

Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the
whole Counsel of GOD

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O Lord my God,
I will give
thanks unto
thee for ever.

Psa. 30:12

THANKFUL FOR PLENTY

Plenty of Food. "Ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied," Joel 2:26.

Plenty of Water. "Thou didst send plenteous rain," Psa. 68:9.

Plenty of Goods. "He shall make thee plenteous in goods," Deut. 28:11.

Plenty of Production. "The Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand .. .," Deut. 30:9.

Plenty in Store. "So shall thy barns be filled with plenty,..." Prov. 3:10. "Bread enough, and to spare," Luke 15 :17.

Plenty for All. "A plentiful country," Jer. 2:7.

Plenty of Mercy. "Slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy," Ps. 103:8.

Plentiful Pardon. "Return unto the Lord, for He will abundantly pardon," Is. 55:7.

Plentiful Peace. "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ," Phil. 4:7.

Plentiful Redemption. "With the Lord is plenteous Redemption," Ps. 130:7. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3:16.

Plentiful Grace. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye always having all sufficiency for all things, may abound unto every good work, II Cor. 9:8.

Plentiful Resources. "Unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," Eph. 3:20.

Plenty for the Future. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, " I C o r . 2 : 9 .

(S e l e c t e d)

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Editor: Gene Hawkins



“**B**ut of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only....But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.” Matt. 24:36 & 43

Though many have often used this citation in reference to Jesus’ coming for the Church, and indeed Paul also describes Him coming as a thief, (1 Thess. 5:2) the exact context of these words applies directly to Israel in the latter days of the tribulation. We are at this present hour in the days of Noah, wherein “...the days that **were before the flood** they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,...” V. 38 However it is imperative to understand that the day described here is a day of judgment, rather than a time of deliverance to heaven, for they “...knew not until the flood came, and took them all away;... Then (at that time) shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” Matt. 24:39-42 Many have interpreted these words as applying to the Church and meaning that those taken away were transported to glory, but just the opposite is true. Those taken while they are “...in the field...” or “...grinding at the mill;...” are “...taken...” after the same pattern as those taken away by the flood in Noah’s day. Those who were not aboard the ark were not transported to glory; they rather perished in the waters of the flood. Thus, those who are left are those left on the earth to live another day wherein they will be blessed during the Millennium. Note some other key phrases in this portion which also testify both the time of these happenings in the tribulation and the severity of judgment which ensues. Jesus established the timeline in the middle of the week

with this reference from Daniel. “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:” Matt. 24:15-16. We then hear loud strains of judgment foretold as The Master warns: “...**woe** unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck **in those days!**...For **then** shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be...For as the **lightning** (severe judgment) cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” (in judgment, not deliverance) “For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.” (at Armageddon) Matt. 24:19-29

4 The point here is that by the time these things come to pass, the entire Church will already be in heaven. Daniel clearly tells us that the abomination of desolation, which means that the antichrist will set up his own image in the temple, will not take place until the middle of the seven year week of tribulation. “And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.” Dan. 12:11 Daniel is very precise here with his timeline stating that from the time the daily sacrifice is taken away until the middle of the week, exactly 1290 days will have transpired. This is undoubtedly why Jesus said in reference to that time, “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation,... stand in the holy place, (**whoso readeth, let him understand:**)” This may appear to be exactly opposite the inference shown forth in V. 36, but that is in no wise the case. “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only....” There is no contradiction here. The Son of Man will come as a thief to the unsuspecting, but there will also be those who understand perfectly the order of God’s Word. Jesus must of necessity be speaking to two different groups of people, namely those who have ears to hear and those who have turned a deaf ear and blind eye to the facts of scripture. We are confident that there will be those in that day who will most assuredly read and understand this specific prophecy from

Daniel. They will know that when the daily sacrifice is taken away they will be able to count down exactly 1290 days to the time when the abomination of desolation is set up.

Daniel also gives us another very significant timeline which likewise begins when the daily sacrifice is taken away. “Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the **transgression of desolation**, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Dan. 8:13 Simply stated, this means that there must be exactly 2300 days from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away until the end of days allotted to the antichrist, for the temple can never be cleansed until he and his abomination of desolation are removed. The one who reads and understands will know perfectly that there are exactly 1290 days from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away until the middle of the week. He would also understand that there are only 2300 days from that same starting point until the absolute end of the tribulation period. Thus 2300 days minus 1290 days leaves a balance of only 1010 days from the time the antichrist sets up his image in the temple until Jesus pours out His judgment on this man of sin, thus ending this horrendous day of destruction. This is in fulfillment of Jesus’ declaration that “...except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.” Matt. 24:22 We would again emphasize here that this scenario does not contradict the premise that, “...of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only,” for by the end of these 2300 days, Jesus would have already come as a thief executing severe judgment upon the unsuspecting, while the faithful remnant, which will be watching, is preserved.

Thus, life will continue on this earth for “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened,... and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And **then** shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and **then** shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in

the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Matt. 24:29-30 The day of Jesus’ coming as a thief is over and Rev. 1:7 conveys exactly the same message. “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and **every eye shall see him**, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” The end of the 2300 days of which Daniel prophesied does not mean that Jesus will on that day come with “...power and great glory.” That spectacular event will come to pass later, and He will not return as a thief, for “...every eye shall see him...” and there will be a host looking for Him even as we are exhorted to do at this present time.

6 We would also point out today that those who read and understand, along with those who do not, are clearly evident in these closing days of the Church Age before the tribulation actually begins. Paul outlined the contrasting conduct of these two groups when he wrote to the saints at Thessalonica. “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves **know perfectly** that the day of the Lord so cometh as a **thief** in the night... But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a **thief**. Ye are all the children of light,... we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do **others**;...” (other Christians) I Thess. 5:1-6 Jesus also separated these two groups when He wrote the following words to every Church in Rev. 2-3. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;...”

God has always been more specific and precise in regard to exact timelines pertaining to Israel. He told Abraham “... that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs,... and they shall afflict them four hundred years;...” Gen. 4:15 The record in Ex. 12:41 is even more precise. “And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, **even the selfsame day it came to pass**, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.” Daniel also “...understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.” God also told Daniel that

“Seventy weeks, a total of 490 years, are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city,…” Dan. 9:24 This timeline also began at a precise moment and ended with one week remaining when Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, an event which has become known as “Palm Sunday.” “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment (Neh. 2:1-8) to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks:” Dan. 9:25

It is also quite evident that some of those at Jesus’ first advent had to have understood somewhat of a precise time that He should arrive, as witness both Simeon and Anna. Scripture is very definite as to the place of His Birth and the wise men revealed to Herod a time within 2 years due to the sign of the star which was given. Isaiah is also very emphatic that, “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” Isa. 7:14 However, when this great miracle came to pass, it was loudly passed off as nothing more than an act of fornication, as insinuated by the Pharisees in John 8:41. 7

God is very emphatic in His message to the Church today, promising: “For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” Heb 10:37 Scripture is also quite clear that Jesus’ coming for the Church will likewise be as a thief, even as stated above in Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians. However, Jude warned us that “...there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.” Jude 1:18 Peter likewise proclaimed “...that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” II Pet. 3:3-4 We continue to hear such reports of unbelief today, despite the tremendous signs of judgment being unveiled before our very eyes. No, the seals of judgment found in Rev. 6 have not been opened yet, but can anyone deny that God is trying desperately to get the attention of men by all these warning signs which are so prevalent at this present hour? We

8 have noted before in these pages that for quite some time, the world has been experiencing an era which Jesus described as "... the beginning of sorrows." Matt. 24:8 The term sorrows is one which is used to describe a woman in labor wherein the birth pangs begin rather mild and sporadic, but as the birth draws nigh, those pangs become much more frequent and intense. This same pattern is clearly manifest in these latter days. Earthquakes are becoming rather severe and almost commonplace. Tsunamis and tidal waves have brought untold disaster and misery around the world. These past few months have produced hurricanes Harvey, Florence, and now Michael just in the U.S. alone. Add to that the forest fires in California and other Western States, along with horrific flooding on the Eastern side of America. We can only wonder how long emergency aid for all these natural disasters will hold out. Christians should feel inclined to help those who have suffered such violence, but even before massive amounts of money have been collected for one disaster, another devastating event leaving many homeless and in dire need has already taken place in another area. We can safely say on the authority of God's Word that this same pattern will not only continue but escalate.

We have noted previously in these pages how "wars and rumours of wars... nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom,..." along with many other acts of hatred and violence, can all be attributed to man and his ungodly, incontinent, and rebellious heart. However there is a clear pattern presented in scripture, wherein there does come a time when forces quite beyond the powers of natural man become clearly evident. Men love to believe that man-made "global warming" is responsible for the violent erratic weather of our day and thus he can surely do something about it, but scripture is very plain, insisting that "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:" Matt. 24:29 This verse describes events well into the tribulation period but the effects of this "heavenly shake-up" on the earth has already begun, and only The Heavenly Master is responsible for it. Men will find more and more that the only Man who can say

with authority and immediate results, "...Peace, be still,...." is Jesus. Even the most elite on this earth are absolutely powerless to stop the massive force of wind, rain, and floodwaters, brought forth by Harvey, Florence, and now Michael!

Jesus will come as an unbidden thief to the unbelieving masses around this little earth ball, and sadly that will include born again Christians. He straitly charged the disciples: "And take heed to **yourselves**, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you **unawares**. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." Lk. 21:34-35 The exact context of these words is once again in reference to those who will endure the throes of the tribulation period. However, the principle of teaching readiness or unreadiness is exactly the same in the end of this Church Age. Not only did Paul warn us against sleep, passivity, and drunkenness, he also stipulated that we must be found **LOOKING** earnestly for Him. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb 9:28 The hope of Jesus' second advent was made prominent in the very early days of the Church Age when Jesus led His disciples out to Mt. Olivet and ascended into heaven. "And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1:10-11 These same disciples had just previously asked, "...Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (V. 6) Thus, it is not hard to imagine that they would assume His return would be very quickly. We know assuredly that Paul had such a hope for himself when he wrote, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that **we which are alive** and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout,.. and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then **we which are alive** and remain shall be caught up together

with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” I Thess. 4:15-17 Peter likewise exhorted his hearers to be ever ready. “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night;...Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God,...” Jesus likewise instructed the Church at Philadelphia at the very beginning of the Church Age. “Behold I come quickly...” Rev. 3:11 None of these citations even hint that He would not come for over 2000 years! The impetus here is that they should look for Him at the time then present. The same holds true today. It is incumbent on every believer to look for Him and EXPECT His return “**in my lifetime.**” It really does not make one whit of difference whether Jesus comes in my lifetime or not, but it makes a great deal of difference as to whether or not I BELIEVE He is coming while I am yet alive! The fact of WHAT any person believes will have a definite effect on **THE WAY** he lives his life. This is exactly the message which Peter conveys: “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons **ought ye to be** in all holy conversation and godliness, **Looking for and hasting** unto the coming of the day of God,...” So let us follow the example of the Thessalonian believers and abide continually in our **new occupation** “...to wait (to stay...in a given place, state, relation or expectancy) for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.” I Thess. 1:10

**For the Lord himself shall descend
from heaven with a shout, with
the voice of the archangel, and
with the trump of God:
and the dead in Christ shall rise first:**

I Thess. 4:16

Christ, The Triangle

L. J. Eidsness

“**I AM the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**” John 14:6

By this wonderful statement, the Lord Jesus Christ declared Himself to be three different things: **The Life** for our spiritual birth, our beginning as Christians, **The Truth** for our knowledge, our spiritual learning, growth and progress, and **The Way** for our walk and spiritual fellowship. Yes, we all had to begin in this world by birth. That is life in the natural, and after that, we grow in knowledge and stature and also learn to walk. The Lord made it very plain that we must begin in the kingdom of God in a similar way — by birth. Therefore He said to Nicodemus and to everyone else, “**Ye must be born again,**” to enter the kingdom of God. We must be born of water (the Word) and of the Spirit of God.

Now it is important that we, as Christians, see the difference between Christ as the Life given to us in the new birth and Christ as the Truth and the Way.

1. **The Life.** Life, in whatever form, is a wonderful mystery. No human mind can understand it; yet we all have it and may enjoy it. Often we remark, “How good to be alive.” God, in the creation of all living things, has manifested many kinds, or forms of life. Look at the numberless plants of the vegetable kingdom, where the lowest form of life is manifest and see the evidence of a vast variety of life, some lasting for only a day, while others endure for ages. Again think of the myriads of forms of life manifested in the animal creation, and wonder at the variety of life as well as the body that God created. As the animal creation shows a higher kind of life than the vegetable creation, even so when God made man in “**His likeness,**” He manifested a much higher order of life, human life. He put so much value on it that He forbade the taking of human life, except as just penalty for sin. We might also mention the angelic host as higher form of life.

Above all these varieties of created life, let us now fix our eyes upon Him who said, “I am **THE** Life.” First, we see Him taking on Himself the form of a human and living a sinless life. Then we see Him dying on the cross for our sins, all the

sins of fallen mankind. Again we see Him rising from the dead the third day, just as He said He would, and showed Himself alive to His followers. In His glorified resurrected body, He talked to them. He ate with them. For a period of forty days, He appeared to them **"by many infallible proofs."** Finally they saw Him ascend up into heaven, returning to His Father. He had left them a promise; **"If I go,...I will come again."** Thus He had manifested Himself, not as a life, but as **THE** Life, which is eternal. It is written, "For the Life was manifested and we have seen and declare unto you that eternal Life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled" —1 John 1:1, 2. Talk about "real life" and "true to life," well this is it ; for this is the only kind of life that is really and truly called "Eternal Life" in the Bible. And the wonder of it is, that God **GIVES** this Life to us lost sinners, when we receive Jesus Christ as our Saviour. **"The Gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"**—Rom. 6:23. And He **"is the true God and Eternal Life"**-1 John 5:20. Thanks be to God, that Jesus came **"that we might HAVE life and HAVE it more abundantly."** Therefore **"he that HATH the son (Christ), HATH the Life."** To as many as receive Him (Jesus), He gives power to become sons of God.

Now if the whole human family is in a state of death, **"according to the course of this world,"** (that is its condition, spiritually, God says, and the only remedy for death is life), then it is very important for every one to receive Him who is **THE** Life. By simply receiving Christ, the Saviour, we **"pass over from death unto life,"** and are delivered from a state of spiritual death and enter into a state of life eternal. Then we are in the kingdom of God in spirit, or the kingdom of God has entered into us. In His kingdom is no death. **"For He is not the God of the dead, but of the living,"** and Jesus said, **"He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die."**

2. The Truth. After we have received life, then comes **KNOWLEDGE.** It is and must be so in the spiritual realm as well as in the natural. And as the life is of no value to us until we **HAVE** it, so the Truth will do us no good until we **KNOW** it. We read therefore that **"God will have all men to be saved,"** that is, **HAVE LIFE** first of all, by receiving Christ. Next, He wants all the saved **"to come unto the KNOWLEDGE of THE**

TRUTH." I Tim. 2:4. All true knowledge is centered in Christ. Apart from Him can be no knowledge of THE Truth. For "in Him are hid ALL the treasures (values) of wisdom and knowledge"—Col. 2:3 "If ye continue in my word, ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free." John 8:32

As the Life makes us free from death only as we receive it, so the Truth makes us free from error only as we know it. As long as we are ignorant of any truth, we are in darkness concerning the same. A man may climb to the highest place in human learning and become a shining light among men of science, and still be in total darkness concerning God and eternal things, and go out into utter darkness forever. "If the light, therefore that be in you is darkness, how great is that darkness?" Jesus said. When we study God's Word of Truth, we are so apt to "lean on our own understanding," which is unsafe, because the Truth can be made known unto us by the Holy Spirit only. For "the things of God knoweth NO man, but the Spirit of God ; but God hath revealed them unto us (Paul) by His Spirit"-1 Cor. 2: 10, 11. "When He the Spirit of Truth is come (on you), He shall lead you into all the Truth." The truth concerning The Triune God and His eternal purposes —the truth about man, his present condition and future destiny and the truth concerning Israel, the Church, the Bride and the resurrections, etc.

13

3. The Way. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord (The Life), so walk ye in Him" (The Way)—Col. 2:6 Every Way has a starting place as well as a goal. Likewise The Way, Jesus Christ. There is only one place where anyone can begin in Christ. That is at the Cross, "where I first saw the light." And just as surely as the Cross is our starting point, so the Crown is our goal; for The Way leads from the Cross to the Crown. It is a way of humiliation, self-denial and suffering for Christ's sake and the Truth. "If we suffer with Him, we shall reign (have a crown) with Him." If any will come after me, let him deny himself take up his cross and follow me." "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." For although Jesus was God, He made Himself of no reputation, but took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. He humbled Himself and became obedient, even unto the death of the cross." Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him

and set Him down with the Father in His throne.

Yes, the way of the cross does not only lead home, but it leads to the crown and throne, a place near the Father, where the Son is, for "no man cometh to the Father, but by me," He said. So by receiving Jesus as our Saviour, He becomes our life and we become God's children. That brings us into real fellowship with the Father. Then as we go on and learn to know the Truth, "as it is in Jesus," we grow in grace and in knowledge and become better acquainted with our Father and His will. As we walk in that will, we walk in The Way, Christ Jesus. That keeps us in fellowship, "and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ"-1 John 1 :3.

Christ is the Way to travel in,
The Truth to seek and know.
He is the Life to have if you
Would live and learn and grow.

14

But who can WALK the Way, or know
The Truth while dead and lost?
Until you Christ the Life receive
You are a walking ghost.

So quick receive Christ as your Life,
And then from day to day,
You'll learn to KNOW Him as the Truth
And WALK in Him The Way.

(Reprint 1943)

A crowd of troubles passed him by,
As he with courage waited.
He said, 'Where do you troubles fly
When you are thus belated?'
'We go,' they said, 'to those who mope
Who look on life dejected,
Who weakly say good-by to hope—
'We go where we're expected.'

"...I, The Lord Do These..."

Eva Laura Bond

"I form the light, and create evil, I, the Lord do all these things." Isa. 45:7

It is interesting to understand this scripture as it is meant to be. God is love, therefore evil in the sense many interpret it, could not come from pure, holy love, so we must search further into the word that we might understand God's meaning here. This word evil is in no way whatsoever connected with sin, but this word translated from the Hebrew means "sorrow, wretchedness, adversity, afflictions and calamities." These are brought on humanity because of neglect, disobedience and oftentimes the believer has a touch of this in their lives to test and try their faith that they may be overcomers. I Pet. 1:7.

This same word is used after the Israelites miserably failed God in bowing down to the golden calf after He brought them out of Egypt. "And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people." Ex 32:14 This word repented means the Lord felt sorry for the people as he had compassion on the people when he thought to send more sorrow upon them. Do you know why he felt this compassion? Because Moses besought the Lord and reminded the Lord of his covenant and his promise to the people. Moses interceded for the people even as Jesus intercedes for the believer today and that plea for mercy was extended.

I John 1:9 and I John 2:1, 2 declare that, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous; And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Wherever we read the phrase, "...repented him of the evil,..." we always find another thing — sin was prevalent, and in the lives of the people. We find another case in I Chron. 21:1. The Lord had already sent pestilence upon the people

and 70,000 men died and just as the angel stretched forth his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord had compassion on the people, even so far as to feel sorry for the further sorrow and adversity that he could have brought upon them.

Again we have the same answer as to why the Lord had sorrowful compassion on the people, enough so to say, "It is enough."

Before God felt this way, David confessed and said, "I have sinned greatly in that I have done...." A messenger of the Lord gave David his choice of three punishments but David by that time had fully surrendered, and given himself to the Lord. Why? Because he knew that His mercies were great and David had plead that he be not left into the hand of man.

We read of the disobedience of the people and may wonder at God's mercy to feel sorry for them and stay the hand of evil which is sorrow, afflictions, etc., but let us not forget that this same scenario has also surely been written in the personal individual record of present living believers today.

16

(Bonds Of Peace 1952)

Heart Searchings

I pondered at close of day—
Had I helped one along life's way?
Did I encourage one depressed?
Could I say of all that I did,
It was my best?

Did I help one in despair
To carry his cross so hard to bear?
Did I drive away tears with a smile,
Chanting Christ's praises all the while.
Was that my best ?

Did I lead one, gone astray,
With steadfast steps up the King's highway ?
I wondered as the day sped by,
Did I keep love's banner flying high ?
Was that my best ?

Mable Squire

Jesus Changeth Not

W. J. Franklin

Irejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ. I've experienced many blessings, but HE is the Blessor. In the word of God we read of unspeakable joy. We read of "...ways past finding out." We read of love that passeth understanding. We read above all of an unspeakable gift, Christ Jesus, the greatest thing God has ever given to the world or to any individual. We may have all kinds of blessings, but they pass, they fluctuate.

Today we may have an abundance — tomorrow we may know what poverty is. But in poverty and riches Jesus changeth not. He is always the same. That is why our hearts can be on an even keel at all times. We have Christ, God's unspeakable gift. He fills our hearts truly with joy.

We may have blessings but they pass, material and spiritual, even spiritual feelings, the blessings of God on our very bodies and mind, they pass. Maybe tomorrow after that blessing our minds may be very slow. Circumstances and adverse conditions will drive us into a very low state of mind but Jesus changeth not. How good it is.

Solomon said, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." After weighing wealth, after weighing knowledge, after weighing mirth and natural joy, or what today we might call fun — we have tried drinking, we have tried music, we have tried great accomplishments, but after it was all over Solomon made these two statements which are very outstanding. "I hated life. I hated all of my works." It sounds like the language of a suicide but we know that there is one thing that isn't vanity. That is the Lord Jesus Christ. I could testify of many things but nothing could bring the blessing to my heart or to any of our hearts, as much as just the pure simple precious knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

This is my testimony and if I were giving a testimony on a witness stand, I would give the same testimony and ultimately I know that we would win the case.

(Bonds Of Peace 1950)

REFLECTIONS

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” I Thess. 5:18

We have reached another traditional season in our country wherein men’s hearts, at least for a time, seem willing to acknowledge the bounty which the God of all grace has bestowed upon them. However, God’s Word is very plain that thanksgiving is not simply to occupy a “season” in our lives. Paul issued the above admonition more as a command than an option, stating that this is the will of God for your lives. He likewise imparted this same message to the Colossians. “And above all these things put on charity, ... And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.” Col 3:14-15 “...be ye thankful,” cried Paul, once again emphasizing that thanksgiving must be rendered with intended purpose and obedience to God, and not simply as a matter of convenient discretion or whim on our part.

One of the stark indictments against natural man is that, “...when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful;...” Rom. 1:21 There is no substitute for a grateful heart. The very beginning of our journey into the Presence of God is to be with thanksgiving, for we are to “**Enter** into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.” Psa. 100:4 The term “...gates...” must of necessity be a reference to experiences beyond salvation, for there is only one gate which will give us access into eternal life. However, God does have many “gates” of opportunity and experience leading to multiplied avenues into the great depths of His fellowship and provisions for us. The pattern is always the same. We would appear before the gate of access, but then follows the “courts” of untold revelation and blessing wherein simple thanksgiving gives way to the fullness of praise and rejoicing in the Lord for His unspeakable bounty toward us.

Jesus clearly told us that "...the hour cometh, and **now is**, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." John 4:23 When God opens new gates of revelation to us, it is simply the glorious signal for us to open our hearts, and surrender our tongues in praise and adoration to Him. The more truth we understand the greater our worship will be.

We surely do rejoice in the natural bounty which God has freely given to us, for we are indeed a blessed people, but Paul was referring to something far beyond material wealth when he said to the Colossians "...**above all these things** put on charity,..." That counsel is then followed by the gentle command "...be ye thankful." The preceding verses in this text which describe "...**all these things...**" are glorious, for they portray the gates and paths which will lead us to tremendous spiritual development in Christ. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Col. 3:12,13 It is for all these glorious blessings for which we must, without reservation "...be thankful unto him, and bless his name."

19

GH

Give thanks unto the **LORD** for he is good:
because his mercy endureth for ever.
Let Israel now say,
that his mercy endureth for ever.
Let the house of Aaron now say,
that his mercy endureth for ever.
Let them now that fear the **LORD** say,
that his mercy endureth for ever."

Psa. 118:1-4

A FATHER'S GIFT

John F. Ney

What must I do to receive the Holy Spirit? The answer to the question, "what must I do to be saved?" has been proclaimed with no uncertain sound by many. Multitudes know without uncertainty in their minds and without a doubt in their hearts that "salvation is of the Lord," that salvation is a Person, even Christ Jesus, the Gift of God to a lost world and the answer to the question is, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"—Acts 16:31.

20 The way to receive a gift is to accept it. A gift is a gift, something absolutely for nothing. My knowledge of the value of a gift increases my desire for it; but the giving of a gift depends wholly on the giver. He cannot receive anything for it. If he does, it is no more a gift. If I do not know the person who has promised a gift to me, I may doubt his promise, or the value of that gift which he has promised. If my father would say, "John, come over tomorrow, I have a very valuable gift for you," I would be there "Johnny on the spot" to receive it even if I did not know the nature of the gift; because I know him to be honest. Now, is the Holy Spirit a Gift? Or not? Did not Jesus say to His disciples? "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you?"—John 16, 17. And did He not say, "I send the promise of my Father upon you?"—Luke 24:29. Did the Father keep His promise to His children (those disciples to whom Jesus was speaking and others)? Did He give the other Comforter as a Gift? Or did He torture them a while, by having them to fast, pray, agonize and groan, trying to make themselves worthy of Him?

Now some teach their experience instead of the Word of God, which no doubt all of us have been guilty of sometime in some measure, and say, "It is much harder to receive the Holy Spirit than to receive salvation." This is not Scriptural, nor logical.

It ought to be easier to believe a promise from a father

than from a judge, who is a stranger to us and whose laws we have been violating. The sinner has no Father to come to. He thinks of God as a judge, standing over him with a club, a God that demands justice. He would like to run away from Him if it were possible. Now it requires a revelation from God for a sinner to believe that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Surely, God has to present His Son to the sinner, who is under conviction by the power and love of the Holy Spirit, and enable him to believe, though with a trembling heart, that reconciliation has been made.

What, then, must I do to receive the Holy Spirit? Believe on the Lord Jesus as "as the Scripture hath said"--John 7:37. Yes, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified.) The apostles were not trying to crucify themselves; but "were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (Luke 24:53), waiting for the "...not many days hence..." Acts 1:5 "And when the day of Pentecost (fiftieth) was fully come,..." the Spirit came. The Father fulfilled His promise. Peter knew that it was the promise of the Father that had come. He could say to the bewildered multitude—"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear"—Acts 2:33. 21

The apostles did not preach on the Holy Spirit; but they preached in the Holy Spirit. (Jesus had told them before about the Spirit's work). Neither exhorted they them to seek the Holy Spirit. They preached Christ in the power of the Spirit as the Scripture set Him forth and those who believed on Him, "as the Scripture hath said," were scripturally filled.

Peter did not have to speak on the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The Spirit was speaking for Himself. He only pointed the hearers to Joel, saying, "This is That," and went on preaching Christ. At the house of Cornelius, Peter opened his mouth and preached Christ unto them; but he did not leave Him in the grave. It was too much for the Holy Spirit. He cut Peter's sermon short and fell on all them which heard the Word. The Jews were astonished that the Gentiles also received the Holy Spirit; for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God"—Acts 10.

22 Paul came to Ephesus, "and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, unto John's baptism." To be baptized unto John's baptism was not believing on Jesus "as the Scripture hath said." His baptism was saying that Jesus was not yet glorified. That those disciples had not received the Holy Spirit made Paul know that they had not been baptized in Jesus' Name. Believers were filled with the Spirit, in those days, without tarrying, after the Spirit had descended. The people received Him by faith.

Water baptism had not become a mere form in those days like it is now. For one to be baptized, especially a Jew, in the name of that despised Nazarene was a proof positive that he believed that Christ was risen from the dead. To be baptized, they were boldly declaring Romans 10:9— "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." That is why Peter could say emphatically to the multitude who were pricked in their heart, when they inquired, "Men and brethren what shall we do? Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost." I believe those three thousand souls that were added unto them received the Holy Spirit. That was all that was needed in those days to be filled with the Holy Spirit—to believe on Jesus, "as the Scripture hath said." Has God changed

His way of filling folks with the Holy Spirit? Is the Holy Spirit still a Gift, and that to God's children? Thank God, He is the same!

Many seekers for the Spirit are where those disciples were at Ephesus. only they have heard that the Spirit has been given. They are obeying shadows and types, by which they are saying that they do not believe that Christ has fully justified them. Of course there is no real faith. And other seekers are Galatian believers in some measure; they are fallen from grace. They endeavor to crucify themselves. They think they have to attain to a certain stage of crucifixion before they can be filled. The Holy Spirit is a Gift from the Father and His main work is to glorify Christ. Do not think that the Spirit approves of anyone trying to fix himself up to receive Him. That is robbing Christ of the glory due to Him for the work He has already done on Calvary. When a sinner who has no religion (not a backslider), comes into a meeting where they really believe on Jesus "as the Scripture hath said," and gets saved, it is so easy for him to be filled with the Spirit.

Jesus said on one occasion, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Do you really believe that God gave His only begotten Son and that you are justified from all things? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" God is more willing to give than we are to receive. Someone says, "I have to wait to learn some lessons." If we have lessons to learn, can we not learn them more quickly by having the Spirit of Truth on the inside than on the outside? Yes, there is one lesson we learn, that we are mighty slow to believe God, and that the Holy Spirit is the Father's Gift, and cannot be earned, any more than salvation.

(Reprint 1927)

* God calls men when they are busy, Satan calls them when they are idle.

* He who thinketh by the inch and talketh by the yard -- deserveth to be kick-ed by the foot.

Faith Exemplified

William Felicy

"THE just shall live by faith." Heb. 10:38.

There are many wonderful examples of faith in the Bible. There comes to my mind three men of God, men of great faith, men who were fearless in expressing their faith in God. These come to me with a powerful lesson, showing that faith in God works the same today as in past ages. These three men are Job and Jeremiah of the Old Testament, and Paul the Apostle of the New Testament. They lived hundreds of years apart; but they worshipped the God who changes not. Job's life was a picture of the suffering of the godly, while Jeremiah voices the failure of man, and Paul shows the way of victory over the flesh thru faith in Christ.

JOB

24

"For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth"—Job 19:25. "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith"-1 John 5:4. Job, the man of suffering, is one of many examples of what faith can bear. His faith in God was so strong that none of his afflictions could move him from his confidence in God. Job was a man of prosperity, in so much as there was none so great as he in the earth. His sincerity is seen in his watchfulness over his household; for when his sons and daughters were feasting and drinking, dear old Job was offering up burnt-offerings for them. Thus he was a type of Christ offering Himself without spot on the cross for us. He said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." That great love and faith prepared him for the future trials of life; for Satan, that old accuser of the brethren, was moved against him.

But some will say, Must that righteous man, that man of faith, suffer? I say, Why not? Did not our Lord suffer, leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps? Is it not written, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all?" Psa. 34:19 Suffering exercises faith and makes it firm. It is called a trial; for afflictions, distresses, grief and bodily pain put our faith on trial. Peter says, "That the trial of

your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ"-1 Pet. 1:7. Yes, dear ones, the very dearest of God's people are tried; but their faith carries them thru to victory.

Job lost all. With family, property and health gone, he was still on further trial. His wife, who should have comforted and encouraged him thru his sufferings, came with a subtle suggestion. She said, "Curse God and die," the quickest way of deliverance from suffering. Was not Satan speaking thru her? Yes, but the patriarch knew that his Redeemer was living. He was conscious of the fact that God sees and hears and tries the heart; as it is written, "The Lord trieth the righteous." That test did not move him against God; but rather he reprov'd his wife, saying, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women." His faith carried him thru the trial. A conscious knowledge that our Redeemer lives begets faith that bears us through victorious. Christ, who purchased us with His precious blood, lives; yes; He ever lives to make intercession for us. Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." That held him up thru all his trial. 25

Hear him again. "And tho' after my skin worms destroy this body (earthly); yet in my flesh shall I see God." Job's faith looked beyond the grave to a future and eternal life in the presence of the Lord, where tears and suffering never come. When earthly friends and relatives fail us, God is still with us, though we have to behold Him thru a vale of tears, from a heart of sorrow at times. But it is not forever; for in due time the cloud shall pass away and we again shall feel the sunshine of His love. Job's trial worked out for his good; and so do trials for us. He had the respect of the aged men. Princes refrained from talking and put their hands on their mouths; and nobles held their peace when Job spoke. The ear that heard him blessed him and he became eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. Men kept silence and gave heed to his counsel. After his words, they spake not again and his speech dropped upon them. They waited for him as for the rain and opened their mouths wide as for the latter rain. He chose out their way and sat

chief among them and dwelt as a king in the army. Read Job 29:7-25. Yet he was to learn the weakness of the flesh in a deeper sense.

When God began to speak to Job at the close of his sufferings, His words had wonderful effect. It is in the furnace of trials and times of sufferings that God's Word gets in. Though we read of no evil in him, yet we see that he judged himself, and we hear him cry, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear." "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Job had heard and believed. His faith carried him through the trial. He was then to receive a greater revelation of God. Therefore, hear him say, "**But now mine eye seeth thee.**" Ch. 42:5 Notice, the eye is in the singular number. He was seeing thru an eye of faith, and had "an eye single to the glory of God."

26 The results of that visitation of God thru the Spirit to him are seen in his reply. He exclaimed, "Wherefore I abhor (hate) myself" (the fleshly man). He obtained a view of the old creation, "which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts"—Eph. 4:22. His inner life abhorred the old creation. The same is true today. The more we walk in the Spirit, the more we despise the works of the flesh. Again Job cried, "I repent in dust and ashes" (an act of humility). He learned in a deeper way that his Redeemer liveth. Oh, how needful for us to know our Redeemer and let Him live within us unhindered. Jesus said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent"—John 17:3. "So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning."

JEREMIAH

While Job witnesses to the power of faith under trial, Jeremiah shows the attitude one should take toward the fleshly (self) life in order to promote faith—an attitude of entire dependence upon Him, even shut up to faith. He received a knowledge of the limitations and inability of the flesh of man to direct his steps aright. That knowledge is seen in Jeremiah's prayer — "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"—Jer. 10 :23. David

says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in His (God's) way"—Psa. 37:23. But notice, this is not the natural man, but one who has been born of God, as Jesus says—John 3:3,6. It is the new-born man that God orders and delights in. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I Cor. 2:14.

The natural heart of man is described in these words — "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" Chap. 17:9 In the face of this description and other Scriptures, who can say that he is able to direct his steps? "There is a way that seemeth right (just seemeth) unto a man; but the ends thereof are the ways of death." Prov. 16:26. That is the way of all those who are self-sufficient. God has shut man up to faith in His Word; for "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"—Matt. 4:4. Man is born of natural seed, which is sinful, and the inclination and will to commit sin are in him. Therefore he "must be born again." He must experience a spiritual birth, which comes thru the instrumentality of the Word of God, as mentioned by the Apostle Peter. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever"-1 Pet. 1:23. Without this new birth, no one can walk uprightly before God. It is not in the natural man to direct his steps.

PAUL

Faith is the victory in all ages. Job's faith held him faithful in suffering and trial. Jeremiah's faith held him faithful when all flesh around him failed. Now we come to the greatest apostle of the New Testament, named Paul (the Little). He shows us the way of victory thru faith under all circumstances. He says, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not"—Rom. 7:18. This statement is not from the lips of a sinner, but from one who has been born again, born of the Spirit of God. Paul speaks of the strife of the two natures in a believer; for after one is

born again, he is still in a body of humiliation and subject to temptations. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." Jn. 3:6 The flesh is not born again; but in the provision and reckoning of God, it is put to death (Rom. 6:6), and we are told to reckon (count) ourselves to be dead unto sin (Rom. 6:11) and to yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Rom. 6:12,13. In Rom. 7:18, we see the home of sin (my flesh). When the believer understands this truth, he will realize that he has two natures—one of flesh and one of spirit. He can then say as Paul did. "I have been crucified with Christ (I reckon with God); nevertheless, I live (still on earth in a body of flesh); yet not I, but Christ liveth in me (I am a new creature); and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me"—Gal. 2:20. Now listen to this exhortation—"Put off concerning the former conversation (or manner of life) the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Eph. 4:22.

28

It may seem strange that Paul would write thus to saints who had been sealed with the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption. But he thereby shows the sinfulness of the old creation. The words "put off" indicate that some were still yielding in a measure to the old Adam. They had not yet put on the new man entirely, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. This new creation (as we walk in the power of the Spirit) keeps the flesh in a state of death and brings forth a life of true holiness in the believer. Read Paul's prayer in Eph. 3:16-19. The Holy Spirit strengthens the inner man, the Christ life. And we read, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit and ye (believers) shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." Gal. 5:16. Notice the warfare in the next verse—"For the flesh lusteth against the spirit; and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary (opposite) the one to the other, so that ye may not do the things that ye would." "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh (we owe it nothing) to live after the flesh; for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye thru the Spirit (the Holy Spirit's power do mortify

(put to death) the deeds of the body, ye shall live"—Rom. 8:12,13. We must continually reckon our old man dead and Christ to be our life.

These Scriptures and many more, which space will not permit, show the way to a victorious life, so that we need no longer cry, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But we may shout, Thank God, through Christ I have the victory. Paul knew this victorious career by experience and revealed it to us thru his writings, a part of the inspired word of God. See 2 Pet. 3:15,16. Thus we may know the way of victory over the world, the flesh and the devil, and rejoice in it every day.

Such a triumphant life brings us an assurance; "for we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Rom. 8:28. The love of God stands the test in every trying hour, which works for our good and God's glory. This every faithful believer learns; for when we fall into divers temptations (James 1:2-4), we can count it joy, because a battle is to be fought and a victory to be won, in which we are edified and God is glorified. The message of God's grace, revealed thru the Apostle Paul, gives confidence in God that He will keep what we commit unto Him (2 Tim. 1:12), and enables us to leave a living, victorious testimony behind. Hear his last word —"I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing"-2 Tim. 4:7,8. "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." Psa. 37:37
(Reprint 1936)

* **Satan hinders prayer**, it is true; but prayer hinder Satan far more.

* **Some folk may call themselves "Jehovah's Witnesses,"** but they are not the witnesses of Jehovah.

CHAPTER SIXTY FOUR ~ III JOHN

“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.” V. 6-7

Isaiah 64 corresponds with III John where the beloved apostle also emphasizes “truth.” This is the predominant theme of this little one chapter book wherein John uses the term six times, commending Gaius at the outset because “...thou walkest in the truth.” V. 3 He further asserts: “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” V. 4

30 The above text from Isaiah also emphasizes truth, as Israel must recognize their dreadful failure in this realm. John likewise assails “... Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.” III John 9-11

Isaiah follows this same pattern, first declaring failure, but immediately claiming the glorious truth of God’s promise. “But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand. Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people. Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.” V. 8-10 This current condition of Israel is directly because they have forsaken God’s Truth, but Isaiah begins this chapter, crying out to the Lord for His intervention in their plight. “Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence,” V. 1 This plea is actually a cry for judgment because “... Zion is a wilderness,

Jerusalem a desolation,” and the nations are responsible, as noted in V. 2. “As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!” Those “waters” of the nations are surely boiling today, and this upheaval will wax worse and worse as end time events unfold. God will “turn up the heat” dramatically in order that these nations “... may tremble at thy presence!” It seems that no national power around the world displays any kind of “trembling” before God at this present time, but that will soon change as He begins to pour out His Judgments upon them. Israel is well acquainted with such judgments as noted in the following verse. “When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.” Those terrible things and mountains flowing down happened in Israel. Therefore this people well know the devastation which God can inflict upon a nation, for they are first-hand witnesses of it. Their own history reveals the Mighty Hand of God, and they apparently also know that they missed out on His purposes for themselves. “For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.” V. 4 These glorious provisions of God are always available, for “... him that waiteth for him...” but their own unbelief has prevented them from claiming such promises. Paul uttered the words of this verse almost verbatim, when he wrote to the Corinthians. “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” I Cor. 2:9 The apostle continues this passage by announcing that “... God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” I Cor. 2:10 This is also the essence of Isaiah’s declaration in our current text. “Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.” V. 5 This will one day be the testimony of national Israel. They will know by experience that “Thou meetest him that rejoiceth

and worketh righteousness,..." because they will have discovered that such righteousness comes only in Christ Jesus. This will follow the fact that they will know that His wrath, which has been poured out upon them in the great tribulation will have been well deserved "... for we have sinned." However, once such repentance, along with remembering "... thee in thy ways:..." has been implemented in their own lives, "continuance" of His work of righteousness will ensue and "...we shall be saved." The following verse emphasizes the absolute priority of such national repentance.

32 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." V. 6 Just as John emphasized truth, so also this nation must acknowledge the truth of their own condition. They have trusted multiple "righteousnesses" in time past such as that of the law, their own traditions, along with their boast of being the children of Abraham. All of these are now designated as "filthy rags," a gross reference to the menstrual cycle of a woman. They further admit that "... we do fade as a leaf;..." which is a reference to fact that their outward testimony is now in shambles. It can be likened unto the fig leaf aprons of Adam and Eve, which in no wise hid their nakedness from God, and had the same result of expelling from God's fellowship, for "... our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

"And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities." V. 7 This verse seems to indicate that the aforementioned broken relationship and separation from God has been even further exacerbated, and that is most assuredly the case. God did set Israel aside during this entire Church Age, and there is no record of national Israel calling "... upon thy name..." nor any "...that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee:..." Israel has been "... consumed because of our iniquities,..." and that trend will continue well into the tribulation period. However, hope springs eternal, and it will for this battered nation as Isaiah announces the onset of a drastic and

dramatic change: **“But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.”** V. 8 **“But now,...”** is a reference to the **time** when this nation will call upon the Name of The LORD, which is in direct contrast to their former attitude. This represents a collective cry which now claims The LORD as their Father, and that they are willing to be submissive pliable vessels in His Hand. Thus their plea will reach the very Heart of God as they appeal to His Matchless Grace, crying out **“Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.”** V. 9 The wrath of which they speak, will be fully manifest in the tribulation. The words of their appeal indicate that Israel does recognize the fact that their own iniquity evoked the wrath of God, but now they have learned the way of redemption. They finally understand the glorious benefit found in Isa. 43:25. **“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”** Psalm 103:12 will likewise find a true home in the very heart of national Israel. **“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”** The plea **“...neither remember iniquity for ever:...”** will also fulfill the promise of Jer. 31:34. **“And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”** All these are the glorious testimony of National New Creation Israel, as God will now remember both they and their land.

“Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.” V. 10 There will come the day when Israel, as well as the whole world, will recognize that that these are **“Thy holy cities...”** Not only does God honor the claim that Israel belongs to Him, but all the land too. The devastation described here is that which will be inflicted by the horrors of war during the great tribulation. The idea is to destroy Israel, but that will not come to pass. Jerusalem will be decimated, but it still belongs to God, a fact that is not in any wise regarded by the nations today. The temple is also singled out as being a distant

memory due to the horrendous results of war. “Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste.” V. 11 This will be the stark reality at that time, but it will also be a time when Israel know where to turn, and thus they ask, “Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?” V. 12 The answer to those questions is a resounding NO! God will not punish them forever. Quite the contrary! This nation shall be exalted, as will be seen in the last two chapters of this book where her millennial state is clearly defined.

JESUS IS COMING

Jesus is coming,
He's coming, I know--
Coming for those
Who are longing to go
Way up to heaven
To live with Him there.
He's coming with glory
That is debonair.

We don't know the hour,
We don't know the day,
But we know He is coming
To take us away.
Come, dear Lord Jesus,
Come quickly, I pray!

Beula Clark

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grace and glory

P.O. Box 831

Grandview, Missouri 64030



God dwells in a Thankful Heart

... a heart with room for others