

THE NEW CREATION

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“Prove ALL things and hold fast to what is good.” – 1 Thess. 5:21.

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A Date to Remember

There are two dates that the human race shares in common and celebrates: birthdays and deaths. We often want to know how old a person was when they died and may even compare their age with ours and draw some concern if the years are not far apart. In the bigger scheme of things, the date of death is more important than the date of birth. A friend's death has a profound effect on us when the closeness we shared is broken. We feel the emotions of missing the deceased.



Jesus had a profound influence on his followers and detractors. His disciples grew to love him immensely while his opponents sought to kill him. Jesus died as a young man with full perfection of body and spirit. He laid down his life in doing the Father's will. The pattern was shown him in the Passover offering of the lamb on the 14th of Nisan. He knew his date of death from the beginning. Did that have a weight on his mind? Yes, because he had much to accomplish while with his followers. That weight and the concern that he had been faithful to the Father in his ministry bore down on him in the Garden of Gethsemane. But once strengthened he was at peace and faithfully laid down his life in a most horrible of deaths - crucifixion.

Do we want to remember our Lord on the anniversary of his death and what he did for us? Yes, most certainly. This year his memorial will be on Thursday, April 14th after Sundown.

"Let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" - 1 Cor. 5:7. The feast we enjoy is really our entire Christian walk since acknowledgement of Jesus as our savior and consecration to God. This feast we share with our brethren for we are all one in Christ Jesus. We do not want the leaven of malice and wickedness in our fellowship. We enjoy this feast throughout our heavenly journey, praising God for all His grace to us through Christ Jesus.

R. Whittaker

“... But to Whom Little is Forgiven, the Same Loveth Little” Luke 7:36-50

The insightful title of this article was expressed by Jesus in his encounter with Simon, the Pharisee, found in Luke 7:36 that is really worth remembering. This statement does not mean that one who does not sin can't love...but rather points to the understanding that sinners have gained that leads to an ability to show mercy and demonstrate love toward their neighbor -- like that shown in the wonderful parable of The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30).

In this case, noted above in Luke 7:36, a woman, a well-known sinner, kissed and anointed Jesus' feet, washing them with her tears and hair. She obviously was touched by the good works and love of Jesus with a heart that was not hardened by a false sense of righteousness. Jesus, who could read Simon's thoughts acknowledged that this woman was a sinner, but that her sins which he acknowledged were many, were forgiven, because she loved much, and demonstrated faith.

None are without sin (Ro. 3:23) for as Psalms 51:5 declares "...I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." This sinful trait however was not passed down to Jesus by His perfect Father, yet Jesus as a man was able to sin, often being tried by Satan toward that end. Jesus suffered as all humans do which enabled Him to understand the condition in which we find ourselves, and as such was and is merciful. So merciful that He suffered greatly for righteousness' sake and offered up His perfect life to save all of mankind from the bondage of sin and death (1Cor. 15:22).

It is this "Gift of Gifts" that he requested His followers to remember. Just as God asked Israel to remember their deliverance from bondage in Egypt by annually keeping the Passover, so Jesus asked His followers to remember His sacrifice that provided mankind's deliverance from sin and death (1Cor.15:22). No doubt, those who are followers of Jesus remember him daily and even hourly as they strive to walk with

him. As we partake annually of the symbols of wine, (which represents His shed blood), and the unleavened bread, (which represents His faultless broken body), we outwardly express our appreciation for His great sacrifice and love on behalf of all mankind.

Life experiences and trials, including examples of kindness, help to inspire us to do good, to be a neighbor that cares, that include not only turning from sin, but embracing the whole admonition given by the Apostle Paul in Eph 4:28 *“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, **that he may have to give to him that needeth.**”* Again, the admonition here is not only to stop sinning, but just as important, to start doing good, and put into practice the New Commandment Jesus gave, *“That ye love one another; as I have loved you...”* (Jn 13:34). As they say, “actions speak louder than words,” so let us do as Jesus instructed in Mat 5:16, *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your **good works**, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*

By way of encouragement, we should take note that this call to action does not go unnoticed. Let us remember what the angel said to Cornelius in Acts 10:4 *“...thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.”* God is so gracious that if the sinner turns from his sins and makes restitution (truly repents), walking righteously, his sins will no longer be remembered, **not even mentioned.** (Eze 33:15-16). As the Apostle Paul states in Eph 5:8, *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.* What an encouragement, for it is how we apply God’s Word to life’s experiences that we can be faithful to the end, fulfilling the law of love.

By Grace and the Love of the Lord, we believe that what He promises in Rev. 3:5 will come to pass. *“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but **I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.**”*

What a wonderful prospect!

J. DiCesare

Beheaded for Christ

*“Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been **be-headed** because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received the mark on their foreheads and on their hands; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” Rev. 20:4*

To start with, let’s talk about **the human brain** for a couple of minutes. Even with all the advances in medicine and study of the human brain, there are still mysteries and gaps of understanding of how this incredible organ functions within the human body. One of the things we do know is that the last small part of the brain known as the



Hypothalamus is a fascinating entity that concerns our thoughts today. It is within the Hypothalamus that we are able to laugh, able to cry, able to express love or hatred or anger or fear or hostility. All occur in the Hypothalamus. Even our blood pressure is controlled by the Hypothalamus.

Obviously then, the whole control of our being, the whole control of our body, our physiological activities, our emotional state, our behavioral patterns, our attitudes, are all centered in the brain!!! The brain is the control center. Whether we are good people, whether we are bad people is because of our brain.

Most of what we understand concerning the brain, in terms of brain function, the BIBLE assigns to the heart. For instance, In Mark 7 we read: *“For from within, out of the hearts of people, come the evil thoughts, acts of sexual immorality, thefts, murders, acts of adultery, deeds of greed, wickedness, deceit, indecent behavior, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile the person.”*

In reality, from within, out of the mind of man proceed evil thoughts.

So, as we explore the thoughts of John the Revelator in 20:4 we need to understand that John is being shown a vision of the Church. They are the ones who have been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and God's Holy Word. They are the ones that are sealed by the holy spirit and thus immune to the mark of the beast and its false worship.

So, then the question is, how do we become beheaded?

In Romans 6:3-6, we read: *“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;...”*

What happens when we are baptized into Jesus Christ? We die! And what happens when we come out of the water? We are resurrected into a newness of life in the Lord Jesus Christ, as new creatures, a new creation. And as new creatures, we have, metaphorically, been beheaded, and now Jesus Christ has become our head. That is when it begins. That is where it starts. It is a gradual process; it is a growing process.

Paul says in Colossians 1:18 *“He is also the head of the body, the church...”*

In Romans 12:1-2 we read: *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, **but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,** so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

That can only happen when this mind of ours is transformed into the mind of Christ. Renew in the Greek literally means “to renovate” – for example, when we renovate a living room, we replace the old with something new while the old structure remains. We need to renovate these old human structures of ours with minds that have been transformed into something new, renewed with the mind of Jesus.

In writing to the church at Philippi, the Apostle Paul writes: *“Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, (when Christ becomes the head of the body, then we start to become likeminded, because we are being nurtured by one mind, that is the mind of Jesus) having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”*

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; (that only happens when we have our own head, our own mind) but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus....”
We need to have the mind of Christ to be able to become like Christ.*

Speaking to the Nation of Israel, concerning their restoration, God says through the Prophet **Ezekiel – 11:19-20**: *“And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, so that they may walk in My statutes, and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God.”*

This is a prophecy concerning the Nation of Israel in the age to come, not in this age. In the age to come, God is going to remove their stony hearts and give them a heart of flesh, so that they will walk in the ways of God, and God is going to do

that. But this prophecy has been fulfilled in the church, you and me, right now. It is not only a prophecy for the nation of Israel in the age to come, but also a prophecy for spiritual Israel right now. And what God wants to do, is not give us a new heart but give us a new head. That is why those who are sitting on thrones judging the nations have been beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God. What God wants to do is to take off my head and replace it with the head of Christ.

So, when Ezekiel says, *"I will give them one heart..."*, what he is saying is, I will give them one mind. Although there are many in the body of Christ, if they become beheaded for My sake, for the witness of Jesus and the Word of God, I will make my Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, become their new head.

Remember, the brain controls the whole body. And the beauty is, whether there are 50 or a million of those who are beheaded for the witness of Jesus and the Word of God, they ultimately become a single unified body, because they are controlled by a single head, Jesus. In Christ there is *"...neither male nor female, there is neither bond or free, there is neither Jew or Gentile."* The body of Christ is indiscriminate concerning salvation. *"Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it."*

Jesus says to all, *"Come to me all you (everyone and anyone) and I will give you rest."* For we all become one because we are controlled by one head. We are all controlled by one heart, (biblically). That is the heart and mind of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: To have the mind of Christ, God would like to give every one of us a head transplant. He would like to remove our heads so that the Lord Jesus Christ can become truly, the head of the body. So that He can become everything to the Church and thus allow you and I to become everything that God wants us to be.

D. Gorham

The Unity of the Body of Christ

“Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf” (1 Corinthians 10:17 NIV)

This familiar Memorial text occurs in a context discussing the idolatry of Israel as they wandered 40 years in the desert. Paul encourages us to avoid Israel’s examples. They committed fornication with other peoples, worshipped heathen gods, complained about the manna, and made a golden calf representing Jehovah. They murmured against Moses, Aaron, and Jehovah because of the evil report of 10 spies. They asserted their wants, thinking, and appetites above the commands and gracious provisions of Jehovah. Not satisfied with His ways, they wanted their own. Their idol of self-interest, or self-will can be the most subtle and dangerous idol of all.

Paul inserts the illustration of the Memorial to point out that by partaking of the emblems of Jesus’ sacrifice we demonstrate the commitment of our lives to serve the purposes for which Jesus lived and gave his life on the cross. Paul compares our eating of the emblems to the priests of Israel eating some of the sacrifices that were offered by the people under the Law. Leviticus 6:14-30 records laws concerning grain offerings and sin offerings. Any priest eating such sacrifices *“shall become consecrated”* (verses 18, 27 NAS) or demonstrate that he has been consecrated for service in the Tabernacle or Temple.

Paul means that if we eat the emblems of Jesus’ sacrifice, we declare that we have consecrated our lives to Jesus and his Father. If our lives afterward become ruled by self-interest and self-will, rather than the will of God, then we are in idolatry, with its consequences.

Paul includes the thought of our theme text. Because there is only one loaf (the body of Jesus), and we all partake of that one loaf, then we who are many are one (united) body of consecrated disciples of Jesus.

Unity

The unity of the body of Christ is a theme that the Apostle Paul visited again and again in writing to the churches. He

understood deeply the Lord's desire for unity among his disciples.

Jesus prayed for his followers to exhibit unity as a testimony to the world. *"I pray . . . that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me"* (John 17:20-23 NIV).

Does history record that this is the way Christians have lived? No; far from it. Rather than unity, harmony, and cooperation, Christians are often known for their squabbles and divisions. Persecutions and wars have arisen between peoples of differing Christian beliefs. Today, there are approximately 41,000 distinct Christian churches or denominations worldwide.

Why are there so many denominations and church groups? Disagreements on (1) scriptural interpretation and belief, (2) church practices in worship and activity, (3) church structure and where authority lies, congregational or centralized hierarchy, and (4) differences in personality, passions, and talents. Some emphasize Biblical knowledge; some prefer creative and artistic methods of worship, some focus on service. (5) Differences over traditions passed down over generations or centuries. For example, some use contemporary Christian music, others prefer traditional hymns. (6) Sometimes people just don't get along with each other. Christians still struggle with pride, selfishness, and stubbornness. Sometimes disagreements are taken personally and people are offended. Maybe this is why Jesus focused so much of his teaching on love and forgiveness as an expression of the kind of people he wants us to be.

What Do the Scriptures Say?

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1)

“Accept life with humility and patience, making allowances for each other because you love each other. Make it your aim to be at one in the Spirit, and you will inevitably be at peace with one another. You all belong to one body, of which there is one Spirit, just as you all experienced one calling to one hope. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, one Father of us all, who is the one over all, the one working through all and the one living in all. Naturally there are different gifts and functions . . . His ‘gifts to men were varied. Some he made his messengers, some prophets, some preachers of the Gospel; to some he gave the power to guide and teach his people. His gifts were made that Christians might be properly equipped for their service, that the whole body might be built up until . . . we arrive at real maturity (Ephesians 4:2-7, 11-13 Phillips).

Humility Is the Key

Paul said Christ created diversity among his body members by giving different gifts or talents to each one. Yet despite these differences, he tells us to be at one in the Spirit. How do we do this? By having humility.

If we do not agree with a fellow Christian, are we able to ask ourselves, “Do I have it wrong?” Only if we have true humility. If in subsequent conversation and personal study we are reassured of our position, can we accept and respect the liberty of that person to hold a different view? Only if we have true humility.

True unity during this Gospel Age can only be attained when each member of the body of Christ has a heart conviction that “I am no better nor more important than anyone else,” and when there is sincere respect for differences among God’s children. This respect must affirm the value of every other human and their right to exist as a part of God’s creation, including His New Creation. Humility must be deep in our heart and mind.

“I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment. . . . As each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,

so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us ... prophesying ... serving ... teaching ... encouraging ... contributing ... leadership ... showing mercy. ... Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another ... Honor one another above yourselves... Live in harmony ... Do not be proud ... be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.” (Romans 12:3-10, 16 NIV)

Humility acknowledges that I am not more worthy of salvation and God’s love than anyone else, for none are worthy in his sight. My needs are no more important than others. My understandings, while precious to me, carry no more weight for others just because I believe them. I know only in part, even if most of my understandings are correct and others’ are largely wrong. I cannot discount the leadings of God claimed by others.

“Concerning ... food offered to idols ... “all of us have knowledge,” as they say. Such knowledge, however, puffs a person up with pride, but love builds up. Those who think they know something really don’t know as they ought to know.” (1 Corinthians 8:1-2 TEV)

“Love is eternal. ... inspired messages ... are temporary ... tongues ... will cease ... knowledge ... will pass. ... When what is perfect comes, then what is partial will disappear.” (1 Corinthians 13:8-10 TEV)

Avoid a Competitive Spirit

Eliminating feelings of self-importance and being more valuable than others removes competition with others. When competition in our minds is gone, there is room for only joy and appreciation for others. This is true humility. That is when we are emptied of self-interest. That is when we can easily practice the golden rule. That is when we can love even our enemies.

We can be God’s special treasure, yet be no better or more important than others. This is a “divine paradox”—both are true. Our relationship with God is like a spectrum—at one end we are special to God, at the other end we are as nothing in

His eyes. The bridge between those two ends of the spectrum is Jesus Christ.

There should be no competition generated by someone having different beliefs than I. Nothing has to be done in this age to resolve the reality that others believe and act differently. God will resolve these differences in His way in His due time. We need not be anxious in these differences unless to consider that we are the one who is wrong.

We cannot change the views or perspectives of others unless God opens their hearts. We should never feel we have “won” or been “vindicated” over others. We may not be God’s instrument to resolve differences now. However, we can speak respectfully about our different views and perhaps reach mutual respect and bridge the divide.

Others’ differences in no way diminish us because we are different from them. Thus, others’ differences (beliefs, services, activities, etc.) are no inherent threat to us.

Retaining Humility When There Are Divisions

Thus we can meet and act separately from them without condemning them or feeling superior. A belief like eternal torment impugns the character of God and is not scripturally supported. But we need not condemn the people who hold this view or feel superior to them.

We might see hypocrisy in the position of others and point that out with compassion and humility. We believe what we believe, because our studies of God’s word and our Christian experience have led us to conclusions that appeal to our head and heart. The same is true of every other sincere Christian. We should respect that, though disagreeing with their conclusions. Even people of other religions should be respected, for how could they be expected to understand if God has not called them and not empowered them with His Spirit.

It is natural to meet with those who are like-minded on scripture and on how to live the Christian life. What is wrong is to view those in other congregations as less faithful. Separation for peace and comfort in meetings and practice is not wrong. Judgment by either group that the other is less faithful or less spiritual is wrong, the temptation notwithstanding.

Divisions in Paul's Day

There were divisions in the church in the Apostle Paul's day. "You come together not for the better but for the worse. ... I hear that divisions exist among you ... there must also be factions among you, in order that those who are approved may have become evident among you." (1 Corinthians 11:17-19 NAS)

We will not all think alike and may not all meet together. Some will be approved by the Lord, and some will not. But still the call is clearly to unity.

Where there are separations and divisions, it is important that those who leave not wrap themselves in a self-righteous justification such as, "We are doing this to protect the purity of the truth." For those leaving, this may be a smoke screen for the unwillingness to tolerate other views. For those remaining, avoid an unwarranted indictment of the others' motives.

Humility Does Not Press for Uniformity

At times the leaders of a congregation have suppressed freedom of expression. Sometimes brethren have separated in order to regain Christian liberty.

If we acknowledge what Paul said—that we know only partially at this time—it seems presumptive to use our own perspective of how to lead the consecrated life as the template for fellow Christians. An example to one another, perhaps, but not a basis for judgment regarding one's standing before God.

If one endeavors passionately to convince others of their views, this may stem from an unresolved anxiety. Perhaps they cannot imagine how you could be happy without seeing things as they see it. Or perhaps they cannot be happy unless you see things as they see it. This missionary approach to convincing others is much different than merely sharing an insight coming from study that may prove a blessing to others.

Humility Embraces Liberty and Diversity

As Bible Students we might all find ourselves unwilling to regularly meet with a congregation that believed in the Trinity, the immortal soul, and eternal torment. But there are other differences that could or should be tolerated, because they do

no violence to God's Plan that we agree on, and do not affect our understanding of God's expectations about character development. Examples might include:

- When does the Millennium (1000 years) begin and end?
- Does the New Covenant go into effect at the beginning of the Gospel Age or the Millennial Age? Or at the end of the Millennial Age?
- All matters relating to chronology. Br. Russell has excellent counsel on this (R5348): "Suffer not any dispute over a day or a year to break the most precious bond of love which binds us to the Lord and to all who are truly his. Be specially careful on this point when the subject of discussion is one respecting which we have no positive knowledge. The rupture of fellowship may sometimes be necessary, when we "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints"—faith in the Divine Plan, in the Redeemer, in the efficacy of His death, etc. These matters are positively stated in the Bible—not left to deduction, as in the case of chronology and all matters based upon chronology."

Another piece of wise counsel from Br. Russell on the subject is found in *Studies in the Scriptures*, Volume 6, pages 240-242: "Unity of faith is desirable; it is to be striven for—yet not the kind of unity that is generally aimed at. Unity is to be along the lines of "the faith once delivered unto the saints" in its purity and simplicity, and with full liberty to each member to take different views of minor points ... The Scriptural idea of unity is upon the foundation principles of the Gospel. (1) Our redemption through the precious blood, and our justification by demonstrated faith therein. (2) Our sanctification, setting apart to the Lord, the Truth and their service—including the service of the brethren. (3) Aside from these essentials ... there can be no Scriptural fellowship; upon every other point fullest liberty is to be accorded."

Our challenges respecting unity are compounded by our beliefs and practices: (1) that we are on an equal footing, re-

specting our relationship with God and interpretation of the Bible. (2) Having the majority of our weekly meetings in open discussion format. Thus we study the Bible, come to a variety of conclusions, and our meetings provide a forum for sharing our conclusions. Do we see the inherent challenge?

Paul addressed this diversity, while reinforcing the oneness from which it originates. *“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit ... different kinds of service, but the same Lord ... different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another ...knowledge ... faith ... healing ... miraculous powers ... prophecy ... distinguishing between spirits ... tongues ... interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. The body is a unit ... though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink”* (1 Corinthians 12:4-13 NIV).

The Christian Message Is Inclusive

A few brethren may have a natural ability to draw people together; the rest of us will have to learn it through the dark or dimly-lit paths that mark our lives. But to be useful to our Lord in his Kingdom work, we will need to have this ability. To help people rise above the wounds of this life, to trust in God misunderstood and misrepresented for millennia, to join with diverse others to build a world that has a place for everyone who has ever lived, a world characterized by harmony, peace, and love.

The “Christian message” trumpeted by many is a message of exclusion. But the Good News announced by angels the night of Jesus’ birth was a message of inclusion, *“Good tidings of great joy ... to all people.”* Do we practice inclusiveness? Especially within our fellowship?

When the disciples vied for honors, Jesus said *“He that is greatest among you shall be your servant ... he that shall*

humble himself shall be exalted” (Matthew 23:11-12). In the Parable of the 11th Hour Workers (Matthew 20:1-16), the master paid each worker the same, one denarius. This speaks about equality among us in God’s eyes, and the humility we should have, not considering ourselves more important than any other of God’s servants.

Conclusion

There is a tendency to suppose that we know what is right or best, that our way is superior, our contribution greater, and we are more important. If we allow this in our thinking then we may take the next step and mentally dismiss or diminish the value of others. This is the thought process that Jesus describes in Matthew 5:22—a progressive devaluing of our brother or sister in Christ.

Is there a tendency for any of us to think that all of our Scriptural understandings are correct? That we have a duty above others to “protect” God’s truth? That we carry more responsibility than others to show fellow Christians the right doctrine to believe and the right way to live? That we are especially important to God’s work of developing the body of Christ? If so, we diminish the value of others in these areas.

“The Lord's plan of granting great liberty is the best plan--the one which most surely tests the heart-loyalty, most fully develops character, and proves the willingness of each to follow with the other the Law of Love, doing to the other as he would the other should do to him. Such ... comparative freedom is well adapted to the Lord's object in the present time—namely, the selection of the little flock and the perfecting of them in character and instructing them for the Royal Priesthood of the future” (*Scripture Studies*, Volume 6, page 196)

Tom Gilbert

He drew a circle that shut me out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in.
--*Outwitted*, by Edwin Markham

Joel's Prophecy: "Blood, and Fire, and Vapor of Smoke"

Joel 2:28-32

Where the apostles do not directly explain Old Testament prophecy we should tread carefully. Peter quoted more of Joel's prophecy than was needed to explain the gift of tongues, yet he introduced the whole passage with the words, "*this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel*", apparently placing it all in the same time frame.

Acts 2:19 *"And I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come. 21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Paul also quoted the last part, "*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*", in Romans 10:13, applying it to those who were responding to the Gospel, which lends weight to the view that this whole prophecy had a contemporary application.

Once again, in interpreting these images, the importance of the Old Testament scriptures is underlined. "*Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke*" is a powerful allusion to the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai, the most memorable event in Israel's history, and that is surely how it would appeal to the Jewish mind, invoking a vivid impression of the sanctity and terror of the mountain, the presence of God, the blood of oxen with which the people were sprinkled (Ex. 24:8), and the beginning of that covenant-relationship with Jehovah which had governed the life of Israel up to the time of Christ.

It is significant also, that a Jewish tradition existed which marked the day of Pentecost as the anniversary of the giving of the Law. There is no direct scriptural support for this, although the time, fifty days after Passover, would be about right,

according to Exodus 19:1. However, there is adequate evidence in other writings that the day was regarded in that way, so that at Pentecost the Jews would have been more than usually reflective on that event a millennium and a half before.

Joel prophesied perhaps eight hundred years after Sinai, so that God, in saying "*I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke*", was not pointing back to the giving of the Law Covenant, but into the future, to an event similar in nature to the giving of the Law.

The sun and the moon

"The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood". Once again, going back into the Old Testament we find similar expressions used, not always in connection with the same event, but generally depicting the demise, by God's decree, of some earthly regime. The shining of the heavenly bodies upon the earth implies stability, order; their darkening symbolizes the end of that established order. Using almost the same words, Isaiah foretold God's judgement on Babylon:

Isa. 13:10 *For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.*

Concerning God's eventual judgement on the world, in Isaiah 24:23 the prophet used similar imagery:

Isa. 24:23 *Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, for the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.*

Again, Joel, in chapter 3, echoes Isaiah concerning the end of the kingdoms of the world. Joel 3:15 *The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.* In Ezekiel 32, it is the end of Pharaoh's kingdom that is spoken of:

Ezek. 32:7 *And when I shall extinguish thee, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun*

with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. 8 All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God.

In the Gospels and in Revelation we find these same symbols used with the same general meaning, that of the end of some earthly establishment (Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24; Rev. 6:12), and the fact that the Bible does not always apply this symbolic expression to the same event means that it has to be understood in its particular context. We must therefore respect Peter's application of this whole passage of Joel to the time at hand, and not remove it from its proper setting.

The close of the Law Covenant era

If we take these two prophetic images together, the one of an event comparable with the giving of the Law, the other of God's decision to terminate an existing arrangement, both of these things occurring around the time Peter spoke, then I think the meaning becomes clear. The prophecy would seem to point out the end of the Law Covenant regime, and the inception of a new order, designated "*the great and notable day of the Lord*".

I am sure that the Jews would have been familiar with the symbols used, yet I greatly doubt that the significance of the prophecy was realized at the time Peter spoke. If the message was as momentous as I have suggested, why did the apostle not give the interpretation of the second part of the Joel passage? Why did he not announce the end of the Law Covenant? I think we all know the answer to that question. We have only to read the rest of the book of Acts to be aware of the reaction of the majority of Jews at that time to any suggestion of an alteration to Mosaic customs. (Acts 6:14; 18:13; 21:28). To the Jew who had not yet believed, an announcement of a full end to the Mosaic covenant would have been completely and utterly unacceptable; the apostles would have immediately alienated themselves from their countrymen, and the Gospel would have been obscured from Israel.

Of the New Testament writers, Paul is the one who most eagerly embraced the liberty which is in Christ, yet despite his boldness, Paul well knew that in approaching the unbelieving Israelite with the Gospel, concessions had to be made if any good was to come: 1 Cor. 9:20 *And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law.*

The first priority was their acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah; all else could be unveiled with the passage of time. Jesus seemed to take into account the limited pace at which most human beings can adapt to great change, when He said to the disciples at the last supper, *“I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now”* (John 16:9). His patience with them seems also to have been extended to the whole nation, in His guidance of the apostles’ ministry to Israel.

The “great and notable day of the Lord”

In view of all that, we might ask, why did Peter even quote those last verses of Joel 2 on the Day of Pentecost? I suggest that it was simply because that was where they belonged. As Paul wrote to those who had been under the Law, God has *“blotted out the bond of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross”* (Col. 2:14; RV; see also Eph. 2:15). The Law Covenant was finished, whether Israel was immediately aware of it or not, and something new began at Pentecost. What can we say about *“the great and notable day of the Lord”*? As we know, to support their preaching of Jesus, the apostles appealed constantly to the Old Testament, not always as we do, quoting book, chapter and verse, but often gathering all the prophets together and treating their testimony as one. Later that same day, Peter spoke again to the people: Acts 3:18 *But the things which God forshewed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. 19 Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; 20 and that he may send the Christ who hath*

been appointed for you, even Jesus. 21 whom the heavens must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began. 22 Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me; to him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. 23 And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken unto that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days. (RV).

In speaking of the prophets collectively like this, Peter was actually summing up Old Testament prophecy and reducing it to its elements: the death and resurrection of Christ, the necessity of obedience to the words of Jesus, repentance and remission of sins in His name; all now effective and being fulfilled in “*these days*”. It follows that these things are the basis of a new arrangement, prophesied by Joel, which would supplant the Law of Moses. What greater and more notable day could there be, than the era in which the salvation of God was revealed, that to which the Law and all the prophets had pointed?

With the assistance of the Holy Spirit, Peter was recalling things which the Lord Himself had told the disciples after His resurrection. To the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, Jesus said, Luke 24:25 *...O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? 27 And beginning from Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

And later, when they were all gathered together, He said, Luke 24:44 *These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me. 45 Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; 46 and he said unto*

them, *Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. "Beginning from Jerusalem."* That is, beginning with Israel. Thus, Christ and the apostles teach the unity of Old Testament prophecy, by gathering the prophets under these major themes, which in reality are one great theme, that of the Messiah.

The Messianic age

And it shows us that the prophets did not prophesy of a discrete Gospel age, to be followed by a Kingdom age; these are concepts derived from the New Testament. What they unanimously pointed forward to is the age of the Messiah, a "*great and notable day*," which would begin with His revealing to Israel (Zechariah 9:9; Malachi 3:1; 4:5); a "*great and notable day*", during which there would be an offering for sin (Isaiah 53:10; Zechariah 13:1; Ezekiel 36:25), reconciliation between God and men (Psalm 32:1-2; Genesis 22:18; Isaiah 53:11; 57:19; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 37:26), the going forth of the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3) the granting of God's favor to Jew and Gentile through faith (Psalms 2:12; 22:27; 24:3-5; Isaiah 2:2; 42:1-6; 49:6; 55:5; 56:1-8; 65:1; 66:18) - everlasting life for the faithful (Habakkuk 2:4; Psalms 30:4; 37:18; 49:14:15; Isaiah 56:5; Daniel 12:12) - the establishment of God's kingdom, with the son of David sitting on the throne of the Lord (2 Samuel 7:16; Psalms 2:6; 18:50; 45:6,7; 47:7-9; 89:33-37; Isaiah 9:6,7; 32:1; 55:4; Ezekiel 37:25; Daniel 2:34; 7:13-14) - the resurrection of the dead and removal of the curse on mankind (Psalm 49:7-9; Job 33:24; Isaiah 25:7-8; 26:19; Ezekiel 16:53; Daniel 12:2; Hosea 13:14) - the judgement of the world (Psalms 9:7-8; 67:4; Isaiah 2:4,12-21; 11:4; 61:2; Joel 3:12; Micah 4:1-3), - and ultimately, the establishment of everlasting righteousness and peace (Psalms 37:9-11; 46:9; Isaiah 26:9; 32:16-18; ch.35; 51:6,8; 60:17,21; 65:21-25; Micah 4:3-5).

Paul W. Brownlow
New Covenant News, Australia

Who Do You Say I Am?

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:13-16.

When we ask others around us the question: Who do you say Jesus is? Their answer reveals to us what they think. But when we are asked the question about Jesus: "Who do you say I am?" Our answer is of the utmost importance. Like Peter, our answer should be, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Strong's Concordance tells us that "Christ" comes from the root word (chrio); *anointed*, i.e. the *Messiah*, an epithet of Jesus." This fact that Jesus is the "anointed Messiah" is fundamental to salvation and our eternal destiny.

Jesus said in John 14:6, *"I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."* This is a basic truth that has been watered down by ecumenism supporters. We have been warned in the last days there will be many deceivers. We are warned in 2 John 1:7, *"Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world."* The sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary's cross is an essential truth that God's love prompted Him to make this provision, as recorded in John 3:16-17, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."*

Have you taken hold of Jesus as your personal Savior? Regardless of what others might say, He is the one and only way to gain eternal life. *"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life"* (John 3:14-15).

The Apostle Paul wrote, *“This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men--the testimony given in its proper time”* (1 Tim 2:3-6).

Jesus carried out His Father’s will perfectly while here on earth. No one else could have done this; thus earning Him to be raised up and is now seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly realms. Because of His sacrificial death that made atonement for the sins of the world, you and I have been saved from the consequences and penalty of sins. We have this blessed assurance in Paul’s words: *“Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him”* (Romans 4:7-8). Also we find a similar assurance in Psalms 32:1-2: *“Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.”*

The ultimate purpose of Jesus’ work in carrying out God’s plan is expressed in John 3:16-17: *“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.”*

Yes, Jesus is The Christ, our Savior, but He is also King of kings and Lord of lords. One day, perhaps very soon, He will return to earth and establish His earthly thousand-year Kingdom. We read of this in Revelation 19: 11-16: *“I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice He judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on His head are many crowns. He has a name written on Him that no one knows but He himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and His name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were*

following Him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh He has this name written: KING of kings and LORD of lords."

Jesus has yet a big task before Him as the above text shows. But He will be successful as we read in 1 Cor. 15: 24-28, *"Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For He "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under Him, it is clear that this does not include God Himself, who put everything under Christ. When He (Jesus) has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to Him (God) who put everything under Him, so that God may be all in all."*

What a day that will be!

E. Weeks

Jesus Only.

JESUS only! In the shadow
Of the cloud so chill and dim,
We are clinging, loving, trusting,
He with us and we with Him;
All unseen, though ever nigh,
Jesus only--all our cry.

Jesus only! In the glory,
When the shadows all are flown,
Seeing Him in all His beauty,
Satisfied with Him alone;
May we join His ransomed throng,
Jesus only--all our song!

From Poems of Dawn

When It's Hard to Pray

Romans 8:26-30

The Bible tells us that God knows our every thought and every word on our tongue (Psalm 139:1-4). And when we don't know what to pray for, the Holy Spirit "*makes intercession for us...*" (Romans 8:26).

These biblical truths assure us that we can have communication with God even without a word being spoken, because He knows the intentions and desires of our heart. What a comfort when we are perplexed or in deep distress! We don't have to worry if we can't find the words to express our thoughts and feelings. We don't have to feel embarrassed if sometimes our sentences break off half-finished. God knows what we are trying to say. We don't have to feel guilty if our thoughts wander and we have to struggle to keep our minds focused on the Lord.

And for that matter, we don't have to be concerned about a proper posture in prayer. If we are elderly or arthritic and cannot kneel, that's okay. What God cares about is *the posture of our heart*.

What a wonderful God! No matter how much we falter and stumble in our praying, He hears us. His heart of infinite love responds to the needs and emotions of our own inarticulate hearts. So let's just *keep on praying!*

*Prayer is the heart's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire that trembles in the breast.*

Montgomery

Romans 8 is best known for the powerful statement of trust in verse 28 that, "*God works all things together for good to those who love Him...*" But a closer examination of this chapter also reveals a profound and often overlooked theme: *the personal care and ministry of God in our lives through the Holy Spirit's ministry*. There, we see the "Spirit of life" (v.2) direct-

ing our minds to spiritual things (v. 5), personally indwelling our lives (v. 9), enabling us to die to the things of the flesh (v. 13), leading us as children of God (v. 14), bearing witness to our hearts (v. 16), and interceding in our prayers (vv. 26, 27). These things all help form the ministry of the "Comforter" Jesus promised to send (John 14:16). "*...The world ...neither sees him nor knows him but you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you...*" (John 14:17, 18). *So be encouraged!*

Selected

Supreme Reflections

A blade of grass, a tall oak tree,
The morning sun, a bird so free;
The moon at night, the stars above,
The tiny ant, a feathered dove;

The ocean's deep, the wind that blows,
The rain of Spring, the Winter's snows;
The mountain's height, the rainbow's arc,
The light of day, the still-night dark;

The human being, the soil of earth,
The butterfly and the redwood's girth;
The giant whale, the seasons' change,
Earth's rotation, the child-bearing pains;

The countless galaxies, the flowers that bloom,
Nature's instincts, the tight-wrapped cocoon;
All these phenomena are but a "drop,"
Of God's creation that never stops!

Daniel A. Donnarummo (10-24-84)
Deceased 1-7-2022

Every Saint Has a Past

"Every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future".

Oscar Wilde

This pithy saying encapsulates the entire plan of God.

All humans who ultimately attain eternal life, whether in the spirit realm or the earthly realm, will be saintly perfected beings and they all have a past. After listing a number of sinful character qualities and actions done by pagans, Paul reminds the Corinthians that "such were some of you". This should be very humbling to each and all, as God says that none have been perfect -- no not one.

On the other hand, even though all humans are sinners they have a future [if they will accept it on God's terms] -- a future of eternal life. Some hear the Gospel call and respond in this church age; most will hear the call to life clearly in the Kingdom age.

We all have a past that only God's grace allows us to leave behind and to move forward. Jesus, and the life he gave, is the expression of God's grace. As the hymn by Bill Gaither says, "Just an old sinner, saved by grace".

"Master, save me" was Peter's cry as he sank into the raging waters.

"God be merciful to me, a sinner" was the penitent cry of the publican.

"If I could only start all over", a weary traveler sighs.

Have we seen ourselves in these cries?

Or perhaps something less dramatic, like a conviction gradually coming upon us that all is not well, and should be? That we need something, some One, greater than ourselves? "Come to me", Jesus said, "and I will give you rest".

Perhaps there was such an occurrence in one's distant past? Or maybe just yesterday? Or something yet for the future? But it must come to each and all, sooner or later.

Every sinner has a future; but do not wait too long, for the heavenly calling of God is rapidly coming to its conclusion. True, the earthly Kingdom of God will soon open with its restoration privileges, and it will be wonderful -- but the heavenly calling is far superior.

“Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day.”

[“O God, Our Help in Ages Past”, verse 5
-- hymn by Isaac Watts]

L. Schneider

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. John 8:36

THE true disciples heeding the Word of the Great Teacher, and continuing in all things to be His pupils, are not only set free from superstitions and ignorance, but also from the service of sin; and receive instead a correct appreciation of their own natural weaknesses and blemishes, and of the divine mind--the Truth. In consequence, their freedom is one which blesses instead of injuring them; one which brings humility instead of pride and boastfulness; one which brings patience instead of anger; one which brings generosity and benevolence instead of spitefulness and selfishness; one which brings joy and peace instead of discontent and bitterness of spirit. Truly, the Son alone can make us free indeed.

Daily Heavenly Manna

The thing we should first think about in an experience is to acknowledge God. Our own understanding cannot stand up to the burdens of life.

Prayer sows the thoughts we want to have.

He Is Risen!

The Edenic transgression of our first parents brought a winter of sin, sickness and death upon all mankind. The Apostle Paul said, "*By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned.*" Had there been no sin, no violation of Divine Law, there would have been no death and man would have lived under perfect Edenic conditions in a state of uninterrupted happiness, peace and life eternal.

Therefore, we conclude, in harmony with the Bible, that God has subjected man to death for a very clearly defined purpose and to accomplish a definite end. When men have learned the great lesson that death is intended to teach, then God will give mankind the chance for life through Jesus' death, not for a few centuries or millenniums, but to last forever:

The Hope - The Plan of God contains the only hope of deliverance for the world and this hope was alive among God's chosen people for many centuries before the first advent of our Lord. This hope was based on the promises made by God in His Word, "*I will redeem them from death: oh, death, I will be thy plague; oh, grave I will be thy destruction*" (Hosea 13:14). Also, "*I will open your graves, oh my people and will bring you up out of your graves*" (Ezek. 37:12). These promises and many others were like a bright star of hope for those people that finally led to the coming of their long-expected Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But it was His resurrection that caused this star of hope to shine forth with resplendent beauty on the earth. None before Him had ever risen by virtue of their own right to life. To be sure, Elijah had resuscitated one from the sleep of death, and so had Elisha. Also, Jesus himself had awakened three persons from the death state. But these all died again, having no right to live forever. But Jesus was perfect, and not under Adamic condemnation. He was holy and kept the Mosaic Law perfectly, something that none had succeeded in doing before Him. Thus it was that He stood forth as an acceptable sacrifice to God on behalf of all mankind. Having no sin of His own for

which to suffer put Him in a position to suffer for the entire human race.

Prophesying concerning Christ, the prophet Isaiah said, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon **him**, and with his stripes we are healed. The LORD has laid upon him the iniquity of us all. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many for he shall bear their iniquities"*. Isaiah 53:5, 6, 11.

And so, as a perfect sacrifice Jesus went to death ~ a voluntary death – which He could have avoided had He so desired. He had warned His disciples about His coming death and also had predicted His resurrection, but evidently they did not grasp the full meaning of His words, for his crucifixion was a terrible blow to them. But it was no blow to Satan. To him the death of Jesus was his greatest triumph. Ironically enough, it turned out to be his most terrible defeat when Jesus arose from the dead. As a matter of fact, it was the greatest event, the brightest light that had ever shone in this dark world. It lifted up and reinvigorated all those forlorn hopes of His disciples. It was a revelation of His Divine Power that brought joy, confidence and peace to their hearts.

He Is Risen - "He is not here," said the angel at the tomb, "but is risen!" How this must have thrilled the sorrowing disciples! No wonder they ran to make sure, and then ran some more to bring the good news to their brethren. How quickly sorrow and despair gave place to joy and confidence, and the day of darkness changed into bright sunlight because death finally had been conquered and the bright Star of the Resurrection had become more brilliant than ever!

The resurrection of our Lord gives assurance of a release from the state of Adamic death, the death that now has a hold on all mankind. Knowing this beforehand, Jesus said, *"All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the son of man and shall come forth"*. (John 5:28) The Apostle Paul also said that there would be a resurrection of all, *"both of the just and of the unjust"* Acts 24:15.

Continued on page 36

A Portrait of Jesus:

Cleansing the Temple

“And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers...He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.” Matthew 21:12-13



Jerusalem was bustling with travelers who had come to celebrate Passover. They all ended up at the temple where they were forced to change their money for the temple currency, which was the only money accepted to purchase animals for sacrifice. Jesus enters the temple complex, but first He must pass through the *Court of the Gentiles*, this is the only place that the Gentiles are permitted in the temple complex and it is their place of prayer. As Jesus approaches, He no doubt is hit first by the stench of a barnyard, as the smell of dung and urine from the animals fills the air. The noise is deafening as the bleating of sheep and the lowing of the cattle mix with the loud voices of the money-changers trying to get the people to come to their table to exchange their currency. It is then that Jesus turns and sees in a corner, off in the shadows a Gentile kneeling, his eyes closed and his head bowed in prayer and Jesus is incensed. This should be a holy place, a place of prayer, this is His Father's house and these men have desecrated it. They have no regard for this poor Gentile or any other who is struggling to pray to Jehovah in this chaos, they only care about the next dollar they are going to make off the next willing victim who comes to them to exchange his money. Making a profit at Passover had become more important than remembering the Exodus, or giving thanks for deliverance, or prayer.

There is a whip laying on one of the money-changer's tables and Jesus grabs and begins cracking it. The money-changers draw back. Jesus turns the tables over, money spilling everywhere and drives both livestock and money changers out of His Father's house and His words explain His actions...*“You have turned my Father's house, which is a house of prayer into a den of robbers.”* Jesus came that day to His Father's house to pray, but today zeal for His Father's house consumes Him, and so He cleans house (John 2:13-17). He removes the leaven from the temple and returns His Father's house to that for which it was intended, a house of prayer, not just for the Jew, but also for the Gentile and for all who would humbly bow their heads in prayer and worship.

D. Mathewson

Prayer List

"Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you." (1 Samuel 12:23)



Let us be Prayer Warriors for our Brethren!

Allen Family – VT (d)	Jones, Arlene - VA
Ammerman, Shirley & Family – NJ (d)	Karavas, Anna - CA
Anderson, Family– WI (d)	Knapp, Jamie – NH
Bews, Sandra and Family TX (d)	Knapp, Joseph – IL
Boswell, Arlene – IL	Leavitt, Denise & Richard – ME
Buxton, Jean & Family - UK	Lepitre Family - IL
Carpenter, Gloria – KY	Howes, Paul & Carla - UK
Cline, Ruth – MO	Mazzotta, Eva – VA
Cooper, Carmela – NJ	Miller, Alain – Canada
Csutor, Judith – CT	Moore, Ralph & Maryellen – CA
Day, Ronald – PA	Orsburn, Judi – CA (d)
Dewys, Mary & Family – MI (d)	Parker, Geraldine – CA
DiCenso, Shirley Anne & Family - (d)	Penton, Jim – Canada
Dickson, Roberta Jo – CA	Phillips, Stella – OK
Duhaime, George & Family – CT (d)	Riggio, Fran – NH
Dunn, Kim - IL	Rowe, Bryan - UK
Fantuzzo, Tony – NY (d)	Schultz, Becky & Family – MN (d)
Feliciano, Carmen - NY	Schwartz, Ruth – TX
Fischer, Mike & Liz – WI	Seminoff, Brenda – CA
Foster, Jean – IL	Thomassen, Sandi – NM (d)
Hauslein, Karen – MD	Tuscia, Priscilla – FL
Hawk, Barbara – PA	Weaver, Eddie - NY
Hildebrandt, Lois - FL	Weeks, Jeannie (Mitchell) (d)
Hogrebe, Joan – MO	White, Ken & Joan - NY
Hopkins, Linda & Andrew – TX (d)	(d) = death in the family
Iannaccone, Marie & Family – IL (d)	

Entered into rest:

John Cram, NH - Nov. 2021

Zygmunt Roguski, OR – Dec. 2021

Agnes Persaud, CO – Dec. 2021

Daniel Donnarummo, OH – Jan. 2022 Daniel was a Board member of CDML and will be missed. His death was three years to the day of his beloved wife Joan.

Russell Allen, VT – Jan. 2022

Important: If you know anyone in the names listed above whom no longer needs special prayers, please advise us so we may remove their names. Also, if any of the information is incorrect, please let the editor know. Thank you.

Bible Correspondence Course New Graduates & Websites

Congratulations to the following students who have completed their course and have been awarded a Certificate.



Jennifer Capps of Virginia completed the Ransom Course.

You are invited to view the following websites:

<http://www.cdmi.org> (Christian Discipling Ministries International)

<https://www.christianbelieversconference.com/>

<http://www.cbchurch.com> (Christian Believers Fellowship in New Hampshire)

<http://www.biblefellowshipunion.co.uk> (Bible Fellowship in UK)

<http://www.bbschurch.org> (Lombard, IL)

<https://sites.google.com/site/quietwatersdevotions/home>

<http://www.cartyorkshire.co.uk> (CART)

<http://www.campblessing.com> (Camp Blessing)

<http://www.newcovenantfellowship.org.au> (New Covenant News, Australia)

<https://e-biblia.org/> (Os Estudantes da Bíblia, The Bible Students, Brazil - Portuguese/Span) email: contact@e-biblia.org

Letters

Dear CDMI family,

I'm still enjoying your booklet and want to make a small contribution to help with printing and mailing.

Thank you to all involved! Janet Saunde

**The date for the memorial of our Lord's great sacrifice is
Thursday, April 14 after sunset.**

Continued from page 32, He Is Risen

In view of these positive promises of the Word of God we can believe in a coming resurrection. It will not be long before we will see billions returning from the tomb, families coming together in joyous reunions, never to be broken again by death and in the rising tide of perfect vitality resulting in the overcoming of disease, the passing away of drugs, medicines, doctors, hospitals, undertakers, cemeteries and all things connected with suffering and death, in a time of rejoicing such as the world has never known!

Not only will the general resurrection result in all the obedient ones being uplifted to perfection, but Adamic death itself will be finally destroyed. In 1 Corinthians 15 the Apostle Paul makes the triumphant declaration, "*He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*"

Thus the Plan of God will be brought to a glorious conclusion when heaven and earth will once again be united in full harmony under the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of man, through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, the One worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing to the eternal glory of God and the everlasting joy of all His obedient creatures whom He has redeemed with His precious blood! Rev. 5:12; 21:1-5.

G. Boccaccio

Conferences & Conventions

The Christian Believers Conference is to be held at Gordon College in Massachusetts this year, Thursday, August 4-Sunday August 7. The theme is **Magnifying the Word of God**.

The Berean Christian Conference committee is planning an in-person conference for July 2-9, 2022 and is looking for a suitable location.

Note: If you would like to have your Convention, Conference, Camp, or Seminar published in The New Creation Magazine, send information or a program *at least three months in advance* of the issue month of the magazine to the editor, Bob Whittaker.

Notice: If you know of Christian friends who would benefit from receiving the bimonthly New Creation Magazine via mail, send their names and addresses to the CDML main office, care of Bruce Blake. The address is inside the front cover. Remember, the magazine is given at no cost. Also, please realize you can read the current or past magazines online at CDML.org or subscribe there.

Donations

Many people around the world appreciate the New Creation magazine. For many, it is their only source of Christian communication. Also, for many, they only have it through the generous contributions of others. If you feel moved to help them in continuing to get the New Creation, please consider a donation to CDML.

Article Contributions

Please send articles for possible publication to Dennis Gorham,
4 Alicia Street Somersworth, NH 03878
email: dennisgorham@comcast.net

Any information published in this magazine that you know is incorrect should be brought to the attention of the editor at his email address: bobwhittaker64@gmail.com. We strive for accuracy but do not have full knowledge.