

THE NEW CREATION

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“Prove ALL things and hold fast to what is good.” – 1 Thess. 5:21.

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The Year before Us

2024 promises a continuation of the preparation for the incoming kingdom and means the continuation of turmoil in the institutions of this world. Our faith in the word of God gives us hope for a brighter future. We see beyond the clouds and look for the Prince of Peace to manifest his kingship. As recorded long ago, God gave Jesus "All authority in heaven and on earth." Matthew 28:18



*STANDING at the portal of the opening year,
Words of comfort meet us, hushing every fear;
Spoken through the silence by our Father's voice,
Tender, strong and faithful, making us rejoice.
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
For His Word shall never, never pass away.*

*"I, the Lord, am with thee, be thou not afraid;
I will help and strengthen, be thou not dismayed.
Yea, I will uphold thee with Mine own right hand;
Thou art called and chosen in My sight to stand."
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
For His Word shall never, never pass away.*

*For the year before us, oh, what rich supplies!
For the poor and needy, living streams shall rise;
For the sad and mournful, shall His grace abound;
For the faint and feeble, perfect strength be found.
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
For His Word shall never, never pass away.*

*He will never fail us, He will not forsake;
His eternal covenant He will never break;
Resting on His promise, what have we to fear?
God is all-sufficient for the coming year.
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
For His Word shall never, never pass away.*

Poems of Dawn

R. Whittaker

Report of the Spies

This article will attempt to show the important role and utter failure of the spies sent out by Moses at the command of God, to spy out the “promise land” that God was about to give Israel (Numbers 13). Was this command by the Lord a test of their faith, given that God had promised them this land, and had miraculously delivered them out of bondage in Egypt? Should they have had fear and doubt, and is this a lesson for us today? It is a lesson for us, as the Apostle Paul says in Heb 3:7-11, *“Wherefore (as the Holy Spirit saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.*

God’s Chosen People

We are told in Amos 3:2 concerning Israel, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth:...” They were “God’s chosen people,” who He wanted to bless, and **enter into His rest** in the land “flowing with milk and honey” before them (Num.13:27). It was as we would say today, a “turnkey” situation, a land that was fully developed with no work to be done, provided solely by the Lord. It was a temporal rest that foreshadowed a spiritual rest. These spies numbered 12, a leader representing each of the 12 tribes of Israel. The implication here for us is how important it is to have wise and God-fearing (honoring) leaders who take God’s Word to heart.

True leadership carries with it the great responsibility of making wise judgments and a willingness to endure hardship. We are called to be leaders by letting our light shine (Mat 5:16), to be living examples of God’s grace. Unfortunately, ten of the leaders sent by Moses to assess the land and its people were not wise, even though they had just experienced a great deliverance from bondage in Egypt. They and Israel feared the

Canaanite people, thereby rejecting the Lord though a lack of faith in Him. They were blinded by the big mistake of taking God's blessings for granted, **and not taking them to heart**. Consequently, they did not demonstrate the faith and understanding of Rahab, the harlot from Jericho, who 40 years later said to the two Israelite spies in Joshua 2:9-12, "*... I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: **for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.** Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token: And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death. And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.*" She clearly took what the Lord had done and was going to do for the Israelites to heart. So, we see the significance of Heb 11:6, "*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*"

When Jesus came, we know He came to save ALL mankind (Jn 3:16), but by God's great love and mercy for His people, Jesus still came to call out a royal priesthood, exclusively from the nation of Israel. He told His 12 Apostles in Mat. 10:5-6 "*....Go **not** into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*" This was again expressed when he told the Syrophenician women in Mark 7:27 "*...Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the chil-*

dren's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs," when she asked that her daughter be healed. Yet, due to her response of great faith, Jesus granted her request, not having "respect of persons," but rather doing justly, being merciful Himself and keeping God's will for man.

Speaking of Israel's continued failure to see what was right before their eyes, was their rejection of Jesus. Therefore, Paul the apostle to the gentiles warns us in Heb.4:1-2, "*Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of **entering into his rest**, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them (Israel): but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*" For as Peter preached to us in 1Pe 2:9 "*...ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*"

Blood lines and elections (the will of the people) as we have witnessed, and do witness today do not in themselves provide good leadership. Good leaders **MUST** have good character centered on God's Word to help guide those they are to serve. But ultimately, the people themselves must demonstrate good character and integrity founded on God's Word, not willing to accept less from their leaders, for God judges us as individuals, and not collectively. Now we know that King David was described as a man after God's own heart (1Sa 13:14), and was mostly faithful in his reign, yet we know he did not qualify to build God's temporal temple, having blood on his hands (1Ch 28:3). Speaking of Jesus, God told David in 1Ch 17:11-14 "*And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. **He shall build me an house**, and I will stablish his throne forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son: and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee: But*

I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom forever: and his throne shall be established for evermore.”

Building the Spiritual Temple

Let us remember what Jesus said to Mary Magdalene in John 20:17 “...go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and **your** Father; and to my God, and **your** God. As we are told in Rom 8:14, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” The thought continues in Rom 8:17, “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” Although Solomon, king David’s son built the physical temple or house of the LORD, Jesus is building a spiritual temple for the LORD, a house built without hands, as God revealed to king Nebuchadnezzar, by Daniel in Dan 2:45, “Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold;(representing nations/this evil world) the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.” This stone, that shall overcome the world and nations as prophesized in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream is that “holy city, New Jerusalem” (Rev 21:2) that is also mentioned in Revelation 3:12 that describes the true temple of God, a house built without hands, made up of the faithful in this age. We read, “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.”

Let us not follow the example of the 10 foolish spies, and the people they influenced, thereby rejecting the Lord. Let us demonstrate faith and our love for the Lord by obedience, thereby being described by Peter in 1Pe 2:9-10, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

David was not qualified to build the temporal temple that foreshadowed the true temple to come, but was honored that his descendent, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is building that spiritual temple made without hands, that we who were once called the uncircumcision, (Gentiles) now have the opportunity to be true Israelites, as Paul declares in Rom 2:29, *"But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."* Our circumcision of the heart is not made with hands, but by the Word of God by His grace.

J. DiCesare

"When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days,....they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land. 27 Thus they told him [Moses], and said, "We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. 28 "Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there....30 Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it." 31 But the men who had gone up with him [except Joshua] said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us." 32 So they gave out to the sons of Israel **a bad report of the land** which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of *great* size." Num 13:25-33 NASB

Physician Heal Thyself

“So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.’

Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’ So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, ‘Is this not Joseph’s son?’

He said to them, ‘You will surely say this proverb to Me, “Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in your country.” Then He said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.’

So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.” [Luke 4:16-30; see also Matthew 13:53-58, Mark 6:1-6]

This incident at Nazareth seems to be in two parts: (1) the lesson from Isaiah; and (2) the lesson about faith and God's dealings with others than the "chosen people".

The story begins when Jesus returns to Nazareth, as we read, "*Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief.*" [Mark 6:1-6] It was not that Jesus COULD NOT do miracles there, but that he WOULD NOT, because of their lack of faith [wrong condition of heart].

"Familiarity breeds contempt" says the proverb. Since the inhabitants of Nazareth knew Jesus personally as the carpenter's son, some were turned off even by his gracious words. After all, some of them had grown up with Jesus; they had played in the dirt and mud together; played games as awkward teenagers; they had all worked with their hands at various occupations; none had been to any special rabbinical school. And now Jesus comes home, with a reputation as a teacher and a healer. Who did he think he was, anyway? And so, they were offended at him.

"Where did this man get these things?" "Is this not the carpenter... So they were offended at Him."

The people wanted to see their apparently prominent hometown boy bring some excitement; but Jesus wanted to preach comfort to the sin-sick and broken-hearted. So, this set the stage for the appearance in the synagogue.

First came the lesson from Isaiah. He apparently spoke many gracious words, as they "*marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth*", before he said, "*Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing*". This raised eyebrows and probably many started whispering. Jesus said Isaiah was writing about him!

Then it came time for lesson number two -- faith, and other peoples. He knew what people were thinking, and whispering, so he began to say it out loud. "*Physician heal thyself*" is what they were thinking and so Jesus quoted that saying. What did that mean? Jesus could read the hearts and minds of the

people, and he knew what they really wanted him to do -- miracles! healings! excitement! If you could heal in Capernaum, do so here in your hometown and heal your own people, friends and neighbors.

In this case, Jesus was not tactful; he had a point to make. So he stated that "*many widows were in Israel*" in the days of Elijah during the famine, but Elijah helped a non-Israelite, a widow of Sarepta in Sidon. It was the same with the lepers in Elisha's day; only Naaman the Syrian was cleansed. But why was this done? They had faith [and they were gentiles]! True, the faith was perhaps small, even tiny, but it was faith nonetheless -- faith in the God of Israel and His prophets. And this faith was not generally found among Jesus' hometown acquaintances; they had "religion", but were blind to higher spiritual matters, the "spirit" of the Law. Jesus was God's appointed representative, but all they could see was a carpenter. The "chosen people" also could not, or would not, see that the God of Israel could deal with other peoples in ways and at times of His own choosing. God was not restricted by the limited views of the Jewish people.

The widow apparently had some knowledge of the God of Israel and His prophets. The story is in 1 Kings 17:8-16. We read in verse 11 that Elijah asked for a little food; she replied in verse 12 "*As the Lord your God lives, I do not have bread*", but only enough for one more small meal. Somehow, she recognized Elijah as a prophet of the God of Israel. Elijah then tested her by saying "*feed me first*", and she had enough faith to do so! She believed the promise of Elijah that God would provide food for many days. And it was so.

Naaman is an odd story in 2 Kings 5. A captured Jewish girl was in his household as a servant. Apparently well-treated, she cared for her master and his welfare, and so she spoke of her faith that Naaman could be healed of his leprosy by the prophet Elisha in Israel. Naaman had enough faith [where that came from, who knows] to bring this to the king's attention. The king, surprisingly, sent Naaman [one of his favorite commanders] to Israel, and ultimately to Elisha. We are told in

verse 1 that the king of Syria credited Naaman's victories to the God of Israel. Difficult to know exactly what this meant, but at least the God of Israel was known and somewhat respected in Syria.

When Naaman arrived in Israel, he was irked that the prophet would not even meet with him, but merely sent his servant; then even more irked when told to wash in muddy Jordan seven times. It was one of Naaman's servants who urged him to do what was asked -- "*you would have done great things if asked; why not do this little thing?*". So Naaman swallowed his pride and did so and was cured. Not much faith by Naaman [a "mustard seed" in size], but it was sufficient.

A marvelous ending to this story of Naaman is that he took home with him loads of dirt from Israel [vs 17-18], and basically said he would worship on this dirt when he sacrificed and prayed to the God of Israel. But then he made a request of the prophet. Naaman said, part of my job is to go with the king when he prays to his idol, and when he bows, I have to bow also -- even though my heart is no longer in it. Please forgive me in advance. And Elisha said, "*Go in peace!*" [vs 19]. God knows our situations. True, the Jews, and later Christians, would be held to higher standards -- but amazing nonetheless that God can deal gently with His creation, knowing we are only dust.

Back in Nazareth, the statements of Jesus caused anger and resentment; partly because he had discerned the true condition of their hearts; but largely because he dared to say that, on occasion, God helped gentiles and had ignored the "chosen people" -- and God was, they thought, supposed to deal exclusively with the Jews. That was too much! The people, in general, were allowed to reveal their wrong heart attitudes and evil intentions by attempting to throw Jesus over a cliff -- but it was not God's time for such. This was not going to happen -- not yet.

Jesus left Nazareth after this, and never returned -- much to their loss.

So what about us? If we had lived in the days when Jesus walked the earth would we have believed and become disciples? Would we have seen the Savior, or merely a wandering carpenter? If we had been in Nazareth, would we have been offended at his words, or would we have embraced them? Of course, this is hypothetical, but perhaps pondering it would be useful.

We are in a totally different "world", nearly 2000 years later; we have the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Greek Scriptures; we have 2000 years of church [and world] history behind us. We know so much more; and yet so little. We live in a world that is as pagan, if not more so, than those ancient days. Surrounded by errors of all kinds, by false religions, by apostate Christianity, by all kinds of temptations and errors thrust into our lives every day. The news assaults us every day. Very different than those ancient days, yet in its fundamentals, just as simple and just as trying -- human nature does not change.

It would seem that if we have believed, in this our day, that Jesus is the Savior and Messiah, and have chosen to follow him in the narrow way -- then we would have done so also back around 30 AD. We would have "walked in the dust" of the Master.

Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Come and see.

God's peace to all.

L. Schneider

(Scripture citations from the NKJV unless otherwise stated).

I discredit God's name when I call Him my Father but act like an orphan.

It is impossible to overdraw your account from faith's bank.

Freedom from Anger

BE ANGRY, AND YET DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. Ephesians 4:26-27

In the story of **The Devil and Daniel Webster** by Stephen Vincent Benet, the main plot centers around a man named Jabez Stone, a farmer in New Hampshire who is down on his luck. His wife and children are ailing, his field is not producing crops, and his horses suddenly become ill. He is so depressed with his lot that, although he is a religious man, he vows he would sell his soul to the devil to improve his wretched fortunes. Naturally, the devil shows up the very next day in the guise of a well-dressed and soft-spoken lawyer fitly named Scratch. The pact is made. Jabez experiences seven years of prosperity, after which he persuades the devil to grant him an extension of three more years. At the end of the decade Jabez, in desperation, asks Daniel Webster, a fellow New Hampshire man, to take on his legal case and defend him.

Jabez Stone is a decent though desperate man. When he realizes that his request may endanger the soul of the great orator, Daniel Webster, he pleads with his would-be savior to leave before the devil gets him. Webster, however, in many ways a man of similar nature — an educated and rhetorical version of the down-to-earth farmer — asserts that he has never left either a case or a jug unfinished. He stays on the case, remaining calm even when the devil shows the little black box with air holes in the lid in which he carries the souls of people he has bought.

Webster begins the case by insisting on an all-American jury. "Let it be the quick or the dead!" The members of the jury selected by the devil are a gallery of traitors and criminals, all actual figures from American history, including such notables as the pirate *Teach* and the cruel governor *Dale*, who broke men on the wheel. The judge, fittingly, is *Hawthorne*, who presided at the witch trials in Salem and never repented of the convictions.

Webster's appeal to the jury is brilliant. At first the doughty lawyer simply "**got madder and madder**," determined to "bust out with lightning's and denunciations." But as he stares at the wild glitter in the eyes of these repugnant souls, he realizes that would be a mistake, playing right into the hands of the devil himself. Instead, he decides to address them as men, the men that they were rather than the damned that they have become.

He does not condemn or revile but instead talks about what makes a man a man. He speaks so movingly that the diabolic glitter disappears from the eyes of the jurors, who seem to return to being simply men once more. At the close of the trial, *Walter Butler*, the loyalist terrorist of the Revolution, delivers the verdict, astonishing the devil by finding for the defendant.

In Ephesians 4:13, the Apostle Paul reminds us that we are "... *called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*"

To live in the full measure of the freedom God has given us means to live a spirit-filled life in the power and love of Christ. As one reads the 4th chapter of Ephesians, Paul reminds us that we need to put off the old self, the old nature, and start living as a new creation. One of the traits that Paul exhorts us that we can be free from is the propensity for anger.

Paul's first words in verse 26, "*Be angry, and yet do not sin*" echo Psalm 4:4. Does it surprise you that the Bible allows us – in both Testaments – to get angry? Anger is mentioned often in Proverbs – like in 14:29 & 16:32:

*He who is slow to anger has great understanding,
But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly.*

*One who is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
And one who rules his spirit, than one who captures a city.*

Now Paul and David didn't have in mind temper tantrums but righteous anger that directs its rage at the appropriate object – sin and sinful behavior, not sinners. And it's expressed for the right reason – to defend God's righteous standards, not to avenge personal grievances. A perfect example of this is

Jesus driving the money-changers from the temple because they had turned God's house into a place for personal profit. (See also Mark 3:1-5).

Unfortunately, we more often than not, become angry because others fail to give us what we want. They may not give us the full measure of respect we feel we deserve, they may inconvenience us, or they may hurt our feelings. Whatever the cause, our anger often stems from selfish desires, not holy vigilance.

So, the Lord is urging us to guard against impure motives and harmful expressions of our anger. In fact, Paul counsels us, "*Do not let the sun go down on your anger.*" Don't brood on it or hold a grudge. Understandably, not all conflicts can be resolved before bedtime; sometimes we may need to take a breather in the process of working matters out. The key is to continue to move toward resolving our issues so we aren't stuck in our anger.

The danger is, if we string out our conflicts, like our story above, as Daniel Webster realized in the nick of time, we can "give the devil an opportunity" to drive a wedge between us and those who we care about. And the devil will use that wedge to bring divisions into the church, as well as into our personal lives.

But God offers us a different way. He has designed the path of freedom to be traveled in peace, by a people (the church) united and empowered by love.

The goal then is a simple one for us to work toward:
*"Let all bitterness, wrath, **anger**, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."* Eph. 4:31-32

D. Gorham

The acid of anger harms the one in whom it is stored more than the one on whom it is poured.

Beware! Anger is just one letter short of ***d**anger*

“It Just Happened” or was God in Control?

Are the things listed below incidents that “*just happened*,” coincidences in the life of Joseph? Or were they all orchestrated and controlled by God’s providences?

Genesis chapter 37:

Joseph’s brothers “*just happened*” to pasture in Shechem, where Jacob:” just happened” to have good reason to be concerned for their welfare (vv. 12-13).

Joseph “*just happened*” to wander to a field where he met a man who had “*just happened*” to overhear his brothers’ plans to go to Dothan (v. 17).

The brothers “*just happened*” to move to Dothan, which was on the main caravan route to Egypt (v. 17).

Joseph “*just happened*” to meet them while he was still wearing his special robe that symbolized one of the sources of their jealousy and hatred (v. 23).

An Ishmaelite caravan on their way to Egypt “*just happened*” to pass by the particular place where Joseph and his brethren were at that specific time (v. 25).

Reuben “*just happened*” to be away when the sale of Joseph was made (v. 29).

The Ishmaelites “*just happened*” to sell Joseph to one of Pharaoh’s high officials, (Potiphar, the Captain of the guard) (v. 36 & Chapter 39:1).

Genesis 39:

It “*just happened*” that Potiphar was also warden of the prison where Joseph would be unjustly imprisoned after being falsely accused of attempted rape by Potiphar’s wife (vv.1, 13-20).

Genesis 40:

It “*just happened*” that Pharaoh’s baker and cup bearer, both of Egyptian high positions would consider telling a lowly Hebrew slave their dreams (vv.1-8).

It *“just happened”* that Joseph’s interpretation of their dreams that in three days they both would be released from prison and that one would be restored and the other put to death came true (vv. 9-22).

Genesis 41:

It *“just happened”* that one day Pharaoh had a dream and none of his wise men and magicians could interpret this dream as they had probably done in previous times (v. 8).

It *“just happened”* that this incident would remind the cup-bearer that two years ago Joseph, a Hebrew slave of the captain of the guard, was in prison and had interpreted his dream correctly and he told this to Pharaoh (vv. 9-13).

It *“just happened”* that Joseph was able to interpret Pharaoh’s dream when all his wise man/magicians could not (vv. 25-32).

It *“just happened”* that Pharaoh would elevate a Hebrew slave to be second in command of all Egypt (vv. 39-43).

Genesis 42:

It *“just happened”* that after seven years a famine occurred in Egypt and all the other lands as Joseph had predicted (v. 53).

It *“just happened”* that Jacob would send all of Joseph’s ten brothers down to Egypt to get food (vv. 1-5).

Joseph was no doubt quite busy overseeing his many duties throughout the land of Egypt, but *“just happened”* to be present at the time his brothers were in line to seek permission to buy wheat. (v.6).

It *“just happened”* that Joseph’s brothers would bow down to him just as his earlier dream had shown (v. 6) and not only once but also at least three other times found in Genesis 43:28; 44:14; 50:18.

Conclusion: It would be absurd for anyone to consider all these incidents as mere coincidences. Indeed, Joseph’s life

and experiences were all planned and timed by God Himself. If all this had not occurred, there probably would be no Israel today.

It is not any different today, God is working unnoticed in your life and mine accomplishing His purpose. One day, looking back, we will recognize and more fully appreciate all that He has done and is doing for us. See Philippians 1:6; 2:13.

E. Weeks

God Knows

GOD knows not I-- the devious way
Wherein my faltering feet must tread,
Before into the light of day
My steps from out this gloom are led.
And since my Lord the path doth see,
What matter if ' tis hid from me?

God knows not I -- how sweet accord
Shall grow at length from out this clash
Of earthly discords which have jarred
On soul and sense ; I hear the crash,
Yet feel and know that on His ear
Breaks harmony-full, deep and clear.

God knows not I -- why, when I'd fain
Have walked in pastures green and fair,
The path He pointed me hath lain
Through rocky deserts bleak and bare.
I blindly trust since ' tis His will
This way lies safety, that way ill.

His perfect plan I may not grasp,
Yet I can trust Love Infinite,
And with my feeble fingers clasp
The hand which leads me into light.
My soul upon His errand goes—
The end I know not-but God knows.

Poems of Dawn

A Blessing or a Curse?

There is an instructive story about a cattleman in old China who woke one morning to find his best horse had gotten loose and run away. He needed that horse for work. *"What a curse,"* said his wife. *"What seems like a curse might be a blessing,"* said her husband.

Sure enough, the next day the horse returned followed by a fine new horse. Two beautiful horses instead of just one. *"What a blessing! It is surely a blessing,"* said his wife. *"What seems like a blessing might be a curse,"* said her husband.

Well, they turned the new horse over to the sturdy son of the cattleman for training. He was thrown from the horse and broke his leg. *"What a curse,"* said the wife. *"What seems like a curse might be a blessing,"* said her husband. A week or two later an officer from the king's army came to draft all able-bodied young men into military service for twenty years, but since he had a broken leg, the young man was exempt. *The curse had indeed turned into a blessing.*

There is some wisdom in the old proverb, *"Be careful what you wish for because you might get it."* We might say we ought to be careful about what we pray for. We do not always know what might be good for us and what may not be good for us. In fact, in this respect, throughout my life I have seen blessings transformed into curses and curses into blessings and *it most often depends on us.*

Some of you will remember the musical, *Fiddler on the Roof*, about the life of poor, peasant village Jews in old Czarist Russia at the beginning of the century. People sang songs like *Sunrise, Sunset*. But every time I saw the production I had one unpleasant moment. It was the time that Tevye is having one of his homey, intimate conversations with the Almighty. He says to God, *"If money is a curse, blast me with it!"* Now there was nothing wrong with the original author's intent, only with the audience reaction provoked by the manner in which those lines were played. The audience always laughed in a self-satisfied, knowing manner. It seemed to me something was wrong with their reaction. There's nothing wrong with being well off but the lifestyle of the audience was very different from

the life of the poverty-stricken Tevye in that poor village of mud, with the always-leaking roofs and the scarcity of the bare necessities of life. Tevye was always worried about where the family's next meal was coming from, so we can understand someone in Tevye's situation saying, "*If money is a curse, blast me with it!*" But Tevye's outburst provoked a laughter that seemed to say, "*I have plenty of money. I sure like it and I would sure like a lot more,*" a kind of self-satisfied laughter. It's like the saying, "*You can never be too rich.*"

Is money always a blessing? In scripture, there is a passage that seems strange at first. When the children of Israel were wandering, starving in the wilderness, we are told God fed them manna from heaven. Now our modern idea of manna from heaven has come to mean something like winning the lottery or a wonderful business deal that comes our way and blesses us. But then scripture says, "*I fed you manna in order to test you, to afflict you.*"

Well, we can understand how money is a test of one's character. Those who waste money on frivolous expenditures we call fools. Those for whom money is the goal of life, we call idolaters. Those who use it for productive purposes and for charitable purposes we call good and wise. But I've also seen that wealth, just as scripture advises us, can be a curse. I have seen young people from wealthy families retired before the age of 40, who spend the rest of their lives seeking every new possible entertainment or self-indulgence. What kind of life is that? I have seen how families have been broken up over the estates of parents, this one thinking he didn't get enough. Such hostility arises among members of the family that they only meet at the funerals of relatives and depart without saying a word to one another. I've seen character destroyed by too much money, *a perceived blessing transformed into a curse.*

Years ago, I read the story about an elderly gentleman who was a pioneer in a chain discount marketing enterprise and was extremely religious. He was a very generous man in the community, particularly for the elderly poor. He quietly helped many who had trouble in business to get back on their feet and become productive again.

He had a son who was fed manna from heaven on a silver platter. He never had to work for anything. He never had to achieve anything on his own. Perhaps the parents mistakenly were trying to protect him from the hardships of their immigrant background, but he never learned to cope with any obstacles in his life in an honest way. As a result, the business went into bankruptcy and ruin. He tried to recover it in the wrong way, and he got himself involved in corrupt practices and dirty politics. The family name of that man, which had been a blessing, was turned into shame, a kind of curse.

I have known people who knew how to change a curse into a blessing, not only for themselves but also for many others. When I was a young lad, one day my mother said to me, *"There is someone I want you to meet."* Now many would have considered my mother wrong to take a young child into that kind of situation, but I remember it six decades later as a positive, affirmative, happy experience. I also remember that woman's name, Mrs. O'Malley, which testifies to my mother's wisdom. The woman was almost completely paralyzed. She lay on a bed facing and overlooking a fairly busy street. The telephone company had fixed up a gadget so that she could talk into a voice box. People called her all day long because, despite her terrible infirmity, she was able to help a lot of people simply by her positive spirit, giving advice, consolation, and cheerfulness. She turned what many would consider a curse, being so disabled as to be cast into a self-pitying melancholy all of one's life, into a great blessing for herself and many others. I am grateful to my mother to this day for giving me the blessing of a memory that has inspired me very often in the hard times that sometimes I have had to face.

All of us fall into times in which we think our own personal situation is so blighted by a mistake we made that we can never repair it. This is the point of a wonderful story by a Polish teacher called the Dubna Maggid, or the preacher from the town of Dubna.

A king had a large beautiful jewel, a ruby, especially precious to him because it was a gift from his deceased queen mother. Through some careless accident, a deep scratch ruined the jewel and the king was in despair about this. He

called many experts to repair it. Some tried polishing. Some tried chemical solutions. Nothing worked.

A proclamation went out that if someone could remove that scratch the king would be indebted to him for life. Many tried and failed. One day, a craftsman of humble demeanor came, saying he would like to try, and the king, nearly giving up hope, turned it over to him. Some weeks later the craftsman returned. The scratch was not removed but the king was delighted because the craftsman had turned the jewel into something far more precious than before. On the surface of the jewel at the end of the scratch, he engraved a beautiful rose. Thus, the scar became the stem of the rose through the man's skill. *A curse turned into a blessing beyond price.*

God gives us life as a precious jewel, more precious than any other. In any one of our lives there can occur a deep scratch, an imperfection, that we think can never be repaired. But through the love and grace of God, and by having His Spirit within our hearts, we can turn the imperfection into a work of art which makes our lives priceless blessings, not only for ourselves but for many others as well. I think this is what God meant when he blessed Abraham with the words, "*Be thou a blessing.*" We can be sure that God wants us to be a blessing as well; therefore take heed, that whatever our circumstances, we seek to be a blessing and not a curse.

R. Boswell

Shut In, but ~ "*A little bird am I shut from the fields of air; and in my cage I sit and sing to Him who placed me there; Well pleased a prisoner to be, because, my God, it pleases Thee. Oh, it is grand to soar from these bolts and bars above to Him whose purpose I adore, whose providence I love! And in Thy mighty will to find the joy, the freedom of the mind.*"

Written by Madam Guyon from her prison
in Versailles, France

Heavenly Reinforcements

"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place... Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits, even the God of our salvation." Ps. 68:17, 19

Why haven't we been more aware of the power of this reinforcement? Because we have walked so long in the outer realm of the senses of the flesh. But the more we learn to "walk in the Spirit," the more we shall be conscious that we are upheld by an invisible host of *"ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation"* (Heb.1:14).

"Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them (that is, with the enemy). And Elisha prayed, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings 6:16-17).

The oppression was great, and the adversary was heavy against Israel. Then God moved upon Deborah, and she sent for Barak and encouraged him to gather Israel to battle against the hosts of Sisera, and they did so, but they were not alone, for we read, *"They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera"* (Judges 5:20).

Not only has our lack of spiritual perception held us back from full recognition of our heavenly assistance, but God has been taking us through the dark night of the soul where even the stars don't shine, that He might perfect our faith. But just because we have not seen them, nor been aware of them, does not mean that they were not there, ready to penetrate the darkness again at the time of God's appointment.

"And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay upon us, all hope that we should be saved was taken away." BUT GOD, who never suffers us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, sends a message of encouragement, so we can say, "Be of good cheer.- for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:20, 25). We are strengthened anew and brought into victory again. Praise God!

from Daily Overcoming

All the Fullness of the Godhead (Deity) Bodily

One word in the above title may be unfamiliar to some readers because more than fifteen different Bibles do not use the word *'godhead'*. And perhaps no Bible edited in this century uses *'godhead'* in all the three places it is used in the *KJ Version* edited in 1611.

In 1881, when the *KJV* was in common use and the first English revision of its New Testament was published, an article by H. V. Reed appeared in the magazine *Restitution*. He wrote: "*The word 'godhead' is not good English: it means nothing in itself and conveys no idea to the reader: What is a godhead?*" It is merely a bad translation. The Greek manuscript word should be rendered *'divinity'* or *'deity'*. Many Bible scholars and translators have realized that *'godhead'* does not convey clear meaning. *Weymouth, Moffatt, Smith-Goodspeed, Farrar Fenton, RSV, Good News, NAS, Living Bible, NIV, J. B. Phillips, Bible in Living English, Jerusalem Bible, NWT, Emphatic Diaglott, and The Everyday Bible* versions, all recognizing its inadequacy, use some word or phrase other than *'godhead'* seen three times in the *KJV*, where, in Acts 17:29, Romans 1:20, Colossians 2:9, it represents a different Greek word each time.

'Godhead' in Colossians 2:9 of the *KJV* is a translation of the Greek *theotes*, which is "*an abstract noun for Theos,*" the usual Greek word translated *'God'* (*Greek-English Lexicon, Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich*). "*An abstract noun is one indicating a quality, as goodness, beauty*" (*Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary, International Edition*). From this it is seen that when Paul wrote of Christ Jesus that "*In Him dwelleth all the fullness of deity,*" he said that *all the qualities of God dwelt in Christ Jesus our Lord*. In view of that, one may be sure that whatever *'godhead'* may be thought to mean, it surely does not properly represent the meaning of the Greek words Paul wrote.

God's Fullness Came First to Christ Jesus

Colossians was written because of the Apostle's concern that brethren with whom he had never shared spiritual percep-

tions in personal contact were being taught unsound concepts...The Apostle realized that *"traditions of men"* had been delivered to them by teachers who developed elements of a wisdom suited to the proud, curious, speculating, carnal temper of the world. These traditions were blended with legal, external observances by Judaizing teachers, and were incompatible with the doctrine of Christ. This situation made Paul's admonition in Col. 2:6-9 especially appropriate and timely.

This is a wonderful assurance to us as trusting Christians! All the attributes which are part of God's being are *'housed permanently'* in our Leader and Forerunner! The completeness of our Lord's powers were constituted when *"He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."* The assertion that *"all the fullness of deity"* dwells in Christ means that the qualities, which are in God's being, are not divided up, part in one and part in others. If on the other hand, the fullness of deity were to be understood as being divided up, it would imply that there were other mediating spiritual powers or independent spiritual forces at work which should contribute their wisdom and power in order that God's work of salvation be fully accomplished. But this is not so. There is neither a partial nor temporary indwelling of God's qualities in Christ, but rather *"all the fullness."* Christ is not in the same rank with other created beings such as angels (Hebrews 1:5). As the Son, He is greater than all that were created through Him.

In view of this, there is no need to seek instruction and wisdom from heathen philosophers. Believers don't need those who set forth divergent schemes of salvation and deliverance from sin apart from Jesus, such as false teachers' dream. Christ is Head of all principality and power, and all God's holy angels are His willing servants. Further counsel from the Apostle on this is in Colossians 2:14-23.

Christ Jesus, our Lord, is the Word, the truth, the personal embodiment of all that is good and true, and emphatically the revelation to man of God's being. The extensive responsibilities delegated to Jesus in His service under God are often af-

firmed in Scripture, two passages of which are now cited: 1 Cor. 8:6, 1 Tim. 2:5-6.

Three Senses Combined in “Fullness”

In the New Testament “fullness” is always a translation of the Greek *pleeroma*, appearing therein seventeen times. One authority has written regarding *pleeroma* in Ephesians and Colossians: “Three formal senses are combined: that which is filled; that which fills; and fullness in the sense of superabundance” (Schilier). The meaning in Col. 2:9 is that all the attributes, all the qualities of God, dwell in Christ Jesus. The fullness dwells in Jesus. Christ Jesus received His *capacity* - He is complete. This does not suggest, however, that His capacity is the measure of the Father's capacity. The glory of the Father is supreme, unequalled. God clearly attested, “I am the LORD: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another” (Isa. 42:8, 48:11). While, of course, the eternal God Himself is not a receiver of resurrection, 1 Cor. 15:41-42 does give a glimpse into the diversity of the heavenly, spiritual glory. The supreme glory is that identified with the Father's glorious spirit body. “God is Spirit” (John 4:24). The glory of the Son is next, and it is the Father who distributes all subsequent, lesser rewards (Matt. 20:23).

There are two principal views as to the exact thought Paul intended in Col. 2:9. Though different, they seem not to conflict, nor does one exclude the other. “For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (RSV). A note in the *Greek-English Lexicon* by Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich sums up one of the views: that the word *bodily* qualifies *dwells*, that the “fullness dwells in Christ Jesus in reality, not symbolically.” It suggests that such view is supported by Col. 2:17, where typical Jewish stipulations regarding foods, holy days, and Sabbaths are shown to be “a shadow of things to come; but the body [which it takes to mean 'reality'] is of Christ.” Realizing that Christ was foreknown in God's eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:11), several translators have not used *body* in verse 17, but instead the word *substance*. Christ Jesus, as the One foreknown and thus that *substance*, enabled the several shadows mentioned in that verse.

The other view is that *bodily* describes how the *fullness* dwells in Christ - "*as a complete and organic whole, not fragmentarily*" (*Expositor's Greek Testament, Nicoll*); "*corporately*" (*Jerome Biblical Commentary*). It is in this sense, too, that the church is one body under Christ, its Head (Ephesians 5:23). The aggregate of Christian disciples constitutes a corporate whole.

Reconciliation Purposed

There was a special purpose in the Father's design that His *fullness* should dwell in the Son. God brought all His qualities into one entity in superabundance to enable His faithful servant to encourage and develop those divine qualities in others. This is shown in previous verses: Col.1:12-22. Paul affirmed that God dealt bountifully with His beloved Son from the beginning (Col.1:17-19). *Weymouth* words the last segment of those verses: "*For it was the Father's gracious will that the whole of the divine perfections should dwell in Him.*" The *fullness* is in Christ to qualify and equip Him for the work of reconciliation. Reconciling man to God and God to man is the objective for which God has caused "*all the fullness of divinity*" to dwell in Jesus.

But this didn't make the Son the Father; it didn't blend the Son into the Father; it didn't make the glorified Jesus identical to the Father. But it did raise their constant unity to a higher, superlative level, to a level not previously experienced. Always God has been supreme, and there is no Bible testimony that the Son ever expected to receive the greater glory, which the Father retains to Himself. There are Bible teachings which show the Father is greater than the Son, and that the Son is to be subject to the Father. One is 1 Cor. 15:25-28.

The Church Now Being Filled

In Eph. 1:20-23, Paul relates our Master's *fullness* to the bringing about of the anticipated condition in which God will "*be all in all.*" He refers to God's exceeding great power, that He raised Christ "*from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies.*" In elevating Christ Jesus to that authority, God "*has put all things under His [Christ's] feet, and*

gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all."

From this is seen that Christ, who is head over all things, is head to the church as manifested by His spiritual organization and supervision of it. *From Him comes its life, in Him is its joy; through the church, Christ is lived forth and witnessed.* The Apostle John exulted in the benefit we receive from Christ (John1:16).

It is of course understood that the fullness with which Jesus fills others is the *fullness of God*. Indeed, the Apostle's exhortation in Eph. 3:19 establishes just that. Our Lord Jesus isn't involved in filling anyone with a counterfeit *fullness*. Our Savior has communicated to His church through the Holy Spirit and Scripture the plenitude of gifts and graces wherein our lives are intended to inspire others to such fullness. In Ephesians 4:10 Paul reminds every believer that Jesus was exalted "*far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.*" Inasmuch as God is to reconcile through Jesus "*all things to Himself...whether things on earth or things in heaven,*" it is most appropriate that Jesus has been exalted "*far above all heavens.*"

During this present time of preparation, each member of the church endeavors to be filled with the fullness to their individual capacity. And the purpose in this for believers is the same as that for which Jesus received "*all the fullness:*" to qualify and equip them for their work in the process of reconciliation (2 Cor. 3:6, 5:18-20). This solemn commission involves every sincere believer in Jesus, and is both a great privilege and a sacred responsibility.

The day when *all* the qualities of God will be *in all* a reconciled, willing and obedient creation is sure to come. They too will be filled with the *fullness* by "*Him that filleth all in all*" (Eph. 1:23) to the capacity of the glory of their being, according to the Father's good pleasure in their rewarding. God's appointed time will not tarry, even though issues of the moment indicate that the promised glorious day is destined to come in a later generation. But this is no cause for discouragement. There is

a rest of faith for "*the people of God*" (Heb. 4:9). All whose faith and knowledge increases today will share with other victors tomorrow in receiving the great reward of "*the crown of life*" (Revelation 2:10). "*Have faith in God*" (Mark 11:22).

How Readest Thou?

It is probable that additional readings of the foregoing discussion with careful consideration of every Bible passage cited will bring a deeper understanding of the thoughts presented. Only when the viewpoints are fully understood is one in a position to properly evaluate whether or not they be true. Personal study in harmony with the statement in the second paragraph of the last subheading is important to every believer: "*Our Savior has communicated to His church through the Holy Spirit and Scripture the plenitude of gifts and graces wherein our lives are intended to inspire others to such fullness.*"

Gilbert Rice

JESUS, my Lord, Thou art my life,
My rest in labor, strength in strife;
Thy love begets my love of Thee;
Thy **fulness that which filleth me.**

Long, long I struggled ere I knew
My struggling vain, my life untrue.
I sought by efforts of mine own
What is the gift of Christ alone.

I prayed, and wrestled in my prayer,
I wrought, but self was ever there;
Joy never came, nor rest, nor peace,
Nor faith, nor hope, nor love's increase.

Mine effort vain, my weakness learned,
Weary, from self to Christ I turned,
Content to let **His fulness be**
An unbought **fulness unto me.**

Life's heavenly secret was revealed--
In Christ all riches are concealed.
We try and fail; we ask, He gives,
And in His rest our spirit lives.

(Poems of Dawn)

Knowledge Shall Vanish Away

Christians too often overrate the importance of knowledge. Referring naturally to their own particular ideas, they emphasize the necessity of *"knowing the truth,"* asserting that *"the wise shall understand"* and not be in darkness. To know the truth, however, and to have the ability to understand the Word of God, *depends much more upon our humility, obedience and love for God than upon our knowledge, so that the emphasis should be rather upon these primary and essential characteristics of the Spirit.* Wherever there exists this tendency to exalt knowledge, there will be found a corresponding lack of attention to the vital purpose of the Christian call.

Our present knowledge is intermingled with error, and to the extent that we are willing and capable of learning, our ideas *will* be ever changing and losing themselves in greater truth. If this process is not taking place, it will indicate we have become established, *not in truth* but *in error.* What we now know is but a fraction of what there is yet to know, and the wider our circle of light, the wider we discover the wall of darkness that shuts us in. As Paul expresses it, *"Knowledge puffs up but love edifies. If any man thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know"* (1 Cor. 8:1, 2).

Now we know in part

One day our partial and imperfect knowledge will be swallowed up in the resplendent light of the coming kingdom, as the flame of the candle fades before the rising sun. All the problems that have confused and troubled us will be solved forever in the sudden revelation that will eclipse all we have ever known. Now we know in part, *then we shall know even as we are known.* What then of this present knowledge in which we pride ourselves, which will be known everywhere if it is truth? Our advanced knowledge, on which we congratulated ourselves and derived feelings of security, will have become the accepted and common property of all. Any fancied superiority or advantage that this gave us will be gone completely and forever.

Indeed, may not the very knowledge in which we now boast then be used against us as a *gift which we have misused*? For with knowledge comes responsibility. *“To him that knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin”* (James 4:17), and the servant *“which knew his Lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes”* (Luke 12:47), in contrast to the one who did not know. Is knowledge then necessary; would it not be better to remain in ignorance? *Knowledge is vitally necessary and to avoid its implications now only increases our future difficulties.* In the fact, however, that *“knowledge shall vanish away”* or as Moffatt renders it, *“be superseded.”* It is obvious that *it is but a means to an end.*

Knowledge that will not be superseded

In using this expression in 1 Cor.13:8, Paul without doubt referred to one of the special gifts of the Spirit; yet his words in vs. 12, *“now we know only in part”* are equally true regarding all knowledge. There is a knowledge, however, that will not be superseded, *for it is presented to us as an end in itself*, being the grand and glorious climax to all our aspirations. This is *to know God*, not merely to know *about* Him and *about* His plans and purposes. It is *to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, which goes beyond knowing what He has accomplished in God's purposes, and what He has effected on our behalf.* *“This is life eternal that they may know You, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom You have sent”* (John 17:3).

This is the true knowledge that is slowly but surely being formed and cemented into our personality day by day, whatever our activities or our opinions, whether we are well versed in Scripture or lacking in mental grasp. We may be seeking to increase our understanding of truth, and we may be making every effort to spread such truth, but *unless we are growing in that inward knowledge that will transform our lives, all our other efforts will fail to bring us to our desired haven.* If after having run our course we have not so learned Christ, He will in turn say to us, *“I know you not.”*

Paul counted *“all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ”* his Lord; that he might *“know Him*

and the power of His resurrection” by “casting down everything that exalted itself against the knowledge of God.” His prayer continually for others was that this knowledge might increase in them. Its transforming effect is shown by “the new man being renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.” Peter also exhorted: “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” that by adding to our faith the various qualities of the Spirit we might be “neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The inward transforming effect of this *heart knowledge* in our lives proves its growth and power by reflecting itself in our attitude towards others, *for “everyone that loves is born of God and knows God,”* and also in our obedience to God because *“hereby we know that we know him if we keep His commandments.”* This knowledge is the true wisdom that shall never pass away, for it unites us to the ever-living God. The Spirit of sonship that makes us children of God also makes us the brethren of Christ. *“All mine are Yours and Yours are mine, and I am glorified in them”* (John.17:10). *“I am the good shepherd and know my sheep and am known of mine. I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them to me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand”* (John 10:27-29).

from the Bible Students Magazine

2Pe 1:3-8 NASB “seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the **true knowledge of Him** who called us by His own glory and excellence.....in your faith supply moral excellence, and in moral excellence, **knowledge**, and in knowledge, self-control, and in self-control, perseverance, and in perseverance, godliness, and in godliness, brotherly kindness, and in brotherly kindness, love. For if these are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the **true knowledge** of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

A Portrait of the Boy Jesus

“Jesus continued to grow in wisdom and stature and favor with God and men.” Luke 2:52



There is very little detail in Scripture about Jesus childhood other than Luke telling us that *“he grew strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.”* Luke 2:40

The only record of his boyhood years is an unusual one that takes place in Jerusalem at Passover time when Jesus was 12 years old. Imagine Jesus for the first time looking upon the temple, witnessing the priests performing their duties beholding the blood sacrifices. With other worshipers, he bowed his head, while a cloud of incense ascended to his Father. Each day he would see more meaning in the rituals. Every act seemed to be bound to his life. The mystery of his future mission was opening up to him. Being thirsty to know more he began inquiring of the rabbis and teachers. When the worshippers departed the temple, Jesus was left behind. His parents thinking he was with the others, the women with the women and the men with the men, were unworried. Meanwhile at the temple, Luke tells us that the teachers were truly amazed at both Jesus’ understanding and his answers to their questions.

Finding Jesus missing, his frantic parents searched for their beloved son three days. When Joseph and Mary finally found him they expressed their anxiety to him. Jesus’ answer was one that Mary would ponder in her heart. *“Why were you searching for me? Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?”* His mission was now clear, his identity sure, it was essential that he be about his Father’s business. He thought his parents would have understood that.

Jesus also knew it was not time for his mission to begin, the law required him to be obedient to his parents for 18 more years until the time appointed by his Father. Luke records Je-

Jesus return to Nazareth and his obedience in these words: *“Jesus continued to grow in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man”* (Luke 2:52). Joseph, a carpenter, no doubt had no better apprentice than Jesus. A son who was eager to learn and who later would use these lessons to effectively teach the people of Israel. *“My yoke is easy and my burden is light”* (Matt. 11:30). Mary had no dearer child than Jesus.

There is no doubt that he brought a special joy to his parents' lives. For 30 years he obeyed, learned from and loved both his earthly parents and his heavenly Father with his whole heart.

D, Mathewson

Jesus Christ never changes.
His care for us is the same
yesterday, today and forever.

Jesus Christ never changes.
His patience with us is the same
yesterday, today and forever.

Jesus Christ never changes.
His faithfulness to us is the same
yesterday, today and forever.

Jesus Christ never changes.
His grace toward us is the same
yesterday, today and forever.

Jesus Christ never changes.
His love for us is the same
yesterday, today and forever.

Jesus Christ never changes.
He is the same
yesterday, today and forever.

Prayer List

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



Let us be Prayer Warriors for our Brethren!

Adkisson, Grace – TX	Howes, Paul & Carla - UK
Boswell, Arlene – IL	Karavas, Anna - CA
Buxton, Jean & Family - UK	Leavitt, Denise & Richard – ME
Cannon, Melissa (Bews) – TX (d)	Lepitre Family - IL
Casell, Agnes & Family –VT (d)	Mazzotta, Eva – VA
Cooper, Carmela – NJ	Miller, Alain – Canada
Csutor, Judith – CT	Moore, Maryellen – CA (d)
Day, Ronald – PA	Ostwald, Dick - WI
Dalesandro, Jim and family - IL (d)	Parker, Geraldine – CA
Dickson, Roberta Jo – CA	Parrinello, Sue MI (d)
Dunn, Kim - IL	Penton, Jim – Canada
Feliciano, Carmen - NY	Phillips, Stella – OK
Fischer, Mike & Liz – WI	Rice, Michelle – MA (d)
Foster, Jean – IL	Rowe, Bryan - UK
Hauslein, Karen – MD	Schwartz, Ruth – TX
Hawk, Barbara – PA	Seminoff, Brenda – CA
Hildebrandt, Lois - FL	Spano Family – IL (d)
Hoffner, Steve – NH	Tuscia, Priscilla – FL
Hogrebe, Joan – MO	White, Joan - NY (d)
	Wolfenberger Family (d)
	(d) = death in the family

Entered into rest:

Ralph Moore, CA, November 2023
Olive Keith, NJ, November 2023

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

People do not care what you think until you care what they feel.

Bible Correspondence Course New Graduates & Websites

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



Emmanuel Gubika of Uganda completed the Basic Course

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You are invited to view the following websites:  
(copy and paste the address into your browser)

<http://www.cdmi.org> (Christian Discipling Ministries International)  
(Current/past NC magazine issues are available on our website)

<https://www.christianbelieversconference.com/>

<http://www.cbfchurch.com> (Christian Believers Fellowship in NH)

<http://www.biblefellowshipunion.co.uk> (Bible Fellowship in UK)

<http://www.bbschurch.org> (Lombard, IL)

<https://sites.google.com/site/quietwatersdevotions>

<http://www.cartyorkshire.co.uk> (CART)

<http://www.campblessing.com> (Camp Blessing)

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

<https://e-biblia.org/> (Os Estudantes da Bíblia, The Bible Students, Brazil - Portuguese/Span) email: [contact@e-biblia.org](mailto:contact@e-biblia.org)

### **Be Patient with God**

God's plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold,  
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart;  
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold.

## Conferences & Conventions

### **New Covenant Fellowship**

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024  
Foothills Conference Centre in Mooroolbark,  
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

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### **Bible Students Fellowship Conference**

High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, England  
14-18 August 2024 DV

**Note:** If you would like to have your Convention, Conference, Camp, or Seminar published in The New Creation Magazine, send information or a program *at least three months in advance* of the issue month of the magazine to the editor, Bob Whittaker.

**Notice:** If you know of Christian friends who would benefit from receiving the bimonthly New Creation Magazine via mail, send their names and addresses to the CDMI main office, care of Bruce Blake. The address is inside the front cover.

### **Donations**

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

### **Article Contributions**

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

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