

Prepare *the* Way

Issue No. 131

PREPARING THE BRIDE OF CHRIST FOR THE RETURN OF CHRIST



**Why is darkness
settling over
our land?**

**The prayer
that brings
REVIVAL!**

**Peter Pollock:
Lukewarm
Laodicea**

**5 Sensational
signs of the
return of Jesus**

Contents

- [2. The call to forsake](#)
- [3. The saints' treasury](#)
- [4. Lukewarm Laodicea](#)
- [6. Prayer brings revival](#)
- [7. Pray in faith](#)
- [8. Trial by fire](#)
- [10. Wait on God](#)
- [11. The Devil's fire](#)
- [12. Confession, cleansing](#)
- [14. The Second Coming](#)
- [17. Good grief](#)
- [18. Fight good fight](#)
- [19. Christ with us](#)
- [20. Darkness on the land](#)
- [21. Drink!](#)
- [22. Answered prayer](#)
- [24. No need to fear](#)

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by Michael Carl

"As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea, -for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him."

What did it mean when Jesus strolled the shore of Lake Galilee and called those men to serve Him without reservation? Well, in one way or another, it meant a complete surrender to Jesus. When they heard Him say, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me (Mark 8.34)," they eventually learned that He meant it.

For most of them, it meant dying for the Lord. We all know from Foxe's Book of Martyrs that all of the original Apostles, second edition (with Matthias), except John went to a martyr's death.

Thomas, not realising the full impact of what he was saying, said it correctly when he said in John 11, "Let's go back to Judea so we may die with Him."

Yet, we have to ask today, what does it mean when Jesus says, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people?" Is there any real meaning behind Jesus' own words, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me" for us today?

Do we really believe this, or have Christ's own words simply become a romanticised exercise in a formulaic religious contemplation for today's 21st Century Christian?

In truth, we have to come to terms with the reality that if we don't really believe He means what He says in these Mark passages, then in fact we are denying the truth and efficacy of God's Word.

As one of my teachers along the way said, "We're professing believers; but in fact, we're practical atheists." The good professor was blunt, but brutally true.

When it comes to obeying the Word of God, we don't do too well with the passages requiring personal sacrifice.

Folks, this must change. If we're ever to realise the depth and beauty of a vital relationship with our Lord, we have to let go and be willing to trust Him with ALL of His Words.

Are we willing to do that?

If not, then our practical doubts are going to rob us of the very meat and meaning for which we deeply long. Let us resolve this day that we're not going to be spectators; we're going to take a step from the shore, wade in and fully become "a fisherman." 🐟



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Christ's fullness – the saints' treasury

by Charles H. Spurgeon

"For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell (Colossians 1:19)."

"And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace (John 1:16)."

THERE is an infinite fullness in Jesus, a fullness of all that any saint can ever want to enable him to rise to the highest degree of grace.

If sin is to be overcome, the conquering power dwells in Him in its fullness. If virtue is to be attained, sanctifying energy resides in Christ to perfection.

I have in my flesh no power whatever, for I am emptiness itself, and in me the truth is realised, "Without Me you can do nothing (John 15:5)." But on the other hand, the power to do all things lies in Christ, and the power to become fully consecrated streams forth from Him. "With God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26)." "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9)," and they who dwell in Him shall find things impossible with man become simple everyday facts with themselves – if they will but have faith in the mediatorial fullness.

Christ has not merely placed enough bread on the table to keep us from starving, His oxen and fatlings are killed, He has spread a royal festival.

He has not provided a scanty garment which may barely hide your nakedness, but He has brought forth the best robe, and has procured earrings for your ears, jewels for your necks, and a crown royal for your heads. For it pleased the Father

that in Him should all fullness dwell for all His saints.

If you have not these riches, the fault lies with yourself. It is there – you may have it, if you only had faith to take it.

Too often we sit down like beggars on the dunghill, and groan and cry because of the poverty of our nature when we ought to be rejoicing in the Lord. I thank God that we can groan, for that is something – but there is a more excellent way, a better gift to be earnestly coveted.

In Christ you are rich to the fullness of riches; get up, I pray, to the high places, and realise for yourselves the fullness of God in Christ Jesus.

The fact is we have a superabundant force in Christ, and if only we knew it. Instead of talking about the struggles of the church, and the strain that is put upon us, to hold our own – the joy of the Lord would give such strength to us that we would not remember our own efforts. But like the flood which rushes down the mountain after the rain, the flush of life from Jesus would speed on with a tremendous force, overleaping every obstacle, and filling our souls to the brim.

God grant us to know this truth that there is a fullness in Christ, and in the strength of that fullness may we cry, "Forward and upward."

The Father has placed His grace in Christ because it gratifies His love to His Son. It pleases the heart of the great God to see Jesus adorned with the fullness of deity, and every time Jesus gives out to believers, the great heart of

God is gladdened thereby.

Come, I pray, with swift feet to the place where all you want is stored, and take all your heart requires; yes, come for the highest degrees of grace and for the largest measures of success, and you shall have them, for Christ delights to give.

I would stir in you a sacred ambition, I would provoke you to the highest style of Christian manhood, and the most heroic form of Christian service. What you have received is the pledge of what you may receive.

Christ is yours, and by that fact ALL things are yours. "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things (Romans 8:32)?"

I charge you, let that text enter into your hearts. And when you feel straitened in prayer, and tempted to say, "Oh, not here, I cannot rise so high, I am not qualified for that attainment," do, I pray, remember the gifts already received, by which Jesus opens your mouth and bids you ask great things. The Father has given you His Son, how can He deny you anything?

I feel a dissatisfaction with my present attainments; I pant to know my Lord better. I am discontented with what I have done for Him hitherto, I long to do 10 times more for His glory. Do you feel the same? Oh, then He will keep touch with you; yes, He will do exceedingly abundantly above all you ask, or even think.

Believe in great things. Let us have great faith in what God intends to do. Believing these great things, let us expect them. Be on the lookout for spiritual miracles. The Lord of Hosts is with us, therefore let us expect great things.

Expecting great things, let us attempt great things. Let us each set about doing something for Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Will you not consecrate yourselves to be whole burnt-offerings to Christ, for Him to live, for Him to die?

May it be seen throughout the world that there are men and women who have received of the fullness of the Crucified One, and who therefore can give it forth to others, and point them to Him, in whom the Father is well pleased that all fullness shall dwell. 🐟



In the early church we saw much in the way of God in action, and that was because God was still in charge. The disciples did not know what tomorrow was going to bring and they were knitted and bonded together by a total dependence on God.

That's the way it should be, if Jesus is building His church. He does not need the meddling, arrogant ways of man to spread humanism.

Jeremiah the prophet had spoken clearly about the New Covenant. Through Jeremiah, God had pronounced that the day would come when, by the Spirit, God would teach us.

He would write His law on our hearts, and we would be His people. No more shall every man teach his neighbour – that will be the work of the Holy Spirit.

He will give us one heart and one way, that we may fear Him forever, for our own good and the good of our children, so that we would not depart from Him.

He would reveal great things to us! We would know Him, directly and personally and intimately. It would be so much more than just knowing about Him. It would not be about signs, wonders and miracles. Yes, we would know Him!

There is nothing greater or mightier than “knowing” God! Paul spoke about the Gospel being “the revelation of Jesus Christ and Him crucified,” meaning that it would be so much more than just a doctrinal statement. It would be an experiential way of life.

When Jesus prayed to the Father in John 17, He defined the gospel “that they will know You and Me.” His sheep would hear His voice – and “hearing” means not only listening but doing and obeying. Jesus would build His Church!

When we look at the Book of Revelation and the chapters dealing with the seven churches, we see again a record of how the world forced its way into the respective fellowships.

It's a review of man's attempt to build the church with all the worldly intrusions. And it did get messy, as always is the case with man trying to play God or to implement God.

There is only one edifier, only one builder and only one way into the real Kingdom – and that's through Jesus Christ, through repentance and the Holy Spirit sanctifying our lives.

I am the Way, the Truth and the Life – nobody comes to the Father except through Me. The road is narrow and few make it, is also a biblical prophetic promise about the final outcome of this world.

Fear God and keep His commandments for that is the whole duty of man, summed up King Solomon.

And Job, when he had finally survived all that happened to him and found himself face to face with God said “I have uttered what I did not understand. Now my eyes see you. I abhor myself. Repent in dust and ashes.”

God is an awesome, sovereign, jealous God, a consuming fire who only wants from us everything!

A profound message

Now, let's look at a profound prophetic message...

We are always looking for prophetic messages, but there is a problem. We have hard hearts and deaf ears – and all we want is ear-tickling news. To top it, we are desperately short of discernment, it is woefully lacking.

The Bible promises us an end-time deception and apostasy second to none.

Reading Revelation is a great blessing if you hear it, receive it and keep the words of the prophecy. We must read it and believe it, and not add or subtract.

Laodicea is understood as the church of the final showdown, the final lockdown – and it certainly has a lot to say to listening ears.

“I know your works,” says the Lord – for indeed, He knows everything, down to even the final motivation for the things we do. No doubt they were doing good works socially and politically.

They were first-class humanitarians, supplying and caring for widows and orphans and obviously even gaining praise and acknowledgement from the world. But nobody's good – as Jesus berated the rich young ruler.

In fact, feeling good about good is not good!

It spawns pride and humanism. Good works are misrepresented widely. Christianity is not a fruit of good works, rather good works are a fruit of the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ working in our lives.

Intellectually, the difference is subtle – but spiritually, it is as night and day.

I know you better than you know yourselves. God knows our true heart conditions and motivations, and we just can't fool Him. To even think so, is arrogance of the highest order.

You are neither hot nor cold, says the Lord. Again, a categorical statement of the real problem – that is, being lukewarm.

It is so repulsive that it induces Jesus to vomiting! I will spit you out. I will spew you out. Those are very strong words of conviction and authority from Jesus. God does speak straight.

Remember when Paul stood up at Athens to address the world's intellectual leadership – and he didn't beat about the bush? He told them straight that they worshipped an “unknown God,” that God did not live in temples built by human hands. Such stark clarity from Jesus in expressing His repugnance and disapproval of what was going on.

It would almost have been better to be a “pagan” outside the temple than passive and apathetic in it. God doesn't need any one of us, and in Him we live and move and have our being.

I have been in the ministry more than 40 years, and you would be surprised and even shocked at how many so-called believers – even leaders – have confessed to battling to put Jesus Christ number one in their lives.

Jesus asked Peter whether he loved Him more than anything else in the world, a prerequisite to “feeding My sheep.”

It's horrific!

Lukewarm is horrific, as is backsliding, and losing your first love. It is serious – not just like the annual flu!

And it most certainly is not covered by the umbrella of God's endless cheap grace. Presumption is a great sin, as confessed by David in Psalm 19.

Presumption is defined as “a form of self-confidence which makes self-righteous, over-confident triumphalist assumptions concerning one's importance and rights as a believer. It is unacceptable arrogance in lives that should be characterised by humility.”

You simply cannot use God, or even think you can.

Because you say! How profound and disturbing is that? We may well say so, but it most certainly does not mean that

it is so.

Naming and claiming things in the name of Jesus is a huge presumption. Even lies and exaggerations seem to be considered okay if they are camouflaged and laundered in faith.

Many faith claims are just not true. They are a downright cheek and impudence!

They are false misrepresentations. Healing, and miracles are biblical – and we should pray for them and expect them. But lies and exaggerations are an absolute abomination. Even worse when they are veiled in faith.

And it seems that the Laodiceans were happy with their lot. They were enjoying it. Yes – lukewarm, and loving it!

What an indictment. You don't know, said Jesus!

You are spiritually ignorant and you lack teaching. You are “uninformed” as you “grope” and “grapple” with the Kingdom of Darkness and the God of this age. In truth, you are in deception – another powerful condemnation.

You say that you are rich, wealthy and blessed but you don't know what you are saying...

Lukewarm, and loving it!

Deception is a major prophetic promise for the end times, and there will even be signs and wonders to fool the elite. And it's Jesus Who is speaking. Jesus is God's plan. There are no other plans or options. Jesus – the rock of offence – laying it out on the line.

As always, God offers options. What you need desperately and urgently are:

First, refined gold. Not the glitzy stuff that you have made, but the pure refined gold that comes out of the furnace. You have not been “refined” in that fire. Job said: “When I am tried, I will come forth as gold.” That's the gold of refining.

But sadly, it's not going to happen when the preachers are not preaching sin, repentance and the Cross. All they are promoting is cheap grace.

Secondly, there is need of white garments. That means purity, holiness and righteousness. God is awesome, God is sovereign and He is to be feared.

Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, we are told. Obedience to God's Word is vital, as is self-effacing

humility. These should be discernible traits, and fruit of a genuinely saved life. Flattery, and mutual admiration clubs are the devil's work.

Thirdly, there is a desperate need for eye salve. We are still seeing and judging everything in the material and physical. The man without the Spirit just cannot understand. He will be like Nicodemus, seeing “born again” as climbing back into your mother's womb.

Spiritual eyes and discernment are oh-so absent in modern church leadership corridors. What Jesus has had to say to the Laodiceans would no doubt have offended most of them – as it would today. And Jesus quickly adds: “those I love, I rebuke and chasten.”

God is not a doting Father. God doesn't soft-soap on sin and evil, and the Holy Spirit will never tell you how good you are.

If Jesus said nobody's good, do you think for one second the Holy Spirit will contradict Him?

Hebrews 12:5: “My Son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline and do not lose heart when He rebukes you because the Lord disciplines those He loves and punishes everyone He accepts as His Son.”

Judgement begins in the house of God and what is needed is: “If My people who are called by My name will... humble themselves... pray... seek My face... and turn from their wicked ways... then... Yes... only then!”

It's a call to consecration, my friends. Repentance is the key issue – turning 180 degrees!

And then finally: Behold I stand and knock!

I am still outside, says Jesus. Hear My Voice! Open up!

He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. It's an intimate, personal, individual call. Laodiceans, I am standing outside. I am excluded... bypassed... compromised...

Lo, Laodicea! Its staring us starkly in the face.

Greg Hinnant wrote: Indisputably, Jesus depicts a “church” engrossed and obsessed with the present world. Given to moral compromise. Deceived. Smugly and arrogantly satisfied but a sickening disappointment. Intellectually, the Laodiceans are busy justifying themselves but spiritually “You do not come to Me,” said Jesus. 🐟

Lukewarm Laodicea...

by Peter Pollock

THE “real” church is alive and very well! God has not lost control for a single second and everything is on track.

Check out the temple details, the genealogies and the prophecies, and clearly God will be seen as absolutely meticulous. The real church must not be confused by all the temples that man builds and what you see on television!


“My Kingdom is not of this world,” is about as emphatic a statement as you could wish to hear. You cannot “see” the Kingdom. It's not here, it's not there – and, again, it is most certainly not on television!

“I will build my church,” said the Lord Jesus Christ, and “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” The apostle Peter had correctly stated that Jesus was the Christ when the disciples were asked who everyone said Jesus was.

The Holy Spirit had given this revelation to Peter, and Jesus promised that the “church” would be built on this Spirit. It would not be built on Peter. It was spiritual, not intellectual or physical.

This is such an important issue, because what did the Catholic Church do? They made Peter the first Pope!

And ever since then man has allowed the human factor to control the church.



The prayer that brings revival...

by Ernest M. Wadsworth

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness... and with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all (Acts 4:31-33).”

PRAYER for revival differs from every other kind of prayer. Numerous examples of such effectual prayers are given in the Scriptures. In them we notice factors unknown in other prayers.

They have a singular power to move God. The secret of Pentecost is in them. They embrace what God most loves in prayer. Fervency is greater. Union with God is more intimate. They are more intercessory. They vocalise the Spirit's desires.

Is it any wonder that they shake heaven and bring down showers of blessing?

Elijah, by this kind of praying, brought in days of revival blessing. He said: “Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their heart back again.” Then the fire of the Lord fell (1 Kings. 18:37-38)...

Ezra's revival prayer obtained the purification of the nation. The priests and the people had taken the daughters of the land for themselves and for their sons. The holy seed was corrupted. The hand of princes and rulers were chief in this trespass.

Ezra prayed: “O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to You, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up to the heavens.... Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore... and said... We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God (Ezra 9:6; 10:1-3)...”

God thus saved the nation.

The apostles by union in prayer after Pentecost received a second Pentecostal revival. “They lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, You are God, Who has made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is... And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant to Your servants, that with all boldness they may speak

Your word, by stretching forth Your hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Your Holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:24, 29-31).”

We now venture to name the salient features of effectual revival prayer:

1. Revival prayers are groaning prayers.

Such were the prayers of Israel in the house of bondage. They “groaned” to the Lord (Exodus 2:24). This groan-filled praying was the order of the day. Samuel mentions this in his last address to Israel. He says: “Your fathers cried to the Lord, then the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt (1 Samuel 12:8)...”

Whenever God hears the groanings of His troubled saints He rises to their help. “As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children (Isaiah 66:8).” The Spirit prays through God's people “with groanings which cannot be uttered (Romans 8:26).”

2. Revival prayers are blushing prayers.

Thus Ezra prayed: “O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to

You, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up to the heavens.”

He confessed crimson sins with a blushing face. It is the right accompaniment for naming transgressions. Prayer that comes from a repentant heart, offered with blazing zeal for the glory of God and with shame for His dishonour, will be offered with a flushed countenance.

God never passes over such prayers.

3. Revival prayers are prostrate prayers.

The sight of iniquity, awareness of impotency, inefficiency, and incompetence, and of dependence upon God, with alarm over the perils in crises, cause prostration before God.

It is the only suitable attitude. Thus our Lord prayed in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39). Revival is near when people get down on their faces before God.

4. Revival prayers are based upon the atonement.

They rest upon “the finished work” of Christ. Revival prayers capitalise on the redemption in Christ Jesus. They plead the benefits of Calvary. “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things (Romans 8:32).” On the basis of Christ's atonement we must prevail in prayer for the coming revival.

5. Revival prayers are based upon the Covenant.

The New Testament Covenant cannot be disannulled. It is unalterable. Therefore, saints interested in its terms and provisions may make legal claim for revival at the court of heaven. The New Covenant has ever been the passkey by which men of faith have unlocked doors of revival blessing.

6. Revival prayers are united prayers.

Union and agreement in prayer are essential to revival. It is given in answer to mutual prayer. Revivalists and reformers understood this necessity.

Jonathan Edwards, father of the New England revival, bowed in travail of soul before God for revival. He issued a Call

to God's people, “To come unto union and explicit agreement in prayer for the revival of God's work in the churches in keeping with His holy Covenant and promises.”

Prayer groups were formed all over the land. The spirit of prayer was upon the people. Whole nights were spent in prayer. Prior to his world-famous sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” his congregation spent the entire night in intercession.

We, too, need to travail in soul. We have greater reason for being bowed before God. It is time to seek the Lord with groanings and strong crying. The church is in humiliation; the ungodly are bold; many youth are indifferent; God's servants are in reproach; enemies are mocking the church; and ungodliness prevails.

In similar difficult times, Daniel set his face to seek the Lord with supplication and fasting. We need to wait upon God. We will see mighty manifestations of God's supernatural presence and power when there are mighty wrestlings in prayer in closets, homes, and in services of public prayer. Increase of souls comes with travail of soul.

7. Revival prayers are selfless prayers.

They seek only the glory of God and the welfare of the church, and of the world. Love “seeks not her own.” To save their people Moses and Paul were willing even to be blotted out of God's book (Exodus 32:32; Romans 9:3). Can we say: “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory, for Your mercy, and for Your truth's sake (Psalm 115:1)?”

Are our prayers like these?

Such were the unique features attending the effectual revival prayers of men of old. In proportion as these qualities appear in our intercessions, our prayers for revival will be effectual. Spiritual concern will drive us, as it did Moses, to stand in the gap in an agony of prayer that leads us to say:

“Lord, I know not how to go, until a blessing Thou bestow.”

The Spirit of grace will express Himself through the passionate prayers of prevailing saints so that we will cry out: “Save us, O Lord our God to give thanks to Your holy name, and to triumph in Your praise (Psalm 106:47).”

Pray in faith for revival

by W. C. Moore

JOSHUA and Caleb had faith in God – and they entered the Promised Land. **It was Jesus Himself who said, “According to your faith be it unto you (Matthew 9:29).” The promises of God concerning Canaan Land, flowing with milk and honey, were to all Israel, but because of unbelief the great mass of the people did not enter in.**

Joshua and Caleb were so engrossed with God, they believed Him so fully and followed Him so closely, that when the time came for entering the Promised Land they were ready to go in. They counted God well able to give them that which He had promised. Their minds and hearts were stayed on God and not on conditions or circumstances or – people.

The 120 before Pentecost counted God faithful and they tarried until they were endued with power from on high.

The Spirit of God is stirring many of us today to pray for revival. Let us follow the leadings of the Spirit and pray in faith for God to come forth. Let us “exhort one another daily” to work for, pray for, and believe for a mighty work of God in these last days.

Jesus is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. Let us remember this. Others have prayed through in past days. Why have we not? God is faithful. His promises are sure. Let us only believe.

What is really needed is a Gideon's band to break through, a “120” to believe God, “three mighty men” to go through the hosts, not today of Philistines, but hosts of darkness, and get this water of life, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that our Shepherd King may “pour it out (2 Samuel 23:16; Ephesians 6:12).”

Pioneers are needed who love God and will believe His promises, as did Joshua and Caleb. Let us not argue over fine points of doctrine, but let us all unite to “pray for rain (Zechariah 10:1).” Let us love one another and pray for God to have His way and send a mighty Holy Ghost revival that will make us “one (John 17:20-23).”



TRIAL BY FIRE

by Peter Marshall

The following excerpt – relevant then and urgently applicable now – is from a fiery sermon he preached on March 11, 1944, at the St. Charles Presbyterian Church in New Orleans, USA.

“If the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him (1 Kings 18:21).”

THE setting of the text is one of the most dramatic in the Old Testament. The leaders of the nation, including the king, had come together to make a great decision. It was a national emergency, something had to be done.

Elijah the prophet had called them to meet on Mount Carmel to settle no less a question than whom they

should worship. It was a day of choice, a day of destiny. William Penn said that “Men must be governed by God, or they will be ruled by tyrants.”

Here then was an ancient Hebrew prophet facing the very same issue, and making his people face it with him.

A Blessed Heritage

They all knew the history of their nation, how their fathers had come out of the wilderness, out of bondage into a new land of pioneers. Behind them were great leaders – Moses and Aaron and Joshua – men who had been led by God.

They had set up not a democracy, but a theocracy, a state governed by God. The leaders of the young nation had taken God as their king and sovereign.

They had ample reason to believe, having seen it worked out in their own

history, that righteousness alone exalted a nation, and that the only nation blessed was the one whose God was the Lord.

They had seen it work in the past; their national history was proof. They had been taught that obedience to the laws of God was the only foundation for national greatness, liberty, and security. As long as the nation recognised God as supreme it could stand.

Moral Drift and Confusion

But something had been happening in the national life. The faith and vision of the founding fathers had faded. Moral decay had set in. There was confusion in the minds of the people.

They were beginning to forget the principles that had made them a nation.

They had begun to love things more than principle. All around them paganism flourished...

Materialism had a god, and his name was Baal. He offered to his devotees the things that human instincts crave. He was a god of the flesh. His priests encouraged the people to follow their natural inclinations.

It was worship in indulgence, expressed in lust, and adored in selfishness. It had no inhibitions at all.

It said, “Look after number one, be yourself, be natural.” Self-expression and natural instincts were its programme.

A good time for everyone according to the flesh was its goal.

No wonder it grew in popularity. But still, Israel was confused. The inheritances of the past and the early teachings of their parents were not forgotten. Something of conscience was not yet drugged, so they were confused and uneasy.

They took a little of Jehovah, and a little of Baal.

They became by degrees more and more broad-minded. Was it not a free country? Who wanted to be old-fashioned? So, morality became a relative thing. The old absolutes were regarded as far too intolerant.

The national moral standards were lowered. The worship of Baal and Jehovah got mixed somehow. It was hard to draw a line of distinction. Materialism and Idealism were often confused.

A Time for Decision

Now, Elijah saw the danger. He saw what would happen to the nation when its moral fibre was weakened. He knew the end of confusion and indecision. He believed with all his heart that national ruin and disaster were inevitable if the nation forsook Jehovah and departed from its charter and constitution.

So, he summoned the leaders of the country together on this day of destiny.

“If the Lord be God, follow him. But if Baal, then follow him.” It was a time now for men to take sides. There was no middle ground, it could not be neutral.

They had to be on one side or the other. They had to decide whether they and their nation would be governed by God or ruled by tyrants. Elijah saw that

Israel as a nation could not go with God and Baal, it had to be God or Baal.

The Test of Gods

You remember the dramatic test of trial by fire? On the slopes of Carmel with the copper sky above them and the parched, sunbaked plains of Jezreel at their feet, the people stood waiting.

Elijah announced his proposed test. Let the matter be decided once and for all, let sacrifices be laid on the altar. Let him be God who would send down fire and consume the offerings.

Let Baal have the advantage of priority, let his priests have the first inning. Everything would be in their favour.

The sun climbing to meridian would be at its height. There were 450 of them, and if they all prayed, that would be a lot of prayers.

Let them call upon their god and let him answer if he could.

First Baal...

Then began the weird pagan performance with Elijah jiving at them with pointed sarcasm. While his words had blades in them, his taunts were razor-sharp.

“Cry louder! Why don’t you cry louder? He is a god you’re crying to, isn’t he? Well, he must be talking to somebody, he must be in the chase (hunting) or perhaps he’s gone for a walk. Perhaps he’s asleep. He may be taking a nap, cry louder, wake him up.”

He taunted them all day long, until they were all at the point of exhaustion. Hoarse with their shouting, wearied with their dancing, bleeding and wounded... they had cut themselves, hoping that the sight of their own blood spurting from tired arms and legs might cause Baal to relent and answer.

They carried on until evening. But there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

...Then Jehovah

Then Elijah, confident and unhurried, called the people closer. Going over to an abandoned, broken-down Jehovah altar, Elijah had them set upon it a sacrifice and drenched it three times with water.

He made the test more impressive by soaking the whole altar with water that ran into a trench dug all around it.

And then his prayer to Jehovah, not ranting or foaming, or shouting – and its answer in fire that consumed the sacrifice, licked up the water in the trench until the people looking on cried as they fell on their faces, “The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!”

The Need for Prophets

Now I suggest to you that we need prophets today... who will set before the nation the essential choices...

A time like this demands strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready hands – men whom the lust of office does not kill, men whom the spoils of office cannot buy, men who possess opinions and a will, men who have honour, men who will not lie, men who can stand before a demigod and damn his treacherous flatteries without winking, tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog in public duty and in private thinking, while the rabble with their thumb-worn creeds, their large professions, and their little deeds mingle in selfish strife.

The Danger Within

Lo, freedom weeps. Wrong rules the land. And waiting justice sleeps. We are engaged in total war and fighting for total victory. There are evil forces plotting...

For men have become lovers of themselves more than lovers of their country. Not all traitors are enemy agents...

Love of power and authority has enslaved the hearts of many. Our moral standards have been lowered. And no nation makes progress in a downward direction...

The choices you make in moral and religious questions determine the way we will go. We badly need a prophet who will have the ear of the nation and who will say, “If the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him.”

The Choices Before Us

We must decide and decide quickly who is chief, whom we will serve. Millions of people live in moral fogs. The issues are not clear to them.

They cannot face the light that makes them black or white. They want greys and neutral tints. They move in a sort of

Continued overleaf...

TRIAL BY FIRE

Continued...

spiritual twilight.

Modified immorality based on cleverness guides millions of people. Modified dishonesty within the letter of the law is the practice of millions more. Surely the time has come, because the hour is late, when we must decide.

And the choice before us is plain, Jehovah or Baal. Christ or chaos. Conviction or compromise. Discipline or disintegration...

I, for one, am tired of hearing about our rights and privileges. The time has come, it now is, when we ought to hear about the duties and responsibilities of our citizenship. It's just as plain and clear as that.

Hypocrisy or Submission to God?

Now let us be honest about it. If we have thrown away our national heritage, if we no longer believe that this Nation was founded under God, if, contrary to what is stamped upon our coins, our trust is not in God but in something else, let us say so.

Let us at least not be hypocrites. A nation led by God would lead the world. The world today has many open doors, open to the gospel of Jesus Christ, peoples ready and waiting for the spiritual leadership that could steer the storm-tossed ark of humanity away from the rocks of war and the shoals of selfishness and greed.

Our own country with all its sophistication is filled with people who are hungry for the Gospel. They are satiated with the materialistic philosophies that filled our stomachs and starved our souls, that supplied gadgets while they forgot God...

Choose Now

One challenge these critical days have flung down to the church people is that we must begin to be truly Christian in all our relationships or stop pretending.

Life magazine in its Christmas issue had a magnificent editorial from which I should like to quote this paragraph: The lackadaisical days when it didn't matter much whether you were a

Christian or not may be numbered. If the reassertion of Christianity grows strong, you may have to declare yourself more definitely than you ever expected as to whether you believe in the Word of Christ or not.

This choice, if it is really forced on the Christian world, may be the choice that leads finally to the long-awaited religious revival, a revival born in the hearts of its citizens of her time, who when forced to choose, will find no truth, no comfort and no inspiration elsewhere. (Life magazine, December 27, 1943, pg. 28).

We need a prophet who will have the ear of America and say to her now, "How long will you halt and stand between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal be God, follow him, and go to hell!"

Prayer:

Oh God, bless America! May our prayer not be an empty whine of selfish pride and arrogant stupidity, but may it rather be a humble contrite plea to the God of all nations to make this land that we love so well worth defending, worth fighting for, worth dying for. Oh God, help us to make America God's

country. And now may the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the abiding fellowship of God the Holy Spirit rest upon us all now and abide with us forevermore. Amen

Dr Peter Marshall was born in Scotland in 1902. After completing studies in electrical engineering and working in the coal-mining industry, he immigrated to the United States in 1927.

Upon graduating from Columbia Theological Seminary in Georgia, he began serving as a Presbyterian pastor. Peter Marshall served as senior pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., from 1937 to 1949, Beginning in 1947, he also served as the Chaplain of the United States Senate.

His wife, Catherine Marshall, was prolific author, best known for her books, A Man Called Peter and Beyond Ourselves.

Peter Marshall suffered a massive heart attack and died at age 47 in 1949.

With grateful acknowledgments to Lamb & Lion Ministries



by C. H. Mackintosh

THERE is nothing in all this world more deeply blessed than to lead a life of habitual dependence upon God; to hang upon Him, moment by moment, to wait on Him and cling to Him for everything. To have all our springs in Him (Psalm 87:7). It is the true secret of peace, and of holy independence of the creature.

Let us wait on Him – wait patiently, wait constantly. He has said, "I am the way (John 14:6)," let us follow Him. He will make all clear, bright, and certain. There can be no darkness, no perplexity, no uncertainty, if we are following Him; for He has said, "He that follows Me shall not walk in darkness (8:12)."

Perplexity or uncertainty is very often the fruit of the working of the will. We are bent upon doing something which God does not want us to do at all. We pray about it, and get no answer. The simple fact is, that God wants us to be quiet – to stand still – to remain just where we are. Wherefore, instead of racking our brains and harassing our souls about what we ought to do, let us do nothing, but simply wait on God. This is the secret of peace and calm elevation.



by Bob Russell

PETER was a brave man. To draw a lone sword and attack a host of soldiers arresting Jesus was a gutsy response. Even though it wasn't God's will, we admire Peter's courage and appreciate his love for Jesus.

When all the disciples ran for fear, Peter quickly turned around and followed Jesus at a distance. Again, you have to respect Peter's boldness. He had boasted that he would stand with Jesus even if it meant dying for Him, and he seemed determined to follow through with that promise.

"But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them (Luke 22:55)."

At this point, Peter made the major mistake of overestimating his ability to withstand peer pressure. He was surrounded by people hostile to Christ, and yet he mistakenly imagined he would not be influenced.

Christian people still do that a lot. We think we can warm at the devil's fire and not get burned:

- *I can watch this movie without its foul language and nudity affecting me.
- *I can go to that ultra-liberal college and stand firm; I know what I believe.
- *I can attend that drinking and drug bash; I'm the designated driver.

- *I can date that non-Christian guy and not backslide; I'll convert him.
- *I can miss church once in a while; I'll pray on the golf course.
- *I can visit the casino and bet a few dollars without getting addicted.
- *I can be on the Internet without accountability and not get caught up in pornography again.
- *I can attend that Bible study without getting sucked into the false teaching. I know the preacher warned against it, but I'm mature enough to discern false teaching when I hear it.

Most Christians seem to underestimate their ability to cope with suffering but overestimate their ability to cope with temptation.

They see someone going through severe trials and say, "I could never endure that," but with the help of the Holy Spirit, they can. Yet, they overestimate their ability to cope with temptation, thinking, "I can withstand that," and they carelessly put themselves in a vulnerable position, to later be surprised at how weak they really are.

The apostle Paul warned, "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall (1 Corinthians 10:12)!"

Peter deceived himself into thinking he was blending in with the devil's

crowd, but he stuck out like a sore thumb. Three times within an hour, he was spotted and accused of being one of Jesus' followers, and each time he lied about it.

He turned into a coward so quickly because he overestimated his strength and disregarded the warning of Jesus: "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat."

I remember my fifth-grade Sunday School teacher telling about a king who was looking for a new chariot driver. There were three applicants who were taken up a winding mountain road to a dangerous precipice.

As a test of their driving skills, they were each asked, "How close could you drive your chariot to the edge of this cliff?" The first replied, "I think I could bring the wheel of the chariot within six inches of the cliff."

The second insisted that he could bring his chariot within three inches of the cliff.

The third wisely responded, "If the king were riding in my chariot, I'd stay as far away from the edge of the cliff as I could." That's the guy who got the job.

It's a wise Christian who, knowing the Holy Spirit resides within, flees the evil desires of youth and avoids warming at the devil's fire...



Confession, cleansing and consecration to Christ

by Ruth Paxson (1889-1949)

WHY do I not have the fullness of the Spirit?

There are two objective causes in the realm of truth. One is ignorance. In Christ we possess the fullness of the Godhead, and in the Spirit we have the One who makes this fullness our personal possession. But, because of ignorance of the Word of God, we lack this knowledge. Consequently, we lack the experience of fullness.

The other cause is unbelief. We know the truth but only intellectually and doctrinally. It has not become heart experience. Or we know it but we are afraid to act upon our knowledge and to appropriate this blessing by faith. "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief (Hebrews 3:19)."

Dealing with Sin

Then there are two subjective causes in the realm of experience. One is unconfessed sin. The Holy Spirit is holy, and the place He indwells must be made and kept holy. This infilling demands cleansing from all known sin. It is impossible to be filled with the Holy Spirit while knowingly, deliberately, retaining sin in the life.

The cleansing of the Temple during the wonderful revival under King Hezekiah, as recorded in 2 Chronicles 29, shows us the manner and the extent of the cleansing God requires of us: "Hear me, you Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place (2 Chronicles 29:5)."

"And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the Lord, to cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the Lord... Now they began on the first day

flesh and of the spirit.

There may have been gross, vulgar, even sensuous sins in the life of the past. Perhaps we are rid of those grosser, fleshly sins, but what of those which still defile our innermost spirit?

We used to lie. Now we would not tell a deliberate, out-and-out lie, but there is hypocrisy, deceit, double-dealing. Even in our Christian experience, there is a profession of Christ which is not evidenced in our possession of Christ.

Formerly we had a violent temper to which we gave way constantly. Now there is a large measure of control of outward bursts of temper. But what about that secret irritability and impatience in the spirit?

Once we frankly and outspokenly hated someone – and said so. Now that is sin to us, but is there still lurking in some dark corner of the heart the jealousy or resentment that caused the hate?

We would not openly quarrel with someone as we once did, but if we see somebody we do not like, we just cross to the other side of the street. And we think we are victorious, spiritual Christians not needing cleansing.

One time on the mission field I went to a girls' school to take a series of meetings. One of the missionaries came to me and said, "Do not ask me to do any personal work among the girls during these meetings, for I will not do it." She went on to say, "I am going home on furlough and I am not coming back. I have already told my co-workers that I cannot return because of the condition of my health."

Her health was breaking down, it is true. But the cause of the breakdown was not physical but spiritual.

I began quoting verses on victory from the Bible. She could say every one of them by heart. I spoke of books on victory. She knew them all and had read many of them. The doctrine and phraseology of victory were very familiar to her but she did not have victory.

You ask, "Did she have some great gross sin of the flesh that overwhelmed her?" Oh no, it was nothing but a little hurt that she had allowed to sink down into the depths of her heart four years previously, and which she had nursed until it had robbed her of her peace of heart, her joy in Bible study and prayer, and her passion for lost souls.

More than that, it had brought on her physical illness that was finally taking her

home not to return to the mission field. A little hurt hidden away in a human heart doing damage like that!

Is there anything of this kind deep down in your spirit? If so, will you cleanse yourself of it today? That dear missionary got rid of that hurt and has since been home on two furloughs and returned to the mission field.

At a conference in Switzerland a grey-haired man made a public confession at the close of one meeting that for 27 years he had had nothing to do with his relatives.

For years he had suffered from insomnia. That night, after his confession and cleansing, he slept like a baby. On the following Lord's Day he testified that for 27 years he had not known peace of heart as he had during the last three days.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9);" "He who covers his sins shall not prosper: but whoever confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy (Proverbs 28:13)."

It is utterly foolish and futile for any one of us to pray for the fullness of the Holy Spirit if we hold even so much as a tiny spark of known resentment or hurt or unlove or any un-Christlike feeling toward another. We shall pray in vain. Are you willing to have all uncleanness, both of the flesh and of the spirit, carried out of your life? The cleansing is not the infilling, but it rids us of what prevents the fullness and makes us ready for it.

A Yielded Life

The second subjective cause for the lack of fullness is an unyielded life, which means an uncrucified and uncontrolled self. Infilling demands the yielding of ourselves in toto to the lordship of Christ. It permits no reservations; it allows no locked doors. We must part with everything of which Christ is not the source, and we must place everything under Christ's control. There must be the utter dethronement of self and the voluntary enthronement of Christ.

In the revival under Hezekiah we see, following the cleansing of the Temple, the consecration of themselves and of their sacrifices and thank offerings. "Hezekiah said, 'Now you have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the Lord.' And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings; and as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings (2 Chronicles 29:31)."

After the filthiness was carried out, the offerings were brought in.

This is the divine order in the cleansing and consecration of the Christian who is God's holy temple. The "perfecting of holiness" follows the cleansing from all the filthiness of the flesh and spirit. This comes by presenting the body to the Lord as a living sacrifice for His perfect possession, complete control, and exclusive use.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (Romans 12:1)." "He died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him Who died for them, and rose again (2 Corinthians 5:15)."

Yielding to Christ means opening every part of the life to Christ that He may fill it with Himself. Whatever we open the life to, that fills us. If I open my being in any measure to Satan, to the world, and to the flesh, I am filled to that degree by them.

But if I open every door to Christ, to the Spirit, and to the Word, then they fill my mind, my heart, and my spirit.

Yielding is not infilling, but it prepares for it. Emptying makes ready for infilling. Only the yielded life can be filled with the Holy Spirit. Have you yielded yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ?

Come and Drink

How may the fullness be obtained? The way is so simple but man sometimes makes it so complex. What is God's way? Listen to His words: "Whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him (John 4:14)." It is the active appropriation of a gift. "Jesus... cried, saying, 'If any man thirsts, let him come unto Me, and drink (John 7:37).'"

Could anything be more simple? One does not have to get down a big lexicon or commentary to understand the meaning of one of these words. They are part of your everyday vocabulary. We miss the way because it is so simple.

"Any man." There are no favourites with God. When God says "any man" it is as though He wrote in your own name there. "If any man" means the one who meets the conditions stated. And

what are they?

"Thirst." This is not mere desire for something I vaguely feel I ought to have which I do not possess, or a longing born of jealousy or envy, possibly, for a power which is seen in some Spirit-filled life.

Thirst is an intense desire for holiness for Christ's sake that must be satisfied. It is an intense craving for power to witness for Him and to win souls to Him that must be quenched.

Even more than this is enfolded in that word "thirst." It is an insatiable longing for God Himself. It is that inward heart cry of the psalmist of old: "As the deer pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God (Psalm 42:1&2)."

Someone wrote, "I am unquenchably thirsty for Him and His holiness." Do you have this kind of thirst? It is the first condition for obtaining the fullness. Then what?

"Come." Where and to whom? To a conference? To some human leader? "Come to Me" – the only One who can bestow this gift, the Giver of this living water in all its fullness.

Have you come to Him? Perhaps you have come and asked for the gift. But that is not His condition. He states it clearly. The asking is bound up with the thirsting. But aspiration, even expressed in asking, is not enough. There is something more for us to do.

"Drink." This is an act. Aspiration becomes acquisition by appropriation.

Thirst is desire; I want water. To drink is an act; I take water. Just here is where many sincere, seeking souls fall short of this glorious experience. They thirst but they do not drink.

"Be not drunk with wine... but be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)." How does one get drunk? By drinking. How does he stay drunk? By continuing to drink.

How is one filled with the Holy Spirit? Our Lord says by drinking of that living water. How does one stay filled? By continuing to drink day by day.

If you thirst and will drink right now, will you offer to God this simple prayer: "Lord, I thirst; Lord, I come and drink; Lord, I take the gift You offer, the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and thank You for it." 🐟



by Britt Gillette

WHY do so many feel the constant need to sensationalise what's already sensational?

In my lifetime, people have made a number of sensational claims regarding the end times and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, most of these claims turned out to be (at best) misleading and oftentimes false.

For instance, take *The Bible Code*. I remember walking through the local mall back in the mid-1990s, passing the bookstore, and seeing *The Bible Code* book featured in a window display. It piqued my curiosity.

The book claimed the Bible contained secret codes, and until the invention of modern computers, those codes remained hidden. But under scrutiny, *The Bible Code's* claims didn't hold up. Once you examine the methodology used, you realise you could find these types of "secret hidden codes" in almost any book ever written.

Another "event" capturing the popular imagination was the appearance of "the

blood moons." In the years 2014 and 2015, a tetrad (four consecutive lunar eclipses) appeared on Jewish feast days. Many people linked these celestial events with Joel 2:31, a prophecy concerning the Day of the Lord.

Needless to say, the blood moons came and went, and the world didn't enter the end times as some suggested, nor did the rapture of the church take place.

This past April, an eclipse took place over the United States, and its path of visibility intersected with another eclipse path from seven years earlier. The two paths formed an "X" over the continental United States, and yet again, many people made fantastic claims – this was a sign of God's impending judgment on America, the beginning of the Tribulation, or the rapture of the church.

Yet, like the blood moons, the April eclipse came and went – no rapture, no Second Coming, and no massive destruction of the United States.

We could catalogue page after page of similar claims from the past that came to nothing. People love to tout or sensationalise these types of "new teachings" or "new prophecies." For some reason, we have a need to sensationalise what's already sensational.

It's important to be alert and vigilant against such claims. We must examine them in light of what the Bible says. When we do, the overwhelming majority of these claims don't survive scrutiny. Yet, these sensational claims grab headlines and capture attention. This is odd because we don't need to sensationalise Bible prophecy. It's already sensational. What do I mean by that?

First, we need to define "sensational."

The *Merriam-Webster* dictionary defines "sensational" as:

- 1) of or relating to sensation or the senses
- 2) arousing or tending to arouse (as by lurid details) a quick, intense, and usually superficial interest, curiosity, or emotional reaction sensational tabloid

news

By this definition, the example they provide is perfect – "sensational tabloid news." Think of the sensational headlines you see in the tabloid newspapers as you walk down the checkout aisle in the supermarket.

These types of headlines are "sensational" – meaning superficial (and most of the time, false). They're meant to evoke an emotional reaction, but when you dig into the facts of the story, there's nothing there.

But this isn't the only definition of "sensational." Merriam-Webster offers a third:

3) exceedingly or unexpectedly excellent or great a sensational talent.

Think of a gold medal winner in the Olympics, a world-famous artist, or a renowned musician. By this definition, "sensational" means the pinnacle of excellence.

This third definition applies to the Bible. The prophecies in the Bible aren't sensational in a tabloid sense. They're sensational in a "pinnacle of excellence" sense. The Bible's track record when it comes to predicting future events is 100% accurate.

The Bible doesn't contain vague prophecies. It's filled with detailed, specific prophecies made hundreds and, in some cases, thousands of years in advance. Prophecies recorded by men from different time periods and life circumstances who claimed to be moved by God's Spirit.

Yet despite their diversity in both time and circumstance, the words of those men fit together in perfect harmony. How is this possible? Because none of these men prophesied on their own; they simply recorded God's Word as it was revealed to them (2 Peter 1:20&21).

Bible prophecy doesn't need to be sensationalised. It's already sensational.

Here are just a few examples:

1) Israel Back in the Land

In A.D. 70, Roman soldiers put down a rebellion, sacked Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple, and carried the Jewish people to the farthest corners of the Empire to serve as slaves. They tried to eliminate every trace of the nation of Israel, even renaming the land Palestine in honour of Israel's historical enemies,

the Philistines. Rome intended to erase the memory of Israel forever.

But God had other plans. Thousands of years ago, He foretold the long exile of His people. He promised to call them from "among the nations (Ezekiel 39:28)," from "the farthest corners of the earth (Isaiah 11:12)," and from "north, south, east, and west (Psalm 107:3)." He promised to welcome the Jewish people home from the lands where they were scattered (Ezekiel 20:34), and He promised to restore them to the land of Israel from distant lands (Jeremiah 30:2&10). And this is exactly what He did. Every person on earth is an eyewitness to the modern miracle of Israel.

Think about how sensational this fulfilled prophecy is. Previous conquered and scattered people assimilated into other nations and cultures. For example, Rome and Carthage fought three wars known as the Punic Wars. After more than one hundred years of fighting, Rome finally conquered Carthage (both the city and its empire), salting the earth so nothing would ever grow again.

Rome's goal was to completely and utterly destroy Carthage as a nation, people, and culture. Did they succeed? I think so. Have you ever met a Carthaginian? I haven't either. But I've met quite a few Jewish people.

Despite the mighty Roman Empire's best efforts, the Jewish people miraculously retained their distinct racial, religious and cultural identity for centuries while living as exiles among the nations of the world.

How? Why do the Jewish people thrive to this day while other conquered ancient peoples have assimilated among the nations? Where are the Hittites, Ammonites, Edomites, Jebusites, and Philistines? The answer is found in the Bible.

The Jewish people are still around because of the God of Israel – the same God who promised Abraham his descendants would number more than the stars in the sky (Genesis 15:5). He's the same God who promised over and over again to bring His people out of exile and back into the land of Israel, and He did it in our day and time.

We're all witnesses to what happened

in 1948. The rebirth of a nation almost 2 000 years after its destruction is nothing less than sensational – and the Bible foretold it.

2) Israel With An Exceedingly Great Army

In his Valley of the Dry Bones vision (where God breathes life back into the Jewish people), the prophet Ezekiel saw the Jewish people come to life and stand up as "an exceedingly great army (Ezekiel 37:10)." Zechariah repeated this promise, speaking of a day when Israel is like a fire among sheaves of grain, burning up the neighbouring nations (Zechariah 12:6). In fact, he claims even the weakest soldier among them will be like David (Zechariah 12:8).

Do we see this today? We do.

What are the odds of Israel winning four conventional wars in a 25-year period? Israel barely cracks the Top 100 nations in terms of population, but its military consistently ranks among the most powerful in the world. The whole country is less than 33,000 square kilometres.

That's less than one-tenth of one percent of the land mass of the surrounding nations that wish to destroy her. Does this sound like a recipe for "an exceedingly great army?"

Yet, that's exactly what the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) is. Surrounded on all sides, a brand-new nation that didn't even have a formal military emerged victorious in a multi-front war in 1948. With Syria, Jordan, and Egypt preparing for war, the Israelis struck preemptively in 1967.

The result? They achieved overwhelming victory in just six days.

Caught by surprise on Yom Kippur in 1973, her enemies almost cut Israel in half within 48 hours. But the IDF quickly won back all the territory it lost in the opening days of the war, and the world brokered a truce with the IDF at the gates of Cairo and Damascus. Against all odds, Israel always seems to come out on top.

3) The Gospel Preached Throughout the World

When His disciples asked Jesus to describe the signs of His Coming and the end of the age, Jesus described many

Continued overleaf...

5 Sensational signs of the second coming

Continued...

signs to look for. Among them, He said this: “And the Gospel will be preached throughout the entire world, so that every nation will hear it – and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14).”

Many people today take this sign for granted. They fail to recognise how sensational it is.

Nearly 2 000 years ago, a Jewish carpenter with some fishermen as followers claimed His message would be preached throughout the entire world. That’s a bold proclamation.

His disciples didn’t know whole continents existed. Jesus wasn’t a wealthy, earthly king. He never wrote a book. He never led a nation in military conquest. Nothing up to that time or since would suggest such a person would achieve fame throughout the centuries.

Jesus even said in reference to a woman who poured expensive perfume on His head, “I tell you the truth, wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this woman’s deed will be remembered and discussed (Matthew 26:13).”

Today, the Bible is available in hundreds of languages. Satellites broadcast Christian programming throughout the world. Every day, missionaries carry the Gospel to people who have never heard it before. And everywhere the Good News is preached, the woman’s deed is remembered and discussed.

No need to sensationalise it. It’s already sensational.

4) Rise of the Gog of Magog Alliance

Six centuries before the crucifixion of Jesus, the prophet Ezekiel foretold a future invasion of Israel. He said a military alliance that includes Russia, Iran, Turkey, and a number of Muslim nations will attack Israel “from the north (Ezekiel 38:15; Ezekiel 39:2)” “in the latter days (Ezekiel 38:8)” when God brings His people home from among the enemy nations (Ezekiel 39:27).

Never before have these nations been in alliance. But today, we see them coming together.

Russia and Iran have grown closer and closer, especially since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Turkey, a member of NATO and the first Muslim-majority nation to officially recognise the state of Israel, is breaking from its traditional Western allies on many issues.

One of the nations, Afghanistan, is once again under control of the Taliban and antagonistic toward Israel. Libya and Sudan have developed close military ties with Russia. And Russia, Iran, and Turkey all have a military presence in Syria, putting them right on Israel’s northern border.

Is all this a coincidence? I don’t think so. Who knows when they’ll ultimately attack, but rest assured, they will. The stage is being set in our day and time for the fulfilment of Ezekiel 38&39.

5) The Rising Mark of the Beast System

Ours is the first generation of Christians able to witness some of the events foretold in the Book of Revelation outside of a supernatural fulfilment. For example, the ability of the mark of the beast to determine who can buy or sell (Revelation 13:16&17) was, outside of the supernatural, impossible for past generations to implement.

While a global government could have demanded such a system, it’s unrealistic to believe they could have implemented it and ended all black-market activity. But today? Such a system is waiting in the wings, preparing to roll out.

Right now, 134 countries, representing 98% of global GDP, are exploring the use of central bank digital currency (CBDC). The Atlantic Council hosts a CBDC tracker where you can check the status of these rollouts.

CBDC is centralised, digital fiat currency. But unlike the currencies of the past, CBDC will be fully programmable. This means central banks can manipulate it in real-time. They’ll have the ability to raise and lower interest rates on your currency in real-time. They’ll have the ability to put restrictions on your currency in real-time, such as where you can spend it and on what.

And with CBDC, governments will have full insight into every financial transaction you make. Throw in tokenised assets and digital IDs, and you get a gated global financial system indistinguishable in function from the mark of the beast system.

In addition to these signs, we see many more, such as:

*The Jewish People Back in Control of Jerusalem (Luke 21:24-28)

*Arrival of the Exponential Curve (Matthew 24:3-8)

*An Increase in Travel and Knowledge (Daniel 12:4)

*Israel Surrounded by Enemies (Psalm 83:4; Psalm 83:12; Ezekiel 11:14-17; Ezekiel 35:10)

*The Rise of a Revived Roman Empire (Daniel 2:43)

*The Rise of a Global Government (Revelation 13:7-17)

*The State of Mankind (2 Timothy 3:1-4)

*Denial of the Signs (2 Peter 3:3-4)

All This is Sensational!

Our generation is witness to the emergence and convergence of so many specific and detailed events – events Jesus told us to look for – and that should command the attention of every Christian on Earth. Because for more than 1 800 years following the crucifixion, these signs were noticeably absent.

But today? Today, we see them all around us. For the first time ever, each of these signs is present. The Bible foretold them all in advance. We’re witnesses to these things.

Now that’s sensational!

So don’t get distracted by tabloid-like headlines telling you a comet, asteroid, eclipse, or any other imagining of man indicates Jesus is about to return. Instead, focus your attention on the Word of God.

Jesus is coming, but the reason we know that doesn’t have anything to do with bible codes, blood moons, or crossing eclipse paths. We know Jesus is coming because the Bible told us to look for specific signs, and we see those signs in our day and time. They’re amazing and sensational. And there’s no need to sensationalise what’s already sensational. ☞



by Judith MacNutt

“He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3).”

MANY times the Lord says two words to me: **Pay attention. On one occasion, I was in a hotel where I was to speak, and I noticed an employee who was putting out breakfast for our group. The room was full of people and very busy. I was eating and studying my notes at the same time, but one by one the crowd thinned out – and the two of us were left in the room.**

The Lord again said, *Pay attention!*

I caught the women’s attention and expressed how nice the meal was and thanked her for all her preparations. I don’t know how the conversation changed, but within a couple minutes she was crying.

She said, “My daughter died two weeks ago, and she was my only child. My daughter had graduated from high school and the family was preparing for the graduation party. We had cake and balloons, and her friends were arriving. She was driving home in her graduation present, a new car, and as she turned into our driveway, a drunk driver hit and killed her right in front of our home.”

My heart just sank, and I said, “Can I pray with you?”

So we prayed.

This mother had to take all the balloons down and plan a funeral. She never got to say goodbye to her daughter. She experienced a tremendous level of pain and hurt. Fortunately, she was able to come to see me later and we talked a lot about time of remembrance. In the Jewish culture, for example, there are rituals of remembrance at intervals,

who He was and what this meant (John 11).

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, your Father, believe also in me (John 14:1).” Jesus said this to his apostles, to prepare them for His departure and for the grief and pain that would follow.

“Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him, and he will act (Psalm 37:5).”

When a difficult or traumatic event happens, our first response is fear. If a child breaks away from us and runs out in the street, we scream in fear and run to save the child. Then we may respond in anger: “Why did you do that?” The third response may be delayed: “How would I have lived with myself if this tragedy happened?” And we imagine our grief.

Jesus was acquainted with grief and sorrow (Isaiah 53:3). He knew what grief felt like, and He knew how to move through it to a place of peace. Grief must be processed.

We may have to walk through other strong emotions first.

I cried when my dog died. I cried when my mother died, when my father died, and when friends died. But when my husband died, I found a depth of emotion I didn’t know I had. Jesus wants to comfort us in our loss. Weeping and deep emotion are part of that, even wailing. We may have to walk through our fear and anger first.

It is appropriate to mention, however, that something called complicated grief may set in if our sadness and sorrow continue for years on end. It means we have been unable to move to a place of remembrance.

God’s loving purpose in grief is to cleanse and soften the heart, bringing us to a place of peace in God’s comfort.

We must rest in the arms of Jesus. Let yourself surrender to Him in your pain. We don’t know all the answers, but we know the One in whom we trust.

Lord, I pray that You pour out a gift of faith on each of us, so we can step from the place of grief into a new place of peace with You. Holy Spirit, we ask You to bring deep healing into those places where we have been broken or shattered by loss. Lord, help us trust You, and to enter into Your joy, Your peace and Your great love for us. ☞



Fight The Good Fight!

by J. C. Ryle (1816-1900)

CHRISTIAN warfare is no light matter. What saith the Scripture?

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life (1 Timothy 6:12)...”

“Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:3).”

“Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (Ephesians 6:11-13).”

“Strive to enter in at the narrow gate (Luke 13:24).”

“Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong (1 Corinthians 16:13).”

“Wage a good warfare; having faith, and a good conscience (1 Timothy 1:18&19).”

Faith in the Word and in Christ

True Christianity is the fight of faith. In this respect the Christian warfare is

utterly unlike the conflicts of this world. It does not depend on the strong arm, the quick eye, or the swift foot. It is not waged with carnal weapons, but with spiritual. Faith is the hinge on which victory turns.

A general faith in the truth of God’s written Word is the primary foundation of the Christian soldier’s character. He is what he is, does what he does, thinks as he thinks, acts as he acts, hopes as he hopes, behaves as he behaves, for one simple reason – he believes certain propositions revealed and laid down in Holy Scripture.

“He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).”

A special faith in our Lord Jesus Christ’s person, work and office, is the life, heart and mainspring of the Christian soldier’s character.

He sees, by faith, an unseen Saviour, who loved him, gave Himself for him, paid his debts for him, bore his sins, carried his transgressions, rose again for him, and appears in heaven for him as his Advocate at the right hand of God.

He sees Jesus, and clings to Him. Seeing this Saviour, and trusting in Him, he feels peace and hope, and willingly does battle against the foes of his soul. He sees his own many sins, his own weak heart, a tempting world, a busy devil; and if he looked only at them he might well despair. But he sees also a mighty Saviour, an interceding Saviour, a sympathising Saviour – His blood, His righteousness, His everlasting priesthood – and he believes that all this is his own.

He sees Jesus, and casts his whole weight on Him. Seeing Him he cheerfully fights on, with a full confidence that he will prove more than conqueror through Him that loved him (Romans 8:37).

Habitual, lively faith in Christ’s presence and readiness to help is the secret of the Christian soldier fighting successfully. Nothing makes the anxieties of warfare sit so lightly on a man as the assurance of Christ’s love and continual protection.

Nothing enables him to bear the fatigue of watching, struggling, and wrestling against sin, like the confidence that the indwelling Christ is on his side, and success is sure.

It is the “shield of faith” which quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked one. It is the man who can say, “I know whom I have believed,” who can say in time of suffering, “I am not ashamed (2 Timothy 1:12).”

He who wrote those glowing words: “We do not faint... For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Corinthians 4:16&17),” was the man who wrote with the same pen, “We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (4:18).”

It is the man who said, “I live by the faith of the Son of God (Galatians 2:20),” who said, in the same epistle, “The world is crucified to me, and I to the world (6:14).”

It is the man who said, “For to me to live is Christ (Philippians 1:21),” who said, in the same epistle, “I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content (4:11).” “I can do all things through Christ (4:13).”

The more faith – the more victory! The more faith – the more inward peace!

Would anyone fight the fight of a Christian soldier successfully and prosperously? Let him pray for a continual increase of faith.

Let him abide in Christ, get closer to Christ, tighten his hold on Christ every day that he lives.

Let his daily prayer be that of the disciples: “Lord, increase our faith (Luke 17:5).” Watch jealously over your faith, if you have any. It is the citadel of the Christian character, on which the safety of the whole fortress depends.

It is the point which Satan loves to assail. All lies at his mercy, if faith is overthrown. Here, if we love life, we must especially stand on our guard.

Let us remember that if we would fight successfully, we must put on the whole armour of God, and never lay it aside until we die. Not a single piece of armour can be dispensed with.

The belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, the helmet of salvation – each and all are needful. Not a single day can we dispense with any

part of this armour.

Well says an old veteran in Christ’s army, who died 200 years ago, “In heaven we shall appear, not in armour, but in robes of glory. But here our arms are to be worn night and day. We must walk, work, sleep in them, or else we are not a true soldier of Christ.”

Overcomers Through Christ

Let us remember that the eye of our loving Saviour is upon us morning, noon and night. He will never allow us to be tempted above what we are able to bear.

He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, for He allowed Himself to be tempted. He knows what battles and conflicts are, for He Himself was assaulted by the prince of this world. Having such a High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession (Hebrews 4:14).

Let us remember that thousands of soldiers before us have fought the same battle that we are fighting, and come off more than conquerors through Him who loved them. They overcame by the

blood of the Lamb – and so also may we.

Christ’s arm is just as strong as ever, and Christ’s heart is just as loving as ever. He who saved men and women before us is One who never changes. He is “able also to save them to the uttermost that come to God by Him (Hebrews 7:25).” Then let us cast doubts and fears away. Let us follow those “who through faith and patience inherit the promises (6:12).”

Finally, let us remember that the time is short, and the coming of the Lord draws near. A few more battles and then the last trumpet shall sound, and the Prince of Peace shall come to reign on a renewed earth.

A few more struggles and conflicts, and then we shall bid an eternal goodbye to warfare and to sin, to sorrow and to death.

So let us fight on to the last, and never surrender. Thus says the Captain of our salvation: “He who overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son (Revelation 21:7).”

Christ is with us always

by Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)

“Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world (Matthew 28:20).”

OMNIPRESENCE is an attribute of Deity ascribed to Christ. A consoling thought! Jesus is with His saints at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances.

He is “God with us.” He is with them to comfort them in the hour of sorrow, to enlighten them in the hour of darkness, to guide them in the hour of doubt and perplexity, to deliver them in the time of conflict, to support them in the hour of death. Oh, for faith to realise this!

He was with His three faithful servants in the fiery furnace; He was with Daniel in the lions’ den; He was with Jacob in his wrestlings at Bethel; He was with John in his exile at Patmos. Jesus is at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances, with His dear people.

Are you a child of sorrow? Perhaps you are a son or a daughter of affliction? You may now be passing through the furnace; you may now be draining adversity’s bitter cup; the rod of the covenant may be heavy upon you – friends are unkind, the world empty, everything earthly changing, faith weak, corruptions strong.

And, what embitters the cup, and deepens the shade – your Father hiding from you His dear reconciled face. Is it so? Still is your omnipresent Jesus with you.

Do not be cast down; this furnace is but to consume the tin and burnish the gold, this draught is but to work your inward good: these painful dispensations, by which you are learning the changeableness of everything earthly, are but to wean you from a poor, unsatisfying world, and to draw you near and yet nearer to Jesus.

Be then of good cheer, for He has promised never to leave or forsake you. “For He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper (Hebrews 13:5&6).”

Why is darkness settling over our land... and what can we do?



by Bill Elliff

HOW do we interpret the increasing evil around us? The depraved thinking that shouts wrong as right? The diabolical deception wrapping its tentacles around our children? The sexual depravity that is not only openly practiced but promoted, applauded, and exported? The rapid rise of violence and crime? Once beautiful and orderly cities spiralling into anarchy and chaos?

Ponder everything you see around in its worst forms. Do you wonder why these things are happening? Things that were unheard of 50 years ago?

A Deeper Source

Our only hope in addressing and reversing this decline is to make the right diagnosis and remedy. If you seek to explain this godlessness, you might

point to people, government, media and entertainment, the breakdown of the home and education. But you would be missing the real issues. These are the surface manifestations of a deeper, more diabolical, and determined Driver.

The Apostle Paul, under God's inspiration, gives us a 2 000-year-old answer that is dead centre. "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12)."

Dissect that sentence carefully for your understanding depends upon it. We are not in a battle against mere human forces. The ones who pull the strings of this great dilemma are from a lower realm. There is an unrelenting army of evil that is waging war against God and

all He represents, led by His ancient enemy, Satan himself. He commands...

Rulers: They have the authority to accomplish deadly plans and they have realms over which they reign.

Powers: They have a sphere to dominate and the power to do it. They are not weak and insipid but formidable enemies.

World Forces of This Darkness: These are not merely local demons restricted to just your small neighbourhood (although they are there). They are overseeing large areas of the entire world, bringing darkness wherever they work. It is a well-coordinated strategic attack, using everything at their disposal. They command people and policies, plans and resources. Much is at their disposal.

Spiritual Forces of Wickedness in Heavenly Places: A great cosmic battle is raging. Satan has waged this battle since his fall from heaven, and it is unending. It is headquartered in the unseen realm but waged upon this earth. Satan and his hosts are 100 percent evil and are relentless in their attack upon God and all He represents. Their nature drives them to steal, kill, and destroy with no mercy.

While we may notice only the seen world, this battle in the heavenly realm is just as real as the earthly. Many dismiss this evaluation as fictional and childish, perhaps even comical. This is just as Satan desires.

We must look deeper with biblical insight and spiritual eyes. Wise men and women of God know that the true followers of Christ are both the objects of Satan's attacks and the warriors in the King's army.

What Do We Do in this Battle?

Paul alerts us to this warfare (and the reason for the darkness) and gives us all the necessary equipping to engage successfully. We need not lose hope or fade in the battle. The ultimate victory was guaranteed at an empty tomb, but will not be fully consummated on earth until the end when all the purposes of God for this world are finalised.

Until then, we must...

Be strong in the Lord (Ephesians 6:10).

We do not wage this on our own. Our great Saviour has placed His Spirit in those who believe. "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4)." But we must not rely on our own strength but on God's. When we humbly turn to Him to empower us, we have an inexhaustible supply for every battle.

Be clothed in His armour (Ephesians 6:11-17).

Paul describes piece after piece of armour as ours to use. Truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation can be utilised to protect us and provide weapons of warfare that are "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:4)." We need not stand in the nakedness of our mere humanity, but clothed in God's powerful armour.

Be constant in prayer (Ephesians 6:18).

Our greatest offensive weapon (the one that will be used to win the day) is Word-driven prayer. ALL kinds of prayer, at ALL times, with ALL perseverance, for ALL the saints.

Why is prayer so effective? Prayer brings God into the equation, enlists the resources of heaven, and does what God can do. Satan's hosts are completely defenceless against God's intervention. This is why Satan and his rulers do not fear us... until we begin to pray.

Sadly, many Christians and thousands of churches do not utilise the only weapon that will defeat the enemy. They wonder why they are failing, why the world is seeping into the walls of the church and the lives of the next generation.

It is nothing less than a tragic naiveté about the real battlefield and application of the right means of warfare. It is like trying to fight a battle with the country of Russia by showing upon on the plains of Patagonia. We are not even on the right battlefield.

Be bold in our witness (Ephesians 6:19&20).

Paul's final request was that they would pray for him in the great mission. The one task that would bring advance for the kingdom of heaven is the unwavering, relentless sharing of the good news of Christ.

"Pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel (verse 19)."

This is the great agenda that will bring light into the darkness and rescue enslaved humans from the domains of darkness. We are not to merely stand in a defensive posture, but move forward with the Divine utterance of the Gospel in our mouths and the bold opening of our mouths, advancing the kingdom of God.

The only thing that reverses the course

of men and the societies they lead is spiritual change from within – the Spirit-wrought transformation that comes as men and women, boys and girls, from every tongue and tribe and nation and people hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ and believe by God's grace.

This is not merely Paul's task but ours. We are on the front lines of this mission, right where God has placed us. And it is the great privilege and responsibility of our lives every day to serve our King until we are gathered safely home. ☕



by Octavius Winslow

"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9)."

GOD, the "Fountain of life," light, and grace, has ordained that the Lord Jesus Christ, His own beloved Son, should be the one source of supply from whence all the salvation of the sinner, all the sanctity of the saint, and all the grace and truth of the church, collectively and individually, should be derived – "of (whose) fullness have all we received, and grace for grace (John 1:16)."

How precious ought Jesus to be to us, who has condescended to pour this heavenly treasure into our hearts and to undertake its constant supply! In what way can we best prove our sense of His goodness, but by drawing largely from this fullness, and glorifying Him in what we receive.

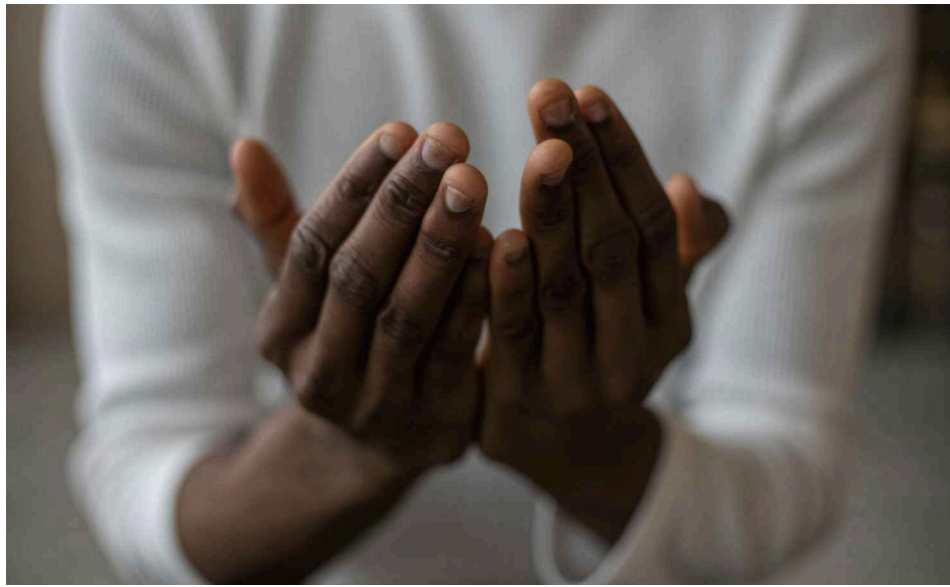
Our resources are inexhaustible, because they are infinite. Nor can we come too frequently, nor draw too largely.

Spring up, O well of grace and love, into our hearts! Oh, for more depth of indwelling grace! Oh, for more fervour of holy love! Oh, for richer supplies from the fullness of Christ! Oh, for gracious revival in our souls!

Come down, blessed Jesus, "as rain upon the mown grass!" Breathe, O south wind of the Spirit, upon the garden of our souls, that the spices may flow out!

Truly the well is deep, from whence we have this living water; but faith can reach it, and in proportion to the strength of our faith, and the directness and simplicity with which it deals with Christ, will be the plenitude of our supply.

"Drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved," is our Lord's gracious invitation to His church. ☕



The grounds upon which our prayers are answered

by George Müller (1805-1898)

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened (Matthew 7:7&8).”

THE promise uttered here by the mouth of our precious, adorable Lord Jesus Christ, with regard to prayer, is as full, as large, as deep, as precious as we could only wish it. And if it had been left to us, beloved in Christ, that we should make a promise for ourselves regarding prayer, I do not know how we could have enlarged it more than it is given to us here.

We should in childlike simplicity seek to lay hold of this Word; for that is FAITH – to lay hold of the Word of God; and to receive what God says to be true without questioning it, just resting on it.

Many people think that faith consists in particularly deep feeling. This is a great mistake. He has the strongest faith who most is able in childlike simplicity to receive the Word of God as the truth of God, and to rest on that Word, to be assured that God will act according to His Word (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

The man and the woman who are able thus to receive the Word of God – thus to rest on it – these are the strongest in faith. And that is just what we have to

aim at continually – that we are satisfied with the Word of God, that we receive the Word of God, and that we say to ourselves: “It will be so – simply because God has said it.”

Compare Scripture with Scripture

Such a promise, as this in Matthew 7:7&8, we should take to heart, so to speak, press it to our bosom like a good old friend, and say: “My God and Father will surely act according to this, His Word, for His Holy Child Jesus has given it as a promise to the church.”

But although this Word of promise is so large, so full, so deep, so precious, yet we have at the same time to compare Scripture with Scripture in order that we may yet obtain further instruction, that our hearts may yet be further enlarged, in order that we may be more firmly established, and that we may yet more clearly see what is in the mind of God regarding this passage.

Compare, for instance, a word regarding prayer, as we have it in the Epistle of James, where we read thus in the third verse of the fourth chapter:

“You ask, and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.” Such a word as this is not to be left out, but to be compared in connection with the promise regarding prayer.

James refers to such who called themselves Christians, disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and who were

without prayer, as we have it in the latter part of the previous verse: “...You fight and war, yet you have not, because you ask not.”

There were some who did not pray at all. Then there were others who did pray, but they did not pray the right way. “You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss.”

Here the question naturally is asked, “What have I to understand by asking amiss?” The Holy spirit in what follows explains the meaning of asking amiss: “That you may consume it upon your lusts.” That is, if persons ask for things for the gratification of their carnal mind, that they may enjoy themselves, that they may strengthen the old evil, corrupt nature in them – then they ask amiss, and they have no warrant from Scripture to expect their prayers will be answered.

But if this be not the case, if we ask for the glory of God, then we do not ask amiss. Now this seems the first and primary point with regard to prayer, and this should be always present to the minds of the children of God with regard to prayer. “*Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).*”

Not Our Worthiness – but His!

Another deeply important point is that we put aside all expectation on the ground of our own merit and worthiness – that we instead plead the merit and worthiness of the Lord Jesus Christ as the ground to have our prayers answered. As the New Testament generally expresses it, we ask “in the name of the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:17; John 15:16).

Now, just as the sinner cannot get to heaven on the ground of his own merit and worthiness, but can expect to be admitted into the presence of God only on the ground of the merit and suffering of our precious, adorable Lord Jesus Christ, by faith in His name – so we, the children of God, in coming to God in prayer, have to put aside all thought of our own supposed merit and worthiness.

We have to disown ourselves, have to cling and cleave alone to Jesus Christ, have to appear before God as such who are united to the risen Jesus Christ, who

hide themselves in Him, who, so to speak, put Christ forward and come hiding themselves in Him, and ask God that, on the ground of the merits and worthiness of the Lord Jesus Christ, God would be pleased to answer their prayers.

Now here is our comfort: The precious Lord Jesus Christ is worthy to receive everything at the hands of God His Father, who is willing to give it to Him on the ground of His mediatorial work because of the perfection of His services, because of His spotless holiness.

If thus we approach God in prayer, then we have the fullest reason, so far as that point is concerned, to expect an answer to our prayer.

“*You ask... I will do (John 14:14).*” Another deeply important point is that we exercise faith in the power of God, and faith in the WILLINGNESS of God to answer prayer. Very few of the children of God question the power of God; the temptation generally is more frequent with regard to questioning the willingness of God to answer our prayer. He can do it, we allow, but is He willing to do it?

Now, here we say to ourselves, God has given the choicest gift He had to give, even His only begotten Son, and He has given us the promise that as He gave Him in the way of grace, so He will, in the way of grace, give us everything with Him (Romans 8:32).

Upon the word of promise we should rest and therefore say, “Not only God can give it, but will give it as assuredly as I ask for the glory of His name, as surely as I plead the merit and worthiness of the Lord Jesus Christ, so assuredly will He give me – for Christ’s sake, and with Christ, that which I ask at His hands.”

I lay stress on this because I have seen, during the years I have known the Lord Jesus Christ, that whenever I was able in prayer – to believe that I would receive what I asked for – it was sure to come (Mark 11:24)!

“*So Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, Be removed and be cast into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to*

you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses (Mark 11:22-26).”

“*...All things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive (Matthew 21:22).*”

“*Jesus said to him, ‘If you canst believe, all things are possible to him who believes (Mark 9:23).*”

Consider how it is with you when you pray, whether you believe that you will receive, whether you exercise faith in the power and willingness of God to answer prayer. If you will so believe, you will receive! If this be wanting, then you have to ask for faith first, to ask that God will help you to believe!

Now suppose all these three points be united – suppose we ask that which is for the glory of God; suppose we plead the merits and worthiness of Christ; suppose we ask in faith – then comes another deeply important point:

God does not always give us a promise with regard to the time when our prayers will be answered. We have just quietly to continue in prayer until God gives the answer.

Here Is the Secret

Thousands and tens of thousands of prayers I have had answered during the years I have known the Lord.

“But,” you ask me, “when were they answered?” Thousands upon thousands of prayers were answered immediately, but very many after days and weeks only; others after months only; still others after years only.

Here God works in His own way because He is God, and He will ever and ever let us see that He is God, and that we are His creatures, and that He acts as He pleases.

Now the point is whether we are willing just quietly to wait until God’s time has come. He has promised that He will answer, if the requests are according to His will.

“*...This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He hears us: and if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we*

know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him (1 John 5:14&15).”

I have been praying now for two individuals for 33 years next November. While I have had tens of thousands of answers to prayers, yet in this instance I am praying for the conversion of these two persons, and they are not yet converted. Therefore, you see, while God answers prayers, He tries the faith greatly. (**Note:** These two men were saved after George Müller’s death!)

All this I relate for the encouragement of my beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, that if they patiently wait on God, the blessing will come. And oh! When the blessing comes, it is all the sweeter, all the more precious the longer we have to wait.

Upright and Sincere

While on the one hand God is ready, notwithstanding our infirmities, our wickedness, our failing, to answer our prayers, yet He does expect from us honesty, sincerity, and uprightness of heart, and He does not answer our prayers while we live in sin (Isaiah 59:1&2; Mark 11:22-26).

“*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me (Psalm 66:18).*”

“*...If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son cleanses us from all sin.... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:7&9).*”

We must be upright and sincere. The warfare against the natural evil tendencies must be carried on, and we must not allow ourselves to live in sin. Should the latter be the case, we have no right to expect answers to our prayers.

“Above All That We Ask”

What we have to do is to wait on God. Therefore, be encouraged to wait on God and expect great things from Him, and you will find that neither your waiting on Him nor your exercise of faith will be in vain, but God will in the end give far more abundantly than you expected; BEYOND OUR LARGEST EXPECTATION WE SHALL RECEIVE. 🐟

Read Ephesians 3:20; Psalm 27:14; 62:5; 130:5; Isaiah 30:18; 40:29-31; Lamentations 3:25; Habakkuk 2:3.

No need to fear



by Holly Spate

“The fear of man brings a snare: but whoever puts his trust in the Lord shall be safe (Proverbs 29:25).”

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Throughout time, certain things have always held true. And those truths carry with them a very certain reality. One such reality is that all believers... every person who has cried out to the Lord and accepted His gracious gift of salvation, has and always will, have hope.

Hope.

That one little word carries with it enormous weight. It brings with it feelings of peace and joy. Its presence enables the ability to stay positive and keeps feet moving in a forward direction.

When hope is absent... when hope seems lost, all seems lost leading many to simply give in and give up.

However, if hope is involved (even if just a glimmer), it can do wonders for one's perspective and ability to keep on keeping on.

Hope is truly an essential element needed in everyone's life.

It brings strength to a weakened state. It provides the ability to grasp hold of the positive, even if by a thread.

The world's definition of hope, as defined by the dictionary is: to have confidence, to trust.

God's definition of hope, as defined by His Word, is: to be confidently assured of what God has promised both in the now and in the future.

How comforting to know that in a world that's becoming more uncomfortable by the day, we always have hope because we have Christ.

He is our constant.

His character is constant.

His promises are constant.

His hope is constant.

And, as with everything in life, our heavenly Father's ways far exceed and are immensely greater than the world's ways and offerings.

Isaiah 55:9 attests to this truth: “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Aren't you thankful for our blessed hope? Aren't you thankful that in the midst of chaos, confusion, and darkness, Christ brings calm, clarity, and light?

Rejoice!

Lift up your head today and sing praises to your heavenly Father for this truth!

Be thankful that you have the promise of a hope that will never falter or fade. YOU always have hope... a hope that is strong enough and powerful enough to withstand all circumstances! A hope that allows YOU to experience joy regardless of what's happening with you or around you.

The hope Christ gives ignites a flame in the soul... a flame so bright, so powerful that no one can extinguish it. Christ's hope reminds believers that all will be alright because Jesus is on our side; therefore, we can confidently stand.

Our Saviour's hope is wrapped in Him and His many promises. Promises such as that found in Hebrews 13:5: “for He has said, ‘I will never leave you, nor forsake you.’”

And that found in John 16:33: “These things I have spoken to you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Hebrews 6:19 conveys the truth that our hope in Christ is both secure and forever. The verse states clearly, “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil.”

1 Peter 1:3 goes on to say, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

And Psalm 71:5 expresses how God is indeed our only hope: “For You are my hope, O Lord God: You are my trust from my youth.”

Yes, as believers, we have hope because we have put our trust in the only One who brings true hope... the only one who is hope... Jesus Christ.

Hope can only be found in Him. We have hope because He is hope.

He is the only hope for mankind... the only hope for the world.

We have hope because Jesus paid it all and paved the way for us all to have a path back to God.

We have hope because His unconditional sacrifice of love washed over our every sin – past, present, and future... for all time.

We have hope because His blood redeemed us... his sacrifice rescued us... completely.

We have hope because He promises to meet our every need and to take care of us every second of every day.

We have hope because, with the breath He gives, all can cry out to Him and accept His remarkable gift of eternal life. A gift like no other... irreplaceable and so undeserved. But a gift offered to all humankind.

Yes, all believers in Christ have hope.

Hope for today.

Hope for tomorrow.

Hope for the future.

Hope for all eternity.

Jesus sustains us.

We never need to give up, give in, or lose hope.

He is our constant.

He is our hope.

He is...

Our peace.

Our joy

Our rescue.

Our today.

Our tomorrow.

Our future.

Our eternity.

No need to fear. 🐟