



# Megiddo Message

*I want to scale the  
utmost height  
And catch a gleam  
of glory bright...*



## The Word Alive

**I**f you want to make a virtue visible, bundle it up in a life. This is what Christ did.

**W**hen God wanted to make known as fully and clearly as possible the ideal life He requires, He sent Jesus Christ to *show* it, to actually *be* that ideal, the living Word of God in flesh and blood, our perfect Example.

We know from the Divine record that Jesus filled this role precisely and perfectly. The apostle John recorded that in Him "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). So fully did Jesus represent the Father's ideals that He could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). And the apostle Paul insisted that "the glory of God" was made known "in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 4:6). In Him the Word of God walked, it talked, it worked, it lived, it breathed, it moved, it taught among men. Wherever He went, the Word went because He was *the Word alive!*

Someone has said that if you want to make a virtue visible, bundle it up in a life. This is what Christ did. He *lived* the quality of life that God requires. He did not only *tell* others what to do, He *showed* them.

A word or an idea seldom has power to affect another human life until it is lived, until it is actually demonstrated in flesh and blood. This is why we fre-

quently associate people with words. When a word is spoken, what leaps into our mind is not a dictionary definition of that word but someone who is the living embodiment of the term. Take, for example, the word *optimism*. When we hear it, we do not think of an abstract quality but of a situation that makes us feel bright, buoyant, and hopeful, or of someone we know who is perpetually showing optimism.

Or take the term *discipline*. When we think of discipline, we think of certain experiences in our life that represent this word to us. Or we think of another person whom we consider self-disciplined, self-denying, self-controlled.

The thought is vital when applied to the spiritual life. It soberes and challenges us to the best that is in us. It is as simple as this: The Word was made flesh in Christ; the Word must be "made flesh" in *us*. We must make the Word of God live in our lives. We, like Christ, must transform into our own flesh and blood all the high and holy principles to which God calls us: principles of integrity, faithfulness, self-control, kindness, hope, joy, peace, patience, love, meekness. In the same way we must *not* live that which Christ did not live. We must *not* show in

(Continued on page 19)

## 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 (II Cor. 10:4-5).

### We believe

—in God, the Creator of all life, all men, and all things.

### We believe

—in the Bible as our only source of knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for the salvation of humankind.

### We believe

—in Jesus Christ the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was born of a Virgin, ministered among men, was crucified, resurrected, 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.

### We believe

—in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.

### We believe

—in humankind as providing the nucleus from which a superior, God-honoring people shall be chosen to receive the blessings of immortal life.

### We believe

—in ourselves as capable of applying the precepts and principles of the Word of God in our own lives, in this way perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

### We believe

—in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth will be filled with His glory, His people, and His will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

## Bible Quotations

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version. Other versions are identified as follows:

**NEB**—New English Bible

**NIV**—New International Version

**NASB**—New American Standard Bible

**RSV**—Revised Standard Version

**TLB**—The Living Bible

**TEV**—Today's English Version

**JB**—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition

**Phillips**—The New Testament in Modern English

**Berkeley**—The Modern Language New Testament

**Weymouth**—The New Testament in Modern Speech

**Goodspeed**—The New Testament translated by  
Edgar J. Goodspeed

**Moffatt**—The Bible, A New Translation

**AAT**—The Bible: An American Translation

## About Our Cover

Our cover photo was taken by Mr. and Mrs. Sutton at Moraine Lake in Banff National Park, Alberta, Canada.

# Megiddo Message

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The MEGIDDO MESSAGE is a religious magazine devoted to the cause of Christ, and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. Official organ of the Megiddo Church. L. T. Nichols, Founder; Newton H. Payne, President and Editor; Ruth E. Sisson, Executive Editor.

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MEGIDDO is a way of believing and living, grounded solidly in the Bible as the reliable Word of our Creator. A total view of life, the world and the universe, it sees all events, men and nations moving together toward one God-ordained climax: the Kingdom of God on earth. This has been the plan of God since the beginning. Christ will return visibly, bodily, as King, and the governments of this world will be joined to form a totally new worldwide government. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants. This is the purpose and goal of all creation.



# “Behold the Bridegroom Cometh!”

- When Is Christ Coming?
- God Sets Dates
- Who Will Welcome Jesus When He Comes?

*While we do not believe that God has revealed the day or date of Jesus' return, we admire the zeal of those who believe in it so firmly that they are willing to proclaim it widely, and we feel like joining them in echoing the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom comes" and would add, "Get ready to meet Him!"*

**L**ast fall, a great amount of excitement was stirred by the wide circulating of a book by Edgar Whisenant, called, *88 Reasons Why The Rapture Will Be In 1988*. The appointed date, according to Mr. Whisenant, would coincide with Rosh Hashana in September, 1988. But the day came and went as every other day in 1988, and there was no rapture.

Now this same author has published another booklet called *The Final Shout*, in which he says that he has discovered why 1988 was not the correct year—because of a one-year calendar error in the first century. So he and his comrades are still looking for

Jesus imminently, possibly this September. He does not make a positive prediction but a projection: that if his calculations are right, this will be the date. But right or wrong, he feels compelled to proclaim the message of Jesus' parable: "Behold the Bridegroom cometh!"

"I want to remind you," he says further, "of the responsibility we have as Christians. If you were ridiculed and mocked last year because you loved someone enough to give them this message, you need to keep the same fervent fire and desire. Remember, Jesus said we would be mocked for his namesake.

"It is definitely not our desire

to mislead anyone. However, I must announce this message when it is so obviously the last days. I can't ignore all the evidence in the Bible and in these books that point to the Lord's return. I feel if I didn't publish these books, and the Lord came, he would not be able to say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant'.

"What are the consequences if it doesn't happen? Well, I know some of the media will mock and scoff, but that doesn't really matter. What matters is that the church is made aware of the time in which we live. Jesus said that if you watch for his appearing, 'Every man that hath this

hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure' (I John 3:3)."

Mr. Whisenant then expresses his caution, acknowledging his lack of absolute knowledge as to the date. The positive fact is that "Jesus is coming, and," he adds, "it is very possible it will take place in 1989. However, if the calculation is off one or two years, then it could be next year, or the next.... Again, we have weighed the seriousness of speaking or not speaking, and we have decided that the signs of the times and the enclosed information warrant the giving forth of this message without delay, 'Behold the bridegroom cometh!'"

While we do not believe that God has revealed the day or date of Jesus' return, we admire the zeal of those who believe in it so firmly that they are willing to proclaim it widely, and we feel like joining them in echoing the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh" and would add, "*Get ready to meet Him!*"

We do not have space here to discuss the "88 Reasons..." behind Mr. Whisenant's intense expectancy, except to mention the astounding accuracy of the Bible prophecies for this age relating to social, moral, political and spiritual conditions. But if he can feel so impelled to believe, how much more should we, who stand upon a foundation rock-sure, grounded in the fulfilled and fulfilling Word of the Lord, be anxious to echo the message of our returning Lord! How much more intent should *we* be, how stirred, how alive with expectancy! God forbid that *we* should be even for a moment disinterested in what He has revealed or forgetful of the climactic age in which we are living!

Jesus Christ IS coming, and that hope is just as sure, just as real, just as certain as the sunrise tomorrow morning.

And though we know not the day, let not this fact delude us

into complacency or detract from our fervor; rather, let the imminence of the great Day keep us on tiptoe, so to speak, living every moment with greatest care, as in the presence of our Lord. Let it keep our ears and eyes open wide to every word that has been written to reveal the times and seasons, every fulfilled and fulfilling prophecy, every bell that is ringing to proclaim the glorious message that "the Day of the Lord cometh, it is nigh at hand."

### God Sets Dates

The fact that the day of Jesus' coming is not revealed does not mean that it is not fixed on God's calendar. In fact, we know that it is. Jesus Himself in saying that the date is not known to "man" or even "the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son," said that it is known to the Father (Mark 13:32).

Knowing dates in advance is God's prerogative, He who declares "the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isa. 46:10). He has a definite plan, and that plan is working out exactly according to His schedule.

Even more than this, God sets dates. He knows the future just as easily as we can know the past. And His plan is so specific and so precise that He has appointed the precise time, that is, He has set a date, for many an event in history.

For example, *God set a date for the flood*, and revealed it in advance to Noah. He told Noah that in just seven days He would begin the rain that had been prophesied (Gen. 7:4). The flood came precisely after this seven-day warning period, and the selfsame day Noah and his family entered into the ark (Gen. 7:10, 13).

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**J**esus Christ IS coming, and that hope is just as sure, just as real, just as certain as the sunrise tomorrow morning.

*God set a date for Isaac to be born*, and told it in advance to Sarah and Abraham. "My covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year" (Gen. 17:21). It happened just as the Lord had said, and "Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him" (Gen. 21:2).

*God set a date for the Israelites to come out of Egypt* and centuries in advance told it to Abram. "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years... But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again" (Gen. 15:13, 16). God told Abram, then living in Canaan, that his descendants would live in slavery in Egypt many years, but would again enter the Promised Land "in the fourth generation." This is precisely when they entered the land, the four generations being Levi, Kohath, Amram, Moses. He not only foretold the generations but also the number of years they would dwell in Egypt. "...And they shall afflict them four hundred years..." (Gen. 15:13). The prophecy came to pass just as predicted, not only to the generation but to the exact year and day. We read,

"Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt" (Ex. 12:40-41).

God set a date for the Jews to come out of Babylon, and told it in advance to Jeremiah and others who would read and understand the prophecy. "And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years" (Jer. 25:11). The servitude lasted, as was prophesied, just seventy years.

God set a date for the first advent of Christ, and told it to Daniel, Mary, Joseph, and Simeon in advance. Did Jesus arrive at the time appointed by God? We read, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). The Scriptures confirm it; Jesus came at the exact time predetermined by God.

God set a date for the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish people, and decades in advance told it to His Son Jesus. Said Jesus, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matt. 24:2). History records the fulfillment of this event in 70 A.D., when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans and every stone was removed from the Temple.

Can we think that the God who foreknew and fore-planned all these events does not know when He will once again break into the affairs of men and nations and bring to pass the things so long foretold?

God has set a date for the coming of Elijah and the end of this age, and has revealed it to all who will read His Word and be enlightened. This is His decree: "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet

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**L**et the imminence  
of the great Day  
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Lord.

before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5), and surely He knows just when He will do that sending. There is a plan and a schedule all in place. And close upon it will follow the "great and dreadful day of the Lord," also at a precise, pre-planned time. The words of the prophet Habakkuk are definite: "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. 2:3). The Moffatt Bible translates this as, "The vision has its own appointed hour...."

When Daniel the prophet interpreted the panoramic dream of the last days, he had this to say: "...there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days" (Dan. 2:28). The primary object of the King's dream was to show what would befall his kingdom after his death and to reveal the succeeding world empires, all the way to the Eternal Kingdom of Christ which would supersede all kingdoms of men. In the midst of these prophecies, he clearly states that the end time is fixed: "For at the time appointed the end shall be" (Dan. 8:19).

The apostle Paul stated the same fact clearly in these words: "...he hath appointed a day, in the which

he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained" (Acts 17:31).

The Bible is not like any other book because it is the Word of God; when it speaks, it speaks with authority. Fulfilled prophecy is solid evidence for its inspiration. Prophecy is not a haphazard guess, it is history written in advance by one who knows the future as fully—and with even more accuracy—than we can know the past.

The exact date of Christ's return is known to God, but we are confident that He did not intend for us to know it or He would have provided more exact information by which we could figure it. However, with the quantity of evidence pointing to the era of His coming, what the Bible calls "the times and seasons," can we be complacent, we who find the day coming fast and right upon us? All this information should be of primary concern to us, a piercing trumpet call to us to get ready. Never has the message been so urgent, never has the Day been so near.

### Living Believers?

The Day has been appointed, the hour fixed. Now, what about those who will be living when that hour arrives?

Here is a point that has special interest to us who are living in the era when the return of Christ is imminent. Do we have any sure evidence that there will be living believers when the great Day comes?

The answer is a resounding Yes! Equally as certain as the promise of His return is the promise that there will be living believers to welcome Him. Of course the plan includes the resurrecting of the dead in Christ, but these alone will not complete the number. The Bible indicates there will be those living and ready to welcome Him at His return. What a glorious thought—what a holy challenge!

What is the evidence? How do

we know that some will be living and believing when Christ returns? How do we know that the light of divine knowledge will be shining when the new day dawns?

Perhaps most familiar and most explicit are Jesus' words to Martha at the time Lazarus died. When Jesus said confidently, "Thy brother shall rise again," Martha's mind went immediately to the great resurrection at Christ's second advent, and she answered in full faith, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus' reply, as warmly assuring as it must have been to Martha, says even more to us who find ourselves living right on the verge of the great resurrection day. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:25-26).

Could words be more explicit? First Jesus confirmed her faith: Yes, all believers *will* be resurrected: "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." But beyond this He pointed out a select group: "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Some will be "living *and* believing." And what of these? They shall "never die."

The apostle Peter made a statement equally definite, that the light of Divine knowledge will be shining when the great Day breaks, and the light cannot shine without living light-bearers. His words

are explicit: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise" (II Pet. 1:19). The Word of God will be shining *as a light in a dark place*—how long? "Until the day dawn and the day star arise." Who is the day star? It is Christ, the "bright and morning star" (Rev. 22:16). The "sure word of prophecy" will shine as a light in a dark place *until* the arrival of the Sun of Righteousness and the dawn of a new day of Christ; there will be no interval of darkness between.

The apostle Paul also mentioned the same point. After discoursing upon the resurrection and how vitally important it is to the Christian hope, he made this positive statement: "We shall not all sleep" (I Cor. 15:51). It was as if he said, all of us will have to receive the physical change, from mortality to immortality; but *not* all of us will need to be resurrected. Looking ahead some nineteen centuries, he may have realized how much this special encouragement would be needed in an especially difficult time.

In his Second Epistle to the Corinthian brethren, Paul spoke again of this favored group. Speaking of his personal desire to live to see the coming of Christ, he wrote: "Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent [living or sleeping when Christ comes], we may be accepted of him." In other

words, *some will be present* [alive]; *not all will be sleeping* (II Cor. 5:9).

In his first letter to the Thessalonians, speaking again of the believers' hope of the resurrection, the Apostle again voices his confidence that all would not need to be resurrected; and again he speaks of the entire body of Christ as "we": "For this we tell you as the Lord's word: we who are left alive until the Lord comes shall not forestall [gain an advantage over] those who have died; because at the word of command, at the sound of the archangel's voice and God's trumpet-call, the Lord himself will descend from heaven; first the Christian dead will rise, then we who are left alive shall join them, caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (I Thess. 4:15-17, NEB). Notice how clearly he states that some will be "left alive until the Lord comes." Is it not a wonderful prospect and promise!

The same thought is expressed by the writer of the book of Hebrews at the close of chapter 10. After many admonitions to those who would be living at the end of the age—to us—he wants to make sure that we do not give up hope, even if the time seems long. "Now do not drop that confidence of yours; it carries with it a rich hope of reward. Steady patience is what you need, so that after doing the will of God you may get what you have been promised. For in a little, a very little now, the Coming One will arrive without delay"

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to every word that has been written to  
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(Heb. 10:35-37, Moffatt). The end time will be a time of special testing, but do not lose heart. "Steady patience is what you need," you [we] who will be living in that time when the arrival of Christ will *seem* to delay. It was a way of stating two facts: that the end would seem to be delayed, and that some of the believers would experience both the apparent delay and the glorious fulfillment. This prophecy is cited from Habakkuk 2:3, where the same thought is given.

Then comes the admonition especially for those who would be living at this special time: "Meantime my just man shall live on by his faith"—there will be some "just" ones living on by their faith, who will hold on to the end and be saved. "If he [those living by faith] shrinks back, my soul takes no delight in him. We are not the men to shrink back and be lost, but to have faith and so to win our souls" (Heb. 10:38-39, Moffatt).

Christian faith is an endurance test—in every age, but especially at the end of the age. Some will lose heart and "shrink back," he says. But as it is phrased in the Jerusalem Bible, "You and I are not the sort of people who draw back, and are lost by it; we are the sort who keep faithful until our souls are saved." Oh, let us read this passage and picture ourselves as the "you and I." We, you and I, can be those who keep full of faith right through to the end, and so merit salvation.

Jesus pictured several times the

positive fact that living believers would welcome Him at the time of His return. He said it by comparing the time of His coming with the days of Noah and Lot. Both periods were times of extreme wickedness, but at both times there were a few living believers who were spared. Jesus' comparison is positive: "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:26-30). There were only a few, but those few were precious—and the Lord arranged for their safety and deliverance. And, "even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Some will be faithful, some will be delivered.

In Jesus' dissertation on the last days and the prophecies leading into His second advent, recorded in Matthew 24 and Luke 21, He pictured the time of the end, when "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Then follows the promise: "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

He then speaks directly to believers who would be living at that time: "When these things begin to come to pass, ...look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:25-28). How could Jesus have

said this unless He knew there would be believers living right at the time of the end, who would be worthy of "redemption"?

Jesus continued with the parable of the fig tree, which would produce leaves in time to be bearing fruit in summer. The "fig tree," a symbol of true religion, for many years, even 1260, lay "barked and peeled" (Joel 1:7-12). Then life enters into this tree, and it "shoots forth leaves" and prepares to bear fruit. Jesus is picturing the reviving of true faith in the last days, which He follows with this positive statement: "This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled" (Luke 21:29-32). "This generation"—those who belong to the company of faithful believers—"shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled." Once it comes to life, the tree will continue to grow and bear fruit right into the new age. Never again will true religion be silenced.

Jesus' parable of the Ten Virgins also shows that some among His people will be living and ready when He comes. Some would lose faith, but others would hold on, though late the hour, their lamps trimmed and burning brightly—a symbol of due preparedness—and be ready to welcome the Bridegroom upon His return (Matt. 25:1-12).

Jesus pictured it again in His message recorded in Luke 12. Here He compared Himself to a lord who would be going away and returning. He says, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately." Some will be on the watch, ready to "open unto him immediately....Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come

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**C**an we think that the God who  
foreknew and fore-planned  
numerous events in history does  
not know when His Son will arrive on  
earth the second time?



*Today, Lord, help me.*

*I want to obey Your law all through this day.*

*Grant me Your strength,  
Your guidance,  
Your support in any difficulty or distress.*

*Help me to forgive others as I would wish to be forgiven.*

*Help me to make the same allowances for others  
that I would wish them to make for me.*

*Help me to have the same understanding for others  
that I would wish to have, were I in their place.*

*Help me to have respect always for You and Your law,  
and all those who uphold it,  
whether it be to my natural liking or no.*

*Help me today to live so close to You  
that I may, as it were, see with Your eyes,  
think with Your mind,  
and feel with Your heart;*

*Grant that I may become so like You  
that You will some day claim me for Your very own. Amen.*

forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants" (Luke 12:35-38).

Jesus knew that His coming would be later than many expected, and that some would be awake and watching, hence His warning: "If he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants." There would be a seemingly prolonged delay at the time of the end, when faithfulness would be tested, but some would see it through and be blessed.

Can we be sure? Can we know absolutely that this passage applies to *our* day? The apostle Peter asked this very question, and we

are grateful that He did: "Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing" (Luke 12:41-43). Here are words beamed directly to the era of His coming, when the "faithful and wise steward" of these last days would arise to give "meat in due season." Some, He says to us, will be watching and ready. Let that number include you.

The prophet Isaiah also pictured living believers at the time Christ should return. Picture the prophetic

drama in his words: "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isa. 25:9). Some will be there to say "we have waited for him"—some will! And these shall "be glad and rejoice in his salvation"—another positive assurance that there will be living faithful believers when He comes.

The prophet Malachi gave the same solid assurance, and we can know that he is speaking of Christ's *second* coming because of the association with Judgment—which was no part of His first advent. Speaking first of His forerunner, then of the Messiah, he

**O**h, the  
inestimable  
honor of being  
permitted to carry on a  
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of God, and at a time  
when the culmination is  
right upon us!

which was no part of His first advent. Speaking first of His forerunner, then of the Messiah, he says that "The Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple" (Mal. 3:1-2). To whom is our Lord coming? He is coming "to his temple"—and His temple is composed of true believers, those who are actively working for Him, who are being cut and shaped into stones for His eternal use.

In the fourth chapter of Hebrews is another thrilling promise of the absolute surety of God's Word. First there is a warning against unbelief, then the restating of the fact that God has prepared a rest for His people, and that rest is waiting for those of faith. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God....Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (Heb. 4:8-9, 11). What a rich and warm assurance that God's promise is sure, that all who hearken and obey His voice, *shall* enter in!

There are a number of other passages which allude to the same fact. One is in Revelation 11, in the account of the two witnesses, the Old and New Testaments and those who proclaim them. They die, but are not buried—picturing how the Lord carefully preserved His Word through the long night of the Apostasy. But at the end of

the Apostasy, the "spirit of life from God" enters into these two witnesses and they stand "upon their feet" (Rev. 11:11). Once again, the voice of true religion is heard in the land. Then, soon after they stand up, "They heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither" (v. 12). The two ages merge, the one right into the next. Truth is alive and standing when "a great voice from heaven" announces the next scene.

Another allusion to the fact that there will be living believers when Christ comes is in the allegory in Genesis: In the cool of the day, when the voice of the Lord God was heard in the garden, there were people in the garden to hear it. Adam heard—and was afraid.

And how many times are believers admonished to be faithful "until the day of Christ"—a statement that would have little meaning if *no one* were to be in that category.

Again, Jesus said that "for the elect's sake" the night of the Apostasy would be "shortened" (Matt. 24:22). If there were to be no living believers when Christ should come, this would mean that the Apostasy could recur, and what meaning would there be in "shortening" the first Apostasy for their sake!

There are still other passages of Scripture that give distinguished recognition to those who belong to the last hour of the day. In His parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16), He pictured God calling at various hours during the long day of salvation. Some answered the call very early in the morning; others came in at the third and sixth hours; more at the ninth hour, and still others at the eleventh hour. He gave one final call, still others came. But when the time for the dispensing of the rewards arrived, He commanded that the rewards be dispensed "beginning from the last unto the first" (v. 8). The last received special recognition!

The apostle Paul made the same point when comparing the different functions of the various believers to the parts of the physical body. "God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked"—the part lacking the gifts of the Spirit which he had been describing earlier in the chapter (I Cor. 12:1-11, 23-24) would receive "more abundant honour."

Oh, the honor, the inestimable honor that is ours, of being permitted to carry on a work so near to the heart of God, and in a time when the culmination is right upon us! When we think about it, isn't it amazing that the Lord would entrust such a precious mission to the likes of us! And when we look back through the wonders of eternity, we shall only wish that we had done more, that we had sacrificed more, prayed more, labored more. These are the things that will shine like diamonds on the pages of our life-record. And the "well done" of our Master will be the crowning glory that will make it all worthwhile, as it opens to us the vistas of eternity, where we shall join with millions and billions and quadrillions of God's happy sons and daughters in a life of challenge and delight that will grow more and more wonderful with every passing eon.

Is it worth it? Is it worth the long days of darkness and uncertainty, the days of testing, fighting, struggling, suffering, carrying on by faith, for a life that will go on and on and on, from glory to glory through all eternity?

These things have been written for us. Let us hear and take heed, we who are so privileged to live in this last hour of the day, right at the culmination of all that God has foretold! How pure, how upright, how diligent and full of faith we should be, knowing of a surety that we can have a share in all that God has promised.

If we just prove faithful. MM

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# The Kingdom of God: Is It Here Now?

**W**e have received the following from a subscriber:

*"I read with interest in the December 1988 Megiddo Message your explanation of 'The Kingdom Here Now?' and I respectfully disagree with your conclusion that the Kingdom of God (Christ) will be on the earth in some future time, rather than now."*

Our friend then asks that we "carefully consider" certain passages of Scripture which suggest to him that the Church is the Kingdom.

Before considering specific passages, let us look at the general teaching of the Bible about the Kingdom of God. Is the Kingdom the Church?

If we understand our friend correctly, he is saying that the Church as established on the Day of Pentecost fulfilled the prophecies of the Kingdom of God in a spiritual sense, with Christ ruling from His place at the Father's right hand in heaven.

We respectfully disagree with this position. It might be possible to say that the church is a "kingdom" in the restricted sense of being an entity, but the Church in no way fulfills the vast number of prophecies which the Bible makes concerning the literal, eternal Kingdom of God.

What does the Bible tell us about the Kingdom of God? Let us review a few basic points:

**1:** *When the Kingdom is established on earth, Christ will be on earth ruling among men, not from some distant point in heaven.*

The Bible makes a number of statements which indicate that Christ and His saints will be on the scene, i.e., on the earth administering the affairs of the new government. The Psalmist prophetically pictured both Christ's time in heaven and its duration, which would terminate in His ruling "in the midst of" His enemies. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies" (Ps. 110:1-2).

The writer of the book of Hebrews described Christ in His present position, having "sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool" (Heb.

10:12-13). Jesus is now at the right hand of God, not ruling, not reigning over the kingdoms of earth but only "henceforth expecting," i.e., waiting, looking for that time. The same word is used in Heb. 10:27 of the "looking for of judgment." It is the anticipation of something that has not yet happened. Christ will not reign until "his enemies be made his footstool." Hebrews 10:12-13 confirms the words of the Psalmist, stating the reason why Christ is presently in heaven: until the time is right, until He can come to take control, put down all human authority, and reign supreme. He could not be said to be "expecting" if He already had full authority.

The Revelator spoke of Christ *dwelling among men*. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself [Emmanuel, God with us, Matt. 1:23] shall be with them, and be their God." (Rev. 21:3-4).

The prophet Zephaniah also pictured Christ's presence *among His people*: "The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the Lord, is *in the midst of thee*: thou shalt not see evil any more" (Zeph. 3:15).



The prophet Isaiah, describing the glorious time when Christ would be reigning on earth, says, "Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee" (Isa. 12:5-6).

Again, Isaiah pictured Christ and the time when He is exalted (Isa. 33:5-6) as a time when "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty" (Isa. 33:17). He will be *seen* as a king. And should we wonder whether this is the time when He will be king, verses 22 and 24 leave no question: "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us.... And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." This condition has never existed on the earth up to this time.

Again in the book of Revelation, the Lamb, representing Christ, is pictured *with His saints*, the 144,000, and all are said to be standing on the Mount Zion, not Christ up in heaven and the saints alone on the mountain. We read: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads" (Rev. 14:1). These are the same individuals pictured in Rev. 5:9-10, who sing the new song, saying, Thou "hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall

reign on the earth." This same prophecy had already been portrayed by Zechariah (14:1-4).

Jesus told His disciples that they would eat and drink "with [Him] at [His] table in [His] kingdom" (Luke 22:29-30). He said also on the night of the Last Supper, "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29). He would eat *with them*—a statement hardly realistic if the Church were Christ's Kingdom and He were ruling it from heaven.

**2: When the Kingdom is established on earth, certain conditions will exist worldwide, and none of these conditions are satisfied by the New Testament Church.**

The Bible forecasts certain conditions which will be enjoyed by the inhabitants of Christ's Kingdom when it is established, and these benefits will prevail forever. There is no possibility that these conditions have yet been fulfilled. For example:

*No more war, and no learning of war.*

"And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall

beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Mic. 4:3).

*Righteousness practiced by all people on earth.*

"Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified" (Isa. 60:21). "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations" (Isa. 61:11).

*Universal peace.*

"In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth" (Ps. 72:7). "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isa. 32:17-18).

*No violence anywhere.*

"Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise" (Isa. 60:18).

*No more sorrow, crying, pain or death.*

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:3-4).

*No opposing or insubordinate government on earth.*

"For the nation and kingdom

*The kingdoms of the earth go by  
In purple and in gold;  
They rise, they triumph, and they die,  
And all their tale is told.*

*One Kingdom only is Divine,  
One banner triumphs high;  
It is the Kingdom of the Lord—  
And it is drawing nigh!*

that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted" (Isa. 60:12).

*No non-belonging kingdom or government anywhere.*

The government of Christ will encompass "all the earth," extending from "sea to sea"—no room shall remain for any non-belonging kingdom. "The Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one" (Zech. 14:9). "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72:8).

All the kingdoms of earth will become part of the new administration. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

The new government of Christ, represented by the "little stone" which struck the image on the feet, is said to "break in pieces and consume all these [other] kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).

*Justice for everyone forever.*

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever" (Isa. 9:7).

*Security for all people.*

"But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it" (Mic. 4:4). "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9).

*Everlasting joy, no sorrow, no sighing.*

"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain

joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10).

*God's will done on earth as it is in heaven.*

This is the promise which Jesus incorporated in His prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

Since these conditions are clearly prophesied to be "for ever" or "everlasting" once they begin, we should see them existing today if the Kingdom had come on the day of Pentecost or at any time subsequent to that time; but our world today is far from this blissful state. The contrast is too obvious to discuss.

**3:** **When Jesus comes to reign, He will come armed with Divine authority to judge between good and evil, and to destroy evil and reward righteousness.**

Paul wrote to Timothy, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (II Tim. 4:1).

Jesus Himself pictured the Divine plan in parable: He was as a nobleman going into a far country to "receive for himself a kingdom, and to return...after a long time" (Luke 19:12, Matt. 25:19).

This is why the Bible associates the judgment, the rewarding of faithful servants, the setting up of a new government, and the conquest of the nations all with the Second Coming of Christ. He is coming "with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him" (Isa. 40:10). He is coming to resurrect those who have served Him, who are sleeping in death, and they together with the living servants of God will be judged and rewarded (I Thess. 4:16-18; Luke 14:14;

**J** *esus is coming armed with Divine authority to judge between good and evil, to destroy evil and reward righteousness.*

I Pet. 5:4). These, having qualified themselves by becoming like Him, will sit with Him on His throne (I John 3:1-3). Those judged faithful will be His corulers, who sit *with Him* on the new throne (Rev. 3:21)—and there is no indication that that throne will be anywhere but on the earth (Rev. 5:10). The Bible even gives the name of the kingdom's metropolis: "Jerusalem, the city of the great king" (Matt. 5:35).

**4:** **When the Kingdom is established, all the faithful will be present together in the kingdom.**

Jesus described the Kingdom as a time when all the faithful will be present together. "...Ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God.... And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God" (Luke 13:28-29; see also Matt. 8:11). This has not been true at any time yet in the history of the church.

**5:** **The faithful believers are said to be "heirs of the Kingdom," and heirs are not in possession of their inheritance.**

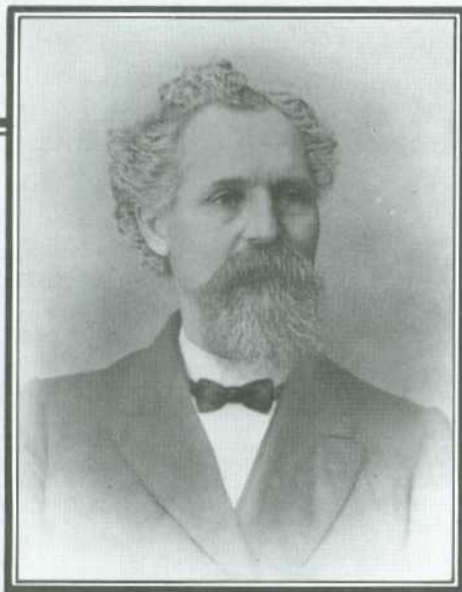
"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath

*(Continued on page 26)*

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# In 1880, he re-lighted

## The Torch



*Founder of the Megiddo Church  
(1844-1912)*

*Informal reflections on the early life and work of L. T. Nichols by Rev. Maud Hembree, one year before her death. Mrs. Hembree, Mr. Nichols' personally appointed successor, was Pastor of the Megiddo Church from 1912 to 1935.*

**W**e honor a man who was born ninety years ago in Elkhart, Indiana, of poor, humble parents. His father was a schoolteacher, and schoolteachers did not get the salary then that they do now. His mother and father were both very religious in their creed, but of course they believed in eternal torment, a literal devil, and so on.

Mr. Nichols showed great strength of character even when very young. I have heard his mother tell how at the age of thirteen he was called the "boy preacher" in the neighborhood. He would take his Bible to school with him, and at noon and recess he would try to interest his schoolmates in its teachings. At the age of eleven he vowed that he would never take a cigar, or a drink of liquor, never use any profane language, never commit an immoral act. We who knew him many years know he kept his word.

Just think of the Word of God influencing him at that early age! Of course, his mother and father were very moral.

He also vowed that he would never cheat anyone. He resolved to live a righteous, godly life, and as he grew older and studied the Bible, he found that its teachings were not according to what he had been taught. During the war (Civil War), when he was drafted into the army, he preached to the soldiers.





## Today, it still burns brightly.

and said, You seek here, his would have been an easier task; but such was not to be.

When my parents emigrated to Oregon from Wisconsin in 1852, it was quite an uncivilized country. But by the time Mr. and Mrs. Nichols moved there in 1874, the Willamette Valley was more settled.

Once in Oregon, Mr. Nichols continued his preaching. Of course we all believed the old creeds, we had never heard anything else. I was twenty-four years old before I ever heard a word about the coming of Christ, or of the Kingdom of God being on earth. I never dreamed but that we were all condemned because Adam sinned, had never heard but that there was a burning hell and a literal devil; did not dream that we had to put away all wrath, anger and malice before God would accept us.

I knew of Mr. Nichols and his wife, and of his sister, Mrs. Skeels; but he had lived there some time before I heard of his preaching. Then I heard that this man was preaching that we do not go to heaven at death, that this earth is to be the future home of the righteous. I had been taught the earth was to be burned up in the end, I did not know that Eccl. 1:4 said, "The earth abideth for ever." I did not know anything about the Bible. We were all surrounded by people who believed heaven was our future home. My catechism said so in plain words.

So I thought that Mr. Nichols' teaching was a terrible doctrine. And of course I had been taught to fear hell and the devil all my life. I said I would

After a few years, he went west (in 1874), thinking perhaps he might find some to listen to what he had learned from the Bible. His experience was not like that of the prophet Daniel who, while he was praying for light, had an angel come to him and say, "I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding." If an angel had come to him

**I** was so prejudiced.  
But as the  
discussion  
proceeded, I could not  
resist the evidence."

—M. Hembree

not go to hear such a man as that, who preached no literal fire, and no devil; it sounded terrible to me. It was right against everything I had been taught.

After a while, though, I heard that there was going to be a discussion between Mr. Nichols and a Professor Campbell, President of the Christian College and a minister of the Disciples' Church. Since the discussion was not to be held in a church—as there was none large enough to hold the crowd—I thought I would attend. A discussion would bring people together when nothing else would. It was the first religious discussion I had ever attended. I had heard many political discussions—I always liked to hear both sides. So I thought I would go to hear this man put down, who had come into our midst to lead people astray. I believed that surely the College President would be able to prove Mr. Nichols wrong.

The discussion lasted four days, two hours in the forenoon and two in the afternoon. People brought their lunches and stayed for both sessions. Some came 100 miles, some 60, and some drove 40 miles each day. I thought I would see that man get such a defeat that he would never dare to speak again. I sat in the seat farthest back that I could find in the great building.

Oh, I was so prejudiced. But as the discussion proceeded, I could not resist the evidence. It was a wonderful discussion. And before the discussion ended, that learned

Hebrew scholar had to get up and make a confession, had to acknowledge he was wrong!

Mr. Nichols had used the Hebrew word *ruach*, from Gen. 7:22, saying it is the "breath of life" the same word used in Ps. 146:4, also in Eccl. 3:19, to show that men and beasts have the same "breath." Professor Campbell disputed this. He said the word did not mean what his opponent claimed. Mr. Nichols told him he would have to retract his statement before the discussion could proceed. Mr. Campbell begged for leniency, said perhaps he was "rusty" in his Hebrew, that he would look up the word. The next morning when he arrived, Mr. Nichols asked him if he had found his Hebrew Lexicon. He whispered, "You were right." Mr. Nichols said, "I knew I was right; and before this discussion can proceed you must acknowledge to these people that you were wrong." He did so, but he realized he was beaten; he could not fill his time after that. That great scholar had to have someone find his texts for him in the Bible Concordance and hand them up to him, while Mr. Nichols repeated his from memory. I do not know how many words he spoke to that Professor's one. The Bible was just as familiar to him as his ABC's.

Mr. Nichols proved from the Bible that the dead are unconscious until the resurrection, that they do not know anything while asleep; but that Professor claimed that they could think without a brain. This was what I had always believed, but when I heard the other side, that "The dead know not anything" (Eccl. 9:5), it was all plain. How could anyone think with a brain stilled in death? How could one see without an eye to see with, or hear without the instrument of hearing?

That professor claimed the Kingdom of Christ was set up on the Day of Pentecost. What a kingdom we would have if that were the only kingdom! Mr. Nichols riddled

his position completely with evidence from the Bible. It was amazing to me.

I went to that discussion so prejudiced that I did not even go up to shake hands with a single one of the speakers. But when the four days ended, I realized I had been wrong. It made such an impression on my mind that I went home and said I would never again believe anything about religion that I could not read in the Bible. I threw my beads and catechism away and bought me a Bible.

The West was a bad place at that time to try to interest people in religion, they were a lawless class. Mr. Nichols wanted a congregation. Then he and Mrs. Nichols were asked to go to Illinois, to see some who had become interested by reading some of the pamphlets he had sent out. He had made \$1100 that year, and they used it all in spreading the Gospel, in missionary work. Some of us moved back to Illinois later the same year. Mr. and Mrs. Nichols and Mr. and Mrs. Skeels settled in Minnesota, about 500 miles from where we were in Illinois.

Mr. Nichols kept on searching for more evidence, and the more he studied the more he discovered what the Bible taught, and the more the rubbish was discarded. He had always taught that there was a work to do after coming into the knowledge of God; that we could not just say, "Lord, have mercy." But it was something else to realize that we must reach the standard of keeping *all* the commandments of God. He tried hard to find others who would believe and teach it to the world, but how few he could find! There had been a complete apostasy from true religion, everyone had been turned from the truth to fables (II Tim. 4:3-4). All were asleep, spiritually speaking, like the virgins in Jesus' Parable (Matt. 25:1-10). He found that we must all be overcomers, must learn to rule ourselves, like the testimony in Prov. 16:32, "He



that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

He found us in darkness, and led us into the light.

The work went on until he fell asleep in death, and there has been no new truth discovered since. Though he has been sleeping these many years, the principles he found in the Bible do not change; they are shining brighter and brighter as the years pass by. And now, we can turn to the Bible and read every doctrine and precept that we believe, and know that we are living in the time of the Messiah's coming.

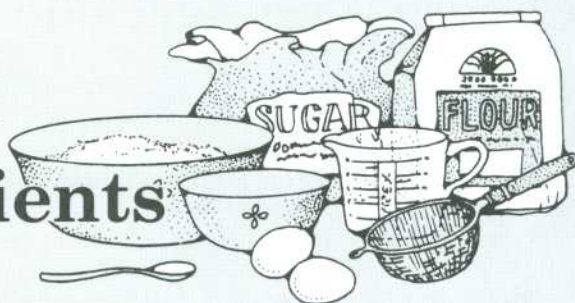
How he searched as for hidden treasure! I have heard his wife tell how at 2 o'clock, perhaps 3 o'clock in the morning, he would still be studying, poring over the Scriptures, studying his Hebrew and Greek Lexicons to compare passages with the original, so as to demonstrate the Divine harmony of the Bible from beginning to end. That is the way he studied. But above all was his godly life, his courage and his high moral standard.

He was not simply a Sunday preacher. He had his own means, and worked hard for it. In all the fifty years of his ministry he never took one dollar of remuneration. He was like the apostle Paul, who labored with his own hands that he might not be chargeable to anyone.

Now it is for us to learn and live by this Gospel, this truth of God, that we may gain with him the honor God alone can give, the honor He has promised in this wonderful Book. MM

**G**entle words  
fall lightly, but  
they have  
great weight.

## Mixed Ingredients



*"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).*

**T**his is one of the most frequently quoted verses in the New Testament. If we love God and are fulfilling His purpose, we discover that all the experiences of our life fit into a pattern for good. The Lord makes us equal to the pressures that are thrust upon us, and we emerge from these situations with a dimension of trust that is invaluable.

A leaf out of life will help reinforce this proposition. My mother was a master in the art of biscuit making. When I was too young to help I was always underfoot. But when I was big enough to help her, I was nowhere around. As I watched her make biscuits, she would take a sifter filled with flour from the bin. As she turned the handle, the useable flour was collected in the mixing bowl while the lumpy, hard pieces remained in the sifter.

At this point I would think of the golden brown, velvet-textured biscuits that would be served at the next meal. My mouth watered as I thought about the finished product. Then I would say to myself, "If these biscuits are going to be so tasty, and enjoyable, everything Mother puts in them must taste good." But did you ever try a handful of sifted flour? You would blow white dust and your mouth would be full of paste.

Next, Mother added some melted shortening—and that is not very good eating either. I later learned that the recipe called for a series of other ingredients that were not appetizing by themselves. But Mother could mix these things together in a way that made the final product a rare treat.

Why can't we be that reasonable in our relationship with God? If we look at each thing that happens in an isolated way we may decide that life is composed of nothing but unpleasant experiences. But the Lord knows how to put these unpleasant items together in the right formula so that the product becomes something valuable and meaningful.

That is how "all things work together for good."

From "Everyday with Paul." by Mendell Taylor, Used by permission.



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## Choose, Choose, Choose

**L**ife is a series of choices even in the ordinary duties of everyday life. As soon as we get up in the morning, our minds begin to formulate the day's activities. The beginning of a new week we start with the first choice, the most pressing duty of the week. After that there are other necessary things on the list, and we have to choose which is most important, or what can be eliminated or simplified.

As aspiring Christians, God should be foremost in all our thoughts and activities. His interests, His plans for us should be our one and all consuming interest. While the things of this world are the center of the majority's concern, they are not ours. Not that we cannot purchase a new car to replace an old ailing vehicle, or remodel our home to make it more commodious, or replace our old furnishings with better, provided we can afford these improvements. But our primary goal in life must not be the acquisition or enjoyment of mere "things." On the contrary, our first absorption must be the seeking of "the Kingdom of God and His righteousness"—that which will bring us eternal life.

Jesus pointed out the contrast between the concerns of His followers and those who make "meat and drink their aim in life," those whose propelling interests are "What shall we eat, what shall we drink, wherewith shall we be clothed?" (Matt. 6:24-33).

Worldliness and godliness are never compatible. We may think we can travel easily with one foot on

the broad way of sin and self-indulgence and the other on the narrow road of holiness, but not so. The two roads never run parallel. We must make a choice.

Demas tried traveling both roads. The cheap glitter of this dying world attracted him, and caused him to leave the path of righteousness. But it caused his destruction. And so will it destroy every one who wanders into it.

Consistent Christians will not be attracted by anything of modern-day Babylon. So fixed are their minds on the vision of God's future that they take no notice of the glamour around them. Their whole attention will be on the world to come.

Every day we must choose. Every day we must be deciding how we shall spend our time, what we shall think about, where we shall go, how we shall spend our money. We can be sure that when we have set our affections on things above, that is where our minds will delight to dwell. By choosing to think on the goodness and greatness of our God and what He is offering us for a short life's service to Him, we will be choosing not to think, to go or to do as we please. All of life will be focused on pleasing God.

Our God gives us the right to choose. At the end of his life Joshua called the people together and gave this challenge: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." After settling them in the Promised Land, he wanted them to follow his example in making the right choice: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

We today can still make this choice. Let us decide, then make that decision "stick" so that we may be permitted to enjoy the magnificent future He has planned for all His faithful children. MM



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## Something to Consider...

*It would take 1,300,000 planets the size of our Earth to approximately equal the size of the sun.*

*Yet the sun is just an average star in a group of stars called the Milky Way, a galaxy.*

*Scientists estimate that about one trillion galaxies, each containing several hundred billion stars, are within the range of our most powerful telescopes, and that there are untold trillions more galaxies as yet undiscovered.*

*How big are my problems?...when I consider that individually I am only one of some five billion human beings on this Earth—then my problems can't be too overwhelming.*

*And when I further consider how small is the Earth on which I dwell compared to the Universe—well, my problems just seem to grow smaller, and smaller, and smaller.*

—Selected

## The Word Alive

(Continued from page 2)

our lives those qualities which do *not* represent Christ, such as malice, arrogance, pride, jealousy, selfishness, grouchiness, irresponsibility.

When our name is mentioned, what are the images that spring into others' minds? Do they think of us as being like Christ? When we have been among others and left, what impression of us lingers? Do they feel as though one like Christ had been there?

This was the impression left by certain brethren in the early church. "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13, NIV). Even after they had left, those not acquainted with Peter and John recognized something different about them—they "were astonished and took note that these men had been with Jesus."

Virtue is real only as it is lived. God is holy, God is just, God is love—because He demonstrates these qualities. And if we would be godlike, these same qualities must be part of our lives.

The upright life is a life of love made visible, that deep holy love pictured so perfectly in I Corinthians 13. Such love is not only an inner emotion but an active demonstration of a godly life. "Love is very patient, very kind. Love knows no jealousy; love makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful; love is never glad when others go wrong, love is gladdened by goodness, always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient.

Love never disappears" (I Cor. 13:4-8, Moffatt). Here is love which, when put into the form of flesh and blood, changes the whole life. It is love that serves, endures, forgives, sacrifices, purifies—what could be a more convincing argument for holiness!

Purity is another term which must come alive in us. We know that the life of Christ was a pure life, free from the taints of selfishness and dishonesty. Just so must we copy that life. We, too, must transform purity into literal flesh and blood in ourselves. We do this in such small ways as being always kind, patient and pleasant with the members of our family; keeping our promises, monitoring our conversation, paying our bills, disciplining our desires, practicing absolute moral integrity in even the smallest transactions of every day. In all these ways—and countless more—purity becomes flesh and blood in us, visible because it is lived.

Another term which we must live is commitment. We, like Christ, must show that we are not our own. Jesus said in many ways that He came to do His Father's will, to make known His Father's purpose, to be the living example of the type of life His Father desires from His

earthly children. We, too, must have this same commitment. If we would enjoy His eternal blessings, we must keep our covenant with the God who hates negligence, indifference, and neutrality. We must be one hundred percent committed to Him. We must realize that we are not our own, we are not here to think as we would naturally think, to speak as we would naturally speak, or do what we would naturally want to do. We are not our own, we are His. And we must be indefectibly loyal to His cause. Whatever selfish interest may arise, our loyalty to Him must come first. Only in this way can we make our word commitment "alive" in flesh and blood.

We all know persons we would like to emulate. Now is the time to *be* those persons—rich in all the loveliness of a godly life, rich in the living goodness of the Word of God made visible in real flesh and blood.

Others have helped us by the influence of God upon their lives. Can we not do the same for others, so that others may be stimulated and helped by *our* lives, by the *Word of God alive in us*?

This is what Christianity is all about—the Word made flesh and blood *in us*. MM

## God Knows Best

*God knoweth best what is best for me!  
Why should I worry, or anxious be,  
Trying to fathom the course I take,  
Grasping at bubbles that fade and break?  
One step is all I have need to see,  
God knoweth best what is best for me!*

*God knoweth best what is best for me!  
Throughout all time and eternity.  
And in my Father's own goodly store  
Is all I'll need now and evermore;  
With Him I rest, for I know that He  
Always shall give what is best for me!*

—Selected



# TWILIGHT:

## *A Tale of the Apostasy*

### Chapter 8: Reprieve

To be a Christian in those days was to be ready to live or die, at the caprice of the state. Only an electrifying hope, a confidence in God surer than life itself, could sustain them.

Striking northward, the victorious but decimated troop with their prisoners camped that night on the Palmyra-Damascus road. The wretched captives, including the women, were tightly and painfully bound, in spite of the obvious superfluity of such a precaution. They were given a little food; not enough to silence the pangs of hunger, but sufficient to sustain life. Most of all they suffered from thirst, but water was precious, and even the guards were strictly limited in their ration.

Darkness fell, but it brought no healing balm to the survivors of the ill-starred escape. They spoke little; the horrors of the day had benumbed and shocked them into silence. Their future was a blank, black wall against which they were to be crushed, inexorably and horribly, by the cruel hand of oppression. Perdix and the women were outwardly tranquil, though infinitely depressed; Severian was almost in a state of collapse. Seated on the ground, he rocked to and fro in misery, moaning, his eyes wild with fear. None of them slept.

The next morning they were given a brief opportunity to stretch their cramped limbs, then they were bound to their mounts and the march was resumed. The children were weaker; it seemed improbable that they could outlive the day. Wulf, a very sick man, kept upright in his saddle only by a tremendous effort. Severians's horse was tied to the tail of an archer's steed.

"Soldier," Severian called, "lead me to the priest; I

wish to talk with him." Grumbling, the man complied. "Sir," he began, "is it too late for repentance?"

"It is never too late," replied the priest. "God receives the vilest sinner if he but turns before he dies."

"I don't want to die; I want to live!" wailed Severian. "If I repent of my heresies and communicate with Valentine, will he spare my life?"

"Beyond a doubt." The ecclesiastic beamed unctuously; another soul he thought, was to be saved from hell. "You will undoubtedly have to stand trial, and you may receive some punishment for the good of your soul. Your possessions, of course, are forfeited by your flight, but Valentine does not slay for the love of slaying; your life will be spared. I myself will instruct you in the true faith on the return journey. You have shown yourself to be wise above your fellows, who seem to be hardened incurably against the power of the church."

For want of usable horses, Mary and Ione were mounted together.

"Mother," said the girl, as they plodded over the burning roadway, "this means certain death for us."

"I fear so, dear; for me, at least. There is a way out, if you choose to take it."

"Mother!" Pain and surprise were in Ione's voice. "Do you think I would play the coward? Jesus went to the cross rather than deny the truth; and what is a Christian but one who follows the example of Christ? Is that really your opinion of me, Mother?"



"No, Ione," she replied, soothingly, "I was only testing you. I know you are true; I know also that Anna was true to the faith. God was merciful to her, that her end was so quick and easy."

"But, Mother," Ione's eyes filled with tears, "I do not fear death because it separates me from life, for this world is too full of troubles; but because I am not ready. I must have more time to make myself ready. But for the coming of Lykas, I might have finished the work,—and we all thought him so sincere!"

"Yes, he deceived us all—except Wulf. If we had the power to read the heart, as Peter did with Ananias, this would never have happened. Severian was really to blame, for he refused to take advice about accepting public office, and he could not hold his tongue. But we must not hold any bitterness against him; the damage is done, and we cannot remedy it by hating."

"I am not ready!" moaned Ione again. "How I wish I were as good as Anna."

"My dear girl, do you doubt God's promise? He has assured us time enough to finish the work, if our hearts are right and we use the time given us. Do you not remember the words of Paul to Timothy, that 'Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come'? This promise is for you, Ione. Fear not; if your heart is right and you are one who will finish the work, God will provide a way of saving your life."

"Mother," said the grateful girl, "what a comforter you are! What could I ever do without you? My only prayer is, if I am spared, that you will be with me."

Ashamed to look his comrades in the face, Severian continued to ride beside the priest. Toward evening the road led them into a region where eddying winds had piled

the sand into high, fantastic, rippled dunes. Atop a giant billow on the left stood something unnatural. As they neared, it proved to be two lances planted in the sand, their shafts crossing. The decurion forged to the front to investigate, his men following him closely. Alexander trembled; he had had enough for one day; another battle would ruin his nerves completely. This might prove to be a brigand encampment, and if so he wanted very much to be elsewhere.

Around the end of the dune appeared the head and long, ungainly neck of a camel; then into the highway rode an Arab, armed to the teeth. Behind him came another, and another, and another. The startled decurion reined his horse. As he did so, the archer behind him let fly an arrow at close range. It struck the officer squarely between the shoulders, penetrating his light mail like paper. He toppled from his horse, the barbed shaft protruding a foot from his chest. The Arabs advanced at a brisk trot, a score of them; the soldiers made no move to resist.

"Shoot, cowards!" screamed Alexander, beside himself with fear. "Why don't you shoot?"

"Silence!" replied the nearest fitting an arrow to his string. "You are our prisoner now, and the priest as well. If you say too much—," he pointed the arrow menacingly toward him and drew his bow. Cowed by the gesture, Alexander could only groan in anguish. The priest sat aghast, incredulous.

"What!" he exclaimed. "Would you turn a priest of God over to these unbelievers? Do you not fear the flames of hell?"

The archers laughed loudly and brutally.

"The flames of hell! We are no Christians, fool; we are Parthians,—heathen! We do not fear your hell."

"You fellows should be the ones

to fear hell; we know something of Valentine's methods," volunteered another, brandishing his sword in Alexander's face. "We are going to cast our lot in with these Arabs and fly to the desert. No more of dull Damascus for us; ho! for the wild, free life of a brigand!"

"And now, Alexander, hand over that money you stole back there on the battle-field," ordered a third. Turning to the leader of the Arabs, who stood quietly by with his men, he said:

"You see, we have proved our mettle already. On our first raid we bring to you eight slaves—one of them perhaps a recruit—and nine hundred *solidi* in gold. Not so bad, eh?"

"We may be able to get a fat ransom for those two," replied the sheik, pointing to Alexander and the cleric. "Church money is as good to us as any other." Alexander recognized him as one of the men who had visited their camp on the outward journey. He saw it all now; that long talk by the campfire had not been of the weather or the price of camels.

"The older woman and the girl," continued the chief, indicating Mary and Ione, "are mine; no one is to touch them."

To the captive "heretics" the change of custodians meant little. To the men it was even a gleam of hope; better the life of a slave in an Arab town than to be done to death by inches in Valentine's

**"J**esus went to the cross rather than deny the truth; and what is a Christian but one who follows the example of Christ?"  
—Ione

chamber of horrors. The women, however, were more apprehensive; their future, helpless in the hands of these wild marauders who recognized no law save that of their own will, was not pleasant to contemplate. Alexander feared most of all the vengeance of the soldiers. He and Lykas had driven them hard in the pursuit, and they had murmured openly.

Hastily the augmented company left the spot and plunged once more into the forbidding unknown. The dead decurion was left lying as he fell; only his weapons were taken. Night was spent in a miserable, dirty village at an insignificant oasis. Mary and Ione were quartered, unbound, in a mud hut by themselves. The sheik who had claimed them entered. In terror they shrank back into the farthest corner.

"Do not fear," he said gently. Coming closer, he addressed Mary; "Do you not remember me?"

Mary looked intently, her brows knit. Suddenly her face cleared.

"Yes, I remember you. Did you not spend a few days in our home in Damascus? Are you not Auda?"

"I am Auda. Eight years ago I entered Damascus on the day of a great religious procession. Some of the rabble, full of zeal for their God, thought to show their righteousness by setting upon me,—a poor, lone heathen from the desert. I was pelted with stones, beaten and kicked like a dog. More dead than alive, I escaped in the alleys and fell fainting at the door of your house. Your husband drew me inside and hid me from the mob, while you and your daughter cared for my wounds. When I saw your faces, I claimed you that I might repay the kindness done me. An Arab does not forget."

"Sir, if ever we needed help it is now; God must have sent you to us." Simply, often choking back her tears, Mary told the story of their betrayal, flight and capture.

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**G**odliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

—I Tim. 4:8

Auda listened, his black eyes smouldering with indignation and thirst for vengeance.

"And where is your noble husband?" he asked.

"I know not. He was taken and sent back to Damascus; ere this he has probably perished at the hands of the bishop, for he would never deny his faith."

Auda swore a crackling Arabic oath. "Would that I had known sooner!" he cried, gesticulating fiercely, "I should have wiped out his guard and rescued him."

A brief silence, then: "You say you were to be arrested at Palmyra by Valentine's orders?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps your fears and flight to Bakra were unnecessary. Last week my men killed and robbed a messenger who bore a packet of letters sealed with the Bishop's cross. They were in Greek, which we could not read. Wait; I will show you."

He brought in the packet, with its seals broken. In the dim light Mary glanced over them hastily. At length she found it; the order to the prefect of the city for their detention. The irony of it, that the message which had caused them so much terror, hardship and ultimate capture should never have reached its destination! But it was too late for idle regrets; at any rate, it had been the means of saving her and Ione from Valentine's clutches; and Wulf—they must intercede for him.

Auda fell to meditating. Presently he spoke again, thoughtfully:

"Tell me, why do men slay one another for the sake of their gods? There are many gods; why cannot every man pray to his own in safety? Even in Arabia we offend in this matter. Far down in the Hedjaz there has arisen a man, one Mohammed, who claims to be a prophet of God, and he has gathered around him a few followers of his own tribe. But they are sorely persecuted by the men of Mecca, and they in turn are said to be only too willing to slay their enemies in their zeal. Why it should be thus, I cannot tell."

"What is this Mohammed's belief?" asked Mary, anxious for Ione's sake to divert the conversation from the recent events.

"I know very little; news travels slowly in the deserts. He teaches that there is but one God, and that all the old gods of Arabia are but impositions and imaginations. But this I know; Arabia is now ripe for a great change, for some strong man to unite our scattered tribes in a powerful movement which will sweep like a consuming fire over the rotten ruins of the Byzantine power. We have been outlaws and fugitives long enough."

"But what can I do for you, the family of my benefactor? Where do you wish to go, back to Damascus?"

"No! We should not be free overnight in that sink of iniquity."

"Into Arabia with us, then?"

"Can you not take us to Palmyra? We have friends there; Olympas, leader of the little band who hold our faith there, will care for us."

"I think I can. We must remain near the road a few days longer, as a rich caravan is expected and we wish to raid it. After that I myself will take you there."

"We shall be very grateful, Auda. Can you not do something for the others?"



"I fear not; I must divide the spoils with my men."

"Can you not at least try to see that Perdix and Rhea are not separated? Cannot her safety from mistreatment be assured?"

"I hope so," replied the chief. "I will personally watch over her, while she is with us, and I know a wealthy family in the Nejd who will be glad to buy them for house-servants. Their children are dying; that problem will soon be removed."

"And Severian?"

"He must take his chances. I have given him to a man who is not cruel; at any rate he will not be beaten and starved. But why should you be concerned about him? He has left your faith."

"We believe in forgiving our enemies, and wishing good in this life even to those who leave us, for this life is short and sorrowful at best."

"Friend Auda," Ione pleaded, "you *must* spare Wulf to us. He fought for us, and was ready to die for us. We cannot do without him. Spare him, for he is of our household, too."

"Ah, yes!" said Mary, "had you only seen him, Auda, you, a warrior, would have been beside yourself with admiration. Can you not for the sake of his heroism as well as for Simon's sake, set him free with us?"

"Wulf? The big fellow?" Auda's eyes were alight. "Ah, I would gladly favor you, but I must have him for myself. With such a man in our band, what could I not do? I could even enter Damascus and seize Valentine himself. I shall

talk to him tomorrow and persuade him to join us. The Goths are robbers like the Arabs; he would be happy with us."

"But if he will not join you?"

"Then he is yours; I shall release him if I have to fight my whole troop to do so."

Mary said no more, but her heart was at rest. She knew Wulf. After Auda's departure, she turned to Ione and said:

"Did I not tell you, my daughter, that God would grant you sufficient time to work out your salvation if your heart was right? And it seems that my work is not yet finished, for I am spared while those better than I have perished."

"You were spared for my sake," answered Ione. "It is sometimes hard for us to see it, but nevertheless 'we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.' For my part, I had rather be Rhea in her slavery than Epigrapbia in her safety in Damascus, or Theodore in the stagnating peace of his hermit cave. Yes"—and her voice gathered fervor—"I had even rather be Anna, dead in the desert, than either of them—or Severian!"

"Severian may yet repent. God has seen fit to spare his life," was Mary's grave reply.

"Perhaps the others are not dead," said Ione, with a trace of hopefulness; "until we know certainly, let us think of them as alive."

"If we only knew that they lived," Mary answered, "we could secure their release, for Auda has Alexander at his mercy, and Valentine would willingly exchange prison-

ers. But there is no way of knowing. Oh, the uncertainty of it!"

A week later the robbers returned to their stronghold in the interior of northern Arabia, bearing with them the loot of their raids on caravans and a long train of unhappy slaves. Rhea's babes had succumbed to the exposure and hardships of the journey, little Paul at the second night's encampment and golden-haired Nicarete two days later. The Arabs, hardened killers and pillagers though they were, were deeply sympathetic, and permitted Christian burial rites, conducted by the sorrowing father himself.

Three hours of Auda's most persuasive eloquence had been utterly wasted upon Wulf, and the great barbarian, much to the disgust of the robbers and their new compatriots, the archers, was set apart for freedom. Severian was utterly miserable; even his apostasy had been in vain, and he felt deserted by God and man. Alexander and the priest were freed only by the payment of an exorbitant ransom, which made the whole affair a thoroughly bad speculation. Valentine, from his palace in Damascus, ruthlessly plundered the poor possessions of the little band to the last *denarius*, and even then had to pay part of the sum from his own treasury. A timely and violent outbreak of plague in the city so aroused his superstitious fears and troubled the remaining shreds of his conscience to such an extent that he refrained from wreaking his vengeance upon Simon and his two companions,

(Continued on page 26)

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**W**e believe in forgiving our enemies,  
and wishing good in this life even to  
those who mistreat us, for this life  
at best is short and sorrowful."

—Mary



## DANGER: *strange gods*

*"If we have forgotten the name of our God,  
or stretched out our hands to a strange god; shall  
not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets  
of the heart"*  
—Psalm 44:20-21

**T**he first and greatest of God's commandments is clear and concise: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30). Being All-wise and eternal and possessing the power to bless and prosper in this life and to bestow life eternal, God is just in requiring full allegiance. As He is capable of granting to us the ultimate—endless life—and will delight to do so for a short life of obedient service, He has a perfect right to require of us all that we can give—a surrendered life, wholly devoted to seeking and doing His will.

Who, then, are the strange gods? or what is idolatry? We may easily scorn the gods of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome; we may despise the idols of wood, gold, or stone in far-off lands; but it is equally as easy to decline into ungodliness of thought, imagination, and unchristian practice. Idolatry may be described as undue devotion, intense admiration, veneration, or love, of any unworthy person or thing. Further, it may be any unworthy pursuit in life on which our heart is set. Pleasure seeking may be idolatry; a hobby, a profession, a business enterprise may monopolize our attention and dominate our lives. Strange gods are these, gods of our own creation. Anything that takes our attention from serving God wholeheartedly, anything we place in our affection above God, or His service, is an idol or strange god.

We should remember that it was of religious people that the words of our text were spoken, and particularly those who knew the true God, who

understood His Word and had covenanted to serve Him. When we speak of forgetting something, it denotes that we once had it in mind. The words of the familiar hymn are fitting here:

*"Jesus calls us from the worship  
Of the vain world's golden store,  
From each idol that would keep us,  
Saying 'Christian, love Me more.'"*

God demands more love from us than we have for the distracting things about us.

If we really believed that in Him we "live and move and have our being," that to Him all hearts are open, all desires known, and that from Him no secrets are hid, we would be more concerned about rendering to Him the reverence He is due. By faith let us deliberately invite and welcome into our minds any inspiring thoughts about God and His holiness; in this way we shall be able to expel any inclination to waywardness, to seeking our own pleasures or ambitions.

The tendency of double-minded humanity through the centuries has been to serve God only halfheartedly. They professed that they knew Him, but by works denied Him. They praised Him with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him. It was "in the dark" that the ancients of the house of Israel performed their unholy rites (Ezek. 8:12). They said, "The Lord seeth us not." In this they were unheeding of God's prophets, warning long before: "Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?" (Isa. 29:15). Had they served the



Lord in singleness of heart they would not have fallen into such apostasy.

God had a covenant with Israel. They were to be His people, holy and free from the defilements of the heathen nations about them. They were to be, as He pictured (Jeremiah 3), His bride, or wife, chaste and pure, having no allegiance but to Him. In exchange they enjoyed the prosperity of the land; they were guarded from the enmity of surrounding nations; they had men of intelligence capable of ruling justly. But in spite of all the goodness on the part of God, they forgot.

But their sins were not hid. God searched them out and His judgments followed for disobedience.

Is our world today so very different from Israel before her downfall? Is it not concerned merely with the things of the present? Material progress is decidedly in advance of spiritual progress. Business, work, pleasures crowd out true religion and genuine piety. A form is maintained, but the real lessons of godly conduct are not practiced.

But here we are principally concerned with the loyalty of those who understand the precepts of God and are striving to live by them. The prophet Ezekiel (14:3) spoke of a class who had set up idols in their hearts. As we stated before, the "strange gods" may be anything that keeps us from serving God wholeheartedly, so we wish to stress the need for care and watchfulness. We need to watch the stream of thoughts that flows through our mind. Evil imaginations, unlawful desires creep in so subtly and in such attractive disguises that before we know it we erect an idol in our heart—and worship it. Particularly we should be watchful when we are tired, when our mental powers are less active and imagination may run free.

There is no substitute for loyalty to God. Loyalty is that qual-

*"By his faith he is speaking to us still"—Heb. 11 : 4, Moffatt.*

## Words for the Living

Excerpts from the sermons, talks and writings  
of Rev. L. T. Nichols (1844-1912).

*We need to be more zealous in the things of the Lord. I would feel condemned if I let a day or an hour go by without a petition escaping my lips to God. We should love to offer a heartfelt prayer to God, and long for the times when we can talk with God.*



*If you should look out the window and see that house across the street on fire, how every one would be up! This house would be clean emptied in two minutes. Every individual would be straining every nerve to save that house.*

*Strange that folks will work so hard to save a poor temporal house; and yet, to get a grand, eternal home, how little we seem ready to do.*

ity which keeps us true in our undertaking to serve God above all else. It means we have a definite destination, a fixed purpose in life and steadfastness in our pursuit. With loyalty to God comes power, poise, purpose, a thorough strengthening of character. Whatever duties have to be discharged are not burdensome to the loyal. Indeed, work is for the worker. And when we are spurred by loyalty, the Master's service is raised to the highest plane because our effort is fused with genuine love for the task.

We know that God's reward

*A pint of good, clear water to drink is worth a barrel poured on the floor.*



*If I were to go out with my two-inch auger and begin boring and strike a fountain, and it would send water up one hundred feet into the air, you would have enthusiasm enough. You would all be out to see the old geyser spout! You would be filled with zeal, no one would be sleepy or indifferent.*

*But such a little thing to have interest in, compared to this greater matter of eternal life! To get the grand endless glory, it seems so hard to enthuse a man.*

*What enthusiasm we ought to have, realizing we have opportunity to prepare ourselves to live FOREVER!*

for loyal service will be grand; and, on the other hand, the reward for evil doing, or "forgetting," will be dismal.

Worshiping strange gods may be pleasing for a season, but only for a season. Known to God are all our ways, and He will recompense according to our works. So let us all examine ourselves as in His presence; let us see our idolatries for what they are and deliberately seek His help in putting them away, that we may have nothing separating us from Him who is our life, our joy and our hope of eternal salvation.

MM

## Twilight

(Continued from page 23)

but suffered them to remain in prison, permitting them to occupy a common cell, until the day when the Persian forces entered Damascus and emptied its dungeons to make room for its former rulers.

\* \* \* \* \*

At sunrise one October day Auda and Wulf, with the two women, the latter heavily veiled, entered the gates of Palmyra unchallenged. After finding by inquiry the house of Olympas, Auda bade his charges farewell at his door and rode away into the depths of his native desert.

Olympas greeted them warmly. "You have fled to Palmyra?" he queried in amazement. "For weeks we in this city have been prepared to flee at a moment's notice to Damascus!"

The End.

## The Kingdom of God:

(Continued from page 13)

promised to them that love him?" (James 2:5; see also Rom. 8:17).

Peter assured his brethren that if they were diligent in living by the commandments of the Lord, "an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:11)—a promise for the future.

(To Be Continued Next Issue)

**T**he way to keep  
your religion  
is to keep it  
busy.

## Trials, as Jeremiah Knew Them

As I was reading Jeremiah, chapters 14 through 17, in the Phillips Translation, I was struck by the Lord's response to Jeremiah: "The Lord replied: 'Stop this foolishness and talk some sense! Only if you return to trusting me will I let you continue as my spokesman. You are to influence them, not let them influence you! They will fight against you like a besieging army against a high city wall. But they will not conquer you for I am with you to protect and deliver you, says the Lord. Yes, I will certainly deliver you from these wicked men and rescue you from their ruthless hands.'"

As enticing as this world appears there is only one place to be: on the side of the Lord. His side is not popular, and is rejected by most of mankind. Yet, even with the severe pressures that Jeremiah was under, the Lord reprimanded him to "stop this foolishness and talk sense!"

Men today are no less ruthless and wicked than those of Jeremiah's time. But when you compare Jeremiah's testing to the Lord's request for us to hold our tongue, to purge our thoughts of wickedness, and to love mercy and forgiveness and compassion, we have so little to do that it is unbelievable. Certainly our God is a high tower in which we can find safety and refuge.

When Christ returns, their resistance to any changes for the better will be fought to the very bitter end. Now is our opportunity to orient ourselves to the Lord no matter the cost. He alone can save us. When Christ comes, the masses will be fervently praying to their false gods to absolutely no avail. I can truly believe that it will be a time of darkness, in fact, gross darkness.

Louisiana

D. K.

## No "Prettying Up"

It is so easy to put things off until a "better" time. However, we have been warned time and again that to put on the armor of God's truth is a

full time work. As our days are numbered and any day could be our last one, *now* is the time to work; now is the time to make ourselves ready because, whether we are ready or not, *He is coming!*

Why do other things seem so important to us when our work for eternal life should be above all other interests? It seems we just don't place the importance where it belongs. However, we are told that only a few will be ready to greet the Savior with joy.

One need only to look in the mirror to see how time has changed us physically. The big question is, Can Christ see the change inside our heart as well as we can see the change in the mirror? Is our heart as clean as we would like people to think? Have we fixed our "inside self" for the Lord? He sees all; we cannot pretty up our inner self and cover the blemishes. He sees all and knows all.

Ontario, Canada

M. G.

## Discovery

I am delighted in having discovered your magazine, *The Megiddo Message*.

I have diligently studied the Scriptures since childhood and have not been able to "swallow" some of the modern interpretation of our churches nor the traditional positions of most churches on Scripture.

I have always felt that we are all "called" to the ministry as followers of Christ. I have also felt that if we truly accept Jesus Christ as our Savior we will obey *all* His commandments as much as our feeble wills will allow. I have further believed that it is improper to ask for pay in the performance of our work for the Lord.

Thus you can appreciate my excitement in reading your feature story about Mr. L. T. Nichols.

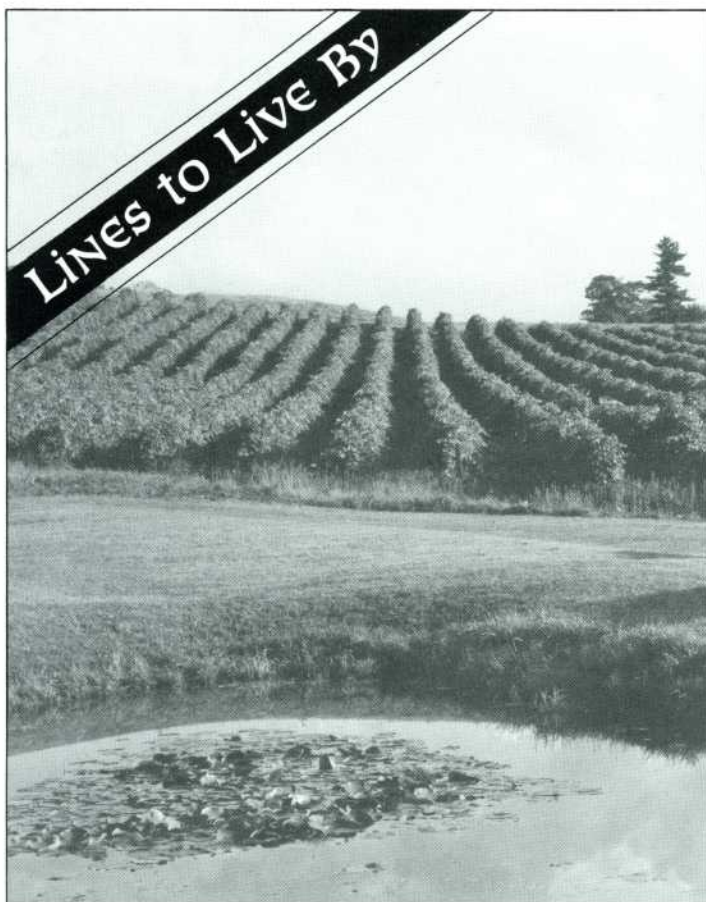
I find all that I have read in your last two magazines (the only ones I have read) to be spiritually nutritious and enlightening. Please expedite my enclosed order (I'll try to be patient).

God bless you in His work.

Alabama

J. O.





*The Christian faces many a test  
If he would purpose to do good;  
So this short motto I suggest:  
Not what I would but what I should.*

*The greatest gift we can give to  
others is a good example.*

Patience is a virtue that carries a  
lot of WAIT.

*You must have long-range goals to  
keep you from being frustrated by  
short-range failures.*

The higher a man rises in God's  
sight, the lower he will be in his  
own eyes.

### Under the Sun

*What is not new to him who knows the Lord,  
Who hears His Word and hides it in his heart!  
He knows the One who gave the orbit start,  
Who knows our thoughts, Who gives us breath  
Who keepeth us from birth 'till death.*

*What is not new to him who knows the Lord?  
Who learns His law, old things give way to new,  
Once impotent, through Him all things they do!  
Old things are gone; new visions take their place  
Old thoughts are purified by heav'nly grace.*

*What is not new to him who knows the Lord?  
Make all things new, this is your Lord's command;  
Join hearts with those who seek the fairer land;  
Not some but all must yielded be today;  
Let not one secret thought obstruct your way.*

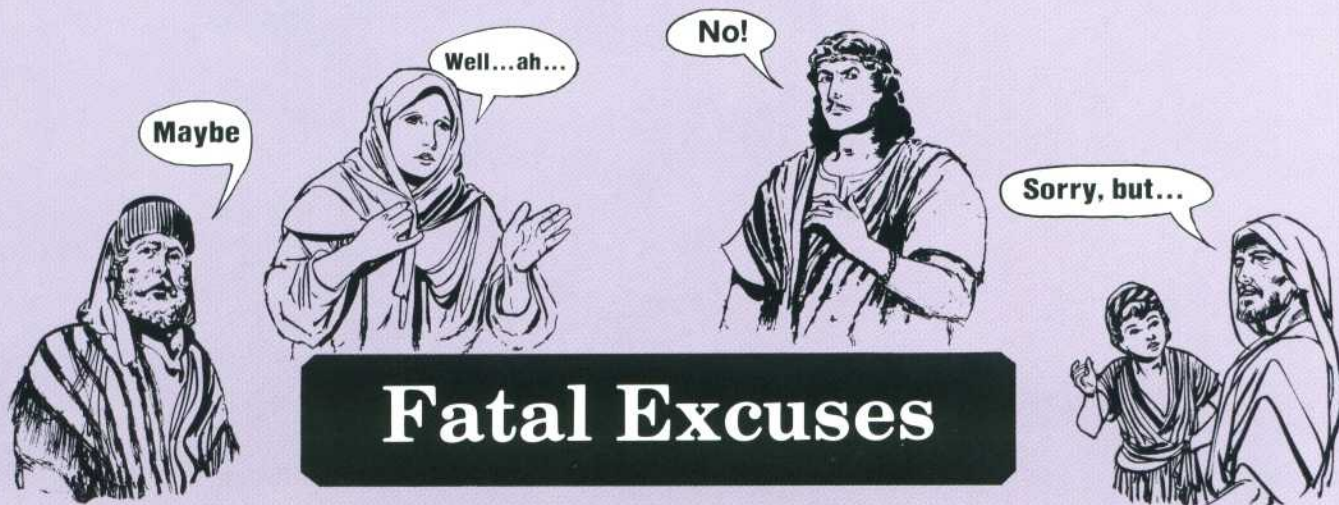
Every one of us must live with the person we make of ourselves, and  
the better job we do in molding our character and improving our  
mind, the better company we will have.

### The Test of a Hero

It's easy to fight in the cause of the right  
When it's surely, steadily winning;  
To nobly stand with a gallant band  
While plaudits loud are dinning;  
For nothing inspires and fans the fires  
Of our noblest best endeavor,  
Like knowing success will crown our best  
And glory be ours forever.

But to stand with the few and yet be true  
To a seemingly losing cause;  
To fight for the right with all our might,  
With never a sound of applause;  
To stand for the truth in the strength of youth,  
While others beat a retreat,  
This, this is the test of a hero, the best,  
A hero we'd like to meet.





**E**xcuses! Yes, we've all contributed our share, of one sort or another. But we don't like to think of them as fatal.

In many situations they are not. But when God is inviting us to a greater, more abundant—even *eternal*—life, and we reply by offering an “excuse,” isn't that excuse “fatal”—because it is standing between us and LIFE!

Jesus recognized this all-too-human trait and told a parable to show us what we are like. He told of a man who “gave a great supper and invited many.” He didn't invite *everyone*—so shouldn't the invited ones have felt honored? Perhaps they did when they first heard about it, but by the time the supper was ready, they had engrossed themselves in other activities.

So what response did the man's servant get when he went to the invitees with the message, “Come, for all things are now ready”?

Was every one of them eager to attend the great occasion, just waiting for the moment to arrive? Far from it! They all had one petty excuse or another. We read: they “all with one consent began to make excuse.” One had purchased land and had to go and see it. A second had bought oxen and had to test them. A third had

recently married and could not come. And so on and on.

Quite naturally, the feast-giver was disgusted at their treatment of his kindness and withdrew the invitations permanently (Luke 14:15–24).

Someone has observed that we have three major relationships in life—to God, to people, and to things. Those invited to the supper were wrongly related to persons and things, and could not, therefore, be rightly related to God.

God's supper is the greater life He is offering His human family. What we now experience, what we see all about us is not all that God can give. He is planning to fill the earth with His glory, a righteous people, members of His eternal family. He is extending this invitation to us, He is inviting us to share endless life in His Kingdom, with joy and comfort and happiness far beyond anything we can imagine. The invitation is real, the plan is in operation, the “supper” is being prepared.

God is still inviting, and “still there is room.” Will you listen, believe, and take it to heart, and get ready for the great “supper”? Will you say “yes” to God?

Or will you offer the fatal excuse—and excuse yourself from eternal life?

MM