

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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In This Issue



Group thinking has a great influence in our lives, whether good or bad. We are all subject to the influence of our peers. Some, under the persuasion of others have lost all faith that there is a God. But we are not of the atheists, who believe there is no God, nor or we of the agnostics who are unsure of the existence of God, but we are of the believers who know and love God. *To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.*

Yes, we believe that Jesus Christ lived and died for us and gave us of his spirit, the spirit that comes through faith in the blood of the New Covenant, which Jesus offered to his disciples in symbol on the night he was betrayed. Jesus has become our role model. There are many famous role models in the world, but none of these can hold a candle to Jesus' example. In our journey of transformation, we must pass through the eye of a needle in the unburdening of ourselves from the hindrances of this world to finding true riches in Him. Then, with his return, *we will be [made] like him, for we shall see him as he is, not as he was.*

In the meantime, we develop the mind of God. Jesus showed us what this mind is, by both precept and example. In our walk, we must not be deceitful as was Ananias and Sapphira. We must also seek to love our enemies and do them good whenever we can. Prayer becomes not only a privilege, but also a necessity in maintaining this close relationship with our Lord.

We have a loving Father and we are His children, and so we try to emulate Him as expressed through Jesus, both to our families and fellow members of the human race, of whom we hope to help return to God in days to come. May the articles in this issue on the above themes be a blessing to you in your walk with Him.

R. Whittaker

Group Thinking

As humans, we like to associate with those people who agree with us and think the way we do. The problem with this is that we may have a false sense of security. Our ideas are never challenged, or if they are, we feel we have enough supporters on our side, that we must be right. There is no call to examine other ways of thinking, for as long as we can find others who will agree with us or support our ideas, we do not feel concerned enough to question things.

In groups or denominations, the group thinking is not inclined to think as an individual, since it might make one feel out of step with the rest of the crowd. There is part of our nature that resists this.

If something is right or true, that is the important thing, and the reason to believe it **is** that it is right or true, no matter if no one else believes it. If we are wrong, yet find a million supporters for our way of thinking, it does not make us right. Each person is obliged to examine things for himself and hold fast to what is right and true.

Another deception of group thinking is the tendency to accept ideas, interpretations, and doctrines as a whole, rather than examining each Idea for its own merit. Thus, if some things have been proven true, we want to assume all things the group believes must be true. In every church or organization, it is practically impossible to separate things that are not true from those which are, for they are interwoven and presented as one creed of belief.

There is a fear in us that if we reject certain ideas or doctrines *within our package*, we will have to give up all we do believe to be right. What we must understand is that Truth does not come in packages but must be sought out with an open mind. It is not enough to find the group we feel is the most right or feel the most comfortable with, and then *assume* that everything must be right.

The need to test our beliefs and examine all things will always be present, for Satan's greatest deception has been the stronghold of mass psychology, or group thinking. It puts people in bondage and weakens the ability of the mind to seek and receive what God would show them through His Word by His Holy Spirit. Group thinking intimidates the average person, giving him a sense of insecurity and doubt that he could possibly be right and they wrong. Yet God can and does reveal Truth to the simplest, most uneducated, and

childlike, for Truth is revealed through the Spirit of God to the sincere, seeking heart.

Our warfare comes against the strongholds of men's set interpretations and creeds. It means the casting down of every thought that is not in harmony with the Word of God. The fact that we see so many denominations in the name of Christ, who use the Word of God, should tell us that all the correct understanding of God's Word is not found in any one place or group of people who call themselves Christians. Yet we would be foolish to assume that because we can see obvious error in certain groups, that they have no truth at all. Every group who claims to be Christians, seeking God through His Word, have some truth, yet if it is not balanced by other truths, found in another group, it will be distorted.

Each person must seek God on every matter that is important for him to understand. He does not have to be an intellectual, or know Greek and Hebrew, or even know the whole Word of God, for *God is faithful to reveal truth as we need it.* We should never feel hesitant to seek God on a matter that everyone around us may believe differently, for this is most probably a result of group thought. If those individuals have not sought God and examined His Word for themselves, what they believe has no value, having been taught them by men and not by God through His Holy Spirit.

"If anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of GOD, who gives to ALL men generously, without reproach, and it will be given him." - James 1:5

"...Jesus answered and said, 'I praise You, Oh Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You did hide these things from the wise and intelligent and did reveal them to babes. Yes, Father, for thus it was well-pleasing in Your sight.'" - Matthew 11:25-26

Selected

"I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. As for you, the anointing you have received from Him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as His anointing teaches you about all things, and as that anointing is real and not counterfeit - just as it taught you, remain in him"

1 John 2:26-27

Unbelief and Agnosticism

Does an unbelieving Christian and an Agnostic have something in common? An Agnostic is unsure if there is a God and claims neither faith nor unbelief in God. A Christian who doubts God for any reason is very close to the Agnostic. For instance, if the Christian doubts that God answers prayers or keeps His promises to care and meet all his needs, spiritual as well as physical, and material, is there much difference between him and an Agnostic?

Have you ever thought of worry as a sin against God? Worry is another way of disguising unbelief. Why do we worry? If we are honest with ourselves, this includes most of us at one time or another. Why do we sometimes go to God as a last resort for our problems? Perhaps it is because we are more comfortable when we feel we are in control. We turn the concern repeatedly in our minds, looking at it from every angle, to see if we can come up with a solution. Worry is like a mental tornado or a like a dog chasing his tail! We have no peace and are to some degree undergoing much unnecessary stress. Would it not be easier to ask God to show you the answer up front, instead of going through all the unproductive, stressful anxiety of mind?

Let's consider **trust** as an alternative. A good example is found in 2 Chronicles 20, where Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, is about to be attacked by alliance of three other nations, Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir. He realizes that he and his army is no match for this vast army. Now, if anyone had a case to worry it would have been Jehoshaphat. Realizing his situation and the impossibility of his army to defeat this great force, he immediately prays to the Lord (vs. 12), *"O our God, will You not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You."* He doesn't consult with his generals as to what to do but goes right to the Lord, who hears his humble, fervent prayer and takes over the situation. Now, the battle is the Lord's (vs.17). Upon hearing this good news through Jehaziel, a Levite, King Jehoshaphat, in full confidence, worships the Lord, which we read in verses 18-19, *"Then, Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice."*

In the next verses, we read of the strangest army formation for victory ever proposed! *"And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out,*

Jehoshaphat stood and said, 'Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be established; believe His prophets, and you will succeed.' And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the LORD and praise Him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, 'Give thanks to the LORD, for His steadfast love endures forever.' And when they began to sing and praise, the LORD set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed. For the men of Ammon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, devoting them to destruction, and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they all helped to destroy one another. When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the horde, and behold, there were dead bodies lying on the ground; none had escaped. When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found among them, in great numbers, goods, clothing, and precious things, which they took for themselves until they could carry no more. They were three days in taking the spoil, it was so much" (Verses 20-25).

God indeed works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. We can only imagine what the opposing armies must have thought as they saw this group of singers up front leading the army of Judah. Nevertheless, their trust and strong faith in the Lord gave them a great victory.

Perhaps, the answers to our prayers may not be this spectacular or immediate, but we can be assured that God will take care of us in the best way if we truly trust Him and let Him have control. His answers may not always be what we request of Him, but they will always be for our eternal best interests. If we are asking something that is according to His will, then His answer will be in the affirmative. This we are assured in 1 John 5:14-15, "And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him." But bear in mind that even though our prayer request may be in accordance with God's will, it may not come immediately but in His perfect timing. Here is where we are to wait patiently and not let unbelief creep in. On the other hand, James 4:3 tells us, "*You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly.*" In this case, the answer is "No." Let us never forget, that His ways are always the best, so let us trust Him in full confidence!

E. Weeks

Important *New Covenant* Considerations - Part 2

continued from the March/April issue

5. God promised to make the *new covenant* “with the house of Israel” (Jer. 31:33). Why, then, does it say in Heb. 8:6, 10 (NAS) quoting that prophecy, that the *new covenant* “a better covenant...has been enacted,” putting its enactment in past time?

The inspired author wrote of the *new covenant*, that it “has been enacted,” because he accepted the witness of the Holy Spirit. He recognized the meaning of Jeremiah’s prophecy. God had indeed enacted the *new covenant* “with the house of Israel.” For about three years, it was made *only* with members of that house, *only* with Jews. God worded the promise that way because He foresaw that respective remnants of the house of Israel and the house of Judah would be together following their captivities (Ezek. 37:18-22). People of those two houses were together throughout and following the ministry of Jesus; and he addressed them as the “house of Israel” (see Matt. 10:6, 15:24). However, only a relatively few of that “house” accepted Jesus as Messiah so as to be received into the *covenant*. But that is no cause to conclude that God did not keep His promise to make it with that house. The fulfillment of his promise is affirmed: “As many as received him (Jesus), to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name (the name of Christ Jesus our Lord)” (John 1:11, 12).

Cornelius and his group were the first Gentiles received into the *new covenant* (Acts 10). They too believed in Jesus. Paul shows that Gentiles “were grafted in among them (the natural olive branches), and with them partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree” (Rom. 11:17). Believing Gentiles become of the one true Israel (Rom. 11:26), and are counted among the 12,000 numbered in each of the twelve tribes. -- Rev. 7:3-8

6. To what period does “those days” refer (Jer. 31:33), after which the *new covenant* would be made?

The period, “those days,” extended from the beginning of Israel’s desert wanderings through the ministry of Jesus. “Those days” began when God found fault with Israel (Heb. 8:8). Their acts of disobedience in the wilderness were so grievous and frequent as to be recalled by the simple expression, “as in the provocation” (Heb. 3:8,

15). (See Ex. 16:2, 17:2, 32:1-29, Num. 11:1, 6-33, 13:1-14:39, Ezek. 20:14, 22, 44.) Because the first covenant was not faultless, place was “sought for the *second*” (Heb. 8:7). Frequently, Israel “continued not in My covenant” during the many centuries before Jeremiah prophesied of the *new covenant*, and God therefore “regarded them not” (Heb. 8:7-9). But He kept His covenant, and visited them with necessary adversity, affliction, and punishment (Amos 3:2). The years after Jeremiah were also part of “those days” mentioned by the prophet. When the meaning of the prophecy is misunderstood, an opening is given to the mistaken idea that “those days” refer to the years during which the gospel has been preached. And that precludes perception that the *new covenant* began to bless believers at Pentecost.

7. Is Jesus alone the Mediator of the *New Covenant*?

Yes. There is no statement in Scripture that any but Jesus is Mediator of the New Covenant. The Apostle Paul indicates clearly who is Mediator. “For there is one God, also **one** Mediator of God and of man, **a man Christ Jesus**, the one having given Himself a ransom on behalf of all, the testimony in its own times” (1Tim. 2:5, 6) Marshall Interlinear). It was the giving of himself as a ransom for all mankind that enables him to be Mediator of God and of men. *He alone was the ransom; he alone is Mediator. No other person or entity is mentioned in Scripture as sharing that office with Jesus.*

Inasmuch as the *better covenant* “has been enacted” (Heb. 8:6 NAS), it is evident that Christ Jesus functions as its Mediator, for without a mediator there could be no *new covenant* and it could not have been enacted. The Holy Spirit’s testimony to us regarding the writing of God’s law in our hearts (Heb. 10:15-18), which writing affirms the remission of our sins, is further assurance that Jesus is Mediator of the *new covenant*.

Moses alone was Mediator of the Old Covenant (Gal. 3:19), and, as interpreted by the Apostle Peter soon after the day of Pentecost, Jesus Christ is the greater than Moses prophesied of in Deut. 18:15, 18. He quoted that prophecy to the Jews in Jerusalem, together with its warning that “every soul, which would not hear (so as to believe and obey) that prophet would be destroyed (Strong #1842, “to extirpate,” which Webster defines: “to pluck up by the...root; to eradicate”) from the people (of God, being not worthy to enjoy fellowship with God’s true Israel).” The Apostle affirmed that all

prophets from Samuel on who had spoken, had all “foretold of these days,” the days of Peter’s time; and that “God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you in turning every one of you from your iniquities” (Acts 3:22-26).

8. What blessings do those in the New Covenant enjoy?

Those in relationship with God in the *new covenant* have peace with God, sanctification, inner joy, and all the other spiritual blessings as “new creatures” in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:15-17). Such have come to God through the name and power of Jesus. “But you have come ... to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel” (Heb. 12:22-24 NAS). This reference to the antitypical covenant and its ratification is drawn from the typical arrangement. After Israel heard and accepted “every commandment of the law,” it was the “blood of the covenant” - - animal blood literally sprinkled on “all the people” -- that brought them in covenant with God at Sinai under Moses, its mediator (Exod. 24:8; Heb. 9:19, 20). But there is no need that blood be literally sprinkled upon those who spiritually “eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood,” and who receive life thereby; who hear the instructions and endeavor to obey God’s will (John 6:53). Their hearts are sprinkled from a consciousness of evil as they trust and obey. (See 1 Pet. 1:2 and Heb. 10:22.)

Hebrews 9:14, 15 verify a blessing received by Jews who had already come into the *new covenant*. “How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! For this reason Christ is the mediator of a *new covenant*, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance -- now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.” Certain elements in the Greek text not disclosed by that NIV rendering are seen in the Marshall Interlinear translation: “By how much more the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself unblemished to God, will cleanse the conscience of us from dead works to serve the living God. And therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so as death (his death) having occurred for redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, the ones having been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.” That blessing is also for the Gentiles, none of whom

transgressed the first covenant because never having been in it, but all of whom nonetheless missed the mark of keeping God's law.

9. Why does Heb. 12:24 use a different Greek word for "new" than used elsewhere in the New Testament and in the Septuagint (Greek O. T.) for "new" covenant?

To indicate that the *new covenant* was then in effect! The Greek *kainos*, Strong's #2537 -- "that which is unaccustomed or unused" "new as to form or quality, of different nature from what is contrasted as old" (Vine's) was written of the *new covenant* when **prophecy** of it was made, quoted, or referred to. (See Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8,13 & 9:15; Jer. 31:31.) God promised an arrangement "of a different nature" than the covenant which had been made old and was vanishing away. *Kainos* denoted the difference between the old and new -- a *new covenant* of a different nature than the old.

But when the writer in Heb. 12:22-24 (NAS) encouraged their spiritual relationships, the promise had become reality. Thus he wrote that "you have come ... to Jesus, the mediator of a **new** (Greek *neos*, Strong's #3501; "new in respect of time, that which is recent" -- Vine's) *covenant*." It is fitting, in this last appearance in the Bible of the words "*new covenant*," that those believers were instructed that they had come to a new, recently-made covenant for forgiveness of sins, mercy to their unrighteousness, and everlasting life.

10. Do disciples have a part in the *new covenant* other than being blessed in it?

Yes, indeed! Though they cannot be its mediator, they can surely be ministers of the *new covenant*. The glory of its reality is due to God who planned it, and to Christ whose blood has ratified the *new covenant*. Paul said of believers that it is "being manifested that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, having been inscribed not by ink but by the spirit of the living God, not in stony tables but in tables which are fleshly hearts...the competence of us is God, who also made us competent ministers of a *new covenant*, not of letter but of spirit, for the letter kills, but the spirit makes alive" (2 Cor. 3:3,6). "And all things are of God, the one having reconciled us to Himself through Christ and having given to us the ministry of reconciliation..." (See 2 Cor. 5:18-20 Marshall's Interlinear.)

G. Rice

Who Is Your Role Model?

Many athletes and actors say they do not want to be role models. Many politicians also say they do not want to be role models. In many cases, these folks should not be role models.

Ben Carson, a pioneering neurosurgeon, said, *“Jesus Christ is my role model”* at the 2013 National Prayer Breakfast. Isaac Newton, a great mathematician and scientist wrote, *“I love the Bible. I read it daily.”* William Penn wrote in his diary that hearing and then reading about the Kingdom of God filled his being with a *fountain of life*.

Leonard Euler, another famous mathematician and scientist, argued for there being a Creator and had Jesus as a role model. Abraham Lincoln’s speeches were filled with acknowledgements to the Creator and His Son. Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous speech acknowledged God and presented the hope of the Kingdom of God. Mother Teresa had Jesus as her role model. Mother Waddles made Jesus her role model and helped feed, clothe, and educate the hungry families in Detroit. Nelson Mandela said that reading the Bible sustained him through the many years of his solitary confinement.

After Jesus died, eleven men known as apostles made Jesus their role model. Many men, women, and children followed them in making Jesus their role model. Paul was one of these men. In 1 Corinthians 11:1 he wrote, *“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”* Again, in Ephesians 5:1, 2 he writes, *“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”* Paul is telling us that he is trying to be like Christ and Christ showed us what God is like. Therefore, if you are imitating Paul as he is imitating Christ, then you are also imitating God.

If Jesus is your role model, then you are trying to live a life of love and recognize that Jesus Christ was a pleasing sacrifice to God for our sins. Jesus said, *“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify*

your Father who is in Heaven" (Matt. 5:16). In Matthew 5 and 6 Jesus also outlines how we are to follow Him and to make Him our role model. Jesus says, *"They will know you are my disciples by your love"* (John 13:35). People know you are following Jesus by your actions and your words.

One beautiful thing about following Jesus is that He promises you many things if you agree to make Him your role model. Jesus said to Martha, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"* (John 11:25-26). Jesus said, *"I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"* (John 14:6), and *"I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33). Jesus says, *"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light"* (Matthew 11:29-30). Jesus has many more promises to those who commit their lives to Him.

If someone asks you, *"Who is your role model?"* and you do not answer, "Jesus," you should consider changing your role model. The benefits are everlasting and the rewards are eternal.

J. Sochacki

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6

"... Christ is the head of the church...." Ephesians 5:23

"... One is your teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren."
Matthew 23:8

"... all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him."
John 5:23

The Eye of the Needle

“And Jesus said to His disciples, “Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”
Matt. 19:23-24



One of the more difficult and intriguing verses in scripture that has caused a lot of debate among scholars, theologians and pastor/elders is the meaning behind Jesus' words found in Matthew 19:34. One will find himself thinking "of course it is impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle." So, is that what Jesus is asserting in His message to you and I as we read this encounter?

First, let's understand a little about the Jewish cultural settings of Jesus' day to set the background for our examination of this wonderful text. If we understand the setting and the culture of that day, it helps to open the passage before us in a very wonderful way.

According to Alfred Edersheim, the Hebrew culture always thought in word pictures. Every story or concept brought a mental picture to mind. We with our Western minds tend to describe things in abstract terms. We use descriptive words to tell what someone or something is like. The dictionary defines "abstract" as theoretical, not practical or applied, not easy to understand.

The Eastern mind is very different. It thinks in images and pictures, which illustrate the subject with a brilliant clarity! To illustrate this, allow me to ask you a question, **Describe God to me?** Western minds (us), will probably say things like: omnipotent, omnipresent, powerful, loving, kind, good, merciful, holy, etc.... These are abstract terms describing to us what God is like. If you were to go to Israel and ask a Jew to describe God, his reply would be quite different. He thinks in pictures, so his immediate answer would be something like:

God is like a rock... In this case, David sees a vivid picture of a huge rock in a burning desert providing cool shade and shelter to the desert traveler. He might say ...

God is like a shepherd ... He would see a gentle, tender, leader of the flock, one who supplies all the sheep's needs, intimately communes with them and tenderly cares for them, a fierce protector. He might say ...

God is like an eagle ... Strong, free, powerful, or

God is like a tower – a place of safety, security, refuge, i.e. a tower of strength.

In our examination of the text above, the disciples instantly connected with the mental picture that explained to them what Jesus was saying.

So, in Matthew 19 we find a young man comes to Jesus kneeling, and asks Him, *“good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”* The young ‘ruler’ was sincere but naïve in the things pertaining to the eternal. In keeping with the legalism of the Law, he sought that one elusive good work that would push him over the top to obtain eternal life.

Jesus’ immediate response to the young rich ruler is to challenge him with a penetrating question, *‘Why do you call me good?’* Jesus is pushing the man to think through the implications of his own words and ultimately see his own lack of goodness. And so, Jesus again challenges the young ruler *‘you know the commandments: do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.’*

The man responds with a sincerity that warms Jesus’ heart. Mark’s account says of this, *‘Jesus looked at him and loved him’*. *“One thing you lack, ... go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”*

The man at hearing this became sad, because he was very wealthy, and he walked away, grieved in his heart. The young

ruler realized that although he had devoted himself to keeping the commandments, he had failed to keep the first and greatest of the commandments – *‘love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.’* (Matt. 22:37-38). The man’s riches were of more worth to him than God and he failed the ultimate test of being “good” in the eyes of God.

Jesus’ ultimate lesson here is that goodness flows not from a man’s deeds, but rather from God Himself. That is why it is listed as one of the fruits of the Spirit, an attribute that God is willing to develop in the heart of all believers, when they are willing to give up everything and follow Jesus.

This brings us to our verse in question – Jesus turns to His disciples and says, *“Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again, I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”*

From an initial reading of this verse, it would appear that Jesus is implying that it is impossible for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. But is that what He is really trying to convey to His disciples?

Certainly, that view would seem to contradict numerous scriptures in God’s Holy Word. Many of the Patriarchs were wealthy men such as Job, Abraham, Lot and Jacob, just to name a few. In I Timothy: 9-10, Paul makes it clear that it is the love of money, not money itself, that is a root for all sorts of evil. But he also clarifies that those who desire to get rich need to recognize the inherent dangers that accompany such pursuits, i.e. temptations, and snares of the devil that can cause foolish and harmful desires, ultimately, leading men into ruin, destruction and a falling away from the faith.

Interestingly, in Jesus’ time there were doors located in the middle of the main gates entering Jerusalem. At night, for security reasons, the main gates were closed so that enemies could not simply ride into the city on their camels and attack. To enter the city at night, the only entrance was a small door, appropriately called, *‘the eye of a needle’*. To enter a man would have to

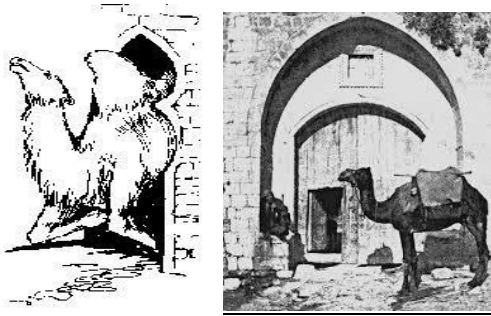
unload his camel of all it was carrying and then carefully lead the animal through the small doorway. It was a slow and difficult task. It would be difficult for the camel to get through the door, but not impossible.

In the story, it is made clear that Jesus did not despise the young rich ruler for being materially wealthy, but he recognizes a sense of emptiness in the man's life, and his search for a greater purpose. Even after following all the rules, the commandments, he failed to recognize the answer to his search was right in front of him, Jesus, the true way to eternal life. Jesus gives a simple answer to the young rulers' request. To enter the kingdom of God he needed to disentangle himself from all his wealth first, like you would have to unload all that was on a camel's back to get through the eye of the needle. Unfortunately, the young rich ruler was not willing to unload his back and he missed out on what his heart was looking for.

May we not miss out on the true goodness of the Lord.

As Jesus said in John 14:6 *"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through me."*

D. Gorham



The above graphics illustrate the needle's eye gate.

True faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible, and receives the impossible.

Our Lord's Glorious Return

We simply cannot agree that Rev. 1:7 teaches a fleshly bodily return at our Lord's second advent. Our Lord will never appear again in a nail-scarred dishonored body to the world of mankind. Let us now examine the scriptural proofs on this aspect of his return.

Today, most Bible scholars commonly refer to the book of Revelations as "apocalyptic symbolism." It is also understood as a "vision." We need to avoid taking literally Revelation 1:7, as well as Zechariah 12:10 and John 19:37. The references are to the Jewish nation, symbolized as those who pierced him. In the future, they will be in mental anguish and repentant with lamentations when they recognize their rejection of their Messiah.

At His ascension, Jesus said, "The world sees me no more" (John 14:19) He also said, "This same Jesus shall so come in like manner." (Acts 1:11) Because He was a glorified divine spirit being at His ascension, no longer in the flesh, His second advent will be in the 'same manner', a spirit being.

We believe that Jesus' fleshly body was consumed on God's altar of sacrifice, the final payment to His Father, completing the ransom and sin-offering. The Father then sped-up the process of decomposition of the fleshly body during the three days our Lord spent in the tomb.

We need to remember, Jesus did not resurrect Himself. God, the Father, resurrected His Son as His reward for being faithful 'even unto death'. Heb. 13:20, Ephesians 1:18-21, 1 Peter 1:3,4.

I humbly submit, unless we harmonize all scripture, 'rightly dividing the word of God' then we are not 'workmen worthy of our hire.' This is our charge and our commission. 2Tim 2:15, Rev. 22:19

We are asked to 'contend for the most holy faith' (Jude 3). Throughout our Lord's three and one half year ministry, Jesus only called those who were rugged individualists; those with integrity of character; those that were willing to 'suffer with Him that they might reign with Him' (2Tim 2:12); those that would 'pick up their cross' daily and follow Him (Matt. 6:24); those that would be 'faithful unto death.' (Rev 2:10). He left us his apostles as examples in all these aspects of following the master.

Fifty years ago, when I was a young Christian and a member of the Baptist Church and indoctrinated by the Moody Bible Institute and its systematic schools of Baptist theology, we would often utilize the phrase of 'no cross – no crown'. This is still a Biblical profundity, because our Savior advocated it to be so.

Most certainly, Jesus did appear to the doubting apostles in His crucified body to satisfy those who did not believe in His resurrection and victory over death. The Bible teaches that spirit beings have the power to manifest themselves in virtually any form that is necessary to fulfill Divine Providence. We have many examples of this in Holy Scripture. Angels appeared to Abraham (Gen 18:17-33), to Jacob (Gen 31:11, 32:24-30, 48:16), to Moses (Ex 3:2), also to Joshua (Josh 5:13-15), to the Israelites (Judges 2:1-5) to Gideon (Judges 6:11-23) and to Manoah (Judges 13:3-21) in human form. Let us not forget the fallen angels that are now chained in darkness who at one time appeared as humans when they married the daughters of men (Gen 6:1-4).

After His resurrection, our Lord appeared in human form to those familiar with Him (as a gardener and then as a pilgrim on the road to Emmaus). None of these recognized Him until He revealed Himself to them.

Our eternal fellowship is with the GOD of Israel and His beloved Son, our Savior through the living word of the living God. We have this fellowship; we need not seek any other. Therefore, we do not acquiesce to the trite accolades of this present evil society with its pandering of its supposed glitz and glamour. The world's glitz and glamour is nothing more than a 'mess of pottage.' Let us not sell off our birthright for a 'mess of pottage' as Esau (the first-born) did. (Gen 25:30-33)

Let us then contend for the Christian faith with the entirety of our sentient being (souls). Let us resolve never to remove our sacrifice of consecration from God's altar, not even for a moment of indecision or fleshly failings. Let's allow our sacrifice to be completely consumed in death with the approval of our Lord and His Father. We must remember that we have an altar that the world of mankind cannot approach (Heb. 13:10).

M. Hardin

The Mind of God

In John the 5th chapter, verses 16-23, it is said that the Jewish religious rulers persecuted Jesus and sought to kill him because he had done miraculous healings on the Sabbath. Jesus replied that his father worked on the Sabbath and as his son, he too was working on this day. That made them even angrier; now, they accused him of putting himself on the same level as God. However, Jesus asserted that he did nothing of himself, but only what he saw the Father doing, also that the Father loved his son and would show him greater works that they may marvel at the authority he had been delegated. He proceeded to tell them that just as the Father raised the dead and gave life, even so the Son would do the same. Then he made an astounding statement that the Father judged no one, but had committed all judgment to the Son. He gave as the reason for this that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father.

This close relationship with God is kept up throughout the Gospel of John. *He that has seen me has seen the Father,*' Jesus told Philip. *The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself. The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do.* (John 14:9-10, John 5:36) Jesus **tells** us about God's character, and he **shows** us God's character. Thus, to learn of God we have to come through Jesus. He is the express image of God's character (Hebrews 1:3). To understand God, we must know Jesus. We have living testimony as to what God is like in the life and words of Jesus. *'For whom he (God) did foreknow (of the bride class) he also did predestinate (the qualifications) to be conformed to the image of his Son.'* – Romans 8:29 If we are to be changed into the character-likeness of His Son, and his Son is in the character-likeness of Jehovah, then we also must be transformed into God's character-likeness. In other words, God's work in us is to bring our new minds into the mind of Christ, which is **the mind of God**.

What we will attempt to do is present the character of God from Scripture and reason. Here is a list, in no particular order, of what I see of God's character.

God is generous, kind, faithful, compassionate, gracious, good, merciful, just, patient, gentle, self-controlled, virtuous, joyful, peaceful, unselfish, courteous, sincere, forgiving, and of course, God is love and God is light. Now there are direct texts that tell us some of this, for instance, *God is light and God is love* (1John 1:5, 4:16), and others that we reason on to be true from our observation of Jesus and knowledge of the Divine Plan. We would like briefly to explore these attributes of God.

God is **generous**. We see this in the marvels of creation. He has provided for us as kings of the earth in the animals and plants and water, wind, and photosynthetic cycles. Generosity gave us an abundance of good things to eat, wear, and build shelters. He made every tree pleasant to the sight and good for food, and rivers and lakes and streams. The beauty of the landscapes, mountains and valleys, sunsets and sunrises, the moon at night and innumerable stars - What can we say but, 'How great thou art'! How generous in your bestowal of so many blessings for man's sustenance and enjoyment. But His generosity is most measured by his gracious sending of His son to give his life a ransom for all. Jesus showed this same generosity in so willingly giving his life on our behalf.

God is **kind**. In the latter part of Matthew 5, verses 44 and 45, Jesus tells us that God is not vindictive but kind to both the evil and the good. He makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. To bless those who do not like you is to be godlike - to be kind. God wants us to be kind in this way.

God is **faithful**. Every promise that God makes is sure of fulfillment – we may not always understand what it means or how it will be fulfilled, but He will bring it about in His manner and time. He promised Adam that if he ate of the one tree in the

garden that was off bounds, he would surely die. God did not later change his mind and lift the death sentence; Adam died after 930 years of life. God required a just man to offer his life and buy the race. God foreknew **that** man – our Lord Christ Jesus. Jesus will own the race by that purchase and he will bring all who will back to harmony with God’s standard of righteousness and everlasting life. Then, according to Scripture, Jesus and his co-heirs will step aside to present a restored race to Jehovah. I Cor. 15:28 - “When all things are subjected to him, then the son himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all.” ‘Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass’ - 1Thess. 5:24. We need to be faithful to our promises too. Ecclesiastes 5:4, ‘When you vow a vow unto God, defer not to pay it’.

God is **compassionate** – A compassionate course of action was taken by the heavenly Father in the flood of Noah’s day. We might not think of it from this standpoint, but the world was wicked exceedingly. The Nephilim and the fallen race needed to be brought in check. Every thought was on evil continually. Unhappiness must have abounded. So God took a compassionate action in bringing the flood on the human and hybrid races. Allowing them to continue would not have good results. It was the compassionate action to do. We think this action is the essence of meaning to the Scripture that God repented that he had made man upon the earth – Genesis 6:6. He was not sorry that He had made man but that now He was going to change his dealings with man, and so, destroyed the world that was. In Thayer, the first definitions given for repent of the KJV of this verse are ‘to be sorry, be moved to pity, and have **compassion**.’ It is the last one that we emphasize. Only Noah, Mrs. Noah, their 3 sons and 3 wives, eight in all, were deemed righteous and carried into the second dispensation by means of the ark.

When we come to the New Testament, we see an example of compassion in the account of the raising from the dead of the widow of Nain’s only son in Luke 7:11-15: “*Soon afterwards He*

went to a city called Nain; and His disciples were going along with Him, accompanied by a large crowd. Now as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He felt **compassion** for her, and said to her, "Do not weep". And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise!" The dead man sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave him back to his mother." Here, Jesus was moved by **compassion**. This attitude reflects God's character and one that is necessary for us to cultivate. The news we hear every day of the suffering of humankind draws on our **compassion**. We do not want to become hardened by the constant drum of news reports that we no longer feel in our hearts a desire to bless the groaning creation.

God is **gracious**. He favors us with his love and blessing. As every lovely hue is light, so every grace is love. When you hold a crystal in the sunlight, the light is broken into seven hues of color: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, and Violet. Each of these hues is light but of a certain wavelength which we perceive as color. So also, each of the graces of the spirit is a manifestation of love.

Often Paul would start his epistles with the words, '**grace** and peace be unto you from God the father and our lord Jesus Christ.' Without God's **grace**, where would we be? We'd be bewildered with life and lost to its meaning and have no real hope for the future. **Grace** or unmerited favor is an essential for us to receive any relationship with the Father. A reflection of God's grace in us is to be **gracious** to others.

God is **good**. This reminds us of the ruler who came to Jesus and asked him in Luke 18:18, '*Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*' Jesus replied in part with a question, '*Why do you call me good? There is none **good** but God.*' Jesus is deflecting the man's praise by shifting his focus to God as the source of life. It is true that none come to God except by

Jesus Christ, yet the goodness of God provided the means for salvation and eternal life. He is the one who gets highest praise for giving eternal life. God is the antithesis of evil. He is good and can only be good. All His creatures depend on that goodness. It is a travesty on His character to attribute evil intent to God. Predestination to eternal torment is blasphemous teaching. *'Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is **good**, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.'* (Psalm 107:1)

God is **merciful**. Ephesians 2:4 tells us that God is rich in **mercy**. Having received mercy ourselves from God, both in our redemption, and now in our sanctification, do we not want to be merciful to others? James 2:13 says that he who shows no **mercy** will receive no mercy in God's judgment of him. Micah 6:8, *'What does the Lord require of thee oh man - but to do justly, love **mercy**, and walk humbly with thy God.'* To love mercy – this is God's requirement for everyone, Old or New Testament. If **mercy** is lacking in our relationships, then sadly, we do not love **mercy** and need a heart reformation.

God is **just**. Justice has to do with what is right, honest, in harmony with a pure conscience. There is no injustice in God's dealings. He is the potter and we are the clay. Whether made into a valuable vessel or a lowly piece of pottery, God treats no one unjustly. He makes certain decisions according to his good will, but all decisions are **just**. Revelation 15:3, *'**Just and true are thy ways thou King of nations.**'* (NASB)

(The remainder of this treatise on The Mind of God will be continued in the next issue of the New Creation Magazine)

R. Whittaker

In God's works, we see His hand; in His Word we see His face.

Be wholly for God if you want to be holy like him.

Ananias and Sapphira

Examination of the facts

The story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts chapter 5 has been seized upon by critics of the Christian ethic in order to disparage Christianity. What kind of a man was Peter, they ask, that he should strike this man and woman dead for what appears on the surface to be a minor case of deceit? Ananias and his wife had sold a piece of land with the avowed purpose of giving the entire proceeds to the Cause but in reality keeping back part of those proceeds for themselves. Critics say "deceit, hypocrisy, yes, but not a crime justifying so extreme a punishment as death. In this modern day of ours it would not even be considered a crime, just an instance of 'being smart'". In the hurry thus to condemn the Apostle Peter the story itself is not considered with the attention it deserves.

First of all, the background: The Christian church had just commenced its development. The incident occurred not long after Pentecost, when, by means of the fervent preaching of the Apostles, a nucleus of three thousand people accepted the faith on the first day and came together in spontaneous fellowship. A few days later another five thousand were added [*came to be about 5,000 –NASB*]. Repeated references to the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the multitude imply that the general atmosphere was highly charged with emotion and excitement. Conviction that Jesus Christ had indeed risen from the dead and ascended to his Father in heaven, and would speedily come again to establish his Kingdom upon earth, was general, and the assemblies of the believers were characterized by intense enthusiasm and zeal for further evangelism. The Lord had commissioned them to preach the Gospel in all the world for a witness unto all nations before his return and the end of the Age, and they were setting about that commission in no uncertain fashion. To that end there was a wholesale selling of land, houses, and any other kind of valuable property, and presentation of the proceeds to the Apostles both for the prosecution (pursuit) of this evangelism and to meet the needs of the poor among their number. Loud were the hallelujahs and expressions of praise to God as each successive donor came forward to add his contribution to the total; in their sincerity and zeal no one thought of doing other than present the whole of the money received from the particular sale.

In such an atmosphere, Ananias came forward. He had sold some land and here was the price received. Secretly, and with the

connivance of his wife Sapphira, he had retained part of the money for himself but the onlookers were not to know that; he allowed them to go on thinking that, like themselves, he had given the whole of the receipts to the cause. He stood before Peter, the money in his extended hand, basking in the approbation of the surrounding believers. Peter was not deceived. He knew the truth of the matter although how he knew it is not explained. It may be an example of knowledge imparted by reason of his attunement with the Holy Spirit — as we would say, inspiration — or it might have been his shrewd knowledge of human nature and something in Ananias' attitude which did not ring true. At any rate, he knew.

It is important to notice that Peter did not condemn or pass sentence on Ananias. His words define a clear statement of the offence, nothing more. *"Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God"* (vv. 3-4) The printed record cannot reproduce the tone of the words or the demeanor of the speaker. They may have been spoken in indignation and anger; they may have been uttered in accents of infinite sadness. We just do not know. The consequences we do know: Ananias, smitten either by remorse or terror, fell to the ground and died immediately, to the consternation of the onlookers. Heart failure, obviously, but what caused it? There is no indication or evidence that Peter was responsible, no statement that he called upon miraculous power to strike the offender dead there and then. Neither is there any suggestion that Deity intervened in any way to bring about this unhappy man's death. There is no clue whatever to the cause, only the bald fact that upon hearing the Apostle's measured reproof Ananias fell down and breathed his last.

Here we should recall the highly emotional and excitable atmosphere prevailing at the moment. Ananias' mind must already have been in a state of strain, what with that and also the inward knowledge of his own deception. To that might well have been added one further factor. A believer in Christ and a son of Israel, he would have known the history of his people well. As he listened to Peter's declaration that he had attempted to deceive, not man, but God, did there flash into his mind, from his knowledge of the past, the story of Achan? Achan, in the days of Israel's entry into the Land of Promise under Joshua, was guilty of exactly the same crime. Israel had been

instructed that the spoil of the conquest was to be consecrated to God and offered to him; no man might keep any for himself. Achan coveted a wedge of gold, some silver, and a goodly Babylonian garment, and he kept back these items from the spoil he brought to the general offering, and hid them in his tent. The element of deceit rendered the offering unacceptable to God; disaster came upon Israel and men lost their lives in consequence. The sin of Achan came to light and he was put to death with all his family, and his possessions destroyed, in accordance with the custom of those days. Is it possible that Ananias, in one self-revealing moment, realized that he had defiled this present offering to God in the same fashion, and saw himself as worthy only of the same fate that befell Achan? He had tried to cheat God! That sudden realization coming on top of the tenseness of the moment might well have been sufficient to induce the heart failure, which caused his death.

Three hours later his wife came in. By then the dead man had been buried; the Judean summer forbade delay in such matters. There is a different element in Peter's words to Sapphira. They imply knowledge of what was to come. *"How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt (test) the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out."* (v. 9) It seems a cruel, almost savage, statement, but here again much depends upon the tone in which it was spoken. The same words uttered sadly, regretfully, slowly, could be those of a man sorely troubled and distressed over the whole matter and conscious only that this woman must in any case now be apprised of her husband's untimely death. It seems certain that Peter was given a fore-glimpse of the coming event; the same faculty of prevision which is evident in so many instances in Scriptural narrative was Peter's at this moment and he must have seen in his mind's eye what was going to happen in a few minutes. It need not be thought that he exercised miraculous power to cause Sapphira's death, only that he knew she was going to die—as die she did. The extent to which Peter's words accentuated the shock she would have experienced anyway on hearing of her husband's death is not possible to estimate; she might well have realized that her own share in the plot had helped to cause the tragedy and that had she dissuaded him from the scheme he might yet be alive. The shock which killed her might not have been altogether, or even in great part, due to Peter's words but to the realization of her own guilt in the matter and its tragic outcome.

In line with the general level of understanding of the times, the spectators would ascribe the happening to Divine intervention. The judgment of God had come upon this guilty pair. The whole thing created a profound impression and without doubt everyone connected with the infant Church took a little more care with their own personal life in the community. To what extent, if any, there was specific Divine judgment in the matter may be open to debate; one has to remember that Judas Iscariot likewise misappropriated funds entrusted to him without any immediate retribution. The narrative states the facts but does not attribute them to any kind of Divine intervention.

Did this lapse affect the eternal destiny of Ananias and Sapphira? There have always been some to insist that the couple is eternally lost; it is possible that the prominence given to their story in the Book of Acts highlights their case more than many others who have lapsed from their high standards in this or other ways. There is no reason for thinking that these two were other than perfectly sincere converts to the faith, overtaken by the temptation to win full plaudits from their fellows without meeting the corresponding obligation. The fault was one of greed; it was not flagrant immorality or deep-rooted hostility to righteousness or love of evil. They wanted God to have part of what they had but not all. Many Christians are like that today in things much more important than money. "*Some of self and some of thee*" runs the old hymn, and in a spiritual sense that is much the same thing as the withholding of the portion which led to the premature deaths of Ananias and Sapphira. It does not seem very reasonable to think that the tremendous potentialities inherent in two intelligent creatures to whom God had given life should be vitiated and extinguished by what was, after all, not a very terrible crime, when there is no evidence at all that those two beings were already irrevocably committed to evil. And God has "*no pleasure in the death of him that dieth*" but would rather by far that he turn from his evil ways, and live. Perhaps the right view of this question is that stated by Canon R. H. Charles in his "*A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*" when he says "*the idea that forgiveness is impossible in the next life has only to be stated in order to be rejected; for till absolute fixity of character is reached, repentance and forgiveness, being moral acts, must be possible under a perfectly moral Being.*"

A.O. Hudson

Portrait of Jesus: He Loves His Enemy

"But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:44, 45



Jesus shared these words with His disciples early in His ministry, over the next three and half years they would witness how to live them. In the last days of Jesus life, we find out exactly what this means. We find Him with his twelve disciples in the upper room. There is no servant to wash their feet, so Jesus take a towel and wash basin and washes all his disciples feet, including the feet of Judas, the one who would betray his Master. He could have asked Judas to leave...send him off to do his business as he did later, but he didn't, he took the time to show him who He really was, a servant King and to let him know he was loved. A little while later Jesus announces that he will be betrayed and the room fills with whispers, "who is it?" Judas knows Jesus knows, but none of the others understand. John leans in and asks who is it, and Jesus says something very strange, something that must have confused John at the time, which only upon reflection he made sense of it. He says He will offer bread dipped in sop to the betrayer.

In John 13, we are told that Jesus dipped His bread in the bowl and then gave it to Judas. There is a tradition that the host gave the dipped bread to an honored guest as a sign of affection. This simply makes Judas' act of betrayal even harder to believe. Jesus knew who His betrayer was and yet He took the time to express His love to Judas. One can only wonder how Judas could move forward with his betrayal after this, but Scripture says that Satan entered into him and hardened his heart. Jesus then went out and died for all mankind and even His enemies. That is LOVE exemplified!

What is the lesson for us? Jesus told us to "love our enemies," and then in John 13, Jesus showed us what that looks like. Perhaps you have been betrayed by a loved one, or someone just seems to have it out for you. Have you tried "washing their feet," sharing a meal and honoring them? Jesus showed us the way of love, it is not an easy road, sometimes it seems impossible, but it is a life-changing road that we will never regret taking.

D. Mathewson

The Children's Story Corner: Prayer

Dear Ones,

Did you make any New Year's resolutions this year? I did. My resolution is to pray more. You might want to make praying one of your resolutions, too. Have you ever wondered why and how we should pray?



Just as your mother and father enjoy giving you presents, God our father loves us and likes to give us gifts. He wants us to ask Him for everything we need. Philippians 4:6 says, "In everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known to God." There are many examples in the Bible of God's children praying and God answering their prayers by giving them good gifts. One of my favorites is the story of Daniel. After Daniel prayed, his enemies had him thrown into a pit full of hungry lions. God heard Daniel's prayer and gave Daniel the gift of life by shutting the mouths of the lions and keeping them shut all night so they couldn't eat Daniel.

Jesus knows how important prayer is. When he was here on earth, Jesus prayed often. He sometimes got up very early in the morning to pray. At times, he would go off by himself, away from everyone, so he could pray in peace. Once, the followers of Jesus asked him to teach them how to pray. Jesus said to pray this way: "Our Father who is in heaven, let your name be made holy. Let your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever." Amen. In our prayers we can praise God, ask for His kingdom to come, ask for what we need, ask God to forgive our sins, and to keep us safe. There are many other examples of prayers in the Bible that show us how to pray for others, like for our President and the leaders of our nation, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and reverence. Every prayer should be sincere and from the heart. We should not say the same words over and over while we are thinking about other things.

We must believe that God can answer our prayers. Three Jewish boys refused to bow down to a statue of the king of Babylon, so they were going to be thrown into a super-hot furnace, like a blast furnace where we make steel. The boys said they knew that God could save them but they didn't know if He would this time. Either way, they said they would not bow before the idol. The boys didn't have to wait very long to find out if God would save them. When they were thrown into the furnace, everyone who was close by died from the heat but the boys were not hurt. Their clothes did not even smell like smoke. Like these Jewish boys, we need to wait and watch for answers to our prayers. God often gives us something much better than what we ask Him for.

I pray that you will keep on "letting your requests be made known to God" and that you will send your questions to the editor of this magazine.

Aunt Nancy

In the history and doctrine of prayer, nothing is more important than the light shed upon the subject by the prayers of Jesus. These are to be studied in connection with His teaching concerning prayer found in the model of the Lord's Prayer, and general statements and hints to His disciples.

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

Whatever might be our natural inclinations with reference to definiteness and persistency in prayer, we must take our instructions from the Scriptures; and overcoming our natural predilections, we must as 'little children' and as 'dear children' conform our views and conduct to the instruction, which is from above. Let us all, therefore, remember the words, 'ask (in my name), and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.' - John 16:24.. The heavenly Father has multiplied mercies, blessings, and providences in store for His obedient and faithful children who will ask for them.

C. Russell

The Family Corner: A Message to Fathers



I will walk in my house in the integrity of my heart." Psalm 101:2

Matthew 5:48: "You must be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

How can we fathers do the best job possible in raising our children? Christian fathers have a high standard to live up to given that they (as all Christians) are admonished to act as their Father in heaven acts towards them. Let us take some time now to talk about how our Father acts towards us, to spotlight the standard of how we fathers need to act towards our children.

Providing

Matthew 6:25-28 - "This is why I tell you: do not be worried about the food and drink you need in order to stay alive, or about clothes for your body. After all, isn't life worth more than food? And isn't the body worth more than clothes?"

Our Father tells us not to worry about clothing and other necessary items that we need in life. So we need to provide our children with food and clothes. We don't have to spoil them with an overabundance of things, but enough to be adequately provided for, just as our Heavenly Father provides for our needs (not our wants).

Looking out for their interest

Matthew 7:11 - "How much more, then, will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!"

This verse implies that our Father knows what we need and is ready to give it when help is requested by His children. As fathers, we need to study each of our children in order to know what they need in advance of their requests. Only then will fathers be ready to give good things to their children in a timely and wise manner.

Merciful

Luke 6:36 - "Be merciful just as your Father is merciful".

Sometimes we tend to talk down to our children, especially when the pressures of life are coming to a boil. Our Father in heaven does not treat us this way. We find abundant Grace to help in time of need. Our children should believe that they can approach us with the same confidence in which we approach the throne of grace.

Forgiving

Luke 15:20-22 - "...He was still a long way from home when his father saw him; **his heart was filled with pity**, and **he ran, threw his arms around** his son, and **kissed him**. 'Father,' the son said, 'I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son.' But the father called to his servants. '**Hurry**,' he said, '**bring the best** robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet.'"

We have here the classic response as to how fathers should treat their children when they repent of their sins. No lectures, no rebukes, no "I told you so!" Our Father's attitude is first compassion, then acceptance in action -- He runs -- towards us. Then He embraces us with His whole heart, not just with partial acceptance. There is no suspicion of future failures! He also is in a hurry to complete the reconciliation between His long lost son and Himself. He provides him with the very best clothing. What more could He do!

We must have this same attitude when our children stray. In order to carry this out, there must be great anticipation of a return from sin. Why else would the father of the parable run to meet him? His heart is obviously with his son, even when the load of sin stands between them. As fathers, do we have this same attitude towards our children?

Correction

John 15:2 - "He breaks off every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, so that it will be clean and bear more fruit".

Just as our Father corrects and guides us in the way that we should go, so fathers should not be afraid to prune the unfruitful

twigs that a child grows. It must be done, but with utmost care and loving thought, so as not to damage the entire branch.

Impartial

1 Peter 1:17 - "You call him Father, when you pray to God, who judges all people by the same standard (impartial), according to what each one has done; so then, spend the rest of your lives here on earth in reverence for him."

Too often fathers treat their children as better than they treat all other children. Their children can do no wrong. This is not a reflection of our Father above. He judges all by the same standard whether they are His children or not. Fathers must show their children that there is only one standard of right to live by. It is this standard that shows them consistency in life and that all others are of equal importance. Otherwise, pride will go before the fall. This is often seen at sporting events in which children participate; parents are often partial in their judgments and do not reflect our Father's single standard of judgment.

Consistency

Matthew 5:37 - "Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No;,' anything beyond this comes from the evil one."

Perhaps the most important trait a Father can show is consistency. Children must know that their father's responses will be the same over time. If a response is one thing one day and another the next, how can children trust their father's judgment? Our Father is never changing. We know exactly what we can expect because His word does not return unto Him void. As fathers, we must reflect our Father's consistency as well. Nothing is more important to a child's development than having a father whose guidance and direction doesn't change with the blowing of this world's winds. A word of caution: If we find we have made a wrong decision, we should not be hesitant to say we were wrong, explain why, and apologize.

A. Weeks

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!

Anas, Julie – FL	Jones, Arlene - VA
Allen, Peggy & Russell – VT	Karavas, Anna - CA
Anderson, Family– WI (d)	Knapp, Jamie – NH
Andrada, Delores & Family – CA	Knapp, Joseph & Pat – IL
Bews, Sandra and Family TX (d)	Ketko, Marion – MI
Boswell, Arlene – IL	Leavitt, Denise & Richard – ME
Buxton, Jean & Family - UK	Lepitre Family - IL
Carpenter, Gloria – KY	Howes, Paul & Carla - UK
Caudle, James – WA	Kingsmith, Beresford - UK
Cline, Ruth – MO	Mazzotta, Eva – FL
Collins, Bert - NJ	Miller, Alain – Canada
Cooper, Carmela – NJ	Mitchell, Mitch - France
Csutor, Judith – CT	Moore, Ralph & Maryellen – CA
Day, Ronald – PA	Munoz, Sue - NY
Dickson, Roberta Jo – CA	Newling, Roseanna – NH
Dobbins, Esther - NH	Niewiemiński, Elaine – NY
Donnarummo, Dan – OH (d)	Parker, Geraldine – CA
Duhaime, George & Martha – CT	Penton, Jim – Canada
Dunn, Kim - IL	Phillips, Stella – OK
Fantuzzo, Sharon - NY	Riggio, Fran – NH
Feliciano, Carmen - NY	Rowe, Bryan - UK
Fischer, Mike & Liz – WI	Schultz, Dan – MN
Foster, Jean – IL	Schwartz, Ruth – TX
Gary, Inez – VA	Seminoff, Brenda - CA
Hauslein, Karen – MD	Tuscia, Priscilla – FL
Hawk, Barbara – PA	Trent, Frank & Thelma - FL
Hildebrandt, Lois - FL	Teunis, Doris – IL
Hogrebe, Joan – MO	Weaver, Eddie - NY
Hopkins, Linda & Andrew – VA (d)	White, Ken & Joan - NY
Iannaccone, Bob & Marie – IL	Wisdom Hezekiah Ikpo - Nigeria
Ibasfalean, George – FL	Zychal, Ruth & Craig– NJ

(d) = death in the family

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

Bible Correspondence Course New Graduates & Notices

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



Basic Course

1. Sara McKinney, Arkansas
2. Joshua Cordova, CA

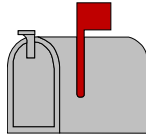
Ransom Course

1. Frank Kelso, Georgia
2. Sherri Brock, PA

You are invited to view the following websites:

<http://www.cdmi.org> (Christian Discipling Ministries International)
<http://www.cbfchurch.com> (Christian Believers Fell. 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.homechristians.net> (Fraser Valley, B.C.)
<http://www.christianrespondent.com> (R. Frye)
<http://www.bibelgemeinde.at> (Free Bible Students, Austria)
<http://www.bibelgemeinde.org> (Mission Work Bible Students, Austria)
<http://www.kronline.at/bibelstudien> (Free Bible Students, Germany (English))
<http://www.softgrafic.com/bibbia> (Italian Bible Students)
<http://www.newcovenantfellowship.org.au> (New Covenant News- Australia)

Letters from Our Fellowship and Readers



Two recent notes from "His" Servant:

In the name of our dear Jesus, I greet you with a prayer for your peace and continued reliance upon our Lord.

In Jesus' most precious name I greet you with a prayer for your continued loyalty and trust in all that He has allowed each of you to experience in your journey into Him!

"His" Servant

The following letter is addressed to His Servant, an anonymous donor of this magazine and supporter of CART (Christian African Relief Trust). We publish it here, as a favor to CART, to be read by 'His Servant' as an acknowledgement of CART's appreciation of his gifts.

Dear Brother,

I am just writing to send you a big thank you for all your wonderful gifts over many years since I started the work of CART in 1983. Vanessa took over the work in 2002 and has done a wonderful work in setting up projects by which the people could help themselves. In addition to food and clothing, we have provided education facilities and have sent books, school furniture, and computers. We have also provided clean water supplies and set-up farming projects. Your gifts have been a great help.

Thank you, and may God richly bless you.

In love, Guildford Tompkins

From Chicago, Illinois, Alice Ryden writes:

Christian love and Greetings!

I am very grateful for the New Creation Magazine and its purpose for spreading the good news of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to many around the world and upholding Biblical truths. The articles are a blessing to me. I value and appreciate the good spiritual teachings and insights I gain from them.

The Bible Correspondence Courses are also an excellent tool for learning God's Word and increasing spiritual growth. This past year, I have been blessed by being one of the teachers for the Bible Correspondence Courses and consider this area of service joyful and fulfilling. Students are learning God's Word and growing spiritually.

I wish to encourage those seeking God or desiring to enrich their spiritual lives to consider availing themselves to these studies and experience the goodness of God and Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

My prayers are for God's continual guidance and loving care upon the CDMI ministries and for the directors and New Creation staff who serve Him faithfully.

In Christ, Alice Ryden

Conferences & Conventions

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.

Bible Students General Convention, July 20-25, 2019

University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho

Theme Text: Proverbs 3:1

Registration information online at biblestudentsgeneralconv.org

Christian Believers Conference, 111th Annual, August 4 – 8, 2019

Gordon College, Wenham, Massachusetts

Registration: contact Bruce & Chere Blake, 36 Chapel Lane, Somersworth, NH 03878 or email: sblake4588@gmail.com

cell # 603-953-7059

Bible Students Fellowship Conference, August 16-20, 2019

Felden Lodge Conference Centre,

Hemel Hempstead, HP3 0BL, England

Theme: Salvation, - Philippians 2:12

Contact Nicholas Charcharos at nick.charcharos@btinternet.com

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