

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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Tumultuous Times

The next two months show promise of tumultuous times in the political, financial, social, and religious arenas of this world. The struggle between truth and righteousness versus error and corruption, although always present for centuries past, is reaching a crescendo in our day. The great controversy is world-wide, not just in the U.S. and Europe. All the nations are being drawn into this battle. We have been forewarned of this trouble, but it has seemed to creep up on us so slowly until this year, wherein the Covid-19 virus has taken front stage and caused rapid havoc in the institutions of man.



The apostle Peter foretold our day in **symbolic** language in 2Peter 3:10-13 NASB: *"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.*

While in the midst of this conflict, we can have confidence that truth and righteousness will win out. Mankind is learning the terrible results of the sinfulness of sin while those of the little flock, seeking to follow truth and righteousness and live their lives accordingly, are experiencing the development and refinement of their characters. Let us determine to remain faithful to the Lord and His word whatever the present may hold.

As the wood, hay, and stubble are burned up in this day of reckoning of the Lord, let us rejoice in the gold, silver, and precious stones that pass through the trouble and shine the brighter in their witness to the goodness of God.

R. Whittaker

Just Do Your Job

It has become a familiar scene for the fans of the National Football League and particularly, the fans of the New England Patriots: entering into or often well into the 4th quarter of the contest and the Patriots are tied or trailing on the score board and all eyes are fixed upon the now legendary coach, possessor of eight Super Bowl rings with six as head coach, who now is walking in front of the bench where his offensive or defensive players are resting and waiting for the next turn of events that will send them back into battle. What great words of wisdom and inspiration will Bill Belichick grab out of his great reservoir of tricks and knowledge gathered over a life time devoted to learning the game of football? In times like this, N.E. fans know that it will not be out of the big bag of tricks to which he will go but the wise coach will again pull from his favorite little purse just the same four words that have been his rallying cry throughout his unprecedented coaching career, "*Just do your job.*"

Implied and well known to any who have played for or served with the coach in these four words of exhortations is: we don't have to change a thing, you know your, job just make plays, trust the process, don't worry about what the others are doing, if you all do your job the process will take care of the rest -- "*Just do your job.*" The true key to unparalleled success, can it really be that simple? Of course, these players have been especially selected for the good works and put together precisely with other players to accomplish the coach's goal. Therefore, their focus and concern need only be "*Just do your job.*"

These four simple words can be a helpful reminder and rallying cry for the faithful followers of Jesus Christ. Too often we get caught up looking around to see what others are doing, instead of having faith in the process and focusing on what we are given to do. We lose focus when we look up at the scoreboard to see where we are. We have expectations of what results we should be seeing at this time from all our "good works" and can begin to question the process when it appears that the scoreboard shows us trailing even now, late

in the 4th quarter. Our expectations and scoreboard watching are harmful distractions to our just doing our job. This is inevitable as our expectations are set within the very finite vision of our life time while God is exhorting and using us to see and play for His life time, eternity.

With billions or even trillions of moving parts happening simultaneously at any one time to accomplish the multifaceted intensions of His grace for some 7 billion people, it is highly unlikely that we ever know exactly all that God is accomplishing with the “good works” He has planned for us to do. It is only occasional when we even understand all that He is doing in our own lives. We need simply keep the faith and of course “Just do your job” which includes but not limited to: throw the seed of the Gospel message, use what is in your hands, (*Ex14:16 & 21*), live your epistle louder than you recite it, and know that irrespective of what the scoreboard your observing may say at this time, believe in the process because the game has already been won.

The Christians “process” or game plan to follow is God’s marvelous plan of salvation, His eternal purpose in Jesus Christ. They are not the plans of a great coach who wins 69% of the time but the 100% sure desire and purpose of the Keeper and Creator of the universe, the heavens and earth, God, The Almighty. He devised the plan before the world began (*1Pet 1:19-21*) (*Eph 1:4,5*), knows the end from the beginning (*Isa 46:10*) and can neither lie (*Tit 1:2*), nor fail (*Isa 55:11*). He has selected you for these “good works” (*Eph 2:10*) and placed you where you are to work them (*1Cor 12:18*). You have been selected by the Owner/Head Coach of the universe, shown, trained and experienced the great Plan of Salvation. The process doesn’t only work but the game has already been won. Our Captain, Jesus Christ has already won the game on the Cross at Calvary.

There is still one question to be answered: Where will you be? Will you be among the cheering, grateful fans on earth or will you become the co-heir you’ve been called to be and reign in “glory, honor and immortality” as a part of the Bride of Christ? Stay focused and “*Just do your job!*”

B.Blake

Be an Isaiah

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!” He said, “Go, and tell this people...” Isaiah 6:8-9

In Isaiah 61:1-2 we read,

*“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
Because the LORD has anointed me
To bring good news to the afflicted;
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And freedom to the prisoners;
² To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD
And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn,...”*

While this prophecy was not fully fulfilled in Isaiah’s day, the greater Isaiah applied it to His ministry.

*“THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME,
BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE
POOR.*

*HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES,
AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND,
TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,
TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD.”*

And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Luke 4:18-21

After His resurrection, He gave a commission to His followers.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Matt. 28:19-20

Isaiah was given a vision of the earthly kingdom with all its blessings to humanity. See chapters 35 and 66. If we believe these promises, let us not hesitate to share them with all who need comfort now.

Jesus warns us that *"...everyone who hears these words of mine and doesn't put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand, and it fell with a great crash."* Matt. 7:24-27

How dark our days would be without our faith and hope. Let us strive to live the two great commandments more perfectly every day. *"And He said to him, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."* Matt. 22:38-40

When you couple that with Jesus' "new commandment", how blessed we truly are. *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."* John 13:34

"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one more than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." John 15:12-13

D. Anas

Unless we run on love, we don't run well at all!

Love can never be wasted; it always brings a big return, if not in this life then in the next.

Love gives itself, it cannot be bought.

True love always flows outward.

Jesus' Witness to the Samaritan Woman

Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman is only recorded in John the 4th chapter. Please read the account in your Bibles as we go verse by verse. It takes place in the first year of our Lord's ministry. In the previous chapter, Jesus and his disciples are baptizing in Judea (vs.22). John the Baptist is also baptizing but at the Jordan in Aenon near Salim. A dispute in verse 25 occurs between John's disciples and the Jews about purification. This expression, the Jews, is here used as a term applicable to the opposition, mainly the Pharisees and scribes. John the Baptist is informed by his disciples that Jesus is baptizing and all are coming to him, but John is not surprised and acknowledges that "He must increase but I must decrease". This brings us to John the 4th chapter.

Verses 1-3: *When therefore the Lord knew the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples), he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.* Such news was not appreciated by the Pharisees. The Pharisees and scribes were not baptized by John as Luke 7:30 tells us: *"the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him"*. But they were eager to keep up with the latest movements among the people and were jealous of any competition. The Pharisees knew that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John, possibly from the dispute between John's disciples and the Jews. Therefore, Jesus retreats from Judea and returns to Galilee, possibly because he wants to avoid an early confrontation with the Pharisees. Vs. 2 informs us that it was Jesus' disciples that did the baptizing and not Jesus himself. The water baptism was a sign of repentance for sinful conduct in disobedience to their Law Covenant. This put them in a position to receive their Messiah. Even Jesus' disciples received a baptism signifying their repentance and forgiveness of sin. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was not yet available and would not be until Pentecost.

Not everyone was baptized in the Jordan River. There were other bodies of water throughout Judea. A proof of this is

found in Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian Eunuch on the road down from Jerusalem to Gaza. When he saw the water, he asked to be baptized. This water was in Judea and far from the Jordan. Therefore, our Lord did not have to be at the Jordan River to be baptizing. The next verse makes this clear. Vs 4 reads, *(4) And he needed to go through Samaria.* The region of Samaria lies between Judea and Galilee and the main road went directly from Jerusalem through Samaria. If Jesus had been at the Jordan, he could have gone along the river valley and skirted Samaria. But he needed to go through Samaria.

What do we know of the history of Samaria? In the days of the rebellion of the 10 tribes from the rule of King Rehoboam, the kingdom was split in two: the 10 northern tribes called Israel and the 2 southern tribes called Judah. One of the kings of Israel was King Omri who built a city called Samaria as his capitol. Thereafter the 10-tribe kingdom was known as Samaria. Samaria is in the allotment of land given the tribe of Ephraim. So Ephraim is also used synonymously for the 10 tribe kingdom. Even with the association of Samaria with the 10-tribe kingdom, there is no Scripture naming the Israelite people as Samaritans. Who then were the Samaritans?

The Samaritans were a mixed race of Jewish and Gentile blood and were viewed unfavorably by the pure Jews. What gave rise to the Samaritans? It started with the Assyrian invasion and resettlement of the 10 northern tribes. The Assyrian King, Shalmaneser, conquered the ten tribe kingdom in 722 BC and deported the main population to Assyria. Shortly thereafter, his son, Esarhaddon, took peoples from the east and brought them to Samaria where they intermingled with the Israelites who had escaped resettlement. With fewer people in the land, the lion population increased and killed some of the immigrants. The immigrants rightly credited these lion attacks to not knowing the worship of the God of the land. Eventually the matter came to the attention of the king of Assyria, so he sent a Jewish priest from the captivity to instruct the people in the worship of Jehovah, the God of the land. Now whether he was a priest after the order of Aaron we don't know, and we suspect he wasn't because the northern tribes had been idol worshippers and had ordained priests from tribes other than Levi. But

this priest gave them some instruction in the fear of Jehovah. However, they also continued their worship with pagan practices. You can read about this in 2 Kings 17:24-41. Over time, the population became homogenized as Samaritans with corrupt beliefs.

In the meantime, the 2-tribe kingdom of Judah continued in place for another 135 years before the king of Babylon took them captive. These Judean Jews who were exiled by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, started returning to Judah and Benjamin with the edict of Cyrus in 539BC. During the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, Ezra had a confrontation with the Samaritans, Ezra 4:1-5 ASV, *Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity were building a temple unto Jehovah, the God of Israel; (2) then they drew near to Zerubbabel, and to the heads of the fathers' houses, and said unto them, Let us build with you; for we seek your God, as ye do; and we sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us up hither. (These words are important. These were the Samaritans.) (3) But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of the fathers' houses of Israel, said unto them, You have nothing to do with us in building a house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us. (4) Then the people of the land (that is the Samaritans) weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, (5) and hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.*

Also, in another account, Nehemiah had conflicts with Sanballat, a Samaritan leader, in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. This is in Neh 4:1-2 ASV, *It came to pass that, when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. (2) And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, seeing they are burned?*

So we see from these two accounts that enmity developed between the Jews and the Samaritans in the rebuilding of the temple and the city walls of Jerusalem. The Samaritans also built a temple in the days of the Persian Empire on Mt. Gerizim. They strenuously contended that this was where the nation should worship. They received only the five books of Moses, and rejected the writings of the prophets and all the Jewish traditions. This further increased the enmity between the Jew and the Samaritan. In John 8:48 the Jews answered Jesus derogatively, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?" In Luke 9:51-56 a Samaritan village did not receive Jesus because he was resolutely heading toward Jerusalem. So the enmity was on both sides. Returning to our reading:

John 4: 5, 6 so he came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph: and Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

Sychar is 35 - 40 miles north of Jerusalem on the main road. It was the former city of Shechem near where Jacob had bought land and where Joseph's bones were brought up from Egypt and interred. Also, Jacob had given his dying blessing to Joseph of one portion of land above his brothers (in Gen. 48:22). This was the land. It was also in Shechem that Dinah was violated and her brothers Simeon and Levi killed all the male inhabitants and Jacob and his family had to flee. Jacob's well was nearby and Jesus, being tired from the journey rested by the well. The sixth hour was noontime and the heat, hunger, and thirst necessitated a rest. "When Christ was weary, he rested; when he was hungry, he partook of food, and never, in any case, worked a miracle for his own present benefit or for his disciples" (quote from C.T.Russell).

Verse 7: There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. This was unusual for a woman to come to draw water in the heat of the day. Would she not have been more comfortable to come in the cooler early morning hours? But we will find that she was a dissolute woman and either the shame she bore or

the shunning of her townspeople kept her on a schedule that avoided her peers. *Jesus said unto her, Give me to drink. Verse 8: For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy food.* Jesus started a conversation with the woman by asking for a drink. This must have startled her for (9) *The Samaritan woman therefore said unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, ask drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)* (10) *Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knew the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, Give me to drink; you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living water.* What is the gift of God? In Romans 6:23, we are told that *the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Jesus had the living water by which she could attain eternal life. But the woman misunderstood him as evident in her reply: (11) *The woman said unto him, Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: whence then have you that living water?* (12) *Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?* (13) *Jesus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinks of this water shall thirst again: (14) but whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life.* She then interprets the living water to be an eternal source of literal water that doesn't require her to come anymore to the well and physically draw it up. (15) *The woman said unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw.*

At this point, Jesus, knowing she wants the living water but does not understand his metaphor, turns the conversation to her personal life and begins the work of giving her the living water: (16) *Jesus said unto her, Go, call your husband, and come hither.* (17) *The woman answered and said unto him, I have no husband.* Jesus said unto her, *You say well, I have no husband: (18) for you have had five husbands; and he whom you now have is not your husband: this have you said truly.* (19) *The woman said unto him, Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.* From what Jesus just told her, and she knows it is true, she determines that he is a prophet. So she asks him where is the true place to worship God—here on Mt. Gerizim,

where they had built a temple--or in the Temple at Jerusalem. (20) *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.* (21) *Jesus said unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour comes, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father.* (22) *Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews.* God was in covenant relationship with the Jews; they had the Law and the Prophets and the promises made to their forefathers—all that had been revealed of salvation to that time. They had been entrusted with the oracles of God. But then Jesus makes a startling statement: (23) *But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such does the Father seek to be his worshippers.* (24) *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.* This indicated a change in dispensation and Jesus was here holding out an opportunity to the Samaritan woman, although it wouldn't have its full realization until after Pentecost. The wording is in the same vein as John 5:25, *the hour **is coming** and **now is** when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.*

There was one truth that the woman knew and held as a hope of gaining greater clarity in understanding—the coming of the Messiah. So she replies: (25) *The woman said unto him, I know that Messiah comes (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things.* (26) *Jesus said unto her, I that speak unto you am he.* What a revelation to this woman! Jesus did not often acknowledge that he was the long looked-for Messiah. I can think of a few instances where he clearly did so: 1) in Peter's answer to his question about who his apostles thought him to be; 2) in his confession before the High Priest at his illegal trial and condemnation by the Sanhedrin; 3) before Pilate; and 4) to this Samaritan woman.

At this point his disciples returned with food to eat and were surprised that he was talking with a woman but they did not ask what or why: (27) *And upon this came his disciples; and they marvelled that he was speaking with a woman; yet no man said, What seek you? or Why speak you with her?* The woman recognized this as the time to leave, but she fully expected to re-

turn because she left her waterpot behind: (28) *So the woman left her waterpot, and went away into the city, and said to the people,* (29) *Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did: can this be the Christ?* Her testimony to the people was that he told her things about herself that were not public knowledge to strangers, and this along with her earnestness brought the people out to see for themselves: (30) *They went out of the city, and were coming to him.* (31) *In the mean while the disciples prayed him, saying, Rabbi, eat.* (32) *But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that you know not.* (33) *The disciples therefore said one to another, has any man brought him aught to eat?* (34) *Jesus said unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work.* (35) *say not you, There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest.* (36) *He that reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit unto life eternal; that he that sows and he that reaps may rejoice together.* (37) *For herein is the saying true, One sows, and another reaps.* (38) *I sent you to reap that whereon ye have not labored: others have labored, and you are entered into their labor.* Jesus' disciples initially misunderstood his statement that he had meat to eat that they knew not. But he explained that he meant he was engaged in harvesting work. This was the will of his Father. It reminds me of the words of Jesus when tempted to turn the stones into bread: *Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.* The harvest work was the Father's will and he rejoiced to have the privilege of doing it; it was his meat and drink to do so. Evidently, the literal harvest was yet 4 months away, but the spiritual harvest had already begun with his ministry, and he saw in this Samaritan village an opportunity to attract prospective wheat. The sowing the Samaritans had received in various degrees over the past centuries gave an opportunity now for the reapers to gather fruit unto eternal life.

By now the woman had returned with many of her fellow citizens who were eager to meet Jesus. I wonder if the man she was living with was also there. She had evidently not lived a reputable life in this regard. I suppose her 5 husbands could have been deceased, which would have been known by the

townspeople, and her admittance to the people of what Jesus had told her was a great witness in convincing some of them in believing his claims: *(39) And from that city many of the Samaritans believed on him because of the word of the woman, who testified, He told me all things that ever I did.*

(40) So when the Samaritans came unto him, they besought him to abide with them: and he abode there two days.

(41) And many more believed because of his word; (42) and they said to the woman, now we believe, not because of your speaking: for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Savior of the world. A good number of the townspeople prevailed on Jesus to stay with them. Jesus saw this as a field ripe for harvest and spent two days teaching them the good news of salvation, and now even more responded with acknowledgement that he was indeed the Savior of the world.

(43) And after the two days he went forth from there into Galilee. Think of having spent two days with the personal teaching of Jesus. What a privilege these Samaritans had received.

(44) For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet has no honor in his own country. I think this last verse is recorded for the contrast between the Samaritan visit and the sometimes poor reception Jesus got from those of his own people. You remember the townspeople of Nazareth, his childhood city, wanted to throw him down a cliff.

From the encounter with the Samaritan woman, we may draw some lessons for ourselves. For example, God's providence may direct a meeting with one who is a social outcast but has a thirsting heart for the living water. We can refresh such with the living water by giving them the words of Jesus. His words give life and hope to those who mourn. A recognition of him as the Christ or the Anointed One brings further opportunity to take his yoke upon them and learn of him. Such will find that his yoke is easy and his burden is light.

Jesus used the opportunity to engage the woman by replies that convinced her that he was a prophet. We don't have that

ability or office but we can give a good testimony with our life and the fruits of the spirit to be a witness that draws the spiritually thirsty to inquire for more. The gift of God—eternal life—is available through Jesus Christ our Lord and is the living water we are privileged to bring to others. Perhaps the response will be recognition of Jesus as the Messiah (the Christ).

Following Jesus' baptism unto death, the sacrificial worship at the Temple was no longer pleasing to God, and after AD 70 there was no Jewish Temple. As Jesus told the Samaritan woman, the hour not only comes but also now is when the true worshippers of God would worship the Father in spirit and in truth. How could this be? The reason was that Jesus revealed the Father to them (*he that has seen me has seen the Father*, that is, God's character). Although worship in spirit and truth was what God always wanted, God initiated worship through typical sacrifices until the appointed time. Now that Jesus was here, true worship was made known by his teachings. After his death and resurrection, beginning at Pentecost, true worship became understood with the begetting of the holy spirit. Those gathered in the upper room that day received a commission from the Lord to be his witnesses. From Jerusalem, the truth went out to all Judea, to Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth. No doubt, it quickly reached the town of Sychar where eager ears were waiting to hear the good news in its fuller sense. Some of our brothers and sisters are very likely to be from the Samaritans of Sychar. Such was the power of our Lord's witness to the Samaritan woman and her townspeople.

R. Whittaker

"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. "And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. "Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. "But a **Samaritan**, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, **he felt compassion**,.... Luke 10:30-33
NASB

Tradition of Men and Commandment of God

“For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men....” Mark 7:1-13

The Pharisees were complaining to Jesus about his disciples' transgressing the tradition of the elders by not washing their hands before they ate. It was not necessarily that the disciples' hands were dirty. But they had neglected the ceremonial washing which was Jewish tradition. Jesus rebukes them by making a double charge against the Pharisees.

He denounced them because they obeyed the tradition of men, but at the same time, disobeyed the commandment of God. He also reminded them for being more concerned about clean hands than pure hearts. How does this apply to us today?

Are we any different today from the Pharisees in Jesus' day? Sometimes, we are very careful to observe traditions and customs. For examples: we try not to talk with food in our mouths; we lay out the correct position of our silverware setting; we stand when a woman walks into a room, we stand at the playing of our National Anthem; we say “please” and “thank you”; etc. But are we just as careful in obeying the commandments of God? Do we love our neighbor as ourselves? Do we love and pray for our enemies? Do we forgive those who wrong us? Do we avoid even the appearance of evil? Do we? Do we? Do we obey the commandments of God?

We, sometimes, observe the tradition and culture of men and neglect the commandment of God. In this respect, we are like the Scribes and Pharisees of old. There's nothing wrong with most of the tradition of men – to be polite, clean, good manners, etc. But, we should also take care of the heart issues as well. The Pharisees were only concerned with the outward matters, but our Lord was concerned with the heart matters. “Father, help us to focus more on the ‘inners’ rather than the ‘outers’.”

D. Donnarummo

Why Are There Trials and Tribulations?

(texts in answer to this question submitted by J. Sochacki)

Ephesians 4:12: **For the perfecting of the saints** for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

James 1:2-4: Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles (trials and temptations) of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that **when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow**. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

1 Peter 1:6-9 So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure **many trials for a little while**. **These trials will show that your faith is genuine**. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 3:13-18: Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good deeds? But even **if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it**. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good deeds, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong! Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit.

1 Peter 4:12-14: *Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, **be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering**, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world. If you are insulted because you bear the name of Christ, you will be blessed, for the glorious Spirit of God rests upon you.*

1 Peter 5:8-11: *Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are. In His kindness God called you to share in His eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So **after you have suffered a little while, He will restore, support, and strengthen you**, and He will place you on a firm foundation. All power to Him forever! Amen.*

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 *If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. **The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience.** And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.*

J. Sochacki

1Co 10:13 NASB *No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but **with the temptation will provide the way of escape** also, so that you will be able to endure it.*

“...The appropriate **way of escape** in each particular temptation; not an immediate escape, but one in due time, after patience has had her perfect work (Jas 1:2-4, Jas 1:12). He “makes” the way of escape simultaneously with the temptation which His providence permissively arranges for His people.”

Jamieson, Faucett, Brown Commentary

In Everything Demonstrate Your Thanks

I heard a fellow express that it was a good day every day that he is able to wake up. Now that was a man who took nothing for granted, which is a particularly good quality. It takes understanding to appreciate that all we have is a gift given to us. Who wouldn't always be appreciative with that understanding written on their heart? (1Thes. 5:18)

Our hearts should be free of want and a spirit of dissatisfaction, but instead be ever grateful, understanding in all humility that "godliness with contentment is great gain." (1Tim. 6:6) Our focus in life should not be on obtaining the material gifts all around us that eventually perish, but as Jesus admonished, "seek ye first the Kingdom of God." (Mat. 6:33) We need to think and walk after the spirit, doing the will of God, and not carnally after our lustful flesh.

We all have faults as sinners that we regret, so let's put them behind, and follow the admonition of Ephesians 4:28, Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. When we follow this admonition and make this a desire in life, we are indeed seeking the Kingdom of God by doing God's will...by "loving our neighbor as ourselves" like the Good Samaritan, laying up for ourselves everlasting "treasures in heaven." (Mat. 8:19-20) We are thereby demonstrating a true love of God. (1Jn. 4:20) We should not withhold compassion by the high mindedness of claiming "a law was broken," but instead remember the example of our Heavenly Father who gave His only begotten Son to save ALL of us as law breakers while we were yet sinners. (Ro. 5:8) When we have this understanding, we can realize what Jesus taught when He said, "it is more blessed to give than receive." (Acts 20:35) We must be merciful if we are to receive mercy as sinners and lawbreakers ourselves. (Lu.6:38) Satan can give us high minded slogans and many excuses to withhold blessings and mercy from those seeking our help, whether it is us individually, or

collectively as a nation God has so greatly blessed. Let us always be led by a “thus saith the Lord.” Jesus proclaimed, “Freely you are given, freely give.” (Mat.10:8) We need to realize the GREAT value of human life and treasure all of God’s children, which in turn will provide great blessings for us, individually and collectively by the will of God. This desire to help will not stem from our fleshly lusts, for it is spiritual in following the leadings of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and not those of Satan. (Jn. 8:44)

The Lord surely provides for all of our needs, even through eye openers like a pandemic that hopefully will impart a measure of wisdom to the fool-hearty. The Lord tells us in Proverbs 21:20, *“There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.”* I am amazed when I see miles of shiny \$50,000 trucks and cars in pandemic food lines owned by those who could not last 2-3 weeks without going hungry. Yes, the Lord is gracious, and even provides for the foolish, who have consumed their resources on their lusts. The Lord admonishes us in John 6:27, *Labor not for the meat which perishes, but for that meat which endures unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.* Let us labor, not after our lusts, but “to give to them that need help,” whether it be temporal or spiritual gifts that we receive of the Lord. When asking for help in prayer, let us take to heart James 4:3, *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.* Let us take this important lesson to heart, and ask that we might help others.

David, a man described by God as a man after His own heart, (1Sam.13:14) recognized without a doubt the unsearchableness of our Heavenly Father, and daily gave Him praise. The verses he compiled below are more than mere words. When we reflect on them, we come away with a greater appreciation of the depth of their riches, for they reflect the unsearchable truths that inspire, and draw us closer to our loving, righteous, and faithful Creator. In Psalms 145,

David proclaims, *“Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.”* There is a song titled, *“The Best Things in Life are Free.”* Even MasterCard sort of proclaims this in their Ads that give the dollar costs of many items, and then close with a statement like, *“a babies smile....priceless.”* It takes eyes that are blind and ears that cannot hear, and senses that are dull, and hearts that are hardened to not appreciate as David proclaims, *“the wonder, the majesty and unsearchableness, the power and greatness of our Heavenly Father”* who gives us an infinite number of priceless gifts that are all too often just taken for granted. Think about it, isn't taking things for granted an offensive and unappreciative state of mind and heart. David continues, *The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee. O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee.*

God's grace and great love and mercy are reflected in the giving of His only begotten Son...the gift of gifts, given to a rebellious and unappreciative creation. How great is the Lord's mercy and divine love! How this example, and the graciousness proclaimed here, should tame and temper us in life's affairs!

David continues, *The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him **in truth.***

The Lord's care and providences that shape and influence our hearts and minds should be a growing evidence of the Lord's faithfulness towards us. He cares for us, lifting us up when we fall, and as we read, gives us sustenance in every sense of the word, with *“meat in due season.”* As we read, the Lord lifts up all that are *“bowed down”* with a hum-

ble spirit, and **preserves** all them that are obedient. These verses so wonderfully speak of the Lord's faithfulness towards us. Let us every day sing praises to our Heavenly Father, and never show hearts hardened by taking for granted his countless gifts.

Let us remember 1Co.4:7 "*For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*" Yes, the Lord is faithful to provide our every need. Let us acknowledge His faithfulness by being humble, gracious and loving ourselves, anxious to help others as a good neighbor, as Jesus described the Good Samaritan. (Lu.10:33-37). Let us follow the admonition of Phil 3:18-21, "*For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*"

Let us not follow the worldly wisdom of high mindedness, but as law breakers ourselves, let us be merciful by showing compassion to all of God's children, whoever they may be, or from wherever they come.

J. DiCesare

Gal 6:9-10 NASB Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. 10 So then, while we have opportunity, **let us do good to all people**, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Mat 5:7 NASB "**Blessed are the merciful**, for they shall receive mercy.

The Whole Armor

Eph. 6:10-18

“Hear ye, Hear ye!” soldiers of the cross,
Are you ready for victory or for loss?
Do you have your full armor on?
Or, are you careless and heed not the alarm?

We fight not against flesh and blood,
But Satan – The father of all falsehood;
He deceived Adam and Eve, which was the start,
Of the devil’s wiles and his continual “darts.”

We are urged to put the armor complete,
From the top of our heads right down to our feet;
And what is this armor we are to wear,
It’s not the metal covering for us to bear.

We are called to put on the “inner man’s” array,
And the “hotline” open to God, as we do pray;
The “helmet of salvation” – Jesus’ shed blood,
The “plan” prepared even before the Flood;

The “breastplate of righteousness” – God’s grace,
A renewing of our minds, like a clean, washed face;
The “shield of faith” – our trust in the Lord,
That gives us a stronghold through peril and sword;

Our “loins girt about with truth” – that sets us free,
The Divine Word of God – food for you and me;
“Feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace,”
Good news to a world that’s wallowing in defeat;

The call to “bear arms” summons us today,
The battle is raging in our “temples of clay;”
Everyone’s piece of armor should be in proper place,
And we’ll be victorious, with the help of God’s grace.

D.A. Donnarummo

Praise

Psalm 139:14-16

Some excerpts from a sermon by Benjamin Barton

We call your attention to the words of Psalm 139, verses 14, 15 and 16.

"I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth well. My substance was not hid from Thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there were none of them."

This passage has furnished the text for many, many sermons. The usual application has been on this wise -- that the Psalmist was here referring to the marvels of the human body. If we were to take a few statements from these verses, they might seem to sustain this significance. But we are learning that we are not justified in making any application of a verse in the Bible unless that application would agree, not only with isolated parts of that statement, but with the context as well, and, when we consider the context here, we are satisfied that no reasonable application could be made to the human body.

When we read, *"my substance was not hid from Thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth,"* it is quite evident that the last part of the verse does not apply to the human body, unless it could be true of someone born down in a coal mine. When we read, *"in Thy book all my members were written which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them,"* we cannot imagine this to relate to the human body; that God had a book in which he wrote down, two eyes and two ears, eight fingers, two thumbs, and ten toes, etc. It seems to me there is some deeper, some greater, and more important significance to these words than that.

We understand that the significance of these verses can only be grasped as we begin to understand something about this

wonderful union with Christ. We do not always mean the same thing when we speak of the body of Christ.

Sometimes we use the expression, body of Christ, in a mystical sense, not referring to the physical body which Jesus had and which was crucified upon Calvary, nor to the spiritual, heavenly body which he has had since his resurrection; but to those who in a mystical, figurative sense are represented as constituting his body because they resign self, their wills, their lives to Him, desiring henceforth to do what he would have them do and to be what he would have them be.

We find this thought running through the New Testament writings. Remember how the Apostle Paul, before his conversion, was on the way to Damascus to apprehend the Christians there, and how there shone about him a wonderful light, above the brightness of the sun at noonday, and he heard the heavenly voice saying, "*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*" You remember Saul cried out, "*Who art thou, Lord?*" And the reply was, "*I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*" I can almost imagine Jesus responding, "Saul, it is not Stephen and those other disciples, but me you have been persecuting".

Ephesians 3:9, "*and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world has been hidden in God.*" We see, here is a great mystery which many professing the name of Christ know nothing about. Some tell us there are no mysteries in the Bible. Any who say that cannot have studied the Bible very seriously or carefully, or exercised his reason in doing so. The Bible is full of things about this mystery.

In Ephesians 2, verse 15, he tells us that Christ is "*to make in himself of the twain one new man, so making peace.*" Christ was going to make in himself a new man. What could he mean by this? There is a peculiar thing about this new man. It was going to be a new kind of man; a man made up of many individuals. "*The twain*" refers to two classes -- namely, those following in the footsteps of Jesus from among the Jews, and a second class who would become his followers from amongst the Gentiles -- and of these twain he would make in himself one

new man, thus making peace. While spoken of as one individual, yet many individuals compose this new man. Jesus is the head and the church the members of the body.

We begin to see why the Lord uses this illustration, why he speaks of Christ and the church being bound together in this wonderful unity, because they constitute "the Christ". It is the common thought that the title "*Christ*" applies merely to the Lord Jesus. It is true that Jesus was "*Christ*", which means the "anointed" one. He is the one whom the Father anointed with that Holy Spirit in such a wonderful manner 1,900 years ago. He is the one whom the Father used in such wonderful ways in the past in the creation of all things made, and in still more wonderful ways has planned to use him in the future. When we consider the Bible carefully, we find that "*Christ*" sometimes applies to Jesus as an individual, but in other instances it refers to this man of many members of which Jesus is the head. We find that when the Bible uses the expression "*Jesus Christ*," it emphasizes the fact that Jesus, the individual, is meant, but where "*Christ*" is used alone it often means this company over which Christ is the head. We believe there are some places where the word "*Christ*" occurs without "*Jesus*," when the individual alone is meant, but we will find in quite a number of passages, where "*Christ*" occurs without the appellation "*Jesus*", it has reference, not to Jesus alone, but to this company.

For instance, in the 1st chapter of Colossians and 24th verse, the Apostle points out how we are to "*fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for his body's sake*". One may say, what is meant by that? This word, translated behind, means that which is lacking, that which is wanting, deficient. It is as though the Apostle had said, brethren, there is something deficient in the sufferings of Christ which we have to fill up. Would it indicate a deficiency in the sufferings of Jesus Christ? No, there was no deficiency in the sufferings of Jesus Christ, for he finished the work which the Father had given him to do and suffered everything that he should suffer. Where is the deficiency, then? If we turn to the prophecies of the Old Testament, we find references to the sufferings of Messiah, the Christ, which were not fulfilled in Jesus. We find quite a num-

ber of prophetic statements made relative to Christ which could not by any possible means be applied to Jesus.

When the Savior completed his earthly course by dying on the cross, there was a part of the sufferings of "Christ" left. How could this be? The Old Testament prophecies had relation not merely to what Jesus would do, but to the composite "Christ", Jesus and the members of his body. Jesus filled up faithfully everything that he, as an individual, was to suffer; he endured what he was to endure; there was not one thing lacking. But something was lacking to fulfill what the prophets had written about the sufferings of "Christ", and that was the part which the church, the body of Christ, is permitted to fill up, that they may also be finally glorified together with him. We see now that this word "*Christ*" has a most beautiful significance.

Melchizedek was also a type of Christ, head and body, being both king and priest. In 1st Peter 2:9 the Apostle says, "*Ye are a royal priesthood.*" We recognize that there is no royal priest pictured in the Bible but Melchizedek, and this picture was given that we might have the grander conception of "*Christ*", not only Jesus as the individual "*Christ*", but the thought of a collective "Christ" of many members, to serve as king and priest.

Many things which the prophets declared Christ would do have not been done, because "*Christ*" has not fully come. These are things which are waiting for this great collective Christ, this Christ of which Jesus is the head. We find statements in the Scriptures which are not true of the Lord Jesus, but spoken of Christ. If this were not so, then according to the Bible, the Lord Jesus was a sinner. We see this illustrated in the 69th Psalm. That it refers to him is very evident from the 21st verse, where we read, "*They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*" We know how this was fulfilled in our dear Redeemer. The same prophet, speaking in the 5th verse, says, "*O God, thou knowest my foolishness and my sins are not hid from thee.*" Did Jesus have any sins or foolishness? I say, No! He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. Yet here "*Christ*" has some foolishness and acknowledges sin. How can we ac-

count for it? Many of these prophetic utterances have been very confusing to people, which we now see so readily. This was a statement true of the collective Christ, but not the individual Christ.

So in the passage which we have chosen for our text, we see the wonderful knowledge referred to is relative to this collective Christ. When it says, "*I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made,*" we recognize that there is no class able to praise God as could Jesus and those who have followed in his footsteps. The thought of being "*fearfully and wonderfully made*" refers to this wonderful body of Christ. "*My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret.*" This work of making this new man has been going on for 1,900 years, but in secret. The world has known about the great historical events, about political and financial affairs; they have known of great advancements along scientific and agricultural lines; they know about astronomical happenings. But the most wonderful thing which has ever taken place the world knows nothing about. There are those who are called Christians who do not understand how some are willing to sacrifice their lives to gain membership in the body of Christ. To a large number of those professing the name of the redeemer, this would be considered sheer foolishness. We believe every true child of God down through the gospel age has had some idea of this secret, though perhaps not clearly seen by many.

"In thy book all of my members were written (in the Lamb's book all of the members of that wonderful body have been written) which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there were none of them." Before anyone had been invited to become a member of that body, God had made provision for this class in His wonderful plan. Amen

Benjamin Barton

1Co 12:12-14 NASB *For even as **the body is one and yet has many members**, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, **so also is Christ**. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many.*

A Portrait of Jesus:

His Father's House



“Every year the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. When Jesus was twelve years old, they went to the festival as usual. When the festival was over, they started back home, but the boy Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. His parents did not know this; they thought that he was with the group, so they travelled a whole day and then started looking for him among their relatives and friends. They did not find him, so they went back to Jerusalem looking for him. On the third day they found him in the Temple, sitting with the Jewish teachers, listening to them and asking questions. All who heard him were amazed at his intelligent answers. His parents were astonished when they saw him, and his mother said to him, “My son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been terribly worried trying to find you.” He answered them, “Why did you have to look for me? Didn’t you know that I had to be in my Father’s house?” But they did not understand his answer. So Jesus went back with them to Nazareth, where he was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. Jesus grew both in body and in wisdom, gaining favor with God and people.”
Luke 2:41-52 GNT

The fact that Jesus family attended Passover every year spoke of their devotion to Jehovah. On these journeys to Jerusalem, the men, women and children traveled in their respective groups...I am sure this made the 63 mile journey go by faster. This was the last year before Jesus would enter into full participation in the religious life of the synagogue. When Jesus would turn 13, He would formally take on the yoke of the law and become a bar mitzvah or “son of the commandment.” So Jesus chose to go to the temple and learn more about His Father’s business. For more than three days He amazes the rabbis

with His questions and He listens intently to what they have to say. The rabbis were amazed at His intelligence and His intense interest in learning. They had never encountered anyone like this child.

Meanwhile His parents have spent an entire day walking toward home in their respective groups, believing Jesus to be with the other boys his age. The fact that His parents did not immediately miss Jesus, speaks to His responsible behavior and their trust in Him. They simply thought He was with His friends as He had been for years during this recurring journey home. They must have been frantic when they realized He was not with them. The three days they searched for Him must have left them feeling frustrated and anxious. When they finally find Jesus, Mary does what any mother would do, she asks him what is going on and then lays on a guilt trip about how worried they were. Jesus answers her simply but with disbelief, "How could you not know where to find me? I **HAD** to be in my Father's House." Jesus recognized at the young age of twelve His unique sonship to God and that His mission would require Him to be devoted to God's purposes to the extent that it would take precedent over His earthly family ties. His parents did not understand His answer, but scripture tells us that Mary treasured this incident and kept it close to her heart. Jesus returned home with His parents and was obedient to them. He submitted to their authority as prescribed by the law and there is nothing more mentioned about His childhood other than that He grew physically and spiritually and in favor with His Father in heaven and with man. He must have been an incredible child and young man. When He turned 30, He would leave behind His earthly family and begin His ministry as the Son of God, doing the will of His Father and bringing salvation to all mankind.

D. Mathewson

Children's SC: *Meeting Together*

Dear Ones,

Imagine you are living in the city of Troas, in Turkey. The year is 55 A.D. Your parents have brought you to church to hear a missionary named Paul speak about Jesus. Your friend, Eutychus, is listening from his seat on a windowsill. You can see him starting to nod off as Paul continues speaking and it gets later and later. Suddenly people scream! Eutychus has fallen and is lying very still on the stone floor three stories below. He is not breathing. Paul runs down the steps and kneels over your friend. God be praised! Eutychus is breathing! He gets up. He acts like nothing has happened. He isn't even bruised. Jesus, through Paul, has raised your friend from the dead. Aren't you glad you were at church so you got to see this miracle!



If we are not going to church, we are missing out on many blessings. We might not see someone dead brought back to life, but we will see people who are as good as dead in their sins accept Jesus, get baptized, and be on the path to everlasting life. We will see very old people, little children, people of other races, poor people and rich worshiping God together. This is encouraging to us. Because we are there, we are encouraging to everyone else at church with us. By being at church, we are saying to each other, "You are not alone. I am here to help you. I love you." Seeing children and young people at church makes me especially happy. I have hope that they will grow to be Christians who are strong in their faith.

Hebrews 10:24 and 25 says we Christians must keep meeting together in one place so we can encourage each other to have love and to do good works. Paul says that we are to gather together physically, and to be together even more as we see that the end is drawing near. He tells us this for good reason. Paul visited the Christian churches at every opportunity. Writing letters to his fellow Christians was not good enough for the apostle Paul. Writing letters to each other and being on social media is not good enough for us either. Calling other Christians on the phone and seeing each other's faces on Zoom or Skype is pleasant and uplifting, but we also need to be together. At church, we can show our love for each other by touching one another and confiding in each other our deepest joys and fears.

Please send your questions to the editor of this magazine. I am praying for you.

Your Aunt Nancy

The Accuser

C.S. Lewis, in his "Screwtape Letters," suggests that one of the most successful tactics that Satan and his demons use in trying to win Christians back to their side is to *get them to dwell on their failures*. Once they begin to feel guilty about their performance in their Christian life, they are as good as won.

Have you ever had the experience of feeling that you have hurt or offended someone and instead of asking for their forgiveness, you just try to avoid them? Every time you see that person you cringe and hope that they don't approach you. Your guilt feelings start to build up and before long you start to resent that person. You start to feel hostile and alienated toward them, when in fact you don't really know for sure if they are even angry with you.

This is exactly what happens when we feel guilty before God. Our guilt often turns to hostility and we feel alienated from God. Satan knows this. He loves to get his hands on a *sensitive* Christian and try to get him to feel unworthy before God. *Satan gets him to focus on his sinful life rather than on the fact that he has been forgiven*. "But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and *free from accusation*" (Colossians 1:22).

Did you know that the word "Satan" means literally, "*the Accuser?*" (See Rev. 12:10.) I can imagine Satan standing before God with a portfolio on each of God's children. He opens his records on (place your name here) and says, "Aha! Look at what (your name) did. He's one of your children?" And then Satan begins to accuse. But then Christ steps up and says, "Father, (your name) believed in me in (fill in the year). The forgiveness I paid for (your name) at the cross was then applied to him." And the Father says, "**Case dismissed!**"

But Satan doesn't give up. After his accusations before God get nowhere, he begins to work on *our conscience*. He tries to place us on a hopeless treadmill of sinning, vowing we won't do it again, desperately struggling not to sin, and then sinning again. Then finally Satan has us exactly where he wants us. We become so discouraged that we feel God has given up on us. We begin to doubt whether we are really forgiven of our sins.

But wait a minute, don't we know that Satan is a liar and a deceiver? We don't have to accept the feelings of guilt that Satan dumps on us because Christ took that guilt along with our sins and nailed them all to the cross once and for all. Until we accept this fact, we will not be able to respond to God in faith. Ephesians 1:4-7 tells us that He has accepted us just as He has accepted Jesus. *"That we should be holy and without blame before him in love..... wherein he has made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."* When God looks at us, He doesn't see our sins - **He sees Jesus!**

This doesn't mean that we can go out and sin and have no conscience about it. But we also need to understand that once we have repented of our sins and have been washed in the blood of Christ that we no longer need to ask for forgiveness again. It is already a settled fact with God and He just wants us to claim what is already true. 1 John 1:9 tells us *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* The word *"confess"* means to acknowledge or to agree with someone about something. In this case it means to agree with God that we have sinned.

If we constantly plead with God for forgiveness for the same sins, we aren't confessing (agreeing about) our sins. *We are showing a lack of faith in God's promises that we were forgiven at the cross of Christ.* Listen to what He did for us at Calvary. *"When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him."* These rulers and authorities are Satan and his army. They no longer have any legal right to interfere with any child of God. We can allow Satan to come into our lives, but we certainly don't need to. Praise God!

Have you been waiting for God to punish you for your sins? Has this guilt produced an estrangement from the one person you need to be closest to - your Heavenly Father? Please take comfort in the fact that no matter how much you have let Him down, if you have accepted His Son as your Savior, **God does not condemn you.** He only wants you to *acknowledge your sins, turning from them and thank Him* for His forgiveness, so He can put His arms around you and reassure you of His love.

Dennis Thorfeldt

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!

Allen, Peggy & Russell – VT	Jones, Arlene - VA
Anas, Dan – FL (d)	Karavas, Anna - CA
Anderson, Family– WI (d)	Knapp, Jamie – NH
Andrada, Delores & Family – CA	Knapp, Joseph – IL (d)
Bews, Sandra and Family TX (d)	Ketko, Marion – MI
Boswell, Arlene – IL	Leavitt, Denise & Richard – ME
Buxton, Jean & Family - UK	Lepitre Family - IL
Carpenter, Gloria – KY	Howes, Paul & Carla - UK
Cline, Ruth – MO	Kingsmith, Beresford - UK
Cooper, Carmela – NJ	Mazzotta, Eva – VA
Csutor, Judith – CT	Miller, Alain – Canada
Day, Ronald – PA	Mitchell, Mitch - France
DiCenso, Sabatino - AZ	Moore, Ralph & Maryellen – CA
Dickson, Roberta Jo – CA	Munoz, Sue - NY
Donnarummo, Dan – OH (d)	Niewiemiński, Elaine – NY
Duhaime, George & Family – CT (d)	Orsburn, Judi – CA (d)
Dunn, Kim - IL	Parker, Geraldine – CA
Fantuzzo, Tony – NY (d)	Penton, Jim – Canada
Feliciano, Carmen - NY	Phillips, Stella – OK
Fischer, Mike & Liz – WI	Riggio, Fran – NH
Foster, Jean – IL	Rowe, Bryan - UK
Gary, Inez – VA	Schultz, Becky & Family – MN (d)
Gmiterek Family (d)	Schwartz, Ruth – TX
Hauslein, Karen – MD	Seminoff, Brenda – CA
Hawk, Barbara – PA	Thomassen, Sandi – NM (d)
Hildebrandt, Lois - FL	Tuscia, Priscilla – FL
Hogrebe, Joan – MO	Trent, Thelma – FL (d)
Hopkins, Linda & Andrew – VA (d)	Weaver, Eddie - NY
Iannaccone, Bob & Marie – IL	White, Ken & Joan - NY
	Wisdom Hezekiah Ikpo - Nigeria
	Zychal, Ruth & Craig– NJ

d) = death in the family

Entered into rest:

Judith Black – June 12, 2020

Jeanne Nelson – June 23, 2020

Esther Dobbins – July 5, 2020

Don Orsburn – July 21, 2020 (Don was on the CDMI Board and Manager of the Bible Correspondence Course curriculum. He is greatly missed).

Bible Correspondence Course New Graduates & Websites

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



USA

Basic Course -- Rodney Sperry, Maine (We apologize for misspelling Sperry as Speer in the last issue}

Notice: As of this time, we do not know the names of recent students to publicly acknowledge for their successful completion of Bible Correspondence Course work. The Course Manager, Bro. Don Orsburn, died suddenly on July 21, 2020. He left a good example of faithfulness to Christ in his zeal to do the work put into his hands.

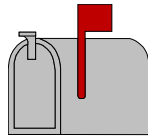
(Heb. 6:10 NASB) God is not unjust so as to forget Bro. Don's work and the love which he has shown toward His name, in having ministered to the saints.

(We hope to publish names in the next issue).

You are invited to view the following websites:

<http://www.cdmi.org> (Christian Discipling Ministries International)
<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/home>
<http://www.cartyorkshire.co.uk> (CART)
<http://www.campblessing.com> (Camp Blessing)
<http://www.homechristians.net> (Fraser Valley, B.C.)
<http://www.bibelgemeinde.at> (Free Bible Students, Austria)
<http://www.bibelgemeinde.org> (Mission Work Bible Students, Austria)
<http://bibelforscher.heimat.eu/> (Free Bible Students, Germany (English))
<http://www.softgrafic.com/bibbia> (Italian Bible Students)
<http://www.newcovenantfellowship.org.au> (New Covenant News, Austr.)
<http://www.ebbereanos.org> (Berean Bible Students, Brazil – Portuguese/Spanish)

Letters from Our Fellowship and Readers



No letters to publish this issue.

The Lord's Name

"You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold guiltless anyone who misuses His name."
Exodus 20:7

We often think of this text in the area of not using the Lord's name as a curse. There is no question that this commandment was meant to convey that, but there is more that it conveys to us as Christians. The use of Jehovah's name should always be one that is filled with awe and reverence and great respect, for He is the Creator of the Universe. There is no question that the Father who saved us should be adored, but there is more. As Christians, we have taken on the "family name". If we claim to be Jehovah's sons and daughters, we have a responsibility to live up to all that His name deserves. That is an awesome responsibility! Are we bringing honor and glory to the name of the One we claim to serve? Do our spouses, our children, our neighbors, our coworkers know who our Father is? Are we making our Father proud of us? Have we brought honor or dishonor to His name with our actions? In Romans 2:24, Paul told his fellow Jews, "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." What a startling text! They were bringing dishonor to their God by their actions and in doing so, turning others away from Christ. The way we as Christians live can make all the difference in how unbelievers see our Father and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are being watched by all with whom we come in contact. If we live as God's Son, if Jesus Christ shines through our lives, we will bring glory and honor to Jehovah. His name will be honored. Let each of us resolve this day to not take Jehovah's name in vain. Live your life worthy of Jehovah, and in doing so bring Him all the honor and glory that is due Him. (*go to next page, bottom*)

Conferences & Conventions

Note: There is a dearth of physical conventions at this time due to the coronavirus. However, if you are having an online convention and would like to advertise it in the New Creation, please send full information to the editor at least 3 months in advance of your conference or convention.

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 CDML.

Article Contributions

Please send articles for possible publication to Dennis Gorham,
4 Alicia Street Somersworth, NH 03878
email: 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. We strive for accuracy but do not have full knowledge.

Father, may we never take your name in vain. How we pray that our lives might never bring you shame, but only glory and honor for that is what you truly deserve! We are so blessed to have been adopted as your sons and daughters, though we are so undeserving. How we long to make you proud of who we have become because of your grace! May we always live worthy of the name of your dear Son, that others will be drawn to Him. May our lives bring you glory and honor and praise forever! Amen.

Quiet Waters Christian Devotions