

THE NEW CREATION

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NOTE: The thoughts presented in the articles are those of the writer and are not necessarily totally endorsed by the New Creation Staff. “Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” – 2 Timothy 2:15.
 “Prove ALL things and hold fast to what is good.” – 1 Thess. 5:21.

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Is It Time for a Restart?

Last January I received two shots of the Pfizer Covid 19 vaccine. Since I am now eligible because of age and interval to receive a recommended booster, I immediately signed up. It took me more than ½ hour to fill in the online registration for my desired appointment. But at the 30 minutes limit I lost all the information I had carefully entered. However, when I started over I was already geared to fill in the blanks and easily completed the forms within the fixed time interval.



Isn't that like the walk of the Christian? We begin with great hopes and make good progress, but then seemingly run out of time. We slip up, overtaken by the sinful tendencies of the flesh. We need a restart. The Lord is good, very good and merciful; he provides for the erring and those who are out of the way; a humble and contrite heart He will not despise. Now we are geared to move ahead on His timetable and we find his yoke is easy and his burden is light.

After checking in at the pharmacy, I had to wait for the vaccine administrator to prepare the doses for the registered. One man ahead of me hadn't done his paperwork and was frustrated. A variety of people arrived while I waited. One, using a walker and a private assistant, spoke loudly, appearing confused and demanding. Another, a wife of fragile frame, leaning on her husband for stability physically and mentally, shuffled in. As I looked upon our group I realized here was real humanity. All were young once but time had passed us by; we were in our sunset years. We all needed a restart.

With Christ as our savior, brother, and chief we have the greatest gift from God. What a privilege we have in our discipleship to Jesus! He is our restart. How many restarts do we need to keep this in mind? May God's great gift be an inspiration for your Thanksgiving and Christmas joy!

R. Whittaker

Gifts to Our King

A Christmas Meditation

"My son, give me your heart" (Prov. 23.26).

The wise men of the East came seeking the new-born Jesus, King of the Jews, with gifts of myrrh, frankincense and gold. From this incident we gather some valuable suggestions respecting our obligations to our Messiah, and the need to renew/increase them at the close of another year.

The wise men...arrived at Jerusalem and made inquiries respecting the new-born Jewish King. The news soon spread, and the holy city was in commotion because, according to the prophets, Messiah, promised for centuries, was due to appear about that time, and "All men were in expectation of him."

This expectancy naturally would be heightened by the coming of these Magi from a far country, supposedly Persia, to show homage to Messiah. The news finally reached the royal palace, and King Herod himself, who, doubtless on his own account, felt a jealousy toward anyone who would be likely to share the royal honors and dignities, thus detracting from his own importance. Additionally, he felt that as representative of Caesar's government it was his duty to see to it that no king should arise in the land under his jurisdiction, whose title-claims would in any measure conflict with Caesar.

We have assurance that there was a truth connected with the appearance of a special and peculiar star. It guided the wise men of the east to the country of Messiah's birth and to the capital city of that country. The Lord may have given them additional understanding of the matter, just as He subsequently warned them in a dream. Herod cunningly affected to be deeply interested in the search of the wise men for the Messiah. He called the wise men of Judea to assist. These were the chief priests and lawyers, men learned in the Law and prophets of Israel. He inquired where the prophets had foretold that the Messiah should be born. They promptly answered, "*Bethlehem of Judea,*" and for that city, only six miles away, the Magi set out. They promised to return and identify to Herod the baby King and where He might be found, ostensibly so that the king might also go to worship at His feet, but he really

wanted such knowledge to destroy the baby Jesus. In route for Bethlehem, the miraculous star that they had seen in the Far East appeared to them again, apparently as a ball of light or fire traveling near the earth. It served as a guide until rejoicing, they reached the very house and found the "*young child*" and His mother.

Tacitus, Suetonius and Josephus tell us that throughout the entire east at this time, there was an intense conviction, derived from ancient prophecies, that before long, a powerful monarch would arise in Judea and gain dominion over the world. Virgil, who lived a little before this, says that a child from heaven was looked for, who should restore the Golden age and take away sin. Confucius had prophesied the appearance of such a deliverer and a deputation of his followers going forth in search of Him were the means of introducing Buddhism into China. The clearest of all these prophecies was by Zoroaster, said to be a disciple of Jeremiah from whom he learned of the Messiah and talked concerning Him to his disciples.

We should remember that Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were princes in Persia and intimate with the wise men of that country, which at that time was the principal nation of the world. It is easy to see how traditions would be handed down, especially as Daniel's prophecy respecting the time of Messiah's birth might be well known to the disciples of Zoroaster, Persia's wise men. There were Jews scattered abroad throughout that country who more or less kept alive the thought of Israel's hope for the great Messiah so long promised of God, and they prophesied of one bringing blessings not only to Israel but through them to all families of the earth.

God chose as messengers of His good tidings not only wise men, but reverential men, men of faith, and His choice of these messengers from the east to arouse the people of Judea and Jerusalem as heralds of the great King was not an exception to the rule. Although not of the nation with which God had so far dealt and given His promises, they were, nevertheless, good, reverential men. They delighted to know of the coming blessings of peace on earth and goodwill amongst

men through whatever nation the Lord was pleased to find His representative.

In one respect many Christians could learn numerous important lessons from these wise Gentiles. No false patriotism stood in their way to hinder their appreciation of Divine favor to the children of men. When they found the Saviour, they were not daunted by His humble home surroundings. They worshipped Him in three ways: *Firstly*, they fell before Him, physically expressing their reverence; *secondly*, they worshipped Him in their hearts, giving expression to their rejoicing and confidence; *thirdly*, they opened their treasure-box and presented to Him three gifts appropriate to royalty, the myrrh representing *submission*, frankincense representing *praise* and gold representing *obedience*.

Our consideration of the reverential spirit of these noble heathen men, who had so little light and knowledge respecting the great Messiah and His work, should bring a blush of shame to us. We can reflect that we are favored with brighter light to guide us to the Lamb of God. We see His star in a better and truer sense and are guided to Him by many prophecies. We have found not only a baby but *One who bears our sorrows and carries our grief. He made His soul an offering for sin so that by His stripes we are healed.* Therefore, *what kind of oblation should we pour at the feet of Him who loved us and bought us with His precious blood? With what deep reverence have we bowed the knee, prostrated ourselves and given outward evidence through our bodies of full submission to our great King? Him we know and through His gracious provision for us and for the world of mankind we have heard, not uncertainly, but with the voice of Him who speaks from heaven. Have we offered our myrrh? Have we shown willingness for service even in bitter experiences, in joy to honor the King as we suffer with Him? Have we worshipped Him in heart? This is not an outward form of powerless godliness but an offering to Him of the frankincense of heart adoration, appreciation and gratitude.*

Have we laid at His feet our earthly substance, our gold, and realized that all we have and are is but an offering far too

small. Will this be our attitude till the end of our present pilgrimage?

The apostle's words, *"Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God which is your spiritual worship,"* (Rom. 12.1), apply not only to the initial consecration of our hearts to the Lord, but, as the Scriptures express it, to a covenant of sacrifice, an agreement to die daily to self and be alive more and more in the Lord's service. Thus, we shall glorify Him in our bodies and spirits which are His. If we have lacked in this in the past, shall it be so in the future? Shall we continue to grow in knowledge...in love, in service, in worship and in the privilege of laying our little all at the feet of Him who is our gracious Heavenly King? His Kingdom is so soon to be established and He has invited us to sit with Him in His throne, share His glory and be participants as spiritual Israel in the great work of blessing the whole world of mankind.

Our opening text is well worth remembering. This does not apply to sinners who are not sons in any sense of the word. *The message to sinners is a call to repentance and to forsake sin.* Only those who have repented of sin and who trust in the precious blood of Christ are reconciled to God and may take to themselves the words *"My son, give me your heart."* When we give our hearts, it includes all that we have and are, in the highest and noblest and fullest sense. That which was illustrated by the gifts of the wise men is represented in the brief statement, *"Give me your heart." Whoever gives his heart to the Lord fully and unreservedly gives his body, his worship, his reverence and praise. He gives also his earthly treasure, time, talents, influence, money, all to be used in joyful service for the glory of the King.*

All who have never answered this call are urged to do so now. To those who have given their hearts to the Lord, we urge a remembrance of the fact that the sacrifice once put upon the altar must remain there, and that *the longer it remains, the more joyful should be the service.* In this, every opportunity for sacrifice becomes more appreciated and our hearts become more thankful. In turn each experience become richer and brings the peace of God which passes all understanding, ruling in our hearts and preparing us for the glorious things

which God has reserved for those who truly love and reverence Him.

The Bible Study Monthly, England

My Sacrifice

Laid on Thine altar, O my Lord Divine,
Accept this gift today, for Jesus' sake.
I have no jewels to adorn Thy shrine,
Nor any world-famed sacrifice to make;
But here I bring, within my trembling hand,
This will of mine ~ a thing that seems so small;
And Thou alone, O Lord, can understand
How, when I yield Thee this, I yield my all.

Hidden therein Thy searching gaze can see
Struggles of passions, visions of delight,
All that I have, or am, or fain would be ~
Deep loves, fond hopes and longings infinite.
It has been wet with tears, and dimmed with sighs,
Clenched in my grasp till beauty ~ it has none.
Now, from Thy footstool, where it vanquished lies,
The prayer ascends ~ 'May Thy will be done!'

Take it, Oh Father, ere my courage fail;
And merge it so in Thine own will that I
May never have a wish to take it back;
When heart and courage fail, to Thee I'd fly.
So change, so purify, so like Thine own
Make Thou my will, so graced with love Divine,
I may not know or feel it as my own,
But recognize my will as one with Thine.

Poems of Dawn

Is America on a Slippery Slope?

Years before Abraham Lincoln became President of the United States and while still a young man, he discerned the country was slowly losing its focus on the principles upon which our country was founded. He is quoted as having expressed these words, *“At what point shall we expect the approach of danger? By what means shall we fortify against it? Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant to step across the ocean and crush us with a blow? Never! All the armies of Europe, Asia and Africa combined could not by force take a drink from the Ohio; or make a track on the Blue Ridge in a thousand years. At what point then is the danger to be expected? I answer: If it reaches us it must spring up among us. If destruction is our lot, we ourselves must be its author and finisher.”*

I believe that if Lincoln was living today, he would express an even deeper concern for the conditions this country finds itself in. Could it be that we are in even greater danger of heading down the slippery slope of suicide as a nation?

His foresight was prophetic for his day. The Civil War would come upon the scene in only a short while. The Northern States and the Southern Confederate States would enter into war among themselves that would have brother fighting against brother. It is estimated that more than 600,000 young men died in battle or by disease.

As divided as they were back then, today we seem to be very much divided as a nation once more. Our President is opposed at almost every turn. There used to be at least a respect for the Office, but today this is far from being so. Even the News Media have taken sides and express their slanted opinions. It is almost impossible to know what really is truth!

The question is: Can we as Christians do anything about turning this around? On the surface, it seems like an impossible task. God has been pushed out of almost every possible

sector of our culture. Public prayer is either banned or frowned upon by our secular climate. It is looked upon as something not “politically correct” and even by some as personally offensive. Laws have been redefined by our Supreme Court that contradict their original purpose.

As Christians we may not be able to turn things around for it may not be in God’s plan to do so. Our responsibility is to let our light shine while continuing to be the salt of the earth at every opportunity. In our little corner we need to be an influence for good to the praise of our Heavenly Father and Lord Jesus Christ. Opposition is to be expected from the secular world that surrounds us. In the parable of the persistent widow, Jesus expresses some sobering words at the end, “...when *the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?*” (Luke 18:8 (ESV)). The way the world is headed, the answer seems to be: “Very little!”

If we were without hope, the future would indeed be very bleak and frightening. But we have God’s many precious promises that there will indeed be a better world when Jesus returns to establish God’s Kingdom on this earth. “*Therefore wait for me, declares the LORD, for the day when I rise up to seize the prey. For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all my burning anger; for in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed. For at that time I will change the speech of the people to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord*” (Zephaniah 3:8-9). Again we read in Acts 3:19-23: “*Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets long ago. Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to Him in whatever He tells you. And it shall be that every*

soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.”

Just to make sure, if we have any doubt, the Prophet Isaiah writes these convincing words in Isaiah 55:8-9, *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”* What God has promised will come to pass in due time. Our job is to wait, always with hope, and be faithful in the everyday tasks that the Lord sets before us. Let us heed the prayer Jesus left to His followers and every day lift up this petition, *“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”* (Matthew 6:9-10). *What a marvelous day we have to look forward to!*

E. Weeks

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. [John 8:36](#)

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

Daily Heavenly Manna

On the Way

The following poem is by the late **Sr. Carlene Meyer**, written at the age of 26 in 1978. Her husband Br. Terry Meyer of California sent it to the editor for the encouragement of the church, and we are glad to be able to publish it in the New Creation. Br. Terry writes that he sees this poem as a lesson in “touching lightly the things of this earth” as we all press toward our heavenly calling.

On the way to where I was going
I picked a flower or two
and lay upon the soft green grass
dreaming under magnificent blue.

Insects hummed all around me,
butterflies basked in the sun.
I watched the birds fly above me,
a stream by my side did run.

A soft wind whispered past me
stirring the leaves above,
speaking of far-off places,
of enchantment, magic and love.

I uttered a sigh of contentment,
as all fused into one.
This world I lived in was perfect,
of sadness or tears I found none.

And then coming forth from the wind,
a powerful voice spoke to me,
saying, “Why tarriest thou on the earth child,
when a pilgrim you’ve covenanted to be?”

Astonished, I answered sincerely,
“But Father, this all comes from You!
I’m only enjoying your creations,
the moments spent, just a few.”

“Would you have me ignore these –
the birds, the sun and the flowers?
I want only to know them,
And so I spend these hours.”

His answer did surprise me,
for I thought that I'd been right
to tarry just a moment
in the wildflowers and the light.

“The time is short now child
to prove yourself to Me.
Your character needs shine brightly,
the purest of gold it must be.

“Oh little one, how do I tell you
that these trifling things below
are not in themselves so hurtful,
but cause you to walk too slow?

“Look to the path ahead child,
pick up your pace and run
the race that is set before you,
until it has been won.

“And for your faithfulness and love
I'll give to you a crown,
which I have kept prepared for you
before the earth was found!

“In those days we'll have full fellowship,
My jewel you'll truly be,
amidst my throne of truth and light
you'll dwell immortally.

“You'll be with me on the divine plane,
you, the church and I
will have vast eternity
to create earth and sky!

“You’ll know each flower intimately,
the smallest creature by its name.
I’ll give for you to create
each of these its frame.

“So you see now why I say
tarriest not on this earth,
for what I have in store for you
you’ll soon receive at your birth.”

I kneeled upon my knees in prayer
asking Him for strength
to run the race successfully
and faithfully the length.

Then I rose up to my feet,
the flowers I’d picked dropped to the ground,
and with one tear, yet overjoyed,
I ran the race with one less pound.

Carlene Meyer

Joh_14:6 Jesus *said to him, "I am **the way**, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

Act 9:1-2 NASB Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high-priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to **the Way**, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Act 19:9 NASB But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of **the Way** before the people,

Act 19:23 About that time there occurred no small disturbance concerning **the Way**.

Act 24:22 But Felix, having a more exact knowledge about **the Way**, put them off, saying, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide your case."

Pride

What a terrible word. Webster defines it as “too high an opinion of oneself” or “the state or quality of being proud.”

In Proverbs 16:5 we read *“The LORD detests all the proud in heart.”* Also see Proverbs 6:17 and Psalms 10:15.

Not long ago, the LGBT members hid in closets. Look how things have changed in this country and so much of the world. Now they are clamoring for more acceptance and liberties - like “Pride Month.”

What does it all mean? Has God changed His position on these actions and now approves of this conduct because it is done out of “love”?

Consider what God’s word says. In Matt 15:19&20, Jesus said *“For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man unclean.”*

The Apostle Paul had much to say about this matter. He warned the Ephesian church in his letter, saying, *“But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people”.* (Eph 5:3)

And to the church at Colossae, Paul wrote *“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming”.* Col 3:5&6

In the first chapter of Paul’s letter to the Romans, he deals extensively with this evil starting at verse 1:24: *“Therefore, God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of the bodies with one another.”* *“Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchange natural relations for unnatural*

ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women, and were inflamed with lust for one another. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind to do what ought not to be done. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them." Romans 1:24-32

Unfortunately, many of the Christian churches and their members are welcoming those who are practicing this lifestyle.

In the Corinthian church that Paul helped to build, one of the members was practicing sexual immorality with his father's wife. (1 Cor 5:1) Paul condemned his action and the blind eyes of the congregation members who approved it. (Verse 5)

Continuing on, Paul said this: *"I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people – not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral. In that case you would have to leave this world. But I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. Expel the wicked man from among you."* 1 Cor 5:9-13. Also read I Cor 6:9-11.

The battle line is clearly drawn. Judgement will be like Sodom and Gomorrah. I lost one of my sons to AIDS in 1990. It was the most painful time of my life. May we give warning to others who may be at risk.

We are fast approaching the days that Jesus predicted before His return. See Matt 14, Mark 13, and Luke 21. May we indeed be found on the right side of this battle with the devil's forces. God Bless!

D. Anas

Joy to the World! The Lord Has Come!

What a privilege it has been for each of us to sing and read those words over our life-times, especially during this season when we celebrate Christmas. Hallelujah! What a loving God to give us His Son as atonement for the sins of all mankind! To send His Son to live and die that each of us may look forward to eternity in His Kingdom- with His Son as our own personal Savior!

Luke 1:1-18

“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.

So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!

So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which

the Lord has made known to us." And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds."

Vs 8 talks about the wonderment of those who heard the shepherds report. This brings us back to our own childhood thoughts when we were first told of the "birth of Jesus Christ our Savior", born in that manger -- a humble beginning as a babe in a manger who was to grow into the King of the Jews, who gave His life for the sins of all mankind. How wonderful this story! It became clearer to us as we matured in life and in the knowledge of Jesus and God's plan and lead us to the salvation Jesus brought us, starting on that Christmas morning.

Galatians 4:4-7 *"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."*

God's perfect plan in His perfect timing -- that leads to joy unspeakable! By comparison, all the Christmas gifts we have now opened, and we are enjoying, have no comparison to the gift God gave us. 2 Corinthians 9:15 "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"

Whether we use the word "unspeakable" or "indescribable" to acknowledge what baby Jesus means to us personally; let us each shout for joy each day of our lives for our very own Savior! Praise God! Hallelujah! Amen!

Merry Christmas to all our brothers and sisters every day of the year! Love in Christ.

D. Ostwald

Joy to All People?

Resting in the middle of all the beautiful images of the birth of our Lord we read a most disturbing account which may cause some to question the accuracy of the angel's glorious proclamation: *"Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be **to all people**. For there is born to you this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."*

In Matthew 2 we find the famous account of the wise men of whom we sing: they came from the east, following Christ's star, bearing gifts for the "King of the Jews" which led them to Jesus. You will recall that Herod was very disturbed by the news and had the wise men brought to him and told them that after they found the Messiah, they were to come back and let him know so he could go and worship him also. (**Yea, right?**) The wise men are told in a dream not to go back to Herod and an angel appears to Joseph and tells him to "get out of Dodge", go to Egypt for Herod would try to kill the babe. Now we pick up at Matthew 2:16-18: *"Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentations, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."*

So much for that **"good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people."** Can you imagine the hollering and grief of losing all the male children 2 years old and under? One might ask "Did these parents find great joy as a result of the birth of the "King of the Jews"?"

Even after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, he, having paid the full ransom for the sins of the whole world and with believers receiving eternal life for faith in Jesus Christ, about 60 million people still die each year. Many are Christians and many are young, tragic deaths. Where is their joy in the birth of Jesus Christ?

Open your Bibles and read Jeremiah chapter 31, a Messianic prophesy of the hope and joy that He will establish in the coming kingdom of God on earth. God gives this message of hope at a time when Nebuchadnezzar has stomped Israel and taken the crops

and all the best it has; copper, silver and gold, the best tradesmen, the most skilled and wisest people, and the best bred, most learned children off to Babylon and left the rest to fend with what is left. Amid this devastation, God gives these assurances of a coming day: *“For there will be a day when the watchmen will cry on Mount Ephraim ‘Arise and let us go up to Zion, to the Lord our God.’”* (6) and we pick up at vs 13 *“Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, and young men and old, together, for I will turn their mourning to joy, will comfort them and make them rejoice rather than sorrow. I will satiate the soul of the priests with abundance and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the Lord.”*

Now as we continue let me tell you that in Jeremiah 40 we see that Ramah is a place outside of Jerusalem which was basically the holding place where the selected Jews including the well-bred and wisest children were gathered before being exiled to Babylon. Jeremiah continues with the quote we find in Mt 2: (18) *“Thus says the Lord: ‘A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.’”* This is “real time” description of what was happening in Jeremiah’s day as well as a prophecy for the crushed mothers in Jerusalem at the time around Jesus’ birth because Matthew places it there. Now hear the promise of hope and assurance that God gives to the mothers of the children swiped off to Babylon, the mothers of the massacred babies in Jerusalem and to you and me: (16) *“Thus says the Lord: ‘Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for your work shall be rewarded, says the Lord, and they shall come back from the land of the enemy. There is hope in your future, says the Lord, that your children shall come back to their border.’”*

“There is hope in your future” -- God knows and has it covered is the message Matthew leaves all with the mothers of Jerusalem and you and I when he included the prophecy in Matthew 2:15. Not only is God letting the mothers know that He knew 600 years earlier that they would suffer such loss, but He has it covered.

Merry Christmas everybody! Jesus Christ is the hope of all ages and indeed is the *“tidings of great joy that shall be to all people.”* -- **in God’s time.**

B. Blake

Be Ye Transformed

(All Scripture references are from the NKJV unless otherwise stated.)

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Romans 12:1-2

Why do we need to be “*transformed*”? Here are two verses to refresh our minds about what we should already know.

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?” Jeremiah 17:9

“They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.” Psalm 14:3

The Greek word in our opening text, translated '*transformed*', is 'metamorphoo' (Strong's # 3339) and means to change, transfigure, transform. From this Greek word we get the English word “metamorphosis”, generally illustrated by the mysterious change of a caterpillar into a butterfly. It seems rather amazing that this transforming process of a small creature was available for the Apostle Paul to use as an illustration. Most young, whether born live or from eggs, bear considerable resemblance to their parents, but not in this case. One wonders why some creatures have this strange, complicated process of metamorphosis. Perhaps God created such a process seeing that it would be useful in the distant future as an illustration of the Christian experience?

In nature, the caterpillar crawls along a stem or branch, looking only downward to the earth, and eating almost anything green in its path. That is all that it does -- EAT. The caterpillar eats ravenously, not so much to sustain its life, but to provide sustenance for the butterfly that is to come. The caterpillar

cannot reproduce itself. The caterpillar, it is claimed, has no brain but only a nervous center; it knows nothing.

The multi-footed ugly caterpillar, crawling along with poor vision, looking only downward, and with no hope of a future, is a good figure of the fallen human being, the "*old man*". It will perish.

But at some point, instinct tells the caterpillar to attach itself to a branch and spin a cocoon around itself -- then begins the little-understood process of metamorphosis. While keeping life-sustaining organs [nervous center, heart, etc.] alive, the stored food supplies and other body parts begin to be broken down into the basic building blocks of life, such as proteins, sugars, nucleic acids, lipids, carbohydrates, etc. These basic building blocks are then gradually reconstructed into a "new creature".

At the end of the process, the beautiful butterfly emerges. It can fly! It can sip the nectar of flowers! It has compound eyes for excellent vision. It has a brain! It has only 6 legs. Most important of all, it can reproduce itself [via eggs]! This is a good figure of the "*new creature*" as fully developed into a heavenly being. What remains of the caterpillar is left behind - - dead.

The caterpillar entering a cocoon, illustrates the human being entering into the "narrow way", by accepting Jesus as Savior and by repentance and reformation. This is the beginning. Applying this scenario to the Christian life, we find that the transforming process [mostly hidden to the world] is a long series of surrendering to God's will. This process requires patient endurance, and the Master is in control of the process. It is a lifetime work.

Once in this "*narrow way*", then, there should follow the gradual transforming of the mind into Christ-likeness, and holiness, and righteousness -- success in this ultimately leads to eternal life in the heavens. It is in this "*narrow way*" that we will begin

to find the “spiritual” faith; a faith that must grow and develop under the influence of the Holy Spirit. *“Faith comes by hearing the Word of God”*. (Romans 10:17; my translation)

J.B. Phillips has an outstanding and memorable translation of Romans 12:1-2:--

“With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give Him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to Him and acceptable by Him. Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God re-mold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the Plan of God for you is good, meets all His demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity.”

“The Message” translation/paraphrase offers us this:--

“So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life -- your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life -- and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.” Romans 12:1-2

The only other place Paul uses this Greek word for “transformed” [‘metamorphoo’] is in 2 Corinthians 3:18:

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding [reflecting] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

The Christian, like a mirror, reflects the “glory of the Lord” to the best of his/her ability; and in the process is gradually “transformed” more and more accurately into God’s image.

Matthew 17:2 and Mark 9:2 use 'metamorphoo' in relating the transfiguration of our Lord -- a startling transformation indeed!

Jesus taught essentially the same principle as "*transformed*", when he said --

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.'" Matthew 16:24-25

Related Scripture texts to be considered:

"...knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." Romans 6:6

"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Romans 7:25

"...who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." 2 Corinthians 3:6

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20

"...that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness." Ephesians 4:22-24

“Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.”
Colossians 3:9-10

“Do not let your adornment be merely outward -- arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel -- rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.” 1 Peter 3:3-4

Concluding thoughts:

Do we live our lives based on “feelings”, or are only concerned about “doing”? Then we are not being “*transformed*”, we are not “becoming” something new.

So, we see that the Scriptures urge us to be radically transformed from the inside out, to change completely how we think and act, and to have our minds renewed along holy and righteous lines; to be prepared for the heavenly existence.

Finally, let each ponder this question. What, after all, is truly a good, acceptable, and perfect use of this Christian life for God’s purposes?

L. Schneider

God formed us, sin deformed us, and only Jesus can transform us.

Reputation is what men think you are; character is what God knows you are.

A true Christian is one who is right-side-up in an upside-down world.

If anyone speaks evil of you, your life should be such that no one would believe them.

The Design of the Epistle to the Galatians

It is easy to discern from the Epistle itself that the following circumstances existed in the churches of Galatia, and that it was written with reference to them.

(1) That they had been at first devotedly attached to the apostle Paul, and had received his commands and instructions with implicit confidence when he was among them; Gal 4:14-15 *“And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.”* Compare Gal 1:6.

(2) That they had been perverted from the doctrine which he taught them soon after he had left them; Gal 1:6 *I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.*

(3) That this had been done by persons who were of Jewish origin, and who insisted on the observance of the rites of the Jewish religion.

(4) That they claimed to have come directly from Jerusalem, and to have derived their views of religion and their authority from the apostles there.

(5) That they taught that the apostle Paul was inferior to the apostles there; that he had been called more recently into the apostolic office; that the apostles at Jerusalem must be regarded as the source of authority in the Christian church; and that, therefore, the teaching of Paul should yield to that which was derived directly from Jerusalem.

(6) That the laws of Moses were binding, and were necessary in order to justification. That the rite of circumcision especially was of binding obligation; and it is probable Gal 6:12 (“As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution

for the cross of Christ.”) that they had prevailed on many of the Galatians to be circumcised, and certain that they had induced them to observe the Jewish festivals; Gal 4:10 “Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.”

(7) It would seem, also, that they urged that Paul himself had changed his views since he had been among the Galatians, and now maintained the necessity of circumcision; Gal 5:11, *“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”*

Perhaps they alleged this, from the undoubted fact that Paul, when at Jerusalem Act 21:26, (*“Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them”*) had complied with some of the customs of the Jewish ritual. (note: *Acts 21:26* occurs in his last visit to Jerusalem, during which he was arrested, probably late in his ministry, whereas the Galatians letter is believed to have been penned earlier – editor)

(8) That they urged that all the promises of God were made to Abraham, and that whoever would partake of those promises, must be circumcised as Abraham was. This Paul answers, Gal 3:7; Gal 4:7.

(9) That in consequence of the promulgation of these views, great dissensions had arisen in the church, and strife of an unhappy nature existed, greatly contrary to the spirit which should be manifested by those who bore the Christian name.

From this description of the state of things in the churches of Galatia, the design of the Epistle is apparent, and the scope of the argument will be easily seen. Of this state of things the apostle had been undoubtedly apprised, but whether by letters, or by messengers from the churches there, is not declared. It is not improbable, that some of his friends in the churches there had informed him of it, and he immediately set about a remedy to the evils existing there.

I. The first object, therefore, was to show that he had received his commission as an apostle, directly from God. He had not received it at all from man; he had not even been instructed by the other apostles; he had not acknowledged their superiority; he had not even consulted them. He did not acknowledge, therefore, that the apostles at Jerusalem possessed any superior rank or authority. His commission, though he had not seen the Lord Jesus before he was crucified, he had, nevertheless, derived immediately from him. The doctrine, therefore, which he had taught them, that the Mosaic laws were not binding, and that there was no necessity of being circumcised, was a doctrine which had been derived directly from God. In proof of this, he goes into an extended statement Gal. 1, of the manner in which he had been called, and of the fact; that he had not consulted with the apostles at Jerusalem, or confessed his inferiority to them; of the fact that when they had become acquainted with the manner in which he preached, they approved his course Gal 1:24; Gal 2:1-10; and of the fact that on one occasion, he had actually been constrained to differ from Peter, the oldest of the apostles, on a point in which he was manifestly wrong, and on one of the very points then under consideration.

II. The second great object, therefore, was to show the real nature and design of the Law of Moses, and to prove that the peculiar rites of the Mosaic ritual, and especially the rite of circumcision, were not necessary to justification and salvation; and that they who observed that rite, did in fact renounce the Scripture method of justification; make the sacrifice of Christ of no value, and make slaves of themselves. This leads him into a consideration of the true nature of the doctrine of justification, and of the way of salvation by a Redeemer.

This point he shows in the following way:

(1) By showing that those who lived before Christ, and especially Abraham, were in fact justified, not by obedience to the ritual law of Moses, but by faith in the promises of God; Gal. 3:1-18.

(2) By showing that the design of the Mosaic ritual was only temporary, and that it was intended to lead to Christ; Gal 3:19-29; Gal 4:1-8.

(3) In view of this, he reproves the Galatians for having so readily fallen into the observance of these customs; Gal 4:9-21.

(4) This view of the design of the Mosaic Law, and of its tendency, he illustrates by an allegory drawn from the case of Hagar; Gal 4:21-31.

This whole discourse is succeeded by an affectionate exhortation to the Galatians, to avoid the evils which had been engendered; reproving them for the strife existing in consequence of the attempt to introduce the Mosaic rites, and earnestly entreating them to stand firm in the liberty which Christ had vouchsafed to them from the servitude of the Mosaic institutions, Gal. 5; 6.

The design of the whole Epistle, therefore, is to state and defend the true doctrine of justification, and to show that it did not depend on the observance of the laws of Moses. In the general purpose, therefore, it accords with the design of the Epistle to the Romans. In one respect, however, it differs from the design of that Epistle. That was written, to show that man could not be justified by any works of the Law, or by conformity to any law, moral or ceremonial; the object of this is, to show that justification cannot be obtained by conformity to the ritual or ceremonial law; or that the observance of the ceremonial law is not necessary to salvation. In this respect, therefore, this Epistle is of less general interest than that to the Romans. It is also, in some respects, more difficult. The argument, if I may so express myself, is more Jewish. It is more in the Jewish manner; is designed to meet a Jew in his own way, and is, therefore, somewhat more difficult for all to follow. Still it contains great and vital statements on the doctrines of salvation, and, as such, demands the profound and careful attention of all who desire to be saved, and who would know the way of acceptance with God.

Albert Barnes' Notes

A Song of Thanksgiving

"Tell...how great things the Lord has done for you."

Mark 5:19

Through the Psalms the saint of God finds utterance for the praise and thanksgiving of a gratitude-filled heart. Thus has the Lord wisely provided means of expression for the pent-up emotions within.

Among the many beautiful expressions of praise and thanksgiving, we have chosen for consideration the 30th Psalm, perhaps composed after the Psalmist's recovery from a sickness which had nearly proved fatal...Who can consider these words of warm gratitude without his heart burning within him at the thought of his own "*many benefits*" received from the "*Giver of every good and perfect gift*?"

"I will extol Thee, O Lord; for thou hast lifted me up, and not made my foes to rejoice over me. O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave ...kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit" (vs. 1-3)

Is not this descriptive of our own experience? Do we not remember "*the hole of the pit whence we were dug*?" We "*who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past we walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others*" (Ephesians 2:1-3)...And what of our many foes who so frequently triumphed over us; those "*works of the flesh,*" the enemies within the fortress so graphically presented in Gal. 5:19-21? "*What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death*" (Romans 6:21)..."*We looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but found none*" (Psalm 69:20).

Then "*this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.*" He "*looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the*

earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death.”...For “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ (by grace you are saved), and has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:4-7). Therefore, let us, “Sing unto the Lord, O Ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. For his anger endures but a moment; in his favor is life. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning” (vs. 4, 5).

In its highest and truest significance, Praise is the instinctive outburst of adoring worship that rises from a pure spirit at the knowledge and vision of an Infinite, Self-existent, Sovereign-ruling God of Holiness, Justice, Goodness, and Truth. It occupies a higher vantage ground than Thanksgiving, since it represents reverent homage and appreciative adoration for God, as he is in His eternal, glorious, perfect, and blessed Being, utterly without thought of the good he bestows upon the worshiping, recipient creature. The offering of Praise, therefore, is the one spontaneous act of the true saint, unaffected by promise of good and uninfluenced by expectation of return for service. Thus unmixed with any thought of self, Praise is the highest expression of honor to God, and brings the purest and loftiest element into the Christian’s communion with Him. In both Testaments it is characterized as an “offering” and “sacrifice” by which God is glorified (Psalm 50:14, 23; 107:22; Hebrews 13:15). Joined with the sweeter note of Thanksgiving for unlimited “*goodness and mercy,*” Praise is the one revealed employment of the sinless, redeemed hosts in the Heavenly Presence (Revelation 5:7-14). “*Praise waits for Thee, O God, in Zion*” (Psalm 65:1).

The “*remembrance of his holiness*” means literally “*his holy memorial*” (“*celebrate his holy memorial*” ~ Darby) and refers probably to the passage in Ex. 3:15: “*This is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.*” God’s Name is His revelation of Himself, in all His various attributes of Love, Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Truth, and Righteousness. God’s

memorial is that great history of redemption which was, so to speak, the setting up of a monument to His glory on which all these attributes were inscribed. The Revised Version brings out the precise thought in translating: "*Give thanks to his holy memorial name.*"

The things of this Psalm are of continual interest. They do not belong to any one time or any one type of experience. Some of the notes in it are suitable to home, family and individuals throughout all the years of their history. Eminently so is the 5th verse, which tells us of the bitter and the sweet, the dark and the light, which run in various distribution along human lives. The underlying doctrine is the great fact that "God is Love," and that love runs through all, rules over all, explains all.

Here is a reason why God is to be praised - because He manifests Himself in love, not in wrath; or if in wrath, but for a moment. Love directs all. Rotherham renders this verse: "*For there is a Moment in his anger, a Life-time in his good-pleasure (or favor); in the evening cometh weeping to lodge, but by the morning 'tis a shout of Triumph (or joy).*"...Weeping is described under the image of a wayfarer who comes in at evening to lodge for the night. The suddenness and surprise of gladness, on the other hand, in the morning, are beautifully represented by the simple "*at dawn, a shout of joy,*" without a verb. Just as the sun in Eastern lands, without any long prelude of twilight to announce his coming, leaps, as it were, in a moment above the horizon, so does the light of God's love dispel in a moment the long night of darkness of sorrow. From Isaiah we quote a beautiful parallel passage: "*For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, says the Lord thy Redeemer*" (Isaiah 54:7, 8). And in the greater picture of the Restitution day which the Psalmist's words bring to mind, with what thrilled hearts do we in foretaste picture the glorious revealing, through his Christ, of the great God of the Universe, whose righteous and holy character will then be made manifest to all humanity. In that "*new heaven and earth,*" God's blessings abundantly poured forth

upon astonished mankind will result in the wiping away of all tears from their eyes and will more than offset their experience under the terrible Night of Weeping (Isaiah 65:17:Revelation 21:4; Isaiah 35:10; Isaiah 25:6-9).

“And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favor thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: Thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled. I cried to thee, O Lord; and...made supplication. What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth? Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be thou my helper. (vss.6-10).

In their time of trial God's people in all ages have been brought to feel their entire dependence on Him. In days of flowing prosperity we have little sense of that dependence. As the Psalmist expresses it here: *“In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.”* We are very apt to dream, when things are well with us, that they will always be so and never otherwise, *“Tomorrow shall be as this day.”* Yet prosperity is more pleasant than profitable to us. Though in show it looks like a fair summer, it is indeed a wasting winter, and spends all the fruit we have reaped in the harvest of sanctified affliction. We are never in greater danger than in the sunshine of prosperity. It is rare to receive much of this world and not, as the prodigal, to go afar off; *‘tis hard to keep close to God in prosperity’* when we have much of this world to live upon and content ourselves with; to live upon God and make Him our content and stay, as if we had no other life nor livelihood but in Him. We are very apt in such a case to let go our hold of God and the exercise of faith and estrange our affections from God.

It is more common to pray for strength to endure through times of adversity and suffering than for strength to endure through times of prosperity and gladness. Yet, it is these latter times of buoyant self-reliance that are most full of peril. It is not in those perilous ways when every step gives fresh evidence that without our Leader we are lost, that we are most likely to turn away from Him. That supreme peril comes rather when we walk in the open plain, and have forgotten the serpents that lurk among the flowers. For every soul that is harmed by adversity, ten are harmed by prosperity. Yet you

will find a hundred persons who pray against that adversity which so often brings men closer to God, where you will find one who prays against that pleasant prosperity which too often lures men away from God and from their own best future.

And how deceiving is that prosperity! When the days run smoothly, all seems certain to continue. But then ill health fastens on us; death invades our circle; relatives bring us into deep waters; our means of living fail; we are plunged into a very wilderness of woe. How falsely we judged when we thought that it was by its own inherent stability our mountain stood strong! No! It was solely the result of God's favor, for "*all our springs are in Him;*" the moment He hides His face we are most grievously troubled.

What soul can be deserted and not be afflicted? The entire world does no good without the favor of God. *As all the stars, though they shine together, do not dispel the darkness of night; so no creatures can comfort us sufficiently when God hides His face.* His absence cannot but be lamented with greatest grief, whose presence the soul prizes above all earthly joys. "*Oh, may no earth-born cloud arise to hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes!*"

How moving is the Psalmist's pleas to his God in vs. 8 and 9! Yet his prayer for prolonged life was not offered with the view of any earthly possession or enjoyment, but only with a view to the honor of God. He dreaded death as being an end of Praise to God. His plea: if I may live I shall Praise God and witness to His truth before the living, and this will avail to the glory and honor of God. But in death, my lips are dumb as to any testimony for God in the land of the living.

As we ponder our own brief span, our "*fleeting breath,*" well may we repeat the poet's words: "*What need has God of this poor clay?*" We, therefore, with the Psalmist, ask aright for life *when we have in view that we may live to Praise Him.*

"Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; Thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness; to the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee forever!"

W. Siekman

A Portrait of Jesus – *He Gave Hope to the Hopeless*



“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed...today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” Luke 4:18-21

...Jesus' ministry was, and still is, one that gives hope to those who struggle and are in bondage. Whether the struggle is with doubt or fear, sorrow or emotional scars, illness or suffering of any kind, whatever it is that weighs us down, *Jesus is there to give hope.*

This particular day, Luke tells us that Jesus walked into the synagogue in Nazareth, His hometown, to worship and was handed the scrolls of Isaiah to read. Jesus read this passage cited above. He knew it was His commission from His Father. He came to this earth to give the good news to the poor, to heal the sick, to bind up the broken-hearted, to give sight to the blind, and to set the captives free...*He came to this earth to give hope to the hopeless.*

He had seen what sin had done; sorrow and suffering were everywhere. He saw the poor widows struggling for existence. He witnessed the beggars at the side of the road crying out for alms. He felt the weight that the chains of sin had put on the people around Him and Jesus desired to do more than just encourage those who had been bound by Satan; *He had come to bring freedom!* Whatever means Satan uses to keep people captive, whether it is sickness, addiction, poverty, depression, fear, guilt, etc. none of these things will prevail against Jesus who still releases all captives who are willing. At the cross, He paid the price to deliver this captive world from sin and its bondage.

Yes, Jesus came not only to bring hope, but He came to bring freedom to all who would receive Him. He did not come to condemn people for their sin, but to release them from their sin. We must continue the work that He left behind. The commission is ours as well. We, too, are called to bring hope to the hopeless, to preach the good news, to help people see that sin does not have to weigh them down, because one look at their Savior, and they, too, can be free. Jesus continues to bring hope to the hopeless through you and me. *Will you be Jesus to someone today?*

D. Mathewson

Prayer List

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



Let us be Prayer Warriors for our Brethren!

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

Entered into rest:

Bob Ammerman, NJ – August 2021
Susan Fiorello Munoz, NY – September 2021
Inez Gary – September 2021
Beresford King-Smith, England – September 2021

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

Bible Correspondence Course New Graduates & Websites

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



USA

Belinda Kennedy of Ohio completed the Ransom Course

Margaret Roberts of Michigan completed the Ransom Course

You are invited to view the following websites:

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

<http://www.cbchurch.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.homechristians.net> (Fraser Valley, B.C.)

<http://www.bibelgemeinde.at> (Free Bible Students, Austria)

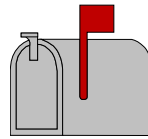
<http://www.bibelgemeinde.org> (Mission Work Bible Students, Austria)

<http://bibelforscher.heimat.eu/> (Free Bible Students, Germany (English))

<http://www.softgrafic.com/bibbia> (Italian Bible Students)

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

Letters from Our Fellowship and Readers



There was no mail to publish in this issue, but here is an excerpt from a letter by the Apostle Paul: *“Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit.”* **1Th 5:16-19** NASB

The only approach to overcoming is to know and believe the promises of God.

Conferences & Conventions

The Christian Believers Conference was held on July 29-Aug.1 online through Zoom. The recorded sermons and interactive studies are posted on the CBC webpage cbconference.com under the subtitle Recent Videos.

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

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.

Donations

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

Article Contributions

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

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