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Megiddo Message



This is the day the Lord has made.
We will *rejoice* and be *glad* in it.
—Psalm 118:24 TLB



by RUTH E. SISSON

More, More, MORE

The growing Christian, like the serious student in school, is never satisfied with his progress. He always sees where he can do more and better. There is always something greater toward which to reach. Every field of knowledge conquered is the opening of ten more that were previously unknown.

This spirit was especially strong in the Apostle Paul. His letters ring with the challenge that motivated him—to be more and yet more like Christ, to do more and yet more for his brethren, to do more and yet more for his Master. And he was exuberantly grateful that God was able to do exceeding more for him. Indeed, the reward to which he was aspiring promised to be *"infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope"* (Eph. 3:20 NLT).

This quality of "more" is apparent in his first letter to the Thessalonians. Very early in the letter he expressed his gratitude for faithful ones. Then he says: *"We are always thankful as we pray for you all, for we never forget that your faith has meant solid achievement, your love has meant hard work, and the hope that you have in our Lord Jesus Christ means sheer dogged endurance in the life that you live before God, the Father of us all"* (1 Thess. 1:2–3 Phillips).

Yet it was not enough. They had not yet reached the ideal of the life God requires. There were yet problems to solve, lessons to learn, goals to reach before they could be found *"unblameable in holiness before our God"* (1 Thess. 3:13). They must keep going, just as steps ascend higher and yet higher. They must, by Moffatt's rendering of the text, *"increase and excel."* Did anyone think it impossible? They were simply following the example of Paul and his brethren. Of course it was possible! They had *seen* it done.

Paul emphasizes this "more" quality in many of his letters. He tells the Roman Christians that they must be *"more than conquerors"* (Rom. 8:37). He writes to the Philippians that their love is not only to abound but that it is to *"abound more and more,"* (Phil. 1:9).

His words to the Thessalonians confirm the same thought. *"Finally, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God, as we have taught you. You are doing this already, and we encourage you to do so more and more"* (1 Thess. 4:1 NLT). There was no place for any selfish satisfaction, only room for more.

Why more and more? Haven't you noticed that God never gives only the minimum? He never skimps or carefully parcels out His blessings. He is generous, abundantly generous. For what did the Psalmist give thanks? Was it for a cup carefully filled to the brim? No, it was for a cup that overflowed. *"My cup,"* he said, *"runs over."*

The writer of Hebrews had caught the spirit when he wrote, *"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching"* (Heb. 10:25 NIV). He wrote also that we must give heed, *"pay more*

WE BELIEVE...

- ★ **in God, the Creator** and sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life, in whom we *"live, and move, and have our being."*
- ★ **in the Bible** as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.
- ★ **in Jesus Christ**, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be King of the whole earth.
- ★ **in the Holy Spirit**, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.
- ★ **in life as the gift of God**, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- ★ **in humankind** as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.
- ★ **in ourselves** as capable, with the help of God, of applying to our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.
- ★ **in the promise of God**, that Jesus Christ will soon return to rid the earth of all sin and suffering and inaugurate an eternal and worldwide Kingdom of peace and righteousness, until God's will is done here as it is now done in heaven.

*"Do not be deceived:
A man reaps what he
sows."* —Galatians 6:7 NIV

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Megiddo Message

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BDAG—Arndt, W., Gingrich, F. W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (1996). A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature; DBL—Swanson, J. (1997). Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains; EDNT—Balz, H. R., & Schneider, G. (1990-). Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament; GES—Gesenius, W., & Tregelles, S. P. (2003). Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures; HAL—Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M., & Stamm, J. J. (1999). The Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament; LSJ—Liddell, H. G., Scott, R., Jones, H. S., & McKenzie, R. (1996). A Greek-English lexicon; LN—Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains; SHG—Strong, J. (1997). The new Strong's dictionary of Hebrew and Greek words. THAYER—A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (1889).

MEGIDDO MEANS...

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



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Front cover: Photo of bright red oak leaves taken in Missouri by Patricia Fleming

PRISONERS *or Free?*



WE DON'T HAVE TO BE PRISONERS OF OURSELVES

God's plan for us is freedom, not bondage.
He has called us to freedom, freedom from ourselves. Jesus said,
"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

BY KENNETH E. FLOWERDAY
REPRINTED FROM
MEGIDDO MESSAGE,
APRIL 15, 1961

In the following words, an eyewitness relates his reaction at seeing a human being deprived of his freedom.

"Recently I was riding in a bus from Rochester to Utica. Two young lads sat a few seats in front of me. Viewed from the rear they seemed to be looking at the scenery and conversing like other passengers. Presently it came time for them to leave the bus. Then I noticed that they were handcuffed to each other. It is hard to describe the expression of their faces as they walked down the aisle. There was a look of humiliation, touched with bitterness. I tried to think how I should feel if I were led through a staring crowd shackled like a wild animal that could not be trusted with its freedom. Bitter is the shame of being a prisoner of the law."

*No freedom in life
equals the peace of becoming
free from our old selves.*

Another kind of prisoner are brave men captured by enemy troops and held as prisoners of war. Captive peoples have been confined in prison camps. They have suffered privation, even torture, and death, but they have been under no shadow of shame.

Shackled by Ourselves

There is still another class of prisoners. They are not shackled or subjected to public disgrace like prisoners of the law. They are not starved or brainwashed like prisoners of war. They may walk the streets or sit in their homes without any external restraint. Yet they are imprisoned by

bars of their own making. They are prisoners of themselves, and we can be among them.

Psalm 142 is headed with this inscription: "A prayer of David when he was in a cave." If, as some think, this psalm voices the mood of David when he was in the cave of Adullam where he was rallying his followers around him, then it is not written from a "physical" prison. Yet this psalm contains the petition: *"Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Your name."* David's "spirit" was in prison although his body was unfettered.

*Note: Bible quotations
have been updated to the
New King James Version.*

Prisoners of Our Bodies

Some of us may be prisoners of our bodies. Our minds dwell in bodies, and whenever the body gets the upper hand, our spirits are imprisoned.

Watch an active young girl at play out in the open air. How carefree of her body she seems to be. It is just a wonderful instrument to be used in pursuing her play. Then think of that person fifty years later, and consider how much the concern of her body may have come to dominate her thought and consume her time. The care of the body's health, the coddling of its comforts, the beautifying of its appearance—all this becomes almost a major concern of some people. When this happens it is evident that the body has gotten the better of the spirit.

There are professional invalids in the world who spend their time and money going from doctor to doctor seeking health, yet are so completely shackled by self-pity and negative thinking that the cleverest doctor can do them no good. This same inconsistency exists among professed life-seekers. They tell themselves they want to be healed; they go to the Great Physician who is able to heal every malady. But they approach Him with a negative mental attitude, saying, "There is no hope, I cannot be cured. Evil habits have such a strangle hold on me that I cannot be free."

A little girl, hearing a sermon on 1 Cor. 9:27, where Paul said, *"I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection,"* reported at home that the minister said, "I keep my soul on top." Both Paul and the little girl had caught the spirit of Christ. Jesus had merited the title of the Great Physician not primarily because of specific illnesses which He had cured, but because He put the body in its proper place. He did heal men's bodies, but He told them that if they would *"seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,"* their bodily needs would fall into their proper—secondary—place. He knew that when men and women are fired with a consuming purpose they become almost indifferent to food and raiment, even to pain.

Much as we deplore war and its diabolical devastation, we cannot deny that during war people give less time to coddling their bodies and worrying about their peace of mind. We can hear the rebuke in the ex-soldier's remark: "During the war we died for things; now we die of things."

Big purposes free us from petty fretfulness and little ailments. And there can be no bigger purpose for us to pursue than the purpose of fitting ourselves to merit eternal salvation.

Prisoners of Our Possessions

God can also keep us from being imprisoned by our earthly possessions. We like to surround ourselves with our belongings. It is natural and right to desire nice things around us. God has given us *"richly all things to enjoy."* Our personalities are in part revealed by the furnishings of our homes. These surroundings show our taste, develop our artistic interests, enlarge our lives. But a house is made to be lived in and not to be lived for. Some women are better housekeepers than home makers. Our material possessions are meant to be not our prisons but the scaffolding by which we build more stately mansions for our souls.

Jesus sensed the danger of our being enthralled by earthly things, and that is why He uttered the following words of caution: *"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?... But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you"* (Matt. 6:25, 33). He would have us keep the right proportion between what we live on and what we live **for**.

As Jesus looked out upon the life of His time He saw men interpreting life in terms of the physical and immediate. They were prisoners of themselves. People regarded money, power and pleasure as the important things. The degeneracy in religion was such that ritual, ceremonies, robes and ornaments, had replaced the truer values of faith, mercy and righteousness. While the body of mankind was vitally alive, and its interest in the things which could be seen and sensed was keen, its soul was slowly but surely dying. The arena and the circus were the centers of attractions, while the spiritual values were in eclipse.

But Jesus' position was the very opposite. He had said that material values were not the most important, that the life of the true Christian must not be interpreted in terms of *"What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, What shall we wear?"* (v. 31). The significant things are not money, food, clothes, power and pleasure; but faith, hope, prayer, patience and obedience. These are the superior, enduring values we must seek.

*Keep the right
proportion between what
you live on and what
you live for.*

As a rule we are attracted by the things which are seen, yet material values have their limitations. Earthly possessions may seem so real, but taken together they cannot provide us with peace of mind, they cannot bestow upon us genuine happiness, *or* assure

us of a life that will never end. In our highest moments we realize that “the invisibilities are the realities, and the intangibles are the permanencies.” “For the things which are seen are temporary; but the

things which are not seen are eternal,” said the Great Apostle (2 Cor. 4:18).

A sage of the Nineteenth Century spoke words that describe so perfectly today’s attitude as to make them seem currently spoken: “Things are in the saddle, and are riding mankind.” If those words were true in Emerson’s day, they are ten times truer today. Luxuries have become necessities, and mere “things”—what shall we eat, and drink, wear and use—are riding mankind more than at any time in the past, making our lives cluttered and complicated. Many a wage earner spends his money months, and sometimes years, before he gets it, making him a virtual slave to his creditors.

More Prison Walls

Our bodies can imprison us by their passions. We know what strong fetters are forged by sinful habit. All about us are those who are slaves of drink, lust, and greed. Only a few can testify with the apostle Paul, “Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more” (Rom. 5:20). Only a few have found that through the power of the gospel God can so fill men and women with hope and the higher hungers as to be delivered from the bondage of degrading appetite.

In our journey through life we fetter ourselves with chains of anger, jealousy, impatience, envy, sensitiveness. They are chains of our own forging; securely attached to our lives by our own fingers; and by our own actions we add to their growing weight,

link by link until, like the Prophet of old, we are—you are— “I am—a burden to myself” (Job 7:20). So wearying and depressing is the effect of these prison walls as to rob life of its present joys, and destroy its future hope.

Perhaps we have chained ourselves with the desire to receive honor from one another, and have become so concerned with what others say and think about us that the desire for God’s honor is secondary in our thoughts. There are people who live on approbation. Give such a one his shot of praise in the morning, and he will be buoyant and happy all day. Deprive him of his morning shot, and he will be disagreeable and morose the whole day long—or at least until he gets his dram of approbation. But Jesus stands ready to break his fetters with His advice not to seek honor of men. “How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?” (John 5:44).

If we have surrounded ourselves with the confining walls of selfishness, covetousness, pride, hurt feelings, we face a tedious task when we attempt to break out of our prison. If, on the other hand, we banish the evils before they imprison us, we remain God’s freemen. Herein lies the great secret of freedom from sin’s binding chains: Rout the evil before it becomes linked to you. It is easier to keep free than to secure freedom after once we have been shackled. We may not be able to prevent the birds from flying over our heads, but we can keep them from making nests in our hair.

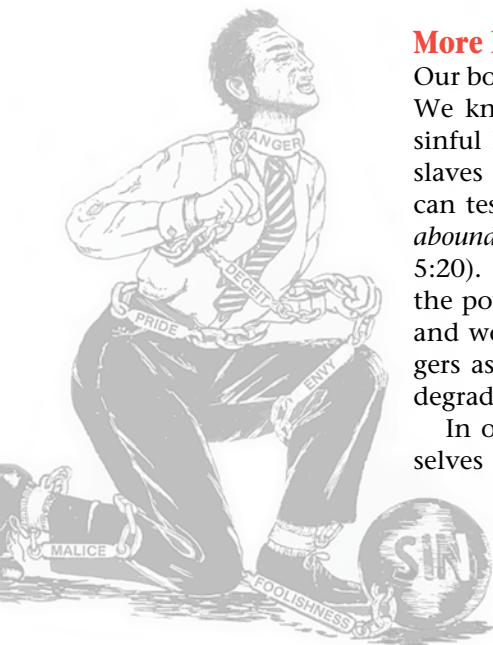
When we wittingly put off doing the things we know we ought to do, we strengthen the prison walls that enslave us. If we would call our trials experiences, and remember that every experience develops some latent force within us, we would grow in grace and knowledge, and be happy and contented, however adverse our circumstances. Too often we forget that temptation is a proving ground to break our will.

If easily slighted or offended, we are still in a prison of our own making. If easily provoked to anger, the trying tasks we dislike are the best experience we could possibly have. Every victory over our natural instincts removes a fetter from our prison.

We need God’s grace to keep our hearts free from resentment against those who wrong us. A white reporter once sought an interview with Roland Hayes, the great black singer. He

In our highest moments we realize that the invisibilities are the realities, and the intangibles are the permanencies.

2 Corinthians 4:18



found him in a dingy room where he was eating his meal because the hotel denied him a better place of dining. The reporter exploded in anger, but Hayes said: "My earliest teacher in voice told me that as a black artist, I would suffer terribly if I allowed the barbs to penetrate my soul; but if my heart was right, and my spirit divinely disciplined, then nobody in all the world would be able to hurt me ... except myself."

When a person can attain such an attitude, he has escaped from the imprisoning bitterness of mind and heart. In the words of Henry van Dyke:

*Self is the only prison
that can ever bind the soul:
Love is the only angel
who can bid the gates unroll
And when he comes to call thee,
arise and follow fast
His way may lie through darkness,
but it leads to light at last.*

Some delight in saying, I am a liberal. Well, if we are truly liberal, our hearts as well as our minds and our bodies must be liberated. When doors are shut against us, we are prone to draw into ourselves and lock our hearts against others. When others give us the cold shoulder, we turn to them a cold back. When we know that another dislikes or suspects us, we are to entertain thoughts about that one which arouse more dislikes or suspicions, and so distrust begets distrust. We forget the divine injunction: "Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of malicious behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you" (Eph. 4:31–32 NLT).

We Are Made To Grow

The creative God made us for creative growth. Growth is the law of our being. Violate that law, and you violate yourself. It is true that the body ceases to grow after a certain time, and the process of slowing down and eventual decay sets in.

Many people are so closely linked with their bodies that the decay of their body means the decay of the person. They have lived to make the body comfortable—to ward off sickness and death from it, to satisfy the cravings and appetites—so that their very persons are bound up with the fortunes of the body.

When it decays, they decay. Life's supreme tragedy is to watch the triple decay of body, mind, and spirit in yourself or in another.

This decay of the person causes more unhappiness than all other causes combined. Jesus said, "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them." If we are not a creative and growing person, we are an unhappy person. Human happiness is a by-product of being a creative growing personality. God has set eternity in our hearts, but to win it perfection of character must be achieved.

The trials and struggles of today are but the price we must pay for the accomplishments and victories of tomorrow. The apostle Peter was acquainted with the walls of confinement that imprison human nature, and no doubt he had been shut in by them more than once before he wrote the words: "For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God" (1 Pet. 2:19–20 NIV). In

these words Peter was setting a very high standard for erring mortals, many of whom live for praise and die of censure. No one naturally likes to suffer for his wrongdoing, much less endure criticism when he has done well. The task is as difficult today as it was in Peter's day.

We should bear in mind that God knows



The Real Prisoners

*Not all are prisoners of steel
Nor locked behind the bars,
Our self-made prison oft conceal
The glory of the stars.
We bind ourselves with ball and chain,
We drag old hurts around—
In many a prison of the brain
A prisoner is found.*

*Come out of the jail! Life lies before;
Forget the things behind
Your memories are wall and door.
Your prison is your mind.
This very moment turn the key
And lift the bolt, and go—
This very moment you are free,
If you will have it so.*

*Drive out the thoughts of things unkind
That make your mind a cell,
And better thoughts will come and find
A place therein to dwell.
A self-made prisoner no more,
Go forth to sun and star.
Let in the light—throw wide the door—
for what we think, we are.*

-Selected

our hearts and in His “*Book of Remembrance*” every good deed is recorded. Temporary honor may be forfeited, because our virtues are not recognized. Perhaps even humiliation will have to be endured because of unjust blame. But the great, good soul, is affected by neither. These things are not worthy of mention compared with the honor of having our virtues recognized and acclaimed by God. When we get the larger, liberating outlook, we can distinguish between the transient and the lasting.

God's Freedom Plan

God's plan for us is freedom, not bondage. He has called us to freedom, freedom from ourselves. Jesus said, “*And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*” To know the truth, is to know the truth of God's Word, and reject

any teaching that conflicts with it. Then it is even more important to know—and accept—the truth about ourselves. Naturally we are prisoners of ourselves. We have been brain-washed in favor of ourselves. Our eyesight is defective, so that we cannot see ourselves in our true light. The transgression that appears like a plank in the eye of our brother, appears as only a small splinter if it is in our own eye. Therefore, we need to be freed from ourselves, before we can know the truth about ourselves.

This thralldom comes to us naturally, it is our heritage from birth. “*Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements*

of this world,” said the Great Apostle. “*But, when the fulness of time had come, God sent forth his Son,...that we might receive the adoption as sons*” (Gal. 4:3–5). We have been made free, but freedom has its price. The fact that we have been made free is no sign that we shall continue to be free if we do nothing to enhance our freedom. In vs. 8 and 9 Paul rebukes the Galatian

church for their infidelity in wanting to turn back to their former bondage: “*In those days, when you were ignorant of God, you were in servitude to gods who are really no gods at all; but now that you have known God—or rather are known by God—how is it you are turning back again to the weakness and poverty of the Elemental spirits? Why do you want to be enslaved all over again by them?*” (Moffatt's translation).

Paul spoke again of the hazards of this bondage, and how to get free from it, in Rom. 8:13-15 (NLT): “*So, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation whatsoever to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you keep on following it, you will perish. But if... you turn from it and its evil deeds, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So you should not be like cowering, fearful slaves. You should behave instead like God's very own children, adopted into his family —calling him ‘Father, dear Father.’*”

Here is true freedom, the freedom of being God's very own children—what a contrast to being prisoners of ourselves!

The history of human life on earth has been one long period of bondage to fear, hate, turmoil, revenge, to merciless individuals and tyrannical overlords, to say nothing of the bondage to the evil propensities of human nature. By accepting divine Authority, allowing the word of God to act as a ruling force in our lives, we no longer are in bondage to our inherent moral defects. Wrath, malice, pride, jealousy, deceit, stubbornness, are among these traits under which we were held in bondage until freed by accepting the surveillance of the Word of God, and amending our lives.

No freedom in life equals the bliss of becoming free from ourselves. Compare the worth of the moral strength that makes it possible for us to sit down and calmly talk over our differences with one who strongly opposes us or has done us a wrong, with the natural trend to let our tempers go, talk back, and make wild and groundless statements to our opponent which we will regret afterward. Is it not a release to be able to conquer our pride so that the possession of wealth, temporal power, and authority over others, will not puff us up or lead us to think too highly of ourselves? If enjoying the moral freedom of the sons of God we can even be told of our own faults and shortcomings and take it with good grace and profit by it.

But desirable as these freedoms are, they are not the ultimate. Freedom from pain, disease,

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We need to be freed from ourselves, before we can know the truth about ourselves.

The ultimate freedom is the physical change to IMMORTALITY.

KNOW YOUR BIBLE

"Let the wise listen and add to their learning" -Proverbs 1:5



BIRDS IN THE BIBLE

1. About whom did Joseph prophesy that the birds would eat his flesh?
2. What was an acceptable burnt offering for the Israelites to sacrifice?
3. To whom did a Philistine say, *"Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air"*?
4. Who sat on sackcloth among the rocks during harvest to prevent birds from devouring her dead sons who had been hanged?
5. What bird did Noah send out from the ark first?
6. On whom did the Holy Spirit descend like a dove?
7. What bird did God provide for the Israelites to eat in the wilderness?

ESCAPES

1. This king of Syria escaped on horseback from enemy Israelites.
2. The angels of the Lord helped this man and his family escape a wicked city before it was destroyed.
3. With the help of his wife, who let him down from a window, he escaped from his father-in-law.
4. Being warned by an angel in a dream, he escaped to Egypt with his wife and child.
5. To escape stoning by the Jews, he *"escaped out of their hands"* and went beyond Jordan.
6. To escape his brother, who wanted to kill him, he fled to his uncle Laban.
7. While Doeg was carrying out a wholesale slaughter of priests, he was the only one who managed to escape.
8. To escape a vengeful queen, he *"arose and went for his life and came to Beersheba."*
9. The disciples let him down a wall in a basket so he could escape enemy Jews.

IDENTIFY

1. I am a relative of Jesus. I lived in the desert and ate locusts and wild honey. I was beheaded by King Herod's order. Who am I?
2. I am a Hebrew prophet who wrote a book of the Bible. I was carried captive to Babylon. I saw a vision of a wheel within a wheel. Who am I?
3. I was my mother's favorite son. I bought my brother's birthright for a bowl of stew. I dreamed about a ladder to heaven with angels on it. Who am I?
4. I am a son of Amram and Jochebed, and Moses' older brother. I am also Miriam's brother. Who am I?
5. I came from Thyatira but I met Paul in Philippi. I was a seller of purple cloth. I was a convert under Paul's ministry. Who am I?
6. I am a prophet of the Lord. I saw Jerusalem destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. I was forbidden to marry and later fled to Egypt. Who am I?
7. I am Jesus' brother. I led a church council and wrote a New Testament book. Who am I?
8. I was recalled from Egypt to be king of Israel. I was a rival to Rehoboam, king of Judah at the time. I set up golden calves for worship at Dan and Bethel. Who am I?
9. I am a prophet of the Lord. I prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, four kings of Judah. Who am I?

PSALMS

1. In the sixth Psalm, David begs the Lord to save his life because he _____.
2. *"The wicked walk on every side,"* says the twelfth Psalm, when _____.
3. *"Keep me as the apple of the eye,"* that is, _____.
4. The twenty-third Psalm is an analogy of _____.
5. *"The Lord is my light and my _____."*
6. *"The Lord is my strength and _____."*
7. David asked that his enemies be _____.
8. The thirty-seventh Psalm promises the righteous will inherit the land _____ times.
9. *"The sacrifices of God are _____."*
10. *"Moab,"* said David, *"is my _____."*
11. The ninetieth Psalm sets man's normal life span at _____.
12. *"The fear of the Lord is _____."*
13. *"The stone which the builders refused is become the _____."*
14. *"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we _____."*
15. Where can we go to be out of God's sight? _____.

Serving ALL the Way!



My, such a loooong time...

Our 21st century style of living has come to associate a certain age with retirement. The harsh demands of the productive workplace are more easily handled by younger minds and bodies.

But from our Christian obligation God offers no retirement plan. There is no point in life when we can say that our duty is done, that now we can relax and be free of care and responsibility. Our work for Christ is a calling from which there is no retirement. Jesus said it simply: “...he who endures to the end shall be saved” (Matt. 24:13).

Far from offering retirement plans, God has even been known to give out some hefty, late-life assignments.

Our minds turn to **Abraham** and **Sarah**. We have known a few centenarians, but they weren’t raising a family. But when the Lord gave the task, we can be sure that He gave also the strength to see it through. When Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah, Abraham was age 100 and Sarah was 90, but there is no evidence that they had any problem with the young child growing to manhood.

Zacharias and **Elisabeth** were another couple. Their exact age is not stated, but we are told that they were “advanced in years” (Luke 1:7) when an angel appeared to Zacharias and told him his wife Elisabeth was to have a child. Zacharias could hardly believe it—a child at *their* age? But Zacharias was told by the angel that the child would be “a joy and a delight” to them (Luke 1:14 NIRV). Zacharias and Elisabeth were just the parents God wanted for John, the forerunner of Jesus.

Moses was another who received a tremendous assignment at an age when many people are content with a rocking chair. At the age of 80, God called him to lead a rebellious and hard-headed horde of Israelites out of Egypt. The mere thought overwhelmed him at first. But he became God’s willing servant, and God provided the strength. Even when Moses died, forty years later at the age of 120, we read that “his eye was undimmed, his vigor unimpaired” (Deut. 34:7 NJB). Moses did not have all the signs of normal aging. Other translations read that “the skin of his cheeks was not wrin-

kled,” or “his teeth were unmoved,” or “his freshness had not fled.” God equipped him for the task.

Samuel enjoyed a long and useful life in God’s service, right through into old age. Even after the nation rejected him and demanded a king, God still had work for him to do—to anoint the new king, then to act as his spiritual advisor—as far as Saul would be advised. This must have been a disheartening task for the aged man of God, but godly Samuel stayed true all the way.

No doubt the **apostle John** thought his career was about over when he was banished to lonely Patmos. Little did he know the spectacular assignment Christ had yet for him. And when the light of the vision had faded, John had still to complete the writing, make copies of it (without the aid of modern copier-printers), send the copies to the various Churches—and await their enthusiastic response.

Apparently God does not plan a relaxed, leisurely retirement for His seniors. As long as we have life and strength, there is work to be done. Jesus, in His letter to the **Church at Smyrna**, wrote, “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). There was no plan for a time of leisure, especially in that age of active persecution. The command was to be faithful—all the way.

The **apostle Paul**, even with his outstanding record, was concerned about finishing well. When parting from his brethren at Ephesus, he expressed the concern closest to his heart: “that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus” (Acts 20:24). He knew also that after he left, “savage wolves ... will come in

*Serving “all
the way” is only
the beginning;
it is training for
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glorious Kingdom
of Christ, world
without end.*

among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves" (Acts 20:29–30). For this reason he wanted to do all he could to have them built up, strong in the faith.

The **apostle Peter** was another who labored intensely for his brethren right to the end of his life. In his Second Epistle he wrote, "Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease" (2 Pet. 1:13–15). Besides finishing well himself, he was laboring for his brothers and sisters in Christ.

We have been privileged to live in the most thrilling century in the history of the world. No people has ever had so many temporal blessings as we. And no people has ever lived so near to the climax of the ages. No one has ever been closer to the

coming of the Kingdom of God than we are this very moment.

Let us keep looking for ways to improve our standing before God. And at the same time, let us keep helping others, be useful and encouraging. Younger people need our support, our faith, and our example of Christ-like living—not just our criticisms or long comparisons with the way "we used to do it." If we stop to think, we may recall that we had our problems, too!

What can equal the joy of knowing that we are pleasing God. Here is the grand sequel to a full life of faithful service—not a brief arm-chair retirement but a renewed youth and a life of unimaginable joy and delight and adventure in Christ's kingdom "world without end." Just think of being granted a place in His eternal Kingdom! Remember, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

For Senior Success

As Christians we have a constant duty at all stages of life, no exception for senior years. A speaker at a large gathering of retirees some months ago offered some outstanding thoughts on practical Christian living for seniors.

"Having just passed my 76th birthday," said the speaker, "I must think more honestly about living my retirement years. The process of growing old is so gradual. When did it happen?"

What can we do to improve the quality of our senior years?

1 First: Accept your age.

No one likes to grow old, but complaining will not change the facts. Neither will denying them. And do we like to talk about our age? Let's face it: No one wants to hear it. David's words are sufficient: "My times are in Your hand" — His and ours (Ps. 31:15). We have no reason to complain; every day we are given is another day of mercy from our heavenly Father (Lam. 3:22–23).

If we live from day to day, thanking God for every hour, praising Him for every blessing in mercy granted, we will have no time or thought for complaints. We will be able to "do everything without complaining or arguing" (Phil. 2:14–15).

2 Second: Travel light.

We can help ourselves by getting rid of excess baggage, such as brooding over failures, disappointments, worries, losses, bitter feelings, and personal resentments. All such are evidence of selfishness, and are outside the laws of human happiness—and definitely outside the Law of God. We will not be accepted to enter Christ's Kingdom if we are dragging along old hurts. Read Philippians 2:1–4 to get the right attitude, and follow Paul's advice to think of others more and self less.

3 Third: Live today, not tomorrow.

God in His kindness and wisdom has veiled the future from all of us. And we can be thankful. Fears of tomorrow can crush our ability to live effectively today. So why allow them to? The important thing is to pack this day full of good thoughts, right deeds and pure motives, and leave tomorrow with God. Jesus said it straight and clear: "...do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matt. 6:34).

4 Fourth: Live by God's Law of Love.

Our greatest value to others—and to ourselves—lies in practicing what we believe. Read 1 Corinthians 13 and Romans 12 regularly, and never forget that *"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"* (1 Cor. 13:4-8 Moffatt).

5 Fifth: Be mature.

We tell the children to "Grow up!" but there may be times when we need to take the advice to ourselves. As we get older we find more and more that we cannot have our own way. We find we cannot get others to do things the way we would like them done—and we probably can't suit ourselves either! But why sulk about it? Why become blue and disagreeable? Why not rather take an unselfish view of our lives, be mature, and see our problems as our school lessons, training us in the skills of the higher life—preparing us to be angels!

Life is too short to be petty. These are great times to be alive. And they call for great living. And great living is possible only when we face our little problems with great courage and great faith.

6 Sixth: Develop your own resources.

Everyone likes lifters better than leaners. As we grow older it's only natural (and comfortable) to do a little more leaning. There will be times we have to lean. But as long as we are able, how about putting our heads to work figuring out some new ways to lift? Why not keep thinking and doing for ourselves and others—in every way we can? Why not keep developing our own interests, creating our own projects, making our own circle of usefulness? We can't expect others to suddenly start planning our lives for us—nor would we want them to. As long as we are able, we are made to think for ourselves.

Being resourceful means helping—not hindering—those around us. It also means being considerate. Our families and friends are busy people. They cannot do for us as much or as often as they—or we would like. But why be sullen about it? Why complain? Why not rather be creative, making the most of our opportunities? We have to accept more and more limitations, but we do not have to stop thinking, and we must not stop growing-spiritually! Said the Psalmist about the elderly, as he compared them to trees: *"They shall bear fruit even in old age: vigorous and sturdy shall they be"* (Ps. 92:14 NAB).

7 Seventh: Do not allow a virtue to become a vice.

Jesus was critical of those whose goodness had become a ritual, stale, brittle and severe. He even called them hypocrites, white-washed sepulchers, clean on the outside but full of filth inside (see Matthew 23). In fact, Jesus' life was a campaign against empty, meaningless traditions. *"Be not as the hypocrites,"* He said (see Matthew 6).

Jesus' faith was alive, robust, and sensitive. His righteousness had no scent of self about it. Neither should ours.

The apostle Paul said, *"Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil"* (Rom. 14:16 NIV).

Sometimes we become more self-centered as we grow older. We can counter this tendency by picking up the spirit of the apostle Paul, which he wrote in his letter to the Philippians: *"If we have any common share in the spirit, if you have any tender heartedness and sympathy, fill up my cup of joy by living in harmony, by fostering the same disposition of love, your hearts beating in unison, your minds set on one purpose. Stop acting from motives of selfish strife or petty ambition,*

but in humility practice treating one another as your superiors. Stop looking after your own interests only but practice looking out for the interests of others too. Keep on fostering the same disposition that Christ Jesus had" (Phil. 2:1–5 Williams). Whatever our immediate situation, we can think above it to the great God we serve and the place we are called to fill in His plan.

As we grow older, we need to intensify our love, keep dreaming great dreams, looking ahead, keeping life fresh and vibrant, our minds set on our one purpose of being accepted when Jesus comes and receiving the crown of life that He has promised (James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4; Rev. 22:12, 14).

8 Eighth: Get ready to live!

Most elderly people are preparing to die—and it is not strange when they become victims of advancing years. But for the Christian, every day is a new opportunity to get ready for real life! This life is only the introduction. And every added day is a fresh assurance from God of our ability to use the time granted us—or why would He give it?

Our challenge is to find every growing point that God has placed in this day and use it! ■

Prisoners or Free? CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

old age and otherwise inescapable death, is what we long for. And that freedom is coming to all worthy ones. We have the assurance from the Revelator that, *"He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever."* (Rev. 21:4).

In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul speaks of the change from mortality to immortality as being *"clothed with our house... from heaven.... We groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may*

be swallowed up by life" (vs. 2–4 NIV). We want the moral change, the release from sin, from the smallness and pettiness of our carnal natures—but we want more. Above all we want the physical change. We *"groan"* or yearn earnestly to be clothed upon with our *"heavenly dwelling,"* the higher life, immortality, *"that mortality might be swallowed up by life"* (1 Cor. 5:4).

Let us not delay in smashing the confining walls that have held us in abject slavery to ourselves, that becoming God's freemen and free-women, we can at last be freed from the bondage of mortality, and with all His faithful servants join in the triumphal acclaim, *"O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"* (1 Cor. 15:55). ■

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FROM PAGE 9

BIRDS IN THE BIBLE

1. The baker (Gen. 40:16–22)
2. Turtledoves (Lev. 1:14)
3. David (1 Sam. 17:44)
4. Rizpah (2 Sam. 21:2–10)
5. Raven (Gen. 8:6–8)
6. Jesus (Matt. 3:16)
7. Quail (Ex. 16:11–13)

ESCAPES

1. Benhadad (1 Kings 20:19–20)
2. Lot (Gen. 19:12–17)
3. David (1 Sam. 19:10–12)
4. Joseph (Matt. 2:13–14)
5. Jesus (John 10:31, 34, 39–40)
6. Jacob (Gen. 27:42–43)
7. Abiathar (1 Sam. 22:18–20)

8. Elijah (1 Kings 19:1–3)
9. Saul (Paul) (Acts 9:23–25)

IDENTIFY

1. John the Baptist (Luke 1:34–36, 57, 60; Matt. 3:1, 4; 14:3, 9, 10)
2. Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:1–3, 15, 16)
3. Jacob (Genesis 25:28–34; 28:10–12)
4. Aaron (Exodus 6:20; 15:20)
5. Lydia (Acts 16:11–15)
6. Jeremiah (Jer. 1:1; 52:12–15; 16:1–2; 43:5–7)
7. James (Matt. 13:55; Gal. 1:19; Acts 1:14; 15:2, 13; James 1:1)
8. Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:1–3, 12, 20, 26–29)
9. Isaiah (Isaiah 1:1)

PSALMS

1. cannot thank the Lord when he is dead (Ps. 6:5)
2. *"the vilest men are exalted"* (Ps. 12:8)
3. safe from my enemies (Ps. 17:8–9)
4. a shepherd (Ps. 23:1–5)
5. salvation (Ps. 27:1)
6. my shield (Ps. 28:7)
7. confused and put to shame (Ps. 35:4, 26)
8. six (Ps. 37:9, 11, 22, 27, 29, 34)
9. a broken spirit (Ps. 51:17)
10. washpot (Ps. 60:8)
11. threescore and ten (Ps. 90:10)
12. the beginning of wisdom (Ps. 111:10)
13. head stone of the corner (Ps. 118:22)
14. wept, when we remembered Zion (Ps. 137:1)
15. nowhere (Ps. 139)

FAITH in Action



by RUTH E. SISSON

WAITING IN PRAYER

 READ ACTS 1:12-14

Bible Text: Acts 1:12-14 NIV

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.

13 When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.

14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

What did the disciples do after Jesus had gone to heaven? They went back to Jerusalem *“with great joy”* (Luke 24:52), a distance of about *“a Sabbath day’s journey.”* It was a step of obedience because Jesus had told them that they must *“not depart from Jerusalem but wait...”* (Acts 1:4).

So they gathered together, and prayed, and waited. For the next number of days, the upper room seems to have become the home of the eleven apostles and the others who were with them.

Picture this little group of devoted ones waiting in that upper room. Here were the people who had been closest to Jesus. Here were the people who in ten days would be part of an experience that would change the course of history forever. Here were the people God was going to use to turn the world *“upside down.”*

As they waited, these believers prayed. That was the only communication they had with their Lord—who was now gone from them. In fact, prayer became a part of their daily ministry (Acts 2:42-47; 3:1). It is a good lesson for us today. We need this constant communion with our heavenly Father, and with our elder Brother.

First Corinthians 15 verse 6 speaks of a group of 500 believers. Only 120 were present in the upper room, awaiting the day of Pentecost. By either figure they are a very small number compared to the populace of Palestine at the time, estimated to be between one and four million. Yet these are the men and women who turned the world upside down for Christ!

In the Upper Room

1 What was the spirit among the disciples as they waited for power from on high? (Acts 1:14) _____

2 What were they doing with their time? _____



Prayer is both a thermometer and a thermostat. It indicates our spiritual temperature, and keeps our inner environment controlled.

- 3 What changes do you observe in the disciples' attitude between the night of the Last Supper (the night before the crucifixion of Jesus) and now? _____
- 4 Who were waiting in this "upper room"? (Acts 1:13–14) _____
- 5 How long did they have to wait for the promised power? (Acts 1:3; 2:1) _____

Who Was There?

We do not know who all the people in that company were, but we know some of them. There were the eleven, and the faithful women, and Jesus' brothers.

We wonder about others. Was Lazarus there? Or Nicodemus? What about Zacchaeus? What about Bartimaeus?

Mary was there. And at least two of her other sons were there, Jesus' brothers. Now convinced that Jesus was who He claimed to be, Judas and James were about to become charter members of the new group which would be called the "Church" or body of Christ (Col. 1:18)—a real change from the day when it was written of them, "*his own brothers did not believe in him*" (John 7:5 NIV).

Altogether, they were a company of about 120. Not many, considering Jesus' three and one half years of preaching. But they were an important company. They were the seed from which would soon spring a much larger group, a group who would spread the gospel all through the known world.

Jesus' Brothers Believe

Prior to this time, Jesus' brothers had not believed in Him (John 7:5). But now their attitude had changed. Can we wonder—when they had seen Jesus crucified and resurrected? How could they not believe! Now they joined heart and hands with the apostles to carry on the work their elder Brother had begun.

- 1 Why do you think Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him earlier? _____
- 2 If you had been a younger brother or sister of Jesus, do you think you would have believed in Him as the Messiah and future King? Why or why not? _____

FILLING THE VACANCY



READ ACTS 1:15–26

Right now, the disciples' minds turned to the vacancy left by Judas. It was impossible for the Eleven to meet and not think of him. Judas had been one of them for over three years. He had been responsible for the group's finances. He had been with them as they walked, or talked, or rested. He had watched with them as Jesus healed the sick, and gave sight to the blind, and made the lame able to walk. He had been there when Jesus spoke those wonderful words of life by the sea, on the hillside, and along the road. He had even broken bread with them at the Lord's table. He had been, as Peter said, "*part of this ministry.*"



Insight

Mary ... in the upper room

When the disciples gathered in the upper room after the ascension, Mary, the mother of the Lord, was there (Acts 1:14), praying quietly as one of the group.

This is the last time Mary is mentioned in Scripture, and she is one of the group of believers. Notice that she is not taking the lead. No one is calling her "mother of God," nor is anyone praying to her. She is simply another earnest believer—a whole-hearted supporter of her Son's cause, the one person who knew His destiny from the first!

At this point she could think back some thirty years and say, "Yes, this has happened just as the angel said it would."

Bible Text: Acts 1:15–26 NIV

15 In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty)

16 and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus—

17 he was one of our number and shared in this ministry."

18 (With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out.

19 Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

20 "For," said Peter, "it is written in the book of Psalms, 'May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,' and, 'May another take his place of leadership.'

21 Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

22 beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."

23 So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias.

24 Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen

25 to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs."

26 Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.



Insight

How many Apostles of Jesus?

The apostle John, observing the foundations of the Holy City in the vision given him by Jesus, saw only twelve: *“The wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb”* (Rev. 21:14 NLT).

If Paul was “in”—and the New Testament makes very clear that he was—then Matthias was not. He might have been a very loyal believer and follower of Jesus, but he was not one of the Twelve.

“I chose you.
I appointed you to go
and produce fruit
that will last.”

—Jesus to His Apostles (John 15:16 NLT)

And he had thrown it all away for 30 wretched pieces of silver. Worse still, he had taken his own life—Judas, the man who might have been; the man who had great opportunity and literally threw it to the wind.

Only a little more than a month had passed since these traumatic events. Do we wonder that they were still thinking about it?

The question now was what to do about filling the vacancy. It seemed only natural that they should do something about it. If Jesus had wanted only eleven, He would have chosen only eleven.

The group began the discussion with prayer. Naturally they wanted to talk about their problem with Jesus, as they had been accustomed to doing, and now this was the only way they could do it. This was the only way they could share their problem with their Lord.

The Lord did not answer, and so Peter as spokesman for the group led the discussion as they proceeded to select two candidates by common vote, then chose one of them by drawing lots. The lot fell on Matthias, we read, and *“he was numbered with the eleven apostles”* (Acts 1:26).

The Task of Choosing

- 1 What else do we know about Matthias from the New Testament? _____
- 2 Why did Paul mention so many times that he was indeed an apostle? Why did the Jews not want to acknowledge his authority as an apostle of Jesus? _____
- 3 How did the disciples’ method of choosing the twelfth apostle compare with Jesus’ method of choosing the original Twelve? (see Luke 6:12–13) _____

Was Peter Right?

Peter may have been overstepping his authority to take upon himself the task of replacing Judas. Recall that each of the apostles was originally chosen by Jesus Christ Himself, and only after He had spent the night in prayer to His Father.

The Scriptures do not approve or condemn the action taken by Peter and the disciples that day. They only state what was done. But we hear no more of Matthias, and only a short time later, Jesus Himself appeared to Saul (later known as Paul) on the Damascus Road, officially placing him in the ministry and appointing him to the apostleship (Acts 9:3–15; 1 Cor. 15:8).

Although the Bible does not say in so many words that Saul (Paul) was appointed to fill the vacancy left by Judas, Paul frequently testified that he was called to be an apostle both by the will of God and by Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1). He begins nine of his inspired Epistles with the salutation, *“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ.”* And in 1 Cor. 9:1–2 (NLT) he stated his case plainly, answering those who opposed: *“Do I not have as much freedom as anyone else? Am I not an apostle? Haven’t I seen Jesus our Lord with my own eyes? Isn’t it because of my hard work that you are in the Lord? Even if others think I am not an apostle, I certainly am to you, for you are living proof that I am the Lord’s apostle.”* At the time of his conversion, Christ said that Paul was His *“chosen instrument to take [His] message to the Gentiles, and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel”* (Acts 9:15 NLT).

POWER FROM HEAVEN: THE HOLY SPIRIT

 READ ACTS 2:1–4

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.”

It was time to start a new movement. Jesus had completed His ministry and departed. But He had appointed His apostles to carry on, and had given them a special commission. Just before He ascended He had told them that He would be sending them special power from heaven, and that when they received it they should go as His witnesses and preach *“repentance and forgiveness of sins”* in His name *“to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem”* (Luke 24:47 NIV).

They waited until Pentecost...and then it happened.

The day of Pentecost had come and gone some 1500 times before this, ever since Moses instituted the feast. But this Pentecost was different.

It was normal for people from every nation to gather at Jerusalem for the occasion. What a perfect time to launch the new movement, the birth of the new Church!

It Happened at Pentecost...

Pentecost this year, like every year previous, was a harvest festival. This very special Pentecost, like the ancient feast day, was also a harvest—a harvest of souls. It was the beginning of the growth of a body of believers solidly bound together, who would become the body of Christ. These were the men and women who would continue His work and carry the Gospel far and wide throughout the then known world.

The event was spectacular beyond description. As they were all gathered together, *“suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind.”* The very description shows that it was beyond the normal human experience. *“A rushing mighty wind”* that comes from heaven is beyond the control of any human being.

It arrested their attention instantly—*“it filled all the house where they were sitting.”*

There was something to hear, something to feel—and something to see. *“Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them”* (2:3 NLT).

What was the result? *“And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability”* (2:4 NLT).



WHAT IS PENTECOST?

Pentecost is the New Testament name for the ancient Israelite “Feast of Weeks.” Derived from the Greek *pentekoste* meaning “fiftieth,” it was celebrated seven weeks plus 1 day (50 days) after the wave offering of the barley sheaf on the Feast of Unleavened Bread (which occurred each year the day after the Passover, or the 15th day of the new year, see Lev. 23:15–16).

Pentecost was one of three feasts which all Israelite males were required to attend each year.

As the wave offering of the barley sheaf at the Feast of Unleavened Bread celebrated the beginning of the barley harvest, so Pentecost was the *“day of firstfruits”* of the summer wheat harvest.

According to the law, the loyal Israelite was to celebrate Pentecost by bringing two loaves of leavened bread as a wave offering of firstfruits to the Lord. Not one grain of their new harvest could be eaten until this offering to the Lord had been made. The loaves were not burned but were given to the officiating priests, along with drink offerings and peace offerings (Lev. 23:15–20).

Pentecost is thought to be the celebration of the day when God gave the law to Moses at Sinai. ■

Bible Text: Acts 2:1–4 NIV

1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.



A closer look

There were all “of one accord”

The Bible says that “they were all of one accord”—of one mind, of one purpose, in one place.

There was not a dissenting voice. No murmuring. No complaining. Peter was not asking what John should do. Thomas was no longer doubting. John wasn’t competing with Peter for first place, or Peter with John.

Now they were content to pray *together*, stand *together*, wait *together*, and worship *together* until the coming of the promised power.

to be continued



QUESTION & ANSWERS

"Rightly dividing the word of truth" -2 Timothy 2:15



How Should We HALLOW GOD'S NAME?

A subscriber writes:

A man from Watchtower stopped by and talked with us. He was concerned about the fact that "Jehovah" is taken out of many translations and is replaced with titles of God, such as "High One" or "Lord." He thinks this is taking the name of God in vain. According to his belief, it is very important to call God by His name "Jehovah" and not by a title such as "Lord" or "God."

He referred to Psalm 110 in particular. The New World Translation (published by the Witnesses) words it: "The utterance of Jehovah to my Lord is; 'Sit at my right hand! until I place your enemies as a stool for your feet.'" In the NIV this text reads: "The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'"

He also used the Lord's Prayer as an example of why Jehovah should be used and not a title: "Hallowed be Your name."

He asked me how I would answer this. I could not answer him, but told him that to me it did not take the Lord my God's name in vain.

He gave me a copy of the New World Translation. I have not read it through, but I did notice that in the Psalms the name "Jehovah" is used many times."

What is the right way to address God? How should we hallow God's name?

To a member of the Watchtower Society, the name Jehovah identifies the "true God," and the name by which He should be called. In the mind of a Witness, addressing God as Jehovah is the distinguishing mark of a true Christian, and all doctrine, worship and ministry revolves around this name. As you say, they believe we dishonor God by calling Him "Lord" or "Lord God" because these are titles and not His "real" name.

In the original Hebrew Scriptures, the Divine Name appears most frequently as four (tetra) letters (gamma), or Tetragrammaton (YHWH). A few times it is referred to by the first letter only, i.e., "Y" (Yah).

In this discussion we will look at several points:

- 1) Why do most translations of the OT replace the Hebrew Tetragrammaton YHWH with a less meaningful substitute, such as "Lord," "God," or "Lord God"?
- 2) How is God addressed in Scripture?
- 3) What is the origin of the name "Jehovah" which the Watchtower organization has selected as the proper translation of YHWH?
- 4) What is important for us in speaking of the Divine Name?
- 5) How should we hallow God's name?

YHWH

The Tetragrammaton

The original Old Testament Scriptures were written in Hebrew, a language that is read from right to left. In the original Hebrew, the Divine Name appears as four consonants,

יהוה

Those four (tetra) Hebrew letters (gamma) are transliterated as YHWH, and are known as the Tetragrammaton.

1) YHWH Replaced with A Substitute in the Old Testament Scriptures

Your Watchtower friend is correct in stating that most translations of the Old Testament have omitted the sacred name and in its place have substituted a title such as "High One," or "Lord."

Why was this done?

According to an introduction in the *Emphasized Bible*, translated by Joseph Bryant Rotherham, the Hebrew copyists reverently transcribed the Tetragrammaton YHWH. The Hebrew reader was instructed not to pronounce it but to say in its place a less sacred name, such as Adonai or Elohim. The Septuagint translators made the concealment complete by substituting the Greek word "*Kurios*" (Greek for "Lord"). The Latin Vulgate substituted "*Dominus*" (the Latin word for "master" or "owner," often used of a feudal superior). Many English translations have retained essentially the same, rendering YHWH as "Lord," or "Lord God." The concealment has been so complete that in more than 5300 occurrences of the Tetragrammaton YHWH in the OT, only 7 times has it been rendered with the name "Jehovah" in the Authorized Version.

A comment in the *Emphasized Bible* (Rotherham) adds the following:

"The motive was good—let that be assumed. It was to safeguard the Divine Majesty in the minds of men. It was to prevent the inconsiderate mention of Him...Why note...leave Him altogether unnamed? Why not fear to allude to Him by any title that could definitely refer to Him? The passages commonly cited as furnishing good reason for the suppression surely cannot mean what is thus attributed to them, since there is a wide distinction between not taking His Name in vain and not taking His Name on our lips at all, even for prayer or praise."

A note in Young's Analytical Concordance also explains that the Divine Name was not spoken near the time of the Captivity. The definition given for "Jehovah" is: "The incommunicable name of the God of Israel. In the Common Version of the English Bible it is generally, though improperly, translated by 'The Lord.'"

Why keep the name veiled today? One possible argument might be that the Septuagint, which concealed the sacred name under the common Greek title *Kurios*, was the Bible Jesus used, and Jesus quoted it freely. If the substitute name was good enough for Jesus, should it not be good for us also? Two thoughts are offered in counter to this:

1) that Jesus used the version as it stood because He was not a scribe or literary critic to challenge it; His mission was to teach its principles and do the will of His Father; and

2) that Jesus used the Scriptures to prove His

Why Is YHWH translated "LORD" Instead of "Yahweh" or "Jehovah"?

The earliest translations of the original Hebrew, such as the Septuagint Version concealed the Divine Name by substituting a less significant name (*Adonay* or *Elohim*) in its place. This occurred in more than 5300 instances in the Old Testament. Only 7 times is the YHWH translated with "Jehovah" in the King James Version or Authorized Version. Why? It is widely assumed that the translators were respecting the Jewish tradition to protect what they considered the unpronounceable and incommunicable Divine name of Yahweh.

The Forward of the Rotherham Bible explains that the translators of the Septuagint, an ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew, made the concealment complete by regularly substituting *Kurios* (Greek for "Lord"). The Septuagint Version was translated from Hebrew into Greek by Jewish scholars during the 3rd and 2nd century BC.

mission and Messiahship. To criticize the Sacred Document would have run counter to His purpose in quoting it. What did it matter how His Father's name was spelled or described, as long as His hearers understood the prophecies and the Scriptures' testimony to Jesus' work and purpose?

2) How Is God Addressed by the Various Scripture Writers?

We cannot see any reason why using a properly descriptive title of God in speaking of Him should be thought of as taking His name in vain.

Proponents of the idea that the Heavenly Father's name is Jehovah or Yahweh appear to have some Biblical support for their position. In the Bible, many names had meanings, particularly in Old Testament times. The names were even changed to give meaning to a situation in their lives. The Lord changed Jacob's name to Israel (meaning, "God prevails"). He changed Abram's name to Abraham (meaning, "father of a multitude" or "chief of a multitude"), and Sarai to Sarah (meaning, "noblewoman" or "mother of kings"—Gen. 17:5–6, 15–16). Jesus' name is "*Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us*" (Matt. 1:23). (Definitions from *Strong's Enhanced Lexicon*).

Titles for God

The inspired writers referred to God by many titles and descriptive terms, such as "*Almighty*," "*Most High*," "*Lord God of Hosts*," "*true God*," "*Living God*," "*God who searches the hearts*," etc.

What is the Heavenly Father's name? The original Hebrew word used in Psalm 110 is the tetragrammaton YHWH, which is translated "Lord" or "God" in the KJV.

Another passage often cited is Psalm 83:18. If we compare the translation of YHWH here, we see varying substitutes used for the tetragrammaton. For example, the KJV reads: *"That men may know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah [JHWH], art the most high over all the earth."* The passage is translated by James Moffatt, *"To teach them that thou, O Eternal [JHWH], thou art God most high o'er all the world."* The NASB and NASB 1995 Update translate as,

YHWH — Original Hebrew tetragrammaton (no vowels)

YHWH are the four Hebrew consonants (tetragrammaton) used for the Divine name over 5300 times in the Old Testament. The ancient Hebrew did not use vowels.

When a Hebrew read aloud from the Scriptures and came to the YHWH, out of regard for the Divine name he apparently read it as a lesser name for God, usually Adonai or Elohim.

When Jewish scribes translated the OT Scriptures into Greek (the Septuagint in the 3rd century BC), they concealed the Divine name by substituting the lesser name, such as Adonai, meaning "Lord" or "Lord God."

JHVH — Latin letters used in translation, read as Adonai (lesser Divine name)

When the Scriptures were translated into Latin by Jerome during the 6th century AD, the lesser Divine name was retained.

J(e)HoVaH — adding vowels from Adonai

About 1518 AD, a man named Galatinus combined these Latin consonants with the vowels from Adonai to form the "Jehovah" that appears in our Bibles today.

"That they may know that You alone, whose name is the Lord [JHWH], are the Most High over all the earth." The NIV reads, *"Let them know that you, whose name is the Lord [JHWH]—that you alone are the Most High over all the earth."*

Those who believe we should use God's "real" name and not a substitute say that as a result of these substitutions, the significance of the Divine Name is lost to the average reader. They comment: "To remove God's distinctive personal name from the Bible and substitute a title such as 'Lord' or 'God' makes the text weak and inadequate in many ways. One cannot render a distinctive proper name by a mere title. A title can never convey the full, rich meaning of the original name of God" (www.Watchtower.org).

Are we dishonoring God by addressing Him

as "God" because "God" is a title, not a name? We have a parallel situation if we speak of the highest position in a kingdom as "the King," or in our country as "the President."

We do not find any command in Scripture instructing us to address the Heavenly Father by His proper name only, nor do we find any suggestion that we are using His name in vain if we speak of Him by an appropriate title in place of using His name. God is holy, and He wants our utmost respect and reverence.

Are we dishonoring God if we call Him *"the Holy One of Israel"* as Isaiah did (Isa. 12:6)?

Are we withholding that reverence if we address Him as *"the Most High,"* as David did (Ps. 46:4), or as Moses did (Deut. 32:8), or as Stephen did (Acts 7:48)?

Are we lacking reverence if we address Him as *"the Lord, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth"* as Abraham did (Gen. 14:22)?

Are we improper speaking about Him as *"the Most High God"* as Daniel did (Daniel 5:18), or as the author of Hebrews did (Heb. 7:1)?

Are we being disrespectful to address God as the *"Almighty"* or *"God Almighty"* or *"Almighty God"* as the angel of the Lord did when speaking to Abraham (Gen. 17:1), or as Jacob did (Gen. 48:3), or as Job did (Job 5:17; 21:15; 22:3; 22:17, 23, 25; 27:2; 31:2; 31:35; 32:8; 33:4; 34:12; 35:13), or as Naomi did (Ruth 1:20), or as the Psalmist did (Ps. 91:1), or as Ezekiel did (Ezek. 1:24), or as Isaiah did (Isa. 13:6)?

3) YHWH Translated "Jehovah"?

Why has "Jehovah" been used as the sacred name for God? The pronunciation Jehovah was unknown until about 1520 A.D., when it was introduced by Galatinus. "Jehovah" was literally a hybrid term. It was a combination of the four consonants YHWH and the vowels in the Hebrew word for Lord. Why this combination of sacred consonants with less sacred vowels? The *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* explains that when the Jewish scholars (called Masoretes) added vowel signs to biblical manuscripts some time before the 10th century A.D., the Tetragrammaton was punctuated with the vowels of the word *"Adonai"* or *"Elohim"* to indicate that the reader should read "Lord" or "God" instead of accidentally pronouncing the sacred name (TWOT 5:501-02).

The *Anchor Bible* (Vol. 6, p. 1011) states: "The form 'Jehovah' results from reading the consonants of the Tetragrammaton with the vowels of the surrogate word Adonai. The dissemina-

tion of this form is usually traced to Petrus Galatinus, confessor to Pope Leo X, who in 1518 A.D. transliterated the four Hebrew letters with the Latin letters **jhvh** together with the vowels of *Adonai*, producing the artificial form 'Jehovah.' While the hybrid form Jehovah has met much resistance, ... it nonetheless passed from Latin into English and other European languages and has been hallowed by usage in hymns and the ASV; it is used only a few times in KJV and not at all in RSV....

"The Hebrew words *elah*, *elohim*, *eloah*, all translated God, occur roughly 2300 times in the Old Testament. To translate all of these Yahweh would seem out of place. Sometimes it is used in a plural sense to refer to other members of God's family, i.e., angels" (see Ps. 8:5).

Note especially this last fact: that in the Scriptures, **the use of the Divine Name is not limited to the Father.** YHWH is used also of members of God's family, i.e., the angels.

In Exodus 23:21, God commanded that the angel be obeyed as the voice of God Himself because "*My name is in Him.*" Members of God's family bear His name. This fact is illustrated many times in Scripture. One instance is in Exodus 3, where Moses heard the voice of God calling to him out of the burning bush (Ex. 3:4). The voice said, "*I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,*" and Moses was afraid to "*look upon God*" (Ex. 3:6). Earlier in the same chapter (Ex. 3:2) we read that "*the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush.*" In the New Testament, Stephen, recounting the same event, affirmed that "**the angel**" appeared to Moses in the bush (Acts 7:35).

4) What Is Important for Us?

The Bible writers are respectful, whatever name or title they use. Did the Hebrew people at the time their Scriptures were being translated (Post-Captivity) feel that the name of God was so sacred that they should not pronounce it at all? At the other extreme, the Watchtower people feel that we should

pronounce it always rather than use a title, and have arbitrarily chosen one "most known" way to pronounce it.

When Moses was commanded to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, he inquired, "...when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" The reply places the emphasis on the authority, the existence, and the character of the Divine Being: "...God said to Moses, **I AM WHO I AM...** Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, **I AM has sent me to you.**" God was declaring Himself to be the One and only eternal, unchanging God, who is from everlasting to everlasting. After this He said to Moses, "*Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations'*" (Ex. 3:13–15). God was "the existing One," unlike the deities of other nations, which were often a stone or a piece of wood or metal formed into an image by the craftsman and worshiped as a god.

5) How Should We Hallow God's Name?

A passage in the book of Psalms suggests that the name by which we address God is not His foremost concern. Psalm 138:2 (KJV) reads: "*I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.*" God values His Word—His promises, decrees, precepts—above all. Rev. 19:13 says of the Messiah's name, "*His name is called The Word of God.*"

Any attempt to properly vocalize the Divine Name is wholly subjective. God has not spoken His name to us. Even the best languages of this world must seem very crude to immortal beings who have existed for untold ages. Besides, there is no command in Scripture which tells us our salvation or our acceptance by God will depend upon properly pronouncing the Creator's name. He wants us to recognize

and take on His character likeness. He is looking for our honor and obedience.

As long as one does not take His name in vain or in any way blaspheme His holy name, we have no basis for thinking its pronunciation is a concern to God. Jesus did not begin His prayer with "Our Jehovah who art in heaven" but "Our Father." All through His ministry Jesus addressed God as "Father."

We find nothing in Scripture that tells us God is concerned whether we speak of Him as Father, God, Lord, Lord

In Scripture angels are sometimes called by God's name.

— Exodus 23:21

God of hosts, Creator, Judge, Redeemer, Yahweh or Jehovah. He wants to be acknowledged reverently as the source of all existence, the great "I AM" who will judge the heart and actions. "*I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins*" (Jer. 17:10). "*...The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed*" (1 Sam. 2:3). And, "*In every nation, whoever fears Him and works righteousness*"—not he who properly pronounces His name—"is accepted by Him" (Acts 10:35).

In all of Scripture we find no statement that suggests that the correct pronunciation of the name of the Deity or the use of a title was a matter of obedience or disobedience. All emphasis is on imitating His character (Matt. 5:48; Eph. 5:1), being holy as He is holy (1Pet. 1:16), and this is the likely meaning of hallowing His name as Jesus prayed in His prayer.

How do we hallow God's name? How do we sanctify it? Jesus was not impressed with lip service. He said of the people of His day, "*This people ... honour Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me*" (Matt. 15:8). If correctly pronouncing His name was a matter of supreme importance, they should have

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

OBITUARIES

"The dead in Christ shall rise" -1 Thessalonians 4:16

On September 21 we met to honor the memory of a long-time Friend and Sister who fell asleep on September 14, 2017, Betty R. Boyer. Known among us as Sister Betty, she, with her family, was a regular presence at our Church services and gatherings for many years.



Betty R. Boyer

Born on May 6, 1923, to James T. Tyler and Alice Moore in Buffalo, New York, she was next to the youngest of four children. One younger sister, Maryanne, survives her.

In 1941, Sister Betty was married to Emanuel Boyer in Kent, New York and between 1942 and 1966, they had 5 daughters and 4 sons. At this time, three of the children are deceased: their second daughter Gail, in 1978; Stephen in 1970; and Emanuel Jr. in 2009. Daughters Betty Alice, Virginia, Diane, Lynette; and sons George and Thomas survive her.

When they were married, her husband was already acquainted with the Megiddo Church as a result of Church missionaries traveling the waterways of New York State by means of the Megiddo III yacht. The missionaries had sold his mother the Church literature, and she, impressed by it, had instructed her children in the principles and beliefs of the Church as they were growing up.

During the children's growing-up years, the family lived in Albion, New York, about one hour's drive from the Church. They attended most Church services and Sunday School classes, and took an active part in Church activities. The children were frequent "stars" in Church programs.

Sister Betty was a consistently loving, dedicated, practical and caring mother and homemaker. Blessed by a husband who was a hardworking and gifted inventor and machinist, she never had to work outside the home. But looking after the needs of nine children, born over a period of 24 years, she was never idle.

Sister Betty and Brother Emanuel lived together until his death in 1990.

During the years following his death, she had

various living situations: in a small manufactured home of her own, with her son Emanuel Jr. and his wife Cheryl, also with her daughter Lynette. About 10 years ago, her youngest son Tom and his wife Carrie opened their heart and home to her.

Tom found deep satisfaction in caring for his aging mother, and the in-home arrangement worked well until Sister Betty's failing health required more than they could provide. At this point, Tom found a suitable assisted-living situation for his mother. During the last few years Tom had to hassle with many changes, but overall he was successful and his mother enjoyed her life. She spoke often of how blest she was to have a son so thoughtful of her needs, and who visited her faithfully.

During the 27 years after her husband's death, Sister Betty showed an amazing ability to cope and adapt to change—a reflection of her faith in God. In the words of her son Tom, "she had a quiet strength that I (we all) would do well to emulate."

Sister Boyer wanted to be a light for her faith among unbelievers in the various homes where she resided. Determined to keep separate from their entertainments and do nothing that God could not approve, she declined many invitations to various activities, and instead kept to herself where she quietly enjoyed her tapes of church services, her Bible reading, her letters, and other church literature. She also was a great lover of nature, watching various birds and wildlife out the window at every opportunity. At one location her window view included a pond where alligators sported in the sun—a most unusual sight that she fully enjoyed.

Sister Boyer was conscientious about applying her faith in real life. Not long ago she wrote that she had only one need: more patience! We can easily understand that one needs a great amount of patience to live in an understaffed care home!



Betty and Emanuel Boyer



Significant in her life through these last years was the regular communication of Sister Wynona Kapica, who kept in contact with her by both phone and mail. Tom and Carrie's son Emanuel in the midst of his busy college life also found opportunities to spend quality time with his grandmother.

Sister Betty's kindness went further than any of us knew. Tom told recently of a boy in his senior high class whom his mother had befriended. When the boy's parents suddenly sold their farm and moved out of state, Sister Betty, hearing that he wanted to graduate from the high school he had been attending, invited him to live with them. Her kindness came back to her in the form of a grateful young man, who wrote her every month for the last 17 years!

Sister Betty never let her faith grow dim. She knew what she believed, that Christ is coming and the dead in Christ will live again. In every letter she was looking forward to that Day, and wanting above all to be ready, as evidenced by this letter that was published in the *Megiddo Message*:

Plan Ahead

The most important and vital question is: Will we have time to make the necessary change from our old nature to become a new creature worthy of perpetuation, especially as we are nearing the end? To renew ourselves inwardly is not automatic but will require much effort on our part to accomplish, so, day by day, may we be more determined than ever to be diligent to succeed.

Human beings could not know all the wonderful thoughts of God, for God's thoughts and ways are so very much higher than man's, and although the Romans changed God's times and laws, and many people have fixed different and erroneous dates for the second advent of our Lord, God will send His beloved Son Jesus Christ, in His own appointed time, and nothing whatsoever could change what God has ordained. God's Word being trustworthy and true, *"it shall not return unto him void but will accomplish that which he pleaseth and will prosper in the thing whereunto he will send it."*

People are planning ahead in this new "millennium" to make it bright and new, but the things of this world are not forever, so let us "watch" as we are admonished; and avoid the terrible fate of the five foolish virgins—eternal destruction. Rather let us follow the example of the five wise virgins, taking a good supply of oil with our lamps, keeping them filled, trimmed, and brightly burning, for we do not know the day or hour when the Bridegroom will come, and we want to be ready to go in with Him to His marriage feast when He does come, before the door is shut. We want to be ready to enjoy the wonderful bliss, peace, and joy, which is ahead in God's Millennium—the glorious reign of Jesus Christ for a thousand years. ■

*"A thousand years from sorrow free
And after all, ETERNITY!"*

CULTIVATE GODLY REVERENCE

Never in our nation's history has the spirit of irreverence been more prevalent than it is today. There is a general irreverence for law and authority. Among the young we witness an increasing disrespect for their parents. Instead of children being taught to reverence their elders' wishes, they dictate to their parents. Not only is this spirit in our nation but around the world. With such a condition, it is not hard to understand why mankind in general have ceased to reverence their Creator. *"The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts"* (Psalm 10:4). The sentiment voiced by the masses is: Look for the best in men and there you will find God.

But the Creator of heaven and earth declares, *"To whom then will you liken Me, Or to whom shall I be equal?" says the Holy One. "Lift up your eyes on high, And see who has created these things, Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; not one is missing"* (Isa. 40:25–26). Can puny man accomplish any such thing? Is he able to create a world? Does he understand the mystery of life? Or, can he prolong his days upon earth? No.

Do we give to the Creator due reverence, considering the great things He has done for us? He has made us acquainted with His grand plan of the ages, and with the glorious climax of that plan. He has revealed that one Day this earth shall shine forth as do those heavenly worlds above (Dan. 12:3)! Moreover, He has revealed to us what we can do to make ourselves worthy of having a place in that glad time! Are we showing our thankfulness to Him by cultivating such a reverence for His law, such a fear of doing something displeasing to Him, that it will steady us through every trial and temptation?

If we would but realize that our whole future depends on our living in close contact with God at all times, it would help us to cultivate a deeper respect for His law. Naturally we are prone to follow the dictates of our own conscience. It is easy for vain man to think he knows more than God. But the reality is that *"it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps"* (Jer. 10:23). We must learn to be humble, willing to be led, and realize our inability to choose our way without the help of His guiding hand.

We are rapidly nearing the end of the age. Soon we shall be called to stand before the Great Judge. Are we living each of these ordinary days as though it were our last? Is it our goal each day to walk *"in all the commandments of the Lord blameless"*? (Luke 1:6).

If we would be truly reverent, we must be cultivating godliness as each day passes, setting a watch so that no evil act or word passes the guardian of our mind.

Let us make the very best use of the time still extended us, that we may be among those who will witness the consummation of God's eternal plan, this earth annexed to Heaven! ■

—B. C., Iowa



AWESOME DESIGNS

Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God.” -Job 37:14



FASCINATING HOPPERS

Frogs, Frogs Everywhere...

Did You Know...?

- ✓ ...that all tadpoles develop into frogs, but all frogs do not develop from tadpoles
- ✓ ...that certain frogs swallow their eggs, then allow them to hatch into tadpoles and then mature into tiny frogs—in the mother’s stomach
- ✓ ...that a frog’s tongue is attached to the front of the mouth so that it can more quickly catch prey
- ✓ ...that some frogs can stay submerged under water for months. If left in a dry atmosphere, some species will die within 3 hours
- ✓ ...that a Jamaican frog lays eggs in a cave and, after they hatch into froglets, carries them out on her back to a friendlier environment
- ✓ ...that a West Africa frog is covered with hair
- ✓ ...that some frogs can jump 20 times their own body length in one leap, over 50 feet for us humans. The longest known frog jump is about 33 feet
- ✓ ...that frog bones, like trees, form a new ring every year during hibernation
- ✓ ...that a painkiller with 200 times the power of morphine has been found in the skin of a frog
- ✓ ...frogs cannot live in salt water
- ✓ ...that captive frogs have lived for as long as 20 years
- ✓ ...that Dart frogs have only one predator: a snake that is immune to their poison.
- ✓ ...that Dart frogs raised in captivity and not given their native diet do not develop venom

Next time you are out in the country on a summer night, listen to nature’s music all around you. Those high tenor voices coming from high up in the trees, those deep bass ones coming from way down the creek—you guessed it—it is the music of the wonderland of frogs.

What are frogs? Well, to describe them is a little tricky because there are so many varieties and they are so different.

All frogs are cold-blooded creatures that can live both in water and on land. Because their body temperature changes with their surroundings, they usually feel cold to us. They have two bulging eyes and a nose on top of their heads, external eardrums, no obvious neck, two front legs, and two back legs. And they do not drink. How do they get moisture? Through the skin. (Toads, a “land” variety of frogs, press against something moist to absorb water through their skin.) They even have the ability to taste through the skin. And they have a body with insides very much like those of larger animals. Many high school students have dissected frogs in biology classes where they saw intestines, liver, pancreas, lungs, spleen, etc.

Frogs are alike in many ways, but they often differ according to the region they inhabit. Of course, Pharaoh would not agree, but frogs in most places do provide a good service to their surroundings. They help to control insects, as well as being useful in medical research. Some are also used for food, even considered a delicacy.

What does a frog look like?

If you have seen one frog, you have seen them all—right? Not exactly. Look at the names of a few of the 2500 different species of known

frogs, and you will have some idea of their diverse appearances. The **Rocket frog** actually resembles a rocket. Can you guess what the **Horned frog**, a native of Malaysia, might look



Malayan Horned Frog's leaf-like appearance gives it a good camouflage. It helps the horned frog escape from predators and also to pounce on its unsuspecting prey.



Tiny Horned Frog

like? Or the **Goliath frog**. As big as a large dinner plate and shaped like a mushroom with two little appendages on each side, it has a couple of holes for breathing and two bulging eyes mounted over a huge smile.

Try to imagine what these look like: the **Western Spotted frog**, the **Turtle frog**, the **Orange-crowned Toadlet** (also a frog), the **Clawed frog**, the **Wood frog**, the **Platypus frog**, the **White-lipped frog**, and some 2500 others. Just how varied are they? They range in size all the way from less than half an inch to one foot!

Paedophryne Amauensis, a species of frog, is the world’s smallest known vertebrate at 0.3 inches.



BY STEVEN WONG

How do frogs multiply?

Several species of frogs lay eggs—some lay as many as 4,000—in a mass of jelly (spawn) in water, and the eggs hatch



into tiny tadpoles. Unlike their parents, the tadpoles have external gills for breathing under water (they do not have lungs,) and a tail for swimming. As they mature they begin to grow legs and develop lungs. Suddenly they quit eating for about four days. During this time, a remarkable change takes place: from tadpole to frog. As a prominent scientist commented on this amazing process: "In one tiny little egg, [are] two completely different animals"—a tadpole and a frog. Is this evidence of evolution? No, the makings of both are in the egg.

What keeps the tadpoles from starving during the transition from tadpole to frog? Well, the Designer didn't overlook anything. Tadpoles don't just lose their tail, they absorb it. Nothing is lost except the gills, which disappear. Soon little frogs hop out of the water.

But not all species of frogs lay eggs in water. One, the **Foam Nest frog**, lays eggs in a foam nest (in branches of a tree or bush). When the rains come, the nest dissolves and the eggs drop into the rain water, which is sufficient for the eggs to develop into frogs. (How did this frog figure this out?)

Another group of frogs lay eggs in damp places instead of in water. These eggs hatch directly into baby frogs, ready to live on the land.



Bulges are the young she carries in a pouch on her back. When they are ready to emerge, they will hop out as miniature frogs.

The **Marsupial frog** lays eggs in a brood patch on the mother's back

where they hatch, develop as tadpoles and, finally, pop out as little froglets, ready to make their way in the world. Unusual, isn't it?

Another Marsupial frog from the border between New South Wales and Queensland, Australia, lays her eggs in a patch of jelly on the surface of the ground. The male keeps an eye on them until they hatch. The jelly then liquefies, allowing the tadpoles to swim freely—right into the males' "hip pockets" where they remain until they emerge as baby frogs.

As amazing as this is, it is a small wonder beside the incredible **Gastric frog**. Found in Queensland, Australia, this frog spends nearly all its time in water just relaxing. However, it is a powerful swimmer and is also capable of traveling long distances on land.



Notice the emerging baby frog the mother has propelled into her mouth from her stomach where it was incubated for some 8 weeks.

The **Gastric Brooding frogs**, discovered in 1972 and 1984, had perhaps not been found earlier because of their small size and timid nature (males grow to about 1.2 inches, females to about 2.2 inches). What is so strange about this frog? The female, after laying her eggs, swallows them—about 18–25 fertilized, cream-colored eggs. During the next 6 to 8 weeks, while the eggs develop into tadpoles, then into frogs, the female does not eat. The process switches off the production of hydrochloric acid in her stomach wall, shutting down the entire digestive process to prevent the mother from digesting the young. (Just think of the benefit for us humans if we could learn how to do this for patients with gastric ulcers.) After about 8 weeks, the mother opens her mouth wide and the youngsters are propelled into her mouth. They hop out, and go their way. Those that

aren't ready for the outside world are just swallowed again until later. (How did the species survive while she was learning this remarkable process?)

Another type of **Gastric Brooding frog** rivals it closely. This frog also swallows its eggs, and in this frog no one knows how the young are prevented from being digested, because the gastric juices are not turned off. It is thought that the eggs may be covered with mucus, like the lining of the stomach wall, to protect them. These eggs hatch into tiny tadpoles, then into froglets which mother frog expels at the appropriate time.

If our awesome Creator can make such creatures as these, we should have no doubt that He can fulfill what He has promised His faithful children.

Music from frogland

The sounds which frogs make are almost as varied as their means of reproducing. The pitch of the frogs' voice seems to be in direct proportion to his size: big frog, deep voice, tiny frog, high voice. For example, the **Carpenter frog** sounds similar to sawing a board with a handsaw, the **Pig frog** sounds like a grunting pig, and of course, the **Bull frog** sounds similar to a bull. Many of the frogs are identified by the sounds which they make (the **Banjo frog**, the **Humming frog**, the **Moaning frog**, the **Quacking frog**).

Home for froggie

Frogs have something in common with just about every other living creature. They are adapted very specifically for the regions they inhabit. **Does anyone think the frogs were able to change themselves to meet the conditions of their region? How could they?** And frogs inhabit just about every region on earth, the only exceptions being the regions of the Arctic and Antarctic. They are found in cold areas such as Alaska and Canada, in streams and lakes of the Deep South, in rainforests, and even in the desert. They are able to survive in their diverse habitats because they were *designed specifically* for them. We can only marvel at their Designer's handiwork!

Wood frogs of the North

Consider the **Wood frogs** that live around the Alaskan ponds and forests. How do they survive the harsh winters?

When late July arrives, it's time to

begin preparing. They disappear under the leaves in the forests to bed down for the winter. But even being protected by the snow pack and bed of leaves is not enough when the temperature drops to 5° Fahrenheit. As the temperature drops

Frozen Wood Frog survives the winter in Denali, Alaska. Filmed by Steve Downer.



Spring arrives in Denali. The frozen **Wood Frog**, buried beneath leaves in an icy grip, miraculously yields to a life resurrected.

Gradually from head to toe as the **Wood Frog** thaws, life enters its rigid body. Only slight movements at first. Finally, the heart starts to pump. Its eyes lose their icy stare—when the special film drops away.



It is mid June. The **Wood Frog** moves forward, pushing its way through the leaves, eager to resume life again. Yes, the Wood Frog is alive!

their eyeballs and brain begin to freeze; it is believed that the cold sends a message to their tiny liver which begins to convert glycogen to glucose. The glucose floods their vital cells to resist dry-



Three kinds of land frogs can be frozen solid and still stay alive. When spring comes they thaw out and hop away.

ing (drying causes frostbite in humans). While the frog may appear dead, its eyes and brain frozen solid, it isn't. When spring arrives, the wood frog will thaw and hop out. Soon the melodies of frogland will be heard again.

How can evolution explain it? Any frog from the temperate or tropical

zones would die under these frigid conditions. How did these frogs survive the Alaskan winters while they were "perfecting" their method of survival?

Frogs of the desert

The **Desert frog's** greatest need is that of every other desert animal: to obtain

A desert frog found in Australia, is "a living water bag." It stores water during rain for time of drought.



and store water. Some frogs that live in the Australian desert absorb so much water that the Aborigines are said to catch them to drink their store of water during the dry season.

This desert frog has started to form a cocoon around itself from its own shed skin.



Protected in its cocoon the desert frog waits for rain.

The **Australian water-holding frog** forms a cocoon of its own shed skin. This skin is so efficient at preventing dehydration that the frog can wait as long as seven years for water while it is burrowed underground.

The **Wax frog** produces wax to cover itself, preventing dehydration during a dry season. (By what evolutionary process did it acquire the know-how and materials to make "wax"?)

Desert frogs, during intense heat, bury themselves in sand or clay and go into a state of torpor.

Tree frogs

Found in North and South America, as well as Europe and Asia, **Tree frogs** are especially equipped for living in trees. They have little disks or pads on their fingers, adhesive pads on their toes, and a groove between the tip of the finger and the rest of the finger. Some tree frogs even have a first finger that is opposed to the remainder

(like our thumb) so they can grab onto branches. Their fingers and toes include special disks for sticking onto smooth surfaces.

Flying tree frogs, found in Central America and Southeast Asia, have webbed feet with fan-like structures that enable them to glide from tree to tree or to the ground without injury.

If a predator gets too close, the Tree frog can leap great distances.



Self-defense

How do frogs defend themselves against predators? The **Tomato frog** discharges a thick white substance which is irritating to animals and can produce allergic reactions in people.

Some frogs reflect the same amount of ultraviolet light as their immediate surroundings, making it very difficult to be spotted by predators such as snakes. Others change their skin color to match the surroundings by expanding and contracting three layers of pigment cells in the skin. (How did Mr. Frog engineer the pigmentation of his



The tip of a dart is rubbed on the back of a Golden Poison-dart frog. The poison will be potent for more than a year.

skin in this most useful way?)

Many years ago hunters and warriors of South America discovered poisons in certain frog skins. They would kill the

The Strawberry Poison-dart frog coaxes her tadpole(s) to climb onto her back. She then transports it to small pockets of water, often high in the tree canopy in a bromeliad.



frog, then hold it over a fire, which caused the poison to drip out. Arrows dipped in the poison could be used for killing game or an enemy. This practice



The colorful **Dart frogs** above are all poisonous, but with varying degrees of toxin. The **Golden Poison Dart frog** which grows only two inches long is the most deadly. It contains enough venom to kill ten humans.

gave this variety of frog its name: **Poison Arrow** frog. Like other poisonous creatures and plants, the Poison Arrow frog is brightly colored. Some are blue, some red, some have bright yellow markings. This is code language to all who come near, which means, "Leave me alone! I am dangerous!"

Of the poisonous frogs, the *Golden Dart frog* is most potent. It is said that one frog's skin contains enough poison to kill 10 to 20 humans.

The frog evolved?

Could all this diversity have come about by evolution? Could each have designed itself for the exact habitat in which it lives?

For example, how could a frog swallow its eggs until they hatch into tadpoles and then develop into tiny frogs?

How long would a desert frog last if taken from the desert and set free in a frigid Alaskan winter?

As we see, each variety of frog was specifically designed for its specific region. So masterful was this design that different species still exist, even after millions of years.

The frog is a rather delicate creature, especially in the larval state. Yet some frogs, those that lay the fewest eggs, are able to protect their young until they are ready to be on their own. Those that lay hundreds or thousands of eggs do so because only a few hatch and mature into frogs. The rest were designed to provide food for other small animals and fish. **How did they survive and reproduce while developing these peculiar features and instincts by some slow and gradual process of evolution?**

This is not to say that some frogs cannot live equally well in places which are not normal to them. But to introduce a different species to a totally different area could be devastating. Some years ago the cane toad was introduced into Australia to kill insects. It seemed like a great idea. These toads will eat almost anything that moves, including insects, small mammals, fish and other amphibians. And they reproduce very rapidly. Pharaoh thought he had a problem? His problem went away (Moses removed it). Not so with the cane toads. To complicate matters, they are very poisonous! If animals such as cats, dogs, birds, bite down on a cane toad, they die—no second chance. How does one figure this into evolution? The animals that die can never learn which frogs to leave alone! And how would they tell their offspring?

No, frogs have not evolved. Our Master Designer, who created every-

thing that lives, saw that they had the right equipment to survive in their environment.

As the Creator of Earth declared, *"I am the Lord, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who by myself spread out the earth. For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being, declares the Lord"* (Isa. 44:24; 66:2 NRSV, NASB). And again we read, *"God, the Lord, created the heavens and stretched them out. He created the earth and everything in it. He gives breath and life to everyone in all the world"* (Isa. 42:5 NLT).

Who are we, mere dust of the earth, to dispute God, the God who declares that He made these things? Having seen the glorious handiwork of God, how can we ignore His instructions to *"turn from godless living and sinful pleasures...? We should live in this evil world with self-control, right conduct, and devotion to God"* (Titus 2:12 NLT). ■

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More, More, MORE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

careful attention...to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away" (Heb. 2:1 NIV).

Why more and more? Because the more we give, the more we shall receive. God has promised that our reward will be just in proportion to what we do. *"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously"* (2 Cor. 9:6 NIV).

This principle is the universal law of God: *"A man reaps what he sows"* (Gal. 6:7–8 NIV).

What does God offer in return? All our abounding, and giving, and excelling, and sacrificing falls far, far short of even approaching what God is able to do for us, He who has promised *"to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine"* (Eph. 3:20 NIV), whose reward will be *"an immeasurably great glory that*

will last forever!" (2 Cor. 4:17–18 NLT).

Isn't this the only *fair* way? Isn't it the only *right* way? Can we skimp on *our* giving to God and expect Him to share His greater abundance with us?

This is our goal and our earnest prayer, that we may be found *"holy and blameless in heart and soul before himself, the Father of us all, when our Lord Jesus Christ comes with all his saints"* (1 Thess. 3:13 Phillips). ■



PAIN OF TALEBEARING

(continued from Summer issue of Megiddo Message)



MEMORY VERSES:

The tongue is a small thing, but what enormous damage it can do. A tiny spark can set a great forest on fire
—James 3:5 NLT

The blue car in the Blanchard yard was the cause of many excited remarks as the Johnsons continued down the road. Suddenly, Mom suggested, "Dad, let's drive back and stop long enough to greet the Turners."

Melissa and Ann shrank against the car cushions, frightened at the thought of actually meeting the "jailbird." But the other children who had heard none of the gossip about the new neighbors were eager to meet the new family.

Dad turned at the crossroads. Soon the Johnson car was parked near the little brown house.

Ann squeezed her hands nervously as she watched her father and mother get out of the car and step up on the front porch. Dad knocked at the door.

It seemed to Ann that it was a long time before the door opened. Jailbird people would be suspicious, and wouldn't be quick to open the door!

She heard a man's voice saying, "Good afternoon."

Then she heard Mom say, "We're the Peter Johnsons, your neighbors up the road half a mile. We just wanted to stop a few minutes to welcome you to our neighborhood."

From inside the house came a woman's voice, but Ann could not tell what she was saying.

Soon the door closed behind Mom and Dad.

While her brothers looked curiously about, hoping to see signs of future friends, Ann fearfully hoped that her parents would soon come safely out of that house. She was frightened at the idea of Mom and Dad being in there with a jailbird and his wife—and very likely, with those four bad sons.

"Say, look over there—on the porch," exclaimed Mark. "Look at those guns! Three of them!"

Ann looked in the same direction. She stared in terror. Three big guns! She scarcely heard Stephen saying, "The Turners must like to hunt. That's a rifle and a couple of double-barreled shotguns."

Ann had her own ideas about the guns. Of course, a jailbird family would have guns. But not for hunting ducks and pheasants!

She put her hands to her face and began to cry with fright.

"Why, Ann," exclaimed Stephen in surprise, "what in the world is the matter with you?"

Ann had no answer. But Melissa piped out, "I know! She's scared! She's scared—of the—jailbird."

"Jailbird," puzzled Mark and Stephen together. "What do you mean?"

"Oh, we promised not—to tell—anybody."

"Not to tell what?"

"Oh—we can't tell anybody!" By now both Ann and Melissa were crying.

At just that moment, Mom and Dad stepped out on the porch, followed by Mr. and Mrs. Turner. Ann could see only four blurry figures because her eyes were so full of tears, but she did hear Mom saying very plainly, "Goodbye now. I'll be sending a hot dish over for you folks tomorrow. And then we'll all see you Sunday morning."

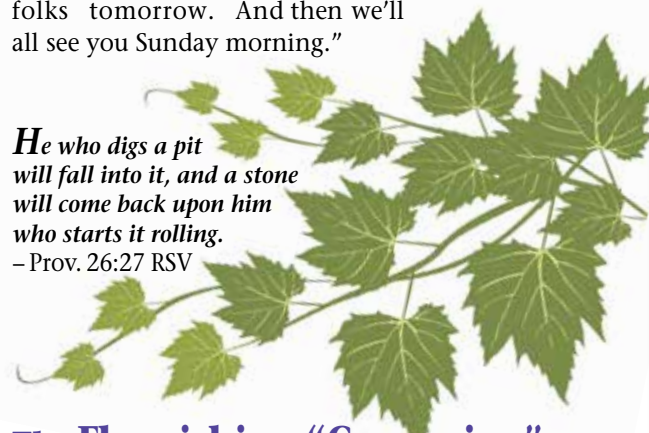
He who digs a pit will fall into it, and a stone will come back upon him who starts it rolling.

—Prov. 26:27 RSV

The Flourishing "Grapevine"

The Turners are going to make wonderful neighbors!" announced Mom as the Johnsons drove on their way to the Reynolds Farm. "Mr. Turner has been a school principal all his life, and he's come here to retire because both of them have always wanted to live on a little farm. Both of them were born on farms in North Dakota. Mrs. Turner has been a piano teacher. They are Christian people, and they are coming with us to church on Sunday."

Ann and Melissa looked first at their Mother,



LET'S TALK ABOUT THIS:

Before you repeat anything you hear, make it pass three tests:

Test 1: Is it true?

Test 2: Is it kind?

Test 3: Is it necessary?

and then at each other. "Guess I sure wasted a lot on being scared," whispered Melissa to her sister.

"Don't they have any children to play with?" Paul inquired of his mother.

"Well, hardly," replied Mom. "They have one son. He's married and lives in Chicago. They expect him here for a visit this fall, during hunting season because he just loves to hunt pheasant."

"But even though the Turners don't have children your age, you'll have happy times with them. I think they are a delightful couple, and I'm just thrilled to have them as neighbors. You children will be interested to know that they are going to raise a few Angora rabbits, and they are going to have some goats because Mr. Turner prefers to drink goat milk. They are going to raise some pedigreed dogs, too."

All the way to the Reynolds farm, Mom and Dad reported happily about what they had learned about their new neighbors.

Somehow, Ann did not have as much fun as usual with the Reynolds children. She kept remembering the jailbird story, and she was glad when at last they were home, and Mom came tiptoeing into her room to say good night.

"Oh, Mom," Ann whispered, "I wish I hadn't told that jailbird story!"

"Yes, I'm sure you do. But let's see what you can think of to do to help make it right."

"I could go over and apologize to the Turners."

"Do you think that would make matters right?"

Ann pondered a while, then said, "Maybe it would do more good if I went and told the Schramm twins the truth about the Turners—so they won't go spreading that jailbird story."

So it was that when Mr. Johnson drove to town on an errand the next day, Ann rode with him as far as the Schramm

farm. It didn't take Ann long to tell the twins and their mother that Mr. Turner was not a jailbird, but that instead the new neighbors were good people. When she had finished, she said, "I hope you girls didn't go tell anybody else that jailbird story."

"Oh," said one of the twins, "we told Gertie Gordon and Patsy Smith."

The Gordons lived across the road from the Schramms. So Ann and the twins went there to tell the Gordons that Mr. Turner was not a jailbird but a respectable retired schoolteacher.

They discovered that Gertie Gordon had already told Sharon Oberholtz.

So Ann and the twins walked half a mile down the road to the Oberholtz farm. There they found that Sharon had told the jailbird story to Grace Lawler. And she had told it on the party line, and there was no telling how many people might have "listened in." To make matters even worse, Sharon had thought that she had heard that both Mr. and Mrs. Turner were jailbirds, and that was what she had told Grace.

Wearily, Ann and the twins trudged back to the Schramm farm so that Ann would be there by the time her father returned from town.

As she rode home with her father, Ann told him how the jailbird story had spread, and how it had gotten worse with each telling.

Dad said, quietly, "Well, the next time you hear someone telling something like this jailbird story about someone you don't know, I'm sure you'll remember this little verse. 'the tongue is a small thing, but what enormous damage it can do. A tiny spark can set a great forest on fire'" (James 3:5 NLT). ■

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How Should We Hallow God's Name?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

been able to honor Him with their lips, but Jesus said they could not. He wanted their hearts, not their lips.

God wants us to love Him with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, all our strength (Mark 12:29–31). This goes much deeper than the proper pronouncing of His name.

The Watchtower people say also, "Even though the modern pronunciation Jehovah might not be exactly the way it was pronounced originally, this in no way detracts from the importance of the name. It identifies the Creator, the Living God, the Most High to whom Jesus said, 'Our Father in the heaven, Let your name be sanctified'" (Matt. 6:9).

If the inspired writers did not try to preserve the original Hebrew pronunciation, why would God put such emphasis on it for us?

What did Jesus do? When praying He referred to God as His Father. The word He used is the same used to describe earthly fathers (*Strong's* number 3962). He also mentioned God as Lord (*Strong's* 2962), and often quoted the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, which followed the con-

vention of rendering "JHWH" as "Lord" or "Lord God."

In our publishing, we often employ the terms "God," "the Eternal," "the Almighty," as well as terms describing His attributes or powers ("the Creator," "the Lord of hosts," "the Omnipotent God," etc.). We also use "Jehovah," "heavenly Father," etc., where the terms seem appropriate to the context.

God wants our hearts, not our words only. He wants our reverence, our honor, our respect, our obedience. How many times the Psalmist exalted and praised God's word and His statutes, judgments, laws, precepts, ordinances, and commandments to point up the importance of honoring God. The apostle Paul in Romans 10 placed all emphasis on the sacred testimony, quoting the Old Testament scripture (Deut. 30:12–14), and even calling it "*Christ*." "*The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart*" (That is, the word of faith which we preach)" (Rom. 10:5–8).

God wants us to have *The word* in our mouth and in our heart. There is no indication that He will judge us according to the sacred name by which we call Him, or how we pronounce that name. ■



Today Is Mine

*Today is mine, in which to work,
 In which to fight the foes that lurk
 In hidden places, to appear
 When I least think that danger's near.
 While yet today I breathe, and live,
 I may my enemies forgive;
 And right the wrongs that oft I do,
 That I may be forgiven, too.*

*Today is mine, but who can tell
 If on the morrow I shall dwell
 In strength and health, upon the earth,
 To still accomplish things of worth.
 Before the setting of the sun
 Some work remains that must be done,
 For ere there is another dawn,
 'Tis possible I may be gone.*

*Today is mine, a monument
 I'll make of it, a day well spent
 In drawing closer to my God,
 To walk the path by Jesus trod.
 I'll learn the art of being meek,
 To practice through the coming week;
 But lest I can not longer stay
 I'll practice being meek today.*

*I'll strive to be more kind today
 To those I meet along life's way;
 At home, and as I go abroad,
 I'll try to glorify my God.
 The angry passions that would rise
 I'll curb today, the thoughts unwise
 I will dispel, nor longer wait.
 Tomorrow it may be too late.*

*I'll work tomorrow, if I may,
 But while it's mine, I'll work today,
 That it may be a stepping stone
 To heights that are as yet unknown.
 I will not wait, and just lay plans,
 Consoled to think God understands;
 For should we meet, He soon would say,
 "My son, what have you done TODAY?"*

—Liot L. Snyder, 1942

How to Be Happy

*If when things go wrong we rejoice in the Lord;
if when someone is unkind we return good for evil;
if when the day is dark we spread a ray of sunshine;
if when we suffer loss we smile and say,
"Lord, not my will, but thine be done";
if in the face of all the wickedness in the world we bear
the fruits of the Spirit love, joy, peace,
longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
meekness, temperance, patience
then we will stand with the winners!*

*We have no time to complain, no space in our minds
for even a thought of discouragement.*

*Thanksgiving opens up the way for every good work.
It creates an attitude of faith, cheer, love.*

*It isn't what you have in your pocket
that makes you thankful
but what you have in your heart.*

When you stop to think, don't forget to start again!

Perseverance is the only sure mark of character.

*Thanksgiving is the constant and characteristic note
of the Christian life.*

The Attitude of Gratitude

In some parts of Mexico hot springs and cold springs are found side by side. Because of the convenience of this natural phenomenon, the women often bring their laundry and boil their clothes in the hot springs and then rinse them in the cold ones. A tourist, watching this procedure, commented to his Mexican guide: "I imagine that they think Mother Nature is pretty generous to supply such ample, clean hot and cold water here side by side for their free use." The guide replied, "No, my friend, there is much grumbling because she supplies no soap."



*The way we are facing has a lot to do
with our destination.*

*Thanks for prayers that have been answered,
Thanks for what has been denied,
Thanks for storms that have been weathered,
Thanks for all that's been supplied,
Thanks for pain and thanks for pleasure,
Thanks for comfort in despair,
Thanks for peace that none can measure,
Thanks to God for all His care.*

*We should be thankful for
the good things we have and also for the
bad things we don't have.*

*God judges our thankfulness to Him by our
actions, not by our words.*

*Try for one day to notice all the little things
that help make your day smoother
and your work easier, and
see if you are not richly blessed.*

*The value of the Bible lies not in knowing it
but in obeying it.*

ABC's of Praise

*Although things are not perfect
Because of trials and pain,
Continue in thanksgiving
Do not begin to blame.*

*Expect things to be hard sometimes,
Fierce winds are bound to blow—
God is forever able:
Hold on! Do not let go!*

*Imagine life without Him—
Joy would cease to be;
Keep thanking Him for all His
Love imparts to thee.*

*Move out of "Camp Complaining,"
Nor ever visit there;
One day Earth will be singing
Praise everyone can share!*

*Quit wasting hours in dreaming,
Redeem the time at hand;
Start every day with worship—
To "thank" is a command.*

*Until we see Him coming
Victorious in the sky
We'll run the race with gratitude
Xalting God Most High.*

*Yes, better times are coming for
Zion by and by!*

— Author Unknown

*Rejoice always,
pray without ceasing,
in everything give thanks,
for this is the will of God
in Christ Jesus for you.*

—1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

