

# ***GRACE & TRUTH*** MAGAZINE

- ***For Which World?***
- ***A Few Thoughts  
On Prophecy***
- ***Are You Trying  
To Look Better?***

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# GRACE & TRUTH

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# Only One Life, 'Twill Soon Be Past

Two little lines I heard one day, Traveling along life's busy way;  
Bringing conviction to my heart, And from my mind would not depart;  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one, Soon will its fleeting hours be done;  
Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet, And stand before His judgment seat;  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, the still small voice, Gently pleads for a better choice  
Bidding me selfish aims to leave, and to God's holy will to cleave;  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, a few brief years, Each with its burdens, hopes and fears;  
Each with its days I must fulfill, Living for self or in His will;  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

When this bright world would tempt me sore, When Satan would a victory score;  
When self would seek to have its way, Then help me, Lord, with joy to say;  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

Give me Father, a purpose deep, In joy or sorrow Thy Word to keep;  
Faithful and true what e'er the strife, Pleasing Thee in my daily life;  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

Oh let my love with fervor burn, And from the world not let me turn;  
Living for Thee, and Thee alone, Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one, Now let me say, "Thy will be done";  
And when at last I'll hear the call, I know I'll say, "'Twas worth it all";  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

—C. T. Studd, a missionary to China, India and Africa (1860-1931)

# ETERNAL WORD, ETERNAL SON

Eternal Word, eternal Son,  
The Father's constant joy,  
What Thou hast done and what Thou art  
Shall all our tongues employ;  
Our life, our Lord, we Thee adore;  
Worthy art Thou for evermore.

The eternal glory's living light,  
Of God the image Thou,  
Creator of the universe  
Upholding all things now;  
Our peace, our strength, we Thee adore;  
Worthy art Thou for evermore.

The Son in whom the fullness dwells,  
Through whom all glories flow,  
Thou hast a servant's form assumed  
That creatures God might know;  
Our spring, our Head, we Thee adore;  
Worthy art Thou for evermore.

Declarer of the Father's name,  
Expression of His grace,  
The Word of life, the light of men,  
The Lord with unveiled face;  
Our joy, our hope, we Thee adore;  
Worthy art Thou for evermore. **GT**

—Anonymous

# A LIFE WITH ETERNAL WORTH

by Roger Penney

When I was in the Navy some ladies at a nearby assembly asked if I would give an elderly lady a ride on Sunday mornings to the breaking of bread, or remembrance meeting. I readily agreed, but I could not have imagined how this “chance” conversation would lead to so much learning and challenge. All that took place was the Lord’s doing, and it was marvelous in my eyes (Ps. 118:23).

As time passed I began to wonder, “How could a little old lady in failing health become such a powerful warrior for God?” The explanation was given by the apostle Paul in his first letter to the saints at Corinth (*see scripture at right*).

In a tremulous, or shaky, voice that hid inner strength and determination, she would ask people she met, “Do you love Jesus, my dear?” There was such love and tenderness in her simple question that, as far as I know, no one ever took offence. But it was not only in witnessing that she excelled.

One day she mentioned a date and a time and asked me if I had been in danger at that moment. Sure enough, I had; it is something about which I am ashamed. She told me that the Lord had put my safety on her mind and she had to pray for me the instant He did. I had been delivered. Gradually, from snippets of conversation, I learned that God often woke her up during the night, causing her to get out of bed and kneel down to pray for someone in trouble or dis-

“God hath  
chosen the  
foolish things  
of the world  
to confound  
the wise; and  
God hath  
chosen the  
weak things  
of the world  
to confound  
the things  
that are  
mighty”  
(1 Cor. 1:27 KJV).



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tress. During the daytime too she would sense the need to stop what she was doing in order to intercede on someone's behalf. Since those days long ago when I was a young sailor, that dear old lady has been an inspiration to me.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF BELIEVERS**

We all have differing gifts and callings, but some things are the same. As believers, all of us are to pray and to encourage one another. We may not all be evangelists, but we are all called to witness and to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15).

We are not all teachers, but we can all accept that God has called us to comfort and to encourage. Isaiah said, "The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary" (Isa. 50:4).

Assuredly, we are not all preachers or heralds of the gospel, but we can demonstrate the love of Christ which is shed abroad in our hearts and which overflows to those around us (Rom. 5:5). God has given to each of us the Holy Spirit, and we are to tell the thirsty souls around us about the Source of living water. As we drink of the

"living water" ourselves, dispensed by the Lord Jesus, we refresh others by the power of the Spirit of God (see Jn. 4:7-14, 7:37-39).

### **AN URGENCY**

The urgency of our day may add motivation to what we do. The world is beginning to experience the rumblings of the devastation soon to strike it. As we see the danger approaching we owe it to the Lord and to our fellow men to warn them of the dire judgment looming on the horizon.

Ezekiel expressed this thought very plainly for all to understand. When the clouds of war and judgment are in view, God will have a watchman from among His people to sound the alarm. If people hear and do not take warning, then their blood is upon them. However, if they hear and take warning they deliver their own souls. The watchman who fails to sound the alarm becomes responsible for the death of those he was to warn – their blood is on *his* head. We are all watchmen and we need to warn others of the imminent judgments of God upon this evil world. It is our responsibility to sound the alarm and to do so clearly (Ezek. 33:1-9).

If we are living a life of pleasure, heedless of the dangers for our neighbors, or if we are concerned only for earthly things,

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then our message will be uncertain. We will then be guilty of their blood (Joel 2:1; 1 Cor.14:8).

## **THE LIFE OF ETERNAL WORTH**

A life of eternal worth is one which gives diligence to show itself “approved unto God ... rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Without Bible study we will be ill-equipped – unable to teach, witness, exhort, comfort and worship.

All these virtues merge into one by the power and discernment given to us by God’s Spirit (Jn. 16:12-14). The Spirit does not speak of Himself. Instead, He shows us the Lord Jesus. We are priests of a holy and a royal priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:5). We are also “an holy nation, a peculiar people; that [we] should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called [us] out of darkness into His marvellous light” (v.9).

Like the Aaronic priesthood, we are consecrated, or set apart, for sacred service. As they were washed, dressed and had blood applied to ears, hands and feet, we are likewise washed and dressed. Their hands were then filled with the pieces of the ram of consecration. Similarly, our spirits, souls and minds are conse-

crated by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, with His character and virtues. We are the true worshipers about whom the Lord Jesus told the woman at the well (Lev. 8:1-28; Jn. 4:23-24).

## **FIRST OCCURRENCE OF “WORSHIP” IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

Abraham must have been tested to the utter limit when told to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering. But in this we see how Abraham and we are led by the spirit of God to understand what it meant for God the Father to sacrifice the Lord Jesus and to lay upon Him the iniquity of us all. It is in this story that we find the first occurrence of the word “worship,” and there we discover the very depths of its meaning (Gen. 22:1-19).

An animal was offered as a substitute for Isaac, but the cup of judgment could not pass from the Son of God (Mt. 26:39). In this we see the burnt (ascending) offering which we offer to God; it is our gratitude and appreciation for the Lord Jesus and of Him. As priests we were given the pieces of the slain ram so we can present to God the virtues and the loving deeds of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The book of Psalms shows how the offerings and sacrifices tell us about the Lord Jesus. One exam-

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ple quoted in the New Testament, with a messianic interpretation, is Psalm 40:6-8. We read in Hebrews: “Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God” (10:5-7).

### FIRST OCCURRENCE OF “WORSHIP” IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The first occurrence of the word “worship” in the New Testament emphasizes how we worship God and joy in Him through our Lord Jesus Christ. He is also worshiped by angels (Heb. 1:6).

Explaining the reason for their visit first to Herod the Great in Jerusalem, the wise men asked, “Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him” (Mt. 2:2). The wise men clearly understood that this

birth, heralded by extraordinary signs in the night sky, was no ordinary birth. That they made an arduous journey through dangerous lands bearing very rich gifts is evidence for the strength of their belief. The message, written in the heavens, had profoundly stirred their devotion and their willingness to bow before the miraculous baby.

### FINAL CHALLENGE

Today we have the privilege of being heralds, ambassadors, priests, prophets and worshipers telling forth the excellencies of our Lord Jesus Christ and joining the heavenly choirs singing His praises. “Worthy is the Lamb which was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing” (Rev. 5:12). May we live in a manner that gives pleasure and a sense of sweetness to the Father and a continuous sweet song to God. *That is a life worth living and one of eternal worth!* **GT**

Nothing will give such peace and happiness as a life lived in conscious harmony with our heavenly Father’s plan for us. Let’s yield our lives to God and view our circumstances as ordered for our good. Let’s see in them a God-given opportunity to live in harmony with His purposes for our lives. If we do this, we will experience His sustaining power and His peace. Our circumstances may never change, but our lives will take on new meaning that will make for peace, happiness and a life worth living.

—E. C. Hadley, “*You Can Have A Happy Life,*” available from *Grace & Truth*.



# LIFE WITH ETERNAL WORTH AND VALUE

by Alfred Bouter

**T**he Holy Spirit limited John's account of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, to a selection of signs, events and messages.<sup>1</sup> There were many more things he could have written about, but he concluded his gospel with an important summary: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (Jn. 20:31 NKJV).

John's gospel presents to us the most wonderful person, Jesus – Yeshua, meaning "Yahweh is salvation" – who is the anointed One, the Son of Man and "God blessed over all" (Rom. 9:5). Yet the Jewish leadership rejected Him, unwilling to accept God's Messiah and refusing to believe that He is the Son of God. As long as the Jewish people reject these two points they cannot have a meaningful relationship with the LORD, or Yahweh, who had made Himself known to them (Dt. 6:4-5). The Jewish leaders accused

Jesus of blasphemy, saying that He had done His great miracles through the power of Beelzebub (Satan) even though the wonders He did were clear signs that He was the Messiah (Mt. 12:22-28). In addition, despite all the evidence to the contrary, they declared Him guilty of blasphemy when He confirmed that He is the Son of God (Mt. 26:62-66).

As already mentioned, one purpose of John's gospel is to produce faith in those who read or hear what was written, so they might receive life by believing in His name. Sadly, the majority did not want it in Jesus' day just as they don't desire it today. But the truth remains: God is the Source of life and the great Giver of life, and it is only through faith that we receive life (Jn. 3:16). This life cannot be separated from God's light and love as none of His attributes can be severed from Him.

Yet the Jewish leadership repeatedly rejected the claims of

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the messiahship of Jesus. In their spiritual blindness – the consequence of their hardening (Isa. 6:10) – they rejected and denounced Him before Pilate, the Roman governor; and then forced Pilate to have Jesus crucified.

When Jesus rose from among the dead three days later, the Jewish leaders spread the lie that His disciples had stolen His body from the tomb. This lie, unsupported by any evidence, is still being spread (Mt. 28:11-15).

### **THE PERSECUTOR CONVICTED**

One man who followed the Jewish leadership after the death of Jesus the Messiah was Saul of Tarsus. He was born in the Roman province of Cilicia, in present-day Turkey. After his education there, Saul went to Jerusalem where he was trained by a famous rabbi, Gamaliel. Saul became a leader among those who persecuted the Jewish believers – those who had accepted Jesus as Savior and Messiah (Acts 8:1,3, 9:1). In Acts 9 we read that after having persecuted those believers in Jerusalem and Judea, Saul received authorization from the Jerusalem leadership to go to the Jewish community in Damascus to arrest those “of the Way” and put them on trial. Just before Saul arrived in Damascus, something totally

unexpected happened: The Lord Jesus, the Messiah, appeared to him with a great light and a voice from heaven. The rejected Messiah of Nazareth – whom the Jewish leaders thought to be a counterfeit, a rebel and a blasphemer, but who is the true God-Man – appeared to Saul, saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” It didn’t take Saul long to realize who was speaking: It was the Lord!<sup>2</sup> Saul instantly submitted to His authority, asking Him what he should do. After a few days, during which Saul was saved and then baptized, this persecutor was persecuted. Why? He had started to preach in the synagogue that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, proving from the Scriptures that this Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, God’s anointed One. The things he had rejected before – just as the Jewish leadership had done, with the exception of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea – he now preached to be the truth. Saul’s new activities were marked by the fact that he used the Old Testament Scriptures instead of the rabbinic traditions<sup>3</sup> to teach the truth. Remember, the New Testament was not yet written in Saul’s day.

The majority of the Jewish audience rejected Saul’s message and started persecuting him, but

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there were a few who accepted his biblical teaching. The same pattern kept repeating itself. In the synagogues he visited, such as in Thessalonica (17:1-10), Paul used the Scriptures to show that Jesus is the Messiah. However, before a pagan audience he brought other arguments since they were not familiar with God's Word (vv.22-31). Time after time Paul had to flee to avoid getting killed. But his life had dramatically changed to one of great value, in tune with the One whose life is of eternal worth.

On the day of His resurrection the Lord Jesus showed from the Scriptures, in His talk with the two disciples from Emmaus, that He truly is the Messiah (Lk. 24:13-35). Fifty days later, on Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came from heaven, the apostle Peter also proved from the Scriptures the same thing about the Lord Jesus (Acts 2:22-32). In his address, Peter quoted Psalm 16 to show that the Messiah Jesus did, indeed, rise from the dead and did not see any corruption (Acts 2:31). He also quoted verse 10 of that psalm, which brings us to the next point about this tremendous life of eternal value.

### **A LIFE OF ETERNAL VALUE**

The Holy Spirit guided David as he wrote Psalm 16, describing the

coming Messiah as a Man on earth who always relied on God and did what is pleasing to Him. The Lord Jesus is God over all, blessed forever (Rom. 9:5), but He is also a Man: God and Man in one Person. This is a mystery beyond anyone's grasp, for no one knows the Son but the Father (Mt. 11:27). The details of the life of our Lord on earth, as presented in the Gospels, will never be forgotten, while the Psalms – especially those called “messianic” – help us to grasp them more intimately, telling of His feelings.

Focusing on Psalm 16 we learn that one of the points that proves the Lord's perfect humanity of a life of eternal value was the fact that He put His trust in God, always relying on Him (v.1, quoted in Heb. 2:13). Jesus always acted in communion with His God because He had come for the express purpose of doing God's will, even where the human race had completely failed and the law could not bring the remedy (Ps. 40:7-8). Christ's food was to do and accomplish the will of Him who had sent Him (Jn. 4:34).

God protected and guided the Lord Jesus, and Jesus always trusted His God – confiding in Him while remaining in this “Refuge,” or hiding place. God was His sole object and delight (Ps. 16:2-3), whereas those who

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are running “after another god” (v. 4) – as they will do when following the coming Antichrist – will cause themselves to have all kinds of trouble as the Lord Jesus predicted (Jn. 5:43-46). The same applies today to those who pretend to do God’s will but follow their own ideas, humanistic agendas or satanic counterfeits.

The Lord Jesus always enjoyed real fellowship with His God and with those around Him, who depended on Him for everything, including their future (Ps. 16:5-6). Such communion has been the experience of many believers throughout the centuries. Furthermore, Jesus constantly blessed the LORD who provided Him with counsel, instructing Him even during the night (v.7). Jesus always set His God, the perfect Object, before Him as His Protection, Companion and Trust – He was always at His side (v.8). Even during the traumatic experiences of being rejected by His own people He could say, “Yes, Father” (Mt. 11:16-26 NASB, compare to Isa. 49:4).

We can only imagine what it must have been for Him when one of His close disciples became an instrument in Satan’s hand to deliver Him to His enemies. How sad, too, when His disciples forsook Him, and then Peter denied Him – even with a curse! Yet, the Lord Jesus always maintained

sweet fellowship with His God and Father, who led Him through those difficult events and experiences (Ps. 16:9).

He simply kept trusting. Thus, He was fully confident that His God would always be with Him,<sup>4</sup> even when He was going through the process of dying, being buried and lying in the tomb. Including being raised from among the dead (Ps. 40; Rom. 6:4), Jesus was always sustained by His God (even though He was able to rise from among the dead in His own power, which is itself a blessed mystery).

Jesus always had confidence that this profound fellowship could not be broken, or even interrupted, by any circumstance or situation. Therefore He was able to be glad and look forward, with confidence, to pass through all He experienced as God’s holy One. Indeed, He was the only truly pious, God-fearing, law-abiding Jew; and He put His trust in His God assured He would not leave Him in the domain of death (Ps. 16:9-10). Through faith Jesus saw Himself already at the other side of death, with fullness of joy at God’s right hand, anticipating His present session in heaven (v.11).

We find something similar in John 17, in the prayer Jesus spoke before His final sufferings, where He placed Himself in spirit after His cross, resurrection and ascen-

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sion. Moreover, the Lord knew that God would only forsake Him during the three hours of darkness on the cross (Ps. 22:1), which was necessary to settle the matter of sin once and for all (2 Cor. 5:21). But God would not allow Jesus to be defiled by anything, and therefore He made sure that His Son<sup>s</sup> would be laid in a clean tomb (Isa. 53:9; Jn. 19:38-42). How remarkable: God's holy One (Ps. 16:11) entered this life through a virgin womb (Lk. 1-2) and He would leave it through a virgin tomb (Ps. 16:10)!

Paul explained in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:35-37) that David did see corruption and he is still in the grave. But in Psalm 16 David spoke as a prophet and a type of the Messiah, foreseeing the joy of God's presence with Jesus in the grave and in His resurrection.

### **THE LIFE OF ETERNAL VALUE CONTINUES**

Now in heaven, the Lord's life of eternal value continues. The author of Hebrews frequently used the Old Testament to show the greatness of the Messiah, who is now seated at God's right hand (Heb. 1:3). He will remain there until His enemies are made His footstool (v.13). While He is in heaven, throughout the age of grace, He functions as the "Minister of the sanctuary," tak-

ing care of God's interests (8:1-2 NKJV). He is also there for us (see Heb. 2:18, 4:16, 6:19-20, 10:19-21, 13:15)!

### **THE MAN IN HEAVEN**

Through faith we see Jesus as a Man in heaven, crowned with glory and honor (Heb. 2:9). This was preceded by His work on the cross (v.17) to bring many sons to glory. He became their great Leader of salvation through sufferings (v.10). Even though He is in heaven, He is linked with the believers – His companions (1:9) – who are on earth and for whom He has sanctified Himself, not ashamed to call them "brethren" (2:11). He indicated this amazing truth to Mary of Magdala the morning of His resurrection (Jn. 20:17).

The ministry of our Lord Jesus in heaven is twofold: to make known God the Father's name to those He calls His brethren and to sing God's praises. In other words, to give a proper response to that revelation, singing on behalf of and with those He calls "the assembly" (Heb. 2:12-13), also called "holy brethren" (3:1). This is the company of called-out ones, from Judaism and paganism, that He started on Pentecost and that He will bring to completion at the rapture (Mt. 16:18; Acts 2:2-4; 1 Th. 4:16-17; Heb.

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11:40). Hebrews 2:14-18 shows how intimately the Lord Jesus in heaven is linked with this company of believers on earth.

Psalm 16 describes as a prophetic preview Messiah's perfect life on earth, which is tied to the meal offering (Lev. 2). Faithful members of His people presented that offering to God. The priestly family ate some parts of it, but the frankincense was only for God (v.2). Today in worship and adoration to our God and Father we present Him whose life here on earth was, and still is, of eternal value, and whose worth we contemplate while He is in heaven – realizing there are elements only God is able to evaluate.

Soon our blessed Lord will come and take us to Himself (Jn. 14:1-3). Then we will enjoy contemplating His eternal worth and we will bring praise and worship to our God forever. **GT**

<sup>1</sup> John's gospel closes with the following statement, "There are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the

books that would be written" (Jn. 21:25). In other words, the recorded details are sufficient, while much more could be added. The Gospel writers, led by the Spirit of God, used the principle of selection, but their selection was endorsed by God as complete and sufficient.

<sup>2</sup> This name implies He is God as well as Man. The name Lord (Greek: Kurios) is often used without the definite article and then, usually, refers to the fact that He is Yahweh (YHWH or Jehovah). In other contexts this name emphasizes His authority as Man, whether on earth or in heaven.

<sup>3</sup> The Lord Jesus kept the Mosaic law – the only Jew who ever did. But He opposed the man-made traditions, as seen in what is often called "the Sermon on the Mount" (Mt. 5-7). He condemned the Jewish leaders' hypocrisy (15:1-20, 23). Christians are under a new law (Rom. 8:1-4; Gal. 6:2): the perfect law of liberty, or the royal law (Jas. 1:25, 2:8,12).

<sup>4</sup> Here we touch a profound mystery. As Man, during the three dark hours, the Lord Jesus was forsaken by God when He gave Himself as the supreme sacrifice (2 Cor. 5:21). Yet, the eternal Son was accompanied by the eternal Father (Jn. 16:32, see also 3:35, 18:11). His sacrifice was accomplished in the power of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus "by the eternal Spirit offered Himself spotless to God" (Heb. 9:14).

<sup>5</sup> Note that it says, "There they laid Jesus" (Jn. 19:42). We would say, "There they laid His body," but this wonderful Person is the Word that became flesh (Jn. 1:14), and forever He will be inseparably connected with His body.

"THESE ARE WRITTEN THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, AND THAT BELIEVING YOU MAY HAVE LIFE IN HIS NAME"  
(JN. 20:31 NKJV).



# HOW TO SHINE AS THE STARS FOR EVER

by Martin Girard

**T**he Bible is unlike any other book. In addition to exhortations, practical examples are given in the lives of the individuals whom we meet in its pages. It is not simply a religious manual containing moral teaching that people ought to practice; it is a mirror of life itself. For instance, the instruction to “fear God, and keep His commandments” (Eccl. 12:13 KJV) can be understood, but we may wonder *how* God can be feared and obeyed in practical ways. We are not left to work things out by ourselves, attempting to adhere to a code of moral instructions. Godly characters whose lives were marked by faith and obedience are presented as illustrations to help us in our own walk with the Lord. Getting to know those who pleased the Lord and finished well can inspire us, with the Holy Spirit’s help, to be like them.

In Scripture, a lot can be compressed into a very few words. One very significant statement is found

at the end of the first chapter of Daniel, where we read that “Daniel continued” (Dan. 1:21). What a fine testimony this is! He was not like a comet that blazed across the sky and then disappeared into the darkness. The light that shone forth in Daniel’s early life continued to burn brightly. Many in our day start out well and begin to serve with great zeal and enthusiasm. They promise much, and their potential is recognized. Soon, however, the brilliance begins to fade, possibly through disappointment or through an unrealized goal. Excellence is replaced by mediocrity, and great things are no longer achieved. The luster has gone, and others are left to reflect upon “what might have been” in their lives.

Daniel was not like that. Unlike the “stars” who occupy the world’s stage and then fade away, men and women who love and fear God can shine eternally. “They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the

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firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (12:3). The truth of this statement is demonstrated in Daniel’s life. As one who was wise and turned many to righteousness, the brightness of his life did not fade. Like the stars of heaven he shines for ever and ever in the presence of his God (Dan. 12:3). A life of earthly value may be impressive for a time, but it counts for little when weighed in the divine balances. The Lord wants those who belong to Him to attain better things. He wants us to surrender our lives to Him, to *continue* as Daniel did, and to finish well.

Daniel began promisingly when he refused to defile himself with food that had been offered to idols and “purposed in his heart” that he would please God (1:8). What a challenging statement! This is, in fact, the first statement that is made about Daniel himself in the book bearing his name, and it provides the key for understanding his exemplary character. We need to consider the background in a little more detail in order to discover what made Daniel such a remarkable man of God.

### **TRANSPORTED TO BABYLON**

Faced with an unknown future in a foreign land and heathen culture, Daniel determined that he would remain true to his God.

With other young Israelites who possessed intelligence, Daniel (perhaps just 16 or 17 years of age at the time) had been transported to Babylon. A first-class education had been planned, and the finest food had been made available. Daniel had all the opportunities the world could offer to be a successful student in the Babylonian university. His name had been changed in order to wean him from his past and give him acceptance in the leading nation of his day. Yet we find this young man resolute, or determined, to remain true to his God.

Like Timothy many years later, Daniel must have known the Holy Scriptures from childhood (2 Tim. 3:15). He knew what God expected of him and made up his mind from the very beginning that he would stick to his principles and honor Him – even if it meant the end of his prospects in Babylon. Knowing that certain aspects of that alien culture would “defile” him, Daniel “purposed in his heart” that he would remain true to the LORD and to His Word.

As we think of the bold stand taken by this young man, it is clear that his parents must have done a good job in training him to recognize the difference between right and wrong. Without their presence and support in Babylon he was still able to stand on his

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own feet and remain true to his convictions, which were born out of love for his Lord. This is the youth who in later life was addressed as “a man greatly beloved” of God (Dan. 10:11).

The early part of Daniel’s life was extremely challenging. Today we are urged by the media and Christians who are moving with the world’s tide to be “politically correct” and tolerant of other viewpoints. “Tolerance” was not part of Daniel’s vocabulary! His heart was set on pleasing the LORD – and ours should be too. Without being bigoted or rude, Daniel politely and firmly made his convictions known and stood by them regardless of the consequences. It is all too easy to be swept along in the popular, easygoing form of Christianity where lifestyle and ambitions – even music and worship – mirror the unconverted world around. Surely it is time for believers, like Daniel, to purpose in their hearts that they will be separate from those things that are contrary to the plain teaching of the Word of God.

The LORD honored Daniel’s stand and endowed him and his three friends with wisdom and understanding surpassing that of their contemporaries (1:20). With his university training over, Daniel “continued” in his commitment to live for the LORD.

## **NO COMPLACENCY**

To start out well is one thing, but to finish well is something else. Away from home, a young Christian at a college or university may well honor the Lord commendably. Later, however, after graduation and when life becomes more comfortable materially, it is possible to slow down spiritually. Not Daniel! He “continued” until Cyrus the Persian came to the throne – and he continued even beyond that point. For more than 70 years this man of God “continued” until he was approximately 90 years old – such was the quality of his life!

God used him to explain the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams and to interpret to Belshazzar the writing on the wall. God also gave him personal revelations of significant future events. Daniel, who all the time was faithful to his God, ultimately proved God’s faithfulness when he was delivered from the lions’ den. At the end of a long life he entered into rest, assured that “at the end of the days” he would stand in his appointed place (12:13).

## **DANIEL’S LEGACY**

How can we be like Daniel? Paul, writing to Timothy, supplied us with the answer: “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of”

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(2 Tim. 3:14). That is the secret. Many today are turning, either willingly or in ignorance, to new ideas and practices which plainly contradict the teachings of God's unchanging Word. God has revealed His mind in the sacred Scriptures, and we must "continue" in them if we ourselves would be faithful to God. Barnabas encouraged the believers at Antioch "that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord," (Acts 11:23). Daniel had that purpose.

The hymnwriter Philip P. Bliss wrote these challenging words:

*Dare to be a Daniel!*  
*Dare to stand alone!*  
*Dare to have a purpose firm!*  
*Dare to make it known!*

Will we dare to be different?

The Lord is calling us to be

people with a purpose – people who will, by grace, "continue" until He comes or calls. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10). Those who are wise will fear Him, and they are the ones who will "shine as the brightness of the firmament" (Dan. 12:3). The testimony of such people is powerful. By turning many others to righteousness and to the Lord, they will shine as the stars for ever. Don't seek to be a "star" on this world's stage! The glory of this world is transient, but "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 Jn. 2:17). It is those whose lives have been made to count for God who will shine eternally. **GT**

*This article is adapted by permission from [www.skywaymessages.co.uk](http://www.skywaymessages.co.uk)*



THE SUN IS THE GREAT AND SUPREME SOURCE OF LIGHT FOR THE WHOLE EARTH. THE STARS ARE NEEDED WHEN THE SUN IS AWAY, AND THE MINOR LIGHT THEY EMIT IS OF THE SAME CHARACTER AND NATURE AS THE LIGHT OF THE SUN. IN CHRIST'S PERSONAL ABSENCE THE PERFECTION OF THE CHURCH'S WITNESS WOULD BE TO EMIT THE SAME CHARACTER OF LIGHT AS CHRIST IN HEAVENLY GLORY – THE SAME IN QUALITY, THOUGH SO FAR REMOVED IN VOLUME.

—Hamilton Smith, "The Addresses To The Seven Churches"

# FOR WHICH WORLD?

by Grant Steidl

**T**his question tends to come up when a young person senses that he is losing the game of life and calls a brief time-out to consider why. Consider Bob, a young and brilliant university grad who was offered a chance to make a fortune in a hurry. His quiet reply, “For which world?”

Obviously, Bob believes in a life beyond the one we presently experience upon planet Earth. He has good reason for doing so.

Even if you don’t agree with him on that point, you probably will agree with his idea that life often seems precarious and disappointing. More and more, the old idea of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” until a ripe old age takes on the appearance of a sick joke.

So what’s so great about the brave new world that has Bob all excited? Just look at some of the contrasts below!

## YOUR PRESENT WORLD

For a brief time – and the longer it lasts the worse it gets.

Filled with violence, sadness and pollution – even if you don’t live in the worst part of town.

The good things, too, are short-lived and blighted by sin – “We had a great time except for ...”

## THE WORLD TO COME

For eternity – and always with “pleasures for evermore” (Ps. 16:11 KJV).

Filled with love and an atmosphere that is clean in every way – “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ... no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither any more ... pain (Rev. 21:4).

A God of infinite love is planning the events – and “there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth [makes unclean]” (21:27).

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Does the world to come sound too good to be true? It probably does if you don't know the One who programmed the sum total of all reality, including yourself. The real crux of understanding this matter is to know God.

### HOW CAN YOU KNOW GOD?

That is a tremendous story in itself; it is what the Bible is all about. Let me put the answer in a nutshell by quoting John 20:31: "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life through His name" (NKJV).

There is another side to this matter of knowing God. He is angry with every person who ignores Him and considers His program unimportant or trivial. According to Jesus Christ such persons will go away into everlasting punishment rather than into everlasting life (see Mt. 25:41).

You still have some unanswered question? So do the rest of us. Forget them for a moment and ask yourself the ones that really count:

- Do I want to know God?
- Do I want to receive His love and live eternally with Him in the world to come which He is planning?
- Am I willing to be cleansed from sin, including my egotistical lifestyle, and be made fit for that place by asking Jesus Christ to become my Savior and Lord?

If your answers are yes, speak to God about it in prayer. He will hear and understand your words and the desire behind them. Then start reading the gospel of John in the Bible.

For all we close with this challenging question: How will your present plans affect you 1,000 years from now? **GT**

**"COME NOW, YOU WHO SAY, 'TODAY OR TOMORROW WE WILL GO TO SUCH AND SUCH A CITY, SPEND A YEAR THERE, BUY AND SELL, AND MAKE A PROFIT'; WHEREAS YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN TOMORROW. FOR WHAT IS YOUR LIFE? IT IS EVEN A VAPOR THAT APPEARS FOR A LITTLE TIME AND THEN VANISHES AWAY."**

—James 4:13-14 NKJV



# Life Eternal:



## Its Infinite Fullness

by Leslie Grant

**T**he eight biblical expressions we intend to consider have reference to the marvelous and immediate giving of eternal life to every soul who is born of God. Yet, each statement has its own special emphasis and significance. Without these and many more in the New Testament, we could not have a proper view of the wonder and preciousness of eternal life. May we greatly value these truths that serve to deepen in our souls a pure appreciation of the Lord Jesus and of the glory of the Father revealed in Him.

*“The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.” —John 5:25 NKJV*

This Scripture and the next two deal with the soul’s reception of the great blessing of eternal life, not simply from the viewpoint of divine sovereignty, but from that of the soul’s response to the gospel. First, the spiritually dead hear the voice of the Son of God. They are not said to have life before they hear; but “those who

hear will live.” The individual’s responsibility of hearing and the sovereign work of the Son of God in giving life are put together here. Wonderful it is that God has decreed that by the Word of God souls are born again (1 Pet. 1:23) and possess everlasting life (Jn. 5:24). This last verse also emphasizes hearing the voice of the Son of God and then living the life that is eternal.

*“Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.”*

*—1 John 5:1*

New birth, or birth from God, certainly gives new life – the life which is of God, eternal life. New birth, in contrast to our natural birth as children of Adam, stresses the precious fact of a vital, real relationship with the eternal God as Father: “As many as received Him [the Lord Jesus], to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God

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(Jn. 1:12-13). Thus by new birth, the relationship of children to the Father through the Son is eternally established. How precious beyond thought! Of course this could only be possible by possessing eternal life. Notice too that personal faith is seen as a requisite, or requirement, in new birth.

*“Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life.”*  
—John 6:54

Eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man in a spiritual sense is an absolute necessity to the reception of eternal life. In John 5, hearing the voice of the Son of God was indispensable, now eating and drinking is insisted on in John 6. One cannot be without the other, for faith in the deity of Christ means faith also in His true Manhood, suffering and death. This eating and drinking implies taking home to the soul the truth of the gospel: the necessary death of Christ for our sins. Our verse therefore shows that the death of the Lord Jesus was an absolute necessity in order that men and women may possess eternal life. It is life vitally connected with the sufferings and death of the Son of Man, which is the very food of eternal life. In anticipation of Calvary, God could and did give eternal life before that time.

*“God ... made us alive together with Christ.”* —Ephesians 2:5

Making alive, or quickening, is said to be *by* the Son (Jn. 5:21) and *“with Christ”* (Eph. 2:5). If new birth emphasizes *relationship with the Father*, quickening emphasizes the *power of God* in bringing life out of death. New birth does not in itself suggest that man was dead. But in his Adam-nature, corrupted by sin, man could not inherit the kingdom of God; he required a new nature from God. Quickening supposes a state of death in which divine power must work to bring life. Here, too, the resurrection of Christ is introduced, and the believer is linked with Him in such a life. It is of course the same eternal life of which we have been speaking, but it is now seen in resurrection power.

*“Jesus answered them, ‘...I give them eternal life.’”* —John 10:28

In this passage it is the Son who gives life, while Romans 6:23 tells us, “The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” If new birth stresses *relationship* and making alive stresses *power of God* in bringing life out of death, these verses stress the *grace of God* in communicating eternal life. It is a wonderful act of divine favor apart from any merit on the part of the recipient – a gift *freely* given

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of God. It is totally God's sovereign work: precious grace indeed!

*"Partakers of the divine nature."*

—2 Peter 1:4

In the same verse Peter tells us we have become partakers by His "great and precious promises." New birth is accomplished by the Word of God, and this divine nature is identified with eternal life. It is "the life of God" (Eph. 4:18). But 2 Peter 1:4 emphasizes the blessed fact of God's sharing with us the divine nature, that it might show itself in every godly virtue as a representation of Himself in an evil world.

*"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation."* —2 Corinthians 5:17

Each individual believer is "created in Christ Jesus for good works" (Eph. 2:10). This highlights the fact of "all things" becoming new. Because of the new creation, or by possessing eternal life, every believer is "in Christ." Just as "the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord," so also "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation." But the expression "new creation" points to an entirely new order of things that God brings into being by His creatorial power.

*"... The washing of regeneration."*

—Titus 3:5

The Lord Jesus told Peter, "He who is bathed needs only to wash

his feet" (Jn. 13:10). Hebrews 10:22 adds, "Our bodies washed with pure water." Regeneration certainly involves new life, and, of course, that eternal life of which we are speaking. But the insistence here is upon the moral cleansing that takes place in saints of God, though sin is not eradicated. The washing of mere moral reform would not suffice. It must be the washing of regeneration: a new life must be present, or the cleansing is not cleansing at all. Thus, receiving eternal life is the "bath" that breaks the power of sin in the soul.

### **In Relation To Old Testament Saints**

None of these things could have been known or so expressed by saints in the Old Testament in spite of the fact that they certainly possessed eternal life, for this was not a subject of revelation at that time. The Son of God had not yet come to tell clearly of eternal life. In His coming to Israel (the sheepfold) He said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" – not a different life or different kind of life "more abundantly," but "*it* more abundantly" (Jn. 10:10). Their having life actually depended on His coming, though in some true sense His saints in that day *already* had life, which

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was to be made more abundant. In grace, that life was given to them in anticipation of His coming, for they could not possibly know the vital, precious character of eternal life in all its fullness until He who is Himself the “eternal life which was with the Father ... was manifested to us” (1 Jn. 1:2).

### In Relation To Our Day

We may add to this the great fact that is peculiar to our own dispensation: the blessed gift of the Holy Spirit given at Pentecost. Israel did not have the abiding character of His presence as does the Church, the body of Christ. It is His presence that is “a fountain of water spring up into everlasting life” (Jn. 4:14) and becomes “rivers of living water” flowing forth (7:37-39).

What a lesson is this for our souls! Though we are blessed infinitely and marvelously with eternal life, “the life of God,” yet this is not enough. We need God Himself dwelling in the soul by the Spirit, who makes known to us the Father and the Son in blessed reality. It is this great fact that distinguishes Christianity from every previous dispensation, enables us to understand eternal things and places us in a position apart from the world and from time.

### Its Full Expression

Eternal life itself is above and beyond all dispensations, for it is the very nature of our God and Father. It is perfectly seen in the Lord Jesus Christ in every detail of His life on earth – its purity untainted by anything through which He passed. *This is the marvelous life that is communicated to every believer.* At this time it exists in us side by side with the corrupted life we have received from Adam, so we cannot look within to see what that life is like. We must look simply at the Lord Jesus; there we see it in perfection!

We enter into eternal life now by faith; but in the presence of the Lord Jesus, in the eternal state, we shall enter into it in its fullest expression: every surrounding circumstance will be vibrant with that life, in contrast to today’s death and decay. In this sense, eternal life is a “promise” (1 Jn. 2:25); but it is the same life we have known in new birth. And just as natural life develops gradually, so in us the realization of eternal life gradually develops, by proper food, exercise, atmosphere and occupation. May we have grace to allow it its fullest and purest expressions through abiding in the love of Christ. **GT**

# Q&A

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## In Mark 10:21, is the Lord saying that Christians should not own anything?

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### THE ANSWER IS “NO”

#### - BUT LET'S LOOK AT THIS A BIT.

God's Word, the Bible, is one cohesive unit. No passage ever contradicts another, and Scripture must always be read in context. Peter pointed this out in 2 Peter 1:20-21: “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (NKJV). Enemies of God's Word often try to call attention to what they call contradictions in the Bible, but in so doing they are exposing their ignorance of Scripture and its principles.

Mark 10:21 is part of the account of a man who came to Jesus asking what he should do to inherit eternal life (vv.17-22). From parallel accounts in Matthew 19:16-30 and Luke 18:18-30 we learn that he was a young ruler. He addressed Jesus as “Good Teacher,” and Jesus immediately responded that only God is good. He went on to refer him to the commandments, mentioning some that referred to

man's relationship with his fellow man. The young man replied that he had kept all of these from his youth. From a purely human standpoint he was an admirable person, and we read that “Jesus, looking at him, loved him.”

Romans 6:23 tells us that “the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” It is not obtained by inheritance, nor can it be secured by our works, lest we boast (Eph. 2:8-9). Jesus told this young ruler that there was one thing he was lacking. What was that one thing? The very first commandment was: “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Ex. 20:3). Here was the heart of the man's problem. He loved his riches more than he loved God. Jesus is God. He went on to tell this man, “Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.”

The young man “was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.” Things – these possessions – meant more to him than God did,

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and he chose his possessions rather than Jesus. He was unwilling to get rid of them and give the proceeds to the poor, unwilling to take up the cross – the instrument of the lowest kind of death in those days – and simply follow Jesus, committing himself to Him. The Lord put His finger on the sore spot, or the heart of the matter, as He told His disciples, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!”

This account is not given to teach that a Christian should not own anything. Rather, it stresses the impossibility of becoming a Christian if we let anything stand between us and God, or us and the Lord Jesus.

We must bear in mind that this rich young ruler was a Jew. God had promised the people of Israel many earthly blessings “if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God to observe carefully all

His commandments which I command you” (Dt. 28:1). Note, “*all His commandments.*” Scripture shows plainly that no mere human being has ever kept *all* God’s commandments; and nowhere does God promise eternal life as a reward for good works or for keeping His commandments.

The basic question in this account is “How does one obtain eternal life?” It is not whether a Christian should or should not own anything. In fact, throughout Scripture God recognizes what we call “property rights,” the right to have possessions. But when we read God’s Word carefully we find that we who are Christians are stewards or managers of all that God entrusts to us. One day we shall have to give an account of how we have carried out our stewardship to the One who has entrusted it to us.

—Answered by Eugene P. Vedder, Jr.

## RESPONSE

**To your writers I want to say that I appreciate your time writing** such straight-forward articles. I also appreciate the job well done by the editor in the monthly themes. God certainly has His hands on your hearts when planning and assembling your publication. – *Ohio, USA*

**I am a 72 year old man,** and the day I set my eyes on the *Grace &*

*Truth Magazine* and read it I received the Lord as my Savior. Please put my name on the mailing list. – *Kaduna, Nigeria*

**Thank you so much for all the magazines I’ve received.** I greatly loved your exposition of the book of Zechariah in the April 2016 edition. Keep it up!

– *Yenagoa, Nigeria*

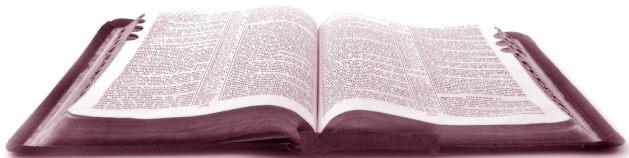




The purpose of this column is to help you study the Bible on your own. Look up the Bible references and think about them before writing your answers. Do not send this study to us, as this is not a correspondence course.

# The Bible – Its Writers

by Alan Groth



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**W**e move on to our next writer: Isaiah. He wrote a prophetic book that bears his name. His book is referred to a number of times by the Lord Jesus and several New Testament writers. In this study, we will look at this prophet and his prophecies.

## Read Isaiah 1:1

1. Who was Isaiah's father? \_\_\_\_\_
2. In which kings' days did Isaiah prophesy? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many chapters are there in Isaiah? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many books are there in the whole Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

## Read Isaiah 7:3

1. What is the name of Isaiah's son? \_\_\_\_\_

## Read Isaiah 8:1-4

1. What was Isaiah's wife? \_\_\_\_\_
2. She bore Isaiah a son. What was his name? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Before the child could say, "my father," what would happen? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Read Isaiah 8:18

1. What were Isaiah and his children for Israel? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Read 2 Chronicles 26:22, 32:32

1. What did Isaiah do? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Where were the rest of the acts of Hezekiah written? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Read 2 Chronicles 32:20**

1. What did King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Read Isaiah 4:2**

1. What is the Lord Jesus seen as in this verse? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Read Isaiah 7:10-17**

1. The LORD gave a sign to Ahaz. What was it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Read Isaiah 9:6-7**

1. What is born and given in verse 6? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Write down His name. \_\_\_\_\_

**Read Isaiah 11:1-11**

1. Who shall rest upon a branch? \_\_\_\_\_

**Read Isaiah 42:1-9**

1. Whom are we to behold? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12**

1. Give a short summary of the servant. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Read Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:16-21**

1. What was the Lord anointed to do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Read Romans 9:27-10:21**

1. How many times is Isaiah quoted in these verses? \_\_\_\_\_

2. If you have the time find these verses in the book of Isaiah.

*In our next study we will Discover  
more about the Bible and its writers.*

# Resolving Family Conflicts

## PART 6

by Emmanuel V. John



### Breakup Of Family Relationships

Reactions to unresolved conflicts lead to serious problems in relationships. Sometimes these conflicts are so painful that the immediate reaction is denial – a common defense mechanism during times of conflict and high stress level. The tendency is to blame the victim in order to avoid taking responsibility for the overreaction to a situation. As Dr. Narramore points out, denial over a period of time can lead to serious mental illness. Denial is often supported by projection and fantasy. He states that “the conclusive cure for denial is confession.”<sup>1</sup>

### Denial

Denial is a barrier to a better family relationship. It shows up in many ways, making it easier to avoid responsibility for solving the conflict. I believe that denial stems from the fall of man and can be traced back to Adam and Eve.

When they sinned they were bound by fear of being found out. They made aprons from fig leaves and attempted to hide themselves from the presence of God (Gen. 3:7-10). Hence, because of our sinful Adamic nature, denial is often displayed, even by children, in reaction to stress, confusion, conflict, change, abuse and violence – especially in the home. From our early years on we tend to rely on denial to provide immediate protection from having to face the reality of a situation.

In many marital relationships with unresolved conflicts, denial can manifest itself in various reactions including:

- Simple Denial – pretending the conflict doesn’t exist when it really does.
- Minimizing – the husband or wife, or both, recognize the conflicts in the relationship but deny the intensity of the conflict despite its present impact.

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• Excusing – while recognizing the conflict, one rationalizes the other partner’s unacceptable behavior, effectively making him or her not responsible for the conflict.

• Generalizing – mentioning the conflict but avoiding the specific problem, thus refusing the needed emotional involvement to resolve it.

• Dodging – the couple recognizes the conflict and even speaks about it occasionally, but often changes the topic to avoid emotional disturbances.

• Attacking – the husband and wife become irritable and even enraged with each other when reference is made to the existing conflict.<sup>2</sup> At this point there is usually a high level of resentment between husband and wife, even though they try to remain in denial.

### Resentment

Sometimes resentment increases when one spouse blows up while the other clams up. Resentment usually results from hiding the repressed feelings of bitter hurts that have developed over a period of time. Also, resentment evokes anger, frustration and fear, and can lead to severe consequences. The wife often fears to honestly and appropriately express her

emotions, and therefore internalizes her anger. The longer a person represses his or her damaged emotions, the more he or she will be consumed by anger, fear, resentment and rejection.

The husband or wife may respond to the unresolved conflict by refusing to communicate or by communicating in a disruptive and/or highly emotional manner. Either spouse may even threaten to harm self or others to gain attention or to release frustration, or at least display a bad temper without any apparent provocation. This “acting-out behavior” may result from repressed feelings of anger and unforgiveness. One couple, who were experiencing intense conflicts, only communicated by leaving messages on the refrigerator. The wife said she was afraid of exploding if they had face-to-face communication.

### Fear

The wife or husband may be bound by fear and be in torment in the midst of the family conflict. Fear magnifies difficulties and minimizes solutions. Hence, fear can affect the individual in various ways and cripple a relationship – or even destroy the individuals. Also, it brings bondage as seen in Adam when he hid from God because he was afraid. The

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apostle Paul declared that “you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear” (Rom. 8:15 NKJV).

Christian families in particular should not be afraid or overly anxious about anything because our heavenly Father will take care of us. Fear is uncharacteristic of our faith in God who is able to supply our needs. Certainly, it is unwise to worry about our future (Mt. 6:25-34). Trusting God is the antidote for fear.

In many marital relationships, fear affects the process of resolving conflicts because the husband or wife worries about reliving past painful experiences, about the unbalancing effect of those experiences on the relationship, and about the possibility of being rejected. Fear significantly affects the strength of love, limiting freedom and bringing feelings of weakness. It also brings in disturbing thoughts. Dr. Tim LaHaye concluded, “The more fear one manifests, the greater the anger of the other [spouse], thus compounding the problem.”<sup>3</sup>

Internalizing excessive fear and anger often leads to depression. Or, the anger can be externalized and displaced in a destructive manner on others in the relationship. The husband can become isolated from, or agitated toward his wife for not being per-

fect. He may project his own feelings of failure on his wife, blame and criticize her, or even lose control and become destructive. This is a reaction to the feeling of loss within the relationship. Hence, the problem is not simply feeling angry, but it is remaining in a state of anger rather than accepting responsibility and working through the conflicts, forgiving one another and self. Instead, the husband and wife choose to be “weighed down with guilt, holding a grudge against self and others as well as punishing self through self-critical thoughts.”<sup>4</sup> If the husband or wife remains in such an angry state, he or she is close to *danger*. Remember, *anger* is only one letter short of *danger* (D-anger)! **GT**

(Adapted from “Resolving Family Conflicts – How To Prevent Breakdowns And Breakups,” published by *Overcomer Press*, Owosso, MI; 1993.)

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<sup>1</sup> Clyde M. Narramore, *The Psychology of Counseling*, (Michigan: Zondervan, 1978), 278.

<sup>2</sup> [Friends in Recovery], *The Twelve Steps—A Spiritual Journey*, (California: Recovery, 1988), 34-35.

<sup>3</sup> Tim LaHaye, *I Love You, But Why Are We So Different?* (Oregon: Harvest, 1991), 155.

<sup>4</sup> Frank B. Minirth and Paul D. Meier, *Happiness is a Choice*, (Michigan: Baker, 1978), 36-37.

# NAHUM

by Leslie M. Grant



*“The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked. The LORD has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet”*

—Nahum 1:3 NKJV

**N**ahum, meaning “comfort,” is a vigorous prophecy of the judgment of Nineveh. Being the capital of Assyria, the city stands for that empire, the “King of the North,” in a coming day. Note that Assyria is not the same as present-day Syria. Rather, it takes its land from Iran, Iraq and Syria. While Egypt denotes for us the world in its complacent, or self-satisfied, independence of God, Assyria indicates the world’s vicious opposition to God. The prophecy was occasioned by the cruelty of Assyria when Sennacherib (meaning “He who destroys”) invaded Israel, and it

was partially fulfilled when Nineveh was destroyed. Yet this prophecy looks on to God’s judgment of the King of the North in a future day. Notice that the determined ferociousness of this enemy is fully matched by the unbending rigor of the judgment of God.

Yet, while the first few verses of the book describe the indignation and fierceness of God’s anger, this is followed by the marvelous comfort of Nahum 1:7: “The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him.” He is slow to anger and perfect in calm deliberation, for He does not desire to condemn. But He will judge evil, whether by whirlwind or storm; and in such judgments the wisdom of “His way” will be seen.

Let us learn well from this prophet both the awful strength of God’s wrath and the blessed strength of His protection. **GT**

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*This column is taken from the book “The Bible, Its 66 Books In Brief.”  
It is available for purchase from Believer’s Bookshelf USA ([www.bbusa.org](http://www.bbusa.org))  
and Believers Bookshelf Canada ([www.bbcn.org](http://www.bbcn.org)).*



**O**ur great Creator is the God and Author of the Bible. He is the One who from the beginning knew and told the future (Isa. 40:21, 41:4,26, 46:10) long before the events happened or will still happen. He recorded many prophecies that have been fulfilled already, guaranteeing that those which have not yet happened will surely come to pass just as He has indicated.

## A FEW THOUGHTS ON PROPHECY

PART ONE

by Alfred Bouter

### God's Amazing Creation Shows The God Of Prophecy

In one second our sun emits more energy than mankind has used since creation. Though only an average-size star, it is unique. Many stars in our galaxy are much bigger, including *Canis Majoris*, which is about 2,200 times bigger than our sun, and the *Pistol Star*, which produces one million times the energy of our sun and has 100 times its mass. Our sun and its solar system are just a pinpoint, a small speck, in our *Milky Way* galaxy; and the entire *Milky Way* is just a small

dot in the universe even though it possibly contains 200 billion stars – maybe even 300 billion!

While estimates continue to rise, our galaxy is just one of between 100 and 200 billion galaxies in the universe, many of which contain 200 billion or more stars. How much time would it take to count them? The distance from one end to the other of the known universe is estimated to be over 100 billion *light years*. A *light year* is the distance light travels in one year. Since light travels approximately 186,000 miles per second, even



just one *light year* is an astounding distance! Who can grasp this?

Quasars, at the extreme edge of the known universe, are about 1,000 times brighter than our *Milky Way* galaxy and emit as much energy every second as our sun could in 10 million years. Many astronomers believe that the total number of stars in space surpasses the total number of grains of sand on all the seashores of our earth. In most cases, stars are separated by trillions of miles!

On a much smaller scale, there are about 100 trillion cells in the human body and the complexity of the activities inside each cell is beyond our grasp. Science has concluded that it would take at least 3,000 super-computers to imitate the operations taking place in the human brain at any

one given point in time. Processes taking place in each human cell are awesome and mind-boggling!

Our God created and maintains this vast universe, even to the smallest part (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:17). He is involved in His creation as its Sustainer and as the Leader of the human race and its history – past, present and future. To those who reject Him as Creator, Redeemer and Possessor, He is Judge.

### **Important Principles**

When we study prophecy, God's Word gives us some important principles to keep in mind:

- Key-distinctions exist between Israel and the Church – in their callings, functions and destinies. The Church has *not* replaced Israel, but God has diverse plans for both.

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• There are various dispensations – periods of time in which God tests people according to the light (privileges) He has given them. Privilege implies responsibility, for which every human must give an account. Because of Adam and Eve’s fall (Gen. 3) *all are guilty* (Rom. 1:18-32, 2:1-11, 3:19).

• Great differences exist between God’s plans and man’s objectives. Since man’s fall a war has been going on between “the god of this age,” who blinds the mind of the unbelievers (2 Cor. 4:4 NKJV), and the Creator God, who is the Redeemer and the ultimate Judge (Acts 17:21-31).

### **God’s Agenda Or Man’s Ideas**

Our great God has a program for this world (Eph. 1:10), for Israel (Rom. 11:26-29), and for the Church – His eternal purpose (Eph. 3:8-11). For these plans to be carried out the Prince of Peace had to come into this world and set things right. At His first coming, when the Word became flesh (Jn. 1:14), Jews and Gentiles rejected Him as was foretold by God (Isa. 49:4, 50:2; Mt. 11:25-27). Christ fulfilled many prophecies, and many more will have a future fulfillment. Together, these prophecies can be called “the foreshadows of the Messiah.”

Our Lord is coming again, for sure, and every knee will bow to

Him as He fulfills the prophetic Word regarding His two comings (Phil. 2:6-10) and other predictions. We live in a world in turmoil which will get worse before these prophecies are fulfilled and the Prince of Peace will reign. Yet, the soul in communion with God may live in peace now, in a close relationship with the Prince of Peace (Isa. 26:3). God’s agenda in this day of grace is for us to promote His interests in His way, as Saul/Paul did after his prayer, “What shall I do, Lord?” (Acts 22:10). He submitted to Him, to do His will – an example for us today.

### **God’s Plan As Summarized By Paul**

“Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith ... according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust” (1 Tim. 1:5,11). We need “a spirit ... of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1:7) to carry out God’s agenda for the period of grace.

This is completely different from what the “Christianized world” follows. Why? Emperor Constantine ruled in the early part of the fourth century AD. After ten major persecutions (consider Rev. 2:10), he made of Christianity – which implies a *relationship* with the true

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and living God (1 Th. 1:9-10) – the main *religion* of the Roman Empire, placing it beside and above the pagan religions. As Emperor he was the *Pontifex Maximus* (high priest) of all these religions, even though he professed to be a believing Christian.<sup>1</sup> Constantine’s policy was not in tune with God’s thoughts, but it was allowed by Him as it relieved the Christians from persecution. Satan, at the same time, showed himself as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14).

God’s plans are also different from the present Zionists’ – even though we sympathize with the nation of Israel and their many sufferings throughout the ages.<sup>2</sup> God’s thoughts, of course, also differ from all other religions as well as the many “one-world government” promoters, new-agers and environmentalists of our days. All these efforts are counterfeits of God’s unique plan for Israel and this world, for their agendas are basically controlled by “the god of this age” (4:4), who is “the prince of this world” (Jn. 12:31 JND). Yet our God is and remains in complete control,<sup>3</sup> and He will fulfill His plans!

Completely different from man’s ideas, God’s agenda for the near future is to introduce His “new age” of a thousand years’ reign of peace under the rule of His Son, who is the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6-

7). Notice that the Lord’s two comings are found in the same passage: *the Child born*, in the past, and *the Son given*, in the future. We intend to consider this matter more, later.

### **The Enemy Plans A Counterfeit New Age**

Soon after Noah’s flood, Satan introduced “the great city” of Babel. It was a system of idolatry (Gen. 10-11) to lead people away from the true God who had revealed Himself as Creator and Judge (Rom. 1:18-23). Satan did this before God presented His plan – “the city which has foundations” – to Abraham, who became the father of all believers (Gen. 12:1-3; Heb. 11:8-10). Today the enemy is busy introducing a counterfeit “new age,” and he is using “the great Babylon” as his goal (Rev. 17).

In contrast to this, since the days of Acts 2, all true believers form a unified company, called and acquired by God from among Jews and Gentiles. Soon they will be taken away suddenly (literally, “snatched away”) from this scene in an event called “the rapture” (1 Th. 4:16-18). After this the apostate, or rebellious, church will continue on earth under Satan’s leadership and connect with apostate Israel and the nations of this world, similar to the situation in the Roman Empire in past days.

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## God's Remnant

While this development takes place God will have a *remnant among Israel* (Rev. 7:1-8) and a *great harvest among the nations* (vv.9-17). There is now – and ultimately will be – a battle between God and His enemy, Satan. If the Evil One could destroy all the Jews, then God would not be able to fulfill the promises He made to Abraham. Satan tried to defeat the Prince of Peace when He came in humiliation (Phil. 2:5-8). Christ, however, always had the victory: during the temptations in the wilderness (Lk. 4:1-13), on the cross (Col. 2:15) and in His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:54). Soon He will have the final victory (Rom. 16:20), public and lasting, when all the Jews and Gentiles will be brought to His feet (Phil. 2:9-10). Then, after the “times of the Gentiles” will have run their course as foreshadowed in Daniel 2:44, the Lord will usher in a new world of righteousness and peace.

## Today's Challenges

Christians have the privilege of being in God's kingdom (Rom. 14:17). This kingdom is now *in testimony*, as it is to honor God and the Lord Jesus in a world that still rejects Him. In other words, the kingdom of God today represents a *moral preview* of Christ's coming reign in glory, similar to what a

few disciples saw on the Mount of Transfiguration. Recorded in the Gospels and witnessed by Peter, John and James, it implies a challenge, namely that God and Christ be reflected in our daily lives. This remarkable event with Moses and Elijah visiting was a *foretaste* of Christ's public reign and also a *confirmation* of the prophecies about it (Mt. 17:1-9; 2 Pet. 1:16-21). It confirmed how God, when His time has come, will publicly introduce His “new age” into this world.

We should not try to enforce with human means or methods what God Himself will realize in the world to come under Christ's rule. Our battle is not against flesh and blood (Eph. 6:10-20) and we should not use carnal weapons (2 Cor. 10:3-5) or try to imitate situations of the past. The enemy's tactics of opposition include methods of imitation (2 Tim. 3:8), transforming himself into an angel of light for his purposes.

Satan is a master of deception and was a counterfeiter “from the beginning,” for he is the father of the lie and the murderer. “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness” (Isa. 5:20). Already Isaiah's days were marked by deception and delusion, and likewise are our days with “another Jesus, false apostles, deceitful workers” (please

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read 2 Cor. 11:4,13-15; 1 Jn. 2:18; 2 Th. 2:3; 2 Tim. 4:1-4; Mt. 24:4-5,11,24; Lk. 18:8; 1 Th. 5:3; Jn. 5:39-43).

In His moral government (Rom. 1:28) God allows and even sends such blindness. The God of Truth will send a special energy of error, a delusion, that people may believe the lie (2 Th. 2:7-12). But true believers are warned to not be deceived (Gal. 6:7; 1 Cor 6:9, 15:33; Jas. 1:16)!

### God's Plans Will Be Fulfilled

Zechariah 12:2-4 (KJV) predicts that God will make Jerusalem “a cup of trembling” (for intoxication) and “a burdensome stone for all people” (as an unsupportable burden). In His governmental dealings with this world, in particular the Western world, God will send blindness, of which our days witness foreshadows.

Israel is the apple of God's eye (Dt. 32:10; Zech. 2:8), even though in His moral government God calls them “Lo-Ammi” or “not My people” (Hos. 1:9 NKJV). Everyone who attacks Israel attacks God Himself. God told Abraham, “I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). God's *plans* will be fulfilled, and we need to understand that His *ways* will

lead to the fulfilment of these plans (see Rom. 9-11). God's plans and ways both are the subjects of prophecy.

As Christians we expect the rapture to occur at any moment, without any signs; and we live in that expectancy (Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Th. 1:9-10, 4:16-18; Ti. 2:13; Heb. 9:28; 2 Pet. 3:11-14; 1 Jn. 3:3; Rev. 22:17,20). These details belong to the blessed hope of the Church, but not part of prophecy. In this we notice a distinction, for the many events that the Lord predicted in His messages to the seven churches (Rev. 2-3) are part of prophecy as they relate to man's responsibility *on earth*. But the hope of the Church is linked with *Christ in heaven*. **GT**

*Look for Part 2  
in next month's edition!*

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<sup>1</sup> This arrangement put Christianity on the same level with this world's religions, even though the Emperor gave preference to Christendom. Today's movement towards a one-world religion is similar in essence and it is anti-biblical (Jn. 8:23, 18:36).

<sup>2</sup> Realizing that in God's ways He uses all these things, we must distinguish this from His true purpose.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout history we notice this control. Just two examples: the First World War, often called “the Great War,” led to a homeland for Israel; the Second World War led to many Jews going back to their country, even though mainly in unbelief and distinct from the fulfillment of prophecy when all will go back.



He was smiling to himself as he looked around and thought, “Boy, I’m sure glad I don’t look like these people – crazy hair, funny-looking pajamas – I’m sure they wouldn’t look this way in public if they had a choice. As they stared back at Jack, however, a disturbing realization swept over him: “I never actually looked in the mirror. What if they are thinking the same thing about me?”

It didn’t take long before Jack was relieved to understand that the smoke was, in fact, a result of food left too long in the microwave.

Back in his room, Jack prepared for bed a second time. But first, looking in the mirror, he noticed that the front of his button down shirt looked a little lopsided; he had missed the top button. Then he saw that the shoes on his feet were from two different pairs. Now he was sure that others must have thought his appearance humorous, too!

As Jack dozed off to sleep he thought of the many other people like him. The Bible says “All [people] have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23 KJV), and God must one day judge sinners. Yet, just like Jack thought he could tidy himself to look better before everyone at the hotel, many people think that they can do good things to look better before God and other people. In

the end, Jack discovered that he wasn’t any better than the other guests after all.

Everyone who thinks they can “tidy” themselves by doing good things will soon find that they are wrong. You see, “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Isa. 64:6). It is “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He [God] saved us” (Ti. 3:5). Jesus, God’s Son came to earth and took the judgment for each sinner who will believe in Him. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish [in the lake of fire], but have everlasting life [in heaven]” (Jn. 3:16).

If the smoke that Jack smelled had been the result of an actual fire, he could have lost his life by waiting too long to escape from the building. More importantly, every sinner who waits too long to accept Jesus as his or her Savior will be lost forever in the lake of fire. Have you trusted in Jesus, thereby escaping the fire and judgment from God? Is Jesus your Savior? Are you on your way to heaven? Or, are you delaying, like Jack did, while you try to make yourself look better? Don’t wait any longer – trust Him now! **GT**

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# Are You Trying To Look Better?



by F. G.

After a long day of traveling and a very poor night's sleep preceding another taxing day at a large hospital while his son had major surgery, Jack was exhausted. It will not surprise the reader, then, that Jack went straight to bed upon arriving in his room at the hotel where he was staying. However, only two hours later he was awakened by screaming fire alarms. Jack stirred, wondering, "Where am I? Maybe this is only a dream." But no; just then, a commanding voice announced over the loudspeaker, "Everyone should leave the building immediately. Please be calm and everyone will be okay. Exit the building immediately. Thank you."

At this declaration Jack jumped out of bed; he wasn't dreaming! Dressed in his nightclothes, he was determined not to appear outside just as he was. "I can come to the Lord Jesus 'just as I am,' as a favorite song of mine says," Jack thought, "but it would be embarrassing to be seen by people without tidying myself, at least a little." Hastily putting on his shirt and pants, and running a comb through his hair, Jack had the nagging thought that he should be going, especially since he was on the fifth floor and the smoke smell was getting worse. Grabbing his shoes in the darkness, Jack was finally ready.

When he arrived downstairs, one of the last, Jack found everyone assembled in a living room-like lobby.

*—continued on inside back cover*

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