

Prepare^{the} Way

Preparing the Bride of Christ for the return of Christ

Issue No. 103
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Peter Pollock

**The
deceived
church**

**Why
prophecy
does
matter**

**10 Steps to
finding your
life partner**

**How
to make
yourself
miserable**



SIN: Is it really a big deal?



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COVER: "Look at the birds. They don't plant, harvest, or gather the harvest into barns. Yet, your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth more than they (Matthew 6:26)?"

Talk to us...

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Jim Cymbala's Easter Story

JIM Cymbala pastors a church in the slums of New York. He tells the following story...

It was Easter Sunday and I was so tired at the end of the meeting that I just went to the edge of the platform, pulled down my tie and sat down and draped my feet over the edge. It was a wonderful service with many people coming forward. The counsellors were talking with these people.

As I was sitting there, I looked up the middle aisle, and there in about the third row was a man who looked about 50, dishevelled, filthy. He looked up at me rather sheepishly, as if saying, "Could I talk to you?"

We have homeless people coming in all the time, asking for money or whatever. So as I sat there, I said to myself, though I am ashamed of it, "What a way to end a Sunday. I've had such a good time, preaching and ministering, and here's a fellow probably wanting some money for more wine."

He walked up. When he got within about two metres of me, I smelled a horrible smell like I'd never smelled in my life. It was so awful that when he got close, I would inhale by looking away, and then I'd talk to him, and then look away to inhale, because I couldn't inhale facing him.

I asked him, "What's your name?" "David." "How long have you been on the street?" "Six years." "How old are you?" "Thirty-two." He looked 50 – hair matted, front teeth missing, wino, eyes slightly glazed. "Where did you sleep last night, David?" "Abandoned truck."

I keep in my back pocket a money clip that also holds some credit cards. I fumbled to pick one out thinking, *I'll give him some money. I won't even*



get a volunteer. They are all busy talking to others.

Usually we don't give money to people; we take them to get something to eat. I took the money out. David pushed his finger in front of me. He said, "I don't want your money. I want this Jesus, the One you were talking about, because I'm not going to make it. I'm going to die on the street."

There is no excuse

I completely forgot about David, and I started to weep for myself. I was going to give a couple of dollars to someone God had sent to me. See how easy it is? I could make the excuse I was tired. There is no excuse. I was not seeing him the way God sees him. I was not feeling what God feels.

But oh, did that change! David just stood there. He didn't know what was happening. I pleaded with God, "God,

forgive me! Forgive me! Please forgive me. I am so sorry to represent You this way. I'm so sorry. Here I am with my message and my points, and You send somebody and I am not ready for it. Oh, God!"

Something came over me. Suddenly I started to weep deeper, and David began to weep. He fell against my chest as I was sitting there. He fell against my white shirt and tie, and I put my arms around him, and there we wept on each other.


The smell of His person became a beautiful aroma.

Here is what I felt the Lord made real to me: *If you don't love this smell, I can't use you, because this is why I called you where you are. This is what you are about. You are about this smell.*

Christ changed David's life. He started memorising portions of Scripture that were incredible. We got him a place to live. We hired him in the church to do maintenance, and we got his teeth fixed. He was a handsome man when he came out of the hospital. They detoxed him in six days.

He spent that Thanksgiving at my house. He also spent Christmas at my house. When we were exchanging presents, he pulled out a little thing, and he said, "This is for you." It was a little white hanky. It was the only thing he could afford.

A year later, David got up and talked about his conversion to Christ. The minute he took the microphone and began to speak, I said, "The man is a preacher." This past Easter, we ordained David. He is an associate minister of a church over in New Jersey.

And I was so close to saying, "Here, take this; I'm a busy preacher." We can get so full of ourselves...



The deceived church

by Peter Pollock

FOR many years the description of “Synagogue of Satan” in the Book of Revelation went by unnoticed. Finally one day, it ground with a thud, hit me like a proverbial thunderbolt, rather like the prodigal son in the pigsty, when he came to himself, and finally understood!

Yes, a huge problem in the church is “those who say they are believers and are not, but lie.” God actually says that it is a “blasphemy.” That’s a serious accusation!

Mahatma Gandhi once said that if it was not for the Christians, Christianity would have swept the world. Others say that God is not the problem, nor is Jesus but it is those who proclaim to represent them that really do the damage! Argument and debate will never cease.

Jesus said the sheep and goats, wheat and tares will live side by side and only be separated by the Holy Spirit and angels at the end. The end-time promise we have from scripture, is that there will be deception and bewitchment.

Money does have power and doesn’t need God. Music also does have power and doesn’t need God! You can build churches without God because gifts and ministries do work even if, dare I say it, it’s couched and even nurtured in rebellion and self-interest.

The church business is a good business! Religion worldwide is lucrative, influential and employs millions. And then there is the ultimate poser: God’s wisdom will always appear foolish to the man without the Spirit. Indeed a bit messy to the naked eye and confusing to the human intellect.

So, in the context of all of this, let’s look at the end-time church of Laodicea, the problem Paul had with the Galatians and the difference between the “Solomon” and the “David” church as espoused by the late David Wilkerson.

Laodicea is the last of the seven churches mentioned in Revelation and, while the seven churches could be analysed as a cross-section of the church movement or else the church down through the ages, let’s look at it as the church of the final showdown, the gathering of the “final shut-down” as the church age expires into tribulation.

God says “I know your works,” for no doubt He would surely be the best judge. They were doing good things socially and probably even with political correctness. They were humanitarians, supplying and caring for widows and orphans and receiving due praise and acknowledgement from the world. But feeling “good” about “good” is not good. Jesus made that clear to the rich young ruler!

Not the fruit of good works...

We have so misrepresented the good works issue that it has spawned pride and self righteousness. Christianity is not the fruit of good works but rather “good works” are the fruit of the Holy Spirit and the genuine lordship of Jesus Christ. And while this is intellectually subtle and misunderstood, spiritually it is as night and day.

I know you better than you know yourselves, says God and that means He knows the true condition and motivation of our hearts and they are not hearts after God.

God cannot and will not be fooled or mocked in any shape or form.

“You are neither hot nor cold” – and that’s a real problem. It is a problem so repulsive that it induces Jesus to vomiting, and statements just don’t get much stronger than that! Such stark clarity about Jesus’ repugnance and disapproval.

In other words, it would almost be better to be a “pagan” outside than a passive and apathetic imposter inside. Lukewarm is horrific, as is backsliding. Jesus criticises the church in Ephesus because it’s lost its first love, a serious enough offence to warrant losing your lampstand.

Taking God for granted, just fitting Him in or being “presumptuous” are issues that should not be taken lightly and cannot be covered up by cheap grace. God also notes that “just because you say so does not mean that it is so.” How profound and disturbing to be told that just “naming and claiming” things contradicts the truth and even damns us.

In some circles lies and exaggerations are considered “okay” if they are “camouflaged,” “laundered” or “veiled” in faith! Many faith claims are exaggerations at best and just not true at worst. We are to pray for healings and we are to expect them. No question. But lies are an abomination!

God also tells the church at Laodicea that they are ignorant! “You do not know,” and this is a very real modern problem with spiritual ignorance abounding and such a lack of good solid teaching. Some even say that the church has never been so devoid of corrective teaching!

We are uninformed as we grope and

grapple with the kingdom of darkness and the god of this age. In truth, it is deception. As the Lord states so emphatically: You say that you are rich, wealthy and blessed. But you are misguided and in denial. You don't know what you are saying. You are deceived!

Deception is a major promise of the end times, even seemingly impressive "signs" and "wonders" are there to fool even the elect. As we obsessively seek after the spectacular we become well and truly anti-Christ conditioned, because when the ultimate end-time deceiver arrives, he will do so with much impressive action and fanfare.

We are quick to affirm

Laodicea, you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. Phew, how is that for an indictment? "Surely not," retorts the devil. And we are quick to affirm this response!

So be it, for God has, since the beginning, allowed us to make our own decisions with our own wills. But there is a big problem. There are huge consequences.

However, God always offers an option. There is a way back to Him if we repent and turn from evil ways. What Laodicea needs is, firstly, refined gold. Not the glitzy stuff they have made for themselves but the true, pure refined gold that comes out of the furnace. It's the gold Job was speaking about when he said "when I am tried, I will come forth as gold."

That's the gold of God's refining process that needs to be preceded by the preaching of sin, repentance and the Cross!

Secondly there is a need for "white garments," signifying that God is in the business of purity, holiness and righteousness. He is an awesome and sovereign God to be feared not as a tyrant but for His Greatness. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, a further confirmation of this process.

Thirdly and finally, the Laodiceans need eye salve, because they are seeing everything in the material and physical rather like Nicodemus who could not understand that "born again" is a spiritual thing, not a physical action. Yes, there is need for discernment – those spiritual eyes and ears!

Those I love I rebuke and chasten. How is that for encouragement? God is not a doting father. God doesn't soft-soap. Flattery and mutual admiration societies are the devil's work!

Greg Hinnant had this to say about the Laodiceans: "Indisputably Jesus depicts a 'church' engrossed and obsessed with the present world, given to moral compromise, deceived, smugly and arrogantly self-satisfied but sadly, a sickening disappointment to Jesus Christ."

Yes, He is standing outside that church. But who can or wants to hear Him knocking? Yes, Jesus speaking!

The apostle Paul takes up a similar cudgel as he addressed the "foolish" Galatians. Paul's words are distraught as he asks who has "bewitched" you that you should not obey the truth? They had in fact received the Spirit by the hearing of faith. They had "started in the Spirit" but were now operating in the flesh. Have you "suffered" all this in "vain," asks the apostle. Such foolishness. Such madness!

They were now involved with a "different" gospel, and so soon! C'mon guys. I marvel! I am astounded! I am shocked! I am shattered! You were running so well. What happened?

You have become estranged. You have fallen from grace. And the scary part is that it can, and does, happen. Straight-shooting Paul did not pull any punches. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel. He had received the gospel direct from God and he didn't fit it into man's politics, cultures or philosophies. He was not impressed or scared of men and their ministries.

And he knew that a little bit of leaven affects the whole lump, it is a pervasive transforming influence, a cancer, to be avoided and recognised as a veritable plague.

The use of the word "bewitched" tells us that Paul recognised the devil's hand in it all. The devil has various strategies including legalism, religion, "cheap grace" and taking everything over the top. If he can't oppose it direct, he simply joins in with an overdose of charismatic witchcraft. And the Galatians were suckers for his wiles because they lacked discernment. They were desperate for something new, something exciting, fresh and experiential to keep them on a constant mountain-top of expectation.

The late David Wilkerson was concerned by another form of deception with the dethroning of Jesus Christ by what he called the "Solomon" church. As we look around the church of today we see big beautiful edifices and we have to gasp as we watch millions of dollars being spent

on television, books, tapes, videos, missions, conventions and seminars. Mega churches with mega services and mega programmes, "franchising" their systems and methods.

Maybe it had all begun with unction and anointing but now this "Solomon" monster is just getting bigger and better – but the driving force, dare anyone suggest, is man-centred with a sort of "give me the tools, Lord, and I will get the job done" humanistic philosophy.

There is an insatiable, obsessive thirst for information and knowledge – and the computer age supplies it. Massive seminars and conventions, huge TV screens that turn the speakers into colossuses – but the emphasis is on tools and teaching and not Jesus Christ.


The student thinks "if I could only get a million dollars I would win the world for Jesus" – with the emphasis again on money, knowledge, networking and strategy. The "word" must have impact – they might well claim that. But God says that my word does not return void only when it is "from My mouth," through My chosen and anointed source!

Full of godly sorrow

In these "Solomon" churches deception is never dealt with, so diametrically opposed from the "David" church which is full of godly sorrow, repentance and a cry for deliverance. A contrite heart is the David heart and that is a heart after God.

The wisdom of the world (rife in the Solomon church) in society and government is dethroning Christ – steadfastly refusing to acknowledge His authority and Kingship. God has been removed from schools, courts and legislature. Many Christians, churches and ministries are rejecting the Lord's counsel, no longer leaning totally on His lordship and certainly in their man-centred practices denying the all-sufficiency of Jesus.

CEO-type pastors are hired, a sort of salesman-type marketing man running the church like a corporation. "Experts" have taken over; sin is now seen in psychological terms; altars are now counselling rooms; social workers and psychologists are spouting man's latest jargon and motivational speakers are a-lighting platforms that are no longer pulpits!

Jesus is dethroned, meaning that He is no longer the source and power behind that movement that carries the tag that the world calls church. Please come, Lord Jesus! 

Shafts of Light 31

*Proud
Lofty
Arrogant
The haughty look
Flattery
Unforgiveness
Criticism*



by Helen Gardiner

"In that day the Lord with His severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; and He will slay the reptile that is in the sea (Isaiah 27:1)."

The Lord, speaking about Leviathan, says in Job 41:33&34: "On earth there is nothing like him, which is made without fear. He beholds every high thing; he is king over all the children of pride."

In this year, I believe that Leviathan will be a fleeing serpent in the church. Yes, God will be dealing with pride. There is just too much pride across the board, and it renders us useless in being really used by God.

Many years ago, we as a church had a week of fasting and prayer, and it was revealed that the first hindering log blocking the flow of the river of God's Holy Spirit, was the log of pride. We have been though much since then, but I think there are still vestiges of pride.

Unfortunately the doctrine of the remnant fans pride. If I say that I believe in the salvation of only a remnant, I am immediately assuming that I am a part of that remnant. I need to be so careful.

"A proud look" is among the things which God hates, as listed in Proverbs 6:17.

Pastor Carter Conlon, Senior Pastor of

Times Square Church, said an important thing in one of his recent sermons: he said that the false prophetic always flatters. I have found that to be true. Flattery produces pride.

Scorning the scornful

God actually scorns the scornful, or, He resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. So says Proverbs 3:34.

This Scripture is repeated in James 4:5-10, which reads: "Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, 'The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously?' But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."

This word also occurs in 1 Peter 5:5-7: "Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.'"

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt

you in due time, casting all your care upon Him for He cares for you."

The Lord is very much committed to dealing with pride, so, do not be surprised when He chastens you. Deuteronomy 8 tells us the story of the Israelites who God tested and humbled, to do them good in the end.

The apostle Paul was a man who had remarkable spiritual revelation and experiences, yet he writes about his thorn in the flesh in 2 Corinthians 12:1-9:

"It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago – whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows – such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows – how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities.

"For though I might desire to boast I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me. And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revela-

tions, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Lucifer or Satan was the original proud one. We read about him in Isaiah 14:12-15: "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit."

Very self-satisfying

As we walk the earth in these days Satan is very accomplished at tempting us to get into pride. And most of the time, he doesn't have to try very hard. Pride – the feeling of pride – is actually very yummy and self-satisfying. Believe me, if you ask God to purge you of all pride you will feel very bereft. Seriously. Pride is part of our identity. We can be proud of silly little things and of much bigger things. The people who battle most with pride are the perfectionists, and, many of them hold to the remnant doctrine.

So do be careful, and, don't be surprised if God turns your world upside down.

There is a reference to pride and humility in Zephaniah 3:9-13: "For then I will restore to the people a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, the daughter of My dispersed ones, shall bring My offering, in that day you shall not be shamed for any of your deeds in which you transgress against Me; For then I will take away from your midst those who rejoice in your pride, and you shall no longer be haughty in My holy mountain. I will leave in your midst a meek and humble people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord, the remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness and speak no lies, nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall

feed their flocks and lie down, and no one shall make them afraid."

Unforgiveness and a critical spirit are rooted in pride.

Jesus set the example in humility. He humbled Himself unto death – even the death on a cross (Philippians 2:8).

In teaching His disciples Jesus says in Luke 22:25-27: "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors, but not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves."

In Mark 7:18-23, Jesus talks about the things emanating from the heart which defile a man. Included there in the list of uglies is pride.

On the other side, there are many promises for the humble. In fact, I believe that

humility is a major key to the coming of the Kingdom within one.

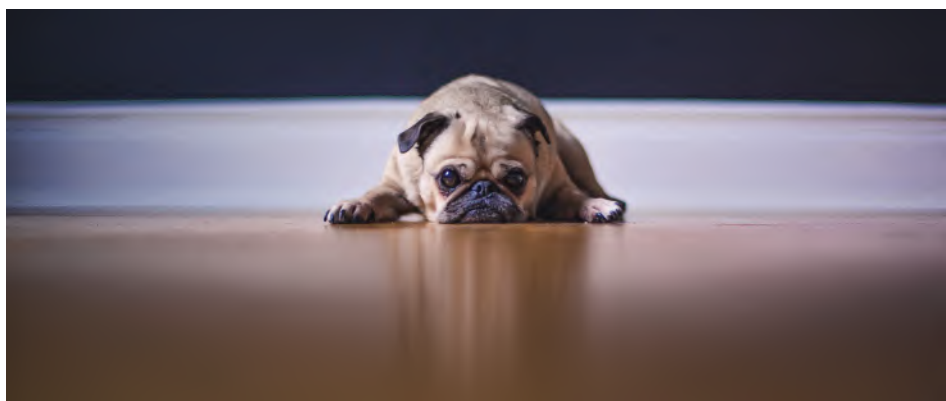
A key to the kingdom

Here are a couple of promises from Psalm 25:9: "The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way."

God wants us humble and totally dependent on Him. I was listening recently to a teaching on prayer by Pastor William Carroll of Times Square Church, where he said that there are times when God will not answer our prayer requests because if He gave us what were seeking we would become proud and/or self-sufficient. He has to deal with our pride and our self-sufficient tendencies before He will say "yes" to our requests.

We end this issue with a lovely promise from Psalm 149:4: "For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation."

Amen. 🐟



Several Ways to Make Yourself Miserable

by Elisabeth Elliot

- Count your troubles, name them one by one – at the breakfast table, if anybody will listen, or as soon as possible thereafter.
- Worry every day about something. Don't let yourself get out of practice. It won't add a cubit to your stature but it might burn a few calories.
- Pity yourself. If you do enough of this, nobody else will have to do it for you.
- Devise clever but decent ways to serve God and mammon. After all, a man's gotta live.
- Make it your business to find out what the Joneses are buying this year and where they're going. Try to go at least one better, even if you have to take out another loan to do it.
- Stay away from absolutes. It's what's right for you that matters. Be your own person and don't allow yourself to get hung up on what others expect of you.
- Make sure you get your rights. Never mind other people's. You have your life to live, they have theirs.
- Don't fall into any compassion traps – the sort of situation where people can walk all over you. If you get too involved in other people's troubles, you may neglect your own.
- Don't let Bible reading and prayer get in the way of what's really relevant – things like TV and newspapers. Invisible things are eternal. You want to stick with the visible ones – they're where it's at now. 🐟

Satan's 10 strategies against you

by John Piper

"That we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs (2 Corinthians 2:11)."

ONE of the most sobering facts about life is that all humans have a supernatural enemy whose aim is to use pain and pleasure to make us blind, stupid, and miserable – forever! The Bible calls him "the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world... the accuser (Revelation 12:9&10)," "the ruler of this world (John 12:31)," and "the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4)."

He is our "adversary who prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8)." Yet, in the most appalling and unwitting bondage, the whole world willingly "follows the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2)." At his most successful, his subjects march obliviously to destruction, and take as many with them as they can.

The "good warfare (1 Timothy 1:18)" includes the daily resistance of this enemy (1 Peter 5:9; James 4:7), the daily refusal to give him an opportunity (Ephesians 4:27), and the daily stand against his schemes (Ephesians 6:11).

God is sovereign over Satan. The devil does not have a free hand in this world. He is on a leash, so that he can do no more than God permits. In effect, he must get permission – as in the case of Simon Peter, where Jesus discloses, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has asked to have you, that he might sift you like wheat (Luke 22:31)." And the case of Job: "The Lord said to Satan, 'Behold, Job is in your hand; only spare his life (Job 2:6).'"

So evidently God sees the ongoing role of Satan as essential for his purposes in the world, since, if God willed, Satan would be thrown into the lake of fire now, instead of at the end of the age. "The devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and... will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 20:10)." His complete defeat is coming and sure. But not yet.



God intends that part of our preparation for heaven be a life of warfare with hell. He calls it a "good warfare (1 Timothy 1:18)" and a "good fight (1 Timothy 6:12)." It is good, not because we might be killed (which we might! – Revelation 2:10), but because these firefights refine the gold of our faith (1 Peter 1:7), in life and death.

God is the great General in this warfare. He has given us the walkie-talkie of prayer to call for help: "Take... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times (Ephesians 6:17&18)."

He sees behind enemy lines, and knows exactly the strategies that will be used against us. He has written them down in a wartime manual "so that we would not be outwitted by Satan." The reason we will not be outwitted is that "we are not ignorant of his designs (2 Corinthians 2:11)."

If you need a refresher for what those "designs" are, here is a summary. May God make you a mighty warrior! May he "train your hands for war and your fingers for battle (Psalm 144:1)."

1. Satan lies, and is the father of lies.

"When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44)." The first time Satan appears in the Bible in Genesis 3, the first words on his lips are suspicious of the truth ("Did God say, You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?"). And the second words on his lips were a subtle falsehood ("You will not die."). Jesus says that Satan "has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him (John 8:44)." We are dealing with the essence of falsehood and deception.

2. He blinds the minds of unbelievers.

"The god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4)." So he not only speaks what is false. He hides what is true. He keeps us from seeing the treasure of the gospel. He lets us see facts,

even proofs, but not preciousness.

3. He masquerades in costumes of light and righteousness.

In 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, Paul says that some people are posing as apostles who are not. He explains like this: "Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness."

In other words, Satan has servants who profess enough truth to join the church, and from inside teach what Paul calls "doctrines of demons (1 Timothy 4:1)." Jesus says they will be like wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15). Acts 20:30 says they will not spare the flock, but will draw people away to destruction. Without God's gift of discernment (Philippians 1:9), our love will be suckered into stupidity.

4. Satan does signs and wonders.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:9, the last days are described like this: "The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power, and with signs and wonders of the lie." That's my awkward translation. Some translate it "with false signs and wonders." But this makes the signs and wonders look unreal. In fact, some people do say that Satan can only fake miracles. I doubt it. And even if it's true, his fake is going to be good enough to look real to almost everybody.

In Matthew 24:24 Jesus describes the last days like this: "False Christs and false prophets will arise and show **great** signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible even the elect." There is no hint that these "signs and wonders" will be tricks.

5. Satan tempts people to sin.

This is what he did unsuccessfully to Jesus in the wilderness – he wanted Him to abandon the path of suffering and obedience (Matthew 4:1-11). This is what he did successfully to Judas in the last hours of Jesus' life (Luke 22:3-6). And in 2 Corinthians 11:3, Paul warns against this for all the believers: "I am afraid that as the

serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”

6. Satan plucks the word of God out of people's hearts and chokes faith.

Jesus told the parable of the four soils in Mark 4:1-9. In it, the seed of the word of God is sown, and some falls on the path and birds quickly take it away. He explains in verse 15, “Satan immediately comes and takes away the word which was sown in them.” Satan snatches the word because he hates faith which the word produces (Romans 10:17).

7. Satan causes sickness and disease.

Jesus healed a woman once who was bent over and could not straighten herself. When some criticised Him for doing that on the Sabbath, he said, “Ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound for 18 years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day (Luke 13:16)?” Jesus saw Satan as the one who had caused this disease.

In Acts 10:38, Peter described Jesus as one who “went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil.” In other words, the devil often oppresses people with illness. This, too, is one of his designs.

But don't make the mistake of saying every sickness is the work of the devil. To be sure, even when a “thorn in the flesh” is God's design for our sanctification, it also may be the “messenger of Satan (2 Corinthians 12:7).”

But there are other instances in which the disease is solely attributed to God's design without reference to Satan: “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him (John 9:3).” Jesus feels no need to bring Satan in as the culprit in His own merciful designs.

8. Satan is a murderer.

Jesus said to those who were planning to kill him, “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth (John 8:44).” John says, “Do not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother (1 John 3:12).” Jesus told the blameless church at Smyrna, “The devil is about to throw some of you into prison... Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).”

To put it in a word, Satan is bloodthirsty. Christ came into the world that we might have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10). Satan comes that he might destroy

life wherever he can and in the end make it eternally miserable.

9. Satan fights against the plans of missionaries.

Paul tells of how his missionary plans were frustrated in 1 Thessalonians 2:17&18: “We endeavoured the more eagerly, and with great desire, to see you face to face; because we wanted to come to you... but Satan hindered us.” Satan hates evangelism and discipleship, and he will throw every obstacle he can in the way of missionaries and people with a zeal for evangelism.

10. Satan accuses Christians before God.

Revelation 12:10 says, “I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, ‘Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.’” Satan's defeat is sure. But his accusations haven't ceased.

It is the same with us as it was with Job. Satan says to God about us, “They don't really love you; they love your benefits. ‘Stretch out your hand and touch all that they have, and they will curse you to your face (Job 1:11).’ Their faith isn't real.”

Satan accuses us before God, as he did Job. But it is a glorious thing that followers of Jesus have an advocate who “always lives to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25).”

Satan Will Not Win

Those are some of Satan's designs. The path to victory in this warfare is to hold fast to Christ who has already dealt the decisive blow.

* 1 John 3:8: “The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil.”

* Hebrews 2:14: “Christ took on human nature that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil.”

* Colossians 2:15: “God disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him.” In other words, the decisive blow was struck at Calvary.

* Mark 3:27: “No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man.”

* Revelation 20:10 says one day the warfare will be over: “The devil... will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone... and will be tormented day and night forever and ever (see Matthew 8:29; 25:41).”

James says, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7).” How do we do that? Here is how they did it according

to Revelation 12:11: “They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.” They embraced the triumph of Christ by his blood. They spoke that truth in faith. They did not fear death. And they triumphed.

The New Testament highlights prayer as the pervasive accompaniment of every battle. “Take... the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication (Ephesians 6:17&18).”

As the close of this age draws near, and Satan rages, Jesus calls us to wartime prayer: “Watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man (Luke 21:36).” Similarly, Peter makes an urgent call to end-time prayer: “The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers (1 Peter 4:7).”


Even Jesus fought against the devil on our behalf with the weapon of prayer. He said to Peter in Luke 22:31&32, “Satan has asked to have you that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.” So Jesus illustrates for us the opposition of a specific satanic threat with prayer.

And, of course, Jesus instructed us to make prayer a daily weapon for protection in general: “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (Matthew 6:13).” That is, deliver us from the successful temptation of the evil one.

Do you confront the designs of the devil with the focused and determined power of prayer?

The question is not whether you want to be in this war. Everyone is in it. Either we are defeated by the devil and thus following, like cattle to the slaughter, “the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2),” or we are resisting – “resist him, firm in your faith (1 Peter 5:9).”

There is no neutral zone. You either triumph “by the blood of the Lamb and the word of your testimony,” or you will be enslaved by Satan. Therefore, “Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:3),” and “wage the good warfare (1 Timothy 1:18).” Pray without ceasing!

The Lord Jesus is no less a warrior today than in the days of old. So I urge you again: Come to him as willing soldiers of the Prince of Peace and learn to say, “He trains my hands for war (Psalm 144:1).” 

Jesus' revival words for this hour

by Mark Bubeck

THE Lord gave me an assignment to pray for revival when I was very young, and for more than 50 years now God has held that assignment upon me. It hasn't always been encouraging, but one of the ways God has encouraged me from time to time is helping me discover things in the Word that I never saw before that have to do with revival.

He's even encouraged me with dreams. When I have a dream that is significant, the first thing I do is ask the Lord what He was saying.

I was in Ghana ministering in a pastors' conference. The next day I was to speak on revival, and I had a burden for that. That night I had a dream. Perhaps you've had a dream like it where you're trying to get some place and you move in slow motion. It seems like you're never going to make it. This was one of those dreams.

I was trying to get to the church that I had once pastored to preach. It was time for the service to begin. I couldn't find my Bible; I couldn't find my shoes. I was trying so hard, and then finally I was running down the road to the church. I knew it was time for me to be in the pulpit. The worship time was over and I was all stressed out.

All of a sudden in my dream, someone came up behind me, scooped me in His arms, and we began to move at great speed.

I didn't need to look. I knew He was my Lord. The thing I remember most was a sense of joy and peace and freedom that replaced all that stress.

When I awakened I said, "Lord, what did that mean?" He reminded me that I was speaking that day on revival and that I'd been praying and preaching about the need for it for 40 years, and that when revival came, it would be like that.

It would be something very sudden, very dramatic. Except for those praying, it would be totally unexpected. God would do something to shock the whole world to get the attention of humanity. Those who have prayed will suddenly realise that the God in heaven has stepped in to do what only He can do. In the

mightiness of grace and sovereignty, borne on the wings of the prayers of those who have been interceding, He will do what only He can do.

I believe it's coming! Revivals are very sovereign. They're all of God and all of grace. But they're also very human. They involve human interaction. They effect human change. They move forward on a wave of human transformation, and the overflow of joy that comes to such a revival awakening as happened at Pentecost. I believe that will characterise what God wants to do in our day before our Lord returns.

I'm convinced that the words our Lord Jesus Christ spoke to the church at Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22) comprise one of the greatest promises of revival we have in the Word of God. Most of us have not looked at that passage in that way. It has to do with the Lord's offer of revival to the Laodicean church. These are revival words to a very weak church, a corrupted church, a spiritually crippled body of believers.

Let us see what Jesus says to the Laodicean church from the perspective that He is giving revival words to this church. First of all, consider the fact that His words are *competent* words. Jesus has competent character credentials.

"And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 'I know your works, that you are neither

cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth (Revelation 3:14-16).'"

Jesus is the "Amen." Oh, that's so precious! He's the "so be it" one. He makes it happen. Furthermore, He is the "faithful and true witness." You can trust what He says because He's faithful even when we're not. He doesn't just speak the truth; He *is* the truth.

Reading on it says He's the "beginning of the creation." He's the author of it. It couldn't hold together without Him – everything that's around us and everything within us. He knows you; He made you; He holds you together.

He's competent in His *omniscience*. Notice above He says, "I know..." Ah, that's precious. Only the Lord really knows us. He knows our thoughts. He even knows the intention behind the thoughts of our heart.

One or the other

He says, "I know your works." I know what you're doing and I know you're "neither cold nor hot." I wish you were one or the other, either "cold or hot." We know what hot is. That's when somebody's fervent in serving the Lord. We pretty much know what cold is. That's when somebody's turned off and they're walking away. The Lord says He wishes we were one or the other.

I think the reason is that when He chastens a cold-hearted person who has been a Christian and knows what grace is about, when the chastening comes, that person begins to know that it is of God.

But when one is lukewarm and chastening comes, when he's going to church every Sunday and maybe teaching Sunday school, or singing in the choir, and chastening comes, he says, "What, Lord? Why are you doing this to me?" He never gets the message. He never responds. So the Lord says, I wish you were cold or hot. I know what you are.

Then Jesus gives some *contradicting* words to us, and these are tremendously important:

"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' – and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked (Revelation 3:17)."

Notice He contradicts our perceived condition. Look at the first part of verse 17: "Because you say, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing..." What a description of those

of us who are prosperous Christians. We make our plans for retirement... our investments... our cars... our trips to the beauty shop... our TV sets – materialism! It's the plague of the body of Christ today.

This is contradictory to what we think we are. We think we have need of nothing, but He contradicts with a truthful diagnosis. His truthful diagnosis is, "You are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

Then Jesus has a *counseling* word to us. I love this because one of the great things of Scripture is the dignity with which the Lord treats us. He's not intrusive like Satan and his kingdom. He comes only to minister to us with our permission and our invitation. When He speaks to us He doesn't demand it and command it. He did that in the law, I know, but we're in grace, and so He counsels. There is no counsellor ever like Him.

"I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see (Revelation 3:18)."

"Buy from me..." I'm not sure of all it means. But I know the "gold" means real spiritual riches. When you have that kind of riches, of which Paul writes in Ephesians (1:7&18; 2:7; 3:8&16), you're truly rich.

Then Jesus talks about white clothes. I don't know all that means, but I know it has something to do with moral cleanness and moral purity.

Jesus counsels us to get an eye-salve so we can see through God's eyes – have wisdom.

Now He says, "Buy this from Me." I know you're thinking, how do I do that? I'll show it to you from Isaiah 55.

The Bible always interprets itself when you come up with questions like that. How do you buy? Isaiah 55:1 tells us: "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price."

What God is saying is "Come... and come... and come..." We just come and we come and we come because we know it's in the will of God. It's our responsibility to believe Him for it. So we keep coming in prayer to buy from Him.

Then in Isaiah 55:2&3 He talks about listening. He says, "Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your

soul shall live."

So when you're buying, you're not only coming in prayer, but you're listening. You're listening through your own saturation of your heart with the Word. You sit under the teaching of God-anointed pastors who shepherd you and teach you, and you hear from God. You listen to buy.

In Isaiah 55:4 there's a tremendous statement – a messianic promise: "Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people..." When you buy, you see the Lord Jesus as the only answer and you come to Him and you come to Him and you come again. You see that He's the only answer.

Then in verse 7 He begins a passage that has to do with repentance... a changed life... obedience... putting away of sin: "Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the Lord, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. 'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,' says 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. (Isaiah 55:7-9).'"

Faithfully buying

Then beginning with verse 10 to the end of the chapter you have revival. When you buy that way and when you keep coming and you keep listening, you see Him and you begin to repent. It's going to come. I don't know when, but one day God's going to say, I want to be with those people; I'm going to do what they're asking me to do. God will do it because we've been faithfully buying.

Then God has a *correcting* word to us. *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent (Revelation 3:19)."*

Desire His love, but know where that's leading: "I rebuke and chasten." God has to refine away the dross and He will do it. "Be zealous therefore, and repent." That means zealous obedience tied in with repentance. Repentance is not just admitting the wrong. It's correcting the wrong. It's letting Him correct the wrong.

Then God has a *consoling* word, and this is so beautiful. Might God burn it into our heart.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and be with me (verse 20)."

"Behold, I..." The NIV translates it,

"Here I am," and this is in keeping with what the Greek says. This is the Lord Jesus. He's ready: "Here I am."

You'll notice that He doesn't just offer Himself. He consoles us with a persistent offer. He says, "I stand at the door" and He hasn't even stopped there; He speaks. "If *any man* hear My voice" – Mark... John... Mary... He is so personal, wonderfully personal.

He says that "if any man hear My voice, and opens the door..." The Lord Jesus is always waiting for you to say to Him, "Oh, Lord Jesus, I need You to come into my life!" But He's waiting also for you to say, "Lord Jesus, I need You to come into my church. I want you to come into the whole body of Christ. I'm inviting you to do that. I want you to come."

That's what revival is. It's the near presence of Christ. When He draws near, nobody remains standing. He is Lord!

Then we're consoled by a precious offer. He says, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me." That's revival! Oh, dear friends, that's the Lord Jesus saying it! He's waiting for you to buy. He's waiting for you to hear and invite Him, I mean really invite Him. Persistent, insistent, consistent. You don't give up.

God has a *coronation* word for us. Notice what He says in verse 21. It's such a gracious word that it almost overwhelms me.

He says: "To him who overcomes" – the person who buys – "will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne."

For people who are buying and overcoming He's preparing a special place of honour. Hear what He says to His church – "If you open the door, and you hear, and you buy, I'm going to have a place right beside Me in the glories of heaven."

Then He leaves us with a *consequential* word.

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches..."

You can hear or not hear. You can buy or not buy. He will not coerce you. He will only invite you. He waits for you to respond. I wonder if you hear Him today?

Let's gather around and have some corporate buying power. Pray through what you've read. Open your Bibles to this passage. I pray the passage back to the Lord. It's a good passage to confess. Confess how your value system is all out of order, and you don't understand how wretched you really are. Admit it. Come and buy! God is waiting... He's knocking. He's calling you by name. ☞

The doctrine of Jezebel!

by David Wilkerson

I COULD subtitle this message “The Danger of Being Seduced by False Doctrine.” Read Revelation 2:18-29 and you will see that Christ Himself warned the church against the doctrine of Jezebel. “You permit that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat the things sacrificed to idols (Revelation 2:20).”

The Greek word here for Jezebel is a synonym for a false teacher. She clearly represents false doctrines. Jesus clears it up by continuing, “...as many as do not have this doctrine (Revelation 2:24).”

Here is a group of God’s people, full of good works and charity, having a form of faith and patience. But the eyes of Jesus appear among them, blazing with flames of fire. With all that is good and commendable, there is something very dangerous going on, something so seductive that Christ warns He will send judgement and make them an example to all the churches.

Certain members of the church were selling out to Satan. Their good works, charity, service, faith and patience were overshadowed by a seduction of false doctrine. They were under the spell of a false teaching, a teaching that came disguised as the true Word but was in fact evil.

Christ said it was “My servants” being seduced. Ministers. We have come to this very dangerous condition Christ warned about. There are multitudes of pastors, teachers and evangelists completely under the seductive spell of the Jezebel doctrine. These seduced teachers are in turn producing “children of seduction.” They teach fornication and the consumption of the food of idols – this is spiritual fornication.

This is eating the demonic food of doctrines that excuse sin.

I want to say, in no uncertain terms, that it is dangerous to sit under the wrong teaching. False doctrine can damn you more readily than all the lusts and sins of the flesh. False preachers and teachers are sending more people to hell than all

the drug pushers, pimps and prostitutes combined.

That is not an overstatement – I believe it!

Multitudes of blind, misled Christians are singing and praising the Lord in churches enslaved by false doctrine. Thousands are sitting under teachers who are pouring out the doctrine of demons – and they come away saying, “Wasn’t that wonderful?”

Christ does not take this matter lightly. His eyes are again piercing the church, and He has come to warn, to expose and to save His people and His servants from this terrible seduction. We had better get serious about it. It is serious where you go to church. It is serious who you are listening to.

God’s people are selling out to Satan on every side by giving themselves into the hands of false teachers and pushers of false doctrines. Selling out to Satan conjures up visions of burned-out addicts, alcoholics, of AIDS-afflicted prostitutes and of God-hating atheists. No. It is happening in the church, in gospel meetings and conventions and in great teaching seminars.

Carried about

The mark of a seduced Christian is that he is “carried about” seeking some new, different, strange teaching. The Bible warns, “Do not be carried about with different and strange doctrines (Hebrews 13:9).” Do not be driven thither and yon, taken from place to place.

This is not speaking of those rare times a mature believer goes to hear a true man of God preach Christ and repentance. This speaks of running from place to place, seminar to conference, church to church, miracle meeting after healing meeting, having no roots.

Their ears are always itching to hear something new, something sensational, something entertaining, something pleasing to their flesh – gadabouts, human tumbleweeds riding the winds of doctrines. They want to be stroked, not reproved. They resemble the Athenians who “spent their time in nothing else, but



either to tell, or to hear some new thing (Acts 17:21).” Paul warned Timothy, “they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears (2 Timothy 4:3).”

The mark of a mature believer is a refusal to be “tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14).” Such believers cannot be manipulated by any teacher. They don’t need to run around because they are growing up in Christ. They are feasting in green pastures. They have circumcised their ears, and they measure every teacher, every doctrine, by how much it conforms to Christ’s holiness.

They can discern all doctrines that are false, and they are repulsed by all the strange, new teachings. They have learned Christ. They will not be held by music, friends, personalities or miracles, but by a hunger for the pure Word.

There are only two doctrines: The doctrine of Christ and the doctrine of Jezebel.

Paul said, “that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things (Titus 2:10).” What is Christ’s doctrine? The grace of God teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world (Titus 2:11&12). The doctrine of Christ will conform you to the image of Christ. It will expose every hidden sin and every evil longing.

Is your teacher rebuking with authority, speaking and exhorting you to forsake sin and to lay down all idols as he is instructed in Titus 2? Are you learning to hate sin passionately? Or do you leave church, still not deeply convicted? Can you go out clinging to pet sins?

The message of the doctrine of Christ is, “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Corinthians 7:1).”

So many write to us saying, “Our pastor keeps saying, ‘I’m not here to preach against sin; I’m here to lift up Jesus.’ Or, ‘None of that condemnation preaching from this pulpit –



I'm here to lift the fear and depression in my people."

The doctrine of Christ is a doctrine of godliness and holiness.

"If any man teach otherwise, and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strife of words, from which come envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings (1 Timothy 6:3&4)."

The preaching of Christ's doctrine will bless, strengthen and encourage you, but it will also convict you so deeply you cannot sit under it and still cling to a secret lust.

Let us look at this doctrine of demons and see if you are in danger of selling out to Satan. There are three distinguishing marks of the Jezebel doctrine. These were all found in the Jezebel of the Old Testament, the mother and the embodiment of false doctrines. Jesus made her name synonymous with false doctrine. It is a doctrine which teaches that something evil can be good, that the profane can be pure.

Jezebel, in Hebrew, means "chaste, virtuous, without idolatry." Imagine. The most ungodly, most idolatrous, scheming, hateful, woman in all the Bible called virtuous, without sin. Something very bad is named good. But ironically it is "chaste?" – with a question mark. How? When? Where? How did she become chaste? When? Where?

And look at Ahab.

"And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as his wife Jezebel the daughter Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him (1 Kings 16:30&31)."

Ahab means "one like father" or "stamped with the nature of his father." Jezebel represents false doctrine and Ahab is its victim. The Bible states that it was not enough that Ahab had a heart bent toward sin, idolatry

and compromise. He brings into his life a satanic influence that will confirm him in his sin. "but there was none like Ahab, who sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up (1 Kings 21:25)."

The message is that the tendency of Christians who hold to secret sin and lust is to embrace and become married to a false doctrine which will only excite and confirm them in their sins.

The last thing Ahab needed was a Jezebel. How dangerous. She brought out the worst in him, magnified it and destroyed him. So it is with false doctrine. If there is any sin, lust or worldliness in you, the last thing you need is a doctrine that will bring out your worst.

When David sinned with Bathsheba, he did not need a false prophet with a soothing message to tell him how much God loved him. He needed the uncompromising prophet Nathan, with a pointed finger, crying out, "You are the man."

Those who preach the doctrine of Christ show the people the difference between the evil and the good. There is no mixture from their lips. "And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean (Ezekiel 44:23)." Ezekiel denounces these false prophets who enrich themselves by bringing a message excusing sin in Ezekiel 22:25-28.

As a result, we have a whole generation of mixed up kids who cannot even recognise evil when they see it. False prophets have deceived them. They call it good when purple-haired rockers, dressed as sado-masochists, strut and gyrate sexually in the pulpit, are told that sex outside marriage is good as long as you are in love and as long as you truly respect the other per-

son. Preachers and teachers have become the greatest defenders of sin in the nation. *"Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to Ahab: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers... The Lord forbade it. And Ahab laid down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said to him, Why is your spirit so sad, that you eat no bread? Exercise authority over Israel! Arise, and eat bread, and let your heart be merry: I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite (1 Kings 21:1-7)."*

Listen to the doctrine of Jezebel, "You are king. Number one. You have rights. Let nothing stop you from getting what you want." She said to Ahab, "Be merry. Be happy. Rejoice. I'll get it for you." That is the prosperity gospel in a nutshell. "Don't sweat it. Don't feel sad or condemned by those desires that eat you up. I'll get it for you."

Like the deceptive methods Jezebel used, these doctrines twist and misuse Scripture.

A badge on covetousness

The greatest deception in the modern church is the matter of using God's Word to put a badge of approval on covetousness. On the surface the Jezebel doctrine works (see 1 Kings 21:14-16). It got Ahab what he wanted. He possessed his rights because when a man was stoned for high treason against the king, all his rights reverted to the king. There has never been a question that for many this doctrine of prosperity works. Like Ahab, they are enjoying their possessions.

But Ahab could not enjoy it because of a pesky prophet of God.

"And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'Arise, go down to meet Ahab... in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone down to possess it. And you shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the Lord, 'Have you killed, and also taken possession?... In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick your blood, even yours.''" And Ahab said to Elijah, 'Have you found me, O my enemy?' And he answered, 'I have found you: because you have sold yourself to work evil in the sight of the Lord (1 Kings 21:17-20).'"

Imagine Ahab walking about his new possession saying, "Isn't life sweet? Ah, Jezebel. I may not agree with all her methods, but she gets it done". But dogging his every footstep is the prophet Elijah. Ahab reels around shocked. He knew what was coming. His conscience told him, "You found me, O my enemy".

So it is today. God has sent prophets throughout the land, crying aloud, confronting the Jezebel doctrine of materi-

The doctrine of Jezebel!

Continued...

alism, making it so uncomfortable for Christians to enjoy their playthings and acquisitions. They have sold out. They cannot see it, but sin is behind all this. Every time I cry out against the prosperity doctrine, I sense the spirit and power of Elijah upon me. You are going to hear more and more exposing of this Jezebel doctrine. Everywhere, prophetic voices will be heard loud and clear, crying out, "Sin. You possessed, by selling out to sin." *"And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, 'So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time (1 Kings 19:1&2).'"*

Christians bound by the Jezebel doctrine have no regard whatsoever for God's holy prophets. They sit coldly, as Jezebel did, unmoved, as Ahab went into detail of the miraculous display of supernatural authority on Mount Carmel.

Listen to Ahab, "But Jezebel, maybe we need to listen. I saw it with my own eyes. Our prophets danced and shouted for hours, but there was no power. Elijah just spoke God's word and fire fell. People were on their faces everywhere repenting. They've turned away from all idolatry. God sent a revival of holiness."

But Jezebel was not impressed. All it did was turn her resolve to stone.

So it is now. The teachers of the Jezebel doctrine and those like Ahab who are its victims are not open to Holy Spirit conviction, nor to the message of repentance and holiness. They hear it, then go their way more determined than ever before in their doctrines. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

The surest sign of a false teacher and a Jezebel doctrine is the putting down of prophetic warnings and the refusal to hear about judgement. They call it gloom and doom. They laugh, mock and ridicule. They have no respect for any negative warnings.

Jeremiah says such shepherds are blind and dumb. The Lord said, "Obey... But they did not listen, nor inclined their ear,

but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward (Jeremiah 7:24-28)."

Those who teach the Jezebel doctrine claim to be prophets. But there is a test of true and false prophets. Jezebel prophets prophesy good things only, just peace and prosperity.

"I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: They commit adultery and walk in lies; They also strengthen the hands of evildoers, So that no one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to Me, And her inhabitants like Gomorrah. Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets: 'Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, And make them drink the water of gall; For from the prophets of Jerusalem Profaneness has gone out into all the land.'" Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; They speak a vision of their own heart, Not from the mouth of the LORD. They continually say to those who despise Me, "The Lord has said, 'You shall have peace;" And to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say, "No evil shall come upon you (Jeremiah 23:14-17).'"

They are jokesters

They do not turn people from wickedness. They speak of dreams and act foolishly in the pulpit. They are jokesters.

Ahab did repent at the preaching of Elijah. Elijah's message deeply affected him. He rent his clothes and he walked for a while in humility. God called it repentance, "See how Ahab humbles himself before me (1 Kings 21:29)." From that day on he could look back and say, "Repentance? Yes. Under the preaching of that great prophet of God, Elijah, in my garden at Jezreel..."

But to him it was a one-time experience, not a daily walk. It did not last very long. The problem was that he had made a covenant with the world. He was in agreement with sin. He had become a brother and friend to the world. He was in covenant with what God had cursed. And so today there is a shallow, yet true, repentance. But you will go back if you do not break your covenant with the world.

Ahab claimed to love the truth, but deep inside he hated reproof. Ahab and Jehoshaphat were going to war with the Syrians. Four hundred false prophets were preaching success: "Go up and you will prosper. You can do it." So there stands the one lonely prophet against the 400 false prophets.

Listen to Ahab's demand for truth:

"And Micaiah said, 'As the Lord lives, what the Lord says to me, that will I speak.' So he came to the king. And the king said to him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall we forbear. And he answered him, 'Go, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.' And the king said to him, 'How many times shall I urge you, that you tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord (1 Kings 22:14-16).'"

Yet in his heart he did not want to hear it; he hated it. So he jailed the prophet.

Pastors, teachers and those in the congregation today all say, "We want only the truth. Preach it like it is. Go. Pour it on. No matter how it hurts." But in their hearts some are seething, "Too much gloom. Too hard. I can't stand anymore of this."


Ahab was blind to the terrible fact that he was being guided by lying spirits. This lying spirit was not of God, but under His command. Evil, lying spirits must go or come at His word. They are not of God, but they are sent by God. "The Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets (1 Kings 22:22&23)."

This lying spirit caused Zedekiah, a false prophet, to boast that the Spirit of God was upon him. The lying spirit in him could honestly declare, "The Lord sent me." Lying spirits are very persuasive – "You shall persuade him (1 Kings 22:22)." Ahab was now fully persuaded he was hearing God's voice and that he would come back victoriously.

Christians bound by the Jezebel doctrine are 100 percent sure they are right. They cannot see the deception. Ahab did not go up thinking, "Micaiah is right; he has God's mind. The 400 are false; they have no word from God." No. He went up fully convinced – fully deceived – totally seduced. He was convinced Micaiah was wrong and the 400 were right.

Why do some Christians fall into such deception?

"Behold, you trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will you steal, murder and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods who you do not know; and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations (Jeremiah 7:8-10)'?"

There is the answer. A clinging to some pet sin, some secret idol in the heart. A justifying of sin. A walk with the world. A brotherhood with the world. Then they come to God's house boasting, "I'm not convicted." This is an open invitation to lying spirits. 

Copyright World Challenge

Daily fellowship with God

by Andrew Murray

"Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3)."

THE first and chief need of our Christian life is fellowship with God. The divine life within us comes from God and is entirely dependent upon Him. As I need every moment afresh the air to breathe, as the sun every moment afresh sends down its light, so it is only in direct living communication with God that my soul can be strong.

The manna of one day was corrupt when the next day came. I must every day have fresh grace from heaven, and I obtain it only in direct waiting upon God Himself. Begin each day by tarrying before God and letting Him touch you.

To this end, let your first act in your devotions be a setting yourself before God. In prayer or worship, everything depends upon God taking the chief place. I must bow quietly before Him in humble faith and adoration. God is. God is near. God is love, longing to communicate Himself to me. God, the Almighty One, who works all in all, is even now waiting to work in you, and make Himself known.

When you have given God His place of honour, glory and power, take your place of deepest lowliness, and seek to be filled with the Spirit of humility. As a creature it is your blessedness to be nothing that God may be all in you. As a sinner you are not worthy to look up to God; bow in self-abasement. As a saint let God's love overwhelm you, and bear you still lower down. Sink down before Him in humility, meekness, patience and surrender to His goodness and mercy. He will exalt you.

Then accept and value your place in Christ Jesus. God delights in His beloved Son, and can be satisfied with nothing less in those who draw nigh to Him. Enter deep into God's holy presence in the boldness which the blood gives, and in the assurance that in Christ you are most well-pleasing.

In Christ you are within the veil. You have access into the very heart and love of the Father. This is the great object of fellowship with God, that I may have more of God in my life and that God may see Christ formed in me.

This Christ is a living Person. He loves you with a personal love, and He looks

every day for the personal response of your love. Look into His face with trust, till His love really shines into your heart. Make His heart glad by telling Him you do love Him.

He offers Himself to you as a personal Saviour and keeper from the power of sin. Do not ask, "Can I be kept from sinning if I keep close to Him?" but ask, "Can I be kept from sinning if He keeps close to me?" and you will see at once how safe it is to trust Him.

We have not only Christ's life in us as a power, and His presence with us as a Person, but we have His likeness to be wrought into us. He is to be formed in us, so that His form or figure, His likeness, can be seen in us.

Bow before God until you get some sense of the greatness and blessedness of the work to be carried on by God in you this day. Say to God, "Father, here am I for You to give as much in me of Christ's likeness as I can receive." And wait to hear Him say, "My child, I give you as much of Christ as your heart is open to receive."

The God who revealed Jesus in the flesh and perfected Him will reveal Him in you and perfect you in Him. The Father loves the Son, and delights to work out His image and likeness in you. Count upon it that this blessed work will be done in you as you wait on your God and have fellowship with Him.

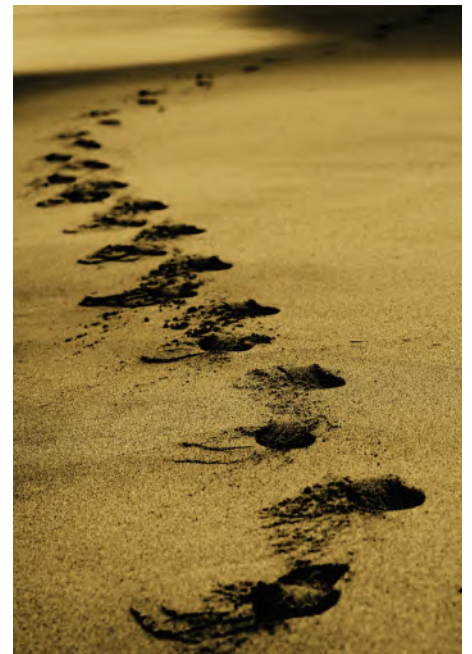
Two things...

The likeness to Christ consists chiefly in two things: the likeness of His death and of His resurrection (Romans 6:5). The death of Christ was the consummation of His humiliation and obedience, the entire giving up of His life to God.

In Him we are dead to sin. As we sink down in humility and in dependence, and entire yieldedness to God, the power of Christ's death works in us, and we are made conformable to it; and we know Him in the power of His resurrection, in the victory over sin, and in all the joy and power of the risen life.

Therefore, every morning present "yourself to God, as one alive from the dead (Romans 6:13)." He will maintain the life He gave and bestow the grace to live as a risen one.

All this can be only in the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you. Count upon Him to glorify Christ in you. Count




upon Christ to increase in you the inflowing of His Spirit. As you wait before God to realise His presence, remember that the Spirit is in you to reveal the things of God. Seek in God's presence to have the anointing of the Spirit of Christ so truly that your whole life may every moment be spiritual.

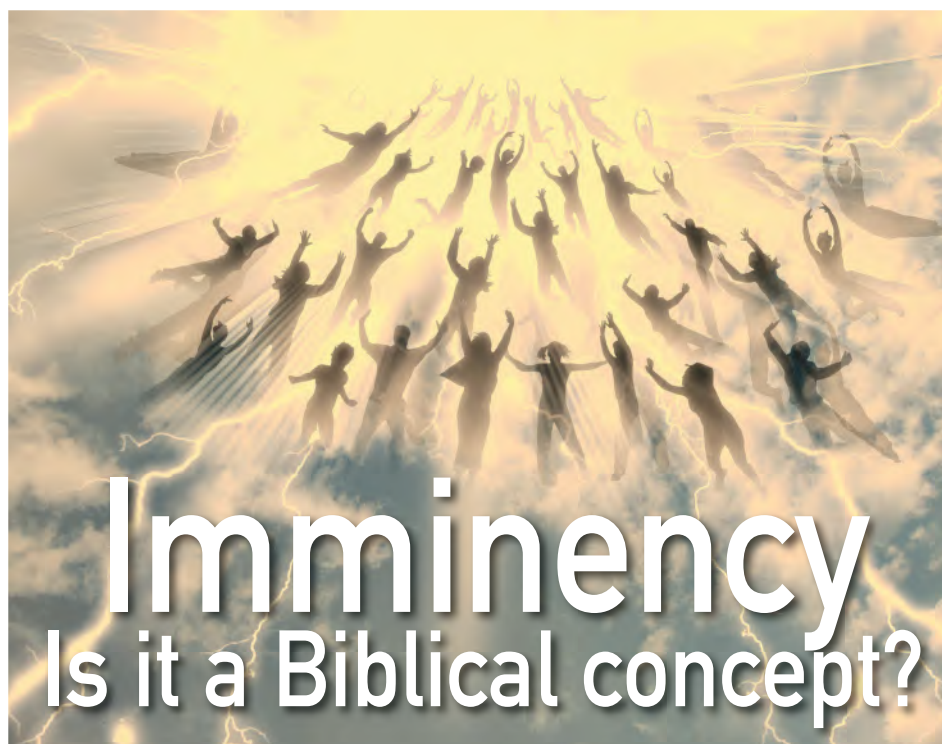
As you meditate on this wondrous salvation and seek full fellowship with the great and holy God, and wait on Him to reveal Christ in you, you will feel how needful the giving up of all is to receive Him.

Seek grace to know what it means to live as wholly for God as Christ did. Only the Holy Spirit Himself can teach you what an entire yielding of the whole life to God can mean. Wait on God to show you in this what you do not know. Let every approach to God and every request for fellowship with Him be accomplished by a new, very definite and entire yielding to Him to work in you.

Here, as through all Scripture and all the spiritual life, faith must be the keynote. As you tarry before God, let it be in a deep, quiet faith in Him, the Invisible One, who is near, so holy, so mighty, so loving; in a deep, restful faith too, that all the blessings and powers of the heavenly life are around you and in you.

Just yield yourself in the faith of a perfect trust to the ever-blessed Holy Trinity to work out all God's purpose in you. Begin each day thus in fellowship with God, and God will be all in all to you.

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:19&20)." 



by Todd Strandberg

IN doing some research on the doctrine of imminency, I noticed few people take the time to actually define what prophetic imminency means. First, let us look at the general definition of the key word, imminent: “The quality or condition of being about to occur.”

Imminency, as it relates to Bible prophecy, simply means that the return of Jesus Christ for the Church can happen at any moment. No warning signs will indicate a short-term countdown. We as Christians are to remain on alert 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If a wife knows her husband normally gets home from work shortly after 4 pm, she knows that beginning at 4 pm, his arrival is imminent. If the woman knows her husband has to work overtime, the imminency of his 4 pm return is then in doubt.

The only way for the Rapture to be truly imminent is to have it transpire **before** the Tribulation. If the Church were required to wait until after the manifestation of certain events, then there would be no doctrine of imminency.

The Granddaddy of Proofs

The Pre-Tribulation Rapture is the only view that allows for the Rapture to be imminent in its timing. All the other views require a number of prophetic occurrences to take place before the Rapture can be

declared imminent. To be looking for the imminent return of Christ, you have to believe in a Pre-Trib Rapture.

Jesus repeatedly said that His return for the Church would be a surprise. The Lord even went beyond that by saying He would return “as a thief” when believers generally won’t be expecting Him to come for them. Consider the following words

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone... Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will (Matthew 24:36,42-44).”

“Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour (Matthew 25:13).”

“He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority (Acts 1:7).’”

The Impact of Jesus’ Warnings

This type of “any-moment” language doesn’t fit a Post-Tribulation Rapture. If Jesus were prevented from coming until after the battle of Magog, the rise of the Antichrist, and the Mark of the Beast, we would have no need to watch for Him

before the Tribulation.

If the Church were required to go through the seven-year Tribulation, you would expect the New Testament writers to have warned us to be prepared for trying times. On the contrary, the New Testament writers repeatedly tell the Church to be comforted by the coming of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:18). The word “comfort” alone strongly implies the Rapture will take place before the Tribulation.

Some anti-imminency folks try to solve the problem they have with the Rapture’s any-moment occurrence by redefining imminency to simply mean Christ will return soon. But if an event is required to take place before the Lord can return, then the Lord’s return is not imminent and there is no need to remain watchful...

Maranatha!

One of the strongest cases one can make for the early Church expecting an imminent return of Christ is to note their use of the word, *maranatha*, which was used as a greeting in those days. When believers gathered or parted, they didn’t say “hello” or “goodbye;” they would say “Maranatha!”

I’ve encountered some writings that say *maranatha* is Hebrew and Greek, but it is actually an Aramaic expression. In fact, it is made up of three Aramaic words: *Mar*, which means “Lord;” *ana*, which means “our;” and *tha*, which means “come.”

So when you put it together, *maranatha* means “Our Lord, come.” It perfectly conveys the concept that the Lord could come at any moment. Maranatha is used once in the Bible by Paul as part of a curse. In 1 Corinthians 16:22, Paul said, “If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be anathema. Maranatha.”

The word “anathema” means “banned,” so Paul was saying, “Let the one who does not love the Lord be banned from our Lord’s coming.” The interesting thing about *maranatha* is that it comes in the form of a petition. When a Christian in the early Church would make this statement, he was actually petitioning the Lord to come. This obviously implies the belief that it was possible for Jesus to answer the appeal.

If members of the First-Century Church believed that certain events needed to take place before the Saviour could return, they would have been silly to greet each other with “Maranatha!” They lived nearly 2 000 years ago, and yet they seem to have

had a deeper awareness of imminency than many of today's Christians.

The Historical Record

Many of the contemporary writers who attack imminency try to promote the idea that this doctrine was recently dreamed up by men who were ignorant of the true meaning of Scripture. One detractor states, "This frenzy (imminency) continues to survive today because of modern misconceptions about the purpose of these prophetic events and the time-frame for their occurrence."

Post-Trib believers are the most vocal in their claim that the concepts of imminency and the Pre-Trib Rapture only date back to the early 1800s. For several years, their charges went unanswered, but recently a number of men have dusted off old manuscripts and found several early Church fathers who were clearly looking for an imminent return of the Lord Jesus.

In a 7th Century Syrian tract written by "Pseudo-Ephraem," the following statement concerning imminency can be found: "All the saints and elect of God are gathered together before the Tribulation, which is to come, and are taken to the Lord, in order that they may not see at any time the confusion which overwhelms the world because of our sins."

A similar sense of imminency can be found in *The First Epistle of Clement*, (written around 96 A.D. by Clement, a prominent leader of the church at Rome who knew some of the Apostles personally and probably is the Clement referred to in Philippians 4:3): "Of a truth, soon and suddenly shall His will be accomplished, as the Scripture also bears witness, saying, 'speedily will He come, and will not tarry.'"

As early as 70-180 AD, *The Didache* (containing the teachings of the Apostles), says in chapter 16, section 1: "Be vigilant over your life; let your lamps not be extinguished, or your loins ungirded, but be prepared, for you know not the hour in which our Lord will come."

One of the earliest Church Fathers, (Tertullian 155-245 AD) wrote: "But what a spectacle is that fast-approaching advent of our Lord, now owned by all, now highly exalted, now a triumphant One!"

John Calvin, the reformer at Geneva during the 1500s and founder of the Presbyterian Church, made the following statements in some of his commentaries on books of the Bible:

"Be prepared to expect Him every day, or rather every moment. As He has promised that He will return to us, we ought to hold ourselves prepared, at every moment to receive Him. Today we must be alert to grasp the imminent return of Christ."

And commenting on 1 Thessalonians 4, the "Rapture passage," Calvin said that Paul "means by this to arouse the Thessalonians to wait for it, nay more, to hold all believers in suspense, that they may not promise themselves some particular time... that believers might be prepared at all times."

The Westminster Confession, written by the Puritans of England during the 1600s, declared that men should "shake off all carnal security and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come."

I'm not much of a fan of relying on what scholarly men write about the Bible. I agree with the quotes I just cited, but I don't really need a bunch of dead guys to tell me what is truth. I have over a dozen copies of the Bible lying around the house, and I have the ability to read and understand each of them for myself.

History has proven that mankind is a dreadful biblical guide. The apostasy that swept over the Church caused a lack of prophecy commentary from about 450 AD until the 1600s. People stopped thinking for themselves. Their interpretation of the Bible became what the institutional church spoon-fed them. Premillennialism largely disappeared after it was condemned as heretical by the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD. It wasn't until the Reformation Movement of the 16th Century that we see a rebound in the number of statements that reflect the Pre-Tribulational view.

Scripture Galore

A host of Scriptures indicate the Church should expect an imminent return of their Lord. The opponents of imminency constantly try to pick apart each individual reference, but they should look at the big picture. *An overwhelming number of verses in the Bible support imminency.*

I've been able to easily locate 22 passages that imply that the coming of Christ remains an imminent event. All you really need is one verse to prove a point, but the weight of evidence should cause even the most hard-core imminency foes to rethink their stance.

I seriously doubt any scholar or layman

could find 22 passages of Scripture that clearly indicate the Tribulation or the rule of the Antichrist is the next imminent event facing the Church. I have already quoted some of those passages. Below are a few more representative verses from those 22 passages:

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour (Matthew 25:1-6,13)."


"Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time will come. It is like a man away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. Therefore, be on the alert – for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning, in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep. What I say to you I say to all, 'Be on the alert (Mark 13:33-37).'"

"Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light (Romans 13:11-12)."

"Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near (Philippians 4:5)."

"Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night... so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober (1 Thessalonians 5:1-2,6)."

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Christ Jesus (Titus 2:11-13)."

"Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door (James 5:7-9)." 

Making much of Sin?

by Paul Washer

THE centre of the Gospel is the death of Christ. Christ died for sin. Therefore, there can be no Gospel proclamation apart from a biblical treatment of sin. This includes explaining the heinous nature of it and exposing men as sinners.

I am aware that the subject of sin is somewhat out of vogue even in some Evangelical circles; nevertheless, any honest consideration of Scripture as it relates to contemporary culture will demonstrate that there is still a need to “make much of sin.”

The need for speaking clearly about sin is acute since we live in a generation born in sin and captivated by it (Psalm 51:5; 58:3). We are a people that drinks down iniquity like water (Job 15:16), and cannot discern our fallen condition anymore than a fish can know that it’s wet. Because of this, we must endeavour to rediscover a biblical view of sin and the sinfulness of man. Our understanding of God and the Gospel depends upon it.

As stewards of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we do no service to men by making light of sin, skirting around the issue, or avoiding it altogether. Men only have one problem – they are under the wrath of God because of their sin (John 3:36).

To deny this is to deny one of the most foundational doctrines of Christianity. It is not unloving to tell men that they are sinners, but it is the grossest form of immorality not to tell them! In fact, God declares that their blood will be on our hands if we do not warn them of their sin and the coming judgement (Ezekiel 33:8). To seek to preach the Gospel without making sin an issue is like trying to heal the brokenness of a people superficially, saying, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace (Jeremiah 6:14).

The book of Romans is the closest thing we have to a systematic theology in the Scriptures. In this letter, the Apostle Paul is setting forth his doctrine before the church in Rome. He seeks to prepare them

for his upcoming visit, and hopes that they will join with him in his missionary endeavours in Spain (Romans 15:23-24). It is extremely important to note that the first three chapters of this letter, with the exception of a brief introduction, is dedicated to hamartology – the doctrine of sin. For three chapters, the apostle labours with all his intellect and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit with one great purpose – to prove the sinfulness of man and to condemn the entire world!

I have often heard Christians declare that God has not given us a ministry of condemnation and death, but of righteousness, reconciliation and life (2 Corinthians 3:7-9 and 2 Corinthians 5:17). This is very true, but this does not mean that we are not to speak much about sin, or use the Scriptures to bring men under the conviction of the Holy Spirit regarding their sin. It is true that there is now no condemnation “in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1)” but there is nothing but condemnation apart from Him (Romans 5:18).

An instrument of exposing

The Scriptures tell us that the Law was not given as a means of salvation, but as an instrument for exposing both the vileness of sin – that sin would be utterly sinful (Romans 7:13), and the sinfulness of man – that all the world might become accountable to God (Romans 3:19). This ministry of the Law should continue to be an essential part of our Gospel proclamation. The “old” preachers called it the breaking up of fallow ground (Jeremiah 4:3; Hosea 10:12), turning over rocks, and pulling back curtains. They saw the need to hold men up to the mirror of God’s Law so that they might see their destitute condition and cry out for mercy.

Of course, this is not to be done with

a spirit of pride or arrogance, and we are not to handle people roughly. God has not called us to be a belligerent or offensive people, even though the truth we preach with all humility may be quite offensive.

The ministry of the Apostle Paul did not have condemnation as its goal, but there is a very real sense in which he laboured to condemn men in the hope that they might recognise their utter moral ruin, and turn to Christ in repentance and faith.

In the book of Romans, Paul first sets out to prove the moral corruption of the entire world, its hostility toward God, and its absolute refusal to submit to the truth it knows (Romans 1:18-32). Then he turns his attention to the Jew, and proves that although uniquely blessed through the gift of special revelation, he is as guilty before God as the Gentile (Romans 2:1-29). Finally, he concludes his argument by presenting some of the most direct and offensive accusations found in Scripture against man (Romans 3:1-18). What is his purpose? He tells us in his closing arguments:

“That every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God.”

Like Jeremiah before him, Paul was called not only to “build and to plant,” but also to “pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow (Jeremiah 1:10).” He was, in his own words, “destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God (II Corinthians 10:5).”

Under the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and through the Scriptures, Paul endeavoured to end the hope of the pagan moralist, the religious Jew, and everyone in between. He wrote and preached to close the mouths of men so that they would never again boast in self-righteousness or



make excuses for sin. He cut them off from every other hope so that they might turn to Christ alone.

An angry, bitter man?

Was the Apostle Paul merely an angry and bitter man with an axe to grind against humanity? No! He loved humanity to such an extent that his life was poured out like a drink offering on behalf of the Gentiles (Philippians 2:17), and he even wished himself accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of his fellow Jew (Romans 9:3). Paul preached against sin for the same reason that the physician works to diagnose his patient's illness and is willing to tell him even the worst of news. It is a labour of love for the salvation of the hearer. Any other response by doctor or preacher would be loveless and immoral.

It may be appropriate at this moment to ask ourselves if our Gospel preaching has such a purpose. Do we love enough to teach truth, expose sin, and confront our hearers? Do we possess a biblical compassion that tells men the truth in hope that their hearts might be broken under the weight of their sin and they might look to Christ alone? Are we willing to risk being misunderstood and maligned in order that truth might be told and men might be saved?

There seems to be a growing conviction even among Evangelicals that contemporary western man is already so psychologically fractured and burdened with guilt that we dare not press him further lest we crush him.

Such a view fails to realise that there is a tremendous difference between a psychological fracture and biblical repentance leading to life. Modern man has become the feeble character that he is because he is self-absorbed and living in rebellion against God. He is loaded down with guilt because he is guilty. He needs God's Word to expose his sin, and bring him to repentance. Only then will there be a biblical brokenness that leads to life.

God's dealings with the nation of Israel provide us with wonderful examples of this truth. Through the prophet Isaiah, He describes Israel's condition:

"The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is nothing sound in it. Only bruises, welts and raw wounds,

not pressed out or bandaged, nor softened with oil (Isaiah 1:5&6)."

The nation of Israel was as fractured and frail as one could ever imagine, yet God dealt with them for their own good by pointing out their rebellion and calling them to repentance. He used many "hard words" against them (Isaiah 1:4), but each was necessary to expose their sin, and turn them from it (Isaiah 1:18&19).

Identifying a malady and explaining the seriousness of it is always the first step to a cure. A man who has no knowledge of his cancer will not seek the aid of medicine, and a man will not flee from a burning house unless he knows of a fire.

To the same degree, a man will not seek salvation until he knows that he is thoroughly lost, and he will not flee to Christ until he knows that there is no other means of salvation. Men must be told of their sin before they will acknowledge it; they must be informed of the danger of it before they will flee from it; and they must be convinced that salvation is found in Christ alone before they will leave behind all their self-righteous hopes and run to Him.

Making much of sin is no longer a consideration for most of the Evangelical community. There even seems to be a conscious effort to discourage such preaching as negative and destructive. We seem to balk at exposing the sinner's sin, and yet this is a primary ministry of the Holy Spirit:

"And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgement; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgement, because the ruler of this world has been judged (John 16:8-11)."

According to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit has been sent into the world to convict men of sin, righteousness, and judgement. Bringing sin to light and pressing the sinner to repentance is one of His primary ministries. Should not we as ministers of the Gospel have the same goal? Should not our preaching reflect the same work? Is it possible to evangelise in the power of the Holy Spirit, while refusing to work with the Spirit in this essential ministry?

Although the Holy Spirit is not dependent upon human instruments, God has ordained that men come to conviction of

sin, repentance, and saving faith through preaching (I Corinthians 1:21). Yet how can the Spirit use our preaching if we are not willing to expose sin or call men to repentance?

The Scriptures teach us that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17), but if God's ministers only reluctantly use the sword in convicting men of sin, will it not quench both the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit? We must not be afraid to follow the Spirit's example in dealing with sinners. If He deems it necessary to convict men of sin, we must join Him in this work. Those preachers and churches that have found a "better way," have no grounds for hoping that the Spirit of God is working among them to bring men to Christ.

Before we conclude, it is important to make one final note. The greatest reason for making much of sin is that it exalts the Gospel. The beauty of the stars cannot be seen in the midday sky because they are eclipsed by the light of the sun. However, when the sun is set and the sky becomes black as pitch, the stars are seen in the full force of their splendour.


True beauty

So it is with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Its true beauty can only be seen in the backdrop of man's sin. The darker man appears, the brighter the Gospel.

It seems that men never even notice the beauty of Christ or consider His worth until they see the heinous nature of their sin and themselves as absolutely destitute of merit. There are countless testimonies of Christians down through the ages who never once esteemed Christ until the day the Holy Spirit came and convicted them of sin, and righteousness, and judgement.

It was only after they were engulfed in the unrelenting darkness of their own sin, that Christ appeared like the morning star and became precious to them.

It is striking that when true believers in Jesus Christ hear a sermon regarding man's depravity, they walk out of the church bursting with joy and filled with a new zeal to follow Christ. It is not because they take sin lightly or find some satisfaction in their former sinful state. Rather, they are filled with joy unspeakable, because in the greater darkness they saw more of Christ!

How we rob men of a greater vision of God, because we will not give them a lower vision of themselves. 



WHY BIBLE PROPHECY MATTERS

by Britt Gillette

WHY does Bible prophecy matter? As a Christian, why should you spend any time studying it? It's sad to say, but many Christians (including many church leaders) say Bible prophecy doesn't matter. And they say you shouldn't spend any time studying it.

Why? Some of the stated reasons are "Study of Bible prophecy is a waste of time" or "it's a distraction."

Another common criticism is "Bible prophecy so negative!" Negative? How is the return of Jesus to establish everlasting peace on earth with no more death, crying, sorrow, or pain (Revelation 21:4) negative? It's not. In fact, it's our Blessed Hope (Titus 2:13)!

No. There's something else going on here, and I think I know what it is. The real reason so many church leaders ignore Bible prophecy is because they care more about what the world thinks than what God thinks.

They associate the study of Bible prophecy with date-setters and "kooks." And they don't want others to think they're like that. It's much easier (and a lot less controversial) to cover topics like "Seven Ways to a Better Marriage" or "Five Ways to Live a Better Life Today" or "How to Be Happy All the Time."

Now, I'm not saying these topics don't matter. They definitely do. God wants us all to live a full and blessed life here on earth. But to ignore Bible prophecy is to ignore anywhere from 25 to 33 percent of

the Bible.

If God didn't want us to study it, why would He reveal it? The Bible says all of God's Word is useful for teaching and instruction (2 Timothy 3:16&17) – and that includes prophecy.

The Power of Prophecy

The prophetic passages in the Bible are just as important as all the others. And God promises wherever He sends His Word, it will prosper (Isaiah 55:11). This includes all of His Word, not just those verses self-appointed Christian leaders deem "okay."

If you have any doubt about the importance of Bible prophecy when it comes to living the Christian life, here's what the Bible itself says about God's prophetic Word:

1) Prophecy Points to Jesus

All prophecy points to Jesus (Revelation 19:10). In fact, Jesus Himself said He came to fulfil the law and the prophets (Matthew 5:17). What if the magi (Matthew 2:1&2) had ignored Bible prophecy? What if they thought the study of prophecy was "a waste of time?"

Then they would have missed out on one of the greatest honours of all time – seeing the baby Jesus. What if Simeon (Luke 2:25-35) had the attitude that Bible prophecy is irrelevant? Then he would have missed out on the greatest blessing of his life. What if Anna (Luke 2:36-40) had ignored Bible prophecy? Then she, too, would have missed out on Jesus.

2) Jesus Demands We Watch

Still think study of Bible prophecy is "a distraction" from God's work? Then how come Jesus demands it? That's right. Jesus doesn't simply suggest the study of prophecy. He commands us to study it. He commands us to "stay alert" and to "keep watch (Mark 13:33,35)."

That begs the question – watch for what? The answer is clear. Watch for His return. Otherwise, He'll find us sleeping when He arrives without warning (Mark 13:36).

If you don't study Bible prophecy and the signs of His coming, how will you ever know what to watch for? And if you don't know what to watch for, how can you obey Jesus?

3) Prophecy Proves the Bible Is God's Word

Long ago, God issued a challenge. He said, "Who else can tell the beginning from the end (Isaiah 41:21-24)?" God proclaims He alone can do so. Only God can reveal what is going to happen before it happens (Isaiah 46:10).

The hundreds and hundreds of specific and detailed prophecies found in the Bible prove its divine authority. What other book on earth can match the Bible in predictive power? None! But if you fail to study Bible prophecy, that fact will pass you by.

4) Prophecy Is a Powerful Tool for Evangelism

In the first century, Bible prophecy was the primary tool for spreading the gospel. Peter cited the Messianic prophecies as clear proof Jesus was the long awaited

Messiah (Acts 2:14-42). His speech led 3 000 people to give their lives to Jesus. He also said the life of Jesus fulfilled what the prophets had written about the Messiah (Acts 3:18-24).

Philip used a fulfilled prophecy to explain the gospel to an Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39). And Paul's primary method of spreading the gospel was to reason from the scriptures (Acts 17:2&3). He explained how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Messiah. And he explained all that the prophets said about Him (Acts 13:27-31).

If you don't study Bible prophecy, you're missing one of the greatest tools for spreading the Gospel. What better way to respond to those who demand evidence that Jesus is the Messiah than to tell them about fulfilled Bible prophecy?

5) Prophecy Encourages Holy Living

If you keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, you know He could return at any moment. And if you know He can return at any moment, it encourages holy living.

In the story of the evil servant, Jesus warned us about a danger. What danger? The danger of thinking He'll delay His return. Jesus said the evil servant thinks, "My master won't be back for a while," and he goes on sinning (Matthew 24:48&49).

Instead, you should live your life as if He could come at any moment. This mindset leads to patience (James 5:8), disciplined

prayers (1 Peter 4:7), love (1 Peter 4:8), and an eagerness to use your gifts for the glory of God (1 Peter 4:10&11). While we wait for the return of Jesus, we should live peaceful, pure, and blameless lives (2 Peter 3:11-14).

6) Prophecy Gives Specific Blessings

Some Christians avoid reading the Book of Revelation. They might find it frightening or difficult to understand. But remember, it's the revelation of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:1). It's not the revelation of John. It's not the creation of ancient men. It's a message from Jesus.

It's so important, God says He'll bless anyone who reads it to the church! And He'll bless anyone who listens to it and obeys what it says (Revelation 1:3). In heaven, some will wear "a crown of righteousness." And who gets this crown? All who eagerly await the return of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 4:8).

7) Prophecy Reveals the Season of the Lord's Return

Jesus says the world will be caught unaware when He suddenly returns (Luke 12:40). It will be like in the days of Noah and Lot. People will go on living their daily lives as normal right up until the moment of their destruction (Luke 17:30). But those who study Bible prophecy won't be surprised by His return (1 Thessalonians 5:4-6).

Why? Because they'll understand the


signs. While we can't know the day or the hour of His return (Matthew 24:36), we can know the season of His return. Jesus, Moses, and the prophets told us what signs to look for. And Jesus says when see all those signs coming together you can know His return is very near (Matthew 24:33).

Conclusion

Don't ignore Bible prophecy. Don't poke fun of it or laugh at it (1 Thessalonians 5:19-22). Prophecy is behind almost every promise Christians hold near and dear. The promise of heaven... The hope of salvation... The joy of eternity with Jesus.

Each is a promise from God guaranteeing our future. And what is prophecy if not a guarantee of future events? So don't let what others think discourage you from studying Bible prophecy.

Remember, the world mocked and ridiculed Jesus. If you follow Him, He says you will be mocked and ridiculed as well (Matthew 10:22-25). Bible prophecy is the message of Jesus. And if you're a Christian, you must be willing to endure persecution for it. Jesus said if anyone is ashamed of Him and His message, He will be ashamed of that person when He returns (Luke 9:23-26).

Don't be ashamed. Study Bible prophecy. Let it enrich your life. For the whole purpose of prophecy is to glorify Jesus (Revelation 19:10). 

Will you help us be a blessing?

DID you know that for less than the cost of a cup of coffee you can send the life-giving message found in *Prepare the Way* to church leaders in African countries, as well as overseas missionaries, prisoners and those in hospitals and hospices?

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Prepare the Way is a 100% non-profit ministry. No one associated with the magazine derives any form of income from the magazine – so, very simply, every cent you give goes straight towards sending out more magazines (we won't even use your money for a cup of coffee of our own)! The

more money we get in, the more magazines we give away – it's as simple as that.

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10 Steps to finding your life partner



by J. Lee Grady

THIS year, five young friends of mine are getting married: Anibál met his future wife at his church in California, Vitaliy met his fiancée at Christ for the Nations Institute, KC found David on the mission field, Ben met Tiffany while studying at Regent University, and Doug – who has been waiting the longest for his bride – got engaged to Danya last week on his 32nd birthday.

But I have many other friends, some young and some not so young, who are still waiting for the big introduction. For whatever reason, marriage hasn't happened for them.

Single Christians are often told that all they must do is “wait on God” for a mate. But I believe that phrase is both overused and abused. In many cases, a single person doesn't need to wait on God; the Lord may actually be waiting on you to take some action.

If you want to be married, here are some simple steps that might help move you farther along in the process:

1. Make sure Jesus is on the throne of your life.

You can never go wrong when you put God first. Matthew 6:33 says: “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” Marriage is a need, and God is very eager to meet it. And since it is probably the biggest decision you will ever make, why trust your own instincts to choose the right person? God is the best matchmaker. Ask Him to guide you.

2. Make spiritual growth your priority.

A marriage is strong when both the husband and the wife are strong Christians. If either is immature spiritually, problems will multiply. That's why you should spend your single years becoming a mature disciple. Paul told the Corinthians that single believers should pursue “undistracted devotion to the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:35).” Get involved in a church, study God's Word and become a passionate worshipper.

3. Make a list of your relationship preferences.

It's okay to desire certain qualities in a spouse. Maybe you prefer a girl who is short, a man who is older than you or someone who has a certain educational background. Psalm 37:4 says: “Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.” Just check your motives and make sure your desires are not selfish or unrealistic.

4. Get rid of your false expectations and fantasies.

Many singles have totally unrealistic ideas about what marriage and romance are all about. Some girls have been conditioned by Disney cartoons to expect a guy to sweep them off their feet and take them to his fairytale castle. That's not going to happen. Neither will you ever feel the level of heartthrob described in romance novels. Pornography has also ruined romance for people; some guys who are addicted to porn can't even experience normal arousal without it. Come down to earth and get real. Marriage

will never resemble your perfect dream world.

5. Set your moral standards high and never sell out.

Every unmarried Christian needs a list of non-negotiables. Never compromise your sexual purity. If a sweet-talking guy from your church's worship team tries to lure you into a one-night stand, refuse his charm. If you feel attracted to a girl and then realise she flirts with every guy and doesn't share your values, back off. And never, ever date a non-believer with the intention of converting them. “Missionary dating” rarely has a good outcome.

6. Get busy with your life and career.

The worst thing any single can do is sit around waiting for a mate. Moping is not attractive – it's pitiful. Don't be desperate. God loves you just the way you are, and you don't need a husband or wife to make you valuable. Live your life. Finish your education, achieve your professional goals and get involved in ministry. It's more likely you will find your mate while pursuing your dreams than while sitting in a corner mourning your singleness. (And remember: Love does not pay the bills. You need a job to be married!)

7. Seek emotional healing.

I know singles who jump from one dysfunctional dating relationship to the next and never realise they have serious issues to address. Don't wait until you are married to realise you have addictions, bitterness or unresolved pain. If you don't get rid of your drama now,

your marriage will be filled with drama. Seek prayer ministry at your church or find a counsellor.


8. Take care of yourself physically.

You don't have to be a cover girl or a GQ stud to find a mate. We come in all shapes and sizes, and your spouse is going to love you and all your imperfections. But making yourself more attractive doesn't hurt! If you always look like you just got out of bed, ask some honest friends to give you a makeover. If you need to lose weight, stop making excuses and start a sensible food plan and exercise routine.

9. Develop an active social life.

Some Christian guys I know are afraid to ask a girl out for coffee, yet they play video games all day while complaining about loneliness. Hello? You will never find a mate in a vacuum. You have to break out of your shell and make yourself available. You don't have to pair up when you gather with a group of singles for fellowship. Many dating relationships start as innocent friendships – and then a romantic spark turns into a flame.

10. Find a married mentor to help you prepare.

You don't have to navigate the journey from dating to marriage all by yourself. Seek out a trusted older friend to help you. Ask questions. Share your fears. Marriage is a huge decision, but a mentor can give you the courage to embrace your future. And they will be cheering the loudest at your wedding because they've played a small part in God's miracle. 

WATCH & PRAY

Thanks to
Elizabeth Kendal

EGYPT: COPTS DRIVEN FROM NORTH SINAI

On February 19 the “Islamic State of Egypt” released a video entitled *Kill All Kuffar* (infidels), specifically threatening Egypt’s Coptic Christians. The group also launched a “Tracking Down the Apostates of Egypt” campaign, which calls on IS sympathisers across the country for support by reporting the whereabouts of infidels, including “Christian leaders... crusaders (Westerners) or Zionists (Jews) who live among you.” Five Copts were murdered in January and seven Copts have been killed in Al-Arish, North Sinai Province since January 31. More than 118 Coptic families have fled North Sinai with more on the way. Most have found refuge in churches, hostels and homes in Ismailiya, Suez Canal city. The Health Minister has set up medical facilities to meet the Copts’ needs. Please pray for Egypt and its Copts.

TERROR IN THE EASTERN REGION OF UGANDA

On Sunday January 15 some 80 believers were praying together in Katira Church in majority-Muslim Budaka District, Eastern Region, when a mob of some 90 local Muslims attacked, angry about Muslims converting to Christianity. Dozens of believers were beaten and bound and 15 women were raped. Police took two hours to respond – only then did the attackers disperse. The pastor, Moses Mutasa, and eight other church members

are missing. The following day Reverend Musa Mukenye intervened to ease tensions and maintain peace. He has urged the police to arrest the attackers and bring them to justice. Unfortunately, impunity has long prevailed, which is precisely why persecution has been escalating. Please pray that God will bring healing and comfort to Katira, and justice to Eastern Region (Isaiah 30:18b).

SUDAN: 25 CHURCHES SLATED FOR DEMOLITION

On January 13, the outgoing Obama administration announced that it was “easing sanctions” on Sudan on the grounds that the Government of Sudan has allegedly shown “sustained progress... on several fronts...” By February 1, land authorities in Khartoum had issued demolition notices to at least 25 churches they accuse of “trespassing in residential areas” mostly in the Sharq al Neel (East Nile area) locality of Khartoum North (Bahri). At a press conference on February 11, the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) denounced the order as pure persecution, noting the discriminatory of the order which targets only churches while bypassing mosques, despite their being in the same area. The SCC called on the government to reconsider its decision or provide alternative sites for the churches. Church leaders see the order as part of a wider campaign to drive the Nuba (the non-Arab, African Christians of Sudan’s Nuba

Mountains) and Christianity out of Khartoum, and ultimately out of Sudan.

HIDDEN GENOCIDE IN THE CHITTAGONG HILLS

Some 95 percent of Bangladeshis are ethnic Bengali (90 percent Muslim, 10 percent Hindu). One to two percent of Bangladeshis belong to tribes indigenous to the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). Whilst the tribes are mostly Buddhist, Christianity is well established, growing and respected. When British India was partitioned in 1947, the CHT was “awarded” to Pakistan, despite being only three to five percent Muslim and despite the indigenes having more in common with their neighbours in eastern India. Today, due to government-driven, military-facilitated transmigration, CHT – now Bangladesh’s most militarised region – is majority Bengali Muslim. The region is closed to foreigners. Human rights abuses including rape, torture, murder, land theft and

forced Islamisation are rife. It is a hidden genocide. Please pray for Bangladesh and the Church in CHT.

INDIA: DEATH IN JHARKHAND, ELECTIONS

On January 20, Bartu Urawn (50) a believer for 10 years and head of a believing family in BJP-ruled Jharkhand, died as a martyr for Jesus Christ. Hoping to force him to deny Christ, villagers tortured Bartu and his wife. Each time they taunted him, Bartu responded, “I will not deny Christ... I will continue to believe till my last breath.” The police refused to register the family’s complaint, and instead forced them to sign a “peace agreement.” The Christian villagers are living in fear of their lives. Meanwhile, elections are under way in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh. Buoyed by the 2014 General Election result, Hindu nationalists have been campaigning hard. Persecution has escalated and will get worse if the BJP is victorious. Please pray for India and its Church.

Prepare the Way Days: June 4, November 5

These are the dates for this year’s remaining *Prepare the Way* days at 9.15 a.m. at Mount Zion Church Merrivale (near Howick). Peter Pollock will be preaching at each meeting – and you’re invited to stay for lunch, too!



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Sacred Retreat

by Timothy Dwight (1752-1817), from a sermon on the character of God

THESE solemn apprehensions are especially quickened in the prayer closet. From this sacred retreat the world is shut out.

No earthly eye looks on. No earthly object intrudes.

Here we bow before our Maker and converse with Him face to face. Our souls are naked before Him. Our lives pass in review; our sins are set in the light of His countenance as are our penitence, our faith, our love, our comforts, and our hopes.

God, thus intimately seen in this private temple, is seen through the day till we revisit the same solemn retreats and again converse with our Maker. Thus a sense of the divine presence becomes the habitual and controlling state of our minds.

Thus aided, thus cultivated, we learn to find God in all places and in all things. This great Being becomes present to us in every enjoyment which we share, in every affliction which we suffer, in every hope which we indulge, and in every advancement which we make in the Christian life.

To the eye of such a man, Jehovah is present and lives and acts in all the works of His hands. His smile is the beauty of the spring, His breath its fragrance. His hand

pours out the riches of the summer and the bounty of the autumn. The thunder is His voice; lightnings are His arrows. He makes the clouds His chariots; He rides upon the whirlwind. The earth is His footstool; the heavens are His throne.

In the sun, the brightest material image of His exaltation, immutability, and glory, He gives light and life and comfort to the unnumbered millions of animated creatures and holds out to the eye of the mind a magnificent symbol of heaven's everlasting day.

Thus, everywhere He lives, controls, and smiles in all the works of His hand.

In His Word He is seen in still more divine forms. There His goodness and mercy beam with a mild and soft, but immeasurable glory in the face of the Redeemer. There His voice is heard in the awful threatenings of His law and the delightful promises of His Gospel.

There He shines, a moral sun, into the soul and awakens in it the life which shall never die.

Animated, comforted, invigorated with hope and joy, the Christian draws nearer and nearer to God and beholds Him in clearer and brighter view, until his soul, entering the regions of eternal rest, opens its eyes upon the glories of heaven and is admitted to behold His face in righteousness forever and ever. ☯