

# THE NEW CREATION

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## Contents

	Page
Contents.....	1
Editorial: It Is the Gift of God.....	2
Is This the Year?.....	3
Year That the Locusts Have Eaten.....	6
The Sin of Leprosy.....	8
The Beatitudes.....	11
How Saying “Amen” Could Be Hurting Your Christian Walk..	16
A Great Multitude.....	18
The Story of Abigail.....	20
What Is Faith?.....	31
Restored.....	32
A Portrait of Jesus: <i>Rebuking Satan</i> .....	33
Prayer List.....	34
Grads/Websites.....	35
Conferences and Conventions .....	36

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

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## It Is the Gift of God

*“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: **it is the gift of God:** Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”* Eph. 2:8-10 KJV



God gives many gifts to his human family. “Every good and perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning.” “In him we live and move and have our being.” All creation has His witness through nature, both about us and in us. We are without excuse for ignoring his sovereignty. However, in recognition of our fallen condition, He sent His dearly beloved Son to provide a way back from sin and condemnation. This then is the greatest gift God could give.

The way back to fellowship and son-ship with God comes through faith. God provided the way; therefore, **it is His gift**, anchored in redemption by the blood of Christ Jesus. There is “no other way we can be saved” from condemnation. Note that **we are not saved by our own works**. However, now that we are in Christ Jesus, we can do the good works ordained by God. “All things become new.” We are “new creatures.”

Among the good works is the development of the fruits of the holy spirit. For instance, *“love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance.”* (Gal. 5:22, 23) Briefly, the good works are the transformation of character into godliness (God-likeness) through efforts to put into action the known will of God in all of life’s affairs. As the apostle wrote, “faith without works is dead” (James 2:20). Therefore, **faith with works is a living** faith.

R. Whittaker

## Is This the Year?

*“Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered unto Him, I need not write you...” -- 2 Thess. 2:1*

We have entered another year of uncertainty. Will this be the year that the Lord will return and gather His bride to Himself? No one on earth knows the answer to that question. Some will say, *“No how! There is still too much that has to happen before Jesus comes.”* Should we shelve the idea to be more seriously considered at some later time? What is our attitude towards this much-longed-for event?

What advice did Jesus give us in respect to this issue? Did He not say, *“I will come as a thief in the night”* – totally unexpected by anyone (Luke 12:39-40)? Did He not say, *“No one knows of that day or hour...”* (Matthew 24:36)? And again, *“Keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour”* (Matthew 25:13)? These and many other citations were spoken by our Lord Jesus. Why?

For over 2000 years Jesus’ followers have lived in expectation of His return, perhaps in their day. I believe that this was the very thing that our Lord wanted them to think. Should we not be living every day as if it were our last upon this earth? Whether Jesus returns tomorrow or we should die unexpectedly, is not the result the same? Remember the parable of the Rich Fool. He thought he had it made, but that very night his life was taken from him (Luke 12:13-21).

Life is a series of choices. Someone has said, *“Life is like a coin; you can spend it any way you wish, but you can spend it only once!”* Our choices will determine our destiny. If we postpone opportunities the Lord puts in front of us, we may be following in the footsteps of the rich fool. Life is short; we need to do the will of the Father when we have the opportunity. In James 4:14, the Apostle asks us this question: *“... you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.”* Keeping focused on the eternal is what is truly important.

How do we go about living a life of expectancy? Paul tells us in Gal. 5:25, *“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit”* (NIV). If we are allowing the Holy Spirit to be our guiding influence, we should be well attuned to God’s will for us. We have two very assuring scriptures found in Phil. 1:6 and 2:11-12: *“Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” “Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose.”*

Let us note that it is *God’s work* that is shaping and changing us into vessels fit for His use. He started this work in us. It is to be according to *His good purpose*, not ours! Do we have a part to play in this? **Yes!** Vs. 12 tells us what that part is: *“As you have always obeyed.”* Obedience is essential if God is to work out His will in us. *That is how we work out the salvation God works in us.* In the KJV *obedience* is mentioned 12 times; *obey* – 69 times; *obeyed* – 41 times; *obeying* – 3 times; not to mention other words similar in thought such as *hearken, heed, be doers*. The Lord desires to teach us that obedience is something of great importance.

We need to have *the mind which was also in Christ Jesus* – *the mind* that was always determined to do His Father’s will whatever the cost. Jesus’ motivation was love for His Father. Love is a very powerful motivation. Love can overcome great obstacles as it never gives up. It is patient and persevering as it presses towards its goal. Proverbs 3:3-4 wisely admonishes us to *“Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.”* Faith and love ~ an unbeatable team!

We find a beautiful example of the Apostle Paul’s mindset in Philippians 3:7-11 which if meditated on will help us, day by day, to stay on track. *“But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of*

*knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.”*

The Apostle Paul was always focused on the purpose for which God called him. In 1 Corinthians 2:2 we read, *“For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”* Now, that is focused! If this is the year that our Lord will return, Praise God! But what is really important is that we stay continually focused on the reason for our calling and live today as if it were our last. If we do, then one day we, too, will hear the beautiful words of Matthew 25:23: *“...Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”*

E. Weeks

### **Lord, Here I Bring Myself**

LORD, here I bring myself,  
'Tis all I have to give,  
My heart's desire is wholly this,  
Henceforth for Thee to live;  
To own no will but Thine,  
To suffer loss or shame,  
All things to bear, if only I  
May glorify Thy name;  
Henceforth mine every power  
Each day for Thee to use,  
My hands, my feet, my lips, mine all,  
As Thou, my Lord, shalt choose.  
Dear Lord, my constant prayer is for increase of grace, That I by  
faith may walk with Thee, Till I behold Thy face.

*Poems of Dawn*

## Years that the Locusts have Eaten

"What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten;  
What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten;  
And what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten." [Joel 1:4]

"I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten..." [Joel 2:25]

The larger context is Joel 2:18-27.

From the mind of the prophet [thoughts put there by God Himself, of course], we have these inspired words. Multiple visitations seem to be implied by the plural word "years"; or possibly the results of a single visitation would be felt for many years.

This message of Joel seems literally to refer to the loss of crops [grains, fruit, vegetables, olives] and livestock [lack of pasture grass] due to the massive invasion of the locusts. Perhaps it is also prophetically referring to the waves of Assyrian invaders then at hand, and yet to come. The locusts, shown in four stages of development, thus might have as a further fulfillment the four waves of conquerors that came upon the land of Israel from Assyria -- Tiglath Pileser III, Sennacherib, Sargon, and Sennacherib.

And who knows -- perhaps in further distant times portraying to some degree the desolations wrought by Babylon, or even Rome? Powerful military "locusts" swarming over, and devouring, the land and its people.

Why had this affliction come? The nation as a whole had forsaken their covenant with God, and He had now sent the promised punishments. Not all in the nation, of course, were apostate -- but all of them [faithful, apostate, indifferent] suffered in the punishments. The faithful had the additional realization that this was not of their own making, and that their years of service to God had seemingly come to nothing, to smoke, to dust, like the "early dew" that goes away [Hosea 6:4].

Of course, God has never fully forsaken His people; there is a limit, and a restoration is always promised.

"For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry; For the spirit would fail before Me, and the souls which I have made." [Isaiah 57:16]

But another thought [whether it was in the prophet's mind, or not] has often come to mind upon reading this 2:25 passage. That is -- restoring YEARS.

HOW can God restore the "years" that have been lost? Restoring crops, Yes! Restoring denuded trees and vines, damaged pastures, Yes! But "years" -- how could that possibly be accomplished?

In one sense, "years" can be restored by deepening one's faith in Christ, to a degree perhaps never known before. This could be a starting over, a repentance to a new life in Christ, a recovery from failure to a "new creation", or similar spiritual renewal. The old, failed life itself, the years that the "locusts have eaten", might even be seen as renewed [in a sense] by the later results.

But there seems to be more involved than even that.

The blessed thought comes to mind that only by the resurrection could "years" be restored to people. The blessings of the Kingdom age of restoration, and then [if faithful] the endless years stretching out into eternity -- that is how "years" could be restored.

God will wipe the tears from off all eyes, and the previous life and its sorrows will not intrude itself anymore.

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." [Revelation 21:4]

"I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten..." [Joel 2:25]

L. Schneider

All quotations from the NKJV unless otherwise specified.



## The Sin of Leprosy

I would like to write to you about a loathsome disease known for thousands of years as leprosy, but also known today as Hansen's disease, being named after the scientist who did a lot of research on it.

Leprosy is a contagious, chronic disease. It starts on the skin, works itself into the flesh, and finally penetrates the bones. It usually first affects the face, hands and feet, and eventually covers the whole body. As the disease progresses, expands, and penetrates deeper, it gradually weakens the body, and eventually the person becomes an invalid, not able to care for himself. Both the skin and flesh are consumed leaving the afflicted person's appearance gruesome to behold.

According to the Mosaic Law as recorded in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> chapters of Leviticus, new lepers were immediately isolated and separated from the rest of the people. They were forbidden to marry with healthy people. When a person was found to have leprosy by the priest, he had to leave his wife, children, relatives, and friends. He was not allowed to continue in his trade or business. Most lepers lived together with others of their kind. They were not allowed to live in the cities and towns, so they lived in caves or in huts that they built for themselves. When approached by other people, they had to shout out a warning: "Unclean! Unclean!" Lepers were considered the *living dead*. An example of this is found in 2<sup>nd</sup> Chron. 26:21: "King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He dwelt in an isolated house, because he was a leper, for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. Then Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land. This would be their state of existence until they died (Numbers 5:1-4).

Leprosy became a symbol of sin to the Jewish people. The outward sinner would be shunned by the people. This was so of the adulterous woman who came to Jesus, washed His feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. Any sinner would be treated much like a leper would be treated. To have contact with *unrepentant* sinners would bring contamination upon you.

Let us now consider the case of the ten lepers that is recorded in Luke 17:12-19. At the time of our Lord's first advent, Palestine, west of the Jordan River was divided into three regions: Judea in the south; Samaria in the center; and Galilee in the north. The more prominent Jews lived in Judah. Jerusalem and the Temple were there. It was considered the center of learning. Those dwelling there looked down on those of Galilee and had a hatred for the Samaritans. Many Jews who had to go to Galilee would not pass through Samaria. They would go out of their way by crossing the Jordan River and traveling up its east side until they could cross back over into Galilee. This would explain the surprise of the Samaritan woman at the well when Jesus asked her to give him a drink of water. Jesus did not mind traveling among the Samaritans, in fact because of His kindness and the way He spoke to them, many believed on Him.

It is believed that Jesus came across the ten lepers while traveling through Samaria. These ten apparently lived together as a group or colony, sharing their misery and loneliness with each other. Without question, rumors had reached them about someone called Jesus who was preaching good tidings of a kingdom to the people and who was healing all kinds of diseases, including leprosy. How they wished for an opportunity to see Him to ask Him to heal them! He was the only hope they had that they could be cured. They might have thought of the wonderful prospect of being able to return to their families and friends and once again live normal lives.

Then all of a sudden, Jesus came walking by their village on the way to Jerusalem. The ten lepers saw Him coming from afar, and somehow knew that this was the Jesus that they had heard about. They could not let this wonderful opportunity pass them by. If ever they were to have a chance to be rid of their horrible disease it would have to be now. They went out to meet Him and as He came nearer they pleaded crying out in unison, "*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.*" Jesus' heart was touched with their plight. Compassion and love filled His whole being and it had to express itself on their behalf. Jesus did not heal them on the spot. He simply said to them, "Go

show yourselves to the priests.” It was a test of faith. Would they go or would they stay around looking for their leprosy to disappear? Fortunately, they all believed and did exactly what Jesus told them to do.

As they began walking, on their way to the priests, a marvelous thing happened. They noticed that their flesh was returning, that their skin was clearing. Their health was being restored and their old strength was returned to their bodies. They had been healed! Jesus had healed them! What excitement and joy must have filled them! But what happens after that? Only one of them turned around, came back to where Jesus was, and falling on his face, gave thanks to the Lord for healing him. Jesus wondered aloud, “Where are the other nine?” And this man who returned was – a Samaritan. The other nine were Jews and yet only the Samaritan, prompted by a bursting heart overflowing with gratitude, thought to return and give thanks. The Lord surely must have appreciated his actions. You remember the parable of the “Good Samaritan” and how the others in the story, who were Jews, coming upon the beaten man, were found lacking; so once again, it was the hated Samaritan that showed the proper condition of heart by his action in giving thanks.

Sin has many strains that can contaminate us. It can render us *spiritual lepers* and as surely as physical leprosy can have a devastating effect on one, so also can we be disastrously affected. What lesson can we learn from the nine lepers? What was their sin? *It was the sin of ingratitude.* They did not come back to thank the Lord. They were too caught up in *self* and what they would now be able to do. When our prayers are answered, are they acknowledged with thanksgiving and gratitude? Let us keep in mind the lesson derived from the ten lepers. May we be like the Samaritan who returned to give thanks, never taking our blessings for granted by showing the sin of ingratitude.

Gaetano Boccaccio

## The Beatitudes

In this article, we will examine the famous and longest sermon given by Jesus, "The Sermon on the Mount." The message of blessings He shared are powerful, and should be taken to heart as an encouragement, to serve the Lord today. Though far from exhaustive, this is an attempt to give some thoughts to the beatitudes he gave so long ago.

**Mat 5:3** *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

You remember the parable (Lu.18:10).... It was the poor in spirit who prayed and came away justified, whose sins were not imputed, but covered, while the Pharisee who prayed, who thought too much of himself, and who looked down on the Publican, did not receive God's grace. **Pride is a killer**...Let us ALWAYS remember who a true Jew or Israelite is, those who receive favor. It has absolutely nothing to do with one's lineage, but one's condition of heart. We brethren strive to be Abraham's seed, being one of Christ's (Galatians 3:2). Remember Revelation 2:9 "*I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.*" So, we see that the Church in Smyrna doing the will of God was rich, having laid up for themselves treasures in heaven. They have the favor of God and will reign with Christ in the Kingdom of Heaven.

**Mat 5:4** *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*

We who strive to walk after the spirit can never remove the Lord from our lives. We may have sorrows and discomforts, but we must always be accepting and thankful for all things, even the trials we face, knowing that they build patience, inner strength, and character (Ro. 5:3). Most importantly, properly bearing trials is an indication of faith, without which we cannot be pleasing to God. (He. 11:6) By faith we know also that the Lord will not give us more than we can bear

(1Co.10:13). We must be faithful...and remember what the Lord told Job who suffered much, after he with some righteous indignation proclaimed his innocence by many examples, including his care for the needy, and not putting his faith in his riches. The Lord who loved him told him in Job 38:2-3 “*Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? **Gird up now thy loins like a man; ...***” We do not want to be shaken by the things we suffer, but maintain our trust in the Lord, and we will be comforted.

**Mat 5:5** *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*

Meekness is the bedrock of our faith, for it enables learning...making us teachable in the ways of the Lord. On the other hand, pride hardens our hearts, and sets us up to fall (Mat. 2:16). Jesus describes himself in the next beatitude “**as meek and lowly in heart,**” as Peter says, “leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (1Pe.2:21)

Concerning Israel, Exodus 19:5 says, “Now therefore, **if** ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: **for all the earth is mine:**” Now we know from many accounts that they were not meek, but prideful, whose house was left desolate. (Mat. 23:38) They were provided as an example and warning to us who are seeking the Lord’s favor. Galatians 3:29 declares, “And if ye *be* Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, **and heirs** according to the promise.” Those who are Christ’s in this age, shall indeed **inherit** the earth.

**Mat 5:6** *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*

The Lord tells us in **Mat 7:7** “*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:*” Notice that we are told here that one hungers and thirsts after righteousness, thus demonstrating a deep desire to walk with the Lord. This desire is likened in Mat.13:44, to a man

who found treasure in a field, and went and sold all he had to acquire that field. To inherit the Kingdom, we indeed must become a **living sacrifice**, to give our all to serve the Lord (Ro. 12:1), knowing we have a loving Father who will respond favorably to fill that sincere desire.

**Mat 5:7** *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*

The Lord's prayer makes it crystal clear that our willingness to forgive is directly related to our own ability to be forgiven by the Lord for our sins. We are also taught in **Mat 7:2**, "*For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*" This principle of receiving in direct proportion to our giving, whether it be mercy or of our substance is also expressed in **Luke 6:38**, "*Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. **For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.***"

**Mat 5:8** *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

To have a pure heart, one must be led by the Lord, and be one of His.

We are told that of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. (Luke 6:45). Thus, to tame the tongue, one must have a pure heart. We are also told that "the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." (1Ti.1:5) Who we are, and end up being is measured by the condition of our heart. A pure heart that loves a neighbor as himself "is the fulfilling of the law, (Ro. 13:10) and additionally, demonstrates our love for God. This condition of heart enables us to "*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*" (Heb.12:14) For of a truth, "*... now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; **but then shall I know even as also I am known.***" (1Co 13:12)

**Mat 5:9** *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

Peacemakers put self aside, and are not carnally motivated, for their only desire is righteousness, to do the will of God in love. Already noted above is Heb. 12:14, *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”* Jesus told his disciples, *“If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”* (Jn.14:23). Keeping the admonitions of Jesus that are centered in love and peace with all men is holding fast to God’s Word, and thus being one of His children. (Mat. 5:44-45)

**Mat 5:10** *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

1Pe 2:20\_ tells us, *“For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.”* Suffering for righteousness sake is any suffering we do in keeping with doing the Lord’s will in every matter, giving thanks for all life experiences that the Lord allows for our ultimate good. James tells us in Jas. 1:2-4, *“...count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”* For we are also told and must take to heart, the promise of 2Co. 4:17, *“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”* This glory whether in this age or in God’s Kingdom of Heaven, is being *“a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.”* (2Ti 2:21)

**Mat 5:11** *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.*

Here we read that we are blessed when we walk righteously in every matter, shedding light in every situation to overcome darkness with the light of God's Word. We must never give in to the pressures of this evil world to please men, for as we are told. "...for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Gal. 1:10) Being known of Christ is to be one of His, and not being part of the darkness of this evil world. Remember what Jesus tells us in Mat 10:25, "*It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?*" Blessed we are if we are faithful, not giving in to the desires of men, and known of the Lord at His return. *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*" (2Co 4:17)

J. DiCesare

### **Gratitude**

Gratitude consists in a watchful, minute attention to the particulars of our state, and to the multitude of God's gifts, taken one by one. It fills us with a consciousness that God loves and cares for us, even to the least event and the smallest need in life. It is a blessed thought, that from childhood God has been laying His Fatherly Hands upon us, and always in benediction; that even the strokes of His Hands are blessings, and among the chiefest we have ever received. When this feeling is awakened, the heart beats with a pulse of thankfulness. Every gift has its return of praise. It awakens an increasing daily converse with our Father; He speaking to us by the *descent of blessings*, we to Him by the *ascent of thanksgiving*, while all our whole life is thereby drawn under the light of His Countenance, and is filled with a gladness, serenity, and peace which only thankful hearts can know.

Selected



## How Saying “Amen” Could Be Hurting Your Christian Walk

Whether it was after praying over a meal or praying in public, from our youth many of us were taught to finish a prayer with amen. That custom followed us to our prayers that we would have in private. It would serve as a conclusion to our prayer and our fellowship with God. Many of us have this habit even until this day. It seems to be a natural conclusion to our communing with God and with His son Jesus Christ. How could this in any way impact our walk in faith you might ask? When we pray we usually try to calm our mind and prepare ourselves to approach the presence of God. It involves making a conscious effort of reminding ourselves of our calling and the importance of it. In that moment during our prayer, we tend to refocus our mind and zero in on who we are in Christ and the privilege to be able to approach the throne of God. (Hebrews 4:16) This puts us back into the spiritual perspective, the eternal perspective. What a great place to be! It is the true perspective, but then something happens. That something is the conclusion of our prayer, the conclusion of our communing with God. And it happens with an AMEN.

Now the word isn't necessarily the problem but it is what the word accomplishes. In the picture of a prayer, it may cut off the line of communication with God. It puts a partition between the time that we are mindful of the bigger picture, and our “everyday lives.” That partition is what may lead us to stumble. It is very common to refer to Jesus Christ as Lord. Under what circumstance would a servant not follow his Lord's leading?

Paul in his first letter to the Thessalonians says that we should “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:17). In a traditional sense this may be impossible as we need to work, go to school, or raise our families, but in the sense that we are listening to the Spirit of God and allowing it to mold us in all that we do, it is more than possible it is essential. Walking in the spirit is also referred to as walking in the light. In our typical lives, we are

always quick to turn the lights on when we walk into a room. We consider it a natural thing to do. A seemingly simple stroll from one place to another would be quite difficult if there was no light to reveal to us a correct path to walk in and the ability to see obstacles and avoid them. Choosing at any time to leave our “spiritual light” off would derail us from our path and make us less aware of obstacles that may be in our way.

Sometimes it crosses our minds that “I need some time to myself.” “I need to put some space between myself and God.” We don’t phrase it quite like that, but we all have creative ways of adding that space. Perhaps we argue within ourselves that the burden of the Lord is heavy and we need to rest. Our mind deceives us that we need rest from the giver of rest. If we walk in the light, we will never stumble. The only way we stumble is if we are deceived, that for even a moment, we would be better off to walk in the dark than in the light. So every time we say amen from this day forth let’s make sure it’s not an ending to our communing with God, but a reminder that though we walk on this earth we are never far from Him. As Paul says in Colossians 3:2, “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

K. Vassilopoulos

*Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*  
Philippians 4:6

THE question may arise, Why will not God give us the things which He sees us to need without our making petition to Him and claiming His promises? Undoubtedly because we need previously to come into the proper attitude of heart to receive His favors and to be advantaged by them. Even as it is, we may be sure that we do not sufficiently appreciate the divine care bestowed upon us hitherto and now. Even in the attitude of prayer and thanksgiving we probably do not discern one-half of our causes for gratitude, as we shall see them by and by, when we shall know even as we are known.

Daily Heavenly Manna

## A Great Multitude

*After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." Revelation 7:9-10 NIV*

*Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. Rev 7:13-15 NIV*

Do we believe the great tribulation has started? If so, let us try to identify this class. Are they Israelites? It is clearly shown they are not only Israelites, for this great multitude is stated to have come from *every nation*.

Are they less than overcomers? We are not told that. What we are told is that they have come to Jesus as their Savior; for the text says *they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*. They may not have complete knowledge of God's plans but they are attempting to keep the great commandments, including the new commandment Jesus gave: to love him as he loves us, and be willing to lay down our lives for each other. See John 13:34 and 15:12, 13.

How comforting to know that so many God-loving Christians in our midst today are probably part of this great multitude, and they will be blessed by Jesus in the kingdom, as we read in Rev. 7:15-17, *Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. ' Never again*

*will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; 'he will lead them to springs of living water.' 'And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'"*

Is this a spiritual class? Perhaps 'yes' and perhaps 'no.' *They are before the throne and serve God day and night in His temple.* That certainly sounds spiritual. But in Rev. 21:2-5, God's temple comes down to earth. *Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."*

Again, in Isaiah 66:1, *the Lord says, this is what the LORD says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Being on the footstool also would place this class 'before the throne.'* In any case, their status will be wonderful!

May we open our arms and our hearts to all who are hungering and thirsting for righteousness and invite them to ... take the free gift of the water of life. Rev. 22:17

Dan Anas

If you have found knowledge, hold it up so others may light their candles from it.

## The Story of Abigail

Through her faith and courage, Abigail saved her household from certain death at the hand of David and his men. She kept David, God's chosen future king of Israel, from making a dreadful mistake, which would probably have haunted him and his kingship for the rest of his life. In 1 Sam. 25:1-9 (NIV) we read:

*"Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah. Then David moved down into the Desert of Paran. A certain man in Maon who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel. His name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband was surly and mean in his dealings—he was a Calebite. While David was in the wilderness, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep. So he sent ten young men and said to them, "Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name. Say to him: 'Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours!' "Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing. Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable toward my men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.'" When David's men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David's name. Then they waited."*

### Background

Here, we pause and briefly review the events leading up to this story. The nation of Israel had wanted a king and the Lord finally allowed them to have a king. The prophet, judge, and priest Samuel, under God's direction, had anointed Saul as king. Under Saul's leadership, Israel fought against their enemies such as Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the Philistines,

and the Amalekites. These nations wanted to destroy Israel and take their land and property.

The Amalekites were a nasty group of people that made their living by raiding other nations and carrying off their wealth and families. The Lord wanted them totally destroyed because he knew that they would never allow Israel to live at peace and would cause Israel to follow their own idolatrous religion. Thus, Samuel said to Saul in 1 Samuel 15: 1-3 (NIV): "*I am the one the LORD sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the LORD. This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.'*"

So that was the Lord's command. *Destroy the Amalekites and everything that belongs to them. Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, near the eastern border of Egypt. He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.* 1Sa 15:7-9 NIV

**So, did Saul do everything that the Lord required him to do? No, he did not.** They were unwilling to destroy completely. They (and they means the Israelite warriors under Saul's leadership as well as Saul) spared the Amalekite king Agag, and they kept for themselves the best of the sheep, cattle, and lambs. Everything that was good. That probably included good stuff that the Amalekites had. Stuff that the Lord did not want them to have. We don't know what those things were but I suspect it could have included idols of gold and silver, etc. God commanded that all of it be destroyed and Saul allowed it to be saved and kept for their own use because they were good things, nice things. Why destroy them?

Not a good decision. It showed that King Saul only obeyed God on his own terms. There are so many lessons here for us, enough for a sermon just in this one event. Lessons such as:

- Saul and his army were willfully disobedient.
- They were greedy.
- They did not honor and respect the Lord.
- They violated the rules of war that God set up in Deut. 20: 16-18, which said that their enemies in the land must be completely destroyed or they would teach Israel to worship their own gods.
- Saul himself was apparently swayed by his army (i.e., public opinion) rather than being a leader for God and listening to Him
- Saul later lied to Samuel.

The Lord was very upset with Saul's actions. Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel: *"I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions."* Samuel was angry, and he cried out to the LORD all that night. 1Sa 15:10-11 NIV

Samuel later confronted Saul about what he had done and Saul tried to lie. So, because of his act of rebellion, disobedience, and rejection of the Lord, God rejected Saul as king of Israel. And instead, God chose David, the youngest son of Jesse, to become the next king. To make a long and amazing story short, Samuel finds David and anoints him king. Saul does not know this yet and David enters into service for King Saul, playing the harp for him, becoming one of his armor-bearers, killing the giant Goliath, and becoming very successful in the army of Israel.

Saul then becomes very jealous of David, as recorded in 1Sa 18:6-9 NIV, *"When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with timbrels and lyres. As they danced, they sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." Saul was very angry; this refrain displeased him greatly. "They have credited David with tens of thousands," he thought, "but me with only thousands. What*

*more can he get but the kingdom?" And from that time on Saul kept a close eye on David."*

After that, things got progressively worse between Saul and David, to the point that Saul tries to kill him. David becomes a fugitive and eventually moves down into the Desert of Maon or Paran as some manuscripts have it with his band of about 600 loyal followers. And thus we pick up the story in 1 Samuel 25.

### **David's Request and Nabal's Reply**

David and his men ask Nabal for some help, anything that he can do for them—some food and water. David waits for a reply. And here was the response from Nabal: *"Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?"* David's men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word. David said to his men, *"Each of you strap on your sword!"* So they did, and David strapped his on as well. *About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies."* 1 Sam. 25:10-13 NIV. Instead of showing hospitality to David and his men, which was normal behavior, Nabal refuses to give them any food or water and basically insults David. **So, was Nabal correct in his refusing David? Do you empathize and sympathize with his position?**

Let's look at it a little closer. Nabal answers: ***"Who is this David, son of Jesse?"*** Well, it seems to me that the whole nation already knew about David being a devoted servant of the nation of Israel, how he killed the dreaded Philistine Goliath, how he won many battles against the Philistines risking his life to protect the nation. How the women came out of all the towns of Israel with joyful singing over David and Saul's victories. And yet Nabal could say "Who is this David" in such an insulting way.

Furthermore, David and his men did not mistreat Nabal's workers, they did not steal anything. In fact, they protected his workers in such a way that no one else could do them harm.



There were plenty of marauders from among Israel's enemies that could have stolen from and hurt the shepherds and shearers and servants of Nabal. But David and his men were right there and protected Nabal's animals and the servants who worked with the animals. Also, this time of sheep shearing was a festive time. Much money would be made from the wool of the sheep and it was a time to celebrate and share with others—especially those who contributed to the effort of taking care of the sheep.

In addition, we are told that Nabal was a Calebite. That means he came from the region of Bethlehem, the same as David. For all we know, he could have been a kinsman of David. Yet he says, "Who is this David, son of Jesse, coming from who knows where?" This was also insulting. I don't know for sure but Nabal probably knew who David was, yet he says "who is this David." As we shall see in a minute, Abigail, his wife knew exactly who David was.

### **Abigail Enters the Story**

Let's continue the story from 1 Samuel 25: 14 – 25 (NIV)

*One of the servants told Abigail, Nabal's wife, "David sent messengers from the wilderness to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them. Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing. Night and day they were a wall around us the whole time we were herding our sheep near them. Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him." Abigail acted quickly. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. Then she told her servants, "Go on ahead; I'll follow you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal. As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them. David had just said, "It's been useless—all my watching over this fellow's property in the wilderness so that nothing of his was missing.*

*He has paid me back evil for good. May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!" When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground. She fell at his feet and said: "Pardon your servant, my lord, and let me speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. Please pay no attention, my lord, to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name means Fool, and folly goes with him. And as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my lord sent.*

There are two very wise and courageous people who took action here. First of all was the **servant**, and then of course the heroine of our story, **Abigail**. The servant took it upon himself to go and inform Abigail about what had happened. I think the servant is often overlooked as a key figure in this story. He knew that Nabal was a wicked man and by his action could bring down the whole household. He also had the wisdom to not go and argue with his master, Nabal. Instead, he went to his wife Abigail, who was wiser and more approachable and more reasonable and she probably treated the servants with more dignity and respect. The servant plays a very important role in this story. One of the lessons for us as Christians is to show respect honor, and kindness to all people, especially to those of the household of faith. We should never think that someone else is less important because of their position, financial status, age, or knowledge. Abigail apparently had this kind of attitude toward the servants, or else the servant would never have confided in her and encouraged her to think it over and possibly take some action to avoid disaster.

Abigail having this kind of attitude and character and respect for her servants is reminiscent to me of how the Apostle Paul writes about the body of Christ in 1 Cor. 12:12–27 (NIV) I will read parts of this. We all know it I think.

### **Unity and Diversity in the Body**

*"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to*

*drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." 1Co 12:12-27 NIV*

There is both unity and diversity in the body. Everyone is important and has a part in the body of Christ. Abigail had this kind of attitude. She felt the servants were important people and she was more than willing to hear what this servant had to say. Abigail took to heart what the servant said and respected his opinion and decided to take immediate action. She acted swiftly and courageously with great wisdom and took control of the situation, without going to her husband who had already made the bad decision. She did what had to be done to defuse a terrible situation which would have resulted in a slaughter of many **innocent** people. She showed great **humility** and **kindness** in seeking peace with David and his warriors. In fact, she was willing to take the **blame** for her husband's bad behavior though she was not at all responsible. She asked for **forgiveness** for her household.

What an example she is to all of God's people everywhere. She did not know what David and his men would do and how they would respond yet she took a tremendous risk for the sake of doing what was good and right. In my opinion, she showed as much courage to do the right thing as any of the more well-known prophets and characters in the Old Testament.

### **Abigail's Acknowledgement and Plea**

*1 Sam. 25: Verses 26 through 31, "And now, my lord, as surely as the LORD your God lives and as you live, since the LORD has kept you from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, may your enemies and all who are intent on harming my lord be like Nabal. And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my lord, be given to the men who follow you. "Please forgive your servant's presumption. The LORD your God will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my lord, because you fight the LORD's battles, and no wrongdoing will be found in you as long as you live. Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my lord will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the LORD your God, but the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling. When the LORD has fulfilled for my lord every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him ruler over Israel, my lord will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the LORD your God has brought my lord success, remember your servant."*

Abigail knew exactly who David was and her action saved the day. In fact, she knew who David was to become. If it were not for her, there would have been a needless slaughter of innocent people in her household and it would have been a stain on David's reputation for the rest of his life. Continuing on in 1 Samuel 25:32–35: *"David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging*

*myself with my own hands. Otherwise, as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak." Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, "Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request."*

### **Lessons Learned**

Sometimes God sends people into our lives to help us, guide us, instruct us, keep us from making a dreadful mistake. So it was with David as he himself praises and thanks God for sending Abigail to him on this day, thus preventing unneeded bloodshed. There could have been a massacre that would have been on David's conscience for the rest of his life. She gave David a chance to rethink his planned vengeance on the household of Nabal. He had acted in anger and outrage but because of Abigail's action, David was able to calm down, rethink his action, and change his mind.

This story also speaks well of David. He could have still acted badly and not paid any attention to this woman, and proceeded with his intentions. But he did not and, instead, had a change of heart realizing that it was not the right response. To put it bluntly, he came to his senses.

I think the memory of this incident stayed with David for the rest of his life. I believe it helped him have a better heart attitude for the things that would later happen to him in his life. I believe it helped him form a more forgiving attitude and an ability to maintain his composure under stress. There are several incidents that come to mind. One is the story of Shimei in 2 Samuel 16: 5 – 13 (NIV) *"As King David approached Bahurim, a man from the same clan as Saul's family came out from there. His name was Shimei son of Gera, and he cursed as he came out. He pelted David and all the king's officials with stones, though all the troops and the special guard were on David's right and left. As he cursed, Shimei said, "Get out, get out, you murderer, you scoundrel! The LORD has repaid you for all the blood you shed in the household of Saul, in whose place you have reigned. The LORD has given the kingdom into the hands of your son Absalom. You have come*

*to ruin because you are a murderer!" Then Abishai son of Zeruah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and cut off his head." But the king said, "What does this have to do with you, you sons of Zeruah? If he is cursing because the LORD said to him, 'Curse David,' who can ask, 'Why do you do this?'" David then said to Abishai and all his officials, "My son, my own flesh and blood, is trying to kill me. How much more, then, this Benjamite! Leave him alone; let him curse, for the LORD has told him to. It may be that the LORD will look upon my misery and restore to me his covenant blessing instead of his curse today." So David and his men continued along the road while Shimei was going along the hillside opposite him, cursing as he went and throwing stones at him and showering him with dirt."*

What a change, what a difference in David's attitude. David overlooks this insult though he could have had Shimei killed on the spot. There is more to this story later in the life of Solomon but nevertheless you can see that David is a much more humble man, leaving it up to the Lord to deal with Shimei.

### **Death of Nabal**

Let's return to and finish the story of Abigail. We pick up the story after David accepts the food from Abigail, 1 Samuel 25: 36–39 (NIV): *"When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing at all until day-break. Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and he became like a stone. About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died. When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Praise be to the LORD, who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. He has kept his servant from doing wrong and has brought Nabal's wrongdoing down on his own head." Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife."*

So, Abigail goes back to Nabal and tells him what she did. She did it honestly and in a wise fashion. She did not do it while he was drunk at his banquet but rather wisely waits until

the next day when he was sober. Oftentimes, it's wise to wait for the proper time to talk to someone about a touchy or serious subject. Nabal may have acted out of rage and done something foolish. After he heard what had transpired, Nabal apparently has a heart attack or a stroke and he dies about 10 days later. In fact, the verse says the Lord struck him and he died.

### **Additional Lessons for Us**

There are many lessons for us from this story of Abigail. Many have already been mentioned. Additional lessons are:

- 1) Our words and actions can have far reaching affects. They can affect our lives and those around us in powerful ways. Everyone in this story could have caused a different outcome for the better or worse.
- 2) How we react to what is said or done is very important.
- 3) We should not hesitate or be afraid to try to do what is right when given the opportunity.
- 4) Pray that God will fight the battle for us and trust Him. No matter what situation we are in, whatever struggles we face, whatever we are worried about with respect to the future, we have the assurance that God understands and that he cares for us. God is faithful; he sees our heart. He can change the situation in an instant as he did for Abigail.
- 5) Be humble as Abigail was before David, even willing to take the blame for something she did not do. Try to live at peace with all people; be a peacemaker as was Abigail. Jesus said in his beatitudes: "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called Sons of God.*" (Mt. 5:9)

Take some time and re-read this story for yourself, and I believe you too will also come to the conclusion that the world would be so much better off if more people were like Abigail.

H. Gmiterek

## What is Faith?

*“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.”* (Heb.11:8)

Faith is the substance of hope, that is belief and trust in God. It is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see. Without faith it is impossible to please God. (Heb. 11:6)

So as believers in the very great and precious promises of God, we may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by fleshly desires, and not only us who are still living, but all the faithful (Heb.11:35,39 & 40) who have died with the same hope.

Abraham through his faith in God did not waiver regarding God's promises when he decided to leave the prosperous city of Ur and face the unknown because he was fully persuaded that God had the power to do what He (God) had promised. (Genesis 12:1-3; Romans 4:20,21).

We who are believers in the promises of God are Abraham's offspring. (Romans 4:16,17) We follow our father Abraham as an example because he decided to leave all the pleasures of that city to follow the command of God. Through that same faith of Abraham, we also believe and hope in the promises of God. When we were baptized, we became a new creation and the old (our former ways) forgotten. (2 Cor. 5:17) We vowed to follow in the footsteps of Christ and God's commandments so as to be worthy citizens to inherit the everlasting joy in the Kingdom of God when Christ is revealed. (Rev. 21:4, 22:3-5; 1 Thess. 4:17)

Abraham never thought of the life which he left behind, but looked forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. (Heb.11:10) Likewise, we must not go back to our old way of life. (James 4:4) Now that we know what God requires of us, we will be blessed if we follow God's commands and decrees. (John 13:17)

Remember that Abraham was blessed because he believed. Abraham trusted God, which is why it was credited to him as righteousness. (Gen. 15:6.) Let us therefore seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and everything shall be added to us in this life and the life to come. (Matt. 6:33)

P. Wabwire



## Restored

"You have rejected us, O God, and burst forth upon us; you have been angry, now restore!" Psalm 60:1

As the Psalmist expressed in this psalm, rejection is what I deserve. Sin once separated me from God. The darkness that surrounded my life even hid from me the fact that I was a sinner. I thought I was a good person; after all, I didn't commit those horrible sins that others committed. I did many good deeds: I went to church every Sunday and to week-night Bible studies, I worked for the church, I even accepted that Jesus died for all mankind. But there was a void in my life that nothing could fill: not more good deeds, not more Bible studies, not more works. The hole in my heart was made by sin and only Jesus could fill that hole. And Jesus did fill that hole. It was the realization that Jesus died for me, for ME personally; that he took my place in death, that transformed my life. Realizing what it cost Him; to know that Jesus suffered so much cruelty and died such a gruesome death that I might be free from sin and have life is a gift for which I can never repay Him. The stripes that he received I deserved, the suffering that he endured should have been mine. I am the sinner, not Him; and yet because he loved me so, he suffered those things that I might be free. All I can do is praise Him!

From the bottom of my heart, I thank you, Lord Jesus, for giving your life for me; for giving me your light in exchange for the darkness of sin, for giving me true freedom for the chains of bondage that weighed me down, for giving me your righteousness in exchange for my filthy rags. I can never repay you for your love and your grace that have so freely flowed into my life. Dear Father in heaven, how can I ever say thanks enough for the gift of your Son? He is the son of your love, the apple of your eye, your only Son. There is no greater sacrifice for a father, than to give his Son to save another. Yet you did that for ME. Thank you for loving me so! Thank you for your grace and mercy! Thank you for redeeming even ME!

Quiet Waters Christian Devotions

## A Portrait of Jesus:

### Rebuking Satan

*“Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men.” Mark 8:33*



Peter and Jesus were the closest of friends. Peter loved Jesus, therefore, hearing what Jesus was saying, that He must suffer and die, must have been terrible words for Peter to hear. What had they been doing for the last 3 years? Was it all for nothing? His mind went wild. Jesus also said that He was going to rise from the dead, but as soon as Peter heard the word, die, he tuned out. He couldn't accept what he was hearing!

Peter did not want to consider for a moment Jesus' words, and so Peter rebuked the Lord! In the Gospel of Mark, we are not told what Peter said, though we can guess that his words must have contained the frustration you might feel when you think someone you love is making a bad decision and *“throwing their life away.”* Jesus' words were destroying Peter's vision of what *he thought* was God's will. We can be sure that Peter reacted out of deep love for Jesus and not wanting to lose Him; not out of blatantly evil words of rebuke with a wrong motive. Jesus heard Peter's words knowing the love and concern in Peter's heart, within the beauty of friendship; but also as the temptation to be less than the person He was called to be, and to walk away from suffering and escape what His Father has called Him to do. Thus, came those words now so familiar to us, words we sometimes use ourselves: *“Get thee behind me, Satan.”* Despite Jesus love for Peter, despite their friendship and the love that prompted Peter's rebuke, Jesus recognizes the Tempter, Satan, and without hesitation addresses him as well as Peter.

Satan can be subtle...he can use our friends, those we work with and those we love, to draw us away from God's plan for our lives. We also need to be careful that out of love for others we don't get in God's way in their lives. May the actions here of our Savior be a lesson to us when we need to address Satan's temptations without hesitation! There is no question that we need to keep our eyes focused on God's plan for us.

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!

Adkisson, Grace – TX	Howes, Paul & Carla - UK
Allen Family – VT (d)	Iannaccone, Marie & Fam. – IL (d)
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
Casell, Agnes & Family –VT (d)	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)	Ostwald, Dick - WI
DiCenso, Shirley Anne & Family - (d)	Parker, Geraldine – CA
Dickson, Roberta Jo – CA	Penton, Jim – Canada
Duhaime, George & Family – CT (d)	Phillips, Stella – OK
Dunn, Kim - IL	Rice, Michelle – MA (d)
Fantuzzo, Tony – NY (d)	Rowe, Bryan - UK
Feliciano, Carmen - NY	Schultz, Becky & Family – MN (d)
Fischer, Mike & Liz – WI	Schwartz, Ruth – TX
Foster, Jean – IL	Seminoff, Brenda – CA
Hauslein, Karen – MD	Thomassen, Sandi – NM (d)
Hawk, Barbara – PA	Tuscia, Priscilla – FL
Hildebrandt, Lois - FL	White, Joan - NY (d)
Hoffner, Steve – NH	(d) = death in the family
Hogrebe, Joan – MO	
Hopkins, Linda & Andrew – TX (d)	

### Entered into rest:

Deborah Erma Moerschel, NY – Jan. 2023

**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.

*People do not care what you think until you care what they feel.*

## **Bible Correspondence Course New Graduates & Websites**

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



**Tina Buckingham of WV completed the Ransom Course in March.**

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You are invited to view the following websites:

<http://www.cdmi.org> (Christian Discipling Ministries International)  
(Current/past NC magazine issues are available on our website)

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

<http://www.cbfchurch.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 Biblia, The Bible Students, Brazil - Portuguese/Span) email: [contact@e-biblia.org](mailto:contact@e-biblia.org)

## Conferences & Conventions

**2023 Christian Believers Conference Invitation** from the Conference Chairman:

“Dear Brethren,

“We are excited to announce the **114<sup>th</sup> annual Christian Believers Conference** to be held at beautiful Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts on **August 2-5, 2023**. Please mark your calendar, and make plans now to attend. This year’s theme is:

### “The Pursuit of Godliness”

“The fellowship and spiritual insight that CBC provides is a great treasure indeed. It is our fervent hope you will help to make the conference even more meaningful by your presence, for we all need the encouragement and support of those of “like precious faith.”

“Through God’s grace we are able to offer a free conference again this year, but we do ask that those who are able consider paying their conference fee or making a donation.

“A conference program and registration form with more information will be available in mid-May, but we urge you to make your plans now if you are planning to attend.

“On the behalf of our Conference Planning Committee, we look forward to being with you this next August.”

Yours in Christ,

Bo Shaw, 2023 Conference Chairman

2023 Christian Believers Conference

**Go to: [www.cbconference.com](http://www.cbconference.com) for more information**

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### **Bible Students Fellowship Conference**

High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, England

9-13 August 2023 DV

**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 CDMI main office, care of Bruce Blake. The address is inside the front cover.

### **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 CDMI.

### **Article Contributions**

Please send articles for possible publication to Dennis Gorham,  
4 Alicia Street Somersworth, NH 03878  
email: [dennisgorham@comcast.net](mailto: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](mailto:bobwhittaker64@gmail.com). We strive for accuracy but do not have full knowledge.*

*“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.” Joshua 1:8`*

Meditation on the divine law day and night is not, of course, to be understood literally--that we should do nothing else day or night than think upon the Scriptures. We are to understand the Lord to mean that we should ever have in mind, in connection with all of life's affairs, the thought that we are his, and that he is our guide and director in all things, and that the slightest matter that would pertain to our lives and our interests, day or night, should be undertaken with due consideration of the Lord's will respecting the same.