

Megiddo Message

September/October 2005

God has made everything
beautiful for its own time.

-Eccl. 3:11 NLT





THE RICH FOOL

And he gave an illustration: "A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. In fact, his barns were full to overflowing. So he said, 'I know! I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I'll have room enough to store everything. And I'll sit back and say to myself, My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!'"

"But God said to him, 'You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get it all?"

"Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God."

—Luke 12:16–21 NLT

As a child I used to think about how nice it would be to be wealthy and not concerned about anything. But I soon learned that money cannot buy health; money cannot buy length of days; money cannot buy happiness.

Jesus tells it all in a parable about an intelligent, hard-working, forward-looking man (Luke 12:16–21). His counterpart might be living today. This man had made his fortune and was ready to retire early and really enjoy life for years to come. In today's world he would be viewed as the ultimate success, one to be studied and emulated.

Are you shocked to hear that Jesus called him a fool?

Dr. Frank Crane, in a book called "Four Minute Essays" (1919), expressed the rich fool's understanding of life. The fool is speaking:

"I believe in Now.

I believe appetites were made to be gratified and not to be controlled.

I believe in having a good time, for I'll never be young but once.

I believe in mortgaging every acre of the future and using the money now.

*We are fools in Jesus' view
if anything means more to us
than our hope in God.*

I believe in picking all the blossoms and never caring for the fruit.

I believe in looking out for number one.

I believe in other people being thrifty, self-restrained, and temperate, for my benefit.

I believe in luck.

I believe no one ever really got on by hard work, but that

success is a throw of the dice.

I believe the rich are happy.

I believe I do not need advice.

I believe in always being kind, thoughtful, liberal, and charitable—to myself."

We live in a world that no longer recognizes God. For the most part, God has been abandoned, even in many churches; abandoned for the pleasures of life and the pursuit of wealth.

Jesus never said that wealth is wrong. Then why did He call the rich farmer a fool? Look at the fool's attitude.

* *I did it.* The rich fool gave no credit to God that there were no droughts, or locusts, or pestilences. He gave no credit to God that he happened to come in possession of some very fertile soil. His attitude was "I did it all."

* *It's all mine.* It was a case of misplaced values. He could see no further than the "here-and-now." He presumed material possessions and worldly pleasures were the measure of the value of life, and he was counting on many years to enjoy his great wealth without regard for others, not even God. He was the center of his own universe.

* *I deserve it.* To be self-reliant is a natural human desire. Hadn't he earned it? Why shouldn't he be able to enjoy it?

The rich farmer saw it as being ALL his, and he was not willing to share. So he resolved to tear down his barns and build bigger ones to store his abundance.

He did not think of others, or how he might best use his wealth to glorify God so he might be blessed in all his deeds. But instead of enjoying all the finer things of life, entertaining the elite, and being looked up to as some great one, he would soon be dead and forgotten, and all his wealth divided among his heirs.

* *I will have it—NOW!* The rich fool was short-sighted in his view of the future and the value of life. He presumed he would possess his riches in the future. He presumed he would be alive in the future.

But God had other plans.

The rich fool had made material wealth his god. "Then this does not apply to me," we may think. But the heart of the parable is more far-reaching than that. Regardless of our status in life, we are fools if we leave God out. We are fools in Jesus' view if anything means more to us than our confidence and hope in God.

What lesson can we learn from the rich fool? Life without God holds no assurances, even for the present. But those who choose God's way have a double benefit. They have the promise of this life to live for God. AND if they are accepted, they will receive a future, more abundant life in Christ's Kingdom that will never end (1 Tim. 4:8; Rom. 2:7; Matt. 19:29; Gal. 6:8).

What did the rich fool have that could compare with that! ♦

Perseverance WINS!

Do you call it hanging in there? sticking to it? keeping on? It is the quality that makes winners, whether one's goal is in this world or in the greater realm of God's Kingdom. And have you ever noticed this singular aspect of perseverance, that the harder it hits a wall, the harder it pushes on!

This world rewards those who persevere. But those rewards are paltry compared with the rewards God is holding for those who "endure to the end" (Matt. 24:13), who "press for the mark" (Phil. 3:13-14), who make qualifying for a place in Christ's Kingdom their first and greatest choice (Matt. 6:33). What is the difference? God's benefits are without end, and they include everything one can ask or imagine, with total satisfaction guaranteed (Eph. 3:20; 1 Cor. 2:9; Ps. 36:7-9).

Bottom line: *It's worth persevering!*

On Persevering through Failure

Excerpts by Fay Vincent at the Canisius College 138th Commencement Exercises on Saturday, May 22, 2004.

I want to talk to you today not about success—for you have each achieved a measure of that. And many people will tell you how to be successful...

Not me. Not here. Not today. Rather, let me talk to you of failure. Yes! Failure! For that is something I know a bit about. For it is my thesis that we, all of us, learn much more from failure than from success.

Am I correct that you remember most vividly the lowest grade you achieved on a paper or test? Do we not all remember the time we couldn't come up with the answer; the time we drew a blank on a quiz; the time we [unintentionally] said something really silly and everyone laughed; the time the professor was sharply critical and we were badly stung?

We need to confront failure to learn from it.

Let me talk to you of my own failures. You have been told of my apparent success. Here is the other side of the coin.

A Failure of Good Judgment: In my freshman year at Williams, I was captain of our freshman football team. We went undefeated. I was sitting on top of the world. I was young, strong and healthy. Then in December of that year, my roommate and I were horsing around as 18 year olds will do. He locked me in my room by taking off the doorknob. Then he left me.

So what did I do? I took a nap for a few hours. Then, in a moment
continued on page

I do not think there is any other quality so essential to success of any kind as the quality of perseverance. It overcomes almost everything, even nature. —John D. Rockefeller

There is no failure except in no longer trying. —Elbert Hubbard



Great works are performed, not by strength, but by perseverance.

— Dr. Samuel Johnson

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FRONT COVER: GOLDEN ASPENS IN NORTH RIM, GRAND CANYON, AZ PHOTO BY PATRICIA A. FLEMING

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.

that defines failure of judgment, I went out on the window ledge to swing to the next room.

I slipped and fell four stories to the ground.

I broke my back, spent four months in a hospital and was paralyzed. My world was shattered.

Of course, I recovered to some extent. But the damage is permanent. And yet from that failure came some blessings.

I had been a jock. I became a student.

I had ignored what truly matters in life. I learned better.

For once you are paralyzed and can't walk, you learn to appreciate a walk in the wet grass on a summer morning. Or a swim in Nantucket Sound on a hot day. And how nice it is to enjoy Beethoven, Verdi, a good book and a quiet evening with friends. You need not walk well to enjoy some sublime pleasures.

At age 18, I learned—painfully—what truly matters. I wish you easier lessons....

Some of our great public figures were very familiar with failure....Our greatest general, Ulysses S. Grant, who graduated at the bottom of his class at West Point, was a failed army officer, who at the onset of the Civil War was eking out a living in a small store in St. Louis. Winston Churchill, had he died on his 65th birthday, would have been unknown except as the failed proponent of the Gallipoli Disaster in World War I. Dwight Eisenhower was a mere colonel when World War II began, and General George Patton was dyslexic and flunked out of West Point in his plebe year. But he came back, persevered and finally graduated....

Yes. Failure. It is part of my life. It will be part of yours too. Expect it. For it will come.

And yet, life rewards those who having failed, and having failed over and over, still manage to move on. It is the decision to try again that will eventually lead to a reward.

And so I end with a reference to my great hero, Mr. Churchill who at the very end of his life was honored at Oxford by being asked to speak at the commencement there. He gave the shortest speech of his life and, I believe, the shortest commencement speech ever.

After he was praised effusively in the introduction, and after the thunderous applause had finally dimmed, he stood silently before the expectant audience. He stood a long time, not saying a word. The audience waited expectantly for the supreme orator of our age to begin. And it waited. And it waited.

Finally, in that voice that continues to resonate down to our generation, he bellowed out,

"Never, Never, Never, Never, Never...give up." And he sat down!

Write Your Own Success Story

A certain British scientist showed great perseverance in his relentless search for the cause of malaria fever. One very hot, sweltering day, many years ago in far away India, this man sat impatiently studying some small, whitish objects through his microscope. He had been

Don't be afraid to give your best to seemingly small jobs. Every time you conquer one it makes you that much stronger. If you do the little jobs well, the big ones will tend to take care of themselves. —Dale Carnegie



Problems are not stop signs, they are guidelines. —Robert Schuller

The road to success is dotted with many tempting parking places. —Author Unknown

The difference between perseverance and obstinacy is that one comes from a strong will, and the other from a strong won't. —Henry Ward Beecher

When you come to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt



Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go. —William Feather



The greatest oak was once a little nut that held its ground. —Author Unknown

there long that day and many days before.

For centuries, people had suffered from a peculiar form of chill, headache and fever which came to be known as malaria. It was formerly supposed to have its origin in poisonous mists and vapors rising from swamps and marshes. Before this particular day, however, scientists had come to the conclusion that it was not caused by vapors from the swamps but by the mosquitoes carrying the parasite which caused malaria. Yet no one had proved this theory. Now this scientist sat before a mound of cells from the stomachs of the suspected anopheles mosquito. One by one he had been examining the tiny cells, hoping to find in one of them the dangerous malarial parasite.

Tired and discouraged, he looked wearily at the tedious hours of work ahead of him if he were to examine the entire number of cells remaining. For the hundredth time he asked himself if it was worth going on, but something in him refused to quit. And in the very next cell was the answer to his search!

Stories such as this could be multiplied of individuals who, refusing to be discouraged, persevered. No matter how many failures, they could still say, "I WILL TRY AGAIN." As a result, we today enjoy blessings not dreamed of even fifty years ago. And so the fight goes on. All these persons worked tirelessly for success.

How about those who carry their great work for God to a successful finish? What is their incentive to keep trying? It is the reward God is offering, even "glory, honor, and immortality, ... eternal life" (Rom. 2:7). Their reward will be millions, yes, billions of years—and it will never diminish but instead increase through the ages of eternity!

Our quest is a serious one, for life is at stake, eternal life, and no one can do the seeking for us. We have to "...work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). We fear and tremble lest we miss the prize, for we know that the promises of God are sure if we do on our part.

But now comes the most important factor in this quest: FAITH, for "you see, it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him" (Heb. 11:6 NLT). We have only to look around us and see the fulfillment of Bible prophecy in these last days to give us faith. For those who persevere, who succeed in seeking immortality through weariness and watching, who remain "not faithless but believing," success shall crown their efforts.

Remember the promise: "He will give eternal life to those who persist in doing what is good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers" (Rom. 2:7 NLT).

Success at last—even "life forevermore" (Ps. 133:3)—will be the crowning glory of the persevering. With God's help you can indeed write your own success story. How? Simply by persisting in doing what is right!

Help Me Push On!

BY ELVA BYERS

Have you ever stopped to consider how different history might have been had Columbus turned back after launching out on that perilous voyage?

Suppose Thomas Edison had wearied of experimenting with the baffling problems of electricity. What if the many unrecognized pioneers in the field of medical research had given up their quest for the life-saving drugs so beneficial to us today? They had a definite goal in prospect, and there was no turning back.

As seekers for the ultimate goal—the prize of eternal life in Christ's kingdom—we have accepted the greatest challenge ever presented to mortals. Yet, in many respects we are far more fortunate than those stalwart individuals who pioneered in geographical exploration and scientific research. They had little information to guide them in their efforts, whereas we have the written record of One who blazed the trail before us. Here is a giant among men, One who never transgressed after He knew the law. Ultimately He was privileged to hear those assuring words from His heavenly Father, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"* (Luke 3:22).

Now His call comes ringing over the centuries to us: *"Come to me ... Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke fits perfectly, and the burden I give you is light"* (Matt. 11:28–30 NLT).

But listen: we hear another word, sterner in tone: *"No one, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God"* (Luke 9:62). To go straight ahead we must give careful attention to the written Word left for our instruction.

If we ever hear *"well done"* from our Master, we must possess a high degree of faith in ourselves and our possibilities when activated by the power of God and directed by His Word. We need to train ourselves in the habit of thinking positively and optimistically, for no real progress is possible when a person is pulled between conflicting desires.

Through the eye of faith we have caught a brief but glorious vision of eternal glory; it remains for us to keep closely within the path of self-denial that will lead us to its reality.

Yet it would certainly be vain to assume that once we have answered God's call and accepted His yoke, the goal will be ours without effort. Far from it! There will be myriad temptations to resist. We will be beset within and without. We may be beaten to the ground, but there can be no turning back.

Perhaps there is no single aid more vital to the success of the earnest life-seeker than a living, working faith. Not only do we need faith in ourselves, but more important, we need faith in God's Word, His promises and His guidance. There will be times when we do not understand all the why's of our lives, but that should not weaken our effort. Do you remember how Jesus chided His disciples for their lack of faith? If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, He said in effect, you could move any stronghold of sin (Matt. 17:20). So with us: when we have a strong, abiding faith, we will be able to see difficulties in proper perspective.

Perseverance is the hard work you do after you get tired of doing the hard work you already did. —Newt Gingrich

Success!



It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer.

—Albert Einstein

Perseverance is not a long race; it is many short races one after another.

—Walter Elliott

Don't let the fear of the time it will take to accomplish something stand in the way of your doing it. The time will pass anyway; we might just as well put that passing time to the best possible use.

—Earl Nightingale

Don't be discouraged. It's often the last key in the bunch that opens the lock. —Author Unknown

The great majority of men are bundles of beginnings.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

I may not be there yet, but I'm closer than I was yesterday.

—Author Unknown

Keep on going, and the chances are that you will stumble on something, perhaps when you are least expecting it. I never heard of anyone ever stumbling on something sitting down.

—Charles F. Kettering

One may go a long way after one is tired. —French Proverb

Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising up every time we fail. —Ralph Waldo Emerson

Vitality shows in not only the ability to persist but the ability to start over. —F. Scott Fitzgerald

With ordinary talent and extraordinary perseverance, all things are attainable.

—Thomas Foxwell Buxton

There are few areas in the Christian's life more dangerous than discouragement. Sometimes we may almost feel that the Lord has deserted us. But not so! This is no time to lose heart.

Remember, every Gethsemane has its strengthening angel for those who are earnestly praying.

Then, too, how easily we may be turned aside by some fleeting pleasure of modern-day Babylon. Why? Doesn't our heavenly Father offer enough incentive to keep us persevering toward our goal?

Think for a moment: Can you take in even the minutest segment of the vast scope of God's promises (Eph. 3:20)? Has He not offered a hundredfold of blessings in this life, and in the future everlasting life and glory? (Mark 10:30). Is there any joy or happiness now that can equal the exhilaration we feel when we are overpowering the sins that beset us? (Heb. 12:1).

Then think what it will mean to be a recipient of that future glory, to receive what eye has never seen, what ear has never heard, what no one has even been able to imagine—all this and more God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Cor. 2:9)! Only then will life—meaningful life—really begin.

With such a glorious future in prospect, may our prayer ever be, "Oh God, my God, help me keep pushing on!"

Keep Trying

BY SHIRLEY BYERS

There is a saying that "The race is not always to the swift...but to those who keep on running." No matter how excellent the start, each must reach the finish line to receive the prize. This is true most of all in the race for the prize of eternal life that God has offered in His Word. Only "he who endures to the end will be saved" (Matt. 10:22).

It is the difficult places that strengthen our spiritual muscles. Taken one at a time, day after day, these trials actually help us forward. With God's help, nothing can keep us from succeeding if our heart is right, our will is set, and we know what we are going for.

Do you remember the story of the two frogs?

***Two frogs fell into a can of cream
or so I've heard it told.
The sides of the can were shiny steep,
the cream was deep and cold.
"Oh, what's the use?" said No. 1,
"Tis fate—no help's around—
Good-bye, my friend! Good-bye, sad world!"
And weeping still, he drowned.
But No. 2 of sterner stuff,
Frog-paddled in surprise,
The while he wiped his creamy face
And blinked his creamy eyes.
"It wouldn't really help the world
If one more frog was dead.
I'll paddle fast the while I can,"
The braver froggie said.
So kicking hard, while paddling round.
No time to cry or mutter.
He swam and kicked, and kicked and swam,
Then hopped out safe—on butter!***

—Author unknown

This poem illustrates the old proverb, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." Theoretically, if instead of giving up the first frog had kept trying, they might have had butter in half the time, and both would have reached safety!

The determination to keep trying and never give up, regardless of circumstances, must be the attitude of every Christian who aspires to be like Christ. Because we find ourselves surrounded by difficulties is no reason to give up; it is only reason to keep trying. *"I will be with you in trouble"* (Ps. 91:15) is the Father's promise, and His promise will not fail.

Sometimes we feel like the quitter frog. We want God to do for us what we can do for ourselves. We ask Him to remove some obstacle that our own carelessness caused. When His help is not forthcoming we get discouraged, instead of saying, *"He knows the way that I take: when he has tried me, I will come forth as gold"* (Job 23:10).

Our nature tends to pull us down to the animal plane. To live above this nature does not mean trying today and resting tomorrow, but continual trying every day.

No doubt much of our trouble is of our own making. As we look back, is it not true that at least some of our unhappiness was caused by wounded pride, or a deflated ego, or trivial disappointment?

Do we nurture old hurt feelings and magnify slights? or do we let the abrasives of every day smooth and polish us? Touchiness, when it becomes chronic, is a morbid disposition. It is conceit with a hair-trigger.

The Christian life is not automatic. No one ever accomplished anything in any walk of life without effort.

If we do not exercise our body, we lack strength and endurance. Unless we exercise our moral muscles, we have no muscle of soul, no strength of character. And because godly character must last forever, should we be surprised that it can only be developed by persevering day after day, day after day?

The Christ-life brings denial. But the life of self-denial is the more abundant life just in proportion as we die to self. We give up the short-lived, uncertain pleasures God forbids in exchange for a place in Christ's eternal Kingdom. What if we had to sacrifice a hundred lives like this one? We would only be making the future, more abundant life more sure.

Are you looking for *"things which eye has not seen nor ear heard, and which have not entered the heart of man: all that God has in readiness for them that love Him"* (1 Cor. 2: 9 Weymouth)? Then don't get tired and fainthearted, but KEEP TRYING! ♦

CREDIT FOR BEAR PHOTOS:

We regret that we are unable to identify the photographer responsible for these unusual shots of bear determination. We received them by e-mail from Edward Shayler of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, who is personally acquainted with Bruce Leeson, a senior member of the Ecological office of the government of Canada. Mr. Leeson was unable to identify the photographer but was certain of the verity of the photos which were taken this year in the environs of Long Lake, near Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The photos were published earlier by a newspaper in British Columbia, also without identity as to the source.

***Most people never run far enough
on their first wind to find out
they've got a second.*** –William James

***Difficult things take a long time,
impossible things a little longer.***

–Author Unknown

If you give up too easily, write this down and read it daily:

CODE OF PERSISTENCE

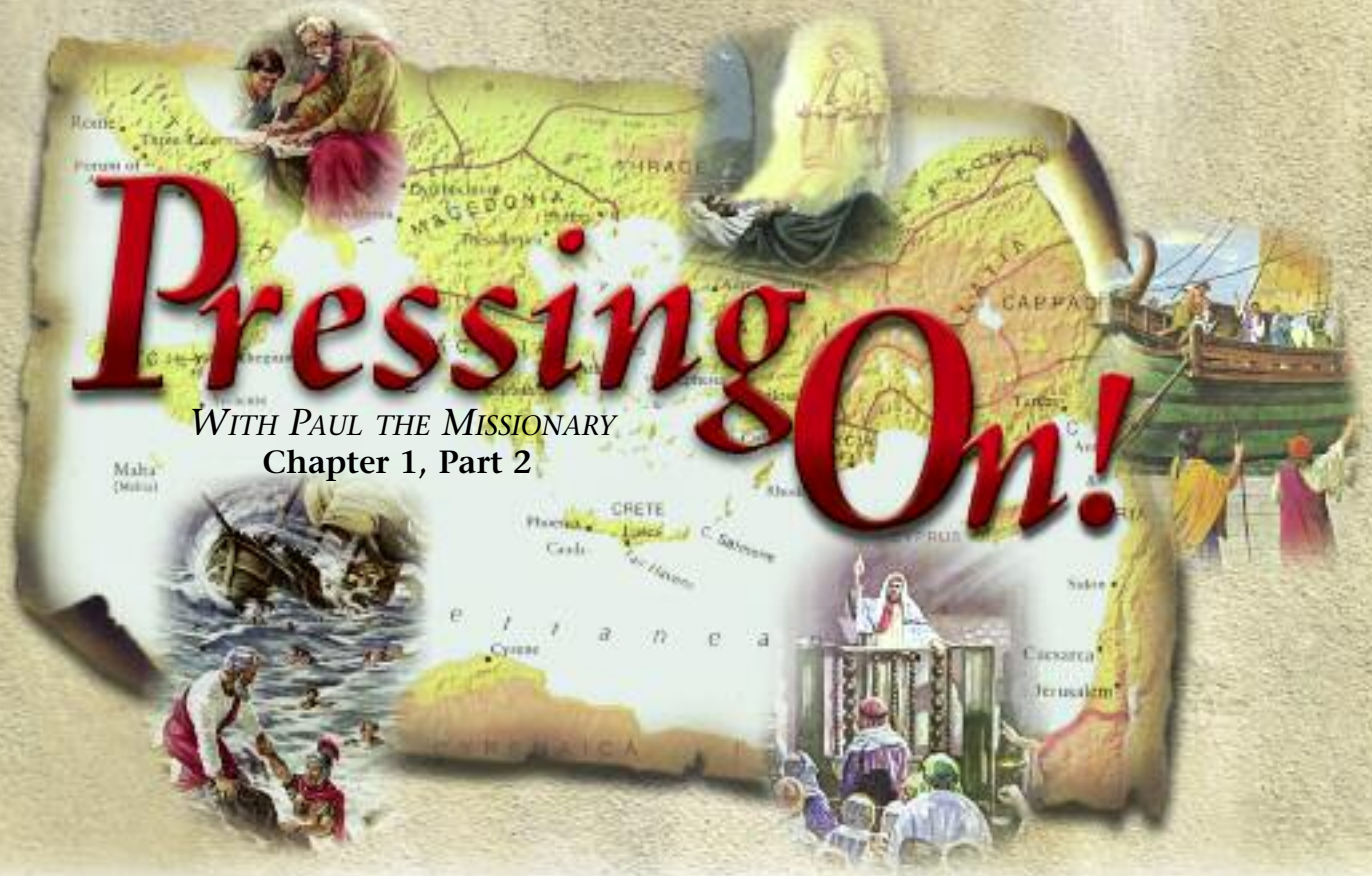
1. *I will never give up so long as I know I am right.*
2. *I will believe that all things will work out for me if I hang on until the end.*
3. *I will be courageous and undismayed in the face of odds.*
4. *I will not permit anyone to intimidate me or deter me from my goals.*
5. *I will fight to overcome all physical handicaps and setbacks.*
6. *I will try again and again and yet again to accomplish what I desire.*
7. *I will take new faith and resolution from the knowledge that all successful men and women have had to fight defeat and adversity.*
8. *I will never surrender to discouragement or despair no matter what obstacles confront me.*

***Success is not final, failure is not
fatal: it is the courage to continue
that counts.*** –Winston Churchill

***Be thou faithful unto death,
and I will give thee a crown of life.***

–Revelations 2:10

***For a righteous man falls seven
times, and rises again.*** –Proverbs 24:16



SYNOPSIS

*This story depicts the impact Paul, the apostle, might have had on his contemporaries. The first scene takes place in **Milo's Tavern**, at The Three Taverns, where once Paul stopped on the way from Melita to Rome after the shipwreck.*

*Several travelers are gathered there on this stormy night. They are **Arbaces**, a sea-captain; **Manlius**, a Roman centurion; **Carbo**, a young Roman salesman; and **Philistus**, a Greek building contractor from Alexandria. **Curio** is the tavern porter. Arbaces has just finished describing the wrecking of his ship, on which Paul sailed as prisoner. He spoke with enthusiasm about Paul's crucial role in the voyage. The conversation turns now to Christianity and Paul's part in the movement.*

As the laughter subsided, so did the tension in the air and Arbaces resumed his seat with a sigh. "Well, all I can say is, you fellows haven't met the man. I'm certainly going to try and see him again, when I get to Rome. You all should as well."

Milo brightened. "I *have* met the man, Captain. Several times."

"Have you?" replied the captain, his interest piqued.

"Tell us, good landlord," Philistus urged.

"It was a bit after this shipwreck. The *Castor and Pollux* had docked at Naples and brought a convoy of prisoners here, to the Three Taverns. Happened that Paul sat in that very chair." Milo nodded at a chair in front of the bar.

Manlius adjusted his chair to face Milo. "And, what was your impression?"

"*Impressive* is just the word. Whatever else you might think of Paul, you'd have to admit he's impressive. Can't

ignore him. Got personality, if you know what I mean. You'd know he was somebody important if he never spoke a word. You can *feel* him."

"I don't like people like that," Carbo remarked "They give me the creeps."

"Well, I'll admit he can make you uncomfortable. You feel sort of, naked—as though he were looking right through you."

"He didn't say much about his shipwreck, but he said a good bit about his God, and this Jesus Christ. I had heard of this Jesus, but I never knew why He was important to the Christians. Paul says Jesus is the Jewish Messiah, and the Son of the God of heaven. Supposedly He fulfilled many of the ancient Jewish prophecies—of His birth, His teaching ministry, His miracles, even His death. He was crucified by Pontius Pilate—but He didn't stay dead. The Christians claim He rose from the grave."

"That is what I've heard as well," Philistus agreed. "That's the core of their religion, as I understand it. It's where the Christians and the Jews part company. The Jews won't accept that this Jesus is anything but an outspoken ordinary man. Certainly not their Messiah. And of course they won't accept the fact—if it is a fact—of His resurrection."

"Because it's nonsense!" Carbo exploded. "You believe that? Things like that just don't happen."

"How do you know that?" challenged Manlius.

"Because I've never seen it," stated Carbo haughtily.

Curio paused in his raiding of his employer's buffet table to speak casually to Carbo. "Ever been to Britain?"

"No."

"But you believe it exists?"

"Of course it exists, stupid boy."

"How do you know that if you've never seen it?"

"I don't have to have seen it. I've talked to people who have. And that's why..." Carbo trailed off as he saw his error. His audience saw it, too. A gust of laughter swept the smugness off Carbo's face as Curio grinned at the embarrassed salesman.

"So you *do* take some things on faith, do you?" he cried.

Milo took the opportunity to rejoin the conversation. "Well, Carbo. Paul says people *saw* this Jesus after He rose from the dead. Plenty of them."

"Know any of them?" quipped Carbo, belligerently.

"Yes."

"Who?"

"Paul." Carbo rolled his eyes, but the landlord continued. "He saw Jesus more than once. Told me the story of his conversion—of the first time he saw Jesus. He says he was a persecutor of the Christians, arresting and killing them. But on such a chase to Damascus Paul said he was stopped in his tracks by Jesus. Blinded for a time, then sent on a mission. Since then he's been a red-hot Christian—white-hot, you might say."

"And have you become a Christian, landlord?" the centurion inquired.

"I'm... well, no, I can't say so. To be a Christian, as Paul explains it, isn't that easy. It's a lifelong commitment to follow Christ."

"That's not for me!" spat Carbo emphatically.

"I agree with you for once, Carbo," the landlord shot back. "Takes a pretty good man to live the life of a Christian."

For the first time the salesman lost his temper. He sprang to his feet and glared, irate, at his host.

"Why you...are you implying that *I'm* not a good man?!"

"You heard what I said," replied Milo, nonplussed.

Carbo sputtered into silence. Manlius was next to speak. "You say he's the chief man among these Christians. What are they doing, now that he's a prisoner?"

"There are a number of others," continued Milo, "who work closely with Paul. About two weeks ago a couple of them came through here. Luke and Aristarchus. They filled me in on—shall I say—the Christian 'news.' As for Paul" Milo went on, "he communicates with his churches by letter, and through the people who come to see him. Since he came to Rome, his church there has grown. You see, he isn't in a regular prison but under house arrest. He lives in his own apartment under guard, and while he can't go out, he can receive visitors. He's got to be one of the busiest men in Rome."

"Even so, it's a long time to wait for a hearing," Philistus was indignant. "Two and a half years! What are our courts coming to? Why back in the days of Augustus—"

"I heard a report the other day," the landlord cut in, "and I hope it's true, that Paul has had his trial and has been released."

"Good!"—spoke Manlius, the centurion.

"I don't know why I say that, not having met the man, but I feel almost as if I have."

"As soon as I can get to Rome," Milo said warmly, "I'm going to find out. I want to see him again."

"Better not," sneered Carbo, "He might make a Christian of you."

"I only wish I had the courage to take the step," Milo replied soberly. "Maybe some day I will."

"Can't see why you're so easily impressed. Did he do tricks for you?" taunted Carbo with feigned innocence.

Milo had enough. He crossed the room with long strides and seized the offending salesman by the shoulder. "That's enough. You speak with more respect, or out you go! Understand?"

"It's raining outside," replied Carbo, blankly.

"All the worse for you. Here's your money back. Go or stay?"

"All right, I—I apologize," gasped Carbo as the landlord made a move towards the door, dragging Carbo with him. In a carefully metered tone Carbo pushed on. "But did Paul do any remarkable things such as the Captain says he saw?"

"Yes, he did," said Milo triumphantly, releasing Carbo who landed back in his chair with a thud. "My slave, Theodorus; his arm was injured—he almost lost it—when a tree fell on him years ago. His left arm was all withered and crooked. You should see him now! Curio, get Theodorus in here." As Curio disappeared through a doorway, Manlius leaned forward, attentively.

"To get back to this central figure, this Jesus Christ, whatever became of Him?"

"Paul says He ascended bodily to heaven, to His Father."

"Uh-huh," was Carbo's sardonic response. "Anything to get rid of the evidence. Why should I believe this man ever lived?"

"The Christian Church is pretty good evidence," said Milo, roughly. "It's here—you can see it. It wasn't here before. It seems far too big a movement to have been constructed on a lie."

"But now that He's in heaven, or with His father," the centurion persisted, "What now? What's it all about?"

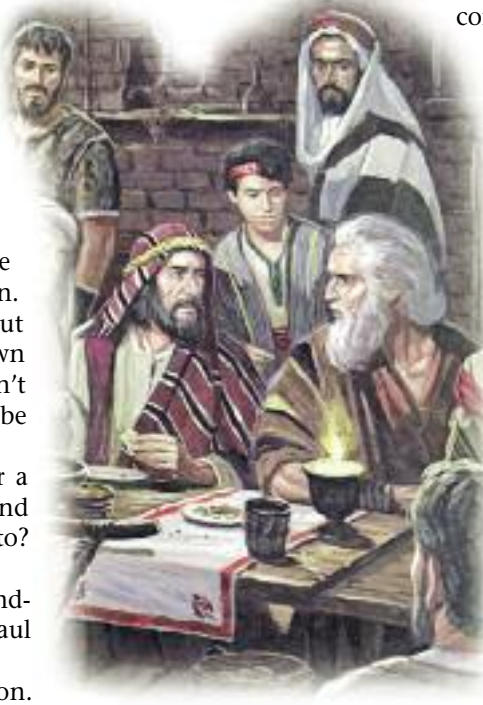
Milo's eyes glowed with enthusiasm as he replied.

"The Christians look for Jesus Christ to come back, sometime in the future, to set up the Kingdom He and His followers preach about—a kingdom where there will be no sickness, no hunger, nor harm. And I believe no death—"

"Sounds too good to be true!" burst out Carbo. Arbaces cut him off.

"Exactly! It's not true, and you don't have to believe it, young man," snapped Arbaces. "The likes of you won't see it anyway."

"In other words, it's for the practicing Christians, and those like them." The officer's words came



thoughtfully, "But what about those who die before He comes back?"

"The Christians believe in a resurrection. They say the same power that brought Jesus Christ from the dead will raise them also."

At this juncture Curio entered with Theodorus, a bearded, middle-aged Greek slave. Milo introduced him to the group and asked him to tell what happened with Paul. Theodorus gladly obliged.

"When Paul, the Christian preacher, stayed here two years ago—he saw my disability as I brought in firewood. He came to me and asked if I would like to be healed. Of course I would! But I thought he must be drunk, or joking, until I looked into his eyes. Excitedly I thrust out my arm as best as I could."

"What did he do?" Philistus inquired.

"He laid his hand on my arm and I felt a thrill go through my whole body. I watched as my arm straightened and filled out. I was healed!"

He bared his arm, and the guests crowded around to see. There was scarring, evidence of a traumatic injury, but the bones were straight and the muscles firm and hard.

"Who else saw it?" someone asked.

"My wife, my son Titus, and Curio here. There was also an officer just come from Spain. Unfortunately, my wife has gone to visit her parents tonight, and Titus is in the army, but Curio is here. Curio?"

"He's right. Every word he says is true."

The landlord turned abruptly on the salesman. "What say you now?"

His reply was prompt and arrogant, albeit a bit surprising, "Magic."

Curio scoffed and asked with alacrity, "Oh, believe in magic, do you?"

"Everybody does."

"The evil eye, and fate, and all that sort of stuff?"

"Well, I'm not taking any chances."

"What a man! He doesn't believe in the gods, he doesn't believe his fellow man, but he believes in silly old superstition."

Nettled by the resulting laughter, Carbo blurted out: "What, will your Christian god strike me down with a thunderbolt?"

"He's not that sort of God. Even if He was, I doubt He'd waste a thunderbolt on a scoffer like you. And I'm not a Christian—but I'd rather be with them than you. At least they have something worth living for."

"One thing is sure," Milo mused, "things haven't been the same since Paul was here."

"You think his brief stay changed your life, do you?" Philistus queried.

"Well, I wouldn't say..."

Curio interrupted. "It did! You know what happened the week after Paul was here? A drove of slaves came by on their way to market. They were a sorry-looking lot, sick and hungry; and what does Milo do? He set out food and water for the whole crowd, for free!"

The host covered his embarrassment by roughly silencing his servant, as Manlius addressed the contractor.

"You seem to have some knowledge of Christian doctrine.

Have you had some contact with them?"

"Not much. I have, however, heard a good deal in various parts of the world where I have had business."

"Hopefully it will have a good influence that continues to spread."

"If you'd heard some of the stories I have..." came the loud and now obnoxious voice of Carbo.

Philistus made a gesture of impatience.

"Oh, I've heard them, but I don't believe everything I hear—even if you do. All the Christians I have seen or heard seem to be good people. They seem to be a people of one purpose—with convictions they are willing to die for."

"How numerous are they?" asked Manlius.

"I have no idea of their number, but you find them everywhere. There are thriving churches in Jude and Antioch, and Ephesus, and Smyrna, and Philadelphia. Yes, and Philippi, and Colosse, and Thessalonica, and Corinth."

"How about Athens and Alexandria?"

"A few. There are small groups in Egypt and in the islands, and I understand their missionaries are pushing out into Gaul, and Spain, and Illyria."

For once, Carbo managed a sober, sensible question. "How do you account for this growth? Aren't there already more than enough religions?"

"I don't know. I've often wondered that myself. Perhaps, the old gods are tired and people are ready for a change. But why a religion so different is making converts I can't explain."

"I know the answer," said Milo with confidence.

"Yes?"

"Paul, and men like him! They speak with authority, and they offer a hope no other religion has."

"Yes, I can see that. The Christian movement must have merit, but it takes a man like Paul to sell it in a Roman world. I've heard his name many times as I've traveled."

"In your opinion, will the thing be permanent, or will it die out when leaders like Paul are gone?" asked the centurion.

Philistus stood with his back to the fire, his eyes thoughtful and his words measured and sincere.

"Who can tell? Christianity dares to be different, and for that reason it is pretty sure to draw persecution."

There was a brief silence, broken by the voice of the old sailor. "Well, we've all spoken our piece but you, Centurion. What's your opinion?"

"It is all very interesting. Like our contractor friend, I have seen a great deal of religions the world over, and I'm not exactly sold on any of them. Granted, whatever gods there are, I'd rather have them *for* me than *against* me."

"I know very little about these Christians. I have never heard of this Paul; but if my old friend Julius Didianus liked him, I would probably like him too. I regret not knowing about him while I was in Rome; I would have gone to see him."

"By the way," Milo tried to be casual, but there was anxiety in his tone, "did you hear any rumors in Rome that the government may be getting ready to move against the Christians?"

An air of foreboding settled on the group. Everyone suddenly seemed aware that the hour was growing late. Arbaces

sauntered to the buffet table to cut himself another piece of cheese.

"Rumor has it that Nero will blame the Christians for burning Rome!" There was scathing disdain in his tone. "Now what possible object could they have in doing such a thing as that?"

Milo laughed, a short, mirthless laugh. "I wonder if he expects sensible people to believe it—"

He broke off abruptly, suddenly conscious of the presence

of an officer of Caesar. Eyes darted between the bartender and Manlius. Such words bordered on treason.

Slowly, Manlius rose to his feet, his polished insignia glittering in the lamplight. His voice was bland and his tone slightly ironic.

"Gentlemen, I shall retire and leave you to your conversation. I am off early in the morning at the command of my Emperor. Good night." ♦

Next Issue: Ambition and Personal Sacrifice



Vivian June Dorman

On October 1, 2005, death claimed a member of our Rochester Congregation, Sister Vivian June Dorman. Sister Vivian was a victim of a type of Parkinson's disease.

She had encountered difficulty early in life. When she was 14, her father died, and to help her mother support the family, she quit school at age 16 to work for the local telephone company as a telephone operator. At age 20 she was married to Russell Batt, whom she had met while serving in the Army, and they had two children, Gary and Sandra. In less than three years, tragedy struck when her husband, a student at RIT, contracted Bulbar polio, and died within weeks, leaving Sister Vivian alone with two small children. About two years later she was married to Robert Dorman, and together they shared life's ups and downs for the next 48 years. They had two more daughters, Sally and Shelley.

Sister Vivian first became acquainted with the Megiddo Church when she was about 21. She subscribed to the Message, her children received the Megiddo Bible Lessons regularly, and she tried to teach her children right principles.

Sister Vivian enjoyed a happy, active life with generally excellent health until the early 1990's, when she was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Her optimistic spirit and strong faith carried her through the extreme difficulties of the disease.

Sister Vivian was blessed with a caring husband Robert and daughter Shelley, who together shared the responsibility for her care in her own home during the ten plus years of her final illness and who did everything humanly possible to make her sufferings bearable. She was also grateful for the kind and continual support of Shelley's husband, Randy Hares.

She is survived by her husband, Robert Dorman, of Sodus; her mother, Caroline Boss, of Williamson; a son Gary Batt, of Fairport; and three daughters: Sandra Lerch, Sally Prebola, and Shelley Hares. She also has two grandsons.

After the children were grown, she gave generously of her time to help with miscellaneous tasks in the Megiddo printing department. Folding, sorting misprints, collating, filing, stuffing envelopes, helping with the Message mailing—whatever the task that needed help, she was there with her radiant, happy, whole-hearted spirit.

Sister Vivian was an optimist, even while battling disease. She submitted this point to be published in the *Megiddo Message*: "When God closes a door, He opens a window." She felt she had personally experienced the closed door—and the opened window. ♦

Obituary

Shelley Hares composed the following tribute to her mother:

*You gave us a lifetime of Love and that love you gave us will
always live within our hearts.*

You lived for the ones you loved, loved with the deepest love.

You gave, asking nothing in return.

You listened and gave us a caring ear.

You gave us hope when life gave us trials hard to bear.

You laughed with such joy for life.

Your kindness to everyone will always be a lasting impression.

And

Your smile was like a ray of sunshine,

A light we will truly miss.

Goodbye is the saddest word we will ever hear...

To a mother we hold so precious, so dear.

We were blessed to have such a wonderful mother like you!

**Happy times at the
Dorman fruit farm.**



FAITH *in Action*



Acts 18:18–23 (NKJV)

18 So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow.

19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

20 When they asked him to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent,

21 but took leave of them, saying, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing." And he sailed from Ephesus.

22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church [at Jerusalem], he went down to Antioch.

23 After he had spent some time there, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

Once persecution of the Christians broke out, especially under Emperor Nero, believers faced certain death if they were discovered to be followers of Christ. Thus, it is said that they used the symbol of the ichthus to identify one another. The lines and circumference of the ichthus included five Greek letters. It was so named because it was an acronym of the Greek translation of "Jesus Christ Son of God Savior." Because the English translation of "ichthus" was "fish," the fish seems to have become a symbol used as well. Many of the early disciples were fishermen.



Ichthus symbol and fish at Ephesus

by RUTH E. SISSON

TIME TO LEAVE CORINTH

 READ ACTS 18:18–23

In the city of Corinth, Paul enjoyed eighteen months of unusual peace and quiet. Just as the Lord had promised, no one harmed him (Acts 18:9–10).

During his extended stay, a large number of people were won to the faith, and the church contained many able and gifted members. As he wrote to them later, "*There is no gift in which you are deficient*" (1 Cor. 1:7 TCNT). Actually, their problems in the Church resulted from a misuse of gifts, not a lack.

1. When Paul left Corinth, where did he go? (18:18) _____
2. Who went with him? _____
3. What unusual personal action had he taken while in Corinth? (18:18) _____

Nazarite signifies "separation." A Nazarite vow was a voluntary vow by which one separated from normal life and subjected oneself to certain outward restrictions usually for a limited time. By taking this vow, one abstained from all "*fruit of the vine*," from touching a dead body for any reason, and from cutting one's hair for the duration of the time vowed (Num. 6:1–21).

While in Corinth, Paul took a Nazarite vow. Why did he do it? We

are not told, but perhaps it was to demonstrate to God how serious he was about his ministry to the Jews. Or perhaps it was just a voluntary discipline he imposed on himself to strengthen his moral muscles. Or he may have wanted to show the Corinthians how serious he was about his personal commitment to live what he preached. It appears that some of the Corinthians were very ready to criticize Paul and to judge him by outward appearances (2 Cor. 10:7, 10), rather than by the strength of his character. To use Paul's own words, he came to them *"not with persuasive words of human wisdom but in demonstration of the spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God"* (1 Cor. 2:4-5).

Whatever Paul's reason for taking the vow, before he left Corinth its term was expired. We know this because *"he shaved his head"* (Num. 6:18).

A Brief Stopover in Ephesus

When Paul left Corinth, bound for Jerusalem, he was not traveling alone. His friends Aquila and Priscilla went with him, as far as Ephesus.



Ephesus view of bay from Temple of Domitian



After a short fall to the Persians, Alexander the Great restored democracy to Ephesus in 356 B.C. Upon his death, Lysimachus gained control over the city and Hellenized it. After 129 B.C. Rome assumed control over Ephesus and granted it tax-free status, allowing the city to govern itself. Ephesus grew in importance until it became the fourth largest city in the east Roman Empire during the 2nd century A.D.

During the period of the Roman Empire, Ephesus vied for political, economic, and religious supremacy among all cities of Asia Minor. It was the capital of the Roman province of Asia and an important seaport for travel and trade through Asia Minor along the Cayster (Kaystros) River Valley. Ephesus moved around as the Cayster River silted the harbor. As the city decayed, the harbor was neglected. Today Ephesus stands seven miles inland in the modern town of Selcuk, near Qusadassi. (below)



(above) **The Arcadian Way** stretched northwest from the theater to the ancient harbor, which has since silted over. Because it led to the harbor, it was an important route, lined on either side with mosaics and shops.

Can't we picture these three zealous believers enjoying every mile of that journey together as they talked of the things they had seen and heard, and how they could live worthy of their own high calling to be part of the plan of God? Can't we hear them thinking through some personal lessons they had learned, lessons in patience, or peace-making, or love? Surely every moment with the great Apostle was precious, as they looked ahead to the Day when Jesus Christ would return as King.

As the three believers disembarked at Ephesus, they were warmly received by an enthusiastic group of believers.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF "BIBLEPLACES.COM"



Qusadassi Harbor

Acts 18:24–28 (NKJV)

24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus.

25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John.

26 So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

27 And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace;

28 for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.



Insight

Who Was Apollos?

The ministry of Apollos is a refreshing and encouraging paragraph in the history of the Christian Church at Ephesus.

There is nothing like an enthusiastic, godly leader to fan the flames. When Apollos came along, we can feel immediately the impact of his presence in Ephesus. Just look at the words the Bible uses to describe Apollos. He was “*an eloquent man...mighty in the Scriptures...instructed in the way of the Lord...fervent [literally, boiling] in spirit,*” and he began to “*speak boldly in the synagogue.*” Somewhere, Apollos had studied the Scriptures seriously. Combining his God-given gifts with his solid personal conviction, he was able to make an immediate impact on the young believers, applying the Scriptures effectively and forcefully.

Well educated in the schools of Alexandria, Apollos was not too proud to take instruction from a couple of tentmakers! What an example of how the true Gospel breaks down barriers of class and status, for as Paul wrote, we “*are all one in Christ Jesus*” (Gal. 3:28).

After the additional instruction from Priscilla and Aquila, he must have seen with new clarity the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures in Jesus, and came back to the synagogue with new energy to teach the whole gospel of Christ!

When Apollos decided to travel on to Greece, his Christian friends in Ephesus sent along a glowing letter of introduction, and Apollos was well received by the Church at Corinth—so well that some wanted to call themselves followers of Apollos rather than of his message. Through no fault of Apollos, this added to a division in the

We do not have any details of this visit, only a few headlines, which tell us that Paul almost immediately took leave, saying, “*I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem.*” But at the same time he promised to return, “*God willing.*”

And so, leaving his fellow believers, Priscilla and Aquila, to carry on in Ephesus, Paul sailed for Syria.

4. What was Paul’s next stop? (18:22) _____

5. It appears that from Caesarea Paul went up and greeted what church? (18:22) _____

6. Where did he go after visiting the church? (18:22) _____

7. What was distinctive about the city of Antioch, with regard to Paul’s travels? (14:26; 15:35–36) _____

It appears that Paul went to visit the Jerusalem church leaders after landing at Caesarea and before returning to Antioch.

After spending some time at Antioch in Syria, it was time to embark on a third missionary venture, to encourage and strengthen his beloved ones in Antioch of Pisidia, and Iconium, and Lystra, where Timothy’s family lived. Luke says that he “*went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples*” (Acts 18:23).

Did Paul need some time to relax? Did he need a change and a rest? Paul was not one to waste any time. He had a heart for the Gospel, and he had a heart for his fellow believers. How were they getting along? He must go and see them! So off he went, on another long and strenuous journey.

But before we travel on with Paul, Luke tells of some sideline activities too important to miss.

The Ministry of Apollos in Ephesus



READ ACTS 18:24–28

At this point in the narrative, the spotlight shifts from Brother Paul to another brother named Apollos.

8. What are we told about Apollos’ background? (18:24) _____

9. What are we told about his manner of presenting the Scriptures? What was his deficiency? (18:25) _____

Church, which the Apostle Paul had to confront and correct. (1 Cor. 1:12–13). Paul had to explain that he planted the seed, Apollos watered it, and God gave the increase (1 Cor. 3:6).

Along with being talented, Apollos also had the godly quality of being teachable. Highly educated and gifted, he could easily have looked down on two tentmakers who wanted to give him instruction. But Apollos listened and learned, and returned to the pulpit to teach with new

energy and boldness, now that he had the complete message of the Gospel.

Because Apollos knew how to be a good student, he was an even better teacher.

How much did Apollos contribute to the cause of the Gospel? He is mentioned a number of times in 1 Corinthians, and again at the end of Paul’s letter to Titus, where he is apparently at the Church in Crete and Paul is asking him to travel with Zenas (Titus 3:13).

10. How did Aquila and Priscilla handle the matter? (18:26) _____

We must commend Aquila and Priscilla for their discrete handling of what could have been very embarrassing for Apollos and detrimental to the cause of Christ. They went directly to Apollos, called him aside, and *“explained to him the way of God more accurately”* in a truly Christian manner.

What an outstanding example of godly instruction. They were not trying to show off their own knowledge. They were sincerely concerned for Apollos’ deficiency, and corrected it in a kind and loving manner. Brother Apollos apparently had a profound knowledge of the Scriptures, and the ability to present that knowledge persuasively. But he needed more instruction, so that he could teach the whole Gospel, including the message of Christ.

As far as we know, Apollos was receptive to the correction of his Christian brother and sister, and went on to help their common cause.

11. When Apollos was ready to leave Ephesus for Achaia, what did Aquila and Priscilla do in his behalf? (18:27) _____

A well-written letter of introduction would help him be received by the believers in Greece.

12. What was the effect of Apollos’ teaching in Greece? (18:27–28) _____

There must have been exceptionally good soil at Ephesus for the Gospel. Visiting there at the end of his second missionary journey, Paul had sparked a serious amount of interest among the Jewish people. Though he did not want to stay at that time, he promised to return (18:21). Meanwhile, Aquila and Priscilla stayed, and we can be sure that their example and teaching encouraged and helped the young believers.

THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY BEGINS

 READ ACTS 19:1–10

While Apollos was traveling from Ephesus and to Corinth, the Apostle Paul was beginning his third missionary journey through Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18:23), *“strengthening all the disciples.”* Paul was burning with a message to share. So many people are wrapped up in making money or making a living. Paul was wrapped up in spending and being spent for Christ. So many are looking for ease and comfort and pleasure. Paul could think only of his new brothers and sisters in Christ, and what he could do to help them.

If we read too rapidly, we miss the commitment and personal sacrifice that is hidden in the brief Biblical account. Travelling *“over the region of Galatia and Phrygia,”* we see Paul walking a distance of some 1500 miles. This is likely at least three months of walking up and down hills, through glens, crossing rivers, spending brief times with believers in the different Churches, and in between sleeping under the open sky, whether it was balmy and warm, or cold and rainy. None of these details are included in the record. They didn’t matter. Paul was so committed that only the highlights are recorded for us, and the good that he could do here and there. But we cannot overlook the human side. Paul was spending and being spent for Christ. After he had covered the Churches in southern Galatia, he went on to Asia, everywhere exhorting them to be strong in the faith and not to be seduced by false teachers. He wanted them to continue in the one true Gospel, learning to live a righteous life, seek-



Insight

Out Of Alexandria ...

In Alexandria, on the north shore of Egypt, the Jewish religion was strong. There the Hebrew Scriptures had been translated into the Greek Septuagint about 200 years previous.

Alexandria was also the birthplace of Philo, the Plato devotee who brought much of Plato’s thinking into the Jewish religion about the time of Jesus’ birth.



Shepherd and sheep near Ephesus

Acts 19:1–10 (NKJV)

1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples

2 he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”

3 And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.”

4 Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

7 Now the men were about twelve in all.

8 And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.

9 But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

10 And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.



(above) Ruins of the
Civic agora (marketplace)

Ruins of the **Commercial agora**
(marketplace) at Ephesus
(right and below)



The commercial agora measured 110 meters square (340 feet) and had a sundial/water clock in the center, the foundations of which are still visible. Inscriptions found here reveal that it was once decorated with numerous statues.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF "BIBLEPLACES.COM"



Insight

Truth with Tact

Aquila and Priscilla give us a valuable lesson in the way they handled the deficiency in Apollos' knowledge.

No doubt they were in the audience while he was teaching in the synagogue. They heard firsthand that he was lacking a significant amount of instruction. But they did not speak to him in front of anyone. They did not stand up and shout, "You don't know what you're talking about." Nor did they pull him aside after the service and argue with him. They had a better way.

Perhaps they said, "Brother Apollos, we would like to invite you to have a meal at our home." Then, around the dining room table, after a pleasant meal, they told Apollos what a blessing he had been to the young Church in Ephesus. Perhaps they told about their own personal experience with the Apostle Paul, and the precious hours they had spent with him as they worked on their tents, and as they listened to instruction from him. Perhaps they also asked Apollos how he came to his knowledge, and what convinced him of the truth of the Scriptures. Then, when the time seemed right, they started to fill in the gaps in his knowledge, and show him what he was lacking in instruction, and the tremendous Gospel that Brother Paul was preaching.

Whatever their method, Apollos was receptive. Even if they had been harsh and blunt, Apollos should have received it. But then Aquila and Priscilla would have not been doing right. The Apostle Paul says that when one is overtaken in a fault, those who are spiritual should restore him "in a spirit of meekness" (Gal. 6:1). Priscilla and Aquila showed the spirit of meekness, and doubtless Apollos thanked them for their instruction.

What priceless lessons are hidden in the Scriptures for us!

ing a place in the coming Kingdom.

We can learn about the weight of his teaching in his Letters. At this point, they were no longer beginners. They had left the childhood ABC's and had gone on to applying what they had learned. Paul wanted them rooted and grounded in the faith, ready to defend it, and most of all to let it change their lives. *"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature"* (2 Cor. 5:17).

And always he was addressing practical issues in the Churches—issues of discord, and immorality, and divisions, and the constant threat of the surrounding culture. Altogether, his Epistles speak to us, because his people and the problems they faced were not that different from our own today.

Finally Paul reached Ephesus and a new problem. Here were a dozen men whose understanding of Christianity was very much like that of Apollos. Like Apollos, they knew only the baptism of John. In fact, they had never even heard of the Holy Spirit.

13. After Paul preached and explained the relationship of John the Baptist to Jesus, what two steps did Paul take with these new believers? (19:5)

14. How many were involved in this misunderstanding? (19:7) _____

15. How long did Paul continue teaching in Ephesus? (19:8) _____

16. What was Paul's main topic of teaching? (19:8) _____

17. When some of the people turned against Paul, what action did he take? (19:9) _____

18. How much longer did Paul continue teaching in Ephesus? (19:10) _____

19. What was the result of his stay in Ephesus? (19:10) _____

(to be continued)

The Duck-billed PLATYPUS:

I'm Not a Hoax!

and still breathe normally—what a great idea! I only have to hold my breath when I dive deep.

On either side of my head, just behind my bill, are two grooves, which contain my eyes and my ear openings. When I'm on land, my eyes are very acute for seeing long distances, though because of their placement I can't see what is literally "under my nose." But that doesn't matter! When I dive, I close them all up tight—my eyes, ears, and even my nostrils (I don't like the water inside!).

My tail is much like the beaver's, and serves several purposes. It stores fat, which I draw on to give me fuel when food is short. I also use it

as a steering mechanism when I swim. Incidentally, I'm an excellent swimmer. You may think my swimming methods juvenile—I use a stroke very similar to your doggie paddle. But what is wrong with that? My Creator designed my big front paws with webbing to give me super propulsion through water. My back feet are small, but they also have webbing that I spread out when I swim, for steering and braking.

Cozy Warm and Dry!

I must tell you about my fur coat. My Designer didn't give it to me just so I could be accused of being a false beaver—no. He gave it to me because I spend a lot of time in the water, and my thick, double-layered fur coat keeps me cozy warm, even in icy cold water. What's my double-layered fur coat like? Probably you've never seen one like it. I have a thick covering of waterproof hair all over my body, except for my feet and my bill. This outer hair layer is long, coarse, and very dense—like 800 hairs per millimeter. Beneath this layer is another layer of hair that is very soft and smooth. With a layer of air trapped between the two layers of fur, I don't even get wet when I swim, or feel the cold water. Isn't that marvelous? With this good insulation, I can go swimming for food even in very cold environments—and this is very important (I'll tell you later).

I know we are different. But a hoax? Never! I feel we're an awesome example of our Creator's genius.

The hoax idea started, it seems, when the early settlers of Eastern Australia first discovered us in the late 1700s. When they attempted to send one of our kind to England by way of the Indian Ocean (it died on the way!), the English naturalists were suspicious that some Chinese sailors were playing some kind of joke on them, that they had taken parts from a number of different creatures and somehow tacked them together (what an idea!). Only when more of our kind arrived in England did the naturalists finally, grudgingly, grant that we were for real!

Why the suspected hoax? Because, in my opinion, our great Designer simply took the best designs from others of His creations and adapted them to give us exactly what we need to survive in our environment. That is why we have the fur of a mammal, the skin of a mole, a muzzle like a duck's bill, a beaver-like tail, the webbed feet of a duck, and—most astounding—we lay eggs, yet suckle our young. You will agree, we are unique!

Who are we? We are the duck-billed platypus. A small animal, about half the size of a house cat, we live along the eastern coast of Australia, in its rivers, streams and lakes, mostly in the south land where the climate ranges from hot to very cold—I'm fine with most of it. But we can be found as far north as northern Queensland.

I hardly know where to begin to tell you what makes me unique, because I do not fit into any of the standard categories. But let me start by mentioning a few of our features.

Features

My duck-like bill is soft, flat and rubbery, and very sensitive to touch. It is quite literally all nerves. I use my bill to search for food, and to find my way in the water (I will tell you about that later). On top of my bill are two nostril holes through which I breathe. Since these holes are on top of my bill, I am able to swim just below the surface of the water



I have another very special mechanism for combating the cold. Reptiles reduce their metabolism in a cold environment and become cold and lethargic. If that happened to me, I would die. I have to keep eating to survive. So what do I do? My Creator has given me the ability to turn up the heat when I begin to get cold. My metabolism speeds up, producing a greater amount of energy. Of course this also means that I need more fuel, but not so much as you might think, because my Designer has given me a way to use the additional heat very efficiently. When my metabolism speeds up, my blood takes a different route through my body. In this way the heat is carried to the parts of my body that require it and not sent to my hind legs, tail and bill. In this way, the usefulness of the heat is maximized, and I can go on swimming and eating year round. Isn't that wonderful?

Time for Dinner!

We all like to eat. And here I really specialize. Every 24 hours—that's every day—I consume food equal to between one-quarter and one-half of my body weight. If you were feeding me, that translates to about 1200 earth worms and 50 fresh-water fish a day! I also like small water creatures that live on the bottom of streambeds. I have been provided with all the right tools to enjoy these yummy delicacies on the bottom of streams.

I always swim with my eyes closed. How do I avoid bumping into things when I swim? And how do I find those sweet, juicy worms? My Designer thought of everything. Does my bill remind you of a duck's bill? Well, they are very different. My bill is soft and rubbery, and is packed with sensitive nerves—really a miniature electronic receiving station. Equipped with electro-receptors and sensors, it picks up electromagnetic impulses sent out by fish and the tiny animals that I eat, so I can swim right to them and grab them. Yummm! Even the darkest, murkiest water cannot keep me from dinner! These sensors also detect changes in pressure that allow me to sense where solid objects are, so I can swim without bumping into things. Your scientists don't fully understand how my electrical system operates, but that isn't strange. I'm not sure that they know fully how their own brain operates either, but you and I both know the Master Mind knows, don't we? All praise to Him for His masterful works!

Well, when I'm gathering food from the streambed, I don't eat it immediately. (I can only stay under water a short time, maybe like two minutes. And no matter how hungry I am, I find it very difficult to eat while holding my breath.) So I collect food in my big cheek pouches until I get back to the surface. Then, using my front feet to walk on the land, I find a comfortable place to enjoy my meal.

You may also like to know how I chew. I don't have teeth as you do. I have grinding pads in my bill that break up my food. I also have serrations on my lower bill that help to sort out the shells and mud I pick up with my food. Maybe the method is different, but it works for me!

Home...

Perhaps you would like to know where I live? My home is a burrow, at the end of a long tunnel, perhaps 60 feet or more, that I dig in a riverbank. You probably wonder how I dig a burrow with webbed feet that were designed for swimming?

Here again, my Designer thought of everything. When I need to use my feet to dig, I simply retract the webbing into my palms. This uncovers my broad, strong nails, and my hands become claws—just the tool I need for digging.

We platypuses build two kinds of burrows: dwelling burrows and nesting burrows. The entrance can be either above or below the surface of the water. If the entrance is below water, we always burrow up into the river bank—we don't want water in our houses!

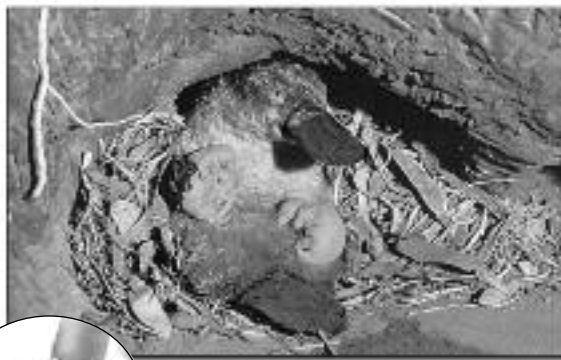
Usually we platypuses are solitary creatures and do not share a burrow, except, perhaps, when I'm off in my nursery burrow caring for my young, another platypus might stay in my nesting burrow. Some people have thought that technically we platypuses should suffocate in our burrows because of insufficient oxygen (we block the door to our nursery burrows to keep out unwanted guests—I think you would do the same). Our babies stay inside the burrow for the first several months, so what about the absence of an oxygen supply? Well, obviously, it isn't a problem or there wouldn't be any platypuses around, would there? Scientists guess that we somehow alter the chemistry of our blood so that we can survive on reduced oxygen. Fantastic? That's what I think. We don't know how! It's better to give the credit to our Designer. It is just another example of His wonderful genius!

Off in the nursery burrow, I lay two soft rubbery shelled eggs that stick together so they don't roll around in the nest. I hold them close to my body for about 8 days until they hatch. Then I suckle my young on milk that lactates from glands in my skin. My little ones lick the milk off some of my fur. Unique again!

One more interesting feature our Designer has built into us is a defense mechanism for our survival. Our young hatch with a sharp spur on one of their hind legs. This makes them less likely to be lunch for some bigger animal. The females lose that spur within a year. The males retain the spur,

which becomes a venom-producing gland that is a defense weapon. The serum can kill a dog, and can cause severe and lingering pain in a human, although you have to seriously provoke one of us to be attacked.

So what do you think? I say we are the unique platypus, far, far from a hoax. Let's give praise to our wonderful Designer, *"the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them"* (Acts 14:15). ♦



Mother platypus holds her two babies. Platypus eggs have a rubbery shell and the usual two eggs are stuck together.



For our information on the duck-billed platypus, we are indebted to the following sources: <http://freespace.virgin.net/g.agnew/details.html> http://www.zoo.org.au/animal_page.cfm?area_id=27&zoo_id=1&animal_id=41 <http://www.science-frontiers.com/sf075/sf075b08.htm> <http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/wildlife/mammals/platypus.html> <http://www.exn.ca/html/templates/printstory.cfm?ID=19990505-53> <http://www.healthsci.utas.edu.au/physiol/mono/Platpage.html> <http://www.healthsci.utas.edu.au/physiol/mono/Taspaper.html> <http://www.csinfo.org/platypus.htm> <http://instruct1.cit.cornell.edu/courses/bionb420.07/anelson/platypus.html> <http://rainforest-australia.com/platypus.htm> <http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/platypus.html> <http://library.thinkquest.org/5053/Australia/duckbillplatypus.html> http://www.blueplanetbiomes.org/duckbill_platypus.htm

WHAT ABOUT THE TRIBULATION PERIOD?

I was wondering where in the Bible does it talk about a seven-year tribulation that is supposed to happen. I can't find it, so will you please send me information on it?

According to some religious groups, Christ will return and take the believers up to heaven in the so-called rapture of the Church. Those who are not raptured will experience the horrors of the tribulation which, they believe, will include the outpouring of God's wrath on all who have rejected the Gospel, and Satan, the anti-Christ and the false prophet will be in control. For Scriptural basis they refer to "*the time of Jacob's trouble*" (Jer. 30:7), and "*a time of trouble*" foretold by Daniel (Dan. 12:1). They base the time period of seven years on Daniel's prophecy of a 70th week (Dan. 9:27) prophetically a week of years or 7 years, at the end of 69 weeks (Dan 9:25–26).

This period of tribulation is understood as a time when God will judge the Gentile nations for their wickedness, and allow a Christ-rejecting world to experience the miseries caused by Satan, the anti-Christ and the false prophet. Through it all, the tribulation will be God's wrath poured out on all who rejected the Gospel.

We as a Church do not believe the Bible teaches any coming tribulation as commonly believed. Jesus' prophecy of tribulation in Matthew 24 applies, by sequence of time, to the period of apostasy that followed the Apostolic Age, when all turned away from the true teachings of Christ to fables (see also 2 Tim. 4:3–4). This time, referred to as the Dark Ages or the Great Apostasy, was forecast by Jesus in these words, where the limits of its duration are also set: "*Then there shall be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved*" (Matt. 24:21–22).

The Apostle Paul foretold the same time in 2 Timothy 4:3–4, a time when "*they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables.*" The same time period was foreshadowed in Joel 1 where, speaking symbolically, the Prophet says, "*The vine has dried up [the vine being the people of God], and the fig tree has withered; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree—all the trees of the field are withered; surely joy has withered away from the sons of men*" (Joel 1:12)—the joy of serving God.

The Apostle Paul makes the prophecy more understandable by setting it in context of time. He is talking to his brethren in the first century, and he says, "*Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come [the day of Christ's second advent] unless the falling away comes first, and*

the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:3–4). Immediately following the time of the early Church, this condition would develop, and Paul himself said that he saw it beginning in his day, as he says further in the letter to the Thessalonians, "*The mystery of lawlessness is already at work*" (2 Thess. 2:7).

What about the time of the rapture, and the period of time that will follow it?

In 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 the Apostle Paul described an event where the resurrected believers along with the living believers will rise to meet the Lord in the air. From that point on they will be with Jesus, but notice that the passage does not say anything about their going to heaven, as is usually assumed. The next we read of Christ's arrival, He stands on Mount Zion, and His saints are with Him (Zech. 14:4–5; Rev. 14:1). But again nothing is said about their having been to heaven or coming back from heaven.

Following the second advent of Christ, He will judge and reward His servants for what they have done, and those who prove faithful will become His co-rulers, who will establish a new government, and proceed to bring all nations into subjection to that government. And, "*When Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness*" (Isa. 26:9)—they will be forced to learn rapidly, to give up their evil practices, their immorality, their lustful living and all the abominations that have flourished for centuries.

(For a more detailed discussion of this topic, see the *Megiddo Message*, volume 90, numbers 1 through 4, the series of articles, "*The Heavenly Kingdom on Earth.*")

We do not believe the Bible teaches a coming tribulation period. Following the arrival of Christ, He will marshal His armies to conquer the evil element and bring in a rule of righteousness and peace which in a short period of time will fill the earth with the glory of the Lord. Far from being a time when the devil, Satan and the anti-Christ will be unrestrained, it will be a time when "*The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places*" (Isa. 32:17–18); when "*they shall not hurt nor destroy in all [God's] holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea*" (Isa. 11:9).

The passages of Scripture often applied to the tribulation, when fitted into the plan of God, describe either the apostasy, which occurred between the time of the Apostles and our day, or they are descriptive of Armageddon, the short period of time when Christ will be conquering the forces of evil and bringing in His righteous rule. ♦

Ann's Scarecrow Daddy

On Tuesday, Ann was the first to reach home after school. She dashed into the kitchen where Mom was taking a chocolate cake from the oven, and she cried, "Oh, Mom, do you know what? Lucia says Dad looks like a regular ol' scarecrow because he's so long and skinny! She says her father is a handsome man, and that our Daddy isn't at all good-looking!"

"Well," said Mom, slowly, "Mr. Hackley is a handsome man. But as far as I am concerned, our Daddy is the nicest man in the whole wide world!"

Ann was disappointed. Wasn't even her mother going to stick up for Dad? "Why, Mom," she asked, "don't you think Dad is good-looking, either?"

"No," replied her mother with a warm smile, "I guess our Daddy just is not what most people would consider good-looking. But he surely looks good to me!"

Truly, Mr. Peter Johnson was not a handsome man. He was the skinniest man in the Pleasant Valley neighborhood. He had a long, thin nose that humped out front like an eagle's beak. His ears were extra large, and his Adam's apple was like a great big lump in his scrawny neck. Only a few black hairs straggled over the top of his head; but Dad always said he didn't mind losing most of his hair because the less there was of it, the easier it was to wash and comb it.

Even when Dad dressed in his best clothes—and he dressed very neatly—he still wasn't handsome, Ann had to admit. And it hurt her to have her schoolmates poke fun at her father's appearance.

Mom understood how she felt. "You love Dad, though—even if he isn't a handsome man?"

"Oh, yes! I don't care if Lucia does think he looks like a scarecrow. I don't care if his ears are too big! He's my Daddy, and I wouldn't trade him for any other Daddy in the world!"

Mom's eyes glowed. "Even when your father was courting me, there were some girls who teased me about how skinny he was, and how he wasn't much for looks, and all that. But I didn't care so much about what he looked like to others because I loved him. I loved him for the kind man he was—in his heart. You know, when we first see a person, we naturally judge that person by his looks. But when we really get to know a person, we don't pay so much attention to the color of his hair or what kind of clothes he wears—we know him for what he really is.

"That's the way with the Lord. He knows us for what we really are. He knows our hearts [Luke 16:15]. Remember the story in the Old Testament about the prophet Samuel going out to anoint one of the sons of Jesse to be king over Israel? The first son that Samuel saw was Eliab. Eliab was so good-looking that Samuel was sure that this must be the one that would be king. But the Lord told Samuel he shouldn't just look at Eliab's handsome appearance, for the Lord didn't choose a man the way another man might. The Lord looked at what a man was like inside. He looked at a man's heart.

MEMORY VERSE

The Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. —1 Sam. 16:7

And the Lord looked at Eliab's heart, and knew that though Eliab was good-looking outside, his heart was not good, and so the Lord did not choose him to be king over Israel" (1 Sam. 16:7).

Ann was thoughtful for a moment. Then she said, "It doesn't hurt anymore—what Lucia said about Dad."

"No," answered Mom, tenderly, "When the Lord looks into Dad's heart, he finds a heart that is good—a heart that is good because Dad loves the Lord." ♦

FOR DISCUSSION:

If a family comes to our house or to our church, poorly dressed and driving an old car, do we pay as much respect to them as we do to a family that comes well-dressed and driving an expensive car? How are we judging people—Lucia's way or God's way? Read James 2:1–5.

The Lord does not want us to be careless or slovenly about our appearance. But when we become vain and spend too much thought and time on what we wear—in order to outshine others—we do wrong. Read 1 Timothy 2:9–10. Instead of primping and fussing over ourselves to make ourselves look better than others, what should we do if we are Christians?

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

MIRACLES OF PAUL AND PETER

1. Who was restored to life by Paul after falling out of a window?
2. By what action did Peter and John impart the Holy Spirit power to the believers at Samaria?
3. Where did Paul heal a slave girl, and make her owners furious?
4. What woman did Peter raise from the dead?
5. Where did Paul heal a crippled man?
6. What two disciples healed a crippled man at the Beautiful Gate?
7. Whom did Paul make blind for a time?
8. On what island did Paul heal the governor's father and many other people?
9. What miraculous occurrence delivered Paul and Silas from prison in Philippi?
10. Whom did Peter heal of long-term palsy?
11. What husband and wife fell dead after lying to Peter?
12. What happened when Paul placed his hands on the believers at Ephesus?
13. What poisonous creature did not affect Paul when it bit him?
14. How many times do we know of Peter being delivered from prison by an angel?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MIRACLES OF PAUL AND PETER

1. Eutychus (Acts 20:5-10)
2. They laid their hands on them. (Acts 8:14-17)
3. Philippi (Acts 16:16-19)
4. Tabitha, also called Dorcas (Acts 9:36-41)
5. Lystra (Acts 14:8-10)
6. Peter and John (Acts 3:1-7)
7. Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:8-11)
8. Malta (Acts 28:1, 7-9)
9. An earthquake (Acts 16:25-30)
10. Aeneas (Acts 9:32-34)
11. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:4-10)
12. The Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. (Acts 19:1-7)
13. Viper (snake) (Acts 28:3-5)
14. Two times (Acts 5:17-29; 12:1-11)

THE PROPHETS

1. Elisha (2 Kings 2:9-14)
2. Nathan (2 Sam. 12:1-9)
3. Balaam (Num. 22:21-31)
4. Abraham (Gen. 20:1-7)
5. King Saul (1 Sam. 10:1-13)
6. Elijah (1 Kings 18:18-40)
7. Moses (Deut. 1:1; 18:15)
8. Gad (2 Sam. 24:10-14)
9. Ahijah (1 Kings 11:29-31)
10. Agabus (Acts 11:27-28)
11. Miriam (Ex. 15:20; Num. 12:10)
12. Huldah (2 Kings 22:1-14)
13. Philip (Acts 21:8-9)
14. Anna (Luke 2:36-38)
15. Deborah (Judges 4:4-5)

THE PROPHETS

1. This prophet performed many miracles and was successor to another great prophet.
2. This prophet confronted King David with his adultery.
3. This prophet of Moab had a confrontation with his talking donkey.
4. This Old Testament patriarch was revealed as a prophet to King Abimelech.
5. This king of Israel was, early in his career, associated with a group of prophets.
6. This wilderness man confronted the prophets of Baal in a famous contest.
7. This Egyptian-born Hebrew leader predicted the coming of a prophet like himself.
8. This prophet took David to task for numbering the people of Israel.
9. This prophet predicted that Jeroboam would be king over ten tribes of Israel.
10. This New Testament man prophesied a famine that came to pass in his own time.
11. This sister of a Hebrew leader was herself a prophetess. For a time she was afflicted with leprosy.
12. This woman was sent for when the long-neglected book of the law was found during Josiah's reign.
13. Four young women, daughters of a Christian evangelist, were considered prophetesses. Who was their father?
14. This elderly prophetess recognized the infant Jesus as being the Messiah.
15. The only female judge of Israel, this woman was considered a prophetess.





The following text was part of a pamphlet published by our founder about 1902. Its warm, earnest appeal still touches our hearts today.

You are warmly invited to come and hear
L.T. Nichols expound on the Bible



A PERSONAL APPEAL

A PERSONAL APPEAL

Over forty years ago, when only a boy of fourteen, I started out to proclaim what I honestly believed to be the truth of God. From that day to the present I have never received one dollar's salary; and I never shall.

Blessed with a strong

Blessed with a strong constitution, for years I labored hard by day, and by night studied this blessed Bible, in Hebrew, Greek, and English, that I might attain to a knowledge of its pages. Truth was the gem for which I searched, and my soul's longing cry was, "O tell me, where it can be found!" After years of careful, earnest study, I rejoice that I have found the gem for which I sought, and hold in my hands the blessed Bible, knowing that it contains no impossibilities, contradictions, or absurdities.

I started out with the determination that no matter what the opposition, I would fearlessly teach whatever I believed to be the true teachings of the Bible. Following Paul's example, I have not at any time shunned to declare the whole counsel of God.

God has not spoken to us or to any man or woman since He spoke to John on Patmos. No angelic being has come to us with a new revelation. Nevertheless, we do not come to you in our own name. We come to you speaking the words of Jesus, the apostles and prophets. In obedience to the command found in Jer. 9:23-24, we do not come to you glorying in our own wisdom, our own strength, our own riches; but we come glorying that we know and understand the Mighty and Eternal One as revealed in His Word.

A Wholly Inspired Bible

We stand ready to defend a wholly inspired Bible. Its words are unlike all other words ever written. They have meaning, yes, worlds of meaning.

They have a message of truth that is not dependent on any single time or circumstance. This message has an authority that survives the passing of earthly powers. No man could have written its words from his own experience or intelligence. We rest sure that it is indeed the Word of God that abides forever. Come and investigate with us, and you can have the same assurance.

People have been educated to believe that there is a conflict between science and religion. We invite you to come and hear us on this point. We look at nature, with its countless wonders of land and sea. We raise our eyes to the measureless immensity of the universe, and know that an All-glorious Being has created and sustains it. The God of nature is the God of the Bible; thus its true teachings are bound to be in harmony with both nature and science.

Knowing that our life is as a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes, should we not seek that knowledge that can gain for us pleasures and joys that will continue to increase through an endless eternity?

You may say that you have no time to search for such knowledge, but Death will rap at your door one of these days, and he will not ask you if you have time for him.

What would you think of a man in the cabin of a sinking ship who would say that affairs in the cabin left him no time to get into the lifeboat? Are we not just as foolish if we allow the cares of this life to consume our time to the exclusion of the knowledge of God?

Our Master, over eighteen hundred years ago, said that only those who do His commandments will be given a right to eat of the tree of life and enter the beautiful city of God (Rev. 22:14).

Having studied the Scriptures for over forty years, we are fully convinced that life eternal will be given only to those who reverence God and keep His commandments, serving Him with all their mind, might and strength. Science may make the world wonder and applaud, but science with all its power cannot raise one man from death's slumber. Science with all its power can give no hope beyond the tomb. None but the mighty hand of God can perpetuate our existence beyond the grave.

Yet we see the world rapidly drifting into infidelity, with less and less earnest religious zeal, less searching after light, less reading of the Scriptures.

In love of humanity, we have felt constrained to start out upon this our mission work. Doubt and skepticism have played sad havoc with the religion of the day. Over one thousand faiths, all teaching differently and all claiming to speak the words of an infallible God—no wonder the earnest seeker is perplexed! No wonder he begins to doubt the infallibility of the Book on which our life depends.

In obedience to this command we have started out on our mission to prepare the minds of people, that they may believe and be ready to accept the Lord at His coming. We do not claim to know the day or hour of His coming; but we do know the times and seasons, and can know that we are living in the era of our Lord's appearing to destroy all human authority and bring this world into subjection to divine law. Enlightened by the prophetic statement, we see ourselves on the verge of the great change. "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man" (Luke 17:26).

At the dawn of the new age, a mighty tempest will roar with unabating fury until the whole world bows in submission to the King of kings and the Lord's prayer is fulfilled: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," and "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," will be reality. Then "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).

In conclusion, we would again invite you to come and hear the Word of God. Compare carefully what we say with the Divine Record. Lay aside all prejudice, all theories, all sayings of men, and deeply realize the sentiment expressed in these verses:

*Truth is the gem for which we seek;
Oh, tell us, where can it be found?
For this we search and pray and weep,
That truth may in our hearts abound.*

*We want the truth on every point;
We want it, too, to practice by.
Divine in nature, 'tis the best;
For truth will ever stand the test.*

*Seize, friends, the truth, where'er 'tis found—
On heathen or on Christian ground.
Among your friends, among your foes,
The Plant's divine, where'er it grows.*



Hold high the torch! You did not light its glow—
'Twas given you by other hands, you know.
'Tis yours to keep it burning ever bright,
'Tis yours to walk within its glowing light,
'Tis yours to hold, a beacon in the night:
For there are other feet that you must guide,
And others who go marching by your side.

If easier paths should beckon you to choose,
Would that small gain compare with all you'd lose?
If you should win the world for one brief day—
And stumble in the dark and lose your way?

Hold high the torch! the torch of hope Divine!
Hold high the torch of faith and let it shine!
Hold high the torch! You did not light its glow—
'Twas given you by other hands, you know.

—Selected

God can only stand with us as we stand firm.

It is better to have little ability and to use that little well than to have much ability and make poor use of it.

Giving your best today is the best recipe for a better tomorrow.

*Lord of the days that are left to me,
I give them to Your hand:
Take me and break me and mold me
To the pattern You have planned.*

The secret of happiness is to count your blessings while others are adding up their troubles.

Have you noticed that all the roads to success and achievement are uphill!

It isn't what happens but how you take it that brings out your true character.

No one can expect to live in idleness and expect to live long and be happy. The ship anchored in the harbor rots faster than the ship crossing the ocean. A still pond stagnates more rapidly than a running stream. Our unused minds and muscles will atrophy much more rapidly than those in use.

To stay young, stay active.

The strongest principle of growth lies in human choice.

Defending your faults and errors only proves that you have no intention of quitting them.

If folks didn't carry gossip, it wouldn't go so far.

A habit is often not noticed until it's too strong to break.



A man's conscience, like the warning sign on the highway, tells him what he shouldn't do—but it does not keep him from doing it.

THINK ABOUT IT

What is the difference between a moment of gratification and pleasures for evermore? (Ps. 16:11)

What is the difference between a few years of fame and honor in this world and the honor of Jesus and a host of heavenly angels? (Rev. 19:7-8)

What is the difference between having all the things money can buy now and sharing the eternal riches of Christ when the whole earth is His? (Zech. 14:9)

It is the difference between choosing our way and God's. There is a whole wide world of difference.

Knowing without doing is like plowing without planting.

A RECIPE FOR FRIENDSHIP

- 1 cup of **good feelings**
- 2 cups of **kind deeds**
- 1 heaping cup of **consideration for others**
- 1 lb. of **sincere worship**
- 3 cups of **forgiveness**

This recipe also works very well for families. Just add 2 lbs. of **together**—some of both **work** and **play**. And for preservative be sure to add **glory to God**.



Holiness

Be holy, for I am holy

– 1 Peter 1:16 NKJV

- ☐ Not the inability to sin, but the ability to learn how to keep from sinning;
- ☐ Not freedom from temptation but power to overcome a temptation;
- ☐ Not infallible judgment, but earnest and honest endeavor to follow the higher wisdom;
- ☐ Not deliverance from infirmities of the flesh, but triumph over bodily afflictions;
- ☐ Not exemption from conflict, but victory through conflict;
- ☐ Not freedom from liability of falling, but the ability to prevent falling;
- ☐ Not the end of progress, but deliverance from the mad rush going no where.

What sincere Christian would not desire the peace and reward of such a holy life?

Definition:

Holy (Gr. **hagios**) = *sacred*, (physical *pure*, moral *blameless* or *religious*, ceremony *consecrated*). In the New Testament **hagios** is translated *holy* 161 times in the Common Version. —*Strong's Concordance*