That is why they are resurrected, brought back to life, so that they can be judged.

PART FOUR  
by RUTH E. SISSON

### STEP #5: THE JUDGMENT OF GOD'S SERVANTS

In many religious circles, judgment is thought of as a form of punishment, and is applied only to the wicked, the transgressors, the rebellious. But according to the Bible, God has arranged that all His servants will be judged. We might think of it as the final exam, where each is rated according to achievement. Those who have the highest scores will be there, also those who have the lowest. And each will receive according to what he or she has done.

How can we be sure of this? Let's look at the evidence.

The prophet Daniel foretold the resurrection, saying that *"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). What determines who is awarded each? Only the record of their lives. For Jesus promises to give to everyone according to their works (Rev. 22:12).

Jesus, in His parable of the sheep and the goats, pictured the judgment, *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him."* He described Himself as the Judge who will *"sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations [eth-nos, meaning a race, persons joined by a common allegiance or habit, i.e., His servants] will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left"* (Matt. 25:31-33). Those He places on the right will receive His richest blessing. Those who are placed on the left will hear the words of separation: *"Depart from Me, you cursed"* (Matt. 25:34, 41). Jesus is very definite that both the winners and losers will be present at the Judgment. As we read in Ecclesiastes 12:14, God will bring *"every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil."*

We might picture the Judgment as payday. When a person takes a job, an agreement is made between that person and the employer. The person agrees to do a certain task for the employer, and in return the employer agrees, to give a certain compensation. The Lord also works with His people on

### Steps Into the Kingdom

1. Elijah the Messenger Arrives
2. Holy Spirit Power is restored
3. The dead in Christ are resurrected
4. Jesus Christ returns
5. Jesus Christ chooses His co-rulers  
(Judgment of covenant makers)
6. Jesus Christ is crowned King
7. Battle of Armageddon; one third of the earth's population submits to Christ
8. The Millennium
9. Satan is bound (no open manifestation of evil)
10. Earth is repopulated and re-trained under new rulership (Christ and the Saints)
11. Satan is loosed (strict authority is relaxed)
12. Second resurrection
13. Open rebellion against Christ's government
14. Rebellious element is destroyed
15. Final judgment of mortals who lived during the Millennium
16. Glorified earth is annexed to God's family in heaven and the Eternal Age begins



the basis of a contract, an agreement. He says, If you do thus and thus, I will do thus and thus.

This was the arrangement with the Israelites. He said, *"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine"* (Ex. 19:5). Again He said to King Solomon, *"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land"* (2 Chron. 7:14).

The prophet Isaiah repeated a similar compact: *"If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day,...And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken"* (Isa. 58:13-14).

When Christ returns, He will come as Judge to recompense His servants, to give them according to what they have done, whether good or bad. There is no indication that the Judgment is of the bad only. Judgment is part of the Divine Plan for all, as Jesus Himself said: *"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work"* (Rev. 22:12). The Lord is fair; He will give just according to what we do. We must all stand at Judgment, whether our record is *"good or bad,"* whether we have done well or poorly. That is why the Apostle Paul said *"we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ"* (2 Cor. 5:10)—all who have agreed to be Christ's servants.

Is this fair? Imagine an operation where everyone who worked was paid the same. The engineer, the sales person, the supervisor, the designer, the part-time day laborer all received the same, without any consideration for the skill they were bringing to the job or their level of responsibility. Who would work really hard at their assigned task? Wouldn't the general attitude be, *"Why bother? It's not worth it!"* When a company has a special assignment that requires a special skill or heavy responsibility, they offer to pay more to the person in that position. If everyone were guaranteed the same pay, whatever their task, very little would get done.

Is the Lord less wise? He knows the capability of each and places a requirement on each accordingly. He says, I will give each of you just according to what you do (Jer. 17:10; Jer. 32:19; Rom. 2:6; Rev. 22:12).

Jesus said it again in Matthew 16:27, *"For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works."* His plan is all fair, all just. The Lord is absolute justice. And His decision will be final. It will not be whimsical. Justice will not be tainted by bribery. No one will have to worry that he did not get what he deserved because the Judge will have total knowledge of all parties and factors concerned. Those He accepts will sit with Him in His throne of authority and will share these same advantages (Rev. 3:21).

Imagine how different a court session would be today if the judge could read the minds of all the people in the court. There would be no misjudgments, no need for any juries, and no delays because of missing evidence. There would be no false witnessing, and no criminals would go free because every judgment would be based on absolute fact. That is the type of judgment Christ will render, because He will know exactly who and what He is judging. Even during His earthly ministry, whether they were disciples or opposition, He knew what they were thinking (Matt. 9:4; 12:25). It is recorded that Jesus *"knew what was in man"* (John 2:25).

The Prophet Daniel pictures the auspicious Judgment, and places it in the



*Imagine a court room today  
where the judge could read the  
minds of all who testified. That is  
the ability Jesus will have.  
His judgment will be based on  
absolute fact.*



sequence of events following the four world kingdoms. In vision He saw these four kingdoms represented as four beasts. Following the rise and fall of these beasts, the Prophet says, *"I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated;...His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened"* (Dan. 7:9–10).

What will be given to those who are approved at this judgment? First of all, immortal life. *"This is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life"* (1 John 2:25; Prov. 3:13–18). Along with life will come authority (Rev. 3:21), riches and honor (Prov. 22:4), and glory (Rom. 2:7). It will be the fulfilling of the promise, that He is able to do *"Exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think"* (Eph. 3:20), more than eye has seen or ear has heard or the human heart has imagined (1 Cor. 2:9). To the winners will be given the high honor of being kings and priests with Christ (Rev. 5:9–10), reigning over all who submit.

### **The Judgment: Where?**

Where will the Judgment take place? The Bible does not specify a location. However, one statement by the Prophet Zechariah may hold a clue. Zechariah speaks of the arriving King as coming *"and all the saints with Him"* (Zech. 14:5). This fact suggests that at the time of His arrival the *"saints"* have already been selected, suggesting that the Judgment may take place in the air between the time the servants of God rise to meet their King and the time that He first stands on Mount Zion. The identity of the *"saints"* will not be known until the Judgment has taken place.

What about those who are rejected? Since the plan of God is to give all according to their works, those who have done some good work for God, even though they did not do all, must be compensated. This again is the Lord's promise, and part of His absolute fairness. Since the next step, according to the Scriptures, will be the setting up of the new government, it seems very possible that those not granted the full reward may be given a partial recompense by being permitted to live during a certain portion of the Millennial reign of Christ.

What about those who turned back, who spurned God's loving call or rebelled against Him? They will be Christ's *"battle axe," "a people great and strong,"* a *"strong people set in battle array,"* His *"mighty ones"* (Jer. 51:20; Joel 2:2–10; Isa. 13:3; Ps. 2), who will be Christ's arm of authority in bringing the nations of earth under His authority. They will fight in Christ's army, and when their work is done, they will simply die. There will not be any suffering, torment, or torture for them.

## **STEP #6: JESUS IS KING!**

The next event will be the greatest event of the ages—the coronation of the King. This coronation will be the fulfilling of the prophecies of centuries, when Jesus takes the throne of earth, along with His co-rulers, and sets up the new, worldwide government.

The scene of Jesus with His new co-rulers was seen by the Revelator in vision as *"A Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads"* (14:1).

The success of the new government is foreordained. *"The Lord shall"*—no question about it—*"be King over all the earth"* (Zech. 14:9).

### **A Worldwide Summons**

Christ and the saints must demand allegiance to the new government, as stated in Revelation 14: *"Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.'" (Rev. 14:6–7).*



*Crown Him with many crowns  
The Lamb upon His throne;  
Hark! how the heav'nly anthem drowns  
All music but its own!  
Awake, my soul, and sing  
Of Him who led the way,  
And hail Him as thy matchless King  
Throughout eternal Day.*

*Crown Him the Lord of love!  
Our Pattern, noble, brave,  
Who died, was buried, and arose  
Victorious o'er the grave.  
He to this sin-sick world  
In power shall return;  
His banner over all unfurled,  
Men righteousness shall learn.*

*Crown Him the Lord of life!  
The King upon His throne,  
Bring peace to earth, goodwill to men,  
All nations Him shall own.  
To Thee be endless praise,  
Thy glory shall abide,  
Be thou our King through endless days  
Adored and magnified!*



# FAITH in Action

Bible Text: Acts 9:31–35 NIV

31 Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.

32 As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the saints in Lydda.

33 There he found a man named Aeneas, a paralytic who had been bedridden for eight years.

34 “Aeneas,” Peter said to him, “Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat.” Immediately Aeneas got up.

35 All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

## “Saints” at Lydda

The Bible speaks of people who are serving God as “saints,” “brethren,” “disciples,” “believers.” In many of Paul’s Epistles he writes to the saints in the Church. They are not saints in the respect that they are perfect in holiness, but they are the “called out” ones. They are dedicated, committed, aspiring to be permanent members of Christ’s family, even “sons and daughters of God Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:17–18).

Are you a “saint” in your town?

## RESPITE AND CHANGE IN PETER’S MINISTRY

The conversion of Saul added a dynamic and powerful leader to the Christian ranks. It also meant deliverance from immediate persecution. Saul the persecutor had become Saul the baptized convert, and as a result, the Churches throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace. Now the Apostles were free to spread and teach the Word, and the people in the Churches, who had formerly been living in fear, could settle down to lives of Christian growth.

While Saul was in training for his new assignment, the Apostle Peter carried on an itinerant ministry, traveling from Church to Church, exhorting, encouraging, and edifying. A few verses in Acts 9 give us a little insight into his ministry, as “*Peter went through all parts of the country*” (Acts 9:32). He preached the Word of the Lord “*in many villages of the Samaritans*” (Acts 8:25). Then, in Acts 9, we read that Peter “*came also to a town called Lydda*” (Acts 9:32). Lydda was a largely Gentile city about 25 miles from Jerusalem, on the road to Joppa. There was already a group of believers in this town (Acts 9:32). Were they possibly some brethren who had fled from Jerusalem during the persecutions of Saul?

 READ ACTS 9:32–35

1. What person of special interest did Peter find in the city of Lydda? (9:33)
2. Why do you think Peter singled this man out for healing? (9:33, 35)

We must remember the purpose of the Apostles’ miracles—not just to heal the sick, but to demonstrate that they were God’s agents and had the authority of God behind them. In the last verse of the gospel of Mark we read about the Apostles’ ministry, that “*They went out and preached everywhere, the Lord*



working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs” (Mark 16:20). To heal a man who was known to have been bedridden for eight years should have been solidly convincing to any open-minded person. There certainly could not be any claim of hysteria, or psychosomatic illness, or any stage-managed effects for such a one.

3. What did Peter say to Aeneas? (9:34) \_\_\_\_\_
4. How long was it before the man felt the effects of the miracle? (9:34) \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the response of the community to Peter’s healing the man? (9:35) \_\_\_\_\_

### **An Emergency at Joppa**



READ ACTS 9:36–43

While Peter was in Lydda, two men came bearing the news that Peter was urgently needed in Joppa, a city on the seacoast about 10 miles from Lydda. A loved sister named Dorcas had died.

Why were the believers in Joppa sending for Peter at this time? Did they want him to perform funeral rites, or to bring words of comfort and hope to the bereaved? Or were they just looking for an opportunity to bring this beloved Apostle to their Church? Perhaps even Sister Dorcas, before she died, had expressed a desire to see Peter. To visit with one who had spent three and one-half years with Jesus would be no small event. Perhaps she and her fellow believers longed to talk with Brother Peter, especially when they heard that he was within ten miles of their village.

6. Where did Peter go when he came to the town of Joppa? (9:39) \_\_\_\_\_
7. What remembrances had Dorcas left behind her? (9:39) \_\_\_\_\_
8. What did Peter do? (9:40-41) \_\_\_\_\_

Can we imagine the emotion Peter felt as he took her hand and lifted her to her feet? or the joy of being the instrument of God in bringing a loved one back to life! And picture the excitement of the fellow believers when they saw their dear sister—alive again!

Do we wonder that forsaking the faith after one had actually had in his being the power of the Holy Spirit was a sin beyond the reach of repentance? *“For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit”* (Heb. 6:4 NRSV).

The healing of the paralyzed man in Lydda had an electrifying effect. It was *“known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord”* (9:42).

### **Approaching Change**

Peter did not immediately leave Joppa. Instead, he found lodging with a believer named Simon, a tanner, who lived by the seaside.

Is there anything unusual about this? Perhaps there is. The Apostles were coming to a drastic change in the structure of the young Church. Up to this time, most preaching and teaching had been among Jewish people. Jesus had commissioned Paul to the Gentiles, but Paul had not yet begun the main part



Insight

#### **Have you thought about...**

Have you thought about the plight of being a cripple during the first century? Not only the pain and suffering, and the sense of uselessness, but think of the poverty, the hardship, and the constant burden on the cripple’s family, depending on alms for support.

The sickbed of Aeneas was not a comfortable one. There were no home conveniences such as we have today, no wheelchairs, no lifts, no social services, and very limited medical services.

#### **Bible Text: Acts 9:36–43; 10:1-6 NIV**

9:36 In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the poor.

37 About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room.

38 Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, “Please come at once!”

39 Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

40 Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, “Tabitha, get up.” She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up.

41 He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called the believers and the widows and presented her to them alive.

42 This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.

43 Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

10:1 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment.

2 He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.

3 One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, “Cornelius!”

4 Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” he asked. The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God.

5 Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter.

6 He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.”





**Peter's itinerary took him from Jerusalem to Lydda, to Joppa and on to Caesarea.**

of his work. The Church first had to be prepared for him, as well as him for the Church.

Even Peter, in the midst of an active ministry, would have to change his views. It would not be easy. Does the fact that Peter stays in the home of a tanner suggest that Peter was already taking steps in the direction of change? Was he already sensing God's larger purposes? A tanner was one who worked with the skins of dead animals, and no good Jew would ever be a tanner. The fact that Peter was willing to stay with him may show that Peter was seeing his former training as out of date. Perhaps he was already learning to look beyond his Jewish prejudices.

## OPENING THE DOOR OF FAITH TO THE GENTILES

Everything in our world is subject to change. God also makes changes in His ways of working. The important thing for us is to be ready to change when His will dictates that change is needed.

From the time God called Abraham out of Ur and promised that his descendants would be a great nation, God had been working primarily with the Jewish people. This did not mean that one had to be a Jew to be accepted by God, but only that God was finding the most useful material for His work from among the descendants of Abraham. Always the door was open to the believing, committed stranger who wanted to worship and know the God of Israel. But the focus of the work of the prophets, and even Jesus Himself, had been with the Jewish people.

In the ten years that had elapsed since Pentecost, the Church had already seen some change. When Peter began his ministry on the day of Pentecost, (Acts 2), he was addressing Jews who had congregated from every part of the empire. When he preached, he went to the synagogues.

Only a few years later he had extended his preaching to the Samaritans (Acts 8), who were only partly Jewish.

When Jesus captured Saul on the road to Damascus, He said that He was appointing Saul to go to the Gentiles. It was time for change. Soon there would be a great influx of Gentiles into the Church.

Right now God had His eye on a certain man in Caesarea named Cornelius.



READ ACTS 10:1-8

9. What are we told about Cornelius' work? (10:1) \_\_\_\_\_

10. What are we told about Cornelius' character? (10:2) \_\_\_\_\_



### Peter or Cornelius?

Can we imagine people of more different backgrounds—Cornelius a wealthy Gentile, a high ranking military man, and Peter an uneducated fisherman turned preacher? Yet both could serve God, and the latter was sent to instruct the former!

God does not see us as other men see us. He does not care about our honors in this world. God looks at the heart. He is looking for qualities of humility, meekness, righteousness, integrity. He is looking for a heart that is dissatisfied in this world and is seeking Him. He is looking for one who is willing to make everything else secondary.

Something about the moral, ethical and spiritual values of the Hebrew's religion attracted Cornelius, even though he was a Gentile. Cornelius was a man of prayer: He revered God. He was also a man of charity and kindness: he was unselfish and helped others. In his desire to worship God, he may even have been regular in attendance at the local synagogue. We are not told.

He also influenced his family to seek God. "*All his household*" shared his faith. Here was one who was tired of the immoralities and vanities of the ancestral faiths of the Romans. Cornelius could see the difference between the pagan gods and the one, true God, the living God of Israel.

11. What extraordinary experience did Cornelius have about three o'clock one day? (10:3) \_\_\_\_\_



12. What did the angel tell Cornelius to do? (10:4–5) \_\_\_\_\_

Notice the angel told Cornelius to send for Peter to learn about the faith and to find out what he was to do. Could not the angel have told Cornelius what to do? No, that was Peter's task!

The angel even gave Cornelius exact instructions about where to find Peter. God always knows where we are. We cannot hide from His all-seeing eyes (Prov. 15:3).

13. How did Cornelius respond to the angel's direct instructions? (10:7–8) \_\_\_\_\_

Cornelius obeyed immediately, and summoned one of his devout soldiers, who was also a God-fearing man, and two of his household servants to go to Joppa.

### **An Angel Prepares Peter to Meet Cornelius**



READ ACTS 10:9-16

14. As the representatives of Cornelius were approaching Joppa, what experience did Peter have? (Acts 10:9–10) \_\_\_\_\_

15. Describe Peter's vision. (10:11–12) \_\_\_\_\_

16. What was Peter's response when the voice told him, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat"? (10:14) \_\_\_\_\_

Peter's reply to the angel (he knew it was a Divine command) was very strange, even contradictory. By replying "Not so," he was saying "I won't," yet by calling the voice "Lord," he was saying "I will."

The Lord did not reprove Peter, but said firmly, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."

The vision was repeated three times and disappeared into heaven, leaving Peter to ponder its meaning.

Yes, Peter understood. God was showing Peter that the old guidelines, the old law, the old limitations were out of date. It was time for a change. The door of faith was being opened to the Gentiles.

### **Visitors from Caesarea**



READ ACTS 10:17-23

Meanwhile, at the house of Simon the tanner, there was a knock at the gate. Can you imagine the consternation of Simon the tanner's wife, when she went to the door to see three strangers standing there, obviously Romans, and one of them a Roman soldier?!

We cannot fault her for leaving them outside the gate, even though they called and called again. Besides, they were asking for "one named Peter," who was lodging there. The wife was aghast—these strangers knew too much!

#### **Bible Text: Acts 10:7-16 NIV**

7 When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants.

8 He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

9 About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray.

10 He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance.

11 He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners.

12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air.

13 Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

14 "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

15 The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

16 This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

*Cornelius was a Roman soldier who had been conquered by Israel's God.*



Insight

#### **What did the vision say to Peter?**

According to Jewish laws, certain foods were forbidden. The food laws made it difficult for Jews to eat with non-Jews. The Jews thought of the Gentiles themselves as being unclean and defiled.

God was telling Peter that he should not look down on any people as unclean—God would accept any one who was righteous and revered Him.

Before the vision, Peter, a Jew, would have refused to go to the house of Cornelius a Gentile. After the vision he could not refuse without disobeying God.



**Bible Text: Acts 10:17-29; 34-35 NIV**

17 While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate.

18 They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you.

20 So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

21 Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"

22 The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say."

23 Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests. The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along.

24 The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends.

25 As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence.

26 But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

27 Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people.

28 He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean.

29 So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection."

34 Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism

35 but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.

17. Why did Peter go to the gate to meet the visitors? (10:20) \_\_\_\_\_

18. When Peter asked the men why they had come, what did they answer? (10:21-22) \_\_\_\_\_

19. What did Simon the tanner do for his Gentile guests? (10:23) \_\_\_\_\_

Can we even imagine the table conversation when Peter welcomed Cornelius' three representatives into Simon's home? At first, it was probably a comment about the weather, or a question about someone's health. Peter might have asked the soldier about his family. Then Simon the tanner might have spoken up and said, "Do you know our Brother Peter used to be a fisherman!" Then Peter could talk about being called by Jesus, and the years he spent following Him. We can be sure it was an instructive dinner table.

By the time the meal was over, it was too late for Peter and his friends to start out on a 30-mile trek to Caesarea. So they had an evening for more fellowship, and more conversation about Jesus.

When Peter left the next day for Caesarea with the men from Cornelius, he did not go alone but invited six of his Jewish brothers to go with him. Why so many? We cannot appreciate the weight of responsibility Peter felt. Much as he knew he was obeying a direct command of the Lord, he also knew his brethren would be slow to change. By going to the home of a Gentile they were breaking a time-honored tradition, and Peter wanted witnesses. He wanted supporters. He wanted brethren who could testify with him when they would deliver the report of all this to the Church at Jerusalem.

As the ten "brothers" walked toward Caesarea, can't we almost hear some of that lively conversation? Cornelius' men wanted to know more and more about Jesus, His teaching, His life, even the law and the prophets. And Peter and his six brethren had so much to tell—all new to these three Gentiles. Wasn't Peter already so thrilled with the new converts that he forgot completely that they were of the "wrong" blood?

The miles were never so short, and very soon the city of Caesarea was visible on the horizon.

***At the Home of Cornelius***



READ ACTS 10:24-48

The city of Caesarea was very different from the Galilean village Peter had known. But that didn't matter at all. They were headed for one place: the home of Cornelius.

And Cornelius had been busy, very busy rounding up family and friends. Now when it was time for the guests to arrive, he had a large group eager to see this unknown "Peter" whom the angel had introduced to Cornelius. Don't you imagine they sent servants down the road to watch for the approaching party? Spotting the group in the distance, the servants ran quickly toward the house, announcing, "They're coming! They're coming! We saw our three men, and a half dozen more! They look like Jews! They're coming!"

As Peter approached, Cornelius instinctively did what he would do in the presence of the Emperor. He dropped to his knees and worshiped. He was overcome by the fact that this was a meeting God Himself had arranged. Immediately Peter gestured for him to stand. "I'm only a man," he said.

As Cornelius escorted Peter and his company into the large room, where the guests were gathered, every eye was on them. What a royal Roman welcome for a Galilean Jew! All Gentiles, they were all eager to learn from the man who had been heralded by an angel.





20. Did Peter tell them he really should not be there because he was a Jew?  
What did he say? (10:28–29) \_\_\_\_\_
21. What did Cornelius tell about himself? (10:30) \_\_\_\_\_

Cornelius explained his experience with the angel, and then told Peter why he had been summoned: to tell them the Gospel.

No doubt about it, Cornelius revered God. Everything he said was God-centered. He had been so hungry for the Divine knowledge, that his whole life had been unsatisfying. In this world, he may have had everything. But he wanted something more, something better. Offering Peter and his Jewish friends the hospitality of his home, he felt like he was opening his doors to an angel from heaven.

Can't we hear this Roman officer telling a Galilean fisherman what he was doing when the angel first spoke to him, that in his eagerness to seek God he had been fasting and praying? Can you imagine a more un-Romanly, un-soldierly thing to be doing in the middle of the afternoon? At mid-afternoon, when his Roman-officer comrades would have been seeing what was posted for the day's sport offerings at the arena, and taking note of which entertainers were in town, and placing their bets on the various events, Cornelius was praying. He was alone with God. And the next morning, while they were all recuperating from the adventures of the night before, Cornelius was lifting up his heart to God.

Peter had heard the story from the servants of Cornelius as they were traveling down the road. Now he heard it from Cornelius himself. This whole experience of Peter and Cornelius was so important, that the sacred writers saw fit to record both Cornelius' experience and Peter's at least three times. They wanted it on the record that God was opening the way for Gentiles to come into the Church on an equal basis with Jews. It is something we need to know!

After both had told their stories, Peter took the floor, and at Cornelius' request, told all about Jesus to the eager, expectant listeners. Peter addressed them, not as Gentile dogs, but as fellow-believers. Was anyone thinking they would be held at arm's length because they were not full Jews? They could sigh with relief as Peter, expressing his new conviction of God's justice and impartiality, *"opened his mouth, and said, 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him'"* (10:34–35).

What did it all mean? God-fearing Gentiles and God-fearing Jews were on an equally acceptable basis to God. The Lord respected character, and character only. There was no more any wall of partition between Jew and Gentile.

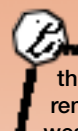
While he was still speaking, God acted in favor of these new believers.

22. What happened? (10:44) \_\_\_\_\_

Then Peter asked that they be baptized, who had received the Holy Spirit "just as we have" (10:47).

A dramatic change in the direction of the Apostle's preaching and teaching, it was the pattern for the future of the young Church. Jew or Gentile, both had an equal opportunity for salvation. ♦

*to be continued*



#### Caesarea was...

the Roman capital of Judea, and no remote place. About 65 miles northwest of Jerusalem, it was largely a Gentile city, and the seat of the Roman power base in the country. The very name of the city suggested the imperial emperor Caesar, along with a world of commerce and profits, a world that was anathema to any loyal Jew.

Herod the Great had transformed Caesarea from a bleak coastal town into a center of palaces, amusement, and commerce. Now it boasted a harbor and a sweeping breakwater that allowed ships to come and go safely. The city also contained both a theater and an amphitheater so that the Roman masters of Palestine could enjoy their base pleasures even when they were far from Rome.



Caesarean amphitheater from south



Caesarean Promontory Palace to harbor

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TODD BOLEN IN ISRAEL



# KEEPING WHAT LAW?

by Gerald R. Payne

**Would you please comment on some Scriptures regarding the keeping of the law?**

**Isaiah 28:9-10, "Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little."**

To whom will He teach knowledge? Certainly not to these people, because they will not listen.

This passage is about the Israelites who had rejected the Lord's teachings. Some versions translate this passage in a very negative way. "To whom would He teach knowledge, And to whom would He interpret the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just taken from the breast?" (v. 9 NASB). The NLT reads, "They say, 'Who does the Lord think we are? Why does he speak to us like this? Are we little children, barely old enough to talk? He tells us everything over and over again, a line at a time, in very simple words!' Since they refuse to listen, God will speak to them through foreign oppressors who speak an unknown language! God's people could have rest in their own land if they would only obey him, but they will not listen" (Isa. 28:9-12 NLT). The Prophet's comment in verse 22 confirms this translation, with the Lord giving this injunction: "Now therefore, do not be mockers."

God repeatedly warned the Israelites through His messengers, saying the same thing over and over, using different means and different words, yet they would not obey. They seemed to have the same attitude many do today. They thought they could do as they pleased and all would be well.

Since the same injunctions are repeated many times, it is very possible, especially in some of the passages which

are not as easy to understand, to overlook their real meaning. It is human nature to take the easy way. This is especially true of the more exacting commands. But God's Word still stands, and it will be fulfilled, whether we listen or not.

**Isaiah 2:1-3, "In the last days... out of Zion shall go forth the law."**

The passage reads: "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

To what period of time does the phrase "in the latter days" refer? The context shows it to be after Christ returns, when "He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isa. 2:4).

His means of bringing peace will be the enforcing of unbreakable law. "The law will go forth from Zion, and the word of our God from Jerusalem (v. 3). No one will be allowed to violate this law which goes out from Zion. Christ will rule with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:7-9; Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15).

At no time in history have people from all over the world gone to Jerusalem to worship, learn and obey. But after Christ returns, Jerusalem will be the seat of worldwide authority, and all will turn there for law and instruction. This is the time we look forward to with great anticipation, a time when

there will be no more war, when all people everywhere will learn to live peaceably with each other, to love God and obey His laws.

**Isaiah 5:24—"They have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel."**

This describes the condition of Israel and Judah during the time of Isaiah. They had forsaken the Word of God. We know this from the context of the passage. The chapter begins, "Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard" (v. 1). The 7th verse leaves no doubt as to the identity of the vineyard: "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant." It also describes the condition of His vineyard at the time: "and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry." The song continues through the end of the chapter. Israel and Judah had forsaken God.

**Isaiah 8:16, "Seal the law among my disciples."**

In ancient times, a scroll was written on, rolled up, tied with a cord, and sealed to preserve it for a later time if it had no immediate use. Isaiah's contemporaries had refused the law (instructions) from God. So Isaiah wrote it down on a parchment and sealed it for later because it was of no further use at the time.

There is some doubt as to the meaning of the phrase "among My disciples." The word translated disciples is from the Hebrew *limmud* which means taught, learned, discipled (*Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*). The LXX, Syriac, and Targum have no reference to disciples (*The Interpreter's Bible*). Therefore the meaning of this verse could be that instructions from God would cease, at least for a time, sealed up from those



whom Isaiah taught (the king and people whom he addressed), again because they would not listen.

The lesson for us is that God will not continue to work with people (us) if they (we) are obstinate.

**Isaiah 42:1-7 is a prophecy of the coming Messiah.**

You are right. This prophecy briefly mentions His first coming: *"I have put My Spirit upon Him"* (v. 1), which occurred at His first coming.

Then the narrative rapidly moves forward in time about two thousand years, and we read, *"He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands shall wait for His law"* (Isa. 42:4). These conditions do not exist today, nor have they ever existed during the history of humankind. It is long-range prophecy soon to be fulfilled. Verses 6 and 7 also include both comings. *"I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles"* (v. 6). But nations would refuse His guidance at His first coming, though He was given as a personal confirmation of the covenant with all who agree to that covenant.

Verse 7 continues, *"To open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house."* Those who are blind to the teachings of God will be given sight (understanding). The captives from the prison of sin will be set free. Those who sit in the prison house (prisoners of superstition and lies) will be released by the teaching of right knowledge.

**Matthew 12:17-21 is an explanation of the prophecy in Isaiah 42.**

The passage reads: *"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: Behold! My Servant, whom I have chosen; My Beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory. And in His name shall the Gentiles trust."*

This is a prophecy of both comings of Christ, the first and the second. Note that verse 20 speaks of sending *"forth judgment unto victory."* This part of the prophecy will be fulfilled at Christ's second coming. He first came as a Lamb. He will return as the *"Lion of the tribe of Judah"* (Rev. 5:5).

There is a similar passage in Luke which is of interest in this context. Christ *"came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing'"* (Luke 4:16-21).

If you read the passage from Isaiah, you will notice He did not quote all the prophecy. He stopped short of the phrase, *"and the day of vengeance of our God"* (Isa. 61:2). He could not have quoted this and then have said, *"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."* The day of vengeance was for a later time, at His second advent some 2,000 years later.

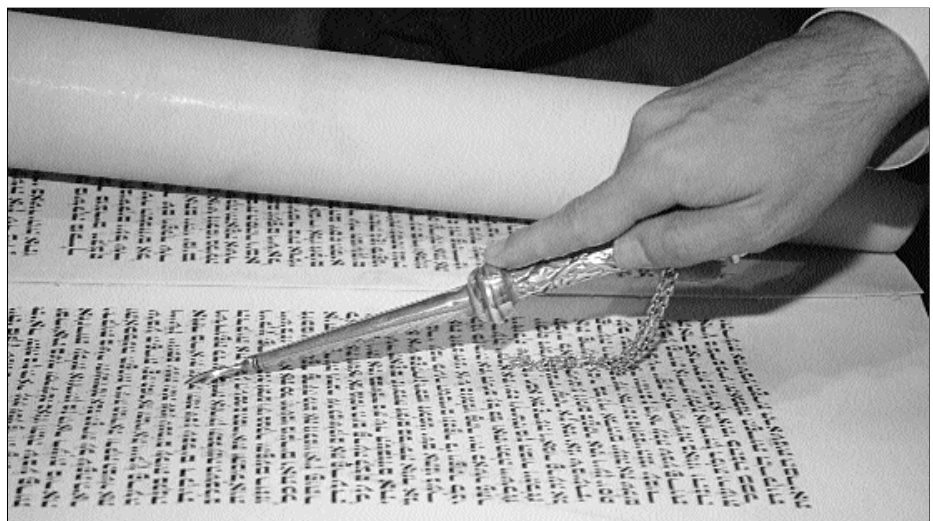
Jesus knew that His mission then did not include *"the day of vengeance."*

**Speaking of Christ, in the same chapter that explains Christ's mission, we see that He will "Magnify the law and make it honorable (Isaiah 42:21)." Did Christ magnify the law and make it honorable? Absolutely yes.**

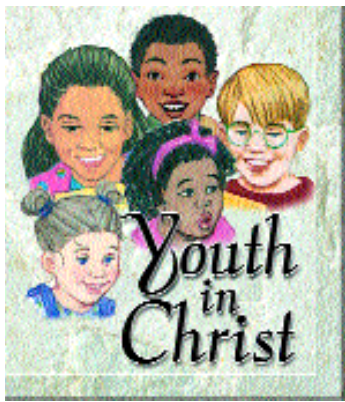
I am not sure what you mean when you say that Christ magnified the law and made it honorable. The wording of Isa. 42:21 may be clearer in the NASB, *"The Lord was pleased for His righteousness' sake to make the law great and glorious"* (Isa. 42:21). This verse is not about Christ, but about God and the Israelite people, as the context shows, *"Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law"* (Isa. 42:24). The Lord taught the law to these people with great signs and wonders, and they rejected Him. Notice the wording of the verse just preceding verse 21 in the NCV, *"Israel, you have seen much, but you have not obeyed. You hear, but you refuse to listen"* (v. 20).

He said, You have seen much. You hear. These words give us some insight as to the meaning of the words *"Magnify the law and make it honorable."* Or, as the NASB has it, *"great and glorious."* As you recall, the law of Moses was given with great signs, wonders, and demonstration of power. The mountain quaked and smoke arose from it as a furnace; they heard the trumpet blast atop the mountain. Moses even had to cover his

*continued on page 24*







# WHAT YOU PLANT WILL GROW

by MARGARET A. TREMBLAY

One bright spring day, Peter went over to the neighbor's farm looking for work. He wanted to earn some money.

"Peter, you are a bit small to be hiring out, aren't you?" Farmer Jackson replied to Peter's eager request for work. "But I believe I can find something you can do. There is always lots to do on a farm." So Mr. Jackson set Peter to planting pumpkins. Carefully Mr. Jackson showed Peter just how to do it. "Drop three seeds every four feet down each row." He handed Peter a small pail of seeds. "When you get that pail empty, you'll find me in the shop."

Eagerly Peter started down the row. Three seeds, four feet. Three seeds, four feet. It was fun planting the pumpkin seeds, and the first row went fast. Then Peter looked across the field. "I'm hardly started!" he thought. By the end of the third row his back was getting tired. The creek down at the end of the field looked so inviting.

Peter kept on planting, but the pail seemed to be getting

heavier. It looked just as full as ever. "I don't think Mr. Jackson would mind if I put four seeds in a hill," he thought.

So Peter went on. Four seeds, four feet. Four seeds, four feet.

But the sun was getting hotter, and still the pail was not half empty. The distance between the hills was getting less now, too, as Peter's steps grew slower and shorter. It was more like three feet now.

"I'm so hot! Wonder how the fish are biting down in the creek?"

The very idea of fishing made his feet move faster once again, and so did his hands. "Why bother to count the seeds anyway?" he told himself. "I'll save time if I just drop a few together in each hill." Now he was guessing, and you can be sure he was generous. Finally Peter decided he was too tired to go another step. Quickly he dumped the rest of the seeds and covered them up.

Feeling satisfied that his job was done, he went to find Mr. Jackson.

## FROM Parents FOR Parents

Twelve-year old Eileen cried as she took a pan of burnt cookies out of the oven. She had put the cookies in with such delight, and now, look at them!

Her mother, hearing her cries of woe, came to the kitchen. "What happened, Eileen?"

"I burned the cookies," Eileen responded unhappily.

"I can see that, but what went wrong?" her mother asked kindly as she put her arm around the distressed girl. "I know you didn't do it on purpose, and I can see you feel badly about it. Dry your eyes and let's look at the recipe together."

Eileen and her mother read over the recipe, line by line until they came to the reading of the temperature control for the oven. Eileen had set the temperature too high.

"Now that we know what went wrong," said mother, "let's wash the dishes and you can try again. Then we'll have nice fresh cookies for dinner tonight."

Eileen's mother turned a discouraging situation into a positive learning experience by helping her daughter discover

## EILEEN'S COOKIES



what went wrong and how to correct it. Instead of scolding her daughter for burning the cookies, she shared her daughter's distress, pointed her to the problem, and encouraged her to try again. This helped Eileen to feel confident and eager to learn.

How we respond to our children affects the way they learn and mature. ♦





*Sooner or later the  
seeds we plant  
will sprout!  
We reap what we sow.*

"Done so soon, my boy?" exclaimed Mr. Jackson in surprise.

"Yes, Sir," replied Peter, handing him the empty pail.

"Sure enough, it's empty," Mr. Jackson smiled. "What do I owe you?" he asked as he reached into his pocket and pulled out a dusty, worn billfold. "How about this?" To Peter's delight Mr. Jackson handed him three one-dollar bills.

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Jackson! Thank you!" Peter beamed as he took the money and ran off toward home to show Mother.

Mr. Jackson's eyes followed young Peter down the lane. "Time will tell how he did his work. Pretty quick, seems to me, he finished pretty quick."

You can imagine what Mr. Jackson

thought of Peter's work when he went out to look at the pumpkin field a week later. The job looked all right the day Peter did it, but when the seeds began to sprout—!

It is an old lesson, but it impresses me. We reap just as we sow. It is true in the pumpkin field, and it is true in our Christian lives. I think of this story at times and wonder, Are there areas in my life where I am doing what Peter did?

#### PRAYER:

*Heavenly Father, I want to be dedicated to live for You. I don't know everything the future holds for me, but I know my future is in Your hands. I trust You to be my guide.*

*I want to remember that I will reap just as I plant. Help me to invest my time now in learning those things that will benefit me in a life of service to You. I pray for the wisdom and light that come from Your Word, that they may direct me in all I do. Amen.*

Do I want to take shortcuts in my spiritual work, stubbornly going my own way, and then cover it up, hoping nothing will ever come of it?

But sooner or later the seeds we plant will sprout! We reap what we sow.

There is a Bible proverb which says, "Be sure your sin will find you out," (Num. 32:23). It is just as true now as it was three thousand years ago. If we are thinking or doing things we would be ashamed to have others know about, just remember that God knows and some day all our deeds will come to light. Everything may look good at the moment, but what about the revealing time?

We cannot expect a great harvest from our lives if we get weary in doing what we know is right and go an easier way. If we want a good crop, we have to give diligence to the work and carefully sow each seed of thought, so it will grow right. Even when the day gets long and the sun hot, we have to keep sowing, remembering that just as we sow we will reap (Gal. 6:7).

If you are ever tempted to do what Peter did, in a spiritual way, remember that the seeds are going to sprout. And what will the Master Farmer think then?

Now is the time to work carefully and diligently! ♦

In Luke 8 Jesus tells of a man who sowed his seed. Four things happened to the seed. Fill in the blanks.

1. Some seed fell by the wayside and the \_\_\_\_\_ devoured the grain.
2. Some fell on \_\_\_\_\_ and withered away for lack of moisture.
3. Some seed fell among \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_ sprang up with it and choked it.
4. But some seed fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a \_\_\_\_\_.

BIBLE TOOLS—Can you finish the names by filling in the missing vowels?

1. P\_\_tt\_\_r's wh\_\_l (Jer. 18:3)
2. Pr\_\_n\_\_ng h\_\_k (Isa. 2:4)
3. W\_\_n\_\_pr\_\_ss (Num. 18:27)
4. \_\_x\_\_s and h\_\_mm\_\_rs (Psa. 74:6)
5. \_\_x g\_\_d (Judges 3:31)
6. N\_\_l (Isa. 22:25)
7. S\_\_ws (1 Kings 7:9)
8. Y\_\_k (Matt. 11:29)
9. Pl\_\_mbl\_\_n\_\_ (Amos 7:7)



## The Heavenly Kingdom of God

continued from page 13

*King Jesus will not tolerate rival philosophies, rival gods, or rival allegiances. The time for tolerance will have ended.*

It will be an appeal with force, and, naturally, resistance. All people will not willingly give up their patriotism, their cultures, their traditions, and their autonomy. But refusal will not be an option. The alternatives will be: submit or perish. Christ's new government will not allow rival creeds, rival philosophies, rival gods, or rival allegiances. The time of tolerance will have ended. One government worldwide will allow only one loyalty: that of the God-ordained authority, Jesus and His associates.

At the same time, the new government will be totally impartial. No nationality or race will be favored above another. This is not new in God's scheme. Never has He showed partiality. *"In every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him"* (Acts 10:35). In the Church of God *"There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all"* (Col. 3:11). The redeemed who reign with Christ will be *"from every tribe and tongue and people and nation"* (Rev. 5:9).

The result of Christ's ultimatum will be conflict. Some will submit, more will resist, even preferring death to submission. The reaction of humankind will fulfill the prophetic vision John the Revelator described when he wrote, *"I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him...and against His army"* (Rev. 19:19)—in other words, Armageddon.

*to be continued, next issue*

## KEEPING WHAT LAW?

continued from page 21

face with a veil, in the presence of the congregation, because he was reflecting the glory of the angel that he met on the mountain. And if one considers the other laws given to Moses, there were many other sights and sounds and voices these people saw and heard.

Whenever we consider the laws spoken of in Scripture, we must bear in mind that the *"law of Moses"* did not bring salvation because it could not *"make perfect"* and therefore could not release from sin and give salvation (Heb. 7:19; 9:9; 10:1). It was only a law meant to govern and teach a people who had been in slavery for 400 years and to be a *"shadow of things to come."* As Paul said, comparing the two, *"For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory"*

(2 Cor. 3:9). Notice that Paul declared that the one condemns; the other makes righteous.

Christ did not magnify the law of Moses. He did magnify and obey the law of faith (royal law), a law which will sanctify and cleanse from sin (John 17:17; John 15:3; Eph. 5:26–27). Nor did He make the law, given to Moses, glorious. God made it glorious by performing mighty acts through His angels.

How did Christ magnify the law? By obeying it. Perhaps you may be thinking that Christ is the only one who ever obeyed the *"royal law"*? There were others. It is written of Zacharias and Elisabeth that they *"were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless"* (Luke 1:5–6). It was said that *"Simeon was just and devout"* (Luke 2:25). The firstfruits (those who will receive salvation at the first resurrection) will

be *"without fault before the throne of God"* (Rev. 14:5). This includes every individual who will receive eternal life at Christ's second coming.

Peter tells us, *"be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless"* (2 Pet. 3:14).

The law of Moses, as previously mentioned, did not bring salvation because it did not require inner purity and holiness. It was a ministration of death—death was the penalty for disobedience (2 Cor. 3:7). It governed only the outward actions of a person. The *"royal law"* (James 2:8), as can be seen from the context of Christ's discourse (Matt. 5:21–48), was a law controlling every part of one's life, the thoughts and intents of the mind. It changed the way one thinks and acts. The law of Moses restrained men and women from evil. The law of Christ even produced a character that would not sin. ♦

## ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 25

### LAST WORDS

1. Psalms (Ps. 150:6)
2. Nehemiah (Neh. 13:30–31)
3. Mark (Mark 16:20)
4. Matthew (Matt. 28:19–20)
5. Revelation (Rev. 22:20–21)
6. 1 John (1 John 5:21)
7. 1 Chronicles (1 Chron. 29:29–30)
8. 2 Corinthians (2 Cor. 13:14)
9. Genesis (Gen. 50:26)
10. Judges (Judg. 21:25)

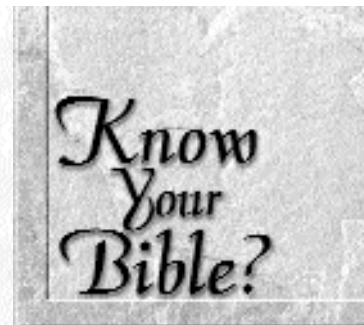
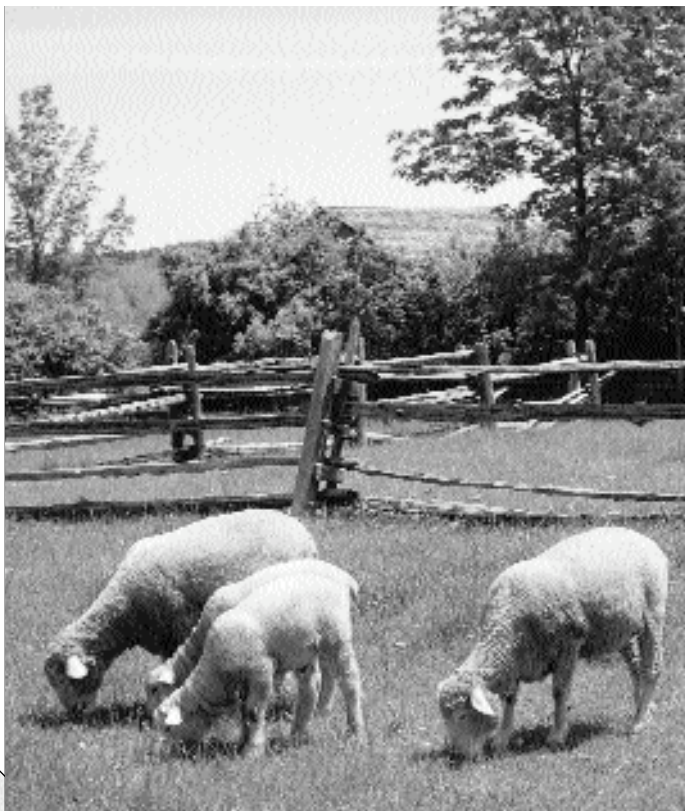
### SHEEP AND GOATS

1. Yes (Deut. 14:4)
2. Simon Peter (John 21:17)
3. Straw (Isa. 11:6–7)
4. False prophets (Matt. 7:15)
5. He was trying to find the Lord's anointed, Saul's successor (1 Sam. 16:1–13)
6. Nathan (2 Sam. 12:1–4)
7. The one sent into the wilderness (Lev. 16:5–10; see also verse 22)
8. A tiller of the ground (Gen. 4:2)
9. Dogs (Matt. 15:24–26)

### QUAKES

1. Moses (Ex. 19:17–18)
2. Jonathan (1 Sam. 14:14–15)
3. Elijah (1 Kings 19:11–13)
4. John (Rev. 1:1; 11:13)
5. Jesus (Matt. 27:50–51)
6. Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25–26)
7. Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Num. 16:1, 3, 31–32)
8. Mary and Mary Magdalene (Matt. 28:1–2)
9. David (2 Sam. 22:1, 8)
10. Uzziah (Zech. 14:5)





### **SHEEP AND GOATS**

1. Were the Israelites permitted to eat goats?
2. After the resurrection, whom did Jesus tell to "Feed my sheep"?
3. *"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat..."* What will the lion eat?
4. Who *"come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves"*?
5. While David was looking after the sheep, why was Samuel with his father and seven brothers?
6. Who told David a parable about a rich man who took away a poor man's only lamb?
7. Aaron was told to take two young goats and cast lots. One of the goats would be sacrificed as a sin offering. The other would be sent into the wilderness. Which was the "scapegoat"?
8. *"Abel was a keeper of sheep."* What was Cain's occupation?
9. After Jesus answered, *"I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,"* which was the next animal to be mentioned in the conversation?

### **LAST WORDS**

Name the books of the Bible which end with the following words:

1. *"Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!"*
2. *"Thus I cleansed them of everything pagan. I also assigned duties to the priests and the Levites, each to his service, and to bringing the wood offering and the firstfruits at appointed times. Remember me, O my God, for good!"*
3. *"And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen."*
4. *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen."*
5. *"He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."*
6. *"Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."*
7. *"Now the acts of King David, first and last, indeed they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, with all his reign and his might, and the events that happened to him, to Israel, and to all the kingdoms of the lands."*
8. *"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen."*
9. *"So Joseph died, being one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."*
10. *"In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes."*

### **QUAKES**

1. Who, in company with the Israelites, met with God and the *"whole mount quaked greatly"*?
2. During whose attack on a garrison, *"the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling"*?
3. Which prophet experienced an earthquake while he was standing on a mountain top?
4. Who had a vision of an earthquake that leveled a tenth part of a city, killing seven thousand?
5. Who, at his death cried and then the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent?
6. Which two men, while prisoners, felt a great earthquake shake the prison foundations and had their cell door open?
7. Who rebelled against Moses and were punished when the earth *"opened"* and swallowed them up?
8. Name the two women who were looking at a sepulcher when an earthquake occurred, and an angel descended from heaven and rolled back the stone from the door.
9. Who, when God delivered him from his enemies, composed a song that described an earthquake; *"That the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook"*?
10. In the days of which king did people flee from an earthquake?

answers on page 24



# I'M AN Underwater Wonder!

*Argyroneta aquatica* (diving spider)

You aren't likely to see much of me, because I spend most of my life under water. Besides, I'm very small, only about 10 mm (less than half an inch). But I think I'm pretty special, thanks to my very wonderful Designer. Let me tell you a little about myself, and see if you don't think so, too!

What makes me so special? Aren't there a lot of creatures that live under water? You are right, but most have a mechanism such as gills to take air from the water. I breathe air, just like you do, and I doubt that you have built many underwater houses. You think I'm not supposed to live underwater? Well, I'll have to tell you that it's just right for me. Yes, I actually live, eat, and raise my family under water.

Why? All I can say is, my Creator designed me this way.

Let me explain. I'll begin with my house. I live in a very comfortable, well-ventilated underwater house. Do I shop for my house? No, I build my own, every inch of it. I even make my own materials. And I provide my own special ventilating system. You don't understand?

I begin by spinning a web and attaching it firmly to the stems of some plants that grow in the shallow waters near the edge of a pond. That's standard stuff for a spider, only mine is under the surface of the water. Then I keep spinning, until I have a little sheet of thick silk. I attach the corners of the sheet to my web and to the stems and leaves of the water plants in such a way that it forms a canopy, or bubble, just below the surface of the water. There I have it—my very own underwater "diving bell," just right for me and my family to live in.

My next task is to get ventilation into my home because, after all, I do breathe air.

How do I ventilate my house? Here I have to say my Creator was thinking before I came along. He designed me with very special long, fine hairs on my back legs that are able to attach air to my body. Sound impossible? Not for me! I simply go to the surface of the water, lie on my back, with my legs just above the surface of the water and "catch" the air on the hairs on my legs and body. Then I return to my house and use my legs to release the air into my diving bell. I do this again and again, until my diving bell is filled with air. Yes, it works! You don't understand the process? I won't try to explain—you'll never be able to duplicate it anyway!

To refresh the supply of oxygen, I rely largely on the plants



Praise to My  
Maker!



that hold my bubble in place—that's why I fastened my bubble to them. They are leafy plants, and the leaves release oxygen right into my home! Unique, isn't it? But I can't take credit for it. Again I thank my wonderful Designer!

I must also tell you how I get my food. My diving bell is my home and also my secret watchtower. I keep a close watch, and when an unfortunate pond creature swims nearby, if it's a nice juicy insect, or a tadpole, or a little fish, I sprint out and seize it (I'm a really good swimmer). Instantly I kill it with my poisonous bite, so it is easy to drag it back into my diving bell. Then I enjoy the feast!

So what do you think? Spiders are not "supposed" to live under water? Maybe not, but since my Designer made me as He did, it suits me just fine.

I could tell you a whole lot more about what my Designer did for me, but you need to learn about Him yourself. Besides, I'm really busy. And right now, I'd like to see a tasty little minnow swim by. There is one coming! Ssssswiiiiishhhh!

For scientific data in this article we are indebted to:

<http://www.animalfact.com/article1013.htm>

<http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/Vines/5197/argyronetidae.html>,

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~ednieuw/Spiders/Argyronetidae/>

<http://www.argyronetidae.htm>, and <http://members.surf.eu.at/dolores/spiders.html>



**Y**ou become what you allow yourself to think—even when you don't think so.

**T**he greatest thought that can occupy a man's mind is his accountability to God.

**I**f you would lift others up, you must be on higher ground yourself.

**F**ar too frequently in this life we are interested in only three persons: Me, Myself and I.

**M**any people would find it easier to keep their faith if they would exercise it more.

**T**he chief factor in prayer is the heart.

**T**o nurse a grudge is to keep alive a thing that will eventually destroy you.

**S**ome people see only a hopeless end, but the Christian rejoices in hope of a glorious end.

#### OTHERS

**Y**ou cannot pray the Lord's Prayer  
And even once say "I."  
You cannot pray the Lord's Prayer  
And ever once say "my."  
Nor can you say the Lord's Prayer  
And not pray for another,  
For when you ask for daily bread  
You must include your brother.  
For others are included  
In each and every plea;  
From the beginning to the end of it,  
It does not once say "me."

**A**mbition never gets anywhere until it forms a partnership with work.



**G**od's work done in God's way never lacks God's supplies.

**W**ise men think without talking; fools talk without thinking.

**I**t takes courage:  
to stand firm for an opinion in the face of ridicule;  
to say what you believe when you know the reaction  
will not be favorable and you could remain silent;  
to avoid an easy compromise.

**T**hink right and act right; what you think and do makes you what you are.

**F**or top performance, refuel daily from God's Word.

**J**esus didn't say "Let your light so twinkle," but let it "shine."



# Drop a Pebble in the Water

*Drop a pebble in the water, just a splash and it is gone,  
But there's half a hundred ripples circling on, and on, and on,  
Spreading, spreading from the center, flowing on out to the sea,  
And there is no way of telling  
Where the end is going to be.*

*Drop a pebble in the water...in a minute you forget,  
But there's little waves a-flowing and there's ripples circling yet;  
All the ripples flowing, flowing, to a mighty wave have grown,  
And you've disturbed a mighty river  
Just by dropping in a stone.*

*Drop an unkind word or careless, in a minute it is gone,  
But there's half a hundred ripples circling on, and on, and on,  
They keep spreading, spreading, spreading from the center as they go,  
And there is no way to stop them  
Once you've started them to flow.*

*Drop an unkind word or careless...in a minute you forget,  
But there's little waves a-flowing and there's ripples circling yet;  
And perhaps in some sad heart a mighty wave of tears you've stirred,  
And disturbed a life that's happy  
When you dropped an unkind word.*

*Drop a word of cheer and kindness, just a flash and it is gone,  
But there's half a hundred ripples circling on, and on, and on.  
Bearing hope and joy and comfort on each splashing, dashing wave,  
Till you wouldn't believe the volume  
Of the one kind word you gave.*

*Drop a word of cheer and kindness...in a minute you forget,  
But there's gladness still a-swelling and there's joy a-circling yet;  
And you've rolled a wave of comfort, whose sweet music can be heard  
Over miles and miles of water  
Just by dropping one kind word.*

by JAMES W. FOLEY

