

Megiddo Message

DECEMBER, 2002



*The mighty oceans thunder your praise.
You are mightier than all the
breakers pounding on the seashores of the world!
Your royal decrees cannot be changed.
Holiness is forever the keynote of your reign.*

-Psalm 93:3-5 TLB

Two Roads

Roads are really about destinations. When we choose a road we wish to travel, we choose where we will arrive.

The same is true in our lives. When we choose a way of life, like it or not we choose also a destination.

Jesus made this point powerfully in His first sermon: *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it"* (Matt. 7:13-14). What is He saying?

Wide gate, broad road: easy-going, self-indulgent, do-whatever-feels-good life. **Road conditions:** smooth. **Number of travelers:** crowded. **Destination:** destruction.

Or...

Difficult gate, narrow road: disciplined, self-denying life; restricted activities, carefully-selected pleasures, lots of mental and moral self-discipline. **Road conditions:** rough. **Number of travelers:** few. **Destination:** ETERNAL LIFE.

Who can miss the lesson? Jesus is telling us that the great goal of eternal life is not free and for all. There is something to do, something to sacrifice, something to give up. The road to life is steep and difficult, meaning that it restricts our freedom to do as we naturally would like to do. Anything that the law of God denies, anything that draws us away from Christ, anything that stands between Him and us must go. There can be no compromising with wrong, no trimming of the sails of Christian ethics, no indulging in worldly pleasures which steal one's time, heart, and money, and leave only an emptiness when they are gone.

Traveling the narrow road means giving up the pride of life, the desire to being somebody in this world and recognized in its social strata. The latest styles, fads and fashions are all outside the narrow road. Having the biggest house, or the most expensive auto, or anything designed to impress is likewise outside the narrow road. Do we wonder that there are few travelers on it?

The importance of the narrow road centers in its destination: *life!* Is it worth it? That is a question each of us has to answer for ourselves. We will answer it in proportion to our vision of the goal. If our heart is set on the goal of life eternal, the narrow road will be a

delight and an honor to travel, and every companion will become our loving brother or sister, and every step a delight because it means we are that much nearer the goal. If our eye is on this world, its goals, and the satisfaction of being like our peers, the narrow, difficult road will offer little attraction.

What is the incentive to travel the narrow road? It is its destination! This road leads to eternal life in Christ's Kingdom!



*There are only
two roads, and
no one can walk
on both. Each
must choose.*

With such a goal in view, the farsighted travelers on this road are delighted to exchange the pride of life for the exalting glory of knowing Christ. They are anxious to give up the strivings for prestige, education, and position here because they have caught a glimpse of an honor that will be eternal. Just think: they are serving a God whose very thoughts are as high above ours as the heavens are above the earth! (Isa. 55:8-9).

Jesus made the point crystal clear: Only two roads, and no one can walk on both. Each must choose. He says, you can travel the wide-open, easy, spacious, smooth

road in the company of the crowds—and receive eternal death in the end. Or you can choose the narrow, difficult, uphill road with the few—and live eternally!

It all comes down to a preference. Would you rather have a smooth, easy, unrestricted life now, with destruction at the end? Or are you willing to forego the momentary pleasures of this world and travel the narrow, difficult road—which gets brighter and brighter until it opens into the perfect, eternal Day that God has promised those who love Him?

These are the facts, and every day we make our choice.

Which road are you traveling? ♦



LIVING ON *Borrowed Time*

The year 609 B.C. was a year of disaster. The place was the nation of Judah. The much-loved King Josiah was on the throne, the youthful king who began so well and did so much so quickly to revive the faith and worship of the true God in Judah. By strenuous religious and political reforms Josiah managed to stem the tide of moral decay and rekindle the light of faith in Jerusalem. People began to have hope—hope for the future of the nation, hope for its political independence, even hope in God.

But then, suddenly, Josiah was killed in battle, and the hopes and dreams which had flourished under him died also. At the same time, in addition to losing Josiah, Judah lost also her political independence. To make matters still worse, Josiah's sons did not share their father's faith, or character, or enthusiasm for a religious reformation.

No one even half perceptive could fail to see that for Judah it was the beginning of the end. Especially not the thoughtful and inspired prophet Jeremiah. Pre-informed of the approaching doom, Jeremiah, pen in hand, added to his prophecies this sad lament: *"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."*

It was a sad note; but what made the

situation hopeless for these people was not their circumstances but their attitude; not God's action toward them but their inaction toward God and their adamant refusal to pay attention to what He said through His prophets.

Even then, the Lord in His mercy did not cut them off immediately. Even then, if they had reformed their ways He would have changed His plans.

But there comes a point where the die is cast; where sin, so long established, cannot be corrected; where warnings, so long disregarded, fall on deaf ears.

Almost four years passed, four years of grace, four years of borrowed time. It was now the year 605 B.C., and another year of national calamity for Judah. Nebuchadnezzar's army marched on Judah, plundered Jerusalem, and carried away the best and brightest of Judah's young men, including her crown prince—and a young lad named Daniel.* It was indeed the beginning of the end.

The people of Judah could not say they had not been warned. For twenty years Jeremiah had been telling them that it was coming. They *could* have repented; they *could* have reformed and turned to God—and saved their nation.

Still, to the majority of the people, things didn't seem that bad. The first captives and Nebuchadnezzar's army gone, life in the nation returned to something like normal. Was it possible that the worst was over?

Another year went by, and another, and another. God's mercy is great—beyond our fathoming!

continued on page 5

ONE OF THE
GREATEST
RESOURCES GOD
HAS ENTRUSTED TO
US IS TIME.

WHEN GOD
HAS PREDICTED AN
END AND THAT END
HAS NOT YET COME,
THOSE PEOPLE
ARE LIVING ON
BORROWED TIME.

*Daniel the prophet, taken into captivity to Babylon while in his teens, spent the rest of his life on foreign soil, but through all he remained loyal to the God of Israel. Read the book of Daniel to learn about his life, his experiences, and the prophecies he received from God even in Babylon.

Megiddo Message

DECEMBER 2002
Volume 89, No.10

EDITORIAL

- 2 **Two Roads** by Ruth Sisson

FEATURE

- 3 **Living On Borrowed Time** by Ruth Sisson
6 **Yesterday—Today—Tomorrow** by Lottie M. Kapica
7 **The Clock of Life**

YOUTH IN CHRIST

- 8 **Jesus' Teachings Work!**
9 **"Do" or "Don't"?**

MEMORIAL FEATURE

- 10 **Megiddo Afloat** Part 3 (*Articles published in local newspapers*)
Unique Craft Here • Boat Sinks
Christian Brethren Coming to Make Rochester Their Home
City Is Invaded • Rochester's New Citizens
How Members of the Megiddo Mission Band Live
The Christian Brethren Colony • The Megiddo Mission
A Band of Zealous Christian Workers in Rochester

BIBLE QUESTIONS

- 15 **Know Your Bible?**
Complete the Beatitudes • Angels • Covenants

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- 16 **Will the Earth Be Destroyed?** by Gerald R. Payne
Must one be born again?

ARTICLE

- 18 **What Do You Hear?** by Hazel Marett

BACK COVER

- As the Waters Cover the Sea** by Arthur C. Ainger

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

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

WE BELIEVE...

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

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

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

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

THE HERALD AND THE KING

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

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

Some sixteen years passed, until the fateful year of 588 B.C. arrived. Ironically, that very summer the streets and alleys of Jerusalem were buzzing with hope and rumor. The word was that Egypt's army was coming to free Judah from the domination of Babylon. Jeremiah, still speaking the clear, unpopular word of the Lord, was hated, maligned, persecuted.

Unrest mounted; riots and revolutions broke loose all over Judah. Quickly Nebuchadnezzar's army rose to the challenge, put down the revolts, then surrounded the city of Jerusalem and sat back to wait while they starved out the rebels. Then, just as Jerusalem's food supply was about to give out, his troops stormed the walls and captured the city. By nightfall it was all over; the nation of Judah was no more. The land was in shambles.

The message was clear: the end had come. The words of Jeremiah sounded taps: *"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved"* (Jer. 8:20). Judah was reaping the harvest of her deeds.

It was a calamity that need not have been; the fruit of years of apostasy, rebellion, and disobedience. If only the people had listened, if only they had believed God's prophets and changed their ways! But they would not. And so the faithful God had no choice but to do as He had promised.

God's mercy is long, but it has its limit. This is why the prophet Isaiah spoke these stern, rousing words: *"Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near"* (Isa. 55:6-7).

We stand today at a point in time never before experienced by people of God. The most significant, most climactic, most dramatic event in 6000 years is right upon us. We are at a point where every one of us ought to be anxiously inquiring, What is *my* relation to God and the great things I know are coming? Can I expect to receive Christ's favor when He comes? Am I doing all He expects me to do?

God's favor is conditional. We cannot assume that He will automatically

protect and preserve us. The prophet Malachi says He will *"spare"* some *"as a father spares an obedient and dutiful child,"* but they are clearly said to be those who fear Him (Mal. 3:16-17 NLT). Isaiah says that God will take notice of the humble and contrite, who *"tremble"* at His word (Isa. 66:2). He loves those who prove the sincerity of their love by keeping Him first in their lives, first in their thoughts, first in their heart's affections (Mark 12:30-31; Col. 3:1-2); that we make His aims ours, His purposes

continued on page 7

THE ISRAELITES COULD
HAVE REPENTED; THEY COULD
HAVE REFORMED AND TURNED TO
GOD—AND SAVED THEIR
NATION. BUT THEY
WOULD NOT.

A CLOSER LOOK AT

LIVING on BORROWED TIME

1. Can you draw a parallel between the people of Judah in 609 BC and the people living today?

2. Why was God's prophet Jeremiah talking to the people about doom?

What would he say if he were here today?

Who else in Scripture delivered a similar message of doom?

3. What was the response of the people to Jeremiah's message?

How do you think people today would respond to a similar message from God?

4. What could the people of Judah have done to avert disaster?

5. What did Jeremiah mean when he told the people, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved"?

6. In what sense is our time "borrowed"? Who does it belong to?

7. Do you feel that you are living on "borrowed time"? Why or why not?

What can we do to avoid a serious loss as a result of over-borrowing?

8. What cataclysmic event is imminent now?

9. What does the experience of Israel and Judah teach us about God's mercy?

A calendar page for December is shown in the background. A magnifying glass is positioned over the word 'Today', which is written in a large, red, stylized font. The words 'Yesterday' and 'Tomorrow' are written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font on either side of 'Today'. The calendar grid shows the days of the week and dates, with some dates highlighted in pink and green.

YESTERDAY- Today-TOMORROW

EACH NEW DAY IS
AN OPEN DOOR FOR
SERVICE AND
USEFULNESS.

There are two days in every week which we should never worry about. One of these is *Yesterday*, with its cares and mistakes, its faults and blunders, its neglected opportunities and unrecognized privileges. No power in this world can bring back *Yesterday*. Not a single act can be undone or a single word be retrieved. *Yesterday* is gone forever.

The other day which should not worry us is *Tomorrow*, with its unseen adversities, its unknowable burdens and immeasurable opportunities. Regardless of our apprehensions, tomorrow's sun *will* rise; whether in splendor or in clouds, it *will* rise. But *how* it will rise depends on the use we make of the day before tomorrow—*Today*.

And *Today* should concern us, deeply concern us, for every *Today* is determining *Tomorrow*. *Today* is alive, vibrant with possibilities. *Today* is the time to rise above *Yesterday's* mistakes, to amend our ways and make our doings good. *Today* is our opportunity to labor joyfully, to perform each task with a carefulness and thoroughness that will leave no regret.

Not the experiences of a day drive men to distraction, but the remorse and bitterness from *Yesterday's* failures add to the dread of *Tomorrow*. Any one can fight the battles of one day. It is only when you and I add the burdens and struggles of those two awful eternities, *Yesterday* and *Tomorrow*, that we break down.

As practical Christians, we should leave *Yesterday* alone and employ the time at hand—*Today*. Though *Yesterday* may not have been all that we meant it to be, we cannot improve it by dwelling on it; except as we draw some lesson from the past, looking backward is a waste of time. The Lord will not hold our past misdeeds against us if only we busy ourselves today with the task of correcting them—by living right *Today*.

We have no reason to dread *Tomorrow*, for tomorrow is still in God's hand. Our Master once said, "*Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*" (Matt. 6:34). *Today's* work is enough to absorb all our energies.

If we want to experience real delight in the work of the Lord *today*, the door of opportunity is wide open. Do not say, "I can't get in," but stand on your feet and *walk* in. We must not neglect our everyday situations while waiting for some extraordinary opportunity to do good.

Each new day is an open door for further usefulness and productiveness. We shall pass through this world but once, therefore we cannot afford to postpone or neglect any duty. Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance but to *do* what lies clearly at hand.

Do we remain indolently inactive when there is so much to think on and put into practice? If we do, our life will be a record of unused opportunities.

A larger and more majestic *Tomorrow* is soon to dawn—an eternal *Tomorrow* where every opportunity for good will be realized, every holy ambition satisfied, every noble desire granted, every faithful service rewarded. "*The Sovereign Lord will show his justice to the nations of the world. Everyone will praise him! His righteousness will be like a garden in early spring, filled with young plants springing up everywhere.*" (Isa. 61:11 NLT) u

ours, and His thoughts ours.

If we want to be recognized and spared when Christ returns, we have a definite obligation. God knows that we need time to bring ourselves to His standard, and sufficient time is part of His promise (1 Tim. 4:8). But can we think that He will spare us if we have not been doing all we could?

These things are especially important to us, because never have any people lived so near the climax as we. Never before have any people of God faced the end of the age more imminently than we. Any day we could find ourselves face to face with immortal beings. The prospect is thrilling; at the same time it is awesome and shocking.

What does it mean to us? Our hearts thrill at the possibility of being among those to escape death, to have the privilege of seeing the end of this age and the beginning of the next;... of living through the period of transition, through the Millennium and on into eternity. It is a privilege beyond the power of words to describe. And—best of all—it is not a dream. It is a privilege which will be granted some; for, said Jesus, *“whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die”* (John 11:26).

But privilege always brings its compensating responsibility, and this is no exception. Since our time may be interrupted, how important that we give superdiligence to our lives each day. In Jesus’ own words, *“Lest coming suddenly I find you sleeping.”*

Every new day is a new opportunity. The time may be short, but as long as there is time, it is ours to use. Each day is a fresh opportunity with potential beyond anything we can imagine—if we apply ourselves to it. Who can say how much growth a single day can produce?

The most important concern is that we give every day our best.

We need to think often of the day “when the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more.” For as surely as we are living, that trumpet will sound, our day of probation will end, and all the wonderful events we have anticipated will come to pass.

And since we do not know when that will be, how carefully we should walk. We have no time for any missteps, no time for any dallying or indecision. Never has the urgency of the hour been so great upon us. Every moment is priceless. Nothing we have is our own; it is all God’s.

The Day is coming when we shall have to stand before the Judge of all the earth to account for His investment in us. When that Day arrives, we shall find it much easier to explain why we used His resources wisely, than why we squandered them, when God has offered such a magnificent future, even eternal life in His heavenly Kingdom on earth. u



THE **Clock** OF **Life**
*The clock of life is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop,
At late or early hour.
Now is the only time you own;
Live, love, toil with a will;
Place no faith in tomorrow, for
The clock may then be still.*

—Selected

This fine grandfather clock was built by Donald Shayler of British Columbia, Canada. It stands a full 8' tall.



BIBLE VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. —Ephesians 4:29 NIV

PURPOSE: to learn to use our words only to help and upbuild others.

JESUS' TEACHINGS WORK!

Celeste was a teenager full of energy, bubble, and ideas. But on this particular night, she was dead serious as she approached her father. Dad knew immediately that something was wrong.

After a moment of silence, she said quietly: "Dad?"

"Yes, my Celeste," he said lovingly, always ready to listen.

"Something happened at lunchtime today—I—" she hesitated.

"You got in trouble...?" guessed her father.

"No—I was so embarrassed and shocked...I didn't know what to do." Celeste stopped again, but took a deep breath and continued. "We were all together... as usual..." and she stopped.

Just what Dad surmised. In recent months Celeste had become involved with a group of five girls at school. They ate together, walked together, did homework together, and generally helped each other. From anything he had been

able to learn, it was a healthful situation. Three of the girls were from Christian families. The two others had no religion and it was the silent resolve of the three to influence them to Christ-like living.

"Tell me about it, Honey."

"It's too embarrassing, Dad, it really wasn't nice. Marsha..." Dad recognized the name, she had stayed overnight at their house a few times.

"What about Marsha?" urged Dad gently.

"Marsha told an off color story...She knew it would get attention. And it did! But, oh! I couldn't believe my ears! Why, Dad, I felt so ashamed, and...and...Marsha claims to be a Christian! Now what will Tammie and Brenda think of our profession?"

"That is why it is so important to represent our faith," replied Dad. "You know

our motto, 'Say nothing you would not want to be found saying when Jesus comes....' What happened in the story?"

"I think it came from some movie she saw at her uncle's. It really was bad! Dad, I wouldn't want to retell it..."

"You don't need to, Honey."

"Dad, the worst of it is that even Chris—who should know better—listened and she didn't seem the least uncomfortable!"

After a moment's silence Celeste squared her shoulders: "Dad, were you ever in a situation like this? Now, I don't want you to tell me what's right and *what's* wrong. I know that part. What I don't know is, what do you *do*? What do I say to Marsha? What do I tell the other girls?"

Dad could see through the problem. Celeste was saying in effect, Give me an answer that will be right, AND not lose my friends.

Dad tried to think what would be helpful to Celeste. He knew Celeste understood what was right and wrong, and she recognized that this story was totally wrong. What to do about it was another matter.

Dad turned to the account in Matthew of Jesus cleansing the temple. Together they read, how "*Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who sold doves. And he said to them 'It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it 'a den of thieves''*" (Matt. 21:12-13).

At that point Dad asked Celeste, "What do you get out of this story?"

"Well, the Savior was upset."

"Yes, Celeste, and may I suggest one more thought. He was saying to His peer group that there comes a time in every person's life when he has to stand up and be counted, and while it may not be the popular thing to do, there are times when you have to do something *just because it is the right thing to do*. And that isn't easy."

Celeste was silent, thinking deeply.

"You may even have to stand alone sometimes." Dad continued. "Think about it tonight, Celeste, and tomorrow you and I can have another talk."

"But, Dad!" she said, "you missed my point. You *can't* do what Jesus did *and* keep your friends."

"You think about it," Dad repeated, "then you and I will have another talk."

Celeste did think about it, all that evening and the next day. The next evening she approached her father again.

"Dad," she said in an upbeat tone—he knew something good was coming. "Dad, it is an interesting thing. I took the cleansing of the temple story to school today and tried it out."

"Well, well!" said Dad. "And did you clean out the Junior High?"

"No," smiled Celeste. Then seriously, "I called Marsha and asked her if she could walk home with me tonight. She said 'yes.' So we walked home. I brought her into my bedroom, and we sat down, and I said, 'Marsha, I just want you to know that our friendship means a great deal to me. Yesterday...when you told that story...I don't think...you realized...how much you have reduced us in the eyes of our friends....I know you thought this was a captivating story, but...if you ever feel you have to tell a story like that again, would you please warn me...in advance...so that I can be excused?'"

"And what did Marsha say?" Dad interposed.

"She broke down, Dad, and put her arms around me, and said, 'I'm sorry. I know it was wrong. What can I do now?'"

"Isn't that wonderful, Celeste! You didn't lose a friend, you have a *better* one."

"Dad, we cried together for half an hour. You know what? The New Testament really works!"

"Yes, Celeste, the New Testament really works. And now you understand Jesus better." Dad put his arm around his young teen. She was getting a little taller every day.

"And Celeste, I've had another thought. Did it occur to you when Marsha was telling that story that you could have interrupted her? You could have said kindly, 'Just a minute, Marsha, are you sure this is a story you want to tell? Is it a story Jesus would tell?' or, perhaps, you could have walked away. Very likely Marsha would have stopped right there. And just think what *that* would have done for your Christian example!"

Celeste was quiet for a moment. "You're right, Dad, you're right. Next time I'll do better. But"—she paused, then added quietly, almost under her breath—"I hope there isn't a next time!" u

Carefully obey all the commands I give you. Do not add to them or subtract from them. —Deut. 12:32 NLT



Of course, we have to have rules by which to live. None of us can do just as he pleases. Naturally there are times when we feel that we could get along better without rules. Sometimes we say that rules take the fun out of life. But everybody has to live by some rules. There are some rules that are the same for everybody, for children and grownups, for teachers and ministers, and even for the President of the United States. These rules are for everyone, everywhere.

These rules ought to be good rules, if they are for everybody. And they are good rules, because they were made by God. They are the rules we find in the Bible.

In the book of Exodus are some rules that are very old. They are called the Ten Commandments. God gave them long ago to people who lived in tents and in a far corner of the world. Those people had no automobiles, no airplanes, no television sets. Everything about them and everything about us seems different, yet these rules are the basis for the laws of our country today. How can rules for them and rules for us be the same? They are the same because rules are for persons, not things. Things change, but people don't change. We need the same basic rules in any year, thirty-five hundred years ago or today.

But have you noticed that these rules God gave to Moses are mostly rules about what not to do? The word "don't" is never very popular. Sometimes you may feel that whenever you want to do something, someone says "don't do it." But suppose that you heard only the word "do." Wouldn't you get tired of that word after a time?

Every "don't" also has a "do." We need both words, "don't" and "do." When God says, "Don't tell a lie," He means also, "Do tell the truth." And that is the best way not to tell a lie, isn't it? Every rule has a "do" side as well as a "don't" side. If you pay attention to the "do" side, you won't have to worry about the "don't" side. u

From *A Treasury Of Story Sermons For Children*, ©1957 by Charles L. Wallis

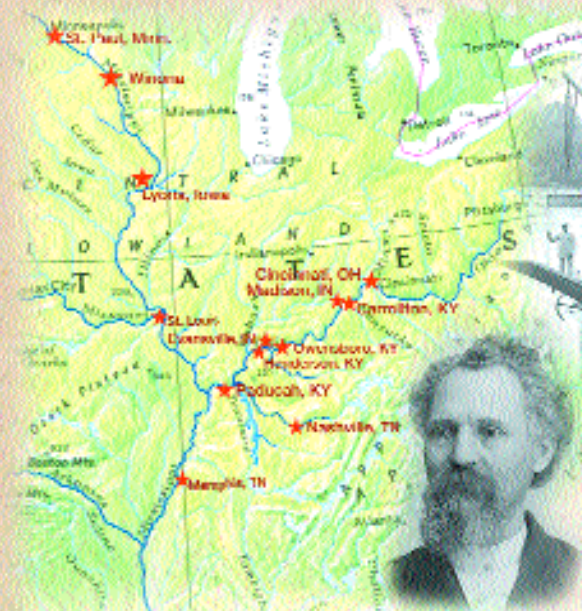
A PRAYER

Lord, Your Word says that we must be careful what we talk about, realizing our words affect others' lives.

Lord, You have told us to say only that which will help and benefit others.

Forgive us for the unkind and unwholesome words we have spoken, and help us to watch our tongues. We want all our words to be pleasing to You. Help us that all we say may honor You.

We pray in Christ's name. AMEN.



Paducah, Kentucky
December 23, 1903



Megiddo Afloat

PART THREE

After more than two hazardous and eventful years on the river (between the fall of 1901 and January, 1904), Mr. Nichols decided to sell the steamer and locate permanently in the East. Rochester, New York, was the location chosen.

The articles in this issue reflect this period of time, also some articles from various Rochester and other local newspapers, whose editors apparently considered the group's activities newsworthy.

UNIQUE CRAFT HERE

THE MEGIDDO RETURNS FROM ITS UP-
RIVER WANDERINGS

THE OWNER MAY SELL IT

The most remarkable steamer on the Ohio—or for that matter, on any river in the wide world—is now tied up at the Paducah landing just below the Fowler wharfbuoys. It is a large, three-decked steamer, the “Megiddo,” commanded by Capt. L. T. Nichols, who has with him a large band of Christian workers who make their home on the boat. They number in all, men, women and children, about eighty-five, including a brass band of twenty pieces, and it is their ideal to live together in this way without ever an angry look or a cross word being exchanged.

The Megiddo visited Paducah about a year ago, and since then has been up and down the Cumberland and the Ohio rivers. The boat had a narrow escape from damage by floating ice last week and was stranded on the bar at Caseyville. She will remain here some days and then, unless she is sold, will go up the Tennessee River. Services will be held in the city during the stay. The travelers preach a unique doctrine of their own.

The boat was built from the specifications of Capt. Nichols, who superintended the building of it, the members of the crew doing nearly all the work. The exterior of the steamer is decorated in a very

attractive manner, ornamental railings surrounding the main and upper decks and scroll work embellishing the appearance of the boiler deck. Surmounting all on the top of the pilot house is a replica of a large Bible opened at the middle chapters of the Bible, Psalm 117. Right at the front of the upper deck arranged in a semi-circle is the motto “In God We Trust,” and between the pretentious smoke stacks, “United We Stand” in large letters can be read from a long distance. The exterior of the boat, however, striking though it is, is entirely eclipsed by the wonderful arrangement displayed in the interior. Looking down the long corridor on the second deck, one gets the idea of a mammoth hotel. There are over fifty staterooms, all kept spotlessly clean, carpeted throughout, the walls decorated with Bible texts, the whole exhibiting an ingenuity of design and elaborateness of finish seldom approached.

Captain Nichols is a preacher of considerable distinction. He has traveled extensively in Europe and America and his views on Bible teaching and exegesis demand attention.

When the boat was visited by a News-Democrat reporter this morning, it was learned that the owners of the vessel are thinking of selling her. She has been over two weeks getting from Evansville, having been stuck on a sand bar above Shawneetown through the incompetency of an Evansville pilot. The Megiddoites had a hard time. Their boat was broadside against all the floating ice

which was coming down upon it in vast sheets, ten acres in extent, and would surely cut them in pieces. This would not be, according to the captain's ideas, and believing in the old maxim about trusting in the Lord and keeping one's powder dry he set about preventing disaster. After securing hotel accommodations for the women and children, the men barricaded the ship as best they could under the guidance of Capt. L. T. Nichols, and soon had a great mass of ice on their upper side which effectually protected their craft from the masses still coming.

After four days and nights of continued work the steamer was floated on Saturday morning only to be stuck by the same pilot on another bar about one-half mile from the first. Captain Nichols then gave the pilot sixty seconds in which to get off the

boat and telephoned Captain Fowler of Paducah for help. Captain Fowler sent Captain Crouse, and the Megiddo was brought safely to Caseyville. On the bar at Caseyville was thirty inches of water and the Megiddo draws twenty-eight, but that was enough for Pilot Crouse, and the Megiddo safely reached Paducah, where Captain Nichols hopes to find a buyer for his splendid craft.

Since leaving Paducah last year, thousands upon thousands have listened to the preaching of the mission people and have been captivated by the sweet strains of their fine brass band.

Editor's note: Within a month from this time a buyer was found and the boat was sold.

“IN GOD WE TRUST”

BOAT SINKS

HANDSOME STEAMER CHATTANOOGA RUNS
ON REEF OF ROCKS

IT WAS FORMERLY THE "GOSPEL BOAT"
MEGIDDO AND WAS A NOTED CRAFT

Yesterday morning about 7 o'clock news reached this city that about 1 o'clock in the morning the handsome steamer Chattanooga had run upon the reef of rock at Big Chain, 15 miles above here on the Tennessee River, and knocked a sufficiently large hole in her hull to sink the craft. The boat was in the charge of Captain Frank M. Carroll....As a result the boat has sunk to the bottom of the river, as she broke in two after striking the rock and went down together with her cargo.

The Chattanooga was built three years ago at Lyons, Iowa, by the band of gospel preachers who named her the Megiddo, and ever since that time she had been going up and down the different rivers in charge of the band which held religious services everywhere they stopped. Last winter the Chattanooga and Tennessee River Packet Co...bought the Megiddo which had aboard living quarters for the gospel band, and also their church hall....

Rochester, New York
January 25, 1904

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN

COMING TO MAKE ROCHESTER
THEIR HOME

WILL PREACH THE COMING OF THE LORD
AND TRUTH OF BIBLE

Somewhere between Paducah, Kentucky and this city there is a train bearing sixty followers of the Christian Brethren faith who are coming to Rochester to establish headquarters and conduct a gospel campaign throughout New York and nearby states. One member of the body arrived in Rochester Monday and has already leased a block at 55 East Avenue for the temporary future home of the group.

Making Rochester the headquarters,

the members will visit different places in the state next summer in specially constructed automobiles or special cars. A large tent will be carried and a brass band will accompany the expeditions to furnish music.

These Christian Brethren are an unusual people and, from all reports, a sincere people. They preach the coming of the Lord, which they believe is near at hand, urging people to prepare themselves and live better lives.

They also believe in the absolute truth of the Bible and teach this doctrine. Concerning this, Captain Nichols says: "After years of careful, earnest study I rejoice with joy unspeakable to know that I have found the gem for which I sought, and hold in my hands the blessed Bible, knowing that between its covers there are no impossibilities, contradictions or absurdities."

Rochester, New York
January 30, 1904

CITY IS INVADED

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN
SETTLE DOWN IN ROCHESTER

The invasion of Rochester by the Christian Brethren is a reality. A small army of 71 men, women and children is now located in a large, old fashioned residence at 55 East Avenue. Captain L. T. Nichols, the leader and originator of the Christian Brethren faith, arrived in Rochester Wednesday evening with the main army of his followers and since then the temporary headquarters of the army have been filled with busy sounds of moving furniture, tack hammers, and carpenter work.

When the society sold its steamboat on the Mississippi a few weeks ago, it sold also a large part of the furniture that was used on the boat. Four carloads of furniture not sold are expected to arrive here today.

Captain Nichols was about the city all day yesterday looking for a large flat that the band might buy for its permanent quarters. He examined a great many places but the buildings did not suit him. As a result, he says that the band will probably remain in its present quarters until spring when a large plot of ground will be purchased and all the carpenters, masons, brick layers and other workers

in the band will turn in and erect a fine large flat that will be exactly suited to the purposes of the organization.

Captain Nichols has picked out Rochester as the permanent home and headquarters of the Christian Brethren. He says the organization is a working Christian organization for the uplifting of men. It is simply an organization of sincere Christian men and women who believe that by working together and living together more can be accomplished for the establishment of the kingdom on earth than would result from individual efforts if the same number lived apart from one another.

The society is not organized upon the communistic principle. There is nothing communistic about them. Each man has his own property, earns his own living and is obliged to rely upon himself for a livelihood. Each family has living quarters entirely to itself and, as far as possible, each family also has a cook stove and complete housekeeping establishment of its own.

Captain Nichols has been all over the United States and Europe, and his followers are men and women from far and near. The women do needlework at home and the men go out and labor as painters, paperhangers, masons, carpenters, and plumbers. Captain Nichols is just the leader for such a band of religious workers as this. He has a strong, bearded face, a forceful and direct style of address and the air of a man whose life has been given to much meditation.

Rochester, New York
February 20, 1904

ROCHESTER'S NEW CITIZENS

THE CHRISTIAN BRETHREN HAVE
PURCHASED LAND

A great deal of interest is being centered in the Christian Brethren, who have located in Rochester with temporary headquarters at 55 East Avenue. The sect differs from some religious bodies for the fact that it does not ask for money to support its votaries. L. T. Nichols, who is captain of the community, and his wife, are people of culture and refinement and possess abundant means to carry on the propagation of

what they consider religious truth.

For some years the followers of Capt. Nichols have lived on a beautiful steamer, and journeyed from place to place along the Mississippi. The steamer was recently sold and the group has decided to settle here.

One of the theories of the Christian Brethren is that some of the stars owe their luminosity to the fact that they are inhabited by immortal beings. Capt. Nichols holds that a literal interpretation of the Bible Story of the creation of the earth in six days is insupportable. He thinks it unreasonable to suppose that a God who has existed through all eternity can have done nothing until within the past 6,000 years. He declares that the universe has been in existence and inhabited for vast ages.

Most of the conversations had were with Capt. Nichols and Mrs. Nichols and also Rev. Mrs. Maud Hembree, a gifted



Rev. Maud Hembree, assistant to Mr. Nichols, was an ardent and able defendant of the Bible. Before her death in 1935 she authored a two volume work, "The Known Bible and It's Defense."

lecturer and of a scholarly nature, showing them to be highly educated people.

The Christian Brethren have abandoned the steamboat feature of their missionary work and have chosen Rochester as the place where they will found a community of people having their own religious belief. They have bought about 5 acres of land on Thurston Road and there is no doubt that soon a thriving village of Christian Brethren will be established on the West

Side which will be a credit to that section of the city and perhaps be the means of doing a vast amount of good from the moral point of view. The Christian Brethren are most assuredly a very desirable class of citizens, as far as can be judged by their manners and appearance. They are thrifty and kind-hearted and imbued with strong religious convictions which, however, are of a very cheerful character, the doctrine of eternal punishment in hell not being accepted by the brethren.

*Rochester, New York
March 27, 1904*

HOW MEMBERS OF THE MEGIDDO MISSION BAND LIVE*

Not since the Megiddo Mission band, composed of more than three score of persons, started out four years ago to save a wicked world, has one single follower of Captain L. T. Nichols ever spoken an unkind word to another. Truly the little Christian band lives like one big, happy, contented family.

Hardly would one expect to find in so many human beings such rare consideration for each other. Go through a single street in Rochester and you will find at least one family willing and ready to expose a neighbor's faults. And there is not a single apartment house nor flat in Rochester where the tongues of gossips do not wag. Somebody stands at the spigot ready to turn on the troubled waters.

At the settlement founded by the Megiddo Mission band at Thurston Road, just inside the city limits, peace reigns supreme. It would be like committing a felony to say just one disrespectful or sarcastic word that might injure the tender feelings of another. There is no person out there to make trouble. And none are wanted. Nothing but a feeling of brotherly love is tolerated. And it is of the real, sympathetic, sincere kind.

"When we started out four years ago," explained one member, "we agreed among ourselves that we would live happily together. We made a solemn vow not to offend each other by a single unkind word. A man's word here is taken in all sincerity. Once he violates a prom-

ise he is liable to expulsion. God never put people in this world to live a life of strife and discord."*

The aim of the little settlement is to live out the golden rule in its entirety. One family helps another. Not a single member is poor, and some have savings tucked away for a rainy day. They never buy anything on credit since it is against the rules. Because of this they have no financial cares.

When night overtakes the members of the Megiddo band they go to sleep with a clear conscience, feeling they have not caused a single heart to ache through any cruel act or unkind word.

**Note: The above statement was the ideal but not always the achieved reality. Always a principle among the group, the rule was made firm by each individual's promise at the time the group was preparing to take up residence on the Mission Ship, as instigated by the leader of the group, L. T. Nichols. Without such a regulation, the project could never have succeeded. And it is a Bible command, to "be at peace among yourselves" and "cease from anger."*

*The Rochester Herald
March 27, 1904*

THE CHRISTIAN BRETHREN COLONY

About the middle of January of this year a small religious colony arrived in Rochester and took up temporary quarters on East Avenue. The colony called itself the Christian Brethren and its arrival was quite unostentatious. Captain Nichols, head of the colony, told the newspaper men when he arrived that he was going to settle his people in Rochester in a home of their own. He is now taking the first steps toward making good his statement.

Early last week the Herald told of the purchase of a large property at the corner of Sawyer Street and Thurston Road by the Brethren, where the headquarters of the colony will be located in the future. Later in the week a Herald representative had a long talk with the Captain about his work and the manner in which they live and labor.

The word "colony" is used rather than community for there is little of the community life about the Brethren. Individual property rights are closely guarded. Those who own their own personal or real property have it in their

THE ROCHESTER HERALD.

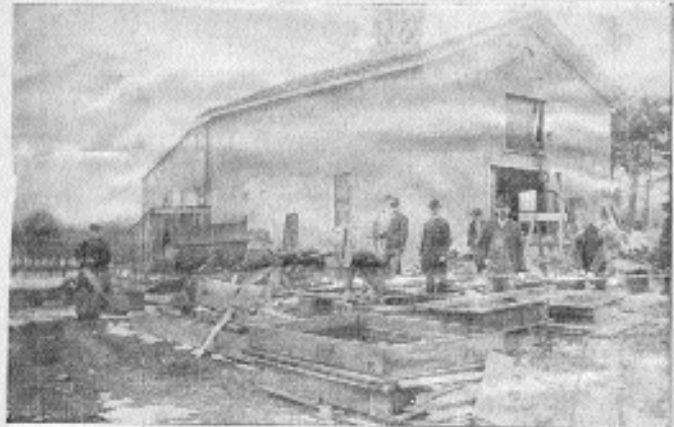
ROCHESTER, N. Y. SUNDAY, MARCH 27, 1904.

THE CHRISTIAN BRETHREN COLONY

Some Facts About Rochester's Newest Religious Body and the Way in Which It Will Do Its Work



NEW RESIDENCE PURCHASED BY THE CHRISTIAN BRETHREN.



CHRISTIAN BRETHREN AT WORK ON THEIR NEW BUILDING.



THE CHRISTIAN BRETHREN BAND IN FULL UNIFORM.



HOUSE DESIGNED AND BUILT BY MEMBERS OF THE BAND.

own name and no other in the colony has any claim on it whatsoever. Some of the brethren are well supplied with this world's goods and have no need to work. But all labor every day, for drones are not encouraged in this busy little world. Neither are the workmen required to work for the colony. They seek their natural employment in the city and are not bound by any tie to any class of work. Among the brethren are men of all trades—in fact it is hard to find any kind of skilled labor in which some of them is not expert. So it matters little to the colony where it locates. Their means of livelihood—hard work—is always within their power. The motto “To labor is to pray” might well be tacked up over their doors. The only benefits they receive from living together are the stimulus and encouragement of mutual aim in religious work and the economy that comes from catering to the wants of the household in a wholesale way. Members of the

colony claim that they live much better for less money than other people in similar circumstances of life.

There is no secrecy about the colony. Captain Nichols met the Herald representative cordially, showed him through the new house and spoke of the improvements that were to be made and of the work that the brethren hoped to do during the coming summer. The leader of the Brethren is an interesting character, bearing all the earmarks of a Westerner who has lived with real men for a lifetime. He is tall and serious in aspect; his voice is soft but its tones leave no doubt that it can command attention when he wishes to catch the ears of a congregation or audience. His manner is direct, though not brusque, and altogether there is something of sincerity

about the man that convinces his listener of his purpose. Among the co-workers of his colony he is more of the brother than the captain. He calls them by name and they answer as if they were fond of him and look up to him as one who has their best interests at heart.

When a boy of 14, Mr. Nichols became persuaded that there was a life work for him to do, preaching the gospel in ways that varied from other and more orthodox sects. He is now forty years older and his faith in his mission is no less strong. Gradually he has surrounded himself with the little band that now has taken up its home in Rochester.

“But this is not Zion City,” said Captain Nichols, “and everyone’s private rights are carefully safeguarded...The property we have purchased has been

allowed to go to seed a good deal and during the spring and summer we will endeavor to make it look a little more beautiful than it is at present. In another month we will be in better shape to receive visitors."

At the rear of the house, when The Herald man made his visit, about a dozen men were at work making frames for the new building and preparing to begin work on it. The ground in the front was being cleared, and while the men were at work in the open the women of the colony were busy indoors cleaning up the new acquisition and making it more suitable to their needs. There was an air of great cheerfulness about their proceedings. They sang at their work and seemed to live in great harmony. All ages and classes were represented. Little children were playing while their parents worked, and of austerity and Puritanism there was no sign. In this sect religion is not synonymous with the long face and downcast countenance.

*Saturday Globe
August 20, 1904*

THE MEGIDDO MISSION

A BAND OF ZEALOUS CHRISTIAN WORKERS IN ROCHESTER

Many of our readers will, no doubt, remember the Megiddo Mission Band that came to Rochester from the south last January. The band resided for a short time in the city, then purchased five acres on Thurston Avenue. Since then the place has been a perfect beehive of industry, proving that the members are a class of missionaries who believe that labor is honorable. There were already on the grounds a handsome residence and two cottages. To these have been added a large three-story building containing 21 rooms and another cottage of nine rooms which will soon be completed. The progress they have made proves that they will soon have one of the finest mission homes in the country and one that will greatly add to the beauty of that portion of the city.

The originator of the band, Rev. L. T. Nichols, is noted as being one of the best-versed men on Bible themes in the world. He has spent a lifetime in its study—from childhood the Bible being

his constant companion. At the age of 14 he was fittingly termed "The boy preacher." For forty-four years Mr. Nichols has devoted his life to religious work and has never accepted a dollar's salary. He is a preacher of considerable fame and has traveled many thousands of miles in the United States and Europe to aid his fellow men in leading holy and pure lives. He is not only a preacher, but he is also an inventor and able mechanic and draughtsman and builder of the ship he commanded for over two years; also of the new mission home. He is an able business man and man of affairs, who, besides all his religious work, has accumulated sufficient means to enable him to devote his life to the cause he so firmly believes in. His wife, to whom he has been united nearly 40 years, is a charming lady who looks the picture of health and contentment.

The mission band has a peculiarity all its own. It has not started out to increase its numbers. It does not expect to take one member out of any of the churches; it does not come as messengers of a special revelation to them, but comes with the Bible in one hand and history in the other, pointing to facts foretold in the one, verified on the pages of history to prove the divine authorship of the Bible.

The mission people are not so much concerned about points of doctrine, if they can only get people to throw away their creeds—take the Bible as their sole rule of faith and practice, lead pure, holy lives, and become a "peculiar people zealous of good works...looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ." Then they will be accepted in the day of His coming.

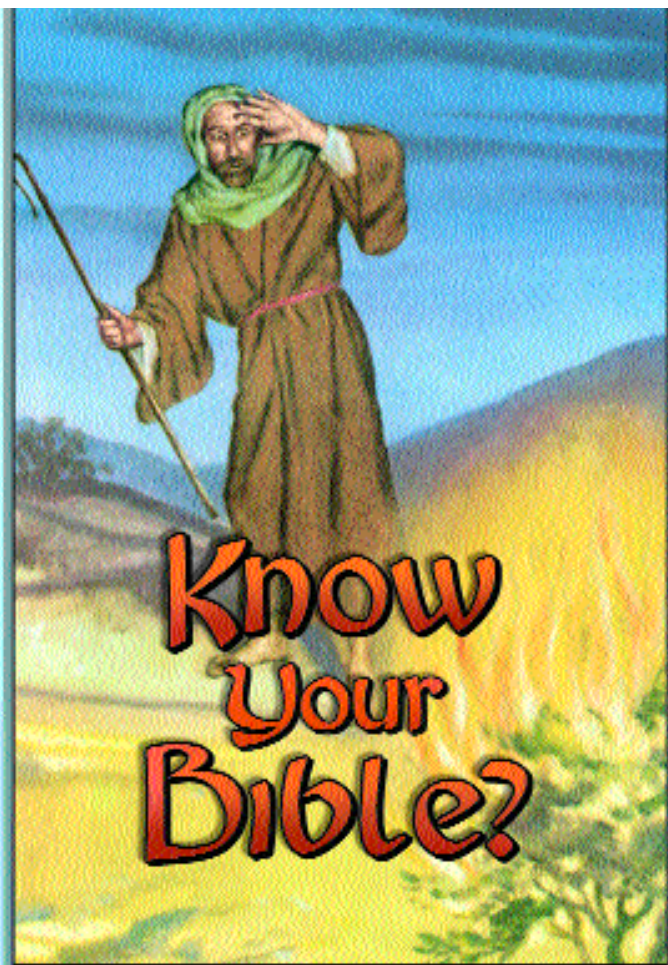
They declare that it is impossible for

human instrumentality to bring about the dawn of universal peace and good will among men. The world is nearly 6,000 years old in the experiment of human good and as far off as ever from the condition of things desired. They point to the golden empire of Babylon; to the silver empire of the Medes and Persians; to the brazen dominion of the Greeks; to the iron power of imperial Rome, as represented in Daniel's vision, and to the fact that mortal man has never succeeded in placing a worldwide dominion in their stead, because it was foretold that upon their ruins the God of heaven would set up a kingdom that would break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and stand forever. They believe that the vision of Daniel has been surely working itself out in the affairs of men; and now we stand in the era of Christ's appearing to destroy all human rule, authority and power of man, and establish on this earth a worldwide dominion. Under the rule of this heaven-sent King, earth's troubles will be hushed in the calm of universal peace. The stroke of divine judgment will alone break up the tangle of evil in which human affairs are involved. They teach that the condition of human society cannot be broken up in judgment and reorganized in righteousness until that Day. Christ will first come to earth and judge His servants, living and dead, then call upon all nations to lay down their arms. The governments of earth will struggle with desperation to preserve the human regime from threatened destruction. They will fight to the end and refuse to beat their spears into pruninghooks until expiring hope goes out in the complete triumph of the Lamb. u

continued next issue



An early spring view of the Megiddo grounds in Rochester, New York, about 1990.



ANGELS

1. In what city did the angels visit Lot?
2. Who did the angel of God wrestle with?
3. What is the name given to the archangel?
4. What did the angel of God use to separate the camp of Israel and the Egyptians?
5. Who did the angel of the Lord stand in front of (blocking his way)?
6. Who did the angel of the Lord deliver from the fiery furnace?
7. How did the angel of the Lord appear unto Moses?
8. What did the angel Gabriel tell Zacharias would happen to him because of his unbelief?
9. What angel flew swiftly to Daniel while he was praying?
10. What did the angels who visited Abraham look like to him?

COVENANTS

1. Who, after making a covenant with his father-in-law, set up a pile of stones as a witness to their act?
2. Who, after making a covenant with a dear friend, gave him his robe, armor, sword, bow and belt?
3. Who was told by God that the sight of a bow in the clouds would be a covenant between Him and every living creature?
4. Who, after making a covenant with the people at Shechem, set up a great stone under an oak as a witness?
5. Who made a feast for the royal party, after making a covenant with a king who had once hated him?
6. Who, after God made a covenant with him, had his name changed?
7. Which king sat in Ahab's chariot and made a covenant with him, promising to restore cities his father had taken?
8. Who stood between God and the Israelites at Horeb on an occasion when God made a covenant with them?
9. Which priest "made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people" followed by the people breaking down all the altars of Baal?

COMPLETE THE BEATITUDES

1. *Blessed are the poor in spirit,* _____
2. *Blessed are those who mourn,* _____
3. *Blessed are the meek,* _____
4. *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,* _____
5. *Blessed are the merciful,* _____
6. *Blessed are the pure in heart,* _____
7. *Blessed are the peacemakers,* _____
8. *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake,* _____
9. *Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me, rejoice and be glad,* _____

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOVE

COMPLETE THE BEATITUDES

1. *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* (Matt. 5:3)
2. *for they will be comforted.* (Matt. 5:4)
3. *for they will inherit the earth.* (Matt. 5:5)
4. *for they will be filled.* (Matt. 5:6)
5. *for they will be shown mercy.* (Matt. 5:7)
6. *for they will see God.* (Matt. 5:8)
7. *for they will be called sons of God.* (Matt. 5:9)
8. *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* (Matt. 5:10)
9. *because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.* (Matt. 5:11-12)

ANGELS

1. Sodom (Gen. 19:1)
2. Jacob (Gen. 32:24-30)
3. Michael (Jude 1:9)
4. Pillar of clouds. (Ex. 13:21; 14:19-20)
5. Balaam (Num. 22:23-27)
6. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego (Dan. 3:21-25)
7. In a burning bush (Ex. 3:1-2)
8. He wouldn't be able to speak (Luke 1:11-20).
9. Gabriel (Dan. 9:21)
10. Men (Gen. 18:1-2; 19:1-2)

COVENANTS

1. Jacob (Gen. 31:43-48)
2. Jonathan (1 Sam. 18:3-4)
3. Noah (Gen. 9:12-16)
4. Joshua (Josh. 24:22-27)
5. Isaac (Gen. 26:1, 26-31)
6. Abraham (Gen. 17:2-5)
7. Benhadad (1 Kings 20:33-34)
8. Moses (Deut. 5:1-5)
9. Jehoiada (2 Kings 11:17-18)

WILL THE EARTH BE DESTROYED?

by GERALD R. PAYNE

"I was wondering where you get your ideas from. The Bible teaches that this earth as we know it will be destroyed. It is not going to be turned into a paradise. Rev. 21:1 says, 'And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.' 2 Pet. 3:10 says, 'But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise; and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.'"

The Bible talks about heavens and earth with more than one meaning. Sometimes the ground on which we walk, the planet we inhabit, is referred to as "earth." For example Ps. 24:1, "The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein." Or Ps. 115:16, "The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's; but the earth He has given to the children of men." In other passages of Scripture, the term earth or heaven is used in a symbolic sense. For example, in Gen. 6:11, we read, "The earth also was corrupt before God." The physical earth, i.e., the soil, the land, could not be either corrupt or good. The very next verse states the same fact in plain language: "So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth." The problem was with the people on the earth, not the earth itself. But the people on the earth were called "the earth."

The first chapter of Isaiah uses heaven and earth with this same meaning, addressing two levels of people, the rulers and those ruled over. In Isa. 1:2, the prophet says, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!" We realize immediately that someone must have ears to hear or the prophet's message is lost. But he answers his own question, as he immediately addresses the problems of the nation of Israel. In verse 10 he is very specific about his audience: "Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah." "Heavens" in verse 2 are "rulers" in verse 10; "earth" in verse 3 are the "people" in verse 10.

In the book of Psalms, heavens and earth are used as terms for people. Psalm 148:4 is an example: "Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, and you waters above the heavens!" The inhabitants of the heavens, not the heavens themselves, praise the Lord.

The Bible is very definite that the physical earth will not be destroyed. Ecclesiastes 1:4 states this fact in clear, simple language; "One generation passes away, and another generation comes; But the earth abides forever."

If the physical earth exists "forever," how will a new heaven and earth replace "the first heaven and the first earth," as John saw in vision (Rev. 21:1)? We do not believe John was speaking of a new physical heaven and physical earth but rather of earth's future inhabitants in two categories, rulers (heavens) and general populace (earth). This same symbolic

"new heavens and new earth" is described in 2 Pet. 3:13 as a place "in which righteousness dwells." The quality of righteousness (right conduct, right doing) is a fitting description of righteous, God-fearing people; but could hardly be thought of as a quality of physical masses of matter.

Isaiah 65:17 speaks also of God creating a "new heavens and a new earth," and in the next verse describes the nature of that creation: "Be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying" (Isa. 65:18-19). What is the nature of the "new heavens" and "new earth"? It is a "people," who are filled with rejoicing and joy, in contrast to the former state of sadness and weeping.

The remainder of the chapter gives even more information about this "new" creation, prophetically describing its "earth" (people). They will "build houses and inhabit them," who "plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them" (verses 20-23). No need to imagine the creating of a new mass of matter to orbit in space! God's making-new process removes the old, faulty human systems and replaces them with new and better.

Why did Peter describe the removing of the present heavens and earth in such graphic terms? Why did he say the heavens "shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up"? (2 Pet. 3:10). His language is figurative. Compare the language of Revelation 18, which describes the removal of the same system as the fall of a city termed "Babylon." The results are catastrophic: weeping, wailing, crying, because "in one hour such great riches came to nothing" (v. 17). They cry out when they see "the smoke of her burning, saying, ... 'Alas, alas, that great city'" (v. 18-19). Then the next verse speaks of the "new" heavens which will take the place of the old. "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets"—in contrast to the rich extravagance of the city that fell, the "new heaven" will be composed of holy apostles and prophets" (v. 20).

Can't we imagine that when the present heavens, those currently having authority, are deprived of their authority, they will protest? God will have to use force, even the "fire" of His judgments, to remove them. Fire is used very often in Scripture as a symbol of Divine judgment, destruction with finality (i.e., Sodom and Gomorrah were said to have suffered "the vengeance of eternal fire" Jude 7. Paul said that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed...in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God...who shall be punished with ever-

lasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

When God's work on earth is complete, He will have a world filled with righteous people, where there will be no violence, no crime, no war, and no dissension (Isa. 11:9; 60:12, 14; Ps. 46:9). "Old things" will have passed away, "all things" will have become new (2 Cor. 5:17) on a worldwide scale. In the words of the Revelator, it will be the glorious time when *"the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself shall be with them and be their God, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away"* (Rev. 21:3-4). Notice the next statement about this superlative state: *"He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold I make all things new'"* (Rev. 21:5). "All things new" includes new heavens and new earth, new ruling authorities and a whole new populace, with all the old problems gone forever. In the words of 2 Pet. 3:13, it will be *"new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."*

And notice the guarantee which Jesus tells John to add: *"...these words are trustworthy and true"* (Rev. 21:5 NIV).

We look forward eagerly to this wonderful, new creation!

F Must one be born again?

"I have looked at your website and I am wondering, do you all believe in the concept Jesus stated and Paul listed in Romans, that one must be born again in order to enter heaven? From your writings, it looks like you people plan on being here on earth during the tribulation period without being killed, and then being here for Christ's reign on earth. Personally, I would rather be with Jesus in heaven.

"Please respond. I am very curious."

Your question brings up several issues. Yes, we do believe that we must be born again before we can experience the immortal state, but we must be sure to read Jesus' words carefully to understand what He means by that birth. Jesus said this plainly to Nicodemus, *"Most assuredly, I say to you; unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God"* (John 3:5).

What did Jesus mean by this statement? We need to recognize first that Jesus is talking about two distinct processes: first, "born of water," and second, "born of the Spirit." Why did He say that one must be "born of water"? In the next chapter Jesus offers the woman from Samaria spiritual, life-giving water, and tells her it is His to give. This very special "water" is the lifeline of spiritual life, the vital knowledge of God, as Jesus revealed during His ministry. We must be "born of" this water of life, i.e., learn the teachings of Jesus and

become "new" in them, letting them remake our lives morally into "new creatures" (2 Cor. 5:17), then when Jesus comes He will remake our bodies to be like His own resplendent body, no longer subject to pain, sorrow, sickness or disease.

This second birth or physical making new, being born of the spirit, is the ultimate change to the immortal state. In 1 Corinthians, Paul said that *"flesh and blood,"* the mortal state as we know it, *"cannot inherit the kingdom of God"* (1 Cor. 15:50). We have to be changed physically, and he explains this change in the next few verses: *"This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality"* (v. 53). Jesus' own comment indicates that it is a physical change of state. He says, *"The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit"* (John 3:8). Those who are Spirit born will not be confined to the normal means of transportation that we know (walk, run) but will be able to move as freely as does the wind, because Jesus said: *"So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

We are aware that many people believe they "are born again" when they are converted, but we do not find support for this thought in the Bible. Nor do we find support for the idea of entering heaven. The Bible promises that the faithful will *"reign on the earth"* (Rev. 5:9-10). Six times in the 37th Psalm, it is stated that the righteous will inherit the earth (land), and dwell in it forever. Proverbs 10:30 tells us the righteous will *"never be removed"*—they would surely have to be "removed" if they were to be transported to heaven. Jesus said *"the meek will inherit the earth"*—a long-term possession. Jesus is coming to *"be king over all the earth"* (Zech. 14:9). In the prayer He taught His disciples to pray, He said, *"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"* (Matt. 6:10).

You suggest that you would rather be with Jesus in heaven during the time which you picture as the tribulation period. We would not have any objection to being with Jesus in heaven, if such were the plan, but we do not find anywhere in Scripture that Jesus offers us that opportunity. Nor do we find reason to fear the time of tribulation, because the Bible indicates God will look out for the good of His own, and they will be *"delivered"* (Dan. 12:1-2), *"spared"* (Mal. 3:17), and safely kept from harm (Joel 2:32). He said He would be coming back, so that we could be where He is (John 14:3). He will come and dwell among men (Rev. 21:3-4) but the location is always specified as earth, not heaven.

God has promised to watch over His own and keep them safe. He will *"give His angels"* this charge (Ps. 91:11). The promise is, *"The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them"* (Ps. 34:7). His promise to His people is unconditional: *"I will never leave you nor forsake you"* (Heb. 13:5; see also Deut. 31:6, 8; Josh. 1:5). u

***Don't worry about doing what is profitable prudent,
or politically correct. Do what's right.***

Act with courage, and may the Lord be with those who do well. —2 Chron. 19:11



What Do You Hear?

by HAZEL MARETT

Rodney!" exclaimed Mrs. Thomas. "How many times must I tell you not to play that kind of music!"

"Aw, Mom, everybody listens to a little rock now and then," protested Rodney. "Besides, this don't hurt me."

"Doesn't hurt," Mother corrected. "But it does! Both the words and the music get into your mind and influence you whether you realize it or not."

Rodney sighed and picked up his new model ship. "Is Dad home yet?" he asked.

"Not yet," replied Mother. "Since he was made manager of Burger Haven, he has extra responsibilities. Shall we surprise him and meet him there?"

Rodney brightened. "Oh yes! Can I have a large sundae?" he asked eagerly.

"You can't possibly be hungry yet," laughed Mother, "but maybe a small one would go down. We'll see."

Rodney's father saw them come in and came to greet them. "I'll be with you in a minute," he said.

They sat down, and Rodney listened intently as Dad walked away. "What's Dad singing?" he asked.

"Come to Big Al's, bring all your pals." Dad's voice drifted back softly as he sang under his breath. "Our burgers are the best, in the east and the west."

Rodney gave a shout of laughter. "Dad, you're advertising for the competition!"

Dad grinned sheepishly. "I heard it on the radio while I was driving to work this morning, and it got into my head. I guess I'd better be more careful about what I listen to."

On the way home, Rodney was thoughtful. "I guess maybe you're right, Mom," he murmured finally. "If hearing that song could make Dad advertise for the wrong restaurant without even knowing it, maybe the songs I hear influence me more than I thought they did, too. I'm going to be more careful about what I hear."

FROM THE BIBLE:

*Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous!
For praise from the upright is beautiful.
Praise the Lord with the harp;
Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings.
Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy.
For the word of the Lord is right,
And all His work is done in truth.*

—Psalm 33:1-4

HOW ABOUT YOU? How about the music you listen to? Do the words please God? Advertisers know that words set to music stay with you even longer than spoken words. And how about the music itself? Would you invite Jesus to listen with you? Be sure that both the words and the sound of the music please Him, and that they don't hurt your testimony.

TO MEMORIZE: "Take heed what you hear" (Mark 4:24 NKJV).

Music influences you!

From: *The One Year Book of Family Devotions*, Vol. 1, Children's Bible Hour ©1988
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There is an old Italian proverb: "When God shuts a door, He opens a window." Many of God's saints have come to barriers in life which have eventually opened upon new and broader fields of service. If we are identified with Christ, distressing circumstances will bring us to new possibilities in the riches of His grace, kindness and longsuffering.

Nothing can come between God and me if I live close enough to Him.

Prayer must be followed by the courage to act.

The smallest deed is better than the greatest intention.

Whenever our judgments and our feelings lack patience, they also lack wisdom and virtue.

The lad who gave his loaves and fishes to Jesus didn't have to go without his dinner.

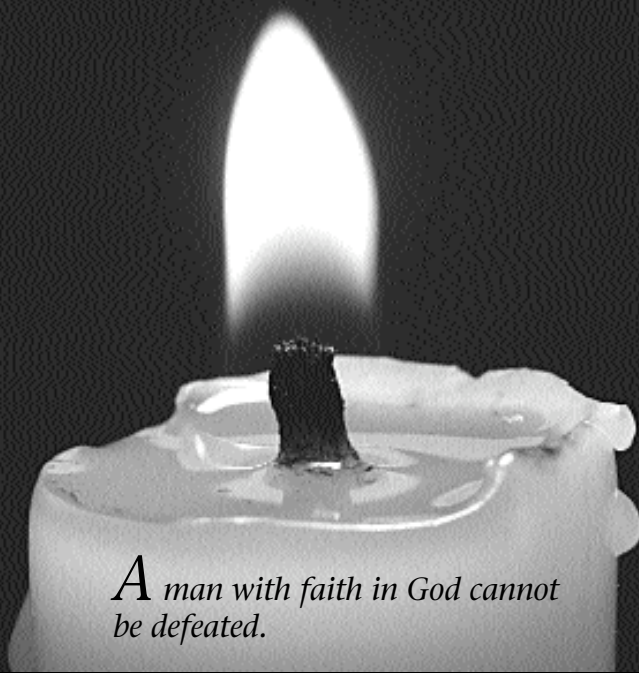
Prayer is the mortar that holds our spiritual house together.

FORGET AND REMEMBER

*Forget each kindness that you do
As soon as you have done it,
Forget the praise that falls on you
The moment you have won it;
Forget the slander that you hear
Before you can repeat it,
Forget each slight, each spite, each sneer,
Wherever you may meet it.
Remember every kindness done
To you, whate'er its measure;
Remember praise by others won
And pass it on with pleasure;
Remember those who lend you aid
And be a grateful debtor;
Remember every promise made
And keep it to the letter.*

—Selected

There is not enough darkness in all the world to put out the light of one small candle.



A man with faith in God cannot be defeated.

Put your will in neutral, so God can shift you.

Wrong is always wrong despite our excuses.

If you cannot do great things, you can at least do small things in a great way.

It is not so much ability that God wants, but avail-ability and pli-ability.

The thickest cloud brings the heaviest showers of blessing.

The best tranquilizer is a clear conscience.

Following the Lord with doubt in your mind is like driving a car with the brakes on.

Don't wait for a crisis to discover what is most important in your life.

As the Waters Cover the Sea

*"There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord,
as water covers the sea." —Isaiah 11:9*

God is working His purpose out as year succeeds to year;
God is working His purpose out, and the time is drawing near
Nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
As the waters cover the sea!

All we can do is nothing worth unless God blesses the deed;
Vainly we hope for the harvest tide till God gives life to the seed;
Yet nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
As the waters cover the sea!

—Arthur C. Ainger

