

# Prepare<sup>the</sup> Way

*Preparing the Bride of Christ for the return of Christ*

Issue No. 117  
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## 7 Political myths about Israel

The power of the  
Lord's presence

Peter Pollock

Walking in  
the light

Have  
you  
heard  
from  
God  
lately?

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**COVER:** Give to the Lord the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him. Ob, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness (1 Chronicles 16:29)!"

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# Look up!

by James Smith

*“Look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near (Luke 21:28).”*

**I**n whatever state, in whatever place, in whatever condition you may be – let us seek grace to follow our Lord’s loving advice, and “look up!”

Do not look *back* – as Lot’s wife did.

Do not look *within* – as too many do.

Do not look *around* – as David did.

But “look up!” Look up to God – He is your Father, your Friend, your Saviour. He can help you. He will help you. He says, “Look unto Me, and be delivered – for I am God!”

Look up for *light* to guide you – and He will direct your path.

Look up for *grace* to sanctify you – and the grace of Jesus will be found sufficient for you.

Look up for *strength* to enable you to do and suffer God’s will – and His strength will be made perfect in your weakness.

Look up for *comfort* to cheer you – and as one whom his mother comforts, so will the Lord comfort you.

Look up for *courage* to embolden you – and the Lord will give courage to the faint; and to those who have no might – He will increase strength.

Look up for *endurance* to keep you – and the God who preserves you will enable you quietly to bear the heaviest burden, and silently to endure the most painful affliction.

Look up for *providence* to supply you – and the jar of flour will not be used up,

and the jug of oil will not run dry; but God shall supply all your needs, according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Look up in *faith* – exercising confidence in the Word of a faithful God.

Look up in *prayer* – asking for what God has graciously promised.

Look up in *hope* – expecting what you ask in the name of Jesus.

Look up with *adoration* – and adore the sovereignty, righteousness, and wisdom of God.

Look up *constantly* – let nothing daunt or discourage you! Rather say, “Our eyes are on the Lord our God – until He shows us mercy.”

Look up – for this will keep...

your *head* from swimming,  
your *heart* from sinking,  
your *knees* from trembling,  
your *feet* from slipping, and  
your *hands* from hanging down!

It is impossible to say what will happen to us, or what will be required of us in the days ahead – but “Look up!” This direction, if properly attended to, will... *procure* for us all that we need, *secure* us against all that we dread, and *make* us more than a match for all our foes and fears!

Fellow-Christian, are you fearful? “Look up” and hear Jesus saying to you, “Do not be afraid – I Myself will help you!”

Are you discouraged? “Look up” – and your youth shall be renewed like the eagle’s, and fresh light, comfort, and

courage shall be given to you!

Are you desponding? “Look up” for Jesus never breaks the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax.

Do not look too much at your *sin* – but look at the infinitely meritorious blood of God’s dear Son!

Do not look too much at *self* – but look at Jesus, who ever lives to make intercession for you in Heaven.

Are you stripped of your comforts, your props, and your goods? Then look up! He who stripped you – loves you! He will be more than all of these to you! He will...

*bind up* your broken heart,  
*calm* your discouraged spirit,  
*cheer* your drooping mind, and  
*fill* you with His own peace and happiness.

Look up...

*for* all that you need;

*from* all that you fear;

*through* all that would obstruct your way.

Look up every day, saying with David, “In the morning, O Lord, You hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before You, and will look up (Psalm 5:3)!”

Look up in every trial, saying “I will lift up my eyes unto the hills, from whence comes my help! My help comes from the Lord, who made Heaven and earth!”

Do not look at your *sin* – it will discourage you!

Do not look at your *self* – it will distress you!

Do not look at *Satan* – he will bewilder you!

Do not look to *men* – they will deceive, or disappoint you!

Do not look at your *trials* – they will deject you!

“Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us – looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:1&2)!”

Look only, look always, look intently – to Jesus!

Run looking, work looking, fight looking, suffer looking, live looking, and die looking – to Jesus, who is at God’s right hand in glory!

**Oh, look, look, look to Jesus!** 



# Walking in the light

by Peter Pollock

**WE love to talk and preach about God's love, grace and mercy but we don't venture anywhere near God's justice and judgement! In fact, we have got ourselves so conditioned to regarding sin, repentance and judgement as a "negative" confession and a "hard" gospel that we, the modern church, are almost unrecognisable as preachers of the true gospel!**

Liberal modernism has triumphed in the visible apostate organisation that in these last days calls itself the church. And how fast we have we have descended the slippery slope of complacency and compromise over the last three or four decades.

It's scary, to say the least, but it is also exciting – both of which I would dare to suggest are acceptable biblical responses to the truth of the Bible as we watch the closing days unfold in the inevitable prophetic destiny of mankind. There is just no way that the "world" is going to avoid the judgment of God!

Sin reaps consequences, an immutable principle God has written into our system, and while sinners are always redeemable in Jesus Christ alone, it is hell and damnation for all and everything outside Him.

In Revelation 9:20, a third of the world has just been wiped out in judgement, but emphatically we read that those who remained refused to repent! One day every knee shall bow and tongue confess this truth, no matter who you are and where

you are.

Wherever you look in God's Word, the story does not alter. It is divinely consistent. The theme is steadfast and true and the course doesn't veer.

In Isaiah chapters 2 and 3, God speaks through his faithful prophet concerning Judah and Jerusalem. A godless people with judgement and exile on the menu, were facing both the truth and the wrath of God – and the prophetic statements that abound in these two chapters are profound and exceedingly challenging. While some may argue that they are out of context for today, nevertheless what is written clearly represents – principally and spiritually – the way God spoke, continues to speak and does communicate with us through true prophets!

## Hell-bent on ignoring Him

There is nothing new under the sun and an immutable God would be having the same concerns expressed in exactly the same way about a modern world hell-bent on doing their own thing and ignoring Him.

Let's take a close look at the immutable, accurate, dependable, time-honoured and absolute prophetic words of God as laid out in these two chapters from Isaiah.

"House of Jacob" – that represents us, the believers – "Come and let us walk in the light of the Lord," says Isaiah 2:5. God is offering to open our eyes, our spir-

itual eyes, to absolute prophetic truth. IT SHALL COME TO PASS!

The "mountain of the Lord's House" shall be "established" and "exalted." All nations shall "flow to it." Out of Zion shall go forth the "law" and the "word" of God and He shall "rebuke" and "judge" many people.

The Lord is coming to rule and to reign! There will be a "millennium," a promise that has been there from the beginning of God's prophetic dealings with His people, and "His People" have always been those who love Him, serve Him and believe in Him with all their heart, soul, mind and strength.

"You have forsaken your people... filled them with eastern ways," says verse 2:6 – and just how spot-on is that! As we look at a modern church over-run with soothsayers and false prophets we recognise this as an age-old truth, something that has always been around to a greater or lesser extent.

Maybe the key issue here is discernment, the ability to recognise what is not of God. There is an obsession with what can be best described as "charismatic fortune-telling" and adherents line up to receive personal prophecies, most of which are just "presumptions," self-indulgent self promotions on how we are going to unify and collaborate to fix up the world.

## World-changing feats

Often, using the scripture about us performing "greater things," we are misdirected and deceived into believing that we are going to promulgate all sorts of world-changing feats.

The definition of presumption is: "A form of self-confidence which makes self-righteous, over-confident, triumphal assumptions concerning one's importance and rights as a believer."

It is unacceptable arrogance in lives that should be characterised by humility. It's nothing but blatant humanism! Only Jesus Christ can fix the world, and He will reign and He will rule when He returns.

Verse 2:8 then tells us that the land is full of idols. How vital for us in South Africa to see that this is just what we have done with Nelson Mandela. People and nations are infatuated by their own success, worshipping the work of their own hands, and believing political concepts and claims that are not even true.

There is an over-emphasis on nationalism and patriotism and, of course, this results



in all sorts of problems in terms of cultures and racism. And this is staring us full in the face!

Verses 11&12 say that the lofty will be humbled, the haughty shall bow down and the Day of The Lord shall come upon everything. The promise is absolute! Everything lifted up, shall be brought down. The Lord alone shall be exalted and all idols shall be utterly abolished (2:17) and then in verse 19 we are promised that people shall flee from the “terror” of the Lord and the “glory” of His majesty.

## **The terror and the majesty**

Is that not interesting? Seemingly two incompatible words are linked – terror and majesty. Indeed, Almighty God is both those things – He is a God of love, mercy and grace just as much as He is a God of justice and judgement.

God will be “arising” to “shake” the world “mightily,” and this does not need any interpretation or explanation and it most certainly is not in line with a lot of the “peace” prophecies we hear bandied around in modern church circles.

Indeed, we are living in a godless world that will reap the consequences of our steadfast refusal to bend the knee and repent.

Chapter 3 moves on to list for us the recognisable affects of staying outside the blessings of God. “Behold!” commands God. In other words, look intently as God takes away “stock and store,” as we watch lands being devastated by drought and famines.

Adversity and suffering piles up as avarice and animosity increases worldwide! As so clearly stated in chapter 1 of Romans, God has handed us over to the consequences of our wretched and sinful ways and the only antidote, doctrinally and in truth, is repentance.

But deaf, stubborn ears just will not hear that.

God further lists that there will be a rejection of skilled and experienced leadership, with young people demanding for the “baton to be handed over” and the “oldies” to realise that it’s time for them to move on or move out. Life is a process which produces maturation, and it is time and experience that ensures that we learn the hard way from the mistakes we have made. The school of hard knocks is the best education system around.

So if you can add to the natural learning

process of life, a “born-again” meeting with the Lord Jesus Christ, when there is added the wisdom that comes via the Holy Spirit, then you realise why the devil is so hell-bent on relegating the wise “oldies” to the dust-heap!

Isaiah tells us that God, on purpose, withholds truer, natural and gifted leadership – anointed wisdom is withdrawn – and things become chaotic. Just look around! Mob, majority rule, with the servants governing is a huge problem, so says Proverbs 19:10.

People power, as we saw with Barabbas, is not God power. A.W. Tozer writes: “The voice of the people, seldom, rarely is ever, is the voice of God.” The mob, the people power, will always be trying to crucify Jesus!

Verse 4 promises that “children,” the immature “yuppies,” will take over, forcing out God’s “white-haired” wisdom and there will be no respect, no fear of God and insolence will be seen all over. This will produce anarchy, the poor will sadly be oppressed and plundered and there will be rebellion and turmoil wherever you look.

Now, how exciting is all that as we look around at what is happening in America with President Trump and in the United Kingdom with the “Brexit” monster. Insubordination is a problem that God feels strongly about!

We are all told to honour our mothers and fathers that things may go well with us. Millions of children in the world today are suffering from the out-working of this commandment. The aggressive, self-righteous and arrogant modern spirit is quite scary.

Verse 8: “Their tongue and their doings are against the Lord. The look on their faces they do not hide. Woe to their soul, they have brought evil upon themselves.” That is what is says! That is what God says, and we should not only read it, but receive it, believe it, and not attempt to add or subtract.

Verse 12: “Children are their oppressors, women rule over them! Those who lead cause you to err and destroy the ways of your paths.” God says that!

Then we have verses 16-23 in chapter 3 as God highlights the daughter of Zion. How specific are His comments. Haughty. Wanton. Strutting. Women calling the shots. Manipulative!

I don’t think that we even begin to understand the extent of the Jezebel spirit

that is caught up in what is masked as women’s liberation and feminism. There is just no point in trying to dig and delve into this monster because all it produces is vitriol – and that in itself is proof of the poison it carries.

We are an amoral society, meaning that we are not just immoral, doing sinful things, but that we parade it and flaunt it, almost shaking our fists at God. In that day God’s word lists finery, anklets, scarves, crescents, pendants, bracelets, veils, headdress, ornaments, headbands, perfume boxes, charms, rings, nose rings, jewels, purses and fine linens. That’s certainly not about men. Dare I say it?

There is mention of mirrors. How significant is that! When they look into mirrors they only see their made-up, masked faces – that was a profound thought that came to me as I read these passages. A tough insight, but prophetically so true!

SO IT SHALL BE – emphatically states chapter 3:24. It will happen!

And do you think that the men escape? They have abdicated their roles. They are passive and apathetic. They are just too busy self-indulging themselves. Or else they are just plain lazy. There is no fragrance; there is no aroma, just a stench. Yes, the men are fallen, they are beaten, they are defeated and they are branded.


## **There is a desperate need to repent**

It is time to lament and mourn, says the prophet! And it needs to be done in sackcloth and ashes! That’s what happened at Ninevah when they responded to the preaching of Jonah. From King to commoner – that means everyone – there is a desperate need to repent.

The “church” – that is the visible organisation that carries that label – is destitute spiritually. It is a giant apostate organisation than has found itself marauded by humanism and the value system of the world.

Religion is the biggest business in the world, and the Christian “franchise” is being offered in all shapes and forms.

Even Jesus, when teaching about the 10 Virgins, proclaimed that half of them would not make it. The foolish unbelieving “five” did not have the “oil,” they did not have a “born again” spiritual relationship with Jesus.

It is time to start taking what God says seriously! 

# Heard from God lately?



by T. A. McMahon

**L**ET'S say I were to voice the question, "Heard from God lately?" to a very large crowd that had a mix of Christians and non-Christians. Among the crowd would be professing Christians, biblical Christians, cessationist Christians, Charismatic Christians, Pentecostal Christians, contemplative Christians, progressive Christians, conservative Christians, as well as a few agnostics, sceptics, and atheists.

Their first thoughts related to a response to my question, no doubt, would be as diverse as their religious perspectives. For example, atheists and sceptics would think I was delusional. Agnostics wouldn't think much about it nor probably even care. Contemplative Christians would react to my question as supportive of their intuitive feelings-oriented approach to hearing from God. Some of the Charismatic and Pentecostal Christians might respond in the same way. Conservative Christians and those with a cessationist bent might worry that I had bailed on the written Word of God in favour of personal subjective communication with Jesus.

All biblical Christians, I would hope, would restrain themselves from thinking ill of me doctrinally for at least a few minutes. They would give me the opportunity

to explain what I meant by my question and then would search the Scriptures to see whether or not it was true.

Let me make a seemingly controversial statement before I start explaining myself. If someone who calls himself a Christian is not hearing from God, he's in trouble – not potential trouble, but serious trouble – guaranteed! His situation is like that of a man in the middle of a minefield without a map or any device to guide him and keep him out of harm's way. That said, what do I mean by "hearing from God?"

## The Lord's responsibility...

I need to begin with what I believe is the Lord's responsibility: God has to communicate with those whom He created. Why? Because there are only a limited number of things we can know about Him without His communicating to us directly.

Everyone who recognises that the universe and everything in it *must* have had a Creator/Designer would also understand that the Creator must be infinitely intelligent and powerful. That awareness, however, doesn't supply necessary details about the Creator that only He can provide.

Furthermore, He is infinite, and we are finite; our own efforts to figure out

an infinite God cannot go beyond mere guesswork. That same ignorance applies to knowledge about ourselves.

Let us reason for a moment. What are some of the things that only God can supply? Well, for one thing, knowledge of who He is! Then there are His characteristics and attributes, as well as His reasons for creating us. What about humanity's condition right after its creation and its later rebellion and separation from Him? Then we learn of His plan for reconciliation between Himself and those very creatures!

Without God communicating such information to us, we're left in a quagmire of speculations, conjectures, theories, and unsubstantiated opinions. Therefore, not only *must* God communicate with us, but He must do it in a way that we finite and fallen beings can understand. This He has already done through His direct communication to us, which is – His Word. His Scriptures. His Bible!

What then of the question: "Heard from God lately?" If what we've heard isn't grounded in the written Word of God, we're more than likely in that minefield mentioned earlier. Each step is precarious, even though the first one may not blow our feet off. But, as National Park rangers instruct and warn hikers, it's the



first step off the marked trail that leads to their becoming lost.

The Bible is filled with instructions, exhortations, and warnings regarding the necessity of carefully adhering to what it says. Hebrews chapter 2 begins, “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.” Is “slippage” something to be concerned about?

Second Timothy 4:3&4 declares, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.” Jesus, in Matthew:24:4, warns, “Take heed that no man deceive you.”

Not earnestly heeding the instructions of God’s written Word is the basis for one’s drifting away, or, as noted, stepping off the “marked trail” that God, in His mercy, has laid out before us.

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## God’s words, not man’s words

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What the Bible supplies is “sound doctrine,” meaning those teachings that were given to and faithfully recorded by God’s prophets through the Holy Spirit. They are objective teachings from God, bereft of the subjective input of men. They are God’s words, not man’s (Galatians:1:11-12).

Yet we are told prophetically that a time will come among professing and true Christians that they will not endure (continue steadfastly) in God’s instructions. False teachers will seduce them through their doctrines. That fact is confirmed in the warning given by Jesus in answer to His disciples concerning the last days prior to His return, which He characterized as being a time of great deception (Matthew:24:4,24).

Although that time is certainly upon us, the antidote for individual believers is found in the Apostle Paul’s exhortation to Timothy that he “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine (2 Timothy:4:2).” “Enduring” sound doctrine means reading it, believing it, and living it out.

Going back to the question, “Heard from God lately?” – how lately is “lately?”

I’m hoping the response is overwhelmingly “daily!” There is no better habit for the believer in Jesus Christ than to read the Bible daily – at least none of which I

am aware.

Here are just some of the reasons.

Those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ, believing that He paid the full penalty for their sins, have been born again. They have received the free gift of eternal life and have begun a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus their Saviour. Of course, that includes loving Him.

For any relationship to develop, an increase in the knowledge that individuals have of one another is key. Everyone knows that’s the way it is when it comes to people with whom they physically interact, whether they be newlyweds, or in a relationship with new friends or new co-workers.

What about someone we want to personally befriend but whom we can’t physically be with? We might consider becoming pen-pals or “email-pals,” which may satisfy the desire to get to know them better.

Well, then what about developing a relationship with Jesus? That takes place through the reading of His Word. It’s through the Scriptures that we learn who He is, what He has done for us, what He wants for our lives, and how much He loves us. We’re told, “We love Him, because He first loved us (1 John:4:19).”

The more we learn of all He has done for us, the more our relationship with Him grows. That’s at the heart of my question, “Heard from God lately?” If we’re not hearing from Jesus daily through the reading of His Word (He is the Word in Revelation:19:13!), our relationship with Him will suffer – at best.

We are told that the Ephesian church had “left their first love” – Jesus Himself (Revelation:2:4). This happened because of their allowance for things – some of them even good – to hinder their love relationship with Him. So, too, will our love for Him be strangled by our own negligence to connect with Him through the Scriptures.

Why does this happen to many believers who are, or should be, aware of the horrendous price He paid in order to save them from their sins? The reasons, among many, include worldly distractions, backsliding, laziness, loving self more than Him, and, for increasing numbers of folks, being deceived regarding how we are to communicate with Him.

The first means of growing in our relationship with Jesus must be through the written words of Scripture, which

is God’s objective communication to humanity. This is critical, because our interpretation of the Word can be tested on an objective basis, according to principles of hermeneutics.

The major deception of our day, which began in the Garden of Eden with Satan’s ploy of subtly undermining God’s command to Adam and Eve, is to replace what God has indeed said with man’s false interpretations. Such interpretations are too often formulated through emotions, impressions, personal sensitivities, intuitions, and so forth. Those who take such an approach rely on their feelings for their understanding.

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## When the experiential dominates...

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This may also lead to the error of *eisegesis*, which means introducing one’s own presuppositions, agendas, or biases into and on to a biblical text. When the experiential dominates a person’s life, God’s truth is lost.

Next we are going to look at some of the meanings regarding the question “Heard from God lately?” that are understood in ways that are seriously at odds with what’s been presented above in this article.

Of late, there has been a rush away from the objective interpretation of Scripture. Now, many insist that they are hearing from God personally with little or no regard to His Word at all! This is not new in church history. In the Third Century AD, the Catholic Desert Fathers were all about hearing from God mystically. That precedent continued into the Catholic monastic and cloistered period and through mystical nuns such as Teresa of Avila and Anne Catherine Emmerich, then into the 20th century via priests and monks such as Thomas Merton and Henri Nouwen. The latter deceased priest has become a particular favourite of many influential evangelicals, including Rick and Kay Warren. Quaker Richard Foster and his Renovaré organization have been instrumental in influencing the Contemplative Movement, with its mystical methods (meditation techniques and spiritual rituals drawn from Eastern mysticism), to spread throughout evangelicalism today.

What has taken place in a greater way among Pentecostals and Charismatics is the very same spiritual subjectivism,

# Heard from God lately?



*Continued...*

albeit cloaked in biblical terminology. Some of their leaders give the impression (intentionally) that they are in a continual conversation with God. One of the false doctrines they conjure up to support their heresies is the teaching that God has two basic but different modes of communication: *logos* and *rhema*. Their belief is that *logos* is God's communication through the written word, and *rhema* is His spoken word.

No. In fact, the terms are used interchangeably throughout the New Testament. Moreover, according to this doctrine, God's oral transmission has authority (they call it "new revelation") over His *logos*, which means that the hearers are beyond being corrected by Scripture!

## Conversations with God

Like Satan (Genesis:3:1-4), the leaders in this movement continually add to, undermine, and contradict God's Word, while their followers willingly conform to whatever those over them may claim. All of those connected with the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) and ministries such as the International House of Prayer (IHOP), Bethel Church Redding, and the Elijah List are among those who promote this error.

Hearing from God experientially seems

to be an accepted practice among some of the most influential women in ministry today. Even a cursory review of the teachings of Beth Moore, Joyce Meyer, Priscilla Shirer, Sarah Young, and Jennie Allen of the IF:Gathering (and her conference speakers) reveals a preponderance of "conversations with God" and little to no exegesis of the Scriptures.

It can't be overstated how dangerous this subjective teaching and pursuit is to millions of Christian women spiritually. Worse than just taking a step off the path of God's Word, it's a step off a cliff with nothing objective (e.g., sound doctrine) in sight to grab on to.

Once a believer buys into the "God told me" stories of others, biblical doctrine quickly mixes with and is lost in a jumble of personal experiences. More often than not, the subjective experiences and teachings replace sound doctrine and are accepted as being true to and even supplanting the Scriptures. It then becomes a clear case of adding to God's Word, a practice that the Bible condemns (Proverbs:30:5&6, Revelation:22:18&19).

Are all subjective personal experiences with Jesus likewise condemned? No. Everyone who has believed the gospel began a personal intimate relationship with Him. That can't take place without the involvement, to some degree, of one's emotions. It may also include some form of personal communication with Jesus – if He chooses, how He chooses, and when He chooses.

The principle of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit personally interacting with believers is found throughout Scripture. Paul's life in Christ reveals his often-subjective guidance and communication with the Holy Spirit.

Subjective? Yes. For example, Paul is forbidden by the Spirit to preach in Bithynia and is redirected to Macedonia (Acts:16:7-10). That communication was subjective, meant only for Paul at that time. Was this an objective command of God, indicating that believers are never to go to Bithynia to preach? No! Peter writes to believers in Bithynia, so obviously the gospel was preached and believed there (1 Peter:1:1&2).

Three things are demonstrated in those verses and many others:

- 1) The principle that God communicates to believers is established;
- 2) He communicates objectively through

instructions and commands for all who read His Word;

- 3) He communicates personally and subjectively with individual believers.


Should the Lord choose to communicate with a believer on a personal basis, that must neither be received as though it were equal to the Scriptures nor put forth in any way that supplements or supplants God's Word. Furthermore, as with every spiritual experience, it must be tested: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God (1 John:4:1)."

The critical test is whether or not the content of the communication or the experience is true to the teachings of Scripture and true to the revealed character of the persons of the Godhead.

Books promoting conversations with God such as *God Calling*, *A Course in Miracles*, *Conversations with God*, and *Jesus Calling*, to name but a few, have become best sellers within Christendom, mostly because few Christians seem interested in applying biblical discernment, which is in direct disobedience to Paul's exhortation to Timothy: "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy:2:15)."

## Selected to be personally taught

The two women who channelled "Jesus" in *God Calling* said they felt highly privileged for being "selected" to be personally taught by him, and indicated that they were more comfortable not having to rely on written words. Who wouldn't want to be personally spoonfed by Jesus and be convinced that His teaching content was at a higher level than what has been written down in the Bible? That's an incredibly powerful seduction and one that is deceiving millions in Christendom today.

Pray for those who have been drawn in by those who "do not speak according to (God's) word (Isaiah:8:20)," and pray for the shepherds who are not shielding their sheep by warning them in solemn words that "Every word of God is pure: He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not Add to His words, lest He reprove you, and you be found a liar (Proverbs:30:5&6)." 





# We conquer on our knees

by Sarah Foulkes Moore

*"Men ought always to pray (Luke 18:1)."*

**EVERYWHERE** in Scripture words to this effect give to prayer a paramount place in the church's machinery of world evangelism. The whole gamut of Christ's doctrine of prayer is not to make prayer an auxiliary to Christian work but pre-eminently its driving force.

"How few," exclaimed Cortland Myers, "ever enter into the positive, practical, power of prayer. It is the mightiest force in the universe – and the Christian world is blind to the fact."

When the mighty Samson, who, typically speaking, stands for the supernatural ministry of the true church of Christ, was taken captive by the subtlety of the Philistines, they immediately penalised their victim by poking out his eyes. Thus blinded, his vision gone, the enemies of Samson and Israel bound and forced him to endless grinding at the mill.

In the identical manner when the church succumbed to the subversive influence of the world of sin, she became blinded to the mighty power of prayer and since has made prayer, not her chief concern but something entirely supplemental.

Is it any wonder Samson lost his power with God? Is it any wonder that a church that has relegated prayer to the background of its many ministries is not "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners (Song of Songs 6:10)?"

Instead of the church today fulfilling her destiny in an invincible, supernatural testimony to the world, we find her chained and bound by her enemies on every hand,

with the world unbelieving and scorning, looking on, and her own membership, generally speaking, backslidden, defeated, and compromising with the world and sin.

The greatest lesson the church must learn today is to put prayer back to its place of pre-eminence in her ministries. In her age-long conflict with the world and Satan, the church has always made her advances on her knees. So today the only weapon powerful enough to defeat the enemy in this last awful conflict is prayer in the Saviour's Name.

If the church will summon her praying forces, and mobilise herself and the nation on her knees, the ranks of the enemy, massing powerfully on every side, will be broken. Winning in the closet of prayer, the church will be everywhere victorious.

"We know not what we should pray for as we ought," declares the great Apostle to the Romans, "but the Spirit Himself makes intercession... for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:26&27)."

"The greatest thing God ever did for me," said the saintly Samuel Chadwick, "was to teach me to pray in the Spirit." This knowledge of the positive, practical power of prayer in the Spirit cannot be gained from books on prayer.

Paul prayed exceedingly day and night so that he could say, "Thanks be to God, who always causes us to triumph in Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14)."

Paul tells us the "Spirit also helps our infirmities" in prayer (Romans 8:26). True prayer is a place of helplessness and infirmity in ourselves but almightiness in the name of Jesus.

Our resources in prayer, as in all things, reside alone in God through His Spirit.

When we pray we must believe the Spirit will do what the Word has promised.

The Word says, "The Spirit Himself makes intercession for us." Then let us yield to the Spirit and let Him pray through us "because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:27)."

If, in this momentous hour, the church has preachers and people who will put on the whole armour of prayer and pray for a nationwide, churchwide, worldwide awakening – such prayer will suffice to shake the gates of hell and advance the kingdom of God to earth.

In this dark hour, the gates of hell seem to be prevailing against the church of God.

Charles Finney, one of the greatest revivalists the world has ever known, has said, "There never will be a revival until somebody makes particular efforts for this end... Opposition does not necessarily kill or prevent a revival by any means. If Christians are *driven to prayer*, a revival will speed on.


"The great revival at Rochester, New York, began under the most disadvantageous circumstances that could ever be imagined. The three churches were at variance. One had no minister; one was divided and was about to dismiss its minister. An elder in the Third Presbyterian Church had brought a charge against the pastor of the First Church.

"But in Rochester there were a few remarkable cases of the Spirit of prayer which assured us that God was there and we went on, and the more Satan opposed, the Spirit of the Lord lifted up the standard higher and higher, until finally a wave of salvation rolled over the place."

D.L. Moody witnessed the rise and fall of America's revival of 1857-1900. He observed its decline and was deeply distressed. He said to a friend, "When the revival spirit dies, may I die with it!" Deep concern for a revived church stirred his whole being. In his last campaign he prayed with touching fervour, "O God, stir the cities of America again!"

God has pledged Himself to answer the Spirit-directed prayer of faith (Jude 20; Matthew 18:18-20; Jeremiah 33:3; John 14:14). The Almighty cannot deny Himself. His oath, His covenant, assures us that if we ask, He will do.

Desperation in prayer is needed.

Fervency and zeal are essential and a holding on in living faith until He, in answer to the heart cries of His people, sends Heaven to our aid. 



# All joy in all trials!

by Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

*“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing (James 1:2-4).”*

**FIRST, let us think a little upon the essential point which is assailed by temptation or trial. It is your faith which is tried. It is by our faith that we are saved, justified and brought near to God, and therefore it is no wonder that it is attacked.**

All the powers of darkness which are opposed to right and truth are sure to fight against our faith, and various temptations will march in their legions against our confidence in God.

It is by our faith that we live. We began to live by it and continue to live by it, for “the just shall live by faith.” Faith is your jewel, your joy, your glory. And the thieves who haunt the pilgrim way are all in league to tear it from you.

Hold firmly, therefore, to your choice treasure.

Do not marvel if the full force of the current shall beat upon your faith, for it is the foundation of your spiritual house. Oh that your faith may remain steadfast and unmovable in all present trials, so that it may be found true in the hour of death

and in the day of judgement.

According to the text we are said to fall into “various temptations” or into “many temptations” – that is to say, we may expect very many and very different troubles. In any case, these trials will be most real.

The furnace, believe me, is no mere place of extra warmth to which you may soon accustom yourself. It is often heated seven times hotter, like the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar, and God’s children are made to know that the fire burns and devours.

The invaluable blessing gained from trials is that our faith is tried and proved. The way of proving whether you are a good soldier is to go down to the battle. The way to test whether a ship is well built is, not merely to order the surveyor to examine her, but to send her to sea. A storm will be the best test of her staunchness. Sanctified tribulations work the proof of our faith, and this is more precious than that of gold which perishes, though it is tried by fire.

Now, when we are able to bear it without turning aside, the trial proves our sincerity. Coming out of a trouble the Christian says to himself, “Yes, I held firmly to my integrity, and did not let it go. Blessed be God, I was not afraid of threats; I was not crushed by losses; I was kept true to God under pressure. Now, I am sure that

my religion is not a mere profession, but a real consecration to God. It has endured the fire, being kept by the power of God.”

I find it especially sweet to learn the great strength of the Lord in my own weakness. We find out under trial where we are most weak and just then in answer to prayer, strength is given answerable to the need. The Lord suits the help to the hindrance, and puts the bandage on the wound.

In the very hour when it is needed, the needed grace is given.

Therefore, when you are tempted, “Count it all joy” that you are tried, because by this you will receive a proof of your love, a proof of your faith, a proof of your being the true-born children of God.

Let us think of the priceless virtue which is produced by trial, namely, patience; for the proof of your faith “works patience.” The man who truly possesses patience is the man who has been tried. What kind of patience does he get by the grace of God?

First, he obtains a patience that accepts the trials as from God without a murmur. Calm resignation does not come all at once. Often long years of physical pain, or mental depression, or disappointment in business, or multiplied bereavements, are needed to bring the soul into full submission to the will of the Lord.

By degrees we learn to end our quarrel



with God, and to desire that there may not be two wills between God and ourselves, but that God's will may be our will.

The next kind of patience is the kind when experience enables a man to bear ill treatment, slander and injury without resentment.

He feels it keenly, but he bears it meekly.

Like his Master, he does not open his mouth to reply and refuses to return railing for railing. On the contrary, he gives blessing in return for cursing. Blessed is that holy love which hopes all things, endures all things and is not easily provoked.

Ah, friend, if the grace of God by trial shall work in you the quiet patience which never grows angry, and never ceases to love, you may have lost a trifle of comfort, but you have gained a solid weight of character.

That is a grand kind of patience, too, when we can wait without unbelief. Two little words are good for every Christian to learn and to practice – pray and stay.

Waiting on the Lord implies both praying and staying. What if the Lord Jesus does not come tomorrow? What if our tribulations are still lengthened out? What if the conflict is continued? He who has been tried and by grace has obtained the true profit of his trials both quietly waits and joyfully hopes for the salvation of God.

This patience also takes the shape of believing without wavering, in the very teeth of strange providences and exceptional demands, and perhaps inward misgivings. The established Christian says, "I believe my God, and therefore if the vision tarries I will wait for it. My time is not yet come. I am to have my worst things first and my best things afterwards, and so I sit down at Jesus' feet and wait for His leisure."

Brothers and sisters, if, in a word, we learn endurance we have taken a high degree. You look at the weather-beaten sailor, the man who is at home on the sea. He has a bronzed face and mahogany-coloured flesh. He looks as tough as heart of oak and as hardy as if he were made of iron. How different from us poor landmen.

How did the man become so accustomed to hardships, so able to weather the storm, so that he does not care whether the wind blows southwest or northwest? He can go out to sea in any kind of weather. He has his sea legs on.

How did he come to this strength? By doing business in great waters. He could not have become a hardy seaman by staying on shore.

Now, trial works in the saints that spiritual hardihood which cannot be learned in ease. You may go to school forever, but you cannot learn endurance there. You may colour your cheeks with paint, but you cannot give them that ingrained brown which comes of stormy seas and howling winds.

Strong faith and brave patience come of trouble, and a few men in the church who have been prepared by this are worth anything in times of tempest. To reach that condition of firm endurance and sacred hardihood is worth all the expense of all the heaped-up troubles that ever come upon us from above or from beneath. When trial works patience, we are incalculably enriched.

"So that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." If our afflictions tend, by trying our faith, to create patience, and that patience tends to make us into perfect men in Christ Jesus, then we may be glad for trials.

Afflictions by God's grace make us all-round men, developing every spiritual faculty, and therefore they are our friends, our helpers, and should be welcomed with "all joy."

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## Sanctified trials produce a chastened spirit

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Afflictions expose our weak points, and this makes us attend to them. Being tried, we discover our failures, and then going to God about those failures, we are helped to be perfect and complete, wanting nothing.

Sanctified trials produce a chastened spirit. Some of us by nature are rough and untender. But after a while, friends notice that the roughness is departing, and they are quite glad to be more gently handled.

Ah, that sick room did the polishing. Under God's grace, that depression of spirit, that loss, that cross, that bereavement – these softened the natural ruggedness, and made the man meek and lowly like his Lord.

Sanctified trouble has a great tendency to create sympathy. Those repeated blows from the rod make us feel for others who are smarting, and by degrees, we are recognised as being the Lord's anointed comforters, prepared by temptation to help those who are tempted.

Have you never noticed how tried men, too, when their trouble is thoroughly sanctified, become cautious and humble? They cannot speak quite so fast as they used to do. They do not talk about being absolutely perfect; they say little about

their doings, and much about the tender mercy of the Lord.

They speak gently to other erring ones.

Those, too, are the kind of people who are most grateful.

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## Bless God!

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I have known what it is to praise God for the power to move one leg in bed. It may not seem much to you, but it was a great blessing to me.

Those who are heavily afflicted come to bless God for everything.

I am sure that woman who took a piece of bread and a cup of water for her breakfast, and said, "What? All this, and Christ, too!" must have been a tried woman, or she would not have exhibited so much gratitude.

And that old Puritan minister was surely a tried man, for when his family had only a herring and a few potatoes for dinner, he said, "Lord, we bless You that You have ransacked land and sea to find food for us today." If he had not been a tried man, he might have turned up his nose at the meal, as many do at much more sumptuous fare.


Troubled men get to be grateful men, and that is no little thing.

As a rule, where God's grace works, these come to be hopeful men. Where others think the storm will destroy the vessel, they can remember storms equally fierce which did not destroy it, and so they are so calm that their courage keeps others from despair.

These men, too, become unworldly men. They have had too much trouble to think that they can ever build their nest in this black forest. There are too many thorns in their nest for them to think that this can be their home.

And these much-tempted ones are frequently the most spiritual men, and out of this spirituality comes usefulness. If you are ever to be a leader and a helper, as you would wish to be, in the church of God, it must be by such means as this that you must be prepared for it.

Do you not wish to have every virtue developed? Do you not wish to become a perfect man in Christ Jesus? If so, welcome with "all joy" various trials and temptations. Flee to God with them. Bless Him for having sent them. Ask Him to help you to bear them with patience, and then let that patience have its perfect work.

And so, by the Spirit of God, you shall become "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." 



# Political myths about Israel

by Dr David R. Reagan

**T**HERE are two kinds of myths that exist today regarding the Jewish people and their state of Israel. There are the terrible *theological* myths that have been conjured up by Christian theologians, and then there are the *political* myths that have been fabricated by the political foes of modern day Israel.

The theological myths are grounded in what is called Replacement Theology. They consist of such allegations as:

- 1) God has washed His hands of the Jewish people because of their rejection and murder of Jesus.
- 2) God has replaced Israel with the Church.
- 3) God has transferred all the promised blessings of Israel to the Church.
- 4) God has no purpose left for the Jewish people.

All four of these allegations are patently false.

The first point that needs to be firmly established about these myths is that they are no accident. They are firmly rooted in Satan's obsessive hatred of the Jewish people. He hates them because:

- 1) They are the chosen people of God.
- 2) It was through them that God gave the world the Scriptures.
- 3) It was through them that God gave the world the Messiah.

Satan further hates the Jews because of promises God has made to them. He has promised that:

- 1) A great remnant of the Jews will be saved in the end times at the Second Coming of Jesus when they repent and accept Him as their Messiah (Zechariah 12:10).
- 2) The Jews will then be regathered to their homeland in belief (Deuteronomy 30:1-5).

3) The nation of Israel will be given all the land promised to them in the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 15:18-21).

4) The Jewish state will be the prime nation in the world during the Millennial reign of Jesus (Isaiah 2:1-4).

5) The blessings of God during the Millennium will flow to the nations of the world through the Jewish people (Isaiah 62:1-7).

6) The world will respect the Jewish people so much that when a Jew walks by, 10 Gentiles will say, "Let us walk with you, for we know that God is with you (Zechariah 8:23)."

Satan does not want to see a single one of these promises fulfilled, and thus he is determined to annihilate the Jewish people. That's what the Holocaust was all about when one-fourth of them were killed. And it is the reason that he will seek to annihilate them once again during the Tribulation when he will manage to kill two-thirds of them (Zechariah 13:8).

But Satan is destined to fail because it is God's will to bring a remnant of the Jews to repentance and salvation. And He is determined to fulfil every promise He has made to the Jewish people. The Apostle Paul affirmed this when he wrote these words:

*"Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? Great in every respect. First of all, that they (the Jews) were entrusted with the oracles of God. What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar (Romans 3:1-4)."*

For 2 000 years the Church has answered the question posed in verse 3 – If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? – with a resounding, "Yes!" The Apostle Paul

answers it with a definitive "No!"

Commenting further on this subject, Paul wrote:

*"For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Messiah according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen (Romans 9:3-5)."*

These words were written after the establishment of the Church, and as you can see, Paul is affirming that God still has a relationship with Israel and has not negated His promises to them. In Romans 9 through 11, Paul makes it crystal clear that God has not washed His hands of the Jewish people and the Church has not replaced Israel.

Jesus Himself said He would not return to this earth to reign until the day when the Jewish people are willing to say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord (Matthew 23:37-39)."

But despite these promises of God, Satan persists in his madness toward the Jewish people because he has deceived himself into believing that he can outwit God – and there is no deception worse than self-deception. And thus, Satan is now orchestrating all the nations of the world to come against the tiny nation of Israel through the perpetration of myths concerning the Jewish people and their nation.

Paradoxically, in the process, Satan is fulfilling Bible prophecy, for the prophet Zechariah stated 2 500 years ago that in the end times the whole world would come against Israel (Zechariah 12:2-3).

Since much has been written about the myth of Replacement Theology, I want to devote the rest of this article to some of the major political myths about the Jewish people and



Israel that exist today. These political myths have been perpetrated by the world's political leaders in an effort to turn the nations of the world against the Jewish people, with the goal of ultimately destroying their state. The media is loaded with these myths about Israel, and they have proved to be very effective in generating worldwide hatred toward the Jewish people and their state.

## **1. The first is that the Jewish people have no claim to the land of Palestine.**

In response to this myth, I think I should begin by pointing out that the word, Palestine, is not a biblical word. You will not find it anywhere in your Bible except as a label on maps in the back of your Bible.

That label is totally incorrect. What came to be called Palestine was the land of Israel for over 1 500 years – the period of the biblical judges and kings. The land did not become known as Palestine until after the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD and began to disperse the Jewish people worldwide.

The word, Palestine, is derived from the Roman word for Philistines. So, to humiliate the Jewish people, the Romans renamed the land after their enemy. Now, as to whether or not the Jews have any rightful claim on that land, the answer is absolutely yes!

The God of the Jewish people is the One who created the universe, and Psalm 24:1 says He owns all of it. He therefore has the right to give any part of this earth to whomsoever He pleases. And it pleased God to give a large section of the Middle East to the Jewish people. This gift occurred 4 000 years ago when God appeared to Abraham and gave him and his descendants a land grant stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River (Genesis 15:18–21).

This is a land grant that has never been fully realised, but will be during the Millennial reign of Jesus. A small portion of this grant is what is currently referred to as Palestine. At the time that Abraham was promised the land, the area was called “The Land of Canaan.”

The initial promise of this land to Abraham and his descendants was specified in general terms in the Abrahamic Covenant contained in Genesis 12:1&2&7

*“The Lord said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country... to the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great... To your descendants I will give this land.’”*

This promise was reconfirmed to Abraham six more times and was spelled out in detail in Genesis 15:18–21. In Genesis 17:7, God declared the promise of the land to be “an everlasting covenant.”

The promise was reconfirmed to Isaac and to Jacob, and it was reconfirmed through King David in Psalm 105 when he wrote:

*“Oh give thanks to the Lord... For He has remembered His covenant forever... The covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac, Then He confirmed it to Jacob... and to Israel as an everlasting covenant, Saying, ‘To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion of your inheritance (Psalm 105:1, 8–11).”*

The fact that the Jews were dispersed from the land for 1 878 years – from 70 AD to 1948 – does not in any way mean that God invalidated their deed to the land. For, you see, God had a second covenant with the Jewish people concerning their land.

The first covenant was a Land Title Covenant given through Abraham. It was unconditional. The second was a Land Use Covenant given through Moses. It was conditional.

In the Land Use Covenant God told the Jewish people that their enjoyment of the land would be dependent on their obedience to His Word – if faithful, blessings; if unfaithful, curses. And He made it clear that if they became disobedient and persisted in that disobedience, the ultimate judgement He would place on them would be exile from the land. But the land would still belong to them!

Let me illustrate this: Suppose you give your teenage son a car and put the title in his name. But you make it clear that as long as he is living at home, under your authority, there will be rules for using the car. If the rules are broken, depending on the seriousness of the offense, the car will be locked up in the garage for a period of time. The car will still belong to the teen, but the enjoyment of it will be lost.

The crucial point here is that although the Jewish people were dispersed from their land in discipline, they were not dispossessed of their land. The title to the land remained in their name.

Now, the world, of course, could not care less about the Jews' biblical and eternal title to the land. So let's take a look at their right to the land from a political and legal standpoint. The fact that they have a legal right to the land can be easily established.

In November of 1947, the United Nations officially and legally authorised the creation of the modern state of Israel. Prior to that time the land had been a League of Nations Mandate, established after World War 1. Britain had been entrusted with this Mandate, the purpose of which was to prepare the people living in the area for ultimate self-rule.

In 1947, when the British announced that they were ready to surrender the Mandate, the United Nations approved a division of the land between the Jews and

the Arabs. Jerusalem was to be internationalized. The Jews reluctantly accepted the proposal and proceeded to establish their state. The Arabs refused to accept the UN action and resorted to war.

No one can truthfully claim that the Jews have no right to the land. It belongs to them both biblically and legally.

## **2. The second myth I want to consider is the one perpetrated by the Palestinians and mindlessly repeated by the world press. It is the claim that the Palestinians were forcibly and unjustly evicted from their state by the Jewish people.**

The first thing that needs to be considered here is that there was never such a thing as a Palestinian state. Palestine was simply a geographical name that was given to a section of the Middle East that was always under the control of some foreign power.

Between 1517 and 1917 – a period of 400 years – it was a part of the Ottoman Empire, whose capital was Istanbul. There was never a sovereign Palestinian state. There was never a Palestinian indigenous population with its own language and culture.

By the beginning of the 20th Century, Palestine was a desolate, barren land that was sparsely populated. Most of it was owned by absentee landlords. The people who lived there would have identified themselves as Syrians. In fact, the Arabs who lived there did not even begin to call themselves Palestinians until the mid 1960s.

But the major point that should be made is that when the Jews began returning to their homeland in the 1890s and early 1900s, they purchased the land from the Arabs at exorbitant prices. In fact, the prices quadrupled!

Again, the Jews did not steal the land, nor did they evict the Arabs. They bought land that already rightfully belonged to them.

And it was a desolate land. All the trees south of the Sea of Galilee had been cut down. The valleys had turned into malaria-infested swamp lands. It was a land no one wanted, except the Jewish people. The Bible had prophesied that the land would become desolate when the Jews were evicted, and it also prophesied that when they returned, it would once again become a land of milk and honey.

Here is the prophecy concerning its desolation:

*“Now the generation to come, your sons who rise up after you and the foreigner who comes from a distant land, when they see the plagues of the land and the diseases with which the Lord has afflicted*

# Political myths about Israel

*Continued...*

*it, will say, 'All its land is brimstone and salt, a burning waste, unsown and unproductive, and no grass grows in it, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah (Deuteronomy 29:22&23)...'*

Here is the prophecy concerning the reclamation of the land when the Jews returned:

*"The desolate land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passes by. They will say, 'This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited (Ezekiel 36:34&35).'"*

And that's exactly what happened, and so the newest myth the fertile imaginations of the Palestinians have conjured up is that the land was as wonderful as it is now when the Jews "stole it" from them!

**3.** The third myth for us to consider is a tragic one because it has resulted in a terrible abuse of the Palestinian people by their own leaders. **It is the myth that Israel has kept the Palestinian refugees of the 1948-49 War of Independence in miserable refugee camps for over 70 years by refusing to allow them to return.**

It is true that there was a massive eviction of Arabs from Palestine during Israel's War of Independence in 1948 and 49 – but they were not forced out by Israel.

They fled at the request of the five Arab armies that invaded Israel after its Declaration of Independence. They were told by the Arab leaders to flee to safety while the attacking nations "made the Mediterranean Sea run red with the blood of the Jews."

Approximately 650 000 fled the land. After the war ended, the Arab nations refused to absorb these people. Instead, they herded them into refugee camps along their borders with Israel and started using their plight to rally public opinion against Israel.

Today, there are only 30,000 of these people still alive, but the Palestinians argue that there are five million refugees because they count their children and grandchildren and great grandchildren.

In contrast, following the War of Independence, all the Jews in the Arab states – a total of more than 800 000 – were forcibly expelled and their properties

were confiscated. The tiny state of Israel absorbed 550 000 of these refugees. The rest were absorbed by Western nations, primarily the United States.

In August of 2018, President Trump announced that the United States would no longer recognise as refugees those Palestinians who fled Israel in 1948-49. He also announced that the UN Relief Agency, which exists solely for the purpose of sustaining these people, will no longer receive the annual \$300 million donation from America. Hopefully, this will force the Arab nations to absorb these people and stop using them as political pawns.

**4.** The fourth major myth I would like to consider is the claim that **the Palestinians are the true indigenous people of the land – like the American Indians – and that the Jews are colonialist invaders from Europe.**

This is one of the fundamental contentions of the BDS Movement – the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement – that so many American corporations and churches have bought into.

For a long time the Palestinians argued they were descendants of the Philistines. But when it was brought to their attention that the Philistines originated in the Greek Aegean Islands and came to Israel in about 1300 BC when the Greeks expelled them, the "indigenous people" argument was changed, and the Palestinians started claiming to be descendants of the Canaanites!

Mahmoud Abbas, the current Palestinian leader, has heavily emphasized this nonsense in recent years. You might keep in mind that he also makes some other absurd claims, such as:

- 1) Jesus was a Palestinian.
- 2) The people Moses led out of Egypt were Muslims.
- 3) There was never a Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.

Additionally, he is also a Holocaust denier. In his doctrinal dissertation, he argued that the Holocaust is fiction, created to generate sympathy for the Jews. So this man lives in a world of lies.

The idea that the Jews in Israel today are colonial occupiers is completely absurd. There has been an uninterrupted Jewish presence in the Holy Land for 4 000 years. Even during the dispersion of the Jews after 70 AD, there continued to be Jewish people living in Jerusalem and in the Galilee.

And the Jews who have returned to their homeland have not just returned from Europe. They have come from over 100 countries scattered all over the world.

There is just no way they can be considered a European "colonial force."

Nor can the Palestinians be considered descendants of the Canaanites. There is simply no genealogical or genetic evidence that connects the Arabs to the extinct Canaanites.

In reality, the Palestinians in the Middle East are Arabs who migrated to the area from places like Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Egypt. Yasser Arafat, for example, was born and raised in Egypt. And notice this revealing quote of his: "The Palestinian people have no identity. I, Yasser Arafat, man of destiny, will give them that identity through conflict with Israel."

In 2012, the Hamas Minister of the Interior and of Security, Fathi Hammad, stated that "half the Palestinians are Egyptians and the other half are Saudis."

**5.** The fifth myth I want to take a look at is the assertion that **Jerusalem is the historic capital of the Palestinian people and is the third most holy site in Islam.**

This is what President Trump would call "fake news." I call it "baloney." The truth is that Jerusalem has never been the capital of any nation except Israel. Period!

When David conquered the city 3 000 years ago, it was a tiny rural Jebusite village. It was made the capital of Israel and served in that capacity for more than a thousand years. It has never been the capital of any other nation – none!

The Roman capital of the Holy Land was Caesarea Maritime. The Crusader capital was the port city of Akko. The capital of Palestine during the 400 years of Ottoman rule was Istanbul.

The mythical claim that Jerusalem is the third most holy site of Islam, after Medina and Mecca, is a manufactured political ploy to make an unjustified claim on the city.

\*Jews pray toward Jerusalem. Muslims pray toward Mecca.

\*The city of Jerusalem is mentioned more than 700 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, either as Jerusalem, Zion or Ariel.

\*Jerusalem is not mentioned once in the Quran.

The Muslim claim to Jerusalem is based on the legend that Muhammad rode his flying horse to the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem where he was taken up into Heaven for a visit. They base that claim on a statement in the Quran that says that Muhammad rode his horse to "the farthest mosque." That was a mosque located in Saudi Arabia that went by that name.

The passage in the Quran could *not* be referring to the Al Aqsa Mosque on the



Temple Mount in Jerusalem, as Muslims now claim, because it did not even exist during Mohammad's lifetime! Mohammad died in 632 AD. The Al Aqsa Mosque was completed in 706 AD, 73 years after Mohammad's death!

**6.** The sixth myth I would like to highlight is the assertion that **for 70 years, Israel has been preventing the right of the Palestinian people to create a state for themselves.**

The first thing to consider here is the absolutely irrefutable fact that the Palestinians already have a state! It is called Jordan. In 1921, Winston Churchill, acting as the British Colonial Secretary, issued a declaration in which he granted two-thirds of Palestine to the Arabs, creating a state called Transjordan, which today is simply called Jordan.

He did this to curry the favour of the Arabs due to the large oil reserves that had been discovered in Arab lands. This left the Jews only a small sliver of land 400 kilometres long by 100 kilometres wide located along the Mediterranean coast.

They felt betrayed, but they swallowed hard and began looking forward to the day when they could convert that sliver of land into the state of Israel.

But then, in November, 1947, the UN voted to divide the sliver into two states – one for the Jews and one for the Arabs, thus creating a second Palestinian state. Once again, the Jews felt betrayed, but they accepted the UN resolution and established their state in May of 1948, when the British ended their League of Nations Mandate over the land.

***Now, here is the crucial point that is never told by the press and is certainly never mentioned by the Palestinians:*** On the very day the Jews met in Tel Aviv and declared the existence of their state, the Arabs could have assembled in Ramallah and declared the existence of a second Palestinian state.

Instead, they encouraged the five Arab states that attacked Israel because they wanted all the land, and they did not want a Jewish state of any size in their midst. So, on the very day that Israel celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2018, the Arabs could have been celebrating the 70th anniversary of their state. They have no one to blame but themselves.

Nor was 1948 their only opportunity to establish a state. They have had several opportunities, one of which was in the year 2000 at the Camp David Conference that President Clinton convened. At that conference, President Clinton convinced Ehud Barak, Israel's most liberal Prime

Minister in its history, to agree to 95% of the Palestinian demands.

When these incredible concessions were made, Yasser Arafat's response was to get up from the negotiating table, walk out of the room, fly back home and start the First Intifada, or Palestinian uprising. Why? Because he knew if he agreed to any compromise with Israel, he would risk his life.

And furthermore, the Palestinian demands were nothing but window dressing for what they really want, which is the annihilation of Israel.

The best summary I have ever heard of the long, sordid history of Palestinian leadership is the one phrased by Abba Eban, Israel's articulate ambassador to the UN from 1949-1959. He said, "The Palestinians have never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity."

Even some Arab leaders are getting fed up with the Palestinians. For example, the Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammad bin Saliman, recently said: "For the past 40 years, the Palestinian leadership has missed opportunities again and again, and have rejected all offers it was given. It's about time that the Palestinians accept the offers and agree to come to the negotiating table – or they should shut up and stop complaining."

**7.** The seventh and final myth I want to address is the most important one that the Palestinians and their allies are using today to rally world public opinion against Israel. It is the one being used on our college and university campuses to enlist young Americans against Israel. **I'm speaking of the myth that Israel is an Apartheid state.**

Apartheid was the term used to describe the policy that prevailed in South Africa for many years that required the strict separation of races.

This claim against Israel is a classic example of the truth espoused by Hitler's propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels, who said, "If you tell a lie big enough and often enough, people will believe it."

The truth is that there is absolutely no Apartheid in Israel. **None whatsoever!**

In fact, the truth is that the only Apartheid that can be found in the Middle East is in the Arab nations where Jews are not even allowed to live! Israel has 1.7 million Arabs living within its borders. They are not separated from Israelis in any way. They enjoy complete citizenship rights, including the right to work with unemployment, medical and welfare benefits.

They also have the right to vote – even the right to serve in the Israeli Parliament!

There is no segregation in Israel in its

theatres, buses, hotels or any other place. The only way Arab citizens of Israel are treated differently is that they are not required to serve in the military, whereas Jews are required to do so – both men and women.

Well, I hope you are getting a clear picture of what hogwash it is to accuse Israel of Apartheid. Yet, the world's political leaders continue to make the claim like mindless zombies.

The only Apartheid that can be found in the Middle East is in the Arab nations which will not even tolerate a Jew living within their boundaries. Yet these are the very hypocrites who shout the loudest about Israel being an Apartheid nation!

Yet, many Christian church leaders have bought this myth – hook, line and sinker. And that's because they are either completely deluded, or else they are motivated by anti-Semitism, and therefore they want to believe a lie.

The only other political myth about Israel that comes to mind is the allegation that Israel is the major obstacle to peace in the Middle East.


That absurdity can be dismissed quickly with one observation from Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu – an observation that cannot be denied: "If the Arabs would disarm, there would be peace in the Middle East. If Israel were to disarm, Israel would cease to exist."

There are, of course, other myths that could be discussed, and Satan is motivating the creation of new ones all the time. But Satan is going to lose this battle. God is on His throne. He is in control. He has the wisdom and power to orchestrate all the evil of Satan and Man to the triumph of His will in history.

***"He who keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps (Psalm 121:4)."***

According to Psalm 2, He sits on His throne in Heaven and laughs at His foes. He's not laughing because He doesn't care. No, He is laughing because He has it all under control.

And He's also laughing because the day is fast approaching when He will unleash His fury and pour out His wrath by sending His Son back to reign over all the earth from Mount Zion in Jerusalem. And on that glorious day when Jesus returns to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, the Jewish remnant will repent and cry out: "Baruch Haba B'Shem Adonai (Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord)!"

Meanwhile, I'm going to continue shouting every day in my heart, "Maranatha! Maranatha! Maranatha! Come quickly, Lord Jesus!" 

# Share Christ's cross... Share His life...



by F. J. Huegel

**ONE cannot make a study of the New Testament without experiencing something of the nature of a shock, in view of the glaring difference between the Christian life as we are accustomed to living it, and the ideal of the Master. Let us briefly summarise the requirements of the Christian life as set forth by our Saviour and by the apostles.**

We are to walk even as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6). We are to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44). We are to forgive as Jesus forgave – even as He who in the shame and anguish of the Cross looked down upon those who blasphemed Him, while they murdered Him, and forgave (Luke 23:34; Colossians 3:13). We are to be aggressively kind toward those who hate us, yes, we are actually to pray for those who spitefully use us (Matthew 5:44).

We are to be overcomers – more than conquerors (Romans 8:37). We are to give thanks in all things believing that all things, even those which blast our fondest hopes, work together for our good (Romans 8:28; Ephesians 5:20).

We are to be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to let our requests be made known to God, so that the peace of God which passes all understanding may guard our hearts and minds (Philippians 4:6&7). We are to rejoice in the Lord always (Philippians 4:4).

We are to think on whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, and whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise (Philippians 4:8).

We are to be holy, for God is holy (1 Peter 1:16). The Saviour said that if we believed in Him, rivers of living water would flow from our innermost being (John 7:38).

We are to stand out in bold, unmistakable contrast from the crooked, perverse world, blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, shining as lights (Philippians 2:15). We are positively to hate ourselves, not to pamper, nor to caress, nor to seek, nor to love ourselves, but literally to hate and to renounce our own selves, and that daily (Luke 9:23).

We are told that we cannot be Christ's disciples if we do not renounce ourselves utterly and absolutely in all things, and at all times (Luke 14:26). Paul tells us that our affections are to be set on things above (Colossians 3:1&2).

## **It would increase our shame and pain**

Enough. We dare go no further. It would only increase our shame, and our pain. We stand indicted. We are not what Christ would have us to be. If this is the measure of the Christian life, if this is the basis upon which we are to be judged, if this

is what God requires of us as Christians, like Isaiah we cry: "Woe is me, for I am undone (Isaiah 6:5)."

Why does not the Saviour, so tender and so understanding, so loving and so wise, not make requirements more in keeping with human nature? Why does He seem to be so unreasonable? Why does He not demand of us what we might reasonably attain? He bids us soar – yet we have no wings.

It is not so much a mere overabundance of *man* that is required. It seems to be rather man-defied, if I may so speak, which the New Testament pronounces as the true type of Christian. Why does the Saviour go so far beyond the merely natural – and put Christian living on the basis of the supernatural?

I protest, it is not *natural* to love our enemies; it is not *natural* to rejoice always; it is not *natural* to be thankful for the things that hurt; it is not *natural* to hate ourselves; it is not *natural* to walk as Jesus walked.

Have we honestly faced this dilemma? Have we had the courage to face the implications of Christ's Word? Is anything gained by evading it, by pretending that the gulf between the humanly possible (that is, what we can attain by nature) and the law of Christ (what God requires in His Word) is after all not so great?

If no satisfactory answer can be given (my contention is that there can) the Christian system confirms the slanders of



its enemies. It must face the grave charge of over-emphasis – exaggeration – fanaticism – or whatever we may call this gulf between the law of Christ and human nature.

This is no new dilemma. Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, is very clear about his conviction that human nature, as such, can never attain the ideal of Christ. Romans chapter 7 is witness to that fact. Here we have the apostle's confession of failure, his cry of despair, his bitter regret upon finding the Christian ideal unattainable, his groanings over what he found to be a heart-rending dilemma, his honest admission that he actually believes that the requirements of Christ's law are something to which human nature, struggle as you will, agonise as you will, can never adjust itself to.

Paul struggles. He agonises. He weeps. He strives as only this moral giant, one of the greatest of all time, could strive.

All to no avail.

The law of sin, he confesses, like the onrush of a mighty stream, sweeps everything before it.

We do well to face squarely all the shocking aspects of this dilemma. Paul did. He did not throw up any smokescreen over either his own incapacity on the one hand, or the unattainable character of Christ's law on the other.

He is astonishingly frank over the fact that in himself (that is, in his flesh, Romans 7:18) he can find no good thing.

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## Leading to a glorious new day

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He candidly acknowledges that he delights in God's law, loves it – but finds it something to which human nature cannot attain. If we will be honest about these things, we will find ourselves led all unconsciously to take certain steps which will most assuredly usher us into a glorious new day.

It led Paul to a great discovery. It will lead us.

It was not that Paul, when he wrote Romans 7 was still wilfully disobedient, as in the days prior to the Damascene road crisis. He *did* love Jesus. He *was* a soldier of the cross. He *was* a consecrated Christian.

It was only that he was now seeing himself in a new light – in the blinding light of the Cross of Christ.

What before, as a strict disciple of Moses, would have been excusable, now overwhelms him with its magnitude. Inno-

cent little things, attitudes comparatively harmless, insignificant little sins – which under the Mosaic law would pass unnoticed if they did not appear to be actual virtues – now break his heart.

They are repulsive. They are unbearable. They seem to burn with the fire of hell. They sting like the bite of a scorpion. They stink like a decaying carcass in some slimy pool.

It is no longer a question of mere ethics. It is no longer a question of right or wrong.

Is it Christ-like? That is the burning question. Paul wants to be free. Self-love, even in its secret forms, its harmless gestures, nauseates him. He desires to be like Jesus in all the loveliness of His humility, and of His compassion. He desires to love God with a pure love and serve Him with that utter singleness of eye which characterised the “only-begotten of the Father.” In a paroxysm of self-loathing, and in the anguish of self-despair, the apostle cries out for deliverance (Romans 7:24).

Is there a way out? Yes, there is. Paul found it – we can all find it.

Now my thesis is this: we have been proceeding upon a false basis. We have conceived of the Christian life as an imitation of Christ. To proceed on the basis of imitation will plunge us in just the sort of slough of despond Paul found himself in when he wrote Romans 7.

We are not what Christ would have us to be. The Sermon on the Mount does not find expression in our attitudes. Sin as a principle is still rampant in our lives. We are not free from envy, pride, self-love and lust of pleasure. The mountain of secret selfishness still crushes us and in spite of all our efforts remains immovable.

There is little joy, so little freedom of spirit, none of that rapture which so characterised the early Christians. We agonise, and bleed and struggle – but failure dogs our footsteps. What is the matter? We are proceeding upon a false basis. We are attempting to do what the Saviour Himself never expected us to do. The Christian life is not an imitation.

The great dilemma of which we have been speaking resolves itself into the most simple terms when we grasp the distinction between *imitation* and *participation*.

“For we are made partakers of Christ (Hebrews 3:14).” What is impossible to me as an imitator of Christ, becomes perfectly natural as a participant of Christ. It is only when Christ nullifies the force of my inherent “self-life,” and communicates to me a divine life, that Christian living

in its true sense, is at all possible for me.

I must be born again.

“The flesh profits nothing (John 6:63).” Without Jesus I can do nothing. I must live in Him, and renouncing my own life, find in Him a “new life.”

Now to this “new life” – the Christian requirements, so incomprehensible and unattainable while we move in the realm of the “flesh-life” – are all simple. They are nothing more nor less than statements regarding its manner of working. The Sermon on the Mount so far from cramping in any way this new life, is simply a statement of the way it operates.

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## We have not listened to Jesus

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The trouble is, we have not listened to Jesus. He tells us that we must abide in Him as a branch in the Vine. Matthew 5-7, without John 15, would be like so many freight cars without an engine, or like a whale without water or a bird without air.

In that upper-room interview, the Master, knowing that it was His last opportunity to impress fundamentals upon His disciples, places the supreme emphasis upon this union, this spiritual oneness with Himself of all believers – this sublime fact of participation. “Abide in Me and I in you.”

Our failures only confirm the Saviour's Word, for He said: “Without Me you can do nothing (John 15:5).”

No, we are not called upon to imitate Christ!


The truth of the matter is there would be little virtue after all in that sort of thing. Paul said so in effect, in the oft-quoted 1 Corinthians 13 – the love chapter. It could only be a wooden, artificial thing. Even here Jesus would say: “The flesh profits nothing.”

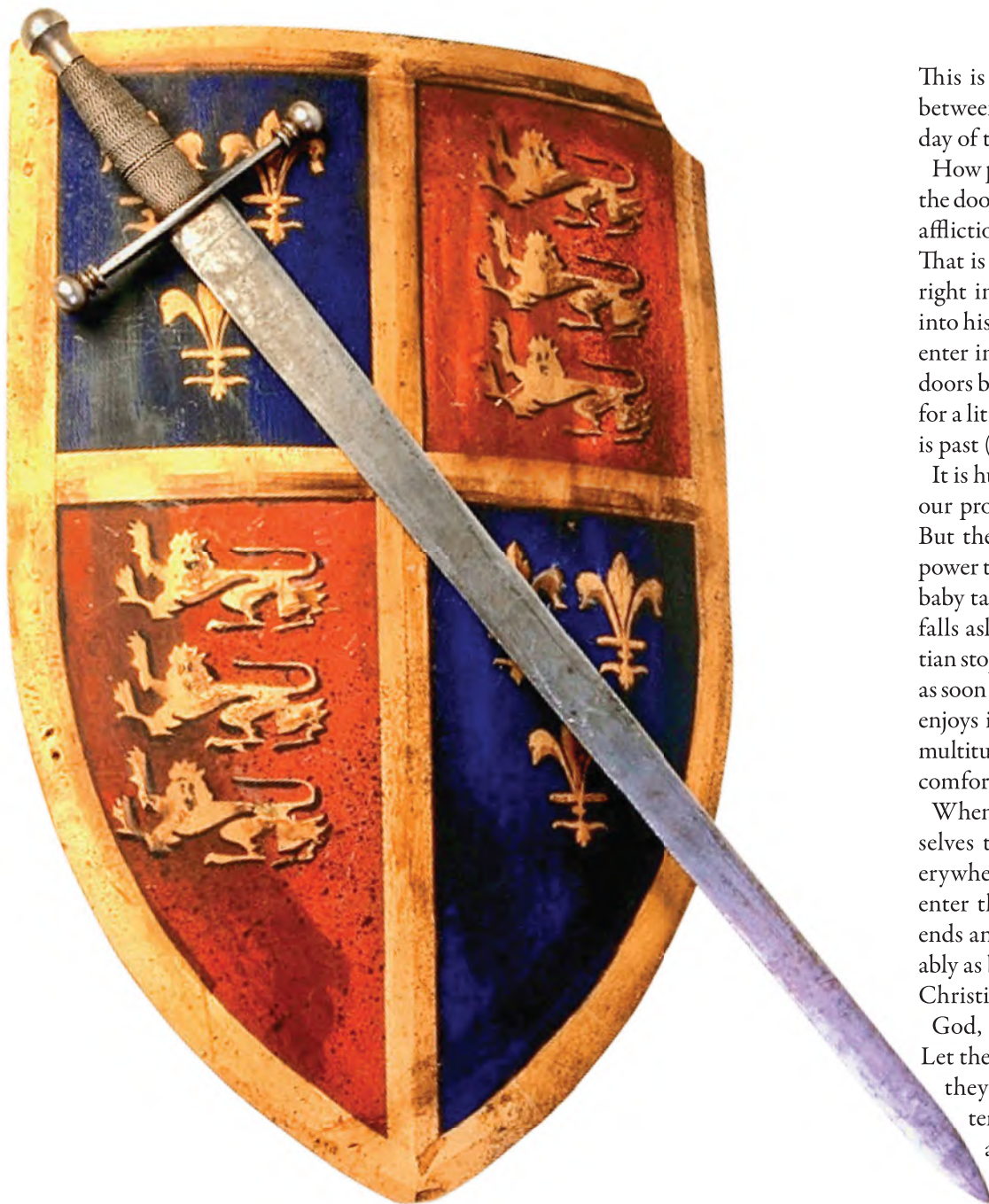
The Christian is not called upon to strain over a role as an actor would agonise over lines poorly learned.

The Christian life in the thought of God is infinitely more blessed and compelling.

“We are made partakers of Christ (Hebrews 3:14).”

Exceeding great and precious promises are given us, “that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).” The believer is grafted into the Trunk of the Eternal Godhead. “I am the Vine, you are the branches (John 15:5).”

“The riches of the glory of this mystery... which is Christ in you the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27).” 



# How to use the sword of the Word against afflictions

by William Gurnall (1617–1679)

**T**HE Christian stands open to storms and tempests from every direction. He is not like a fenced house that is so sheltered by hills or woods that the wind comes against only one side. Like the strange wind which “smote the four corners” of Job’s house, the Christian’s afflictions leave no corner unassaulted.

Often he is attacked by financial stresses, physical problems, and a wounded spirit all at once. And when so many seas of sorrows meet, it is not easy for the Christian’s heart to stand unbroken by their violent

waves.

God does allow His children to walk through many different trials and temptations: “Many are the afflictions of the righteous (Psalm 34:19)...”

But Scripture is a garden which grows a comforting promise for every sorrow. A wise Christian gathers one of every kind and writes them down as a doctor keeps records of tried and proven prescriptions for diseases.

My task here is to counsel you how to use the sword of the Word for defence and comfort in any affliction which may attack you. Know your right to God’s promises.

This is the hinge on which the dispute between you and Satan will move in the day of trouble.

How pathetic for a Christian to stand at the door of promise in the darkest night of affliction and be afraid to turn the knob! That is the very time when we should go right in and find shelter as a child runs into his father’s arms. “Come, My people, enter into your chambers, and shut your doors behind you: hide yourself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation is past (Isaiah 26:20).”

It is human nature to think more about our problem than about God’s promise. But the promise holds in itself the very power to restore the spirit. When a crying baby takes the nourishment he needs, he falls asleep at the breast. And the Christian stops complaining about his affliction as soon as he takes hold of the promise and enjoys its sweetness in his heart: “In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul (Psalm 94:19).”

When a swarm of bees dislodge themselves they are in confusion, flying everywhere without any order, until they enter their hive again. Then the uproar ends and they get back to work as peaceably as before. And it is just as true in the Christian’s heart.

God, in the promise, is the soul’s hive. Let the saint turn his thoughts loose and they riot in fear of the affliction or temptation facing him. But as soon as he collects his straying thoughts and settles his heart on the promise, he recovers his comfort. The Spirit of God sounds a call to retreat from troubled thoughts and come into Him, where there is a quietness and confidence: “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him (Psalm 37:7).”

The Christian’s heart is the colour which his most abiding thoughts have stained it. Fleeting ideas, even if they are comfortably neutral, do not have much effect on the soul either for joy or for sorrow. Poison cannot kill and food will not nourish unless they stay in the body.

But when a person’s thoughts lie steeped in sorrow every day and bitter fears soak into his heart he will probably become bowed down with “a spirit of infirmity (Luke 13:11).” Then he is unable to raise his heart from the thought of his cross to meditate on the refreshing promise of resurrection.

On the other hand, God’s promise works effectually when the believer wakes with it and walks with it bound to his heart.



No pain he feels nor danger he fears can ever take the promise away from him; but as Samson went on his way eating the honeycomb, the Christian feeds on the sweetness of the promise. Here is the saint who can spend the hours of his affliction singing while others are sighing, and praising while they are murmuring.

Be careful, Christian, to practice this duty of meditation. Do not just chat with the promise in passing; but like Abraham with the angels, invite it to stay in your tent door so you can enjoy it fully. This is how saints through the centuries have caused their faith to triumph over the most tragic troubles.

“My beloved,” said the woman, “shall lie all night between my breasts (Song 1:13).” In other words, when sorrows press in to cause fear she will spend the night meditating on the love and loveliness of Jesus, on His beauty and tenderness toward her. When you have learned to do this you will not feel the severity of affliction any more than you feel the bitter cold of a north wind as you wait by a glowing fireplace.

When a Christian can stand upon this Pisgah of meditation and look with the eye of faith across the panorama of the great and precious things which the faithful God has prepared for him, it is easy to turn from the world’s love and rejection alike.

But it is hard for some of us to get up there because we get tired after only a few steps of climbing toward God’s mount. That is when we must call out, “Lead me to the rock that is higher than I (Psalm 61:2).” Who will lift us up to this holy hill of meditation, higher than the surging waves that dash upon us from beneath? God’s Spirit will pick us up in His everlasting arms and take us there.

If only we could put to better purpose the hours we lavish on inferior pleasures and worldly entertainment, the Spirit would surely meet us on the way. But if we take in just one lust to play with – even for a moment of leisure – Satan will be right there to help. Instead, we must spread our sails and let the Holy Spirit fill them with His own breath.

If we are willing priests and lay the wood and sacrifice in order, fire from heaven will come down upon it. But be careful to provide fuel – gather your truth for meditation from the promises and put your thoughts to work on it. Then the Spirit of God will kindle your affections: “While I was musing,” David said, “the fire burned: then I spoke with my tongue (Psalm 39:3).”

Meditation fills the heart with heavenly matter but prayer gives the discharge which pours it forth on God and moves Him to give desired relief to the Christian.

Although it is some comfort to a penniless person to read through his statements and find that someone owes him money, this alone will not supply bread for his next meal. Payment of the debt does this.

By meditating on God’s promise we can see there is deliverance from affliction; but it will not happen until the prayer of faith calls in the debt: “Your heart shall live, you who seek God (Psalm 69:32).” “They looked to Him, and were radiant (Psalm 34:5).” If you hold back prayer God holds back His mercy.

Meditation is like the lawyer’s preparation of the case in order to plead it at the bar. After you have viewed the promise, and disposed your heart to the riches of it, then get to the throne of grace and spread it before the Lord, as David did: “Remember the word to Your servant, upon which You have caused me to hope (Psalm 119:49).”

## **Faith believes He will perform it**

The Christian’s safety lies in the faithfulness and strength of God who is the Promiser; but that security will not be a reality unless faith believes He will perform His Word. Reason may try to discourage you, and if your faith is weak or based only on sense and reason, you will draw little satisfaction from the promise. Too many Christians are bound by fears because their faith acts weakly on a mighty God.

“Why are you fearful, O you of little faith (Matthew 8:26)?” Here you can see the leak where the water came in to sink their spirits – they had “little faith.” It is not what God is but what we understand Him to be which makes the difference between victory and defeat.

If a man thinks his house will collapse in a tornado – even though it is as unmovable as a rock – that person will probably stay outside in the storm rather than trust the shelter to cover him.

To keep up the energy of faith on the power of God’s promises, we must somehow dismiss sense and reason from being our counsellors.

Why did Abraham not stagger in his faith, although the promise was such a strange one? “He considered not his own body now dead (Romans 4:19).”

And, on the other hand, what made Zacharias falter? He listened to the counsel of reason and assumed he was too old

to have a child.

Like Thomas, we are prone to carry our faith on the tips of our fingers – to trust God no further than our hand of sense can reach. God is very often on His way to perform a promise and deliver joyful news to His afflicted servants, when sense and reason close the case as being hopeless.

Sense, reason, and faith are separate entities and must not be confused with one another. We know some things by sense but cannot understand them by reason. Other realities we accept by reason that cannot be discerned by sense, like the size of the sun exceeding the circumference of the earth – when judging by the eye it can be covered with one’s hat.

And other things too, which eclipse both sense and reason, are clear to faith. By faith Paul knew, even when all hope was gone, that not a man would die in the sea storm: “Be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me (Acts 27:25).”

When the angel struck Peter and told him, “Arise up quickly... and follow me,” Peter did not let reason respond to the impossibility of the whole thing (Acts 12:7&8). How could he walk quickly in chains? Or what about the iron gate which fastened him in? He did not give common sense a turn to ask questions but stood up and saw his chains fall off – just before the gate opened itself to them!

## **God will loose the knots**

So do not say it is impossible to bear your affliction or escape a certain temptation. Give faith free reign to follow the promise and God will loose the knots which reason and sense have tied.

Luther admonished Christians everywhere to crucify the word “how” – how can you possibly go through this trouble or withstand such a hard attack? Has not God been faithful to give plenty of promises to stand between you and all harm?

“I will never leave you, nor forsake you (Hebrews 13:5)” and “My grace is sufficient for you (2 Corinthians 12:9).” Nothing “shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:39).”

It is the highest act of faith to believe those things which seem most improbable; and it is the highest act of love, for Christ’s sake, to endure patiently the things which bring pain. In these we are denying carnal reasoning which disputes against God’s power and strength. ✂



# The power of the Lord's presence

by David Wilkerson (1931-2011)

**SCRIPTURES provides endless examples of how the Lord's presence empowers his people to live for him. One of the most powerful examples is the life of Moses.**

Without God's presence, Moses knew it was useless for him to attempt anything. When he spoke face to face with the Lord, he stated boldly, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here (Exodus 33:15)." He was saying, "Lord, if you're not with us, we're not going to make it. We won't take a single step unless we're assured of your presence."

Moses knew it was God's presence among them that set them apart from all other nations. Today, the same is true of God's people. The only thing that sets us apart from non-believers is God's presence "with us," leading us, guiding us, working his will in and through us.

Moses' attitude was, "We operate on one principle. The only way for us to be guided or governed, to do battle and survive in these times, is to have God's presence with us. When his presence is in our midst, no one can destroy us. But without him we're helpless, reduced to nothing. Let all the nations of the world trust in their mighty armies, iron chariots and skilled soldiers. We will trust in the manifest presence of the Lord."

God gave Moses a promise: "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest (33:14)." The Hebrew word for "rest" here means "a comfortable, peaceful confidence." God was saying, "No matter what battles or trials you face, you will always be able to find a quiet rest and confidence in me."

The Old Testament is filled with accounts of the wonderful blessings that came to those who had God's presence with them.

Consider the following examples:

\*God's presence was so evident in Abraham's life, even the heathen around him recognised the difference between their lives and his: "Abimelech... spoke to Abraham, saying, 'God is with you in all that you do (Genesis 21:22).'" This heathen king said, "There's something different about you, Abraham. God is with you wherever you go."

\*An angel told Gideon, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valour (Judges 6:12)." And the Lord himself told Gideon, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you (6:14).?" Although Gideon considered himself a coward, God called him a "mighty man of valour." The Lord wanted to prove what anyone can do when His presence is with that person.

\*God told Isaiah of a special promise he makes to those he loves: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Saviour (Isaiah 43:1-3)." With God's abiding presence, you can go through any fire – and you won't just survive, but will be kept and protected through it all.

These Old Testament accounts aren't just dead-letter stories. They're meant to

encourage us to trust God for his presence in our lives. Like Abraham, Gideon and many others, we have a powerful testimony of what God's presence has done for us: guiding our steps, opening doors, moving obstacles, lifting cares and fears.

God attaches a condition to having his presence in our lives. Consider King Asa. This man led God's people to a miraculous victory over Ethiopia's million-man army. Afterward he testified it was God's presence that had scattered the enemy: "Lord, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude... So the Lord struck the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians fled (2 Chronicles 14:11&12)."

As Asa led his triumphant army back to Jerusalem, the prophet Azariah met him at the city gate with this message: "Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: 'Hear me, Asa... The Lord is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. For a long time Israel has been without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law; but when in their trouble they turned to the Lord God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them (15:1-4).'"

God told Asa the secret of getting and maintaining the presence of God in his life: "Don't ever forget how you got this victory. When you were in trouble you sought me with all your heart, and I sent my presence to you. Remember, it was my presence that brought you victory."

Yet when God's presence is missing, everything is out of kilter, with no law, guidance or righteous teaching. Everyone becomes a law unto himself, doing his own thing. What a picture of so many Christian homes today: everything out of order, with no peace or rest, everyone doing what he or she pleases. The Lord in his mercy grieves over such disorder.

Yet it doesn't have to be that way. God's promises are unchangeable, and his Word pledges, "For the rest of your life, if you will continue to seek me, I will be with you. When you cry out, I will be found by you."

This isn't some complicated theology. Anyone can have the abiding presence of God if he or she will simply call out in faith. We are promised, "The Lord... will



be found by you (15:2)."

Moses sought God for a continual manifestation of his presence "that I may know You (Exodus 33:13)."

Here is how God answered his servant: "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest (Exodus 33:14)."

Moses' request here would be enough for most Christians. Who among us doesn't want God's promised peace and rest? What more could anyone desire? Yet having the assurance of God's presence wasn't enough for Moses. He knew there was more, and he cried, "Please, show me Your glory (33:18)."

God did show Moses his glory. His glory didn't appear in some luminous cloud or an earthshaking demonstration of power. Instead, God expressed his glory in a simple revelation of his nature: "The Lord passed before him and proclaimed... 'the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin (34:6-7).'" Do you see? God's glory was a revelation of his goodness, mercy, love and compassion.

Some may argue, "But what about the disciples' incredible experience on the Mount of Transfiguration? Wasn't that a manifestation of God's glory? There was an overpowering light and the miraculous

appearance of Moses and Elijah."

In that incredible moment, God's glory wasn't in Moses or Elijah or the spectacular light. Rather, his radiant glory was in Jesus: "He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light... and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him (Matthew 17:2,5)!'"

## Gracious and longsuffering, abundant in goodness

Here is God's glory personified in Christ. Jesus is the revelation of all that God said he was to Moses: gracious and longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth, merciful to thousands, forgiving sins. At the Mount of Transfiguration, God revealed a living picture of his own glory: "It is all now embodied in my Son."

Beloved, God wants to open our eyes to "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints (Ephesians 1:18)." This means, simply, that all the glory revealed to Moses is embodied in God's Son. And now Christ has been given to us as our inheritance: "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9)."

Where can we find this revelation of Christ? We find it only as we come to prayerful trust in God's Word. Paul says as we allow Scripture to give us an ever-increasing revelation of Jesus, we will be changed: "We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18)."

This revelation of Christ's glory will provide a keeping power for our lives: "Upon all the glory shall be a defence (Isaiah 4:5)." In other words, his glory will keep us heavenly minded in our worst hour.

As you continually reflect on this revelation and commune with him, you'll become more and more like Jesus. And as you experience his loving mercy, you'll trust him more and more to see you through all trials. His Word makes it clear: "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him (2 Chronicles 16:9)."

Seek him with all your heart, and desire his presence in your daily life. Then you'll know and experience his incredible glory. Jesus is going to walk with you through your troubles. He rejoices over you. You are going to make it, dear overcomer. God loves you and will keep you in his presence. Amen. ☞

# Will you help us be a blessing?



Did you know that *Prepare the Way* is sent free of charge to church leaders in many African countries, as well as overseas missionaries and prisoners? But this **only** happens through the support and donations of people just like you.

If you have a heart for the nations and a desire to see churches built up through sound, Biblical teaching, then please would you consider supporting this ministry?

*Prepare the Way* is a 100% non-profit ministry. No-one associated with the magazine draws **any** form of salary or income from the magazine – so, very simply, every cent you give goes straight towards sending out more magazines! The more gifts we get in, the more magazines we give away – it's as simple as that.

If you are able to help, please fill in the form below, or simply do a direct deposit into the magazine's account (Prepare the Way, Standard Bank, Howick Branch, Branch code 058325, Account number 052449815)

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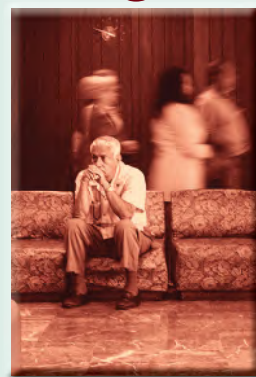
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## Ethiopia: Former imam's wife beaten, lost baby, but God brought news

by Mark Ellis

**A FORMER sheik and Imam came to Christ and suffered terrible persecution, but God re-engineered the circumstances to reap an abundant harvest.**

In May, 2018 the former imam took a group of new believers to a Christian training conference. “While he was away three men beat his three-month pregnant wife to the point where she lost their baby,” reports Erik Laursen, executive director of New Covenant Missions.

“The men dropped her off at the hospital and then proceeded to steal everything the family owned from their home, even the bed sheets,” he recounts.

The former imam reported the crime to the local authorities. “Do you know who stole all your belongings?” they asked.

“It could have been anybody because they all hate me because I was a sheikh and now I am a Christian,” he replied.

The police then had everyone in the neighbourhood swear with their right hands that

they did not commit the crime. No one confessed.

A few nights later, the three perpetrators gathered outside the former imam’s house and began screaming and yelling, “like crazy, possessed men.”

Alarmed by the display, neighbours brought the three men to the mosque to have the imam cast out the demon or “jin” from them.

As the imam attempted to cast out the demons, the men started yelling back at the imam, “How can Satan cast out Satan, you are one of us!”

They continued to yell and said to the imam and the other sheikhs: “You are the devil, you are the one that made us beat the woman and steal the stuff!” This created a loud argument between the sheikhs, imam, and the three crazed, demon possessed men.

To resolve the situation, the possessed men were ordered to return all the stolen property to the front door of the former imam’s house.

When the former imam awakened the next morning, he opened his front door

and was shocked to discover all their stolen property was returned – except for one lost sheep!

Perplexed by this turn of events, he contacted the town elders (also Muslim) to ask where it came from. The town elders organised a meeting to bring reconciliation between the former imam’s family and their Muslim neighbours. The elders assured him they would also find the stolen sheep that had not been returned.

During an investigation, the town elders learned that one of the three men that had stolen the property and beaten the former imam’s wife had gone to the witchdoctor and confessed the crime.

The three men were arrested and jailed for their deeds. The imam and other mosque leaders were warned by the police to not cause any more religious disturbances or the mosque would be closed for inciting religious violence.

A short time later, the former imam and his congregants were worshiping in their small house church and they heard a loud crash against the build-

ing. A woman was standing outside throwing large rocks at the house church and falsely accusing the former imam of human trafficking!

A crowd from the neighbourhood gathered and it became an unruly scene. The woman threw a rock and severely injured the head of one of the congregants. The town elders, police and mosque leaders arrived to settle the dispute.

“The town elders, being all Muslim and part of the mosque, did not want any trouble that could cause their mosque to be closed,” Laursen recounts.

The former imam explained that they were simply reading the Bible and worshipping Jesus. “He went on to state that the Bible was the book of truth.”

The town elders and mosque leaders told the woman to leave.

But then God did something amazing. He stirred the hearts of the six Muslim town elders to ask questions about the Christian faith. “They knew he used to be a sheikh. He shared with them that he knows they refuse to believe that God could have a son but then he showed them in their own Quran where it actually states that God is a Father.

“They were shocked and wanted to learn more.” As they studied the Scripture, the power of the Word and the Spirit brought conviction and a spirit of repentance.

All six of the town elders surrendered to Jesus as their Lord and Saviour and decided to follow Him!

When Erik Laursen first heard the story recounted by the former imam, he was overcome with emotion. “I sat astonished and could do nothing but pray. I simply didn’t even have words to say to this man of God!

“It was beautiful and even brings me to tears now, three weeks later,” Laursen says. ✕



Thanks to  
Elizabeth Kendal

# WATCH & PRAY



## SOMALI CHURCH BEING ATTACKED

Somalia is one of the world's most dangerous places to be a Christian. Al-Shabaab hunts down and executes Christian converts. Somali Muslims maintain that Christianity has no place in Somalia. Civil war and famine have forced hundreds of thousands of Somalis to flee into Kenya, where they have access to Kenyan and international aid workers and teachers, many of whom are Christian.

A small and vulnerable ethnic Somali Church is taking root both inside war-ravaged Somalia and in eastern Kenya's Somali-dominated Garissa County. Kenya might offer freedom and opportunity, but the work among Somalis is still incredibly dangerous. On March 8, Pastor Abdul (Somali, aged 30, married, father of three) was severely beaten in Garissa by Somali Muslims. Though relocated, his family fear for their lives.

Please pray for the Somali Church.

## IRAQ: FROM NATION TO DECIMATION TO ELIMINATION

Some 17 000 Islamic State (IS/ISIS) fighters are believed to be consolidating in Iraq, where IS attacks are increasing in

frequency and sophistication. But their return is not the only threat facing Iraq's remnant Christians, most of whom belong to the long-persecuted Assyrian nation, whose historic heartland is in northern Iraq's Nineveh Plain.

Baghdad and Tehran are currently struggling against the Kurds for control of the north's "Disputed Territories," which includes the Assyrian heartland. To that end, Baghdad and Tehran are apparently using the Shabak – a distinct ethnic group who are nominally Shi'ite – as their proxy against the Kurds in Nineveh. The Shabak are working to seize Assyrian lands, drive the Christians out, prevent their return and replace them with Shabak, seemingly with Baghdad's approval. Please pray for Iraq's Christians.

## COMMUNAL VIOLENCE THREATENS PROGRESS IN ETHIOPIA

The great reform work being done by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed could be undone if escalating communal violence cannot be contained. More than 2.4 million Ethiopians are now displaced because of communal violence, much of which is believed to be incited by political elements opposed to PM Abiy's reforms.

In early February, three mosques were burnt in a majority Christian region in the north, while at least 10 churches were burnt in a ma-

majority Muslim region in the south. As in the more numerous cases of pure ethnic violence, majorities are attacking minorities and local police are not intervening.

In each case of religious violence, it was incited by a false report and then carefully organised. Please pray that God will complete the good work he has begun in Ethiopia.

## SUDAN: STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARED

Rocked by more than two months of relentless protests, Sudan's Islamist president Omar al-Bashir on Friday, February 22 declared a nationwide, year-long state of emergency.

Led by doctors and others from the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA) – an outlawed umbrella group of unions – the protesters continue to take to the streets to call for al-Bashir's resignation.

As revealed in a BBC Africa investigation, al-Bashir is now deploying squads comprising

armed police, soldiers, security/intelligence and plain-clothed thugs to round up opposition and "cleanse" the streets. More than 50 protesters have been killed and scores wounded while more than a thousand have been arrested.

This might be Khartoum's worst crisis in decades but, unless God intervenes, the National Islamic Front/National Congress Party regime – and possibly even al-Bashir himself – will probably survive. After all, this regime has long deployed lethal force against its citizens with impunity.

Even today, not one foreign government has backed the protesters' call for al-Bashir to step down. Yet without significant pressure, this brutal Islamist dictator – this tyrant whose racial and religious hatreds and mass-murdering regime have resulted in the breakup and impoverishment of Sudan – will not go.

Remember the long-suffering Church in Sudan and please pray.

## Make a date with us!

**June 2, November 3**

These are the dates for this year's Prepare the Way days at Mount Zion Church, Merrivale (near Howick in KZN) at 9.15 am. Peter Pollock will be preaching at both events. Bring a friend, make a day of it and stay for (free) lunch!



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## Manna for mahala!

If you'd like to receive Peter Pollock's Daily Manna devotional, which will also take you through the whole Bible in a year, then go to our website ([www.prepare.co.za](http://www.prepare.co.za)), and on the home page go to the "Daily Manna Sign-up" at the top, fill in your details and we will e-mail it to you every morning. What's more, it's absolutely free!



# Suffer gently

**THE quickest way to get out of great trouble, or suffering, is to so yield ourselves up to God that we suffer with a patient and gentle spirit.**

We are living in a world where sorrow and suffering and trouble are indigenous, and sprout like the weeds everywhere. We must go through much trouble and suffering of various kinds, and if it does not spring from one source it will from another.

Now, if we are rebellious and fretful, and are constantly chafing our souls under trials and laying the blame on other people, and murmuring against God, and always fighting with our circumstances, we only bruise our own spirits, and add to the troubles, and postpone the period of our deliverance.

Your case is a peculiar one, of course, and so is every other case as peculiar as yours. You are tempted to lay the blame of your great trials on this or that person, or you recriminate yourself, and lash your own feelings into a tempest forever getting yourself in the fix you are in.

Or Satan tries to make you curse God and die, as he attempted with Job; or you are disposed to think God does not love

you, and is dealing with peculiar severity in your life.

Then you think of how many people there are who could give you relief from your suffering, or could easily change your circumstances in life, and you wonder why they do not do it. Many suggestions come to your mind of what might have been, or what might be.

If you will put yourself utterly into the hands of God, and in your heart detach yourself from people, and places and things, and plans, and gently sink into the Holy Spirit, and ask Him to so flood you with gentleness and love and faith that you can bear all things in God's will, you will soon find the Lord beginning to work blessed changes both in your inner life and in outer circumstances.

The very things you are suffering, and that seem to be a wreck and ruin in your life, you will see in the end were the very instruments best adapted to perfectly subdue every part of your will and heart to Jesus.

In all your suffering, if you lay the blame on others, or allow your mind to dwell upon the fortunate circumstances of other people, or allow yourself to pine and chafe,

you will delay the blessed purpose of your Heavenly Father, and cripple your faith and becloud the operations of your mind.

Suffer gently.

Sink quietly into the invisible arms of God.

Cling to Jesus.

Love the blessed Holy Spirit and talk constantly with Him.

Do not try to break the chains of trouble that seem to bind you, but put them in the gentle hands of Jesus.

Do not be anxious to have your troubles come to an end, but keep asking God that the suffering may produce in you a perfect fitness of heart and mind to fulfil your life mission. Be like a lamb that bears without bleating.

Rest assured that just as soon as the Lord gets your soul into the very place He wants it, He can and will quickly alleviate many a trouble, and bring you out into a large place where you will praise Him for everything He has allowed to come into your life.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28)." 