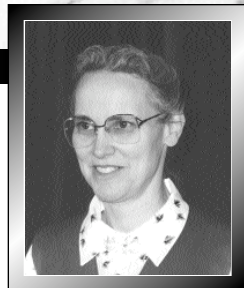


Megiddo Message

Vol. 88, No. 6
July, 2001



**CONFIRM THY SOUL
IN SELF-CONTROL,
THY LIBERTY IN LAW.**



Blessed Heartburn

You and I are probably not on the same wavelength, but soon we will be. Do you remember reading of two men who were enjoying a long, thoughtful walk one day, when an anonymous stranger joined them?

The two were walking to Emmaus, a small town not far from Jerusalem. And they were talking—about things that had been happening recently, the trial and crucifixion of a totally just and innocent man, Jesus Christ. Now the story was circulating that some women had gone to the burial site and discovered the stone rolled away, the tomb empty, the occupant ALIVE.

Altogether, it was too much for a reasonable man to believe.

As they walked, a stranger joined them. *"What are you talking about?"* He asked. *"Why are you sad?"* After they explained, the stranger reproved them: *"How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"* And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Who was it? The two men didn't know, but they felt comfortable inviting him to their home. Surprisingly, he accepted. Then, as they sat down to eat, the stranger took bread; and as he blessed it and broke it, the men's eyes were opened and they realized the stranger had been Jesus. Jesus Christ Himself!

And He was gone.

"They asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?'" (Luke 24:32).

We should have known who He was, they said to themselves, because *"Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road?"* Didn't we feel impressed and invigorated and renewed in mind and spirit?

The story of the walk to Emmaus is a familiar one. But there is another lesson in the men's words to one another: *"Were not our hearts burning within us?"*

You and I can identify with that feeling. But how do we keep the fire burning? When we turn to the ordinary tasks of home or shop or job, is the fire still hot in our hearts?

To keep our hearts burning during the common, often stress-filled hours of each day is the real test of our character. Can we do it? Can we keep that warm fire of enthusiasm glowing through every weekday valley?

It is up to you, it is up to me. My heart can burn if I take the time to stoke the fire of my zeal.

What makes the heart burn?

It is I who must pray, and pray without ceasing.

It is I who must build up my faith by pondering the solid foundations of evidence upon which it stands.

It is I who must ponder the deep insights I find in the Word of God, I who must commit it to memory, I who must meditate upon its message, I who must apply it to myself.

It is I who must take the opportunity to fellowship with Christian friends.

It is I who must take or make opportunities to worship and sing to God's glory.

It is I who must make the effort every day to think right, feel right, be right. If I keep my mind channeled in the right direction, my heart will burn.

If our hearts are consumed with this blessed heartburn, with this all-pervading desire to be right, we will be patient when our toddler spills his milk for the fourth time. We will be kind to one who has said something unkind about us. We will be forgiving when our neighbor apologizes for an embarrassment caused us the day before. If our hearts are burning within us, we will be understanding and helpful to the brother or sister struggling with a problem. And when things go wrong, we will look first to ourselves and never, for any reason, return evil for evil.

Our hearts will burn within us all the time and we will keep a sharp vision of future glory. The more real the future to us, the more anxious we will be to be a part of it. ♦



We're In This Together

by RUTH E. SISSON

Christian love and fellowship are among heaven's most precious gifts. But along with them comes responsibility. After Cain killed Abel, he asked that timeless question: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The answer is: Yes, you are.

God has given each of us responsibility for others. We are not alone. We are in this together.

As you read the Bible, particularly the New Testament, watch for the "one another" words: "Teach one another," "Instruct one another," "Help one another," "Love one another," "Admonish one another," "Stir up one another," "Stimulate one another," "Encourage one another." And remember, "one another" means you to me, I to you; it is a two-way street, give and take. I must be willing to help you, and you must be ready to help me.

Ecologists, and environmentalists, scientists, and many other concerned individuals are talking about the disgraceful abuse that has been inflicted on our planet's resources by human hands. If this were to go on generation after generation,

the race would face dilemmas probably beyond its power to solve. The phrase is often heard: "We're in this together," with the inference that we should be interested in one another. Being human, we have all the same human needs, and when we hurt our environment, we are in reality hurting ourselves and our posterity.

"We're in this together" is also true in the realm of the spirit. Those who have committed their lives to serving Christ, who are seeking eternal benefits from the hand of their Creator, say this phrase with another meaning, a meaning which draws together all the members of the body of Christ in all ages. We are in this together—"this" being the fight, the struggle, the race for eternal life; and when the time rolls around, in the "dispensation of the fulness of time," God will gather together all His own. Who are the "we" who will be gathered in? It is a large group, including all believers from all ages.

Have you ever noticed that the "together" idea flows through the whole New Testament, particularly the letters written to various churches of the first-century world? Most often it is expressed by two precious

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

FRONT COVER: Hector Falls, N.Y. Photo by Mr. and Mrs. David Sutton.

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.

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little words: “one another.” These two words occur in our English translations approximately sixty times. The apostle Paul heads the list, penning the concept nearly forty times. Most of his statements about “one another” have very practical, focused meaning for us as individuals. They tell us that we do not struggle alone, that we are not forgotten, that we belong to a larger family in which there is unity, support, and the closest of kinship. At the same time, they speak to us of our duty as part of this corporate whole.

In a very practical section of his Epistle to the Romans (chapters 12 to 16), the Apostle uses this phrase in six key “one another” statements. Let’s look at each of them to see what he might be saying to us.

BELONG TO ONE ANOTHER:

***We are “members one of another”
(Rom. 12:5).***

In Romans 12:4, Paul is explaining the need of a feeling of “each for all and all for each.” To illustrate the nature of the Church and how it should function, he makes an analogy of the human body. “*For just as we have many members in one body,*” he writes, “*and all members do not have the same function, so we who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another*” (Rom. 12:4–5 NASB).

This is the most basic *one another* concept in the New Testament. All others build on this fact: that we belong to each other, and are as interconnected as the parts of the physical body.

This means that we cannot grow without belonging to this body of believers. We must be connected to be nourished. If we break this connection, we will not be nourished and will die, just as a hand or limb severed from the body dies. The analogy may seem drastic, but Paul is saying that we have to stay connected to stay alive. We cannot live (spiritually) on our own resources. This does not mean that we must live “next door” to believers, but we must be joined in heart and soul and interest, the mind of Christ dictating our conduct and the will of the body of Christ being our will.

Underlying this illustration are some very important rules for life.

First of all, it tells us that we must be honest with ourselves. We cannot be living on an inflated view of ourselves or feel superior

to others and function as part of the body. One of the first basic commands of the Greek world was “know thyself.” An honest assessment of ourselves is the first step to usefulness.

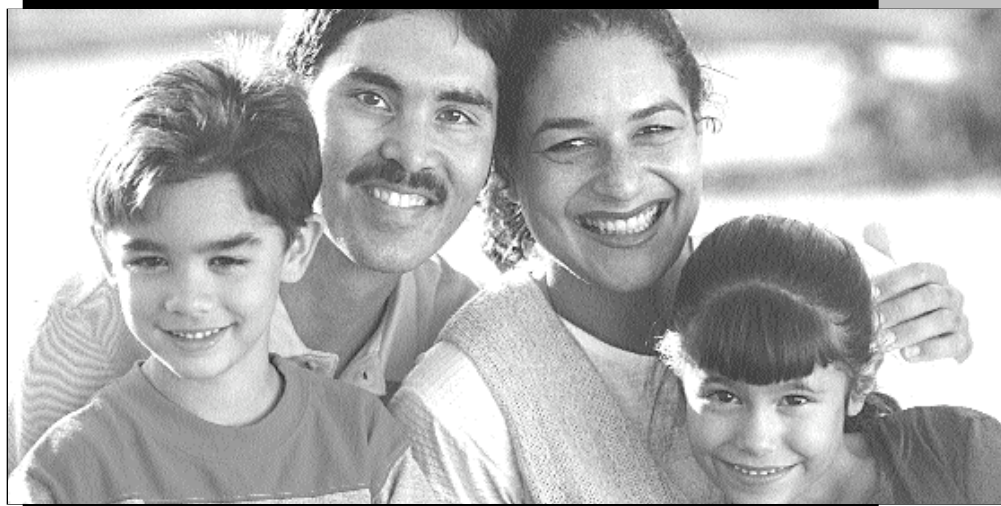
Then, too, Paul is saying that each of us has a gift from God. It may be a gift for writing letters, or sowing seeds, or fashioning wood, or teaching children, or singing songs, or lifting loads, or any of the thousand common tasks of every day—whatever it be, it is a “something plus” given us by God, and we owe it back to Him to use in His service and for His glory.

If we are part of the body of Christ, we cannot go our own way, no more than one foot can go in one direction and the other foot can go opposite. We will have one objective: to be faithful to Christ our head. In everything we do, we will try to be His personal, living representatives.

Paul called it being “*of one mind*” (1 Cor. 1:10), meaning that members of the body think alike. Not that we will all agree on the kind of car to drive or the color of the clothes we prefer, but we will agree on all matters of spiritual import. The same beliefs will undergird our faith and the same principles motivate and direct our conduct.

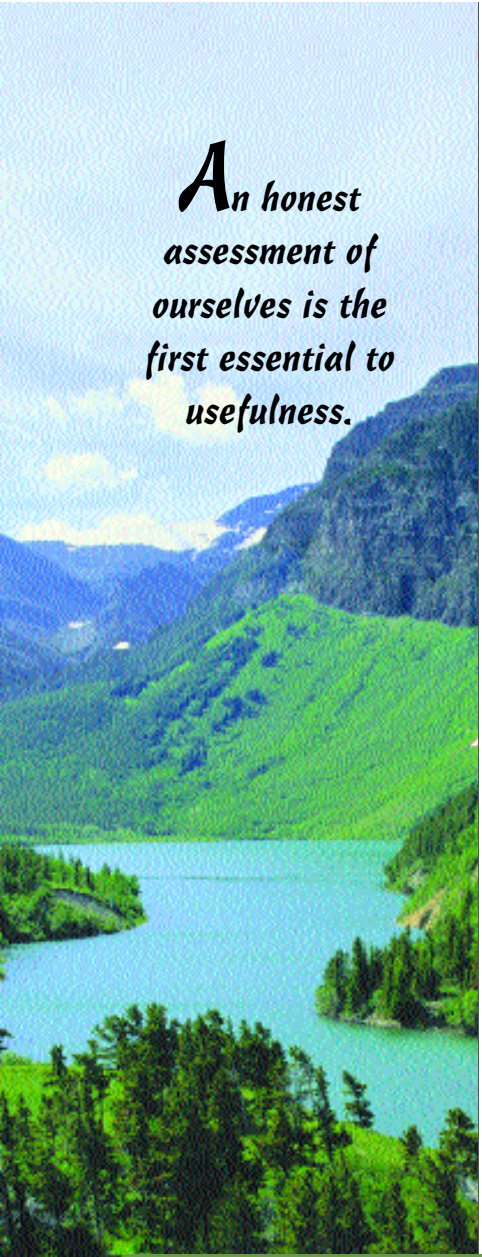
If we are part of the body of Christ, we will do our part to contribute to its well-

***We cannot live
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dictating.***



being. We cannot be isolated and aloof, independent and self-willed, and really “belong.”

If we are part of the body of Christ, we will want to do our part to keep the body functioning smoothly, coherently, effectively. Paul said this in his letter to the church at Ephesus: “*In this body of believers every joint supplies its own distinct function, according to the proper working of each individual part*”



**An honest
assessment of
ourselves is the
first essential to
usefulness.**

*Climbing the mountains, crossing the plains,
Fording the rivers, sharing the pains;
Sometimes the losses and sometimes the gains,
Getting used to the family of God.*

*Reaching our hand to a brother in need,
Speaking of trust and of true courage too;
Learning to walk as the Master would do,
Getting used to the family of God.*

*Laboring together, enjoying each task,
Getting used to the family I'll spend eternity with;
Learning to follow where ever He asks,
Getting used to the family of God.*

—William J. Gaither

(Eph. 4:16). We all know the problems that result when a knee, a foot, or any other one part of our physical body refuses to function properly. Just so in the spiritual body of Christ, each part must do its assigned task if the body is to grow and build itself up in love.

And just as the different parts of the body feel for one another, so Christian believers should be *"members one of another,"* each responding to the needs of the other. When one member suffers, all suffer; when one member rejoices, all rejoice. As *"members one of another,"* we share the joy, we share the sorrow, always looking for ways to build each other up in our most holy faith (Jude 20).

BROTHERLY DEVOTION:

***We are to be "devoted to one another"*
(Rom. 12:10).**

Devotion is a close, warm, and stirring word. Devotion draws heart to heart because each has something to share with the other.

Paul was practical. And he demonstrated this fact in his instructions to these young Christians at Rome, as to how they should become functioning members *"one of another."* It was not to be a cold and independent relationship. They were to be *"devoted to one another in brotherly love"* (NASB).

Actually, in these words Paul introduces a second analogy. Just as he used the human body to illustrate how members should function together, now he thinks of *"one another"* as units in a family. In essence he is saying that just as the family is made up of brothers and sisters, so we are members of God's family, brothers and sisters in Christ. This is the basic meaning of *"brotherly love."*

This means we must care about one another and put one another's interests ahead of our own—this is not a natural thing to do. Instinctively we are selfish.

Our first thought is always, *"How will this affect me?"* But we cannot belong to this very special family of believers and remain as we are. We must change. God does not

want those who look merely on their own things and neglect the things of others. Our *"belonging"* means that we must take an interest in the individual members of the body, have a concern for their spiritual (and physical) well-being.

But in developing concern for others we are really strengthening our own spiritual muscles. We are just that much stronger for the giving up.

This concept of *"family"* suggests growing dimensions of warmth, emotion and reality. It implies common interests, common background, and common concern among the individual members. These are the bonds that make them *"family."*

What draws them together? It is their common dissatisfaction with the interests and goals of this world, and their common love for things heavenly. They are not satisfied to live a few years, even in the most ideal situation, and then die. They want more, much more. They have heard that God is offering LIFE and they can't forget about it, even for a moment. They want that life! and they are willing to serve and sacrifice anything and everything to obtain it.

This common interest draws them together as devoted brothers and sisters in Christ.

If we are part of His family, we will be like Him in character, in behavior, in commitment. Others observing us must see that we are different, that we belong to a higher purpose. When they see us, they will look for our likeness to the higher family, and it is our responsibility to show it. Otherwise we tell them that we do not really belong.

Another part of belonging to the family of Christ is that of bearing the family likeness. Members of a family have something in common—goals, pleasures, ambitions, interests. If we belong to Christ's family, we will be eager to share the sorrows and joys, the pains and pleasures of our family.

SELFLESS SERVICE:

***"Give preference to one another in
honor"* (Rom. 12:10).**

As the accompanist supports but never competes with the soloist, so the Christian specializes in helping. If the role is secondary, so be it—his one purpose is to exalt Christ. This is what Paul meant when he said, *"honor one another above yourselves"* (NIV).

Watch the people of this world and see

who does it: just about no one. Each is out for himself and his own advantage. Aspiring Christians are no different. The laws of self-preservation are strong in all of us, in fact there is no stronger impulse within us. Nothing less than the law of Christ can change this instinct so that we truly "honor one another above ourselves."

This total about-face change of nature is one of the identifying qualities of each member of Christ's body.

But there is a paradox here: by giving of himself to others, by thinking of others before oneself, he is in reality seeking his own best interest, because Christ will recognize and reward this type of service as if it had been done personally for Him. In the words of His parable, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in" (Matt. 25:35 NIV).

The selfless believer will in the end receive far more than he could have ever had by the most aggressive self-seeking. In fact, there is no comparison. For "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

This world has no prospects that can faintly compare with the rewards that will redound upon each unselfish member of the body of Christ.

ONE MINDEDNESS:

"Be of the same mind with one another" (Rom. 15:5 NASB).

All that Paul has written up to this point reinforces the need for oneness. Unity is the binding power of believers who are "members one of another," when they truly "honor one another," and when the "other" they honor is Christ. This was Paul's admonition to the Philippians: "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5 NIV).

Being of one mind with Christ means giving up our own ideas of what is most important in life, of what we are seeking, our short-term goals, and long-term ambitions. All take on new meaning when we accept Christ's mind for our own. One question becomes our constant guideline: "What would Jesus do?" rather than making our own judgment based on our own self-set goals.

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Touching Shoulders

There's a comforting thought when I'm weary and tired,
When I rest at the close of the day;
This thought, it grips hold of my faltering frame
And gladdens my heart for the way;
It lightens my soul and it scatters the blue
And it thrills me with joy through and through
As I think of the spiritual strength that I gain
Walking shoulder to shoulder with you.

Did you know that you gave me new courage today?
Did you know I was laboring hard?
Did you know that I struggled and waited and prayed
And was cheered by your kind, friendly word?
Did you know I thanked God for the smile that you gave,
For the sound of your voice ringing true?
Did you know I grew stronger and better because
I had merely touched shoulders with you?

I thank God each day I can battle and strive
A place in His kingdom to fill;
And I thank Him for trials—I'll accept with a smile
Whatever life brings, good or ill;
I may not be great in the ranks of this world,
But to God I resolve to be true.
And I still feel the courage that you give to me
Ev'ry time I touch shoulders with you.

I long to be there when the ages roll on,
I'm determined to work with a will.
There's no satisfaction like moving ahead,
There is nothing to equal the thrill.
I see you hurry on, over pitfalls and snares,
You are pressing your way straitly through.
And oh! the new courage and hope that I feel
Ev'ry time I touch shoulders with you.

Lord, make me a blessing to others, I pray,
May my life know the glow of Your fire;
I seek heaven's blessing and joy unsurpassed;
To the great crown of life I aspire!
And oh, if I reach it, what glory supreme
To hear these sweet tones ringing true:
"You can't know the strength you imparted to me
Ev'ry time I touched shoulders with you."

—Contributed



Loneliness is near the top of the list when it comes to mankind's worst enemies. It can affect one's spirituality. It can lead to health problems. It has even driven some to commit suicide.

Loneliness is a recurrent theme throughout the world today. Loneliness because of a language problem, loneliness because of old age or the death of a partner, loneliness because of family problems, loneliness because of economic reasons—the list seems endless. It is a reminder that loneliness is one of the basic human problems wherever one lives, and the problem is intensified when one lives in a vast metropolis where there are many other problems as well.

A person can feel lonely even with people around; or when they are busy doing some task. It's our worst enemy because it is not part of our material existence. We cannot see it, touch it, or simply tell it to go away. But rather it locks up inside us and gnaws at our very being, even our character.

The Bible contains stories of persons of God who were lonely at times, and as we study their trials, we see how they dealt with the problem.

First Kings 19:1–18 presents a good example of such a predicament, of one

who felt that he was all alone in the world. But praise God, the message of this text is one of victory! Let us study this great message.

This man was feeling lonely. In fact, he thought he was the loneliest man in the world, and that he didn't have a friend or even a supporter.

The man's name was Elijah, a Hebrew compound meaning "the Lord is my God."

At this particular time in history, the King of Israel was a man named Ahab, who had a consort named Jezebel. Most of the people in Israel were worshippers of Baal, believed to be a powerful agricultural deity. Shortly before this, Elijah had challenged the prophets of Baal to a showdown on Mount Carmel and he had badly defeated them.

Then, either Elijah or the people who had observed the contest slew the prophets of Baal, vastly changing the religious makeup of Israel in a matter of hours. God, not Baal, was supreme in the land.

So great a success might normally have led to an easy life for the victor, but not for a prophet of God. God's prophets were never popular, and Elijah's victory

*"It is time to stop hiding
and go back to work."*

only angered Ahab and Jezebel. Like bees swarming out of a disturbed hive, their cutthroats spread out from the palace looking for this upstart prophet who had ridiculed their religion, vowing that they would kill him when they found him.

Scrambling his way through the rocks, Elijah felt that something was askew. He had been faithful. He had stood up for God. He had won the contest. Now he was being hunted down like a mad dog, to be run through by a spear or thrown over a cliff, with nobody on his side. He felt alone, with no one to care whether he lived or died.

Have you ever felt like you were in such a position? Have you ever felt

deserted, betrayed, left alone to just hang in the wind? Have you ever wondered where your friends were? Or God? If you have, then maybe Elijah's story can help you, for this is where our text (1 Kings 19) picks up.

Elijah fled to the wilderness and found a cave. While he was in the cave, God gave him a miraculous experience. He experienced a great wind, then an earthquake, then a storm. Finally, when the rumble of the earthquake and the thunder of the storm had passed, he heard the still, small voice of God. The voice said that Elijah was not alone, that there were seven thousand others in the land who had not bowed their knees to Baal—a number symbolic of fullness and strength. It was God's way of saying, "It is time to stop hiding and go back to work."

One of the first things this message tells us to do in overcoming loneliness is to get away from our usual setting. What a very necessary thing that is at times. There is something about where we usually live and work that dulls our senses, so much so that it becomes just routine and we cease seeing things in their true perspective. Getting away helps us see clearly again.

The second thing we need to do is spend time with God, observing His creation, pondering His works. This is always a healthy thing to do. Just as the wind and earthquake and storm helped to restore Elijah's perspective, observing God's work can help to restore ours.

Finally, we need to hear God's voice. We today cannot hear it audibly. Even in Elijah's day, God was not in the wind or the earthquake or the fire, say the Scriptures. But when God had caught Elijah's attention, Elijah heard a voice—a voice that was almost no voice—speaking to him. It said what he was to do, and then it told him there were seven thousand like him in Israel, that he wasn't alone as he had thought.

What is it all about? There is a "communion of the saints," a kind of spiritual unity among all God's people, both living and dead. Every "saint," every believer, is part of it. Of course there are times when we feel alone. But when we link ourselves to God, we become part of a great whole, a great movement, an extended, victorious kingdom that will one day rule the earth!

None of God's people are alone. Not now! Not ever! ♦

RIGHT SPIRIT:

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"Accept one another, just as Christ accepted you" (Rom. 15:7 NIV).

Think about that word: "accept," sometimes translated "receive." Not backbite, not find fault, not criticize, not rub or suspicion, not outthink or outsmart or any other "out" term, but bear with one another, forgive another "if any have a quarrel against any," accept another in loving fellowship.

The word suggests open receiving or admitting to one's family—the way Paul told Philemon to take in Onesimus.

It is instinctive to defend ourselves and reject those who disagree with us. But Paul's advice is different: "accept one another." In other words, receive, take, admit; not bite, suspect, pick, and taunt. This does not mean justifying a wrong, but it definitely removes any ground for needless criticism and fault-finding. Finding fault does not correct a wrong, it only makes another. A sincere interest in a fellow believer will not be expressed by henpecking or harshness. If we show love and consideration to our brother or sister in Christ, we will speak to him or her of a wrong in a spirit of genuine concern, a "spirit of meekness," a Christ-like spirit, lest we condemn ourselves.

And then, when the wrong is corrected, we will forgive and go forward with a fresh faith in our brother or sister, and an eagerness to see them grow as we ourselves want to grow.

Another part of "accepting one another" is distinguishing between principle and preference or custom. We may not like another's way of doing something, but that does not always mean that person is wrong. We may strongly prefer a different approach, process, or method, but we must realize that our preference is not the only issue, that another must have an opportunity to make a choice, and it is good exercise for us to give up our opinion. All of this is part of "accepting one another."

TRUE HELPFULNESS:

"Admonish [instruct, teach] one another" (Rom. 15:14).

To admonish means to stimulate and encourage with words of faith and hope. Our living faith must be stirred. How can this be done, except as we give it voice?

Why are we told to "meditate upon these things"? Why are we to "think on these things" (Phil. 4:8)? Why are we to have the law of God in our minds, that it may be with us when we lie down, when we rise up, and when we walk by the way? It is so give voice to our faith, so that we may share it, so that it becomes a living and working part of us. If we are admonishing one another, the Word of God will be in our minds and will be the controlling influence in our lives. And then, whatever we encounter, the law of God will be there to influence our decisions, to control, and bless.

Paul had even more "one another" admonitions in his letters. To the Galatians he wrote
continued on page 10

**We cannot be
isolated and
aloof, and really
"belong."**

"Don't Step There!"

by BARBARA CRUM

One cold morning last winter, the streets were slippery with a thin coat of ice, partially covered with snow, and the people were obliged to walk very carefully for fear of falling.

As I was passing along with the rest, I noticed a bright-looking lad standing on the pavement near a corner, his eyes focused on one spot on the sidewalk.

As I approached him, he looked up at me and, pointing to the place said, "Please don't step there, sir. I slipped there, and fell."

I thanked the kind and thoughtful little fellow and passed safely by the dangerous place; but his words, "Don't step there!" rang in my ears all day.

A thousand times since I have seemed to hear the clear voice of that kind-hearted boy, reminding me of my duty to those around me and urging me to repeat it wherever it promised to be useful: "Please, sir, don't step there!"

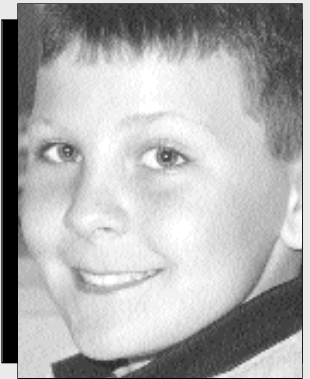
We who travel along the narrow road to the Promised Land have every occasion to heed the warning in the little narrative.

Away back in the Prophet Jeremiah's time he found it necessary to broadcast the same warning, for in Jeremiah 31:21 he said, "Set up road signs; put up guideposts." In other words, set up a warning sign by every slippery, dangerous spot.

Again in Proverbs 4:14-15 we find we must "avoid" and "turn away from" every pitfall and dangerous excavation.

The Apostles, Prophets and Jesus have done on their part. Their many warnings serve as a red danger signal along this highway to keep us in the center of the road and not let us get too close to the edge.

As brothers and sisters working together, let us join hand in hand and help each other over the slippery places along the one road that leads to the promised City where sorrow, disappointment and pain are unknown. ♦



This phrase was written centuries ago as part of an important letter which bears the title, *"The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians."* The translation is by the famous New Testament scholar, James Moffatt.

Do we share the membership of the saints? Are we truly part of the one living brotherhood whose aim and object it is to gain eternal salvation? If this be our common goal, how we should help each other, to stimulate and encourage one another.

"You share the membership of the saints, you belong to God's own household."

—Ephesians 2:19 Moffatt

Christians are duty-bound to believe in the communion of saints. To them, those who died in the faith—recently or ages ago—are not forgotten. If their names are in the Lamb's Book of Life, they are only sleeping for a short period, to be awakened at the return of Christ when He comes to gather together all loyal members of the body.

Every time we meet, even if our congregation seems numerically small, "we" are not all present. The thousands of known and unknown men and women who in their day kept the faith, fought the good fight, and served God's cause loyally, are part of our company.

We owe a tremendous debt to those who went before us, who stood for truth and right, for justice and brotherhood. We should feel encouraged by the thought that we may fellowship with the saints of every age. So many of them lived through difficult times; yet they knew that what seemed to be a grim end could be a divine beginning of something better and far greater.

We are not alone. We are part of a great tradition; we are in a noble succession of the servants of God. As the writer of the Hebrews (12:1–2 RSV) declared: *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."*

The holy men and women enumerated in Hebrews 11 were all masters of faith. They lived and worked in difficult times. They took many steps in the dark, entirely by faith, and they now await their reward. Of them it was said: *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them."*

Resolved

Let us also be persuaded; let us show the same strength of faith. Let us know beyond the shadow of doubt that the things we look forward to will likewise be realized. The Day of the Lord will come; as covenant-makers we shall stand before the Judgment seat of Christ; we shall be rewarded for all that we have done, whether good or bad.

Let us believe these things with a conviction that cannot be diluted. Let us keep reassuring ourselves that no effort for God and righteousness will go unrewarded. And let us constantly renew our determination that nothing shall separate us from our profound hope of securing life eternal in the world to come. ♦

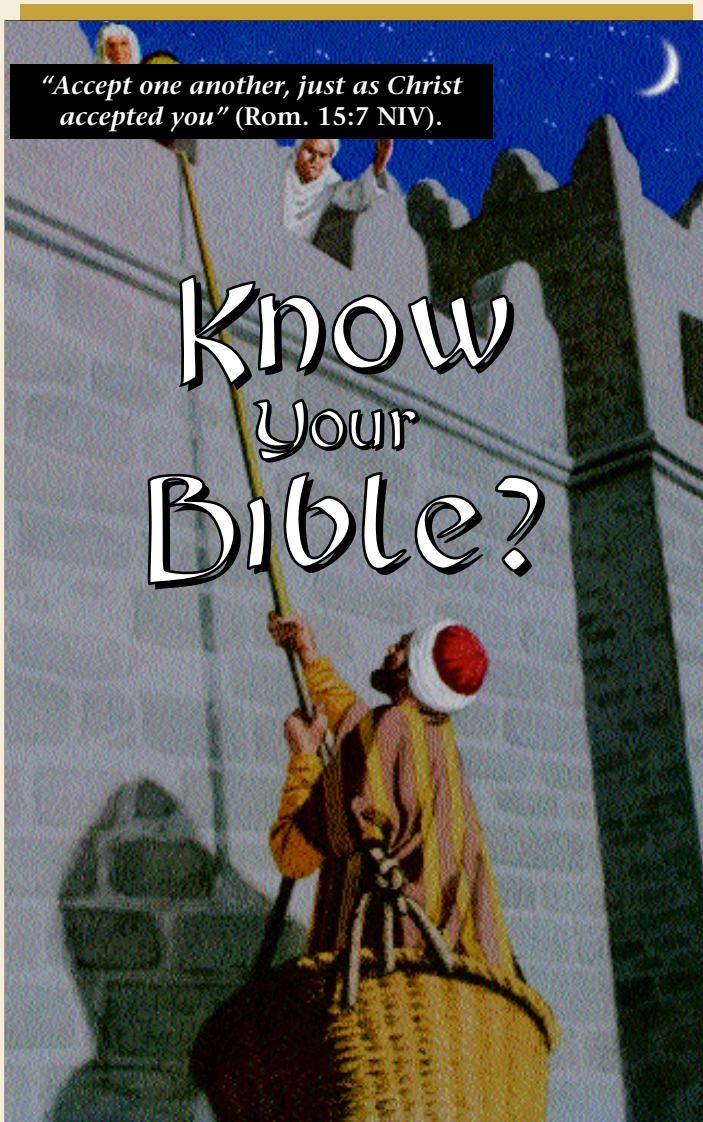
SHARING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SAINTS

by KENNETH E. FLOWERDAY
pastor 1958–1985

Clear the path for long-distance runners so no one will trip and fall.... Help each other out. And run for it!

Work at getting along with each other and with God.

—Hebrews 12:13–14 The Message



BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Where is the saying about the house of mourning?
2. To whom did God say, *"I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing"*?
3. What did Christ say about His sheep?
4. Whom did Paul urge, *"Neglect not the gift that is in thee?"*
5. In what book are the words, *"Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth"*?
6. Where does it say, *"Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?"*
7. What parable ends with the words, *"Then shall the right-
"Admonish [instruct, teach] one another" (Rom. 15:14). servant depart in peace? On what occasion?"*
9. Who said, *"Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?"*
10. What (and where) is the chief proverb about friendship?

WHERE WAS PAUL?

1. When he and Barnabas broke up their missionary partnership?
2. When, after his conversion, he spent three years in seclusion?
3. When he, for the first time, met Peter?
4. When, for the first time, he met Timothy?
5. When he found an altar erected to the *"Unknown God"*?
6. When he saw the vision of the man of Macedonia?
7. When the Lord encouraged him in a vision and promised that no harm should befall him?
8. When he was placed on trial before Felix and Festus?
9. When the prophet Agabus foretold his arrest in Jerusalem?
10. When he chided Peter on account of his falseness?
11. When he took a solemn vow?
12. When his life was saved by a Roman officer?
13. When the Lord appeared unto him, telling him that he was to be a witness for Him in Rome?
14. When he dwelt in a house with a soldier?
15. When he smote a man with blindness?
16. When he was let down in a basket to save his life?

WHERE WAS MOSES?

1. When he was discovered by a king's daughter?
2. When he was granted a view of the land of promise?
3. When he made his escape from Egypt?
4. When Pharaoh and his army were drowned?
5. When he received the Ten Commandments from the Lord?
6. When he broke the two tables of stone which God had given him?
7. When his sister Miriam died?
8. When he took a census of the people of Israel?
9. When he consecrated Aaron and his sons to the priesthood?
10. When the Lord showed him His glory?
11. When Aaron and Hur held up his arms?
12. When God rained bread from heaven for the first time?
13. When he stripped his brother Aaron of his priestly garments?
14. When God first appeared to him in a burning bush?
15. When he grew up from boyhood to manhood?

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Dialogue

PART TWO

CONTINUATION OF REPLY (see June 2001 issue,
Megiddo Message)

"I have a problem with the idea that God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son. It does not seem reasonable that God would charge anyone to offer human sacrifice to prove his or her allegiance or love to Him.

"Does this idea exist in the Dead Sea Scrolls? The passages in the copy I have of the Dead Sea Scrolls correspond to our Bible very well, but the part about the command to sacrifice Isaac is missing.

"Please shine the light of Truth on this subject if it is available so that I may come to a better understanding of it, or simply state that there are still a few things that we do not yet quite understand." —JN

3. Did God by His command to Abraham support human sacrifice?

As you pointed out, God abhors human sacrifice. You suggest that God's command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac would send the message to the heathen that the God of Israel supports human sacrifice.

As far as we can learn from the Biblical account, only Abraham knew of this command until after he had demonstrated his willingness to obey. Wouldn't the fact that God prevented the sacrifice send the message that He did not want human sacrifice? Any heathens looking for an excuse in this would also have to contend with the fact that God did not allow Abraham to sacrifice Isaac.

Some Bible students think that God by this command somehow tempted or deceived Abraham. The translators of the King James Version do use the word "tempt." And this is one of the definitions for the Hebrew word *nacah*. But can this be the intended meaning since "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man"? (James 1:13b). If we consult the Concordances, we find that the word has other meanings that harmonize with Scripture teaching. We find such meanings as "to test, try, prove, tempt, assay, put to the proof or test—*Enhanced Strong's Concordance*. It seems that God's intent was to "test" or "prove" Abraham. The word is used with this meaning in Deut. 8:16, where Moses is telling

the Israelites that God sustained them "in the wilderness with manna... that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end."

The New Testament record supports this idea: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried..." ("tried" is translated from the Greek word *peirazo*, meaning "to test, ... scrutinize, discipline:—assay, examine, prove, tempt, try"—*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*). James seems to have had the same idea in mind when he said that Abraham was "justified [approved] by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar" (Jas. 2:21). The NIV adds, in verse 22, "his faith was made complete by what he did."

In one way or another God tests, assays, disciplines, and proves His children so they can grow in character. Peter speaks of the severest test as a "fiery trial which is to try you." And again, "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love" (1 Pet. 4:12; 1:6–8a). Could the command to sacrifice his son not have been Abraham's "fiery trial"?

God's knowledge of what we need is far more accurate than we can fathom. If we cooperate with Him, can't we trust Him to provide what we need—not too much, and not too little—to make it possible for us to form the character He will approve?

While we do not know all the reasons why God asked Abraham to do this, we do have some idea of the worth Abraham placed on Isaac. What greater test could God have given Abraham than this? Isn't this the exact test of the command Jesus gave when He said, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me"? (Matt. 10:37). Would Abraham's love for his son surpass his faithfulness and love to God? Did Abraham need this testing or proving to help perfect his character? If this was the case, then would it be unfair for God to require this test? Wouldn't it have been unfair and unjust for Him NOT to do it? It seems that God would actually have let Abraham down if he really needed this test and God didn't give it to him. Suppose he had this one thing against his record, that he loved his son more than God? Would God, being just and righteous, not give him the one test he needed to overcome?

Why was the sacrifice of Isaac so significant and so difficult a test of Abraham's faith?

Abraham loved his son very much. But was it simply the filial bond that made this sacrifice so difficult? Recall that God's

DID GOD COMMAND ABRAHAM TO SACRIFICE HIS SON?

by GERALD R. PAYNE

original command to Abraham was, “*Get out of your country, from your family And from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you.*” And the accompanying promise was, even then, “*I will make you a great nation*” (Gen. 12:1–2a). Abraham obeyed because he believed God. And we can be sure he remembered the promise.

About a year before Isaac was born, the promise was restated (see Genesis 17:8–21). And again, a few years later, Abraham was assured, in a brief statement, that “*in Isaac your seed shall be called*” (Gen. 21:12). After “*Abraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines many days*”^{*} (Gen. 21:34), came the ultimate test of faith; God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering.

When God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac, Abraham remembered that it was through Isaac that his seed was to be blessed, that Isaac was his only link to the promises of God, as God had said, “*for in Isaac shall thy seed be called*” (Gen. 21:12). This same promise is echoed in Rom. 9:7 and Heb 11:18.

When Abraham and Isaac started up the mountain alone, we hear Abraham saying to the two servants who were with them, “*I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you*” (Gen. 22:5). How could Abraham expect to bring Isaac back with him unless he believed God would raise Isaac from the dead? No wonder he is called “*father of the faithful*,” one who was willing and ready to offer the only link to posterity, his only son of promise! So far as we can tell, Abraham had never even heard of the resurrection from the dead. This is unlimited faith!

After Abraham had obeyed God, the promise was reaffirmed, “*blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice*” (Gen. 22:17–18).

Abraham’s faith was proved “*because you have obeyed My voice.*” God had promised that he would become a great nation through Isaac. When Abraham set about to sacrifice Isaac, his faith was immovable, “*concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense*” (Heb. 11:19). Again, his faith was affirmed.

The sacrifice involved far more than giving up his second son. Because the promise God made to Abraham hinged upon

Isaac, not Ishmael the firstborn to the bondwoman, Abraham, in being willing to sacrifice Isaac had to trust God to open a way to fulfill His promises. Even at this supreme test of faith, Abraham did not waver. He *knew* God would fulfill His promise, and he knew that for God to fulfill His promise there had to be a living Isaac. That is how he could go through with the sacrifice: because he had full confidence that God could and would restore Isaac, even from the dead.

Do we wonder that he is the father of those who believe?

Without question God abhors and condemns human sacrifice, but we have to recognize the vast difference between the immoral and lust-filled sacrificing of the pagans and the offering God asked of Abraham. We also have to recognize the fact that God knowing the end from the beginning never had any intention of allowing Abraham to go through with the actual sacrifice of his son. The test was for Abraham’s benefit, to test and prove Abraham as the “*father of the faithful*,” not to appease or satiate a vengeful deity.

God arranges that we grow and develop by testing.

As a result of Abraham’s obedience to this command, he bears the high honor of “*father of all them that believe.*” He is one of the great heroes of God.

Why must we think that God was endorsing human sacrifice in any way by giving this command—especially when He prevented it being carried out? Even though He commanded it, He did not allow it.

In Summary


We have noted several points of evidence that God did command Abraham to make the supreme sacrifice:

1. The Dead Sea Scrolls do not contradict the authenticity of the text. On the contrary, the very fact that the scrolls even mention the command of God to Abraham proves that this part of the narrative was not added by the apostate church—it existed even prior to the time of Christ.

2. God is in control of what He does. He knows in advance what will happen; He commanded it but He also prevented (overruled) it.

3. Two New Testament authors affirm the account. If they were given power to recall Jesus’ exact words (which they were—see John 14:26), surely they had the ability to recall the Old Testament accurately. Are their words properly recorded in the New Testament? We have no reason to believe that they were not. There are also thousands of manuscripts existing which verify the accuracy of the text of the New Testament. We may not always understand why God acts as He does, but we can trust that “*the ways of the Lord are right*” (Hos. 14:9). ♦

^{*}We do not know just how long this “many days” was, but it may have been several years. Some commentaries place Isaac’s age at about 25 or even 30 when Abraham was given the command to sacrifice him.



YOU alone are God. You have made...the heavens, the earth and the seas, and everything in them. You preserve it all. —Neh. 9:6 TLB

*The Hand
that made us is Divine*

Did You Know...?

- ✓ ...that pure water consists of only two different atoms, two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen attached to each other at an angle of 105°?
- ✓ ...that a single drop of water contains 1,700,000,000,000,000,000 (1.7 quintillion) molecules?
- ✓ ...that the earth is a closed system—there is no more freshwater on earth now than there was thousands of years ago?
- ✓ ...that water is the most plentiful substance on earth, covering 70 percent of its surface?
- ✓ ...that there are 326 million cubic miles of water on earth?
- ✓ ...that every living thing needs water to live, and every living thing is made of at least some water?
- ✓ ...that water is the only nutrient needed by the body every day?
- ✓ ...that during a lifetime, you'll drink about 16,000 gallons of water?
- ✓ ...that dehydration can cause fatigue and you may not even know you are dehydrated?
- ✓ ...that water is the only substance on earth found naturally in three forms—solid, liquid, and gas?
- ✓ ...that it is estimated that 3,400 cubic miles of water are locked within the bodies of living things?
- ✓ ...that in the United States, approximately 500,000 tons of pollutants pour into lakes and rivers each day, our primary source of potable water?
- ✓ ...that approximately 1,000 gallons of water are required to grow and process one pound of food we eat?

by GERALD R. PAYNE

Water Wonders

What could be simpler than water? Pure and plain, water consists of only two different atoms, two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen, abbreviated H₂O.

But there is nothing simple about water.

Can you imagine that just *by chance* its three molecules (2 H and 1 O) are attached to form an angle of 105°? As with many of the tiniest parts in nature, this fact is no accident but a clear evidence of intelligence behind it. Although water is simple in structure, the physical and chemical properties are extraordinarily complex. And we have no way to create more water to add to our earth's supply. Earth is a closed system, which means that the water supply is constant; it does not increase or decrease.

Our Creator saw fit to provide us with an ample water supply, but if we abuse it, contaminate it and waste it, shortages will occur.

Pure water is odorless, tasteless and almost colorless. Viewed at great depth, it has a tint of blue. But pure water is rare in nature. Due to its ability to dissolve substances in large amounts, water combines with a variety of other elements even as it falls from the sky. Heavy rain and fog are our Creator's arrangement for cleansing the air we breathe, as well as replenishing our water supply. As water percolates through the soil and rocks, larger contaminants are removed from it. Even muddy water can become crystal clear by the time it reaches the deep underground aquifers.

But the water as it filters through layers of rock and soil is doing more than just leaving behind large particles it accumulated from the air. It is reacting with minerals in the soil and rock which, in turn, combine with acids, metals, and a variety



*How does water
climb to the top of
the Giant Sequoia?*

of elements, producing what myriad varieties of plants and animals need to reproduce and flourish.

Some of the rainwater that flows into shallow wells, lakes and streams may not be completely filtered and may contain other substances, such as sewage, industrial waste, large amounts of nitrogen compounds and chlorides from human and animal waste. Yet, rivers provide the major source of potable (suitable for drinking) water—which is only about 1/10,000 of 1% of earth's water supply (only about 300 cubic miles of earth's 326,000,000 cubic miles of water. The ocean consists of 97% of earth's water which, of course, is not suitable for human consumption, yet the composition of ocean water is delicately balanced to support a tremendous variety of plant and animal life which could not live in fresh water—another of God's provisions for life on earth.)

Properties of water

Water exists in three states: solid, liquid and gas. Under normal atmospheric pressure (14.7 lbs. per square inch), pure water freezes at 32° F, boils at 212° F, has maximum density at 39° F, and unlike most liquids, expands upon freezing. It also evaporates, adding moisture to the air. While we give little thought to these properties of water, it is because of these properties that life exists. Boil water, freeze it, drink it, or pour it out, the properties of water (as well as its quantity) remain unchanged.

Suppose that water, like most other liquids, became less dense when frozen. Lakes in colder climates would be frozen solid and all the little living creatures in the lake would die—because the water, as it froze, would sink to the bottom. But because water as it freezes becomes less dense, ice floats as it forms, making an insulating layer on top of the water which helps to prevent heat loss, allowing life to thrive beneath.

Because water can be easily converted to steam by raising its temperature, it has many uses for energy, including cooking, powering steam turbines for the production of electricity, or for driving a locomotive down the track with many tons in tow. And since water evaporates easily as air passes over it, we have natural air conditioning, as well as precipitation to water our crops and replenish the earth's underground water supply.

Water climbs

Have you ever wondered how water manages to climb to the top of trees like the giant Sequoia, for example, that towers over 275 feet into the sky?

As water evaporates from the leaves, water is drawn upward to replace it. But how? A water pump, using even a perfect vacuum cannot pull

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Living, Life-Giving Water



Whether the word *water* brings to mind a liquid which will quench your thirst, or something to swim in, or any one of a myriad other uses, everyone knows that without it we would soon die. No living creature can live without it.

But H₂O is not the only kind of water that is vital. Jesus spoke of water which is most satisfying. In fact, He said, one can drink of this water and never thirst again.

But this water does more than sustain life....It *gives* life. By drinking it, the spiritually dead can come to life, and never die again!

What would we give to have lasting vigor and renewed youth? It may seem like a dream or a fairy tale, but it isn't. This water brings with it the promise of renewed physical life.

How can it be possible for the dead to drink water and become alive, you ask?

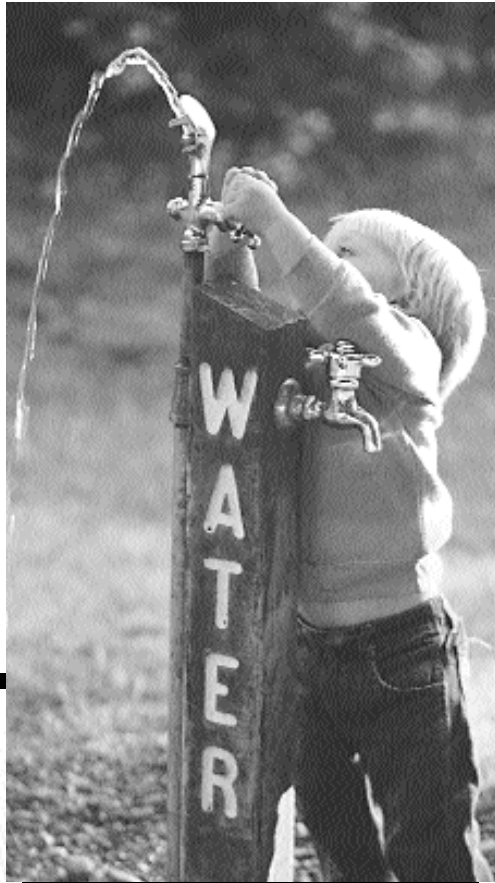
Science deals with literal water which, though simple in structure, is still not fully understood. In this segment we will look at other waters which are often even less understood.

Water is...

In the Bible, water takes on other meanings that are important to understanding some passages in Scripture.

One of the first differences observed between literal water that

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water up more than a little over 30 feet. That leaves about 240 feet to go if a perfect vacuum could be formed—which it can't in a tree.

Is water by some means pushed to the top by pressure? It has been calculated that this would require a pressure of about 100 lbs. per square inch. Think what that kind of pressure would do to the bark on the tree! Even a combination of vacuum and pressure still comes far short of moving water from ground level to the top of the tree. Yet by some means water climbs the entire distance,

or the tree could not grow to that height.

Not only must the water get to the top of a tree but it must carry all the nutrients a tree needs as it climbs.

Scientists have explained that the process of water climbing upward in a tree is done by capillary action, that this special process is possible due to water's singular properties of adhesion,¹ cohesion² and surface tension.³ These terms are all very closely related, and all have to do with how the molecules bond together. But none are a total explanation of what happens.

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* explains: The "upward movement of sap in trees is...called the transpiration-cohesion hypothesis....The forces of cohesion between water molecules and the forces of adhesion between water molecules and the walls of the vessel cells [have a tensile strength of at least] 440 pounds per square inch. This is high enough to permit a thin column of water to be lifted to the top of any tree without breaking the column.

—<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?eu=25071&tocid=0>.

It is further explained that the evaporation of water from the leaves causes the sap (a water mixture) to be pulled up the tree to the top. But bear in mind that this is only a hypothesis. The fact is, no one really knows how sap reaches the top of a tree 275 feet tall!

While we can only hypothesize how this process works—and it happens all the time—our All-Wise Creator knows, and designed the tree to take advantage of His laws of nature long before any human mind even tried to figure it out. ♦

Life-Giving Water

continued from page 15

briefly sustains life and the water described in the Bible is that, as Jesus explained, if you drink of the one you will thirst again. But drink the water He gives and you will never thirst again. *"The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life"* (John 4:14).

What is this water that gives life? Can we still get it? If so, where? Jesus explains, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life."* The water that Jesus gives results in eternal life. And just a little later He affirmed again, *"The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life"* (John 5:24; 6:63). The water He gives and the words He speaks are one and the same. Drinking deep of this water, His words, is the way to eternal life.

It seems so simple just to drink and be filled and never thirst again. But it isn't simple. There is more. Before we can drink this water (hear His words) we first have to understand what He is saying to us, or we will be like the others who went away, trusting in their own way which leads to death. As one of His disciples said to Him, *"This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"* (John 6:60).

Jesus qualifies those who are eligible for eternal life as they who hear (drink the water of life). Hearing involves more than just an acknowledgment. When Jesus commanded us to hear His words, He intended us to hear actively, not just hear with our ear, but put the words into action, i.e. obey. He can give us words to live by, but His words cannot live in us unless we put life into them. Jesus said, *"If you love Me, keep My commandments"* (John 14:15). And a few verses later He emphasized these words, *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word"* (John 14:23). After Jesus had been crucified, been resurrected and had ascended to the Father, He sent words of warning to John for all the Churches. Near the end of all that John saw and heard, he was moved to declare: *"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life"* (Rev. 22:14). Unless one keeps His Word, unless one drinks deep from the fountain of life, declared John, they will have no part with those who will receive eternal life at Christ's coming.

The subversive work had already begun in the Churches when Jesus sounded the warning to overcome. *"He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death"* (Rev.

2:11). Can it be plainer? “God ‘will give to each person according to what he has done.’ To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger” (Rom. 2:6–8 NIV).

The water Jesus gives, then, is His Word, which gives eternal life. But for His Word to give life to us that Word must live in us and we must put life into it by making it a very part of our being, by obeying every command in that Word. Only then shall this water be in us “a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Until we take this vital step, we are all as dead men and women. But let the spiritually dead drink from the everlasting fountains of life and they shall be made alive. Paul told the Ephesians who had been dead in sin themselves, “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others” (Eph. 2:1–3). “You He made alive.”

Yes, the dead can drink from the “fountain of living waters” (Jer. 17:13) and be made alive!

Where can we find this Fountain of living waters? His words are recorded for any who will read and study. “If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God” (Prov. 2:4–5). While this living water is at hand, right in our very hand, it must be searched out. It must be uncovered from the dark superstitions and error of the past and present.

Water that uncovers

When Christ returns, God through Him will judge the world and put to silence all the wicked. This Judgment is compared to a flood of waters that will cover the whole earth. When Christ stands upon the earth again there will be no hiding place for the wicked. “I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the plummet; the hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters will overflow the hiding place” (Isa. 28:17). All who do not measure up to the line of Divine justice and stand straight beside the plum-

met of right-doing will be taken away with the floods of divine Judgment.

The righteous will not be forgotten. “this is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem. It is firm, a tested and precious cornerstone that is safe to build on. Whoever believes need never run away again’” (Isa. 28:16 NLT; the Greek version reads, “Anyone who believes in him will not be disappointed”). There will be no need for fear, no disappointment for the righteous. “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).

A Promise

Living water is part of a most beautiful promise which Jesus made to every faithful child: “They will never again be hungry or thirsty, and they will be fully protected from the scorching noontime heat. For the Lamb who stands in front of the throne will be their Shepherd. He will lead them to the springs of life-giving water. And God will wipe away all their tears” (Rev. 7:16–17 NLT).

All of us should ask the most serious question of our lives right now: Am I thirsting for the living water that gives life everlasting? ♦

¹adhesion: steady or firm attachment—Merriam-Webster Collegiate dictionary. This property would be similar to glue.

²cohesion: the act or state of sticking together tightly—Merriam-Webster Collegiate dictionary.

For a demonstration pour some water in a shallow container. Then hold two hollow tubes (with a significant difference in diameter) upright in the liquid. Notice that the water will rise up in the tubes above the water level of the container. Notice also that it rises higher in the smaller tube. If these same hollow tubes are held upright in mercury you will notice a complete absence of this property (cohesion). As a matter of fact the mercury will be pushed downward instead of rising up in the tubes.

³surface tension: the attractive force exerted upon the surface molecules of a liquid by the molecules beneath that tend to draw the surface molecules into the bulk of the liquid and makes the liquid assume the shape having the least surface area—Merriam-Webster Collegiate dictionary. An example of this can be seen by putting a drop of water on your countertop: Notice how the water seems to stack up instead of spreading out. Or place a double-edged razor blade (old type of blade) on the surface of the water. It remains on the surface of the water, but it is not floating. Push it down, breaking the surface tension, and it will rapidly sink.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 11

BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Eccl. 7:2
2. Abraham (Gen. 12:1–2)
3. “My sheep hear my voice” (John 10:27)
4. Timothy (1 Tim. 4:14)
5. Deut. 8:18
6. Prov. 6:27
7. The parable of the tares (Matt. 13:36, 43)
8. Simeon when Jesus was presented in the temple (Luke 2:25–29)
9. Moses at Meribah (Num. 20:10, 13)
10. Prov. 18:24

WHERE WAS PAUL?

1. Antioch (Acts 15:30, 36–41)
2. Wilderness of Arabia (Gal. 1:17)
3. In Jerusalem (Gal. 1:18)

4. Lystra (Acts 16:1–3)
5. Athens (Acts 17:15–23)
6. Troas (Acts 16:8–9)
7. In Corinth (Acts 18:1, 9–11)
8. Caesarea (Acts 23:27, 33; 25:1)
9. Caesarea (Acts 21:8–10)
10. Antioch (Gal. 2:1–14)
11. Cenchrea (Acts 18:18)
12. Jerusalem (Acts 21:30–33)
13. Jerusalem in the Roman Castle (Acts 23:10–11)
14. Rome (Acts 28:16)
15. Paphos (Acts 13:4–11)
16. Damascus (Acts 9:25)

WHERE WAS MOSES?

1. In the ark of bulrushes in the river (Ex. 2:1–10)

2. On Mount Nebo (Deut. 34:1–4)
3. In the land of Midian (Ex. 2:15)
4. On dry land, on the other side of the sea (Ex. 14:23–31)
5. On Mount Sinai (Ex. 31:18)
6. Near the camp of the Israelites (Ex. 32:15–19)
7. In the desert of Zin (Num. 20:1)
8. In the wilderness of Sinai (Num. 1:1–2)
9. At the door of the tabernacle (Lev. 8)
10. At Mount Horeb (Ex. 33:6, 18–23)
11. Rephidim (Ex. 17:8–16)
12. In the wilderness of Sin (Ex. 16:1–21)
13. On Mount Hor (Num. 20:27–29)
14. In the desert near Horeb (Ex. 3:1–6)
15. In the court of king Pharaoh (Ex. 2:9–10)



Returning Good For Evil

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

—Matthew 5:44

A soldier was astonished when he heard General Robert E. Lee speak in complimentary terms about a fellow-officer.

"General," he said, "do you know that the man you spoke so highly of is one of your worst enemies, and misses no opportunity to slander you?"

"Yes," said the general, "but I was asked for my opinion of him, not his opinion of me."

Lee's kindness is an inspiring illustration of returning good for evil. Now that is not easy to do. That is

why Jesus spoke about it in Matthew 5, in His first sermon. If we obey our Savior in this we have taken a long step toward virtuous living. It would be inconsistent—even unthinkable—to mistreat someone we have just remembered in prayer, and that is what Jesus says we should do: "Pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you."

Abraham Lincoln once said, "The best way to destroy an enemy is to make him your friend."

Let's be like our Lord and return good for evil. Returning good for good is natural; returning good for evil is Christ-like. ♦



From the MAILBOX

Who Has The Steering Wheel?

Everyday we can learn a new lesson if we just take time to be aware of what is said around us.

I recently overheard an elderly man with a young child who had just met some friends. They were discussing a car accident the elderly man had been in, and he was telling his friends that the young girl was with him. I heard her say, "But Grandpa, it was not my fault because I didn't have a steering wheel."

The only way we can expect to share in the promises of God is to daily practice what is right, and be determined that we will arrive presentable. We will not be able to say that the outcome was not our fault

because we lacked a steering wheel!

God has given us the steering wheel. We possess the words, we have the time, there is no lack of help. So, "full speed ahead!" With these tools we will be able to avoid all accidents.

E. Shayler, Alberta, Canada

Can Do!

We know that these mortal bodies of ours were not intended to last forever. We may live ninety or one hundred years, but we so soon grow weak and die. But the Lord offers so much more to those who are willing to work for it. We have to give up all our own ways to gain eternal life, but is not eternal life worth it?

The Christian life is one of self-denial, but we are only required to deny ourselves that which is not good for us. That's why Jesus said we would receive a hundredfold in this life and in the world to come life everlasting. It is indeed the greatest of blessings to know that we are on the road to eternal life.

It's a wonderful blessing to be free from the superstition and religious darkness of

the world. It is also wonderful to be free from the frivolity and vanity of the world. How much better to spend our free time reading God's Word and letting His thoughts fill our minds than to spend it reading useless novels or newspapers or magazines. We only need to quickly go over a newspaper to know what sad shape the world is in. There's no need to read the sordid details. I am glad and thankful that I have things infinitely better to meditate on than the state of our nation's politics or who is going to win the next ball game.

When we reach the point in our lives that we are convinced that we are only asked to give up what is bad for us, self-denial becomes easy. When we reach that point, we will have joy and peace of mind. We will become eager to lay aside every sin and grow into the moral likeness of Christ.

Can we do it? Of course we can! We wouldn't be where we are if we did not have the ability to accomplish the work God requires. We just have to be willing and diligent workers.

S. Kincannon, Tennessee

Every worthwhile accomplishment requires effort.

Precious things are often ruined by old grudges and resentments.

The road marked tomorrow usually leads to the town called Never.

Getting on the right track usually involves getting out of a rut.

God does not want those who are fearful, whose faith fluctuates according to the demands placed upon it. He wants those with great faith.

Disappointment should always be taken as a stimulant, and never viewed as discouragement.

Nothing in the whole world is so outspoken as the Word of God.

A groundless rumor often covers a lot of ground.

*If you your lips would keep from slips,
five things observe with care:
Of whom you speak, to whom you speak,
and how, and when, and where.*

Opportunity often goes around disguised as hard work—and that is why so many fail to find it.

You've all...seen the athletes race. Everyone runs; one wins. Run to win. All good athletes train hard. They do it for a gold medal that tarnishes and fades. You're after one that's gold eternally. I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got. No sloppy living for me! I'm staying alert and in top condition. I'm not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else about it and then missing out myself.

—1 Cor. 9:24–27 The Message (Paraphrase)

It is not the talented people who serve the Lord best, but the consecrated ones.

Commitment in the face of conflict produces character.

Heroism often consists in hanging on one minute longer.

His Greatest Sermon

Many years ago a farmer had an unusually fine crop of grain. Just a few days before it was ready to harvest, there came a terrible hail and wind storm. The entire crop was demolished. After the storm was over the farmer, with his little son, went out onto the porch. The little boy looked at what was formerly the beautiful field of wheat, and then with tears in his eyes he looked up at his dad, expecting to hear words of despair. All at once

his father started to sing softly, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee." Years later, the little boy, grown to manhood, said, "That was the greatest sermon I ever heard." The farmer lost a grain crop, yet who knows but that the storm was the turning point in the boy's life? The boy saw his father's faith in practice.

Determination: Stick with it, regardless.

Honest: Speak and live the truth—always.

Responsibility: Be dependable, trustworthy.

Thoughtfulness: Think of others before yourself.

Confidentiality: Don't tell secrets. Seal your lips.

Self-control: When under stress, stay calm.

Patience: Fight irritability. Be willing to wait.

Purity: Reject anything that lowers your standards.

Compassion: When another hurts, feel it with him.

Diligence: Work hard. Tough it out.

—Selected

