



# Megiddo Message

Vol. 87, No. 7  
August, 2000

**B**lessed is he whose  
soul does not  
pay homage to  
worthless things.

-Psalm 24:4 JB





## SATISFACTION GUARANTEED— But Not Yet

Everyone likes the satisfied feeling, and many companies today thrive on the concept. So confident are some that their advertisements read, “Satisfaction guaranteed” or “Complete satisfaction guaranteed,” implying that if for any reason you don’t like the product you purchased, you may return it for a full refund.

But have you ever read the fine print and found that you did not qualify for the “satisfaction guarantee”—because you hadn’t taken the right steps in the right order? It might be as simple as saving a cash register slip. But without it, no guarantee. If the purchase was an automobile, you might have to change the oil at a certain mileage. If it was a machine, you might have to use a certain brand of supplies to validate the warranty. None are unreasonable requirements, but each meant that you had to think ahead to make good on the warranty.

When God first made His offer of salvation to our race, He put His total satisfaction guarantee on it. But there are conditions to be met.

And there is a period of waiting, to see if we will meet the conditions. In the meantime, we can be sure that everything will *not* be to our liking. Christ did not even suggest that His gospel would immediately satisfy. In fact, His gospel may even create temporary dissatisfaction.

Why? Because His gospel is designed to develop and improve, not coddle and accommodate. His gospel is not meant to keep us as we are but to make us better, more upright, stronger in principle and in character.

Dissatisfaction must precede satisfaction because Christ’s offer overturns our natural self-satisfied feelings. Naturally we like ourselves as we are. Christ’s message comes to tell us how we can be remade into something of infinitely greater worth, so much more that we can scarcely comprehend the difference. At that point we are ready to listen to Christ. We want to learn more, hear more, do more, so that we can *be* more.

The ministry of Christ’s Church is to show that there is something more to life than the humdrum, something more than living to satisfy *“the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life”* (1 John 2:16). God calls us to live on a higher plane, and promises that in the end kindness will rule and goodness will triumph. But that cannot be sure until Christ returns and takes over the management of our world.

In the meantime what do we do with the problems? Do we feel that sometimes we have more than our share? Christ shows us how to turn these problems into possibilities—possibilities for inner growth, moral excellence, and spiritual achievements.

Ask such a one if he is satisfied, he’ll admit that he isn’t. But he’s eagerly looking, longing, preparing for the full satisfaction, even a life where he will experience more than eye has seen, or ear has heard, or the human heart has imagined (1 Cor. 2:9). He is looking for the fullest rewards in exchange for a life of faithful service.

This is what God has promised. No traps, no surprises, just conditions to be met and then we will be satisfied—fully. Just read King David’s description of the guarantee: *“How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, And You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures”* (Ps. 36:7–8 NKJV). Again, *“Blessed is the man You choose, And cause to approach You, That he may dwell in Your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, of Your holy temple”* (65:4 NKJV).

The dissatisfaction is only for a moment. Just beyond this point life begins, a new life, a life filled with the eternal realities which God has planned for every faithful child.

And that is where it ends. In total satisfaction. Guaranteed. ♦

*Christ’s guarantee is not for  
the NOW but for the FUTURE.*





# Where Are You?

In the Genesis allegory we read that the Lord placed Adam in the garden, to “till and to keep it.” We know the rest—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the delicious-looking forbidden fruit, the serpent, Eve, temptation, transgression. Then came the time when they were called to account. “In the cool of the day” they “heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden.”

If all had been well, Adam and Eve would have been delighted to hear His voice and would have gone looking for Him, eager to receive His commendation. But they knew—and they knew *God* knew—that all was *not* well. They had transgressed, and there would be consequences. And so they sought to postpone the dreaded moment by hiding from His presence. But the Lord could not be fooled by their hiding. Little did they realize how futile it is to hide from God. Little did they think how easily His demanding words could search them out: “Where are you?”

These words have a message especially for today. They come to ask our whereabouts—not physical but spiritual. Where are we in relation to what we have set out to become? What have we accomplished?

It is as if the Lord were saying to us, What have you accomplished considering the time, the privileges and the opportunities I have given you? How serious are you about your progress along the road to the Kingdom? How far have you come? How far yet to go? Are you going to make it by the time I give the final call? *Where are you?*

We find ourselves at a critical junction in the day of salvation. Never has any people lived so close to the climax as we. The history of four world kingdoms is behind us. The fig tree, long barked and peeled, has blossomed and borne fruit. Summer is nigh at hand. Any day, any hour, it may be here. We are in the time of which Jesus spoke when He said, “When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:28 NIV).

Never has the weight of responsibility upon any people been greater than that resting upon us. Never has a more solemn charge been given than that which is our own: “Blessed are those servants whom his lord when he comes

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**V**ictory lies  
in daring to say  
“Yes” to the most  
important and “No”  
to everything less.



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

## MEGIDDO MEANS...

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

## WE BELIEVE...

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

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

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

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

## THE HERALD AND THE KING

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

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

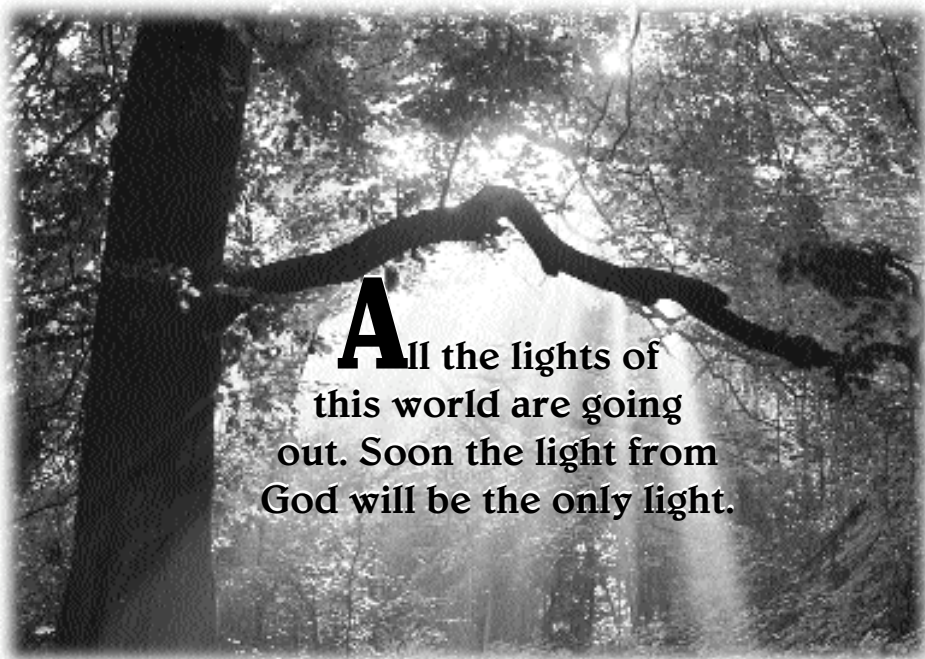
shall find watching...Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come....If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'" (Luke 12:37; Mark 13:33-37 NIV).

What if this night the angel of the Lord should reveal His presence among us and put to us that penetrating question: "Where are you?" What would be our reply? Would our hearts thrill with joy at His presence, or would we, like disobedient Adam and Eve, want to run and hide?

All of us know that we cannot hide from God. Whether we are willing to accept it or not, whether we can see Him or not, we live every moment in His presence. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). He sees, and He knows. There can be no running away. There can be no hiding from His all-seeing eye. As the Psalmist observed ages ago, "If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you" (Ps. 139:8-12 NIV). From such a One there can be no running, no hiding.

A more fitting reaction might be that of silence. Have you ever stood speechless before the Lord? Are you able to look up to Him in solemn, reverent silence? Have you felt the impact of "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord"? (Zech. 2:13). Being silent before God speaks powerfully because it means we have no more excuses to offer, no more arguments, no more resistance. By silence we are saying that we accept what He says and will obey without question. There is no need for words. The record of our life will speak for us.

Where are you? Where am I? In these trying days just before the coming of the great King, we need to draw upon every resource God has provided. We need to keep ourselves active in our spiritual disciplines. Together they



**A**ll the lights of  
this world are going  
out. Soon the light from  
God will be the only light.

should be a constant reminder to examine our priorities, to make sure we know how we are spending our time, our interest, our energy. We need to be continually renewing and reviewing our vision, our sense of purpose, and our faith, because we are accountable. Our contract with the Lord is nonnegotiable; we have no alternative but to see it through to a successful finish.

Where are we in this project? Perhaps we agree readily that we are not where we could be, considering the opportunity and advantage we have had.

But we have our reasons, just as those who have gone before us. The Lord will understand that we have been busy, preoccupied, or not feeling well. Or we have run into circumstances too difficult for *anyone* to cope with.

And so we put off, and put off, and put off the real work of remaking ourselves. And while we dally, while we put off, life is slipping by. Opportunity is slipping by. Soon we shall hear the voice of the Lord *our* God walking in the midst of the garden, and the question from His lips will be directed to us: "Where are you?"

What will we say? What will we say if we have been enjoying any of the still-forbidden fruit? What will we say if we have *known* the right, and failed to do it? What will we say if we have given more concern, and more weight, and

more diligence to things that should be secondary?

Christian living is a matter of making the right choices. We are constantly choosing our thoughts, our attitudes, our feelings, our activities. We are either choosing, or we are letting circumstances dictate to us. In either case, the responsibility is upon us. And very often the problem is not so much right against wrong as right against less-right. Someone has said that "Temptation is having to choose between the best and the not-quite-so-goods." Victory lies in daring to say "Yes" to the most important and "No" to everything less.

This was what Jesus did. He said "No" to anything this world could offer Him, because He could see that the kingdoms of this world were headed for history's junk yard.

Oh, that we might share this superlative vision! Oh, that we might fix our sites on the eternal and *keep them there*. The transitory nature of everything here, things good or bad, things pleasant or unpleasant, has been demonstrated countless times in the annals of the world. Civilizations rise, rule, and fall. A man who narrated a film called "Empty Cities" told of his experience. "We visited and studied the rise and fall of many civilizations," he said. "In the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico, we observed and photographed the impressive pyramids of the Mayan Indians.

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*Five of them were wise...*

"The KINGDOM OF HEAVEN can be illustrated by the story of ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.

The five who were foolish took no oil for their lamps, but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil.

When the bridegroom was delayed, they all lay down and slept.

At midnight they were roused by the shout, "Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and welcome him!" All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps.

*So stay awake and be prepared,  
because you do not know the day or  
hour of My return. -Jesus*

Then the five foolish ones asked the others, "Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out." But the others replied, "We don't have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves."

But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked.

Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, "Sir, open the door for us!" But he called back, "I don't know you!"

So stay awake and be prepared, because you do not know the day or hour of my return.

-Matt. 25:1-13 NLT



*...and five of them were foolish.*



Jesus' parables teach powerful lessons. Near the end of His ministry, He used several to show the importance of keeping awake, alert, ready. He would be coming back, and He wanted His followers to *"stay awake and be prepared, because you do not know the day or hour of my return"* (Matt. 25:13 NLT).

The picture of the bridesmaids waiting for the bridegroom was a common one in ancient Palestine. If the bridegroom was coming from any distance, there was no knowing what time he would arrive, and since he was a supremely

### A Missed Opportunity

Jesus also emphasizes the need to seize an opportunity when it comes. Sometimes we hear of an actor, or a business person, or an artist who went straight to success because a position opened up suddenly right in front of them, and they could simply step into it. This is true, they happened to be in the right place at the right time. But they were also prepared for it. They did not see the opportunity and start then to get ready. They had prepared diligently in advance, and were ready for the opportunity when it came.

If this be true in the things of this world, it is still more true in the Divine

fill the empty life with those Christ-like qualities of faith, endurance, courage, obedience. If we have not individually developed these qualities, we will not have them then.

In Jesus' parable of the ten bridesmaids, when the bridegroom arrived, the foolish bridesmaids were out buying oil for their lamps. On returning, they found that the feast had already begun. They had missed their one great opportunity.

Every day brings us opportunities which we must not neglect—opportunities to help one another, to grow in character, to become Christ-like in thought and attitude. These opportuni-

# Be Prepared!

honored guest, not to welcome him when he

arrived was a serious breach of manners.

Jesus divides His bridesmaids into two groups: wise and foolish. At the start of the parable, however, all look alike. No one knows who will be wise, or who will be foolish. All have lamps brightly burning, awaiting the arrival of the bridegroom. They do not know when he will come.

What makes the difference between the wise and the foolish? It is all a matter of how prepared they are. Those who are wise are prepared to hold out until he comes—they have taken an extra supply of oil in case he is late. The foolish ones let their oil run low, and are caught. When they try to remedy the problem, they return only to find that they missed out—the door is shut, and they are on the outside.

### The Lesson: Be Prepared

There are many things in life which it is impossible to accomplish at the last minute. Unless we have prepared beforehand, we lose out. It is that way with learning. The time for the examination is not the time to prepare. It is that way with the skills of life. When the skill is needed is not the time to learn it.

scheme. God has openings for service, but we can take them only as far as we are prepared.

### Things That Cannot be Borrowed

Jesus' parable says plainly that there are certain things which cannot be borrowed. The bridesmaids could not borrow oil. They had to go and buy for themselves.

What is that oil? It might be the oil of character. Character cannot be loaned from one person to another. It must be developed individually, forged by one's own decisions, thoughts and convictions.

Obedience is another quality that cannot be borrowed. God expects personal obedience to His commands, and holds each one accountable for what he does. As the apostle Paul declares, *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad"* (2 Cor. 5:10 NIV). In the day when each servant of God shall stand before Him to give account, it will be utterly impossible to

ties are here, right at hand. Altogether they are an open door, and we must go through it. If we don't, that door will shut—and we will find ourselves shut out of the joy and delights of the Marriage Feast.

Another truth Jesus emphasizes in this parable is that the failure of the foolish bridesmaids was final. The door was shut, and shut forever. Those who were in were inside forever, those who were out were outside forever. They had all anticipated entering, yet some were excluded permanently.

Some opportunities, once gone, are gone forever.

Centuries later, we read this parable and the question comes to our minds: Will I be shut in, or shut out?

One sure way to be ready when the Bridegroom comes is to be ready every day.

### Keep Your Lamps Burning!

There is something about Jesus' parable that speaks to each one personally. God provides the lamp, but each of us is individually responsible to keep it burn-

ing. This means keeping it filled with oil. We do not have to fill others' lamps, only our own. We do not have to resist others' temptations, only our own. We do not have to shoulder others' loads, only our own.

When it comes to that last moment, when Christ the great Bridegroom comes, nothing will matter but the oil in our own lamp: our character, our faith, our record in heaven, which will witness for or against us.

The Jews had a proverb, "A door that is shut is not so easily opened." The door in Jesus' parable was one such door. John Greenleaf Whittier put it in poetry when he wrote,

*For all sad words of tongue or pen,  
The saddest are these:  
"It might have been."*

### Too Late

Why did the five foolish bridesmaids fail? If you were to ask them, they would likely blame the bridegroom: He came too late. If he had come when he was first expected, they would have been prepared. For a time, all seemed to be going fine. All the bridesmaids arose, trimmed their lamps and looked as though they were ready. But hour after weary hour went by, and ...

Suddenly, something is terribly wrong! Five of the lamps are going out!\* *"The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us*

*some of your oil'"* (Matt. 25:8 NIV). It is a tragic hour for these five bridesmaids. The bridegroom is coming and they are not ready! In desperation they cry to their companions, *"'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out!' But the others replied, 'We don't have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves'"* (25:9 NLT).

Remember the days of Noah? The time came when the door to the ark was shut, and those inside were safe and sound.

But it was too late for those outside. No matter how much they wanted to get in, they could not. The message is the same in Jesus' parable of the ten bridesmaids: *"Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!' But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you'"* (Matt. 25:11–12 NIV).

A godly character cannot be made in a moment. It must be carefully nurtured and cultivated over time. Old habits cannot be removed in a moment; they must be replaced one by one with good habits, and this takes time. *"Don't let the excitement of youth cause you to forget your Creator. Honor him in your youth before you grow old.... It will be too late then to remember him"* (Eccl. 12:1–2 NLT). If faith is not nurtured, it will fail, the light in your life will flicker and go out.

This was Jesus' message in Matthew 7, when He said, *"Not all those who say*

*that I am their Lord will enter the Kingdom of heaven. The only people who will enter the Kingdom of heaven are those who will do what my Father in heaven wants. On the last day, many people will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, we spoke for you, and through you and through you we forced out demons and did many miracles.' Then I will tell them clearly, 'Get away from me, you who do evil, I never knew you'"* (Matt. 7:21–23 NCV).

Who will enter? *"Those who do what my Father in heaven wants."*

Regarding the crisis of Christ's second coming, Paul said, *"You yourselves know full well..."*— they had heard it from Him many times. Today is no different. We have only one life in which to prepare for the coming Judge and King. If we let this opportunity slip away, it will be gone forever.

The lesson: *"Stay awake and be prepared, because you do not know the day or hour of my return"* (Matt. 25:13 NLT). ♦

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\*The KJV erroneously states that the lamps have "gone out." But these words are in the present tense. The present tense represents a single statement of fact or reality viewed as occurring in actual time. In most cases this corresponds directly with the English present tense.—Logos Library System [tense voice mood]. The newer translations have corrected this error and have it in the present tense, "Our lamps are going out."

### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 9

#### FINISH THE VERSE

1. *"Leadeth thee to repentance."* (Rom. 2:4)
2. *"It is more blessed to give than to receive."* (Acts 20:35)
3. *"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands."* (Ps. 100:1)
4. *"Unto thee shall all flesh come."* (Ps. 65:2)
5. *"Under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid."* (Mic. 4:4)
6. *"And thy paths drop fatness."* (Ps. 65:11)
7. *"Slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy."* (Ps. 103:8)
8. *"Always in a good thing."* (Gal. 4:18)
9. *"So far hath he removed our transgression from us."* (Ps. 103:12)
10. *"Striving against sin."* (Heb. 12:4)

#### LEPERS

1. By washing seven times in the Jordan River (2 Kings 5)
2. The pouring of the precious ointment on Jesus (Matthew 26:6–13).

3. Yes (Matt. 10:8)
4. One (Luke 17:15)
5. Where are the nine? (Luke 17:17)
6. "Unclean, unclean!" (Lev. 13:45)
7. Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:18–21)
8. So that the people might hearken to his voice, knowing that God was with him (Ex. 4:5–6)
9. Because she spoke against Moses for marrying an Ethiopian (Num. 12:1, 10)

#### PROVERBS

1. *"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."* (Prov. 16:18)
2. *"The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?"* (Ezekiel 18:2–3)
3. *"Honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones."* (Prov. 16:24)
4. *"If it be found in the way of righteousness"* (Prov. 16:31)
5. He correcteth (Prov. 3:12) He chasteneth (Heb. 12:6)

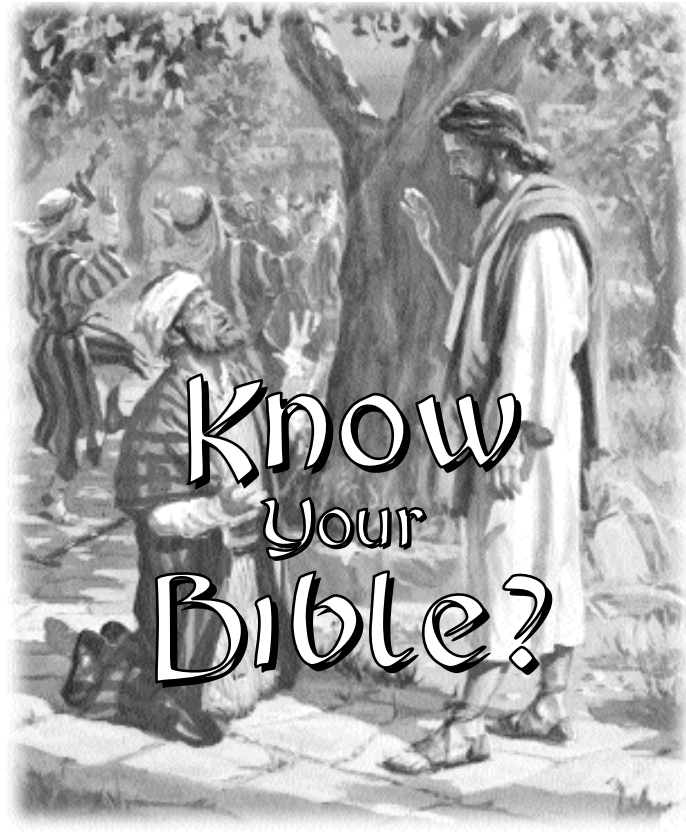
#### KINGS

1. Rehoboam (1 Kings 12:6–8)
2. Solomon (1 Kings 1:39; 6:1, 37–38)
3. Saul (1 Sam. 28:7–8)
4. Hiram king of Tyre (2 Sam. 5:11)
5. Balaam (Num. 22:5–7)
6. Belshazzar (Dan. 5:30–31)
7. Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:7)
8. Nehemiah (Neh. 1:1, 11; 2:1)
9. Ezra (Ezra 7:11–14)
10. Herod (Agrippa I) (Acts 12:1–4)
11. Jehu (2 Kings 9:24)
12. Ahab (1 Kings 22:39)
13. Solomon (2 Chron. 1:8–11)
14. Saul (1 Sam. 9:2; 10:23–24)
15. David (1 Sam. 16:1, 11–13)
16. Belshazzar (Dan. 5:27–30)

#### SONGS

1. Revelation 15:3
2. Moses (Ex. 15:11)
3. Miriam (Ex. 15:21)
4. Hannah (1 Sam. 2:3)





# Know Your Bible?

## FINISH AND LOCATE THE VERSE

1. "The goodness of God" \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the rest of Christ's saying, about giving and receiving "\_\_\_\_\_?"
3. What is the verse in Psalms that ends, "all ye land's"?
4. "O thou that hearest prayer," \_\_\_\_\_
5. Finish the promise in Micah: "They shall sit every man \_\_\_\_\_"
6. "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness \_\_\_\_\_"
7. "The Lord is merciful and gracious, \_\_\_\_\_"
8. "It is good to be zealously affected \_\_\_\_\_"
9. "As far as the east is from the west \_\_\_\_\_"
10. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood \_\_\_\_\_"

## LEPERS

1. How was Naaman healed of his leprosy?
2. What outstanding event in the Gospels happened in the house of Simon the leper?
3. Could the Apostles cure leprosy?
4. When Jesus healed ten lepers, how many came back to thank Him?
5. What short question did Jesus ask concerning the others?
6. What did the law demand that lepers should call out, to avoid contact with others?
7. What king was punished with leprosy, because he arrogantly tried to usurp the place of the priest at the altar?
8. God once gave Moses a temporary leprosy. Why?
9. Why was Miriam stricken with leprosy?

## PROVERBS

1. What is the proverb about pride and a fall?
2. What proverb about grapes did Ezekiel refute?
3. To what does the proverb compare pleasant words?
4. Complete the proverb, "The hoary head is a crown of glory \_\_\_\_\_."
5. Finish the proverb "Whom the Lord loveth \_\_\_\_\_."

## KINGS

1. What king forsook the wise counsel of the old men who had served in the court of his father?
2. Who succeeded David as king of the Jews and built the first great temple at Jerusalem?
3. Who in his distress consulted the witch of Endor?
4. Who sent timber and skilled workmen to build David a house?
5. To whom did King Balak offer a reward if he would curse the Children of Israel?
6. Who was the last king of Babylon?
7. What king of the Jews had his eyes put out?
8. What Jew was cupbearer to Artaxerxes, king of Persia?
9. Who governed Judea under a commission from the king of Persia until superseded by Nehemiah?
10. Who put to death James the apostle and imprisoned Peter?
11. Who drew a bow and killed Jehoram, king of Israel?
12. Which of the kings of Israel built an ivory house?
13. What king chose wisdom rather than long life or riches?
14. What tall and commanding person was the first king of Israel?
15. What king of Israel was a shepherd in his youth?
16. To what king were the words spoken "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting"?

## BIBLE SONGS

1. Where does it tell about "the song of Moses and the Lamb"?
2. Who sang "Who is like unto thee O Lord among the gods?"
3. Whose song begins, "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously"?
3. Whose song begins, "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously"?
4. Who exulted, "for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed"?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 8



# Is It the ***BEST RESPONSE?***

by Elizabeth Kucharski

Many a situation in our everyday life can make us think about a spiritual application of our experience. Such was the case with my recent State Board Examination for my Nursing License. I would like to share with you some of my thoughts related to that experience as they can be applied to our Christian faith and practice.

As the license gives one the right to practice a certain profession and receiving it depends upon the result of the final examination, so our right to the crown of life depends on the results of our life-long test. We, who decided to pursue Christian lives, are students in God's school of life eternal, and are being tested periodically. Our tests increase in difficulty as we gain more knowledge, more understanding and more precision. We are expected to learn something from every one of them. This is the way we make progress toward the final test and our graduation to the Kingdom of God. Yes, we want to receive this particular "degree" because this is the only advancement which counts in the long run.

## **Preparation Period**

It takes years of preparation to get the knowledge and experience necessary to be prepared for the State examination. During our third year at school many of us complained about the increased complexity of test questions. Our teachers' only response was, "These are the kind of questions you will get on the Boards. You have to study more and think, and pay attention to the practice. You have to choose the best response."

That was something that bothered many of us. The best response. Out of four choices of answers to a question, there could be two, three, or even four of them right. We were supposed to choose the best response. It was not enough to have the knowledge on the subject. It was the application part which would help us to determine which was the best response. Our teachers began to test us on the practice as well. They would accept the best response only. If our choice was good, but not the best, we would not get credit for the answer.

## **Taking the Test**

Our teachers were right. We had to face such an approach during our State Boards. At least 70% of my exam questions had

***We want to graduate into the Kingdom of God—because this is the only advancement which counts in the long run.***

this sentence at the end of the question: "What is your best response?" "What is your first response?" The words were written in bold letters to make clear what the examiner intended. And so I had to choose. Sometimes I felt frustrated because the choices were difficult.

Is not this exactly what God wants us to do? He wants to see our best response. He wants us to do our best and to give our best. It seems to us that it would have been relatively easy for an Israelite to choose the best sheep for offerings to the Lord. It could be more difficult for some to actually offer them to the Lord. That was a test of giving up some material possessions. It may seem simple to us who are so blessed with the material goods. But it may not have been so easy for them.

And what about our behavior? It may be challenging to give the best response in an uncomfortable situation. What did Joseph do when explanations no longer worked? He ran out of the house to escape the sin he did not want to commit against the Lord (Genesis 39). Sometimes running out can be the best response, and the only one we can get credit for in the eyes of the Lord.

And what about our loves and desires? Says the Apostle Paul, "*The higher gifts are those you should aim at*" (1 Cor. 12:31). "*And now I will show you the best way of all,*" he continues. "*I may speak in tongues of men or of angels, but if I am without love, I am a sounding gong or clanging cymbal*" (1 Cor. 13:1 NEB).

God no longer asks His people to offer sheep or goats. Yet, He wants us to share our temporal blessings with those of His children who are in need. That, too, was a practice in Israel. God wants more than that. He requires us to feel brotherly love to those He has chosen and accepted. Such is the *best* response, the *best* way of all.

God has not given an exact "recipe" or "prescription" on how to handle any possible situation in life. Yet He has given guidelines and provided us with examples to follow so we can know what the best response is. God gives us time.

Let us consider our choices carefully, and out of many good ones choose only the best. ♦



# The Kingdom of God

- Real
- Literal
- Worldwide
- Eternal

**IS THE CHURCH THE KINGDOM OF GOD?**

**HAS THE KINGDOM COME?**

**DID THE KINGDOM COME AT PENTECOST?**

**IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD SPIRITUAL OR LITERAL?**

**DID GOD HAVE A LITERAL KINGDOM IN ISRAEL?**

**WHEN WILL THE KINGDOM COME?**



# IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD SPIRITUAL OR LITERAL?

**I**n Daniel 2:1–45, God revealed to Daniel the interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The dream included these facts: that the kingdom of God (v. 44) would be established in the days of the 4th kingdom (the first being Babylon, the second the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, the third being the kingdom of Alexander the Great; and the fourth being the Roman Empire).

"Jesus came in the days of the Roman Empire, and this forerunner, John the Baptist, announced the coming of Christ and His Kingdom (Matt. 3:2). Jesus Himself announced the coming of the Kingdom (Matt. 4:17), and also announced that Peter would open the doors of the church (i.e., kingdom, Matt. 16:13–19)."

**C**ould the Kingdom have come without the disciples realizing it?

Let us address each point.

## **WAS THE KINGDOM ESTABLISHED DURING THE DAYS OF THE ROMAN KINGDOM?**

Jesus did indeed come during the days of the Roman Empire, but if His Kingdom had been established during that time, the prophecy would not have been accurately fulfilled.

Let us look more closely at the prophecy. There were other events to happen *after the power of the fourth kingdom was gone*.

Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the image extended beyond the legs of iron. There were also *"feet and toes... partly of iron, and partly of clay"* (Dan. 2:42), indicating, by Daniel's God-given interpretation, that *"the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken."*

*"As you saw iron mixed with miry clay, they will mingle with the seed of men: but they will not adhere one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay"* (v. 43). After the time of the Fourth World Kingdom, this prophecy pictures the existence of many small kingdoms, some strong, some weak. And the prophecy says, *"In the days of these kings [the multiple small kingdoms typified by the ten toes, part of iron, part of clay] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed."* Daniel's explanation goes on to say that when the Kingdom of God is established, it will be worldwide, universal—there will be no competitive government anywhere on earth. For it will *"break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever"* (v. 44).

We have not yet seen this condition. The kingdom of Christ has not yet displaced even one human government.

Was the Kingdom set up during Jesus'

ministry or soon after? Notice that *"stone"* which was *"cut out...without hands,"* typifying the non-human origin of the Kingdom of God (it will not arise from the kingdoms of men), strikes the image not on the thighs, not on the legs, but *"upon its feet that were of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces"* (v. 34). Had the Kingdom of God been set up during the days of the Roman Empire the *"little stone"* should have struck the image on the legs of iron. But it does not strike until time has reached all the way to the feet and toes of the image.

This dramatic striking will mark *"finis"* to all human governments and misgovernments, for at this point *"the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold"* are all *"broken to pieces"* and become *"like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no trace of them was found: and the stone that struck the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth"* (Dan. 2:35).

From this point forward there will be no question as to which kingdom will prevail, how far its authority will extend, or how long it will endure. It will grow until it fills the whole earth, and *"it shall stand for ever"* (v. 44).

## **"THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND"?**

How do we understand Jesus' announcing the Kingdom in Matthew 4:17, or the words of His forerunner John the Baptist, *"Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matt. 3:2)?

When we realize that four thousand years of prophecy had preceded the first advent of Jesus and His forerunner John the Baptist, it does not seem strange that the first advent of the King should be heralded as the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Kingdom. Not that the Kingdom was set up then, but in the advent of Christ the prophecies of God had their first visible fulfill-



ment, confirming the faith of those who had believed the prophecies. With the arrival of the King, the first “component” of the Kingdom, we might say, became visible, even though He was not then the King.

It is also possible that those believing the prophecies did not know to what extent the prophecies would be fulfilled in their day. Many of the prophecies of Christ and His Kingdom telescope the time between His first and second advents, so that one reading the prophecies does not immediately see the whole plan. Even though the facts were stated, we can readily understand that those reading the prophecies were confused, thinking that Christ at His first coming would set up His Kingdom. But this was not the Divine plan, as later they learned that there was yet “a long time” until the full and final fulfillment would come (see Luke 19:11–27; Matt. 25:14; Acts 1:6–11).

## A SPIRITUAL KINGDOM?

**“The kingdom of God is not a physical kingdom (Rom. 14:17) but a spiritual kingdom. See also 1 Cor. 15:50. Only in the kingdom of God can we receive forgiveness of sins, Col. 1:13–14. Paul in this Scripture said that this had already occurred, therefore the kingdom was already in existence when Colossians was written.”**

The text in Romans 14:17 reads, “*For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.*” If we understand this text as Paul saying that the Kingdom of God was not a physical kingdom, we contradict numerous other statements by him and by other Scripture writers in which Christ is pictured as returning, setting up His Kingdom, ruling, triumphing over His enemies, etc.

What did Paul mean? Paul was setting a standard of conduct for believing Christian brethren. He was stating how brethren in Christ should treat one another because of their high loyalties to God. Everything they did was to be done as to the Lord, because they were accountable to God for all: “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ*” (2 Cor. 5:10). Paul was speaking of the way in which we serve God: “*For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men*” (Rom. 14:18). He was not in any way suggesting that the Kingdom of God was not physical.

What did Paul mean, then, when he said that “*flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*”? He explained this further in his letter to the Philippians, saying that our physical bodies must be changed into a superior physical substance, made like unto Christ’s glorified immortal body. We read, “*For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord*

## What church or government has fulfilled God’s promises for His Kingdom?

- ★ the end of war (Ps. 46:9; Isa. 2:2–4)
- ★ universal peace (Ps. 72:7–8)
- ★ universal prosperity (Isa. 65:21–23)
- ★ no more sickness (Isa. 33:24)
- ★ no more violence (Isa. 60:17–18)
- ★ no more danger or fear (Isa. 11:9)
- ★ universal justice (Isa. 60:14)
- ★ no more wickedness (Isa. 60:18, 21)

*Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile [mortal, corruptible] body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Phil. 3:20–21).*

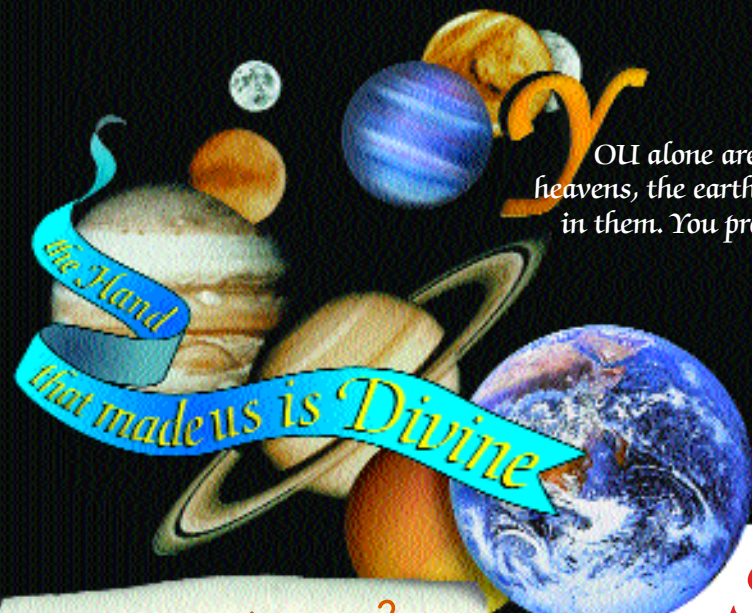
This physical transforming of the mortal body into a substance not corruptible, i.e., not subject to death, is the same thought Paul was projecting in 1 Corinthians 15, that “*this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*” Once this change is accomplished, the transformed being will not be any longer composed of flesh and blood as we know it but of a superior substance that is not subject to death, a substance that is incorruptible. This does not mean we will be spiritual in the sense of being non-material; we will still be physical beings, composed of physical substance, and know as we are known (1 Cor. 13:12), but we will have bodies like the angels (Luke 20:35–36).

We know of no passage of Scripture which says that “*only in the kingdom of God can we receive forgiveness of sins.*” Jesus, having power to read men’s minds and know the true intents of the heart, had the power to forgive sins, and He used it (see Mark 2:10; Luke 5:24; Mark 4:12). But long before Jesus the Divine arrangement for forgiveness had been clearly spelled out: “*Whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy*” (Prov. 28:13); and, “*If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will for-*

*continued on page 24*

**Our physical bodies must be changed into a superior substance, made like unto Christ’s glorified immortal body, before we can live in the Kingdom of God.**





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 the surface temperature of the earth can range 250 degrees?
- ✓ ...that the earth's inner core temperature is over 7,000° F?
- ✓ ...that at one level in the atmosphere it is a searing 3600° F.
- ✓ ...that a volcano can erupt in places where none are expected or have ever been?
- ✓ ...that much of the state of Texas was once submerged under the ocean?
- ✓ ...that the earth's crust, divided in plates, is moving, resulting in quakes and, in some cases, towering mountains?
- ✓ ...that our earth is spinning at a rate of 1,118.52 mph?
- ✓ ...that a speed of 24,856 mph is required to escape the earth's gravity?
- ✓ ...that our planet is bombarded every day with debris from outer space, most of which burns up before it strikes the earth?
- ✓ ...that a meteor left a crater 3/4 of a mile in diameter in northern Arizona?
- ✓ ...that more than 150 impact sites, many of them more than 100 times larger than Meteor Crater, have been located?

by GERALD R. PAYNE

## The Earth Forever

### How was the earth formed?

Some scientists claim that about five billion years ago our earth was formed from a massive accumulation of material bombarded by meteorites and comets. This bombardment, it is claimed, resulted in heating our planet to super-hot, which has been cooling off ever since. It is further claimed that gases released from volcanic activity and other processes formed the atmosphere, which was modified by a variety of life forms. However, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica, 1999 CD, "the question of whether the Earth began hot or cold is not definitely settled, although majority opinion favors a cold origin with intense early heating through radioactivity and the separation of the metallic core."

How was the earth formed? No one knows. Nor does the Bible explain it. From the reading of Genesis, we may gather that it was not done all at once. Nor can we believe the earth was created in 6 literal days when we read that *"These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens"* (Gen. 2:4). This "day" consists of generations! So we know immediately that it is not a 24-hour day. If we apply prophetic time (one day as a thousand years), we still are not near to a solution because geological signs place the earth's date many millions of years ago.

What is the answer? For now it must suffice to simply say that the Lord God created it. *"You alone are the Lord. You made the skies and the heavens and all the stars. You made the earth and the seas and everything in them. You preserve and give life to everything, and all the angels of heaven worship you"* (Neh. 9:6 NLT). Isaiah also speaks of this when he said, *"The Lord created the heavens. He is the God who formed the earth and made it. He did not want it to be empty, but he wanted life on the earth. This is what the Lord says: 'I am the Lord. There is no other God'"* (Isa. 45:18 NCV). (For a discussion of Genesis, see our booklet *"God's Spiritual Creation."*)

### Going down

The "thin" crust of the earth is only 5/1,000 of its diameter. In the ocean it may be less than 8/10,000. Yet this thin crust supports all life on our planet. Temperatures around the earth can range from -127° F (Vostok in the Antarctica) to +136° F (Libya in Africa). Water continually oozes out of the upper few hundred feet of this thin crust (about 19 mi. thick) creating streams, lakes and sustaining the seas and oceans as it evaporates and returns in the form of rain and ice in a never-ending cycle.

Only a few feet into this thin crust the temperature is relatively moderate, a necessity for the survival of some desert creatures, or those that inhabit the frigid cold Arctic or Antarctic regions. But as you go down it does not remain moderate for long. Less than 19 miles below the surface (the mantle area), the temperature is a searing 1800° F. Though the mantle is solid, it is flexible and can be shaped (like plastic). This differs from the crust which, being relatively cold, is brittle and can be easily



fractured (as by earthquakes).

As we proceed through the mantle the temperature continues to rise until at the earth's core it is calculated to be over 6000° F. By studying the recordings of seismic waves from earthquakes, some scientists theorized that the core is liquid. This theory was confirmed with the use of scientific instruments. Another clue was what they understand about the earth's magnetism.

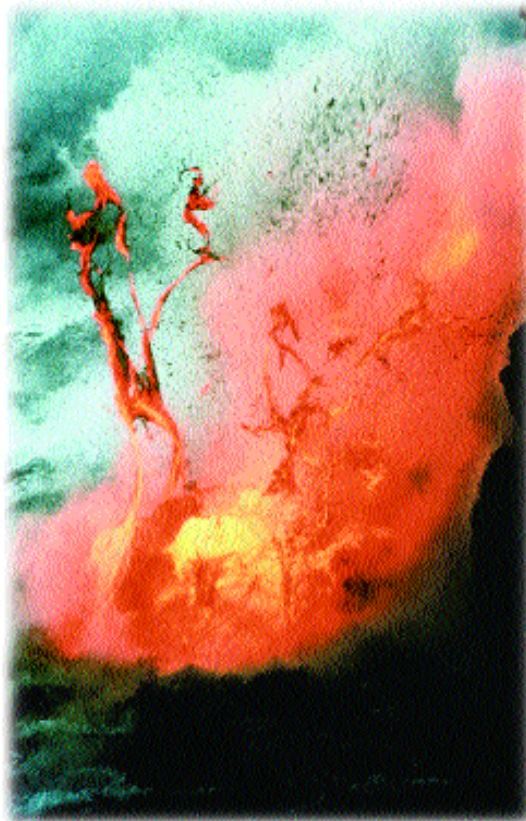
Inside the earth's core is the inner core, which is believed to be over 7000° F. It is thought that this inner core is of iron, which may be solid due to the weight of the surrounding material.

### Powerful lava

While the insides of the earth are continually moving, molten material from deep inside the earth can slowly rise and collect under the earth's cool brittle crust. If the crust gives way, a volcano comes to life. Over 500 million people live in parts of the world that are prone to volcanic eruptions. Some may have no idea that red hot lava is building pressure under their feet, getting ready to break through the surface. An example is the area of Michoacan, a state in Mexico, where there had never been any evidence of volcanic activity before. People began to feel tremors, up to 300 per day. Suddenly there was a loud crack, like thunder, and steam and gases began to spew up into the air, "right there in a flat field," explained one resident. A column of ash rose into the air almost 20,000 feet and spread almost 200 miles away. The lava began to flow 2 days later, and did not stop for 9 years. The citizens of the village near the volcano regularly swept their roofs to keep the weight of the ash from caving them in. In less than 12 months the crater had grown 1100 feet high and had killed every plant within 5 miles. While no human lives were lost, they were finally forced to give up their homes after 15 months due to the ever-creeping hot lava.

Erupting volcanoes can change day into darkness as ash and gases fill the air and block the sun. They can cause temporary climate changes for thousands of miles. If warnings are not taken serious-

ly, the flowing molten lava can claim many lives while the hot ash, perhaps as hot as 1800° F roars down the sides of the volcano at 60 mph, perhaps claiming far more lives. If there happens



to be a large glacier, on the side of the volcano, the destructive potential of the volcano is even greater. Suddenly melted from the heat, water combines with the ash and comes pouring down on a village or town, taking many lives. Even when there is no ice, torrential rains can be devastating as they swoop up the ash and result in tremendous mudslides.

### Moving continents

Land masses can move up or down over time. We read about large land masses that were once submerged under the sea, yet wonder how it could have been possible. Right in the middle of Texas, hundreds of miles from the ocean, it is difficult for campers to drive tent pegs because of underlying stone, sediment from the sea floor from millions of years ago. I have personally seen fossil remains of fish and other sea life there.

The earth's crust is divided into plates. Large continents can move great distances as if floating on water. It is

claimed that Italy, for example, traveled many miles and then slammed into the mainland. As a result, one of the largest mountain ranges in the world, the great Alps, was formed. At the present time, in the area of California, a large plate is moving slowly eastward, evidenced by relatively frequent earthquakes. The "big one" (earthquake) is expected any time within the next 30 years.

But even with the most modern equipment, it is impossible for scientists to predict when an earthquake will occur. Contrast this with the power of the God of heaven, who can make an earthquake occur at a precise moment and place. For example, when the Israelites were wandering in the desert and Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rebelled against Moses and Aaron, the Lord used an earthquake to swallow up the rebels and *"with their households, and all the men of Korah, and all their goods"* (Num. 16:1-34).

Another earthquake has been predicted to occur at a particular moment in time and it will serve a particular purpose. It will happen when Christ returns, and *"His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.... You will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!"* (Zech. 14:4-5 NASB)

### A speeding earth

While the interior of the earth is continually moving, the earth as a unit is also moving, but not so slowly. The earth makes one complete rotation on its axis every 24 hours, at a speed of 1100 miles per hour, giving us our days and nights. At the same time it is revolving around the sun at 67,000 miles per hour. At the same time the solar system is moving in the Milky Way Galaxy at a speed of 559,000 miles per hour, and the Milky Way Galaxy itself is moving in the local group of galaxies.

How does all this motion occur simultaneously, and each keep the right



distance from the other, and the balance of life on earth continue? Who can deny that the vast creation came into being by intelligent Design beyond our fathoming?

What keeps us from being hurled off into space with all this motion? It is another law designed by our Creator, the law of gravity, pulling continually to hold us on the earth.

### **Our atmosphere**

A very thin layer, about 7 miles thick, contains 90 percent of all the life sustaining gases and is the source of our weather. At the surface, the atmosphere consists of 78% nitrogen, 21% oxygen, the other 1% being a mix of many other gases in small amounts. Gravity holds these gases close to the earth's surface. (Did this perfect combination that supports life come about by chance?)

The atmosphere is classified by scientists as having different layers. As a rocket blasts into outer space it first travels through the Troposphere at the earth's surface, then through the stratosphere, where the temperature drops below freezing. As the craft proceeds through the Mesosphere, the temperature plummets to more than 100 degrees below zero. The craft is now 55 miles above the surface of the earth. Then things begin to be a little more comfortable as the temperature begins to climb. But it isn't comfortable for long. In the Thermosphere, which extends up to 435 miles, the vehicle must pass through a searing 3,600 degrees. The next layer, the Exosphere, has less air and is constantly losing molecules to outer space.

God's space travelers (His angels) can come and go through the atmosphere without harm from cold or heat, or without suffocation for lack of oxygen. Isn't it within the realm of reason that earthborns will someday have the same privilege, when they are made like the angels? (Luke 20: 35-36).

### **Danger ahead**

Outside the range of the earth's atmosphere there are more dangers—from meteors, debris, and comets.

Every day, rocks the size of softballs strike our atmosphere. Every few years, debris the size of houses comes thundering toward us.

It is said that we live in a cosmic shooting gallery, we're being hit with

everything from the size of a pea to the size of a house. Fortunately, most burn up before reaching the earth. But some don't. One such is the Meteor Crater in a plateau of north Arizona, where a meteor hit about 50,000 years ago. While the meteor was only 1/2 mile across, it made a crater 3/4 of a mile in diameter. The mass of iron was estimated to weigh 1/2 million tons and it removed 200 million tons of rock on impact. It is estimated that the meteor sped across the landscape at 25,000 mph, creating winds of 1,000 mph which destroyed all life within a hundred square miles. Such an impact could easily destroy an entire city. More than 150 impact sites have been located on earth, many more than 100 times larger.

### **The earth is not doomed!**

Will the earth someday perish from some cataclysmic blast from outer space? or from some other catastrophic event or pollution? Some even think it is inevitable that a nuclear holocaust will destroy all life on our planet. What should we think about these negative forecasts? Should we be alarmed?

Those who make these claims have been challenged by One of higher authority, the Lord Himself. What does He have to say?

It was promised long ago, "*the meek shall inherit the earth*" (Ps. 37:11). This promise could not be true if the earth

will someday be destroyed. It was Christ who taught us to pray, regarding the Kingdom of God, "*Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*" (Matt. 6:10 NASB). The statement in Ecclesiastes is positive: "*One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever*" (Eccl. 1:4).

Did the God of heaven create the earth in vain? Not according to Isaiah. Speaking for God he wrote, "*For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else*" (Isa. 45:18). Could it be that God, knowing there would be those declaring an end to the earth, caused these words to be penned? He did not create it in vain. And these words are backed by the Almighty Himself, "*I am the Lord; and there is none else,*" as if to say, who are you to declare otherwise? "*God, the Lord, created the heavens and stretched them out. He created the earth and everything in it. He gives breath and life to everyone in all the world*" (Isa. 42:5 NLT).

"*Before the mountains were created, before you made the earth and the world, you are God, without beginning or end.*" (Ps. 90:2 NLT). What do we know, humans of few years, as compared to a Creator without beginning or end, a God who has had mercy "*from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them*" (Ps. 103:17-18)? If His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, it seems that there have been many other worlds long before this earth ever came into existence. Surely He can sustain our little planet we call home.

Yes, our foundation is sure; this earth will stand forever. Yes, our foundation is sure—neither will we be moved if we have built on the solid Rock, and that Rock is Christ. ♦

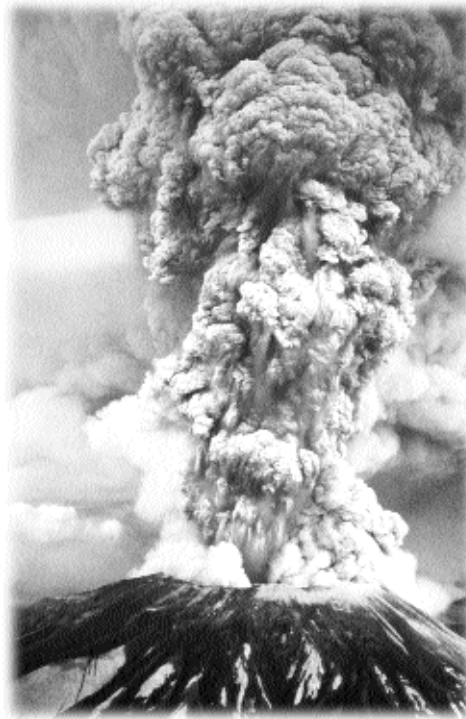
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## Where Are You?

continued from page 5

These people excelled in architecture, astronomy, mathematics; but today their descendants are an unknown, unlettered people...not asking much of themselves, or of the world; and not getting much. A light went out."

All the lights of this world are going out. Soon the light from God will be the only light. Truly, "*the things which are seen*"—the civilizations, the cultures, the people, with all their petty goals—"are temporal."

But the Word of the Lord comes to tell us that this is not all there is. There are other—far more important—*unseen realities*.

Where are we in laying hold of these unseen realities? Are we fixing our minds on them and keeping them there?

What stands between us and the great goal before us? Can we say with Paul that *nothing* can interfere with the fixed reality of our hope? Can we say that "*though our outward man perish*," yet our inner man is being constantly "*renewed day by day*"?

Here is mind-stretching potential for each day. Here is a call to focus on the eternal, not the temporary, because only the eternal really matters.

We need to think often of the day when the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and the dead in Christ shall rise (1 Thess. 4:16–17). For as surely as we are breathing this moment, that trumpet *shall* sound, our day of probation *shall* end, and all the wonderful events we have anticipated will come to pass. Our King will arrive, and time will merge into eternity. He is coming. It is the sure promise of God.

What does this reality mean to us? It means that *now* is the accepted time, now is our day of salvation. Now is the time to "*seek the Lord, while he may be found*," for the time is coming—is near—when He will *not* be found. Has He not warned, "*My Spirit shall not always strive with man*"? (Gen. 6:3).

Are we ready for that great, that awesome event? Are we preparing for it in every way, mentally, morally, spiritually? Are we thinking about it so con-

stantly that it cannot possibly come upon us unawares?

Are we preparing so steadily that we will be ready to welcome our Lord with confidence when He arrives?

This was the prayer and plea of the apostle John to his brethren: "*And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming*" (1 John 2:28). What is the secret of this confidence? It lies in abiding, abiding in Him. Here is constancy: constantly abiding; never leaving, never wandering, never allowing anything which He forbids. If such is our desire, if we are really getting ready, the nearer ready we get, the greater will grow our eagerness. And why not? For everything that comes with Christ will mean greater joy and happiness and a vastly better life than the best we can imagine now. "*The things no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all this God has promised for those who love him*" (1 Cor. 2:9).

Surely there is nothing terrifying in such a promise! Who would want to run and hide from such wonderful joy?

Our confidence, our assurance in that day will depend entirely upon our readiness. The apostle Paul personally prepared for this. He was working, he wrote to his brethren, that he might "*rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain*" (Phil. 2:16). Again he wrote to his brethren, "*According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed*" (Phil. 1:20).

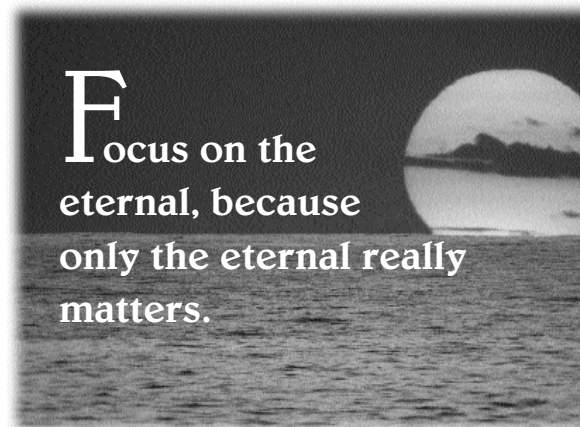
Thousands of years earlier the patriarch Job had the same longing: "*If you will turn your mind to God and stretch your hands to him, if sin you banish from your life, and evil from your house, then you can face him unashamed, you may be firm and fearless*" (Job 11:13–15 Moffatt).

So let us ask ourselves this question *before* we hear it from the voice of the Lord, *before* He calls us to account: "Where are you?" Where are you in perfecting self-control, purity, and love? Where are you in maintaining a steady, onward course toward the Kingdom? Where are you in keeping your mind fixed on all that is good, and true, and noble, and pure? Where are you in keeping a calm, patient, radiant, Christ-

like spirit whatever comes or goes?

Years ago a father shared with his son this wise advice, that one of the great tests of human character is found in making the critical choices of life, and rejecting many apparent "opportunities" that lurk in one's surroundings. "Your challenge," he told him, "will not be in separating out the good from the bad, but in grabbing the *best* out of all the possible good."

What do I love? What do I prize above all else? What do I long for more



than anything in this world? What do I esteem, what do I value? In short, where am I?

The Lord will come. Let this truth come home to each of us with special vigor. The Lord will come and call us to account. Wherever we are, however far from Him we may have tried to run, His penetrating question will reach our ears: "Where are you?"

And we will know immediately if we have tried to hide, if we have tried to avoid facing the reality of these things, that we cannot. We cannot hide from God. We cannot run away from the great things that are coming. We are committed. His all-seeing eye will search us out, and we shall be judged by the things we have done.

Contrast Adam's response to the voice of the Lord with that of the young Samuel. He, too, heard the voice of the Lord calling, and in the dead of night. But there was no fear for Samuel, no terror, no wanting to run and hide; only an anxious expectancy, only an eager and ready "*Here am I!*"

God grant that this may be your answer and mine. ♦



# FAITH *in Action*

by RUTH E. SISSON

Bible Text: Acts 3:1–11 NIV

- 1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon.
- 2 Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts.
- 3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money.
- 4 Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!"
- 5 So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.
- 6 Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."
- 7 Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong.
- 8 He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.
- 9 When all the people saw him walking and praising God,
- 10 they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.
- 11 While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade.

## "WHAT I HAVE I GIVE YOU"

 READ ACTS 3:1–11

### **The Healing of the Lame Man**

After Pentecost the disciples continued preaching in the Jewish synagogues and temples. Why did they go there? Because that was where serious-minded people who believed in God assembled. Someone has said that the first rule for successful fishing is to let down your line where the fish are. Those who already believed in God and knew of the coming Messiah should be most ready to hear the message of the Apostles.

So we find Peter and John going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the "ninth hour," or 3 o'clock in the afternoon. At the gate called Beautiful—probably facing the east side of the temple area—they found a lame beggar.

Luke tells us a bit of the tragedy of this man's life. He had been lame from birth. Think what this had meant to his family. His parents looked at their little child, and saw that his legs were not right. As months passed the defect became increasingly evident. He could not stand, he could not learn to walk. Think what that meant to the child. He could never run or romp, he could never do anything "normal" like his friends. Everywhere he went he had to be carried. There had never been a day in this man's forty-plus years when he had not been a burden to somebody. He could not walk, he could not work. All he could do was sit there and beg, and hope that his plight would provoke pity.

If one had to beg, the temple was probably as desirable a spot as any. A beautiful place, many people passed as they went in to worship. And one would hope that they would be people who had some heart. If they missed seeing the beggar on their way in, they just might see him on their way out.

As Peter and John went by, all the man asked was a coin or two to help him buy a crust of bread.

No doubt the beggar had heard about these two men and the excitement that they had created in the city. But the beggar had no interest in anyone's preaching. All he knew was that he was hungry, and that he needed to beg if he was to eat. His life had been reduced to that—an outstretched palm, a



pitiful look, a wailing plea.

The Jewish religion had nothing more than this to offer him. They found him a beggar, and left him a beggar.

But Peter's approach was different. *"Look at us,"* he said. The man looked up, hoping against hope that they would help him, probably not lifting his thoughts any higher than the wish for pity and coins.

Then Peter said, *"Silver and gold I do not have."*

Can't we see the beggar's face fall? He needed money, and when there was no money, there was no hope.

But Peter continued. *"What I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk"* (3:5–6). The lame man listened. Nobody had ever said anything like that to him before. He was stunned. The words didn't seem to make sense. He *couldn't* walk!

Peter, reading his near disbelief, held out his hand to show that he was serious. The beggar took it. As Peter lifted him to his feet, the beggar felt his feet and ankle bones receive strength. *"He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God."*

1. How was the healing of the lame beggar different from many healings that are claimed today? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where did the healed man go immediately after being healed? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Whom did he thank and praise? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Why was this lame beggar an outstanding candidate for healing? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the purpose of the Apostles' healings? \_\_\_\_\_

The healed man went with the believers into the temple, and praised God with them.

The multitudes were astonished.

Peter and John and the other Apostles did not do miracles in secret. The multitudes saw and were amazed *"and were filled with wonder and amazement."* This beggar was a striking confirmation of the power of God. Everybody knew him, knew his wretched life, knew exactly where he sat and begged day in and day out. He was almost as much a part of the temple as was the gate Beautiful. Now he was able to show the world the miracle he had received. Now people met him where they had never seen him before, where they never expected him to be—inside the temple praising God.

It was great evidence for the Apostles' cause. There was just no question about the fact that God was behind their preaching—no human hand could perform such a dramatic and instant cure!

## PETER'S NEXT SERMON



READ ACTS 3:12–16

The lame man who had been healed quickly became a conversation piece. What had happened? Why had the Apostles chosen him to be healed rather than one of another hundred cripples in the city? Was he more holy than they? And how did they do it? Did Peter and John have some special power of their own to make this man walk?



Take heed

### How Quickly Cured?

Notice that the lame man's cure was not gradual, it was instantaneous. Peter and John did not send the man home to gradually gain strength. The man immediately rose to his feet, and went jumping and leaping. He was free! Suddenly, the world was his. He could run home, he could go wherever he wished.

### Bible Text: Acts 3:12–16 NIV

12 When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"

13 The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.

14 You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you.

15 You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

16 By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.





A closer look

### Sacrifice or Murder?

Many people today look upon Jesus' death as a voluntary sacrifice for the sins of the world. Peter said bluntly, "you killed the author of life." It was murder, and they were guilty.

#### Bible Text: Acts 3:17–26 NIV

17 "Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders.

18 But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer.

19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

20 and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus.

21 He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

22 For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you.

23 Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.'

24 "Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days.

25 And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.'

26 When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

It was a subject worthy of a sermon, and a crowd gathered to hear what Peter would say. But Peter surprised—and probably disappointed—them. He did not talk about the healing—everyone could see that. Rather, he turned the attention of the crowd toward Jesus.

First, he told them plainly that he and John were only ordinary men, who had nothing to do with the healing of the lame man. In one trenchant statement Peter demolished all the claims of so-called healers who claim to work miracles and accumulate merit and money for their abilities.

What Peter wanted to talk about was not the healing but the responsibility of those who had condemned and crucified Jesus. Swiftly he zeroed in on their wrong. *"The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you"* (3:13–14 NIV).

What made the crime so dastardly? Jesus was the Holy One, the sinless One, the Son of God. Never before had anyone lived a life so pure and upright as had He. Who else could say, *"I always do those things that please him [the Father]"*? (John 8:29). Of who else could it be said, *"He committed no sin"*? (1 Pet. 2:22 NIV).

Peter took them back to the scene of the trial only a few months earlier, the mob scene in which some of them had played a part. They had had their choice: the Holy One, or Barabbas. They had chosen the murderer. Could a crime be greater?

*"You killed the author of life"* (3:15 NIV). The enormity of their sin had to be brought home to them.

Then Peter went on immediately to say how God undid their wrong. *"But God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this"* (3:15 NIV).

5. What was the core of Peter's sermon? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think he spoke with so much conviction and power? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Why did the Jews resist and oppose Peter's message? \_\_\_\_\_

7. In what way had they (the Jews) fulfilled the Scriptures? \_\_\_\_\_

The more Peter said, the more uncomfortable was his message. No doubt some among his audience had personally known the soldiers who had been guarding Jesus' tomb, who had been paid handsomely to keep quiet. The officials hadn't wanted to know the facts—then or now. If only they could silence these Apostles, who were determined to bring the whole issue back to life again!

Peter went on: *"Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer"* (3:17–18 NIV).

They had fulfilled the Scriptures without even knowing it! The Jewish people always prided themselves on their knowledge of Scripture. But they were as ignorant of its truths as those whom Jesus charged as *"blind leaders of the blind"* (Matt. 15:14).

### **Confusion about the Messiah?**



READ ACTS 3:17–26

Probably what caused the greatest confusion among the Jews was their inability



ity to distinguish prophecies regarding Christ's first coming from those of His second coming. So Peter's next message is about Jesus' second coming, which he calls "*the times of refreshing*." His focus is on what they must do: "*Repent. 'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord'*" (Acts 3:19).

Peter knew that as a nation there would be no repentance, but he was speaking also to individuals, both then and later, who would read and take heed.

8. Why did Peter preach repentance? \_\_\_\_\_

Who before Peter had preached repentance? \_\_\_\_\_

We today still need to repent and "*be converted*" that our "*sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come*."

Repentance does not change the past, but God has promised that our sins will be wiped out if we repent and turn from them. This is the high point of Peter's message: "*Repent...that your sins may be blotted out*." We need to repent so that our sins can be blotted out.

When Jesus returns, He will come with power to put down iniquity and exalt righteousness.

Why repent? Because "*He shall send Jesus Christ*,"—the Judge, the Conqueror, the King—just as all the prophets have foretold (Acts 3:20-21).

Why is the second coming so important? That second coming will mean a time of a) restitution of all things and b) a time of retribution (vs. 22-24). Christ is coming to restore and to repay. He will restore the power of the Holy Spirit, He will subdue all the forces of evil, and set up His eternal Kingdom worldwide.

To reinforce his message Peter appealed to Moses as unimpeachable authority: "*For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people'*" (Acts 3:22-23 NIV). The quotation is from Deuteronomy 18:15 and 19, a passage well known to his hearers. Peter was saying that prophet had come! Jesus was that prophet, and they had heard Him.

But in hearing they had not heard, "*For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes*" (Matt. 13:15 NLT).

Peter appealed to other prophets also, even "*all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days*" (3:24 NIV).

9. In rejecting Jesus, why were they also rejecting Moses? \_\_\_\_\_

10. What other prophets foretold the coming of Jesus—His birth, ministry, death, resurrection and coming Kingship? \_\_\_\_\_

Peter was speaking to an audience thoroughly familiar with these prophecies. He did not need to rehearse every one. They knew, and they could recall them. Suffice it to say that there was unanimous testimony among the prophets that Jesus would come, that He would be rejected, that He would ascend to heaven, and that He would return.



Take heed

**"Repent!"**

Repent may mean simply to change one's mind, but in the context of Scripture it usually includes changing one's life.

Far easier is it just to change one's mind. But a change of mind must result in a change of life or it is not repentance.

**“Repent...and be converted, so that your sins may be blotted out.”** — Acts 3:19

★ **Why repent? Because Jesus is coming!**



Insight

**Sins "Blotted Out!"**

The ancient art of writing on papyrus used an ink that did not bite into the papyrus, it simply lay on top of it. To erase the writing one could take a wet sponge and wipe it away. So God promises to "wipe off" the record of our sins when we truly repent and turn from them.



Did you know...

**"From Samuel"**

The prophet Samuel lived during the transition between the judges and the kings of Israel, and he was seen as the first in a succession of prophets. He anointed David king, founding David's royal line, from which the Messiah eventually came. All the prophets pointed to a future Messiah.





Take heed

### Repent, Repent!

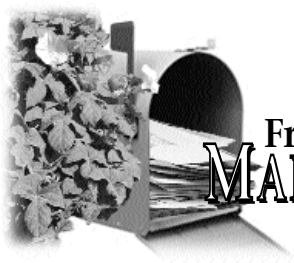
John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus by preaching repentance. The Apostles' message of salvation also included the call to repentance—acknowledging personal sin and turning away from it.

Many people want the benefits of being identified with Christ without admitting their own disobedience and turning from sin. The key to forgiveness is confessing our sin and turning from it (see Acts 2:38).

Of all people, they were the most familiar with the prophets, for, as Peter said, *"And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed'"* (3:25 NIV). They were without excuse. Of all people they should have recognized the Messiah, He who was among them healing their sick, cleansing their lepers, raising their dead. They were the very children of the prophets, they were Abraham's own descendants.

But even though they rejected the Messiah, and crucified Him, God's plan was going forward. He would yet return as King of the earth. Such was Peter's message.

*to be continued*



## From the MAILBOX

### BIG Family

I have been thinking lately of the condition of the world and how it fulfills the ancient prophecies. You recall how Jesus said that in the last days men's hearts would be failing them for fear of the things coming on the earth. Ever since I can remember people have been fearful of a nuclear war. As believers, we know that God would not allow the earth to be devastated by nuclear war, but it is a valid fear to many people. But now it is reported that people are more fearful of violent crime than of the threat of nuclear war.

What is the human answer to the problem of violence? Some say we need more laws. But the lawless will ignore the laws and continue in their lawlessness. Others will say we need more police protection, but they don't want to pay more taxes to pay for more police. So the whole discussion becomes a tangled up mess. But did not the ancient writers say it would be so in the last days?

We Christians have no need to fear because we know why the world is as it is, and we also know that it will not continue this way very much longer.

Soon Jesus will return from heaven and, as we read in Malachi 4, when He is finished, all the wicked will be as stubble and as ashes under the feet of the righteous.

Many today are trying to make the world better, but they lack the authority and the ability to do the job. But soon Someone will arrive who can put an end to this reign of wickedness.

God's people on this earth are so few in number, but I remember reading in the *Message* a few years ago that though believers today may be few in number they are actually part of the biggest family in the universe—God's family! If we prove worthy, all the numberless angels of heaven and all of earth's billions of immortalized inhabitants will someday be *our family*! What an illustrious family to call our own!

Let us daily work hard to become worthy of being an eternal member of God's family.  
*S. Kincannon, Tennessee*

### On Being Christlike

To be a Christian one must be Christlike. We need to keep this goal first and foremost in our minds and hearts at all times, one for which we daily strive. Only in this way can we hope to be selected as one of God's children, worthy to be in the new Kingdom which will soon be established on earth.

Let's watch our thoughts and our feelings and all we are saying and doing, *"whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, with an eye single to God's honor and glory"* (1 Cor. 10:31).

O child of God, guard well your eyes  
From anything that stains the heart;  
Forsake those things that soil the mind—  
Your Father wants you set apart.

We must *"set our minds on things above, not on things on the earth"* (Col. 3:2).

Oh, what a power our God will give,  
To all who now will godly live  
And do His bidding great or small  
As did the dear beloved Paul.

Then, oh, what joy and peace Divine  
Can all be yours, can all be mine!

Godliness is the master key to all future blessings.

*H. White, Missouri*

### Be Alert

We need, especially these days, to be constantly *alert* to our Christian duties.

It's so easy to let things drift amidst our full, daily activities. However busy we might be, we need to start each day afresh to work on that "old" nature, for we certainly are not immune to temptation. And we have that awesome responsibility to prepare ourselves for the soon coming of Christ's Kingdom on earth.

At times, I feel as if I've reached my limit. Then I think of 1 Corinthians 10:13. God is arranging our lives, and is working out His purpose.

We may not fully realize it at the time, but the things we go through are preparing us to become better and better. God will not overlook our labor of love.

Do you realize that we are to be more helpful to our brothers and sisters in the Lord than to our own natural family? Galatians 6:10 says, *"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith"* (KJV).

I especially like this sentence: "We don't need more to be thankful for, we need to be more thankful."

I need not tell you how materialistic our society has become. The call seems to be MORE, MORE, MORE! In reality, more is not always better. There is no satisfaction in things.

You perhaps have heard the saying (though not in the Bible):

*"Only one life, it will soon be past  
Only what's done for Christ will last."*

All of our accomplishments mean *absolutely nothing*. Only what we have done for Christ will have any eternal value. It behooves us then to get our eyes off surrounding circumstances, and keep our hearts and minds tuned to a higher plane.

*R. Cubbage, Virginia*



# The Parable of the Wineskins

**T**hroughout Jesus' ministry, one of the most common questions that He was asked was: "Who do you think you are to break our traditions?"

Jesus' response to these questions, as often was, was with a parable. In fact, He gave them two very brief parables. One parable was simply about a patch on a coat. The other parable about the wineskin was also a familiar picture. In these two parables, Jesus describes the nature of the religion that He had come to place in our hearts.

Too often we cling to the old and the familiar, and we will not give way to the new.

Sometimes our religious traditions are contradictory to the very mind and Spirit of God. In the ministry of Jesus, we find that some of the harshest words He ever spoke were leveled against the religious leaders.

Sometimes we also seek to build our religion on our experience alone, by declaring that: "My experience with God is all I need." So, we build fences around those thoughts and experiences, blocking out any other kind of new experiences that challenge us to new ways and new directions.

However, we need to be flexible. For example: In Jesus' day, wine was sometimes placed in the skin of an animal, such as a goat skin. Then it was covered with pitch, and the neck was secured so that the wine would not spill out. As the wine fermented, the skin, being new, was flexible and expanded. The new skin could stand the strain caused by the fermenting wine. If one had

used an old skin that had become dry, and someone had put new wine into it and the wine began to ferment, the old skin would burst and the wine would be lost.

What Jesus is saying is that His Gospel is the new wine. In other words, He is saying that His Gospel could not be contained in old skins, whether the old skins of Judaism or any old, unregenerate nature. His gospel exploded old wineskins then, and down through the centuries since then it has continued to shatter old wineskins. He is telling us to become more than we are. No old skins can ever contain the freshness of His law as it pervades our lives. Faith has power. Faith is always dynamic, not static.

True Christians know that the Gospel is a gospel of joy! Jesus responded in these parables to the criticism that some had directed against Him when they accused Him of drinking and eating too much with His friends. Today, just as it was then, the wine of His presence has burst the old wineskins and has given joy and invigoration.

**As the old wineskins couldn't hold the new wine, so the power of Jesus' message cannot be contained in the old nature.**



Woman washing out a wineskin in a river.

from: *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*

His Gospel is original! It explodes old traditional man-made systems. It comes to us with a freshness that is filled with joy and hope.

The good news is that we as individuals do not have to remain as we are.

But He (Jesus) also came to shatter the superficial and the worldly. Remember this—Jesus Christ did not come simply to *reform* but to *transform*. His Word brought newness of life.

There are always those who want to build walls or fences around our visions and look down or back. But this is not God's way. God is calling us to look ahead. The Gospel of Jesus is always fresh, always new, and most of all vital! His Gospel challenges us to lift our wings and fly upward into new realms of service and obedience. ♦



## The Kingdom of God

*continued from page 13*

give their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14). This condition was outlined long before the establishment of the New Testament Church on the Day of Pentecost.

David also expressed gratitude for having received forgiveness from God, and this, again, was long before the establishing of the Church at Pentecost (Ps. 25:18; Ps. 32:1, 2, 5).

### TRANSLATED "INTO THE KINGDOM"?

A careful reading of the passage in Colossians 1:13–14 does not suggest that the "kingdom of his dear Son" was then in existence. It reads, as rendered in the King James Version, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." The preposition translated "into" is the Greek *eis*, and has for its meanings "into," also "in order to, for, with a view to, for the use of or service of, with reference to" (*Thayer's Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*). As rendered in *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*, the text reads, "Who delivered us from the dominion of darkness and changed us for the kingdom of the Son of his love."

Paul is commenting on his brethren's having been delivered from an evil world and placed in a new environment, so to speak, with a new outlook, new interests, a new life, all in preparation for the Kingdom of His dear Son. There is not even the slightest suggestion that it had already been established then. Later in the same passage he speaks of their living in "hope," and "hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" (Rom. 8:24–25). Paul often emphasized the standard of conduct required of those who were to be heirs of salvation stating it as a condition to be met by all, who would share in the Kingdom, not saying they had already "arrived." He said the same of himself personally (Phil. 3:13–14).

### CHRIST REIGNING FROM HIS KINGDOM IN HEAVEN?

**"Christ is now reigning over His kingdom from heaven at the right hand of God: Acts 2:29–33, 1 Cor. 15:20–28, Eph. 1:15–23, 1 Tim. 6:13–16."**

All of these passages refer to Christ being at the right hand of God, which indeed He is. But not one of them says that He is at the same time "reigning over His kingdom from heaven."

Let us look at the passages individually. Acts 2:29–33 speaks of those who were baptized and received the Holy Spirit power as part of the special dispensing begun at Pentecost. Accordingly they became part of the true Church. Beyond this, everything was theirs only by promise; the Kingdom was not a present reality: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). They had only the promise.

The passage in 1 Cor. 15:20–28 is part of Paul's discourse on the resurrection. In this part of it he is discussing the role of Christ the coming King, but there is no indication that the Kingdom was already at that time a fully functioning entity.

On the contrary, the evidence he presents shows it was not existing then, for when it exists, "all things" will be "put under him," and "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." As

**When the Kingdom has been established, "all things"—even death itself—will be subject to the authority of Christ. "But now we see not yet all things put under him" —Heb. 2:8.**

of then—or now—neither of these points has been realized; "all things" were not then under the domain and governance of Christ, nor had "death" been destroyed. Neither do these conditions exist now.

The book of Hebrews makes a similar statement about the subduing of all things under Christ, concluding with: "But now we see not yet all things put under him" (Heb. 2:8). In 1 Cor. 15:20–28, Paul is looking forward to the glorious day when the Kingdom will be established, when all opposing "rule and all authority and power" shall have been put down. The passage does not speak of a then-present reality but of a promise to be fulfilled "at his coming" (v. 23).

The passage in Eph. 1:15–23 speaks first of Christ's present place in heaven at the Father's right hand, then of the worldwide authority which Christ will have in the future, and lastly of His present place of authority over His people, the Church. But nothing is said about the Church being the Kingdom. Christ, says Paul, has now been exalted at the Father's right hand, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the world to come" (v. 21). Then he says further: "And hath put all things under his feet," but then goes on to immediately define His present position of authority as being in relation to His church: "and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (vs. 22–23)—He is "over all things to the church"—not to the whole world, not the Kingdom. As concerns the Church, Christ is the head, the supreme authority. "He is the head of the body, the church" (Col. 1:18).

In 1 Tim. 6:13–16, Paul is again speaking of Christ in His exalted position at the right hand of God. First he speaks of Him as earth's coming King, admonishing Timothy to "keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing



of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (vs. 14–15). This clearly describes Christ's future role, which He will fill at the time of His "appearing."

At the present time Christ is the only one of our race to have received immortality: "*Who only hath immortality.*" Christ is the "*firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming*" (1 Cor. 15:20, 23).

Then Paul goes on to describe Christ's *present* environment, with His Father in heaven: "*Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting.*" Nothing is said about His reigning over His Kingdom from heaven.

## THE "REVELATION" KINGDOM ESTABLISHED?

**"The key to the book of Revelation is found in Rev. 1:1 and 22:6, '...things that must shortly (i.e., quickly, or swiftly) take place.' Revelation is not a book of far distant future events, but the events described would take place soon.**

**"Why? Because Revelation was written to Christians who were suffering severe persecution for their faith, and they needed encouragement to realize that their deliverance would come soon, i.e., within a few years. The language was figurative (symbolic) in terms that they would understand, but which would be meaningless to their enemies. This was to protect them from even worse persecution."**

We question your statement that "Revelation is not a book of far distant future events, but the events described would take place soon"—suggesting that they would be fulfilled in the years immediately following the writing of the book, i.e., in the first or second centuries.

The book of Revelation was indeed written to describe events in the future, which must "*shortly come to pass,*" and you are correct in defining shortly "quickly, or swiftly," but the Greek word used here, *tachu*, has more reference to *speed* or *suddenness*, than to immediacy.

Over nineteen hundred years have passed since Revelation was given to John on Patmos, and which of the prophecies of Revelation have been fulfilled?

Could it be possible that the prophecies of Revelation have been fulfilled during the centuries immediately following Christ's delivery of this message?

Among the events forecast in Revelation are:

- ◆ The opening of the seven seals (Rev. 5, 6)
- ◆ The ascent into power of Jesus and His saints (Rev. 11:15)
- ◆ The standing of "the Lamb on Mt. Sion, and with him 144,000" (Rev. 14:1–3)
- ◆ The preaching of "the everlasting gospel to all who dwell on the earth" (Rev. 14:6)
- ◆ The harvesting of the fruits of the earth (Rev. 14:15, 17)

- ◆ The fall of Babylon and all that pertains to her (Rev. 17, 18)
- ◆ The marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19)
- ◆ The great battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:11–21)
- ◆ The binding of the devil, Satan, i.e., all evil (Rev. 20:1–3)
- ◆ The judgment of all who live (Rev. 20:10–15)
- ◆ The descent of the new Jerusalem out of heaven (Rev. 21)

This is just the briefest sketch of events outlined in Revelation, and who can say that any of these have already taken place?

The Christians who read the book of Revelation during the early centuries were no doubt encouraged to stand firm in their faith, knowing that they would be abundantly rewarded in the Kingdom which was to come with the Second Advent of Christ. But there is nothing indicating that anything predicted in Revelation was to take place in their day.

Furthermore, if we understand your position correctly, you believe that the Kingdom began on the day of Pentecost. If that were true, the Kingdom would have already been established prior to the time Christ sent His angel with this message to His servant John, which is the book of Revelation.

No, Revelation is a revealing of yet future events, far too magnificent and vast to describe any history that has yet taken place. The events will be cataclysmic in their effects, and worldwide. The result will be a change of living conditions for all people everywhere, everyone being compelled to bow before the new and Divine authority.

***The book of  
Revelation describes  
events far more  
magnificent and  
cataclysmic than  
anything in history.***

We look forward to that day when the Kingdom shall come, and pray earnestly that we may be ready to have a part in all the great events that will accompany it. With all our heart we look forward to the day when "*the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him*" (Dan. 7:27).

*It is coming!* ◆





## *I Won't Give Up!*

**D**id you ever start to do a job with great enthusiasm, and then when you did not immediately see the expected results, or if the obstacles were greater than anticipated, you became discouraged and quit?

"It just couldn't be done," you tell yourself.

Sometimes the difference between the one who fails and the one who succeeds is that one yields to the temptation to quit and the other resists it.

Especially is this true in the struggle to live a victorious Christian life. Too often we grow weary in well doing in spite of the fact that we are told, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). Besides, God has promised to help every wholehearted one. "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb. 13:5).

It is so easy for a weary body, a tired mind, and a heavy heart to throw in the towel and give up the struggle with the goal unachieved.

Hear is John's answer: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

With God's help I can do anything!

## *I Won't Go Back!*

**B**efore me lies the Promised Land  
Where I shall never feel  
The ravages of this old age  
And never say, "I'm ill";

**W**here tears will cease and joys begin—  
All blessings from our Lord;  
Great wonders far beyond my dreams  
Are promised in His Word.

**T**o travel with the power of flight  
That only angels share  
And feast my eyes on worlds afar  
I never knew were there.

**T**o fellowship with saints of old  
I've never met before,  
The prophets and apostles, too  
Will meet us on that shore.

**G**o back to what? A world of sin  
And emptiness and sorrow,  
A world where evil sits enthroned,  
With nothing for tomorrow?

**O**h, why go back to foolish things  
So shallow and mundane  
When I can have a better life,  
A life that's free from pain?

**I**'m pressing on, I won't go back,  
The prize I'll keep in view!  
For soon He'll come to claim His own  
And crown His faithful few.

by Melva Walton



*You're bound to touch some other life by what you say and do...so never think that when you sin it injures only you.*

*Getting the facts is only half of the job; the other half is to use them intelligently.*

*Little things, often overlooked, are big factors in winning.*

*The Lord gets His best soldiers out of the highlands of affliction.*

*Good intentions die unless they are executed.*

*The Lord doesn't take us into deep water to drown us but to cleanse us.*

*Days and weeks so quickly pass,  
We must use them, or, alas  
Soon our journey will be run,  
With our labor still undone.  
Deeds of good must now be done;  
Victories must now be won,  
Day by day, and week by week,  
If we reach perfection's peak.*

## *The Rose*

*It is only a tiny rosebud—  
A flower of God's design;  
But I cannot unfold the petals  
With these clumsy hands of mine.*

*The secret of unfolding flowers  
Is not known to such as I —  
The flower God opens so sweetly  
In my hands would fade and die.*

*If I cannot unfold a rosebud  
This flower of God's design,  
Then how can I think I have wisdom  
To unfold this life of mine?*

*I'll trust in Him for His leading  
Each moment of every day,  
And I'll look to Him for His guidance  
Each step of this pilgrim way.*

*For this pathway that lies before me  
My heavenly Father knows—  
I'll trust Him to unfold the moments  
Just as He unfolds the rose.*

*Knowing how forgetful we are, can't we bear patiently the forgetfulness of others?*

*A blessing that is shared is not halved but doubled.*

*"Watch and pray." Being on watch often changes the character of our prayers. We blunder along, and fail, and have to pray for forgiveness. Had we been more alert, it might have been a prayer for help followed by praise for victory. Isn't the prayer to be forewarned better than the prayer to be forgiven?*

*Be so busy counting your blessings that you don't have time left to complain.*

*Unless the Christian takes time every day to think of God and seek Him, he cannot serve Him. The most hurried day is exactly the time when we most need the help of God to steady and direct our soul.*





# THIS IS *The DAY...*

## **TODAY**

*I will begin with a smile and resolve to be agreeable.  
I will not criticize needlessly or maliciously.*

## **TODAY**

*I will not waste my time, because the minutes  
I wasted yesterday are lost as a vanished thought.*

## **TODAY**

*has one thing in which I know I am equal with others—time.  
All of us draw the same salary in seconds, minutes and hours.  
I refuse to waste the valuable time God has given me.*

## **TODAY**

*I refuse to spend time worrying about what might happen.  
I am going to spend my time making things happen.*

## **TODAY**

*I am determined to study to improve myself  
so that I can be prepared for what may happen tomorrow.  
I do not want to be found lacking.*

## **TODAY**

*I will concentrate on improving or correcting one thing at a time.  
In one week I will be miles beyond the person I am today.*

## **TODAY**

*I will not imagine what I could do if things were different.  
I will make a success with what I have.*

## **TODAY**

*I will act toward other people as though I knew  
this day would be my last.  
I cannot risk waiting for tomorrow.  
Tomorrow may never come.*