

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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Judgement to Avoid



In Matthew 7:1 (NASB), Jesus said, *“Do not judge so that you will not be judged.”* To read this literally it seems to say, ‘if we do not make judgements on others, we will not be judged by God.’ But that is not fully what the Lord had in mind. Verse 2 gives us this detail: *“For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.”* It is in the way in which we judge – harshly, critically, -- applying our own standard of measure rather than the merciful judgement of the Lord that is the issue. This therefore is a warning and an encouragement to us that we need to be very merciful in our judgement of brethren and not impute evil motives to their conduct. If we do not receive mercy from the Lord, we would be in a very bad situation. The right judgement would be to judge ourselves. What are our motives? As verses 3-5 say, *“Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.”* That sums it up: the judgement should be of oneself. We are to avoid that hypercritical attitude toward our brethren, yea, even toward the world. We can judge fruitage, whether good or bad, but we cannot judge the motive behind the fruitage; that's not our job; only God can read the heart and knows what truly is. Removing the log from our own eye takes a lot of experiential work but if we can by the Lord's grace accomplish this, we have the promise of the added blessing of being able to help our brother remove the speck from his eye. In Matthew 7:12, Jesus tells his disciples there on the mount *“to treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”* In merciful judgement toward others then, we are fulfilling this principle, but also are in that condition of heart that guarantees we will receive merciful judgement from our Heavenly Father.

R. Whittaker

Gal 3:13 ---Cursed?

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us [for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree']". [Galatians 3:13]

"If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God." [Deuteronomy 21:22-23]

We know that Jesus had to die in order to provide the ransom [from Adamic condemnation] for the entire human race. But were the Jews additionally condemned by failing to keep the Law Covenant perfectly? In a sense, yes. But did Jesus specifically have to die by crucifixion on a wooden cross to redeem the Jews from the penalties of breaking the Law Covenant [in addition to that penalty on Adam and his race]? The answer would seem to be no. The Law Covenant was a national, not individual, covenant -- between God and Israel, mediated by Moses. The nation was, of course, made up of individuals, but the covenant was on a national basis [Exodus 19:5-8; 24:7-8].

The terms of the covenant, both blessings and punishments, were clearly spelled out in several places. One such lengthy passage is Leviticus 26 [see also Deuteronomy 28]. Also the following [and other similar passages] --

"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. I call heaven and

earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live..." [Deuteronomy 30:15-19]

There were a host of punishments listed for disobedience, culminating in exile from the Land of Promise. And this is exactly what happened at the time of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Some of the saddest words in the Bible are these:--

"But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy." [2 Chronicles 36:16]

The nation was exiled; the Temple destroyed. God, in His mercy, restored them to the land; they rebuilt the Temple and resumed national life. However, they once again followed the same rebellious path, culminating with their killing of Jesus, the Messiah.

"And all the people answered and said, 'His blood be on us and on our children.' " [Matthew 27:25]

Once again, there was "no remedy".

"See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

[Matthew 23:38-39]

The momentum of disobedience and rebellion went forward until, a generation later, Israel was destroyed by the Romans and the people killed, enslaved, or exiled. Thus, the national punishments written down by Moses came to pass. It was over. The Law Covenant had come to an end. However, there are still promises in the Bible for the blessing of the Jewish people, including the current regathering to the Land of Promise. But, to move on...

The forgiveness of sins [provided to the believers in Jesus] by means of the ransom he provided, would cover all past personal sins, whether related to the original Adamic sin or specific Law Covenant sin or simply sin in general.

"For God's will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time ... but our High Priest offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time". Hebrews 10:10, 12 [NLT]

The death on a cross might have been necessary in God's plan for other reasons; perhaps to fully mature the new creature of Jesus. It may also be, that in some yet-unknown way, this willing sacrifice will finally appeal to human beings and soften their stony hearts in the Kingdom.

If the Law Covenant was violated in any aspect by an individual, there were various penalties, but the ultimate "curse", or penalty, was death. Death by what means? In certain recorded Bible instances, the penalty exacted was stoning to death, and this was the preferred method used by the Jews. Crucifixion was never used by, or even known by, the Jews at the time of Moses; it was the Romans who developed this method.

If great crime against the Law was involved, then the one guilty of such great crime was first stoned or otherwise put to death, and then the body was suspended for a few hours [perhaps on a pole, or tree, or the wall of a city] to brand that one with peculiar ignominy. Regarded thus as an object accursed of God, it was proper that such a one should be buried before the end of the day, so that the offensive object should be hidden from view and not pollute the land.

So, what is Paul really talking about? We need to look at the broader context. The letter was written to the Galatian gentile, but Judaizing, church; Paul's main concern is twofold; primarily, Jewish Christians who were tempted to return [at least in part] to the Law of Moses for salvation, and secondarily, gentile Christians who were being urged by Judaizers to go to Moses first, then to Jesus, for salvation.

"O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?" [Galatians 3:1-3]

Paul's primary point in this letter is that the Law could only condemn, not provide any solution. The Law could only "curse" one with the penalty of death. So, why go there?

"For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all." [James 2:10]

It was Jesus who provided the ransom for all, and only he could provide salvation and life. The Law could only provide death. Death cures sin -- not a certain form of death, or suffering, or torture, or public exposure -- but death. When a person dies, that person sins no more; the problem is, the person is still dead; that is why a redeemer is needed, to provide a resurrection to a new life and opportunity, either a faith-life now or a physical life in the next age.

There are statements by Paul that are, as Peter says, "*hard to be understood*," and perhaps this Galatians 3:13 text is one such. It is not clear why Paul states that Jesus was "*made a curse*" for us [whoever "*us*" is]. There seem to be various thoughts on this topic, but perhaps the following suggestions will be helpful.

It seems that Paul may have had in mind the Day of Atonement, specifically the scapegoat picture, and was comparing those events to the crucifixion.

"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin [a sin-offering] for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." [2 Corinthians 5:21]

Peter presents the same concept when he says --

"... who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness" [1 Peter 2:24]

Jesus, like the scapegoat, "*bore our sins*" to the cross, and then on the cross.

The scapegoat was one of two goats on the Day of Atonement that, together, provided "*a sin offering*" [singular].

"And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering ..." [Lev. 16:5]

True, only the Lord's goat was actually slain by the High Priest's knife, but the scapegoat was just as surely doomed to death when the High Priest sent that animal into the wilderness, never to return.

This singular sin offering was actually showing two different aspects. The true value of the sin offering [blood sprinkled in the Most Holy] was observed only by the High Priest. Outside observers may have seen the death of the goat, and later smelled the stench as the goat was burned "*outside the camp*" [the same stench clings to us as we follow the Lord].

The second goat provided more tangible evidence [of sin removal] to the observers. The High Priest confessed all the sins of Israel onto the scapegoat, which was then taken into the wilderness, never to return. The previous year's sins were carried away, and the new year could start with a clean slate [at least in a typical manner].

Likewise, the true value of the crucifixion [death] was known only to God at that time. The observers saw only an apparently vile criminal die, and be exposed naked to the community -- surely such a one must have been "cursed" of God to receive this fate! Jesus, of course, was actually holy, perfect and innocent, and had the full blessing of God; nevertheless, it appeared otherwise on the surface, as if it were awful guilt.

One day, all will be made plain and clear to the human race. Until then, the stigma and the stench remain on Jesus and his followers.

"Therefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore, let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach." [Hebrews 13:12-13]

"All humanity desires peace, but most do NOT desire the Prince of Peace." Anonymous

L. Schneider

Scripture quotations from NKJV unless otherwise stated.

The Work of God

Part 2 of 2

"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." John 6:29

Believing in Jesus

That generation to which the man Christ Jesus presented Himself lacked faith. Even His disciples lacked sufficient faith to cure someone whose father had brought him to them. When Jesus came, the father pleaded, *"...if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us."* Jesus inquired into his faith: *"...if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth"* (Mark 9:22,23 KJV). Apparently knowing something about Jesus (Matt. 17:14-20, Mark 9:17-29), the man cried out, *"I do believe; help my unbelief."* This man seemed to know that faith grows. It increases through thoughtful consideration of things understood. His belief was *"the work of God."* And it led to a further *"work of God."* The request was granted. The deaf and dumb spirit left his son, not to enter again.

Only believe! It is the only way into life. Repeated exhortations to believe impress its importance:

"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 6:29, 1:12, 3:16

Such assurances by our Master promise reward to those who believe. They denote a belief greater than mere acknowledgment that He was a servant of God. Surely, He expects more of His footstep followers than simple mental assent that He lived as a man on earth. Would He not require of *"believers"* an allegiance superior to that of those who witnessed His re-

markable signs and healings and followed Him as a popular teacher? Should not belief in Jesus change one's entire way of life? Surely, the answers are 'Yes'!

And John's exhortations indicate this. The word *"into"* would more accurately represent the ancient word translated "in" used once in each of the three above- quoted verses.

Belief holds twin concepts. First, there is intellectual assurance. Secondly, there is heart-felt trust. When both aspects are present one believes into the Son. Those who do so leave behind their former condition of being God's enemies. They enter, instead, into a new and blessed relationship with God.

This progression from one life to another is nicely represented in the King James Version. There *"into"* is used fifteen times to translate the same Greek word when teaching of those who may or may not *"enter into the kingdom of God."* Believing into Jesus' service and purpose means trusting in His promises. Further, it means being ready to respond to them: actively participating in His service, even to the complete involvement of one's life.

Let us believe into the depths of God's purpose in sending His one and only Son. He is one with God in the work of redemption. Let our belief in atonement take us into sonship. Let us raise our hearts to spiritual fellowship with God and with Jesus.--1 John 1:3

Words Introduce Work

"Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:13). The significance of the word *"name"* is important to this study. The original promise was written in Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:32). It gave assurance to the faithful who trusted in the power and authority of the great God whom they worshipped. Paul used the word *"name"* as John did--in reference to the Savior into whose hands God committed all judgment (John 1:12). The name of the Son is exalted by the service and responsibility which God assigned to Him in His plan of redemption. *"There is salvation in no one else; for there is*

no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved. Acts 4:12

Belief into Jesus means acceptance of Bible truths related to His service. Those teachings are conveyed by words. Words relate to the *"work of God,"* which our article text says is *"that you believe in Him whom He has sent"* (John 6:29). No wonder, then, that God promised to send Simon Peter to Cornelius, *"...and he shall speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household."* Acts 11:14

Paul, too, related words to salvation, itself *"the work of God."*

"But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart'--that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." Romans 10:8-10

Paul's emphasis on the word in another place is also noted: *"How then shall they call upon Him in [into] whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher [one heralding]? And how shall they preach [herald] unless they are sent? Just as it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!'"* (Rom. 10:14,15, Isa. 52:7) *"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."*--Romans 10:17

Compliance Urged

"Repent," that may have been our Lord's first publicly- expressed word (Matt. 4:17, Mark 1:15). Written in the imperative mood, it commands compliance. God requires that sinners think differently, think afterwards: that such admit, acknowledge, truly repent of things done before they experienced the power of the gospel; before they learned what Jesus brought to light through it.

Peter made a similar command to Jews who *"disowned the Holy and Righteous One"* and who *"put to death the Prince of*

life": *"Repent ye, and be converted..."* -- change direction, cease to do evil, admire and pursue righteous principles. He promised a blessing to all who did: *"that your sins may be blotted out."* The expression *"blotted out"* means to smear something over until it is obscured, no longer recognizable as chargeable. God's condemnation ceases to believers *"from the presence ("from the face"--KJV) of the Lord"* when He turns His countenance of favor upon us.--Acts 3:14,15,19

Similar words also came from Paul: *"having overlooked the times of [past] ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."* Acts 17:30,31

What happy assurance! God now fully receives Gentile hearts that respond in faith. The middle wall of partition no more restricts sonship to Jewish believers only (Eph. 2:13-18). But such promises do not apply to those who cannot believe and who do not obey.

Trust and Obey

Jesus came in fulfillment of God's promise. He was sent to give us an example of faith, to expand faith's influence in devoted lives, and to subdue evil-hearted enemies. An ancient prophet foretold that many would obey Him. *"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, and to Him shall be the obedience of the peoples"* (Gen. 49:10). This prophecy foresaw the tribe from which Messiah would come, and the success of His kingdom, itself *"the work of God."* Despite uncertainties as to the derivation and definition of the word Shiloh, the promise surely meets its fulfillment in the reign as king of the *"Prince of Peace."* Isaiah 9:6

God determined that even the Son's obedience should be tested. *"Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation."*--Hebrews 5:8-10 We thus conclude that belief--the

first-manifested "*work of God*" in us--bears fruit to salvation through obedience.

Peter, too, bore witness to the importance of obedience to what is believed, teaching that the bond of our salvation awaits our compliance: "*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those...who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood...*" 1 Pet. 1:1,2

The apostle there alludes to events associated with an early covenant between God and men. That covenant became effective when it was sealed with animal blood (as distinguished from Jesus' blood). After those people agreed to obey God, both the book of the law (God's requirements as expressed to that time) and the people themselves were sprinkled with blood. "*...and they said, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!'*"--Exod. 24:7,8, Heb. 9:19,20, 10:22

As noted above, Peter is talking about Jesus' blood, not animal blood. Being "*sprinkled with His blood*" denotes the coming of believers into the newly established covenant. Believers into Jesus receive the holy spirit. It is the first evidence of our salvation. We receive it upon our agreement to obey, that is, when we first believe into Jesus.

Such believers are privileged to participate in a further "*work of God.*" Paul describes that work and encourages us to joyful involvement. His exhortation mentions all four participants in the atonement process: God, His Son Jesus, active co-working believers, and the unreconciled.

"Now all {these} things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin {to be} sin on our behalf,

that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. And working together {with Him}, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. 5:18-6:1). "For He says: In a time acceptable I heard thee and in a day of salvation I helped thee; behold now a time acceptable, behold now a day of salvation"--2 Cor. 6:2 Marshall Interlinear, Young, Rotherham, Fenton, Wilson; Isa. 49:8

Summary

"The work of God" is described and taught through "the word of God."

"The work of God"--what is it? It is all the things that God does. It is all that the Son does, too, because He abides in the Father's will. "Whatever {the Father} does, these things the Son also does in like manner."--John 5:19

"The work of God" is whatever God directs those to do who wish to receive His likeness.

"The work of God" is that which brings others into fellowship with Him. And belief into Jesus leads into that fellowship. That is what Jesus said: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."--John 14:6

And it is just that which the Apostle Paul believed into: "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior [called so because He planned our salvation through Christ], who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, {and} one mediator also between God and men, {the} man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony {borne} at the proper time." 1 Timothy 2:3-6

*Belief in that is "the work of God." And that is this article's text: "...that ye believe in Him whom He has sent." **Do you believe?***

(Except as noted, Scripture quotations in this article are from the New American Standard Bible (NASB). Explanatory words or phrases added within Bible quotations are enclosed within parentheses.)

G.Rice

What Is Going on?

One who watches the news on a regular basis sees many horrific happenings in this world that range from fires, earthquakes, storms, and even mass murders -- all terrible and disturbing to a point. I say to a point, because many of these things are somewhat out of our control and in general not directly manmade. The responsibility for the losses from these events may be limited to those who oversee preparedness, but even then, blame is hard to impute, given the nature of these incidents. So, in my mind at least, these conditions are sad, but at the same time are not disheartening, since it can be inspiring to see neighbors and communities pull together to overcome such hardships. They can even help to keep us humble, and even thankful that we were spared. I guess one could say that there is an unseen benefit in such events that help us to look for a better day when *"things are made new,"* when *"... God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."* (Rev 21:4). All the things we suffer serve a purpose, and help to bring us closer to the Lord. Still, what is going on?

I have to confess that I am somewhat bewildered when I see people in leadership positions more concerned with their own wellbeing rather than the institutions and people they are charged to serve. Even that in itself can be understood, for we are told in the scriptures to *"... love thy neighbor as thyself,"* (Mat 19:19) which in itself paints a picture of self-interest that comes naturally to the flesh. However, self-interest to a point is fine...we all try our best to meet our needs and be successful; the problem arises when we do so at the expense of others. That does NOT *"love our neighbor as ourself."* (Mark 12:31) *It is not loving our enemies. (Mat 5:44)*

We saw this condition of self-serving with Israel's religious leaders putting themselves first, at the expense of those they were to serve. They enjoyed the finer things, (Mat. 23:6) just

as we see the self-serving today, and the taking of gifts by those in the leadership positions of serving. Is this wrong?

Proverbs 17:23 tells us, *“A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment.”* Especially today, we witness this behavior now being done openly with no shame. The Scribes and Pharisees who likewise had the responsibility to serve the people were described by Jesus as hypocrites, saying in Mat. 23:13 *“... for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.”* They set a very poor example like too many of our leaders today, and were further characterized by Jesus in John 8:44 that says, **“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”** Satan is a liar, and his followers emulate him driven by lust to continually lie, to put themselves first above their duty to faithfully serve, and more importantly, walk with the Lord, **not being pleasers of men, but the Lord.** (Gal.1:10)

These leaders “wear their religion on their sleeves” with their only focus on themselves, and not the Lord and those they pledged themselves to serve. Full of themselves, they neglect the admonition found in God’s Word, and lie continually, fooling themselves and neglecting the job of serving others. They have not taken to heart God’s Word, and His warning in Luke 16:11, *“If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?”* Overcome by lust and power, they ignore the warning of Gal. 6:7 *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap,”* and the day of judgement expressed in Mat 25:30 *“And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

So, what is going on? To answer this frustrating question, we read in 2Ti 3:1-7 *“This know also, that in the last days per-*

ilous times shall come. *For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, **Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.***”

Although it is distressing to witness those entrusted to do good, sin against the Lord by not serving His people, let us not be frustrated, for these are the **last days** spoken of by the Lord. Let us remember “...for he that **loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?**” (1Jn 4:20) So let us pray that we will see true repentance, and not continued folly and self-serving.

J. DiCesare

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”

I John 5:21

EVIL is insidious, and every parting of the ways, every leaving of the divine path, signifies a separation from righteousness to a degree we are unable to estimate at the beginning. Let us learn that the only safe course to pursue is to trust in the Lord and to be glad to have whatever his providences may mark out for us, and to refuse to have anything contrary to his will, however desirable it might be, however gratifying to human ambition. Let us learn the lesson that ambition is a dangerous thing--especially in our present imperfect condition, where our judgments are more or less warped from the fall, where our knowledge is imperfect, and where Satan is sure to put light for darkness and darkness for light. Our ambitions must be curbed, yea, every thought must be brought into subjection to the will of God in Christ, if we would be on safe ground as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

Songs in the Night

Some “Be Nots”

The Book of Proverbs contains some interesting warnings of “Be nots” that are worth our consideration even though they come to us in a negative form.

In Proverbs 3:7 we read, “**Be not** wise in your own eyes, fear the Lord and shun evil.” Someone who is “wise in his own eyes” has within them a good degree of pride.” In Proverbs 11:2 it warns, “*When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.*” The Apostle Paul advises in 1 Corinthians 1:28-31, “*God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him. It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God, that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: ‘Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.’*” Let us always remember the great truth of where our wisdom comes from as it has clearly told us in the last two sentences above. Shunning pride is shunning evil. Proverbs 6:16-17 tells us, “*There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes... .*”*Haughty eyes*” picture pride and is at the top of God’s list of things He hates. Yes, let all our boasting be only in the Lord Himself!

Another warning is found in the form of “Do not” in Proverbs 24:28, “*Do not testify against your neighbor without cause — would you use your lips to mislead?*” This “do not” challenges our integrity. It is so easy to slip back into our old ways of thinking and say things that are not profitable or uplifting. Sometimes it might come to mind embellishing a matter that we want to share with others so that it is more colorful, or we might say things that seem to “put down” someone so we look better. Whatever the motive might be, it would be wise to pass it through what are known as the “Three Gates of Gold.”

“If you are tempted to reveal a tale someone has told about another, make it pass, before you speak, three gates of gold. Three narrow gates – first, ‘*Is it true?*’

Then, *'Is it needful?'* In your mind give truthful answer, and the next is last and narrowest, *'Is it kind?'* And if to reach your lips at last it passes through these gateways three, Then you may tell the tale, nor fear what the result of speech may be."

Ecclesiastes 5:2 reinforces the above, *"Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God, for God is in heaven, and you are on earth, so **let your words be few.**"* In Col. 4:6 it says, *"Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each other."*

What does it mean to let your speech be *"seasoned with salt?"* Salt has some very effective uses. In our conversations with non-believers we often find some who are "cold" to our message of the good news that the Scriptures have to offer. In such cases, it is wise to not be aggressive in our presentation, but instead lovingly and gently find out where they are in life and what concerns them. This can then open up a way to share the hope offered in God's word. This is in effect letting our "salt" melt the "coldness" in their heart even as salt melts ice.

Salt is used to enhance flavor in food. Likewise, when we "salt" our words carefully they will be inviting and tasteful to others. They are more apt to really listen to what we have to say and give it some serious thought.

Salt can be used to put out fires. When things get out of hand and begin to get "heated" and turn into unproductive arguments, a little sprinkle of loving "saltiness" can quench the heated situation.

Salt is used as a preservative. Your presence can be an influence for good because of your Christian life and reputation. People often are more careful what and how they say things while in your presence. In Matthew 5:13 Jesus tells us "You are the **salt** of the earth" so let's not neglect this gift that has been given us.

The following story illustrates how fear can take over a Christian's witness for Jesus. "There was a young man who

had newly been baptized and had found a job for the summer. It was in a lumberjack camp in the mountains of Maine. He was somewhat aware of the coarse reputation among those he would be working with. Before leaving he went to his Pastor and expressed his concerns to him. The Pastor told him that he and the church would be praying for him while he was away. The young man left for the camp feeling somewhat relieved that he would be remembered in their prayers. The Pastor was anxious to find out how he had fared among those men when he returned home at the end of summer. The young man said it was great. They never found out I was a Christian!"

There is another warning from God's word we do well to take note of. It is "*Be not envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them,*" found in Proverbs 24:1 (KJV). The question is often heard, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" It is easy, when we have been striving to do what is right to become envious of those who appear to be undeserving and even wicked, yet everything seems to go their way. But to be envious of others is to be discontented with what God has provided for us. This was the problem with ancient Israel time after time. One example is when all the pagan countries around them had kings to rule over them and they had only judges they insisted they, too, wanted a king. So God gave them kings, but throughout their history most of them were evil and the people suffered under them. In 1 Samuel 8:7 we read the seriousness of their actions, "*And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have **rejected**, but they have **rejected Me** as their King."*"

Proverbs 14:30 says, "*A heart at peace gives life to the body, but **envy** rots the bones.*" Proverbs 23:17 tells us, "*Do not let your heart **envy** sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD.*" In 1 Corinthians 13:4 the Apostle Paul states, "Love is patient, love is kind. **It does not envy.**"

The Apostle Paul could have had many occasions to be envious but had found the key to overcome this temptation. He testifies in Philipians 4:11, "*Not that I speak in respect of*

want; for I have learned, in whatsoever **state** I am, therewith to be content" (KJV). The NIV renders it, *I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*"

Contentment is a choice and is one that anyone can make by accepting whatever the Lord allows to come into their lives as His overruling providence. It may be a test of faith and a challenge to our Christian walk but something the Lord means for our blessing and our eternal good. There is much to learn in all our circumstances.

*1Thess.5:16-18 tell us, "Rejoice always pray continually, **give thanks in all circumstances**; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* Is it possible for us to *give thanks in ALL circumstances*? Probably not by ourselves alone. But we find the answer to that question in Philippians 4:13 which says, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me"* (KJV). It is only in the strength of our Lord that it is possible for us, as it was for Paul, to give thanks and do all things and endure all the Lord allows in our lives. It may not be easy, but it is possible. Praise God!

E. Weeks

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### "Three Gates of Gold"

Let every thought thy lips would utter pass three gates of gold,  
But, if through these it fails to pass, then let it not be told;  
And o'er each gate in silver letters written thou wilt find,  
Above the first one, "Is it **true?**" the second, "Is it **kind?**"  
And "Is it **necessary?**" o'er the third one and the last.  
Then guard thy thoughts, let none escape, save those these  
gates have passed!

Gertrude W. Siebert

The man who toots his horn the loudest is usually in the fog.

## From the Manger to the Cross

Jesus was born in a Bethlehem stable in a manger more than 2,000 years ago. He lived only 33 ½ years, dying on a cross outside the walls of Jerusalem. He was born in the lowliest circumstances, and it was the lowly shepherds that were first told of this event. They were privileged also to be the first to visit their newborn Messiah. *“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said...”* *“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”* Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, *‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests’* (Luke 2:8-14).

Most people celebrating Jesus’ birth go no further in their thinking than this event that occurred in the city of Bethlehem. Some bring the Wise Men into this scene at the stable. But to do this is inaccurate. It was not a baby that the men from the East visited but a *“young child,”* living in a *“house”* in Bethlehem. *“After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the young child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the young child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route”* (Matthew 2:9-12).

But should our thoughts end at the manger? Should our thoughts of Jesus not take us further than his birth? Should we not step back and visualize *the purpose* for which Jesus was born. The angel proclaimed this purpose in his message to the

shepherds: *"Today in the town of David...a Savior..."* Jesus fulfilled the mission the Father gave Him, not only for Israel but for the entire world of mankind on the cross. 1 Tim. 2:5-6 states: *"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."*

This child grew in grace and favor (Luke 2:40). He came to do His Father's will (Luke 22:42) and even at the young age of 12, He told his parents, *"Do you not know that I must be about my Father's business"* (Luke 2:49)? Jesus carried out His Father's will perfectly, right to the Cross, where he proclaimed, *"It is finished"* (John 19:30). Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Author Unknown

### **Christ Within**

A living Christ, of wondrous birth,  
Who trod the dreary paths of earth,  
Shedding abroad His holy light  
Through the deep gloom of sin's dark night.

A **dying Christ**, whose precious blood  
Seals the poor sinner's peace with God;  
And fills the soul with fullest love,  
Like to the joy prepared above.

A **Christ ascended**--all is done,  
A world redeemed, a victory won.  
With angel hosts, a glorious throng,  
We'll sing with joy salvation's song.

A **living Christ** our spirits need,  
A **loving Christ** our souls to feed;  
A **dying Christ**, our ransom He,  
A **risen Christ** to set us free.

This, too, our need--a **Christ within**,  
A life with God, afar from sin,  
A Christ whose love our hearts shall fill,  
And quite subdue our wayward will.

Poems of Dawn

## A Birthday to Remember

December has been chosen by tradition as the time of the year to remember that Jesus was born. We rejoice to remember His birth, because His first advent has wrought great changes in the earth. We know that Jesus' second advent will complete the change, for then all the old will be gone and all will be made new. How marvelous it is that we can commemorate His great birthday every day of the year.

This wondrous event is reported in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke; and surely it is a joy to read the familiar words over again and to say with Phillips Brooks in his beautiful hymn:

O little town of Bethlehem,  
How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight.

Yes, both past and future ages have one focusing point in common: the coming of the promised Seed, the Daystar from on high, the child born of a virgin, and the birth of the King. John puts it beautifully: *"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth"*(John 1:14).

The vivid pictures presented by Matthew and Luke really set our minds to thinking and we begin to see in the events connected with this birthday portents of all that was to follow in connection with the life of Jesus, truly the greatest life that was ever lived.

Let's look at a few of the events from this sublime story:

Mary and Joseph, under an edict from the Roman Caesar commanding all subjects to be counted and taxed, must travel to Bethlehem, the city of David. Caesar undoubtedly felt himself master of the world, but God was working and Micah's prophetic utterance was fulfilled (Micah 5:2).



The Babe Laid In a Manger ~ Paul says, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). Need we say more?

Shepherds and Angels -- This was not a new combination of diverse elements in God's sight. After all, God had called Abraham, who was a shepherd, and the heavenly messengers appeared to him and reaffirmed God's promise (Gen.18). Jesus used the picture of the Good Shepherd caring his sheep as an illustration of His concern for His followers. (John 10:1-16.) Jesus was proclaimed the *Lamb of God* (John 1:36) when His ministry began and was spoken of as "*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*" (Rev. 13:8). The pictures are numerous; we could all cite many others.

The angel said, "*Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people...*" In David's city a Saviour is born -- *Christ the Lord!* There is nothing to add to this sublime announcement. Hope has become a reality and this is not for a few people but *for all*. "*Praise God from whom all blessings flow!*"

Wise Men Follow a Star -- Balaam, a wise man in his day, (this may be open to question on some counts) spoke under inspiration, "*There shall come a star out of Jacob...*" (Num. 24:17). These were indeed wise men, for they followed the star and wise men of all ages are still following *the star out of Jacob*. Peter makes the relationship still more intimate, "*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto you do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts*" (2 Pet. 1:19).

Herod Is Troubled ~ Evil is always troubled in the presence of good, and evil always seeks ways and means of destroying the good, but God is Supreme (Isaiah 57:20, 21) and will one day destroy all evil.

The Followers of the Star Rejoice ~ So should all of Jesus' followers ever rejoice! "*Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice*" (Phil. 4:4). "*Let all those that put their trust in You rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them: let them also that love Your name be joyful in You*" (Ps, 5:11).

Wise Men Worship the Child and Bring Their Gifts ~ But what gifts have we to bring our King, our Lord, our Master? Only our own poor selves, and this is only what He has given to us in the first place. We can but echo Paul's great statement, "*Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service*" (Romans 12:1). *God gave the Greatest Gift*, and so His precious Son came to earth for each one of us.

Many of us have mused over these things; what is written on these pages isn't new, but we do love to tell this lovely story over and over again. Especially, "*we love to tell the story, for those who know it best, seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest, and when in scenes of glory, we sing the new, new song, 'twill be the old, old story that we have loved so long.*"

Henry Ahrens

'What shall I give Him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I'd give Him a lamb;  
If I were a wise man, I'd do my part;  
But what can I give Him? *I'll give Him my heart!*'

### Lord, Here I Bring Myself

|                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LORD, here I bring myself,<br>'Tis all I have to give,<br>My heart's desire is wholly<br>this,<br>Henceforth for Thee to live; | Henceforth mine every power<br>Each day for Thee to use,<br>My hands, my feet, my lips, mine<br><b>all</b> ,<br>As Thou, my Lord, shalt choose. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| To own no will but Thine,<br>To suffer loss or shame,<br>All things to bear, if only I<br>May glorify Thy name; | Dear Lord, my constant prayer<br>Is for increase of grace,<br>That I <b>by faith</b> may walk with Thee,<br>Till I behold Thy face. |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Poems of Dawn

## The Good News of God's Plan

The Bible tells us that God has four perfect attributes, namely: *Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Power* and that each one harmonizes with the others. Our Lord Jesus Christ came to earth in harmony with God's will and of His own accord without being pressed or forced to do so (John 10:15-18). Since God is Love (1 John 4:8), Jesus is also filled with love for suffering humanity, which has been dragged into the abyss of sin and death by its arch-enemy, Satan. It was this enemy who through falsehood deceived our mother Eve. She then tempted Adam to disobey God. Thus, both Adam and Eve were cut off from the only Source of life. See Gen. 3:1-9; John 10:10.

Satan is called by our Lord Jesus "*the father of lies*" (John 8:44) because there is no truth in him. Today, he still deceives mankind in many ways by mentally blinding them to God's truth (2 Corinthians 4:4). But those who have been called and chosen by God and who continue faithful will not be deceived by this enemy because of the unction and abiding of the Holy Spirit of Truth in them. Fully tested, they will live and reign with Jesus to bring to pass the resurrection of the dead and the restoration of all things. John 5:28, 29; Acts 3:19-23.

The term *Gospel* means *good news*, the good news being that Jesus Christ died "*a ransom for all to be testified in due time*" (1 Timothy 2:3-6); but not just for Believers in this age alone. When men will be raised from the grave during the Millennial Kingdom, they will be instructed and guided into all truth as we read in Isaiah 26:9: "*When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness!*" These will be given every opportunity to have life in all its fullness, leading them to make a final decision: Obey and live forever on the earth, or disobey and return to death, (destruction) but this time it will be the "second death" from which there is no recovery. See Psalm 145:20; Proverbs 2:21, 22; Acts 3:23; Rev. 21:8.

We know there are many Christians who have been led by the clergy to believe there is a literal place burning with fire

and brimstone called Hell. Such a fearsome belief is not from our loving God, but from Satan who thus depicts Him as a cruel and merciless Creator Who, though "*knowing the end from the beginning,*" would condemn some of His creation to unending torment.

But oh, the Love of God constrains us to rebel against such a blasphemy against God's Holy character because there is no truth in such a pagan belief, for while the term "*hell*" is certainly found in the Bible, it is a translation of the Hebrew term "*sheol*" in the Old Testament, and the Greek term "*hades*" in the New and these two terms literally mean "*the grave,*" and not what billions of people have been led to believe.

Our God is a God of pure, selfless love for all His creatures. He hates sin in any form because of the destruction it brings. When our Lord Jesus was on earth, He obeyed God's laws perfectly. While loving sinners, He never excused sin, but came to conquer and destroy it and its author, Satan.

Mankind continues to live under Satan's tragic influence. He uses every ancient and modern device to keep people under his control, especially by trying to destroy the character of our Creator; thus people, unless touched by God's spirit, are in the dark concerning God's true character and wonderful plan for the eventual blessing of all the families of the earth.

Present world governments, institutions and systems continue to be under Satan's influence for we still live in "*this present evil world*" which will soon be completely destroyed (Daniel 2:34, 35) to be replaced by a new government (a new heavens and new earth) in which righteousness shall rule supreme under Christ as King. 2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 19:9-11.

For His faithfulness to His Father's will, even unto the death on the Cross, Jesus was highly rewarded. He is not only Lord and Savior, Redeemer and King over His church, but by His precious blood He has purchased back all mankind to be testified "*in due time.*" Phil. 1:9-11; 1 Tim. 2:6. All mankind, by right of purchase, belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. All the evil and sorrow that Satan has brought into the world will be forgotten by mankind in the ages to come; *only the lessons will remain.*

Lessons of what the sin of disobedience to God brings have been great and painful but will be engraved in the minds of all people forever. They will come to understand and appreciate God's wisdom in permitting evil for a limited time.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Only Begotten Son (John 3:16) was brought forth before the foundation of the earth or the whole universe itself (John 1:1-10); Prov. 8:22-36). He is called the wisdom and power of God in 1 Cor. 1:24. As the Logos (Word) He was with the Father at the creation of Adam and Eve (Gen. 1:26) who were made in God's image and likeness, with reasoning powers and freedom to choose to either obey or disobey their Creator. They were placed in a perfect and beautiful Garden created just for them, filled with flowers and fruit trees to enjoy which would have sustained life eternally, provided they were obedient to God. Genesis 2:15-17. Who can imagine or describe the physical beauty of our first parents or the beauty of their surroundings? We are all disfigured by sin, suffering, sorrow and other evils, being far from the original beauty and perfection. Nevertheless, it is God's Eternal Plan, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to restore mankind during the coming Millennial Kingdom, back to that original beauty and perfection of body, mind and spirit along with a perfect environment and removal of all the evil conditions that have led man to the grave, and death itself shall be no more. Acts 3:17-21; Isaiah 35; 1 Cor. 15:25; Rev. 21:4.

Beautiful as all this is, God has provided a still greater and far more wonderful blessing for those who, during this Gospel age, repent of their sins, accept Jesus Christ as their Lord, Savior and King and who dedicate their entire lives to God in full obedience to His will as "*a living sacrifice*" (Romans 12:1, 2). They are now translated *out of* the kingdom of darkness and *into* the Kingdom of the Son he loves! (Colossians 1:12, 13).

To them is promised a Heavenly home (John 14:1-4), along with glory, honor, and immortality; the divine nature (Romans 2:7; 2 Peter 1:4) when the Lord Returns (2 Thes. 4:13-18). They will live and reign with Christ for a 1,000 years (Rev.

20:6). Do you realize what all these things could mean to you:  
*Meditate upon them!*

For Christians to die means to fall asleep in Jesus quietly, without fear, knowing their resurrection has been assured and guaranteed to them by Jesus' own resurrection. The Bible terms this the "*first resurrection*" because it takes place before the general resurrection of the world. John 5:28,29; Rev. 20:6 ...In God's Kingdom on earth, those resurrected will come to an accurate knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:3-6) concerning God, His glorious character and His purpose to restore obedient mankind to full life, health, peace, and joy. It will be then that the prayer Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "*Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,*" will be fulfilled. Matt. 6:10. *Praise His Name!*

Does this all sound incredible? Remember that *nothing is impossible to God*. This plan, made before the foundation of the world, is a manifestation of God's justice, wisdom, power and love for each of us and we have His Word that all will be fulfilled to the letter. Jer. 31:34. Isa. 40:8; 45:23; 55:11; Mt. 24:35; Mk. 13:31; Luke 21:33.

Dear reader, you are being called of God. Will you accept Jesus as your Lord, Savior, Redeemer and King? We pray you will and see how God will bless you abundantly!

G. Boccaccio

**Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us.**

**2 Corinthians 1:21,22**

THE seal or mark of the New Creature is the possession of the Spirit of Christ. The manifestations of this Holy Spirit are three-fold. (1) Love supreme to God and joyful loyalty to His cause even at the cost of suffering. (2) Love of the brethren--unselfish, noble, pure,--a desire for their welfare, which is always alert to do them good. (3) Love, sympathetic, for the world, prompting to good works, as opportunity may afford, and to a desire and effort always to live peaceably with all men.

Daily Heavenly Manna

## Metamorphosis

When Jesus told Nicodemus that no one could see the kingdom unless he was born again, Nicodemus replied, *“But how is it possible ...for a man to be born again when he is old? Can he enter his mother’s womb a second time and be born?”* (John 3:4 NEB). Taken literally, this idea was beyond human understanding. Yet, *Jesus infers that Nicodemus should have known about it, and indeed, the Old Testament finds echoes of it in texts such as Ezek. 36:26.* Even today, this spirit-birth is misunderstood because it is equated with conception and birth in the physical sense. Both words, *born* and *again*, are translated from Greek, which has no direct equivalent in English, but the ideas which they represent, are full of meaning.

However, there are other natural pictures, which may be used to illustrate this change, and this new birth involves a fundamental change. One of these pictures is in John 12. 24. *“... unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies it produces many seeds”* (NIV). Our Lord’s death upon the cross was the climax of a daily dying, involving a ministry and preaching such as was never seen before or since, but the process began even before His coming to earth. This is made clear in Phil. 2.5-9: *“Take to heart among yourselves what you find in Christ Jesus, He was in the form of God, yet he laid no claim to equality with God but made himself nothing, assuming the form of a slave. Bearing human likeness, sharing the human lot, he humbled himself and was obedient even to the point of death. Therefore God raised him to the heights and bestowed on him the name above all names.”* (RSV) Pondering this statement will bring some idea of the profound change, which led to the birth of the firstborn of the new creation.

Change is seen in another natural process known to zoologists as *metamorphosis*. There are many variations of this, but two examples come to mind, which illustrate spiritual birth referred to earlier. Firstly, the dragonfly’s egg develops into an ugly, brown, sluggish but greedy larva, moving about at the bottom of a freshwater pond, seizing its food with its curious

jaw-like appendages. In time it climbs up the stem of a water-plant, a rather ugly, bulbous creature. Its skin cracks open and the winged image emerges, dries its wings in the warm sunshine and in all its beauty begins its fascinating flight. Similarly, the egg of an emperor moth becomes a caterpillar, eats its way to the next stage of a larva, and envelopes itself by a cocoon shaped like a flask with a narrow neck. After development, the insect forces its way out of this restricting neck and becomes a beautiful moth. This final stage of change involves the shedding of the drab unlovely skin that for a while has hidden the developing beautiful creature. *The struggle to escape creates pressure forcing the vital fluids into the vessels of the wings.* If given help by cutting the neck of the cocoon to make escape easier, the result is the emergence of an ugly swollen body with shriveled wings.

The Greek word *metamorphosis* occurs several times in the New Testament. In the vision of the scene on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17), Jesus is *transformed* before three of His disciples. His face shone like the sun. His clothes became white as light. This may have been an instantaneous and fleeting change, but it was an indication of a phase in the process of change between our Lord's descent from heaven and His return to receive that Name which is above every name.

Metamorphosis is translated "*transformed*" in Rom. 12:2. Philip's translation reads, *'Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within ....'* We must all be conscious of the pressure of the worldly spirit around us, and we need to take positive thought and action to overcome it. Our efforts to do this are like the struggles of the larva of the moth that brings about its change into a beautiful insect.

Metamorphosis occurs again in 2Corinthians 3:18, where the Amplified New Testament reads, *"And all of us, as with unveiled face because we continue to behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into his very own image in ever increasing splendor, and from one de-*



*gree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”*

In Phil. 3.21 Paul writes of the change of our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, but this is not a good translation. The human body itself is not vile, but we have no illusions concerning the fallen state of the human heart or spirit that controls it. Other translations refer to *“the body of humiliation.”* The Amplified Bible reads, *“Jesus Christ ... will transform and fashion anew the body of our humiliation to conform to and be like the body of His glory and majesty by exerting that power which enables even him to subject everything to Himself.”*

In 2 Cor. 4.7 Paul declares *“we who have this spiritual treasure are like common clay pots.”* (GNB) This is reminiscent of the grey skin which covers the ugly bulbous creature which becomes the graceful dragonfly. True it is, as Jesus declared, that this new birth comes through water and the spirit, but we are to be workers together with God: *we have to climb up out of the “pond” of this life. We need to struggle out of the restricting cocoon of this body of our humiliation. Then one day we shall be free of all human limitations and wing our way triumphantly into the presence of God, there to live a new life on a higher plane, giving glory to the Creator of all that is beautiful*

*“Changed from glory unto glory, Till in heaven we take our place, Till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love and praise.”*

D. Nadal

I'm not what I want to be and I'm not what I should be, but by God's grace, I'm not what I used to be.

Spiritual stature cannot be acquired without growing pains.

I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving.

## A Portrait of Jesus: He Meets Us in Our Sorrow



*“So, the sisters sent word to Jesus, ‘Lord, the one you love is sick...Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe.’ ” “Jesus, said to Martha, ‘your brother will rise again’...when Jesus saw her (Mary) weeping, he was deeply moved...Jesus wept.” John 11*

The story of Lazarus illness and subsequent death tells us so much about Jesus! There are so many lessons in this chapter, but today I would like to look at how Jesus dealt with two sisters, who were very different in personality and how he met each one where they were and gave them what they needed prior to resurrecting Lazarus.

Jesus had an extremely close relationship with this family in Bethany. He was close to all three siblings. There are other stories in the Gospel that tell us how different Mary and Martha were in personality. This story is no different. What is of note is how Jesus dealt with the same comment from both of them, differently, meeting them not only where they were, but to touch their hearts and comfort them in the way they needed to be comforted.

When Jesus got word, that Lazarus was sick he tarried. He did not immediately go to heal him, though he could have; he waited until he died to go. When he was close to Bethany, Martha ran out to meet him and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.” Jesus assured Martha that Lazarus would rise again. Martha and Jesus had a discussion about her belief in Jesus. She assured him she believed he was the Messiah, the Son of God. Then she went to get her sister who was still at home weeping.

Mary got up quickly and ran to Jesus, she fell at his feet and said the same words Martha had said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." She was weeping and when Jesus saw that, he asked to be led to the tomb while weeping. He entered into Mary's sorrow with her. He knew he was going to raise him, but he also entered into her pain and sorrow with her and the other mourners before he raised Lazarus.

I wish I had been there to see the reaction of these dear women, his disciples and the other mourners as Lazarus walked out of that tomb! The rejoicing must have been overwhelming! Jesus doesn't always give us what we want, when we want it. Sometimes he tarries, but he will always meet us in our sorrow and give us just what we need at the time. We may have to wait for our joy to be complete, but it will come, just as He promised.

D. Mathewson

### **"God Bless You!"**

I SEEK in prayerful words, dear friend,  
My heart's true wish to send you,  
That you may know that far or near  
My loving thoughts attend you!

I cannot find a truer word,  
Nor fonder to caress you;  
Nor song nor poem I have heard  
Is sweeter than "God bless you!"

"God bless you!" so I've wished you all  
Of brightness life possesses;  
For can there any joy at all  
Be yours unless God blesses!

"God bless you!" so I breathe a charm,  
Lest grief's dark night oppress you,  
For how can sorrow bring you harm,  
If 'tis God's way to bless you!

Poems of Dawn

## 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       |
| Boswell, Arlene – IL                | Karavas, Anna - CA             |
| Buxton, Jean & Family - UK          | Leavitt, Denise & Richard – ME |
| Cannon, Melissa (Bews) – TX (d)     | 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                    | Ostwald, Dick - WI             |
| Dalesandro, Jim and family - IL (d) | Parker, Geraldine – CA         |
| Dickson, Roberta Jo – CA            | Parrinello, Sue MI (d)         |
| Dunn, Kim - IL                      | Penton, Jim – Canada           |
| Feliciano, Carmen - NY              | Phillips, Stella – OK          |
| Fischer, Mike & Liz – WI            | Rice, Michelle – MA (d)        |
| Foster, Jean – IL                   | Rowe, Bryan - UK               |
| Hauslein, Karen – MD                | Schwartz, Ruth – TX            |
| Hawk, Barbara – PA                  | Seminoff, Brenda – CA          |
| Hildebrandt, Lois - FL              | Spano Family – IL (d)          |
| Hoffner, Steve – NH                 | Tuscia, Priscilla – FL         |
| Hogrebe, Joan – MO                  | White, Joan - NY (d)           |
|                                     | Wolfenberger Family (d)        |
|                                     | (d) = death in the family      |

### Entered into rest:

Sandra Bews, TX, July 2023  
O’Neal Webster, LA, July 2023  
Joe Parrinello, MI, August 2023  
Bob Wolfenberger, TX, August 2023  
Lois Spano, IL, September 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.



**No new grads to acknowledge in this issue.**

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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 NH)

<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

Be Patient with God

God's plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold,
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart;
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold.

Conferences & Conventions

New Covenant Fellowship

Thursday 4th to Saturday 6th April 2024
Foothills Conference Centre in Mooroolbark,
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Bible Students Fellowship Conference

High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, England
14-18 August 2024 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.

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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.