

Prepare the Way

Preparing the Bride of Christ for the return of Christ

Issue No. 112
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Peter Pollock

**The same
old enemy**

**How I found
healing from
sexual abuse**

**Jerusalem
in history
& prophecy**

**God's amazing
promise to you
in your trial**

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COVER: "Even to your old age, I am He, And even to gray hairs I will carry you! I have made, and I will bear; Even I will carry, and will deliver you (Isaiah 46:4)."

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The Unmoveables

by Greg Hinnant

CHRISt'S "unmoveables" are those deep-digging disciples capable of withstanding the worst satanic flash floods. Jesus described them in the Sermon on the Mount.

Luke's version is most graphic:

"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say? Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock (Luke 6:46-48)."

Those who "come" to Jesus by conversion, "hear" His Word through teachings, and "dig deep" to fully know Him, the Rock, are building an unmovable house of character.

Jesus warned all believers would eventually face severe testing, a "flood" that will "beat vehemently" against us.

Not a slow, gradually rising flood but a watery blitzkrieg that will "burst against (NAS)" us like a flashflood hurtling through a mountain valley. Sudden, powerful, deadly! But if we build correctly – by the sustained, careful practice of Jesus sayings – we will not be separated from our Foundation. For this we must "dig deep," scripturally, spiritually, and situationally.

We dig **scripturally** by steady, devotional reading and thorough Bible studies. Daily we dig, every deeper, searching and pondering the Rock's sayings and all Scripture.

We dig **spiritually** by devotional seeking. Making prayer our way of life we ask the Rock's help for everything: His wisdom for perplexities, grace for challenges, strength for tasks. We worship regularly, offering thanks, songs, and words of adoration to Jesus through the day.

We dig **situationally** in our daily tests. All previous digging is worthless without this. As situations arise and we put the sayings of Jesus (the Bible) into practice that apply to them.

This is building on the Rock. As tests intensify, this building becomes harder, yet we grow nearer the Rock. We sense His solid support. We stop wavering with unspiritual thinking, emotions, or habits. Self wanes, Christ grows and we steadily form deep, godly habits.

Now when Satan sends his torrents of trouble crashing against us, we may waiver, briefly wondering how to respond, but through prayer we soon remember the Rock's sayings, do them, and resume our spiritual stability.

We're steady. Sure. Strong. Faithful as the Rock we stand on!

The key is the digging. No digging, no Rock; no Rock, no standing – or victory.


Determine to dig deeper – scripturally, spiritually, situationally. Ever deeper. Ever nearer the Rock.

Not understanding a biblical text, book, or theme? Dig deeper! Ask the Spirit's help more often. Research the text or subject more thoroughly. Seek the insights of more teachers and commentators. Meditatively read different translations, comparing them with your primary Bible. Don't stop excavating until you have clear insight from the Rock.

Can't sense God's presence, favour, or voice? Not receiving breakthroughs? Dig deeper! Examine your heart and life more closely. Confess sin more fully. Pray longer, more fervently, in the Spirit, in faith, confident God hears and answers. "Pray without ceasing" – until the Rock answers!

Weary of your trials? Do they seem unending? Do the injustices, loneliness, or burdens feel unbearable? Dig deeper! Take the next step in your spiritual disciplines, personal duties, or ministerial work and God's grace will meet you with fresh strength and renewed hope. You're going deeper, growing nearer the Rock.

Soon you will sense His benediction on your enduring faith: "Well done, good and faithful servant (Matthew 25:21)."

What is He saying? You are one of His unmoveables! 

The same old enemy

by Peter Pollock

THE more things change, the more they stay the same – so wrote a famous French journalist. All sorts of interpretations have been attached to what he meant. And we humans are very good at that, as we put our own spins on whatever is said or written, just adding to the general deception and confusion of the age. A bit cynical that may well sound, but Scripture reminds us that there is nothing new under the sun; as well as confirming that God is immutable.

That means that He does not change, does not have to change and that we can keep preaching the same old Gospel, affirmed and confident that nothing is going to upset the applecart in terms of faith and belief.

The old enemy, the devil, also doesn't change. The way he works, his *modus operandi*, dates back to the very beginning in his altercations with God. The temptations of both Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and Jesus in the Wilderness, expose the devil's consistency.

Like the biblical principles that are set into the system and work irrespective of form or favour, so the wiles of Satan do have an age-old familiar ring.

As we delve through the Book of Revelation – especially those early chapters that deal with the seven messages to the seven churches – our listening ears pick up the same old problems, the same old enemy, that same old foe! Names and faces may

change but the hassles are consistent and continuously underline that it's not about flesh and blood but about principalities and powers in the age-old contest for spiritual truth.

God has ordained that the centrality of Jesus Christ is the key issue. Only in Jesus can you be saved! Only in Jesus can you spiritually re-connect to our Father in heaven. Only in Jesus can prayers be heard and answered. All authority has been placed in Jesus.

So it merely underlines the importance of this doctrinal truth that the Church at Ephesus found itself in trouble because they had lost their focus. Their works and labour, were to be commended; their perseverance and patience were to be admired and they had not become weary exposing false prophets and lying apostles. A big church, no doubt, doing all the right things it would seem. But no! They had lost their first love.

They had forgotten about Jesus in all their humanistic church endeavours and they needed to repent and return or else they would lose their lampstand. The Christ, The Cross and Communion had been replaced by worldly compromise, and it was a huge problem!

Jesus Christ is all-sufficient in Himself and He is all we need because God has simply ordained it so. But, it was a problem then and it is still the same problem today. Maybe we have got smarter intellectually in trying to cover up with our rationalisations and explanations; maybe

we are more deluded and deceived by an end-time outpouring of the wrong spirit and a “different gospel,” but the problem is the same – denial of the centrality and all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ!

Of course, we don't think that we are guilty; are in fact hugely affronted when confronted, but it's the same old, same old spiritual spider-web with the same old deception. We have taken our eyes off Jesus.

We read the first time about the Nicolaitans, their deeds and doctrine and notice that the Lord is very strong about the evil influence of this group, using the word “hate” twice in castigating them not only as a group of people but for their actions and influence. The “hate” here cannot just be written off as an idiom of comparison, as hyperbole, an exaggeration or a misquote! The Greek word *miseo* means to hate, abhor and find utterly repulsive.

God means what he says, as in Malachi when He states “Jacob I love; Esau I hate.” It was not, as I once heard a modern preacher try to explain, that it meant “God did not really hate him, He just loved him less!” The doctrine of the Nicolaitans revolved around worldly compromise, humanism and liberalism. What is missing is that there is no emphasis on holy living and separation from the world. No, rather they promote a sort of “marriage of convenience” with God fulfilling the role of a pandering, pampering, patronising benefactor serving our every need and whim.

Holiness is separation unto God! The

Nicolaitans place no emphasis on doctrinal teaching from the Bible; there is no emphasis on absolute truth or absolute morality and there is no exclusionary belief that Christ alone in the way to heaven. Jesus loathed, hated and was repulsed by such doctrinal belief systems, because bad doctrine produces bad fruit.

That's why Paul always went to such lengths to stress the importance of the right doctrine in his dealings with Timothy and others. Often Paul would admonish on doctrinal issues, not because he wanted to exercise dominance and show his expertise as a teacher, but because he knew just how important it is the rightly interpret the Word of God.

And to this day, the Nicolaitans have not gone away.

Next is mention of the Synagogue of Satan. Many times I read these passages without really coming to grips with the danger of this group. "Those who say they are believers but are not" – that's them! They are the goats, not the sheep; they are the tares not the wheat; and they are trouble.

They are "the Gentiles who will trample down the Holy City (Revelation 11:1)." The "gentiles" have never ever really been in the inner sanctum but have always been floundering around in the outer court. They will not be "measured" because they are not true believers. They are "in" the church, the physical one, but they are not "of" the church, the real remnant one. They have an undermining access to true believers.

I recall my early days when I was so excited about being "born again," about the Lordship of Jesus Christ – and was "convinced" that I was going to save the whole world in a matter of weeks. I certainly got up a few nostrils with my fervour and enthusiasm and heard such comments as "won't someone please lock him up for six months" and "hopefully he is going to mature some day."

Recently after giving an enthusiastic presentation I was asked how old I was. When I told them, an attendee responded, "Shoo! And still so excited about Jesus." To which I responded: "Shouldn't I be? But I must tell you that that many in the church have done their level best to make me unexcited." That's a truth. That's the Synagogue of Satan.

There is no room for radical believers in a modern church that is doing its level best to bring everything down to the mean average. A sort of franchise business with no fear of God!

Again, nothing has changed, as we recall Jesus clearing out the temple and He no doubt would be doing the same if He was around physically.

Next is the Error of Balaam. The Bible tells us that the gifts and ministries are without repentance. In other words once God gives a gift He never takes it away. The gift can be used for good or evil purposes at the discretion of the dispenser.

Balaam was quite a character, a personality. Spiritually he was gifted but he had a flawed character. Sadly, and significantly, we are overly exposed to this problem – the gifted charlatan!

The Balaam story is a long story. I read it over and over, trying to make sense of it. Even then, a baffling combination of events and interpretations saw me finally allowing Derek Prince to enlighten me. Balack came to Balaam, the soothsayer/fortune-teller/witch doctor, with a goodly fee for some "divine" help.

We don't have to get embroiled in all the complications, complexities and strategies, save to know that evil and satanic action and help is always available. The bottom line was that evil wanted to use God's gifting for nefarious purposes and Balaam was willing to prostitute his marvellous spiritual talents.

That's how we end up with false teachers in the church, the way of Balaam, "because they loved unrighteousness and profit (2 Peter 2:15 and Jude 11)."

Satan's greatest weapon

"Satan's greatest weapon is the love of money." Powerful gifts make money. Just turn on your TV! However, Derek Prince does point out that there is a difference between "gifts" and "fruit." Gifts represent ability, fruit represents character. Receiving a gift does not change a person's character but receiving "gifting" carries with it temptation to see "spiritual success."

This is a veritable monster because it so appeals to our ego and our pride. God doesn't need you and me. We are not going to fix the world or the church. We need to get over ourselves! We need to decrease so that Jesus can increase, so aptly noted by John the Baptist.

And we have to remember that we can't even tie his shoe-laces. The Error of Balaam is alive and well, sadly so!

The Jezebel Spirit is a haven for an endless line of soul-power supremos! The Jezebel Spirit deals with everything from sexual promiscuity to false doctrine. Jezebel's father was a priest of the cruel Baal

cult with sensuous and revolting worship involving sexual degradation and lewdness. We need not say more.

However, Jezebel is probably best recognised when we sense a domineering and controlling spirit. Single-minded determination to have own way, no matter the cost, is the character of the Jezebel Spirit, with soul power running rife.

Bullying by manipulation, lies and deceit and the use of sex as a major battleground for exploitation and abuse are the recognisable traits.

We recall two incidents in the Bible. The first was Naboth's vineyard, and how Jezebel manipulated her weak husband and king, Ahab. And then there was Mount Carmel as Elijah contested with the priests of Baal in one of the great days of Christian ministry. Yes, we actually saw a physical and material victory!

But along came Jezebel, and the mighty prophet ran away and sought solace in a pity-party before God. It is a powerful spirit, indeed, and no question that it is alive and well today!

Finally, the Seven Churches message started with Ephesus forgetting "first love" but very challengingly and prophetically finishes with the Church at Laodicea and its end-time delusion and deception. They were lukewarm. Neither hot nor cold!

Friends, you can't be lukewarm if you have truly met Jesus. It's just the way it is!

I am shattered by the number of church leaders today who will honestly confess that they really battle to put Jesus number one in their lives.

If you are lukewarm God will spew you out of His mouth. You simply can't downgrade that statement. You can't mis-translate it or cover it up. Because you "say" something does not mean it's true!

The Lord tells Laodicea that it doesn't matter what they name or claim, they are wretched, poor, blind and naked. Jesus then counsels them they need "gold" – not the glitzy stuff we manufacture out of misguided self-indulgent enthusiasm, but the gold that is refined by fire!

They need "white garments," meaning holiness and righteousness, and "eye salve" that they may have spiritual discernment.

The message continues: "Those I love I rebuke and chasten" – so much for cheap grace. We are told to be zealous, to repent.

Jesus is standing outside that church in Laodicea and He is knocking! Hopefully we have ears to hear His voice, the obedience, to open the door and the will, to overcome as radical believers.

There is nothing new under the sun! 



Stewardship, tithing, and giving

by R.C. Sproul

A WIDESPREAD cynicism toward giving exists in our culture. Some non-profit organisations have mismanaged funds. Thus, many people are reluctant to support these organisations with their donations.

But the cynicism extends even to the Christian community. Some unscrupulous televangelists have given tithing a bad name, so many believers do not contribute to the work of the church. This, I believe, is a significant error, for the Bible commands Christians to be good stewards of their resources for the sake of the kingdom of God.

The whole concept of stewardship begins with creation. Creation is celebrated not only in Genesis but throughout Scripture, especially in the Psalms, where Israel celebrated God's ownership of the whole universe. "The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein (Psalm 24:1)."

God is the author of all things, the Creator of all things, and the owner of all things. Whatever God makes, He owns. What we own, we own as stewards who have been given gifts from God Himself. God has the ultimate ownership of all of our "possessions." He has loaned these

things to us and expects us to manage them in a way that will honour and glorify Him.

The steward in the ancient culture was not the owner of the house. He was hired by the owner to manage his house affairs. He managed the property and was responsible to allocate the resources of the home. The steward's job was to make sure that the cupboards were filled with food, the money was taken care of, the lawn was tended, and the house was kept in good repair.

Given the responsibility

Humankind's stewardship began in the garden of Eden, where God gave Adam and Eve full dominion over the entire creation. Adam and Eve were not given ownership of the world; they were given the responsibility of managing it. They were to ensure that the garden was tilled and cultivated and not abused or exploited, and that the goods God provided were neither spoiled nor wasted.

In our own households, we learn that if we spend \$50 on clothes, that's \$50 we no longer have for other purposes. Everyone, even billionaires, functions with limited resources. Every time we use a resource, we

make a decision, and that decision reveals what kind of stewards we are.

That's where God holds us accountable. He held Adam and Eve accountable for how they took care of the garden. God is interested in how we take care of our ministries, personal lives, homes – every aspect of life. All of these areas deal with managing and allocating resources.

At the centre of the biblical concept of stewardship is the tithe, which first appears in the Old Testament. The word tithe means "tenth." The basic principle was that every person was to return one-tenth of his increase to the Lord on an annual basis.

The beauty of the tithe is that it precluded class warfare and the politics of envy. It prohibited unequal taxes from being imposed wherein one group of people paid a higher percentage than another. When that happens, economics becomes politicized, and it creates vested interest groups where justice is ignored for the sake of power.

In Israel, everyone gave the same percentage but not the same amount. In this structure, a person who makes \$10 000 per year returns \$1 000 in tithe. The person who makes \$1 million per year returns \$100 000. The rich person returns far

more money, but it is the same percentage that the poor person pays.

Trouble developed in the Old Testament when the people held out on their tithes. They were not obedient to God's law. Malachi 3:8-10 tells us: "Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need."

This means that if the tithe principle is still in effect, we systematically rob God when we don't tithe. Let me repeat that. Malachi's teaching indicates that when we fail to tithe, we are not merely robbing the church, the clergy, or Christian educators – we are robbing God Himself.

Change brings a promise of prosperity

But note that God had words not only of condemnation for the people but also a promise of prosperity were they to change their ways. God challenged them to be faithful, giving His own promise that He would open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings upon them.

Why did God institute the tithe in the first place? In order to support the Levites, who had no tribal allocation of land. The Levites were set apart to take care of the spiritual and educational responsibilities of the nation, and their work and physical necessities were paid for by the tithe (Numbers 18).

Under the new covenant, the tithe continues to support the work of building up people in the truth of God and reaching sinners with the gospel. Christ works through churches, seminaries, para-church organisations, missionaries, and many others to build and grow His kingdom.

When we don't tithe, we reduce the ministry of Christ. One of the greatest barriers to expanding the kingdom of Christ in this world is financial. A fundamental principle is at work here. If we have \$100 to work with in ministry, we are limited by that amount. We can waste that money and do only \$10 of actual work. But even if we are expert managers and scrupulous

stewards, we cannot do \$110 of ministry!

Christian ministry depends upon Christian giving. That giving always and everywhere limits the work of ministry.

Of course, my argument assumes that the tithe continues in this new covenant era. Some deny that the tithe continues today, but that's not what the earliest Christians believed...

In the *Didache*, written at the end of the first century or early in the second, there is a significant amount of material on the question of supporting the work of the kingdom. The tithe principle is clearly communicated in this work, showing us that the primitive Christian community continued the practice of the tithe.

Also, there is in the *Didache* a prudential warning given to the Christian, saying, "Let your donation sweat in your hand before you give it." An interesting metaphor, isn't it? The injunction is not for your hand to squeeze the money so hard that you never give it. That's not the point. The point is to be very careful, very discerning where you give your donation.

That brings up a controversial question with respect to financing the kingdom. Again, in Malachi 3:10 God says, "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in my house." In the Old Testament, the tithe, either in animals or produce, was brought to a central location, the storehouse, which was managed by the Levites. The whole tithe from the whole nation was brought into this single receiving place, and it was then distributed by the Levites according to the needs of the people.

Some people believe that means that in the New Testament age, there should be a single storehouse where all the tithes go and from which they are distributed. There are two problems with that.

In the first place, in the Old Testament, the people of Israel had a single central sanctuary. When the New Testament church began, churches were established in every town and every city – in Ephesus, in Corinth, in Thessalonica, and so on. No longer was there one central sanctuary.

So the idea of bringing tithes into one central storehouse becomes problematic.

Some people believe that the local church is the storehouse, and is, therefore, the only appropriate place for us to give our tithes. But nothing in the New Testament equates the local church with the Old Testament storehouse. If we believe that the local church is the storehouse,

we would then have to argue for a central location where the tithes of all Christians would go. All of your tithes would have to go to a central receiving house and then be distributed from there. I have never heard a local church favour that.

Investing in the Kingdom of God


It is simply not biblical to require people to give their entire tithe to their local church. I do believe that the lion's share of it should go to the local church, but I also think that the principle of letting your donation "sweat in your hand before you give it" implies not only discernment but also liberty in giving so that your giving may include a seminary, a Christian college, and other worthy ministries.

The Bible teaches that we are to invest in the kingdom of God. Most of us live in countries that were built on the principle of capitalism, and the fundamental idea of capitalism is this: delayed gratification. Instead of taking the money we make and spending it all now, we save it and invest it. This allows our capital to go to work for us, expanding our wealth.

The most important investment we can ever make is in the kingdom of God, because it has eternal returns. These returns are not just for us but also for our family, our children, our grandchildren. This generation of Christians must invest in the things of God for the sake of the next generation. This follows Jesus' admonition: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you (Matthew 6:33).»

I honestly believe that if you invest in the kingdom of God, you won't lose anything in the final analysis. Tithe from the top, and learn to do that as early as you can in life. If your child gets a dollar allowance, make sure that the first ten cents goes into the collection plate on Sunday, so the child learns the principle early.

We know we cannot spend the tax the government takes out of our paycheque. We must live on our "take home" pay. Our obligation to God takes precedence over our obligation to government. God should get paid first, "from the top."

If you want to know how serious you are about investing in God's kingdom, look at your bank records. They are an objective, concrete record of where your treasure is and where your heart is. 

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God's amazing promise to you in your trial!

by David Wilkerson (1931-2011)

IN Micah 7, the prophet delivers a prophetic message to Israel – one that applies to spiritually starved believers around the world today. Micah began his prophecy with a heartbroken cry: “Woe is me!... there is no cluster to eat (Micah 7:1).”

Micah was describing the effect of a famine in Israel – a famine of both food and God’s Word.

His message echoes the words of an earlier prophecy by Amos: “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord God, “that I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, but shall not find it (Amos 8:11&12).”

Micah also speaks for a hungry people today: the church of Jesus Christ. In his prophetic eye, Micah foresaw multitudes today running from place to place, seeking to hear a true word from God.

He envisioned believers scurrying from church to church, all seeking to satisfy a hunger for food to nourish their souls. And the cry is still being heard: “Woe is me, for there is no cluster!”

My heart goes out to every person who has been snared by a bloodless, powerless,

contemporary gospel.

They’ve never been confronted about their sins or heard the convicting word of truth that would produce Christ’s character in them. They’ve been given nothing with which to build their spiritual house except wood, hay and stubble. And when they’re called to stand before Jesus, everything they’ve built their foundation upon will burn.

Israel’s spiritual famine could not have come at a worse time: the very height of the nation’s moral decay. The time was ripe for a righteous testimony and a loving rebuke to the nation’s leaders for their sin. Yet at the very moment this should have happened, the church was becoming more worldly: “The faithful man has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among men. They all lie in wait for blood; every man hunts his brother with a net (Micah 7:2).”

A breakdown of trust

Micah’s message mirrors today’s headlines. People no longer trust in their leaders, their government, their judicial system. They don’t trust their employers, co-workers, friends or religion. There is a breakdown of trust at every level of society. As a result, everyone looks out only for himself.

We no longer hear, “What can I do to help? How can I contribute?” Instead, the

cry is, “What’s in it for me?”

Yet Micah turned his gaze away from all the decadence and greed in society, all the backsliding and compromise in the church:

“Therefore I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me (Micah 7:7).”

He told Israel, in essence: “Yes, depravity is plaguing our nation’s soul, causing ruin and decay. But ultimately, our focus isn’t on the awful condition of society. A true watchman doesn’t just warn of the sword; he also proclaims God’s promises. In the midst of chaos, he wants his holy remnant to know his heart toward them.”

The same is true today. The Lord has a remnant whose eyes are not focussed on the ruin of society or the church. Instead, they’re preoccupied with the true focus of God’s spokesmen, echoing the exhortations of the prophets, “Turn your eyes toward the Lord, seek his face, wait on him. He will sustain you and meet all your needs.”

The promises that Micah begins to reveal at this point seem too incredible to be true. Yet all are intended for Christ’s church in these present times.

Micah 7:14 says, “Shepherd Your people with Your staff, the flock of Your heritage, who dwell solitarily in a woodland.” The shepherd being addressed here can only be Christ: “Now may the God of peace who

brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant (Hebrews 13:20).”

Micah is prophesying that Jesus would come to earth to shepherd and feed the flock. For those who turn to him in faith and trust, there will never be a famine.

What does this tell us about the present famine?

It says we cannot always blame our lack of bread solely on dead churches or unconcerned pastors. If we turn to Jesus, he promises to feed us. This pledge is good even to those who live in solitary places, where there may be no church: “who dwell solitarily in a woodland (Micah 7:14).”

Micah 7:15 contains one of God’s most glorious promises to his people: “As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders (Micah 7:15).”

This refers to the miracle God performed for Israel at the Red Sea. In so many words, God is telling us, “For years you’ve heard sermons about the great miracle I performed for my people. Yet as wonderful as that deliverance was, it was only a type, a shadow. I want to do for you a totally new thing.”

He’ll open your sea

Right now, you may be in a spiritual wilderness, facing the powers of Satan. You can feel his army of demonic entities thundering down on you. And just as the Israelites were helpless against their enemy, you are helpless against yours. Yet, as surely as God opened the Red Sea, allowing Israel to walk through on dry ground, he’s going to open up your sea supernaturally. You’re going to walk through whatever bonds the enemy has put on you, all of his spiritual opposition. And you’ll no longer have reason to fear him.

Micah prophesied, “The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might; they shall put their hand over their mouth; their ears shall be deaf (Micah 7:16).”

Micah is telling us, “Your Red Sea deliverance will silence Satan’s lies. He’ll have to ‘cover his mouth’ in awe as God’s Spirit moves in you.”

You’ll no longer believe the enemy’s accusations against you. Instead, his demonic powers will end up totally confused.

Many Christians quote 2 Corinthians 10:3&4: “Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not car-

nal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.”

Most of us think of these strongholds as bondages such as sexual trespasses, drug addictions, alcoholism, outward sins we put at the top of a “worst sins” list.

But Paul is referring to something much worse than our human measuring of sins.

A stronghold is an accusation planted firmly in your mind. And Satan establishes strongholds in God’s people by implanting lies in their minds – falsehoods and misconceptions about God’s nature.

He may plant the lie that you’re unspiritual, whispering repeatedly, “You’ll never be free of your besetting sin. You’re a phony, because your mind is still full of evil thoughts. You haven’t changed. Now God has lost patience with you. You’re not worthy to receive any more of his grace.”

Or he may try to destroy your marriage by saying, “You can’t endure this relationship any longer unless your spouse changes.”

If you keep listening to his lies, after a while you’ll begin to believe them. Once you buy his evil argument, it will become imbedded in your mind and heart – and then it becomes a stronghold.

This allows Satan to have power over you through your thought life. He doesn’t have to possess your body; all he needs is a foothold in your mind, to inject lies that constantly twist and turn your thoughts with torment.

We can’t pull down these strongholds by prayer alone. The only weapon that scares Satan and his hordes is the same one that scared him in the wilderness temptations of Jesus: the living Word of God. Only the Lord’s truth can set us free.

Cleanse us, forgive us & cast away our sin

He promises to be God to us; to cleanse us, forgive us and cast away all our sins; to fill us with his Spirit; to lead, instruct and guide us through his Spirit; and to put within us all the power we need to walk in holiness and obedience.

According to Micah, here is the promise we are to cling to: “Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will

cast all our sins into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:18&19).”

We do not subdue our sins; God subdues them.

And he has compassion on us, trampling all our iniquities underfoot, casting them into the sea never to be used against us again. Picture the children of Israel watching all those Egyptian soldiers disappear into the water forever.

Now the Lord is telling us, “Those are your sins, and you’re going to watch them sink to the bottom of the sea. I have washed them away for good.” If you’ll lay hold of these promises, God promises your enemy will be scattered before your eyes.

“They shall lick the dust like a serpent; they shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth. They shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of You (Micah 7:17).”

They’ll crawl out of their holes in fright

The “snakes of the earth” here means, figuratively, “creeping serpentine fears.” These refer to Satan’s planted fears, accusations imbedded in the mind. God says they’re going to crawl out of their holes in trembling fright.

What does this mean? Simply put, when you stand on his promises, every demonic power will squirm away from its stronghold in fear of almighty God.

In addition, the devil and his army “shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of You.” You’ll no longer be afraid of the devil; he’ll be afraid of you! He fears every believer who walks in the almighty Deliverer’s promises.

God is faithful to fulfil his promise to cause every enemy to flee from us. Right now, your temptations, habits and besetting sins may look like impossible roadblocks before you. But the Lord promises to deliver you, for his own name’s sake. He is faithful to keep his Word.

Make this your prayer: “God, you have promised by oath to be Lord to me. You have said you would give me my own Red Sea experience. You’ve also said the devil would have to put his hand over his mouth, no longer able to accuse me with his lies. I stand on your promises now, Father. Deliver me, and glorify your name in my life.”

Amen! 🐟

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by *A.W. Tozer*

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 10:19).”

AMONG the famous sayings of the church fathers, none is better known than Augustine’s, “**You have formed us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in You.**”

The great saint states here in few words the origin and interior history of the human race. God made us for Himself – this is the only explanation that satisfies the heart of a thinking man, whatever his wild reason may say. Should faulty education and perverse reasoning lead a man to conclude otherwise, there is little that any Christian can do for him. For such a man I have no message. I speak to thirsty hearts whose longings have been awakened by the touch of God within them, and such as they need no reasoned proof. Their restless hearts furnish all the proof they need.

God formed us for Himself. The Shorter Catechism, asks “What is the chief end of man?” Answer: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” With this agree the 24 elders who fall on their faces to worship Him that lives forever and ever, saying, “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for You have created all things, and for Your pleasure they are and were created (Revelation 4:11).”

God formed us for His pleasure, and so formed us that we, as well as He, can, in divine communion, enjoy the sweet and mysterious mingling of kindred personalities. He meant us to see Him and live with Him and draw our life from His smile.

But we have been guilty of that “foul revolt” of which Milton speaks when describing the rebellion of Satan and his hosts. We have broken with God. We have ceased to obey Him or love Him, and in guilt and fear have fled as far as possible from His presence.

Yet, who can flee from His presence when the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? When, as the wisdom of Solomon testifies, “the Spirit of the Lord fills the world?”

From His Presence we have fled, like Adam, to hide among the trees of the garden, or like Peter, to shrink away crying, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord (Luke 5:8).”

The whole work of God in redemption is to undo the tragic effects of that foul revolt, and to bring us back again into right and eternal relationship with Himself. This requires that our sins be disposed of satisfactorily, that a full reconciliation be effected and the way opened for us to return again into conscious communion with God and to live again in the Presence as before.

I WILL ARISE...

This first comes to our notice when our restless hearts feel a yearning for the presence of God and we say within ourselves, “I will arise and go to my Father.”

The interior journey of the soul from the wilds of sin into the enjoyed presence of God is beautifully illustrated in the Old Testament tabernacle. The returning sinner first entered the outer court where he offered a blood sacrifice on the brazen altar and washed himself in the laver that stood near it. Then he passed through a veil into the holy place where no natural light could come, but the golden candlestick which spoke of Jesus, the Light of the World, threw its soft glow over all.

Though the worshiper had enjoyed so much, still he had not yet entered the presence of God. Another veil separated from the Holy of Holies where above the mercy seat dwelt the very God Himself in awful and glorious manifestation. While the tabernacle stood, only the high priest could enter there, and that but once a year, with blood which he offered for his sins

and the sins of the people.

It was this last veil which was rent when our Lord gave up His life on Calvary, and the sacred writer explains that this rending of the veil opened the way for every worshiper in the world to come by the new and living way straight into the divine Presence.

God wills that we should push on into His presence and live our whole life there. This is to be known to us in conscious experience. It is more than a doctrine to be held; it is a life to be enjoyed every moment of every day.

The greatest fact of the tabernacle was that Jehovah was there; a Presence was waiting within the veil. Similarly, the presence of God is the central fact of Christianity. At the heart of the Christian message is God Himself waiting for His redeemed children to push in to conscious awareness of His presence.

The world is perishing for lack of the knowledge of God and the Church is famishing for want of His presence. The instant cure of most of our religious ills would be to enter the Presence in spiritual experience, to become suddenly aware that we are in God and God is in us. This would lift us out of our pitiful narrowness and cause our hearts to be enlarged. This would burn away the impurities from our lives as the bugs and fungi were burned away by the fire that dwelt in the bush.

What a broad world to roam in, what a sea to swim in is this God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is eternal. He antedates time and is wholly independent of it. Time began in Him and will end in Him. To it He pays no tribute and from it He suffers no change.

He is immutable. He has never changed and can never change in any smallest measure. To change He would need to go from better to worse or from worse to better. He cannot do either, for being perfect He cannot become more perfect,

and if He were to become less perfect He would be less than God.

He is omniscient. He knows in one free and effortless act all matter, all spirit, all relationships, all events. He has no past and He has no future. He is, and none of the limiting and qualifying terms used of creatures can apply to Him.

The highest love of God is not intellectual, it is spiritual. God is Spirit and only the spirit of a man can know Him really. In the deep spirit of a man the fire must glow or his love is not the true love of God.

The great of the kingdom have been those who loved God more than others did. We all know who they have been and gladly pay tribute to the depth and sincerity of their devotion. We have but to pause for a moment and their names come trooping past us, smelling of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces.

Hearts that are “fit to break” with love for the Godhead are those who have been in the Presence and have looked with opened eye upon the majesty of Deity. Men of the breaking hearts had a quality about them not known to nor understood by common men. They habitually spoke with spiritual authority. They had been in the presence of God and they reported what they saw there.

They were prophets, not scribes, for the scribe tells us what he has read, and the prophet tells what he has seen. Between the scribe who has read and the prophet who has seen there is a difference as wide as the sea.

We are overrun today with orthodox scribes, but the prophets – where are they?

The Church waits for the tender voice of the saint who has penetrated the veil and has gazed with inward eye upon the wonder that is God. And yet, thus to penetrate, to push in sensitive living experience into the holy Presence, is a privilege open to every child of God.

With the veil removed by the rending of Jesus’ flesh, with nothing on God’s side to prevent us from entering, why do we tarry without? Why do we consent to abide all our days just outside the Holy of Holies and never enter at all to look upon God? We sense that the call is for us, but still we fail to draw near, and the years pass and we grow old and tired in the outer courts of the tabernacle. What hinders us?

The answer usually given, simply that we are “cold,” will not explain all the facts. There is something more serious than coldness of heart, something that may be back of that coldness and be the cause of its existence. What is it? What but the

presence of a veil in our hearts? A veil not taken away as the first veil was, but which remains there still shutting out the light and hiding the face of God from us.

It is the veil of our fleshly, fallen nature living on, unjudged within us, uncrucified and unrepudiated. It is the close-woven veil of the self-life which we have never truly acknowledged, of which we have been secretly ashamed, and which for these reasons we have never brought to the judgement of the cross.

It is not too mysterious, this opaque veil, nor is it hard to identify. We have but to look into our own hearts and we shall see it there, sewn and patched and repaired it may be, but there nevertheless, an enemy to our lives and an effective block to our spiritual progress.

NOT A BEAUTIFUL THING

This veil is not a beautiful thing and it is not a thing about which we commonly care to talk. But I am addressing the thirsting souls who are determined to follow God, and I know they will not turn back because the way leads temporarily through the blackened hills. The urge of God within them will assure their continuing pursuit. They will face the facts however unpleasant and endure the cross for the joy set before them. So I am bold to name the threads out of which this inner veil is woven.

It is woven of the fine threads of the self-life, the hyphenated sins of the human spirit. They are not something we do, they are something we are, and therein lies both their subtlety and their power.

To be specific, the self-sins are self-righteousness, self-pity, self-confidence, self-sufficiency, self-admiration, self-love and a host of others like them. They dwell too deep within us and are too much a part of our natures to come to our attention till the light of God is focused upon them. The grosser manifestations of these sins – egotism, exhibitionism, self-promotion – are strangely tolerated in Christian leaders, even in circles of impeccable orthodoxy.

They appear these days to be a requisite for popularity in some sections of the church. Promoting self under the guise of promoting Christ is currently so common as to excite little notice.

Self can live unrebuked at the very altar. It can fight for the faith of the reformers and preach eloquently the creed of salvation by grace and gain strength by its efforts.

Self is the opaque veil that hides the face

of God from us. It can be removed only in spiritual experience, never by mere instruction. We may as well try to instruct leprosy out of our system. There must be a work of God in destruction before we are free. We must invite the cross to do its deadly work within us. We must bring our self-sins to the cross for judgement. We must prepare ourselves for an ordeal of suffering in some measure like that through which our Saviour passed when He suffered under Pontius Pilate.

Let us remember that when we talk of the rending of the veil we are speaking in a figure, and the thought of it is poetical, almost pleasant, but in actuality there is nothing pleasant about it. In human experience that veil is made of living spiritual tissue; it is composed of the sentient, quivering stuff of which our whole beings consist, and to touch it is to touch us where we feel pain. To tear it away is to injure us, to hurt us and make us bleed.

To say otherwise is to make the cross no cross and death no death at all. It is never fun to die. To rip through the dear and tender stuff of which life is made can never be anything but deeply painful.

Let us beware of tinkering with our inner life, hoping ourselves to rend the veil. God must do everything for us. Our part is to yield and trust. We must confess, forsake, repudiate the self-life, and then reckon it crucified. But we must be careful to distinguish lazy “acceptance” from the real work of God. We must insist upon the work being done. We dare not rest content with a neat doctrine of self-crucifixion. That is to imitate Saul and spare the best of the sheep and the oxen.

INSIST THAT IT BE DONE

Insist that the work be done in very truth and it will be done. The cross is rough and it is deadly, but it is effective. It does not keep its victim hanging there forever. There comes a moment when its work is finished and the suffering victim dies. After that is resurrection glory and power, and the pain is forgotten for joy that the veil is taken away and we have entered in actual spiritual experience the presence of the living God.

Lord, how excellent are Thy ways, and how devotional and dark are the ways of man. Show us how to die, that we may rise again to newness of life. Rend the veil of our self-life from the top down as Thou didst rend the veil of the Temple. We would draw near in full assurance of faith. We would dwell with Thee in daily experience here on this earth so that we may be accustomed to the glory when we enter Thy heaven to dwell with Thee there. In Jesus’ name. Amen. ☩

by Dr David R. Reagan

ON September 25th of 1995, a very special Jewish new year began. It was the year designated by the government of Israel as the 3 000th anniversary of the conquest of the city of Jerusalem by King David.

There is no other city on the face of the earth as important as the city of Jerusalem. All the other great cities of the earth – New York, London, Moscow, Paris, and even Rome – pale by comparison. What other city can claim to be “the city of God” or “the city of the Great King (Psalm 48)?”

God loves Jerusalem, and He intends to dwell in it eternally. Psalm 68:16 says that God has desired the mountain of Zion “for His abode” and that He intends to “dwell there forever.” Psalm 132:13&14 contains a similar promise: “The Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation. “This is my resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it.”

When you read these kinds of statements, you can understand why Jerusalem is identified in Ezekiel 5:5 as “the centre of the nations” and in Ezekiel 38:12 as “the centre of the world.”

Jerusalem is where the Son of God shed His precious blood. It is where Jesus ascended into Heaven. It is where Jesus will return to be crowned King of Kings. It is the city from which Jesus will reign over all the nations of the world.

And Jerusalem will be the scene of history’s last battle when Satan rallies the nations at the end of the Millennium and leads them in revolt against the Lord. Finally, Jerusalem is where God Himself will come to reside eternally with the Redeemed.

It is no wonder that Jerusalem has always been an important topic of Bible prophecy.

But before we look at Jerusalem in prophecy, let’s briefly remind ourselves of its history.

The first mention of Jerusalem in the Bible is probably found in Genesis 14:18 where we are told that Abraham paid tithes to the King of Salem, Melchizedek. This was about 2 000 years before the time of Jesus. Although we cannot know for certain that this is a reference to Jerusalem, it seems likely because Abraham was in that geographical area, and the city’s name, Salem, is the root word of the city’s later name, Jerusalem.

Later, we are told that Abraham went



to Mt Moriah, just north of ancient Jerusalem, to offer his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:2). That mountain was later incorporated into the city of Jerusalem during the time of Solomon, becoming the Temple Mount.

The first mention of the city by the name of Jerusalem is found in Joshua 10:1 where we are told that the city’s king, Adonizedek, led a coalition of kings against Joshua and was defeated in the famous battle in the Valley of Ayalon when the sun stood still. However, the city of Jerusalem must not have been taken at this time by the Israelites because after the death of Joshua, we are told in Judges 1:8 that “the sons of Judah” captured the city, “struck it with the edge of the sword, and set it on fire.”

But the Jebusites must have reclaimed it because it is later referred to in Judges 19:10 as the city of Jebus. And it was still in Jebusite hands two centuries later when David conquered it and made it the capital of the Jewish nation.

The story of the city’s capture by David and his forces is recorded in 2 Samuel 5 and 1 Chronicles 11. According to these passages, David reigned from Hebron for seven years while he served as king of Judah. But after he was crowned the king of both Judah and Israel, he decided to move his headquarters northward to a more central location.

The city he selected was Jebus, which was also known as “the stronghold of Zion (2 Samuel 5:7).” After he conquered it, the name was changed to Jerusalem, but it was often referred to as “the city of David” (2 Samuel 5:9). This occurred 1 000 years before the birth of Jesus – or some 3,000 years from where we stand now in human history.

Now, with this brief historical sketch as a backdrop, let’s take a look at the Bible

prophecies that relate to Jerusalem.

Jewish Jerusalem

The first set of prophecies relating to Jerusalem are those that pertain to it as a Jewish capital before the time of Jesus. Keep in mind that the kingdom of David split into two nations after the death of his son Solomon.

The northern nation of Israel was totally apostate from the beginning. It was given over to idolatry and did not have one righteous king in its 200-year history. In sharp contrast, the southern nation of Judah was blessed with many righteous kings. It was also blessed with Jerusalem as its capital. And it was blessed even more by having the Shekinah glory of God residing in its Temple.

But despite all these blessings, the people of Judah became proud and began to drift in their relationship with God. As the nation began to turn its back on God, the Lord mercifully raised up prophets to warn them and call them to repentance. When they refused to repent, the prophets prophesied that the city of Jerusalem would be destroyed and the nation would be taken into captivity.

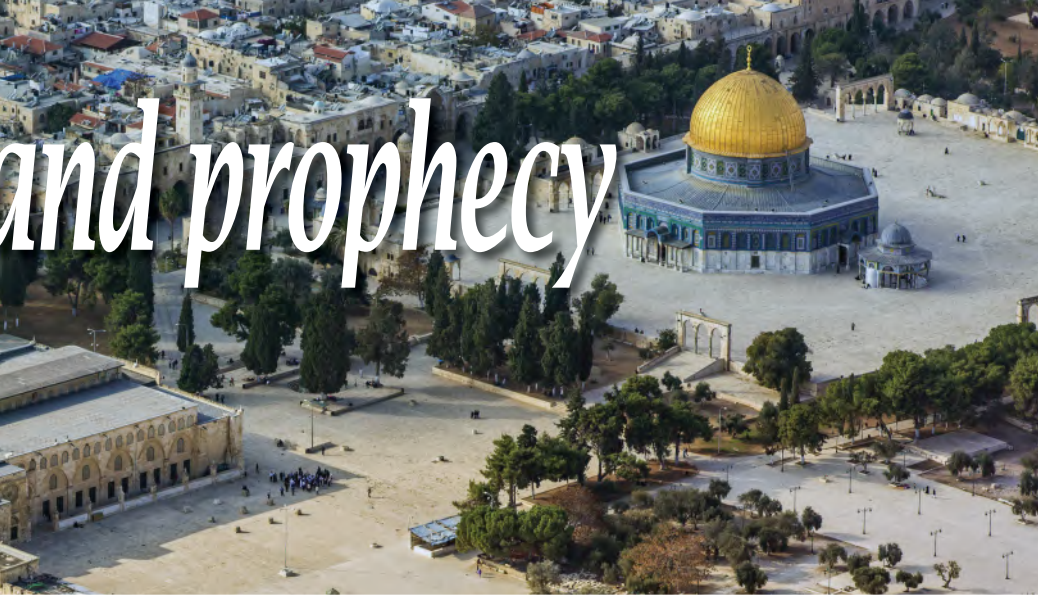
The first of these prophecies was delivered by Micah in the 8th century BC – about 130 years before the city was actually destroyed. Micah spoke out against both political and religious corruption, saying, “Her (Judah’s) leaders pronounce judgement for a bribe, Her priests instruct for a price, and her prophets divine for money (Micah 3:11).”

He lamented the fact that every time these leaders were called to repentance lest the city be destroyed, they always responded arrogantly by observing, “Is not the Lord in our midst? (A reference to the Shekinah in the Temple.) Calamity will not come upon us.”

To which Micah replied: “Therefore, on account of you, Zion will be ploughed as a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, And the mountain of the temple will become high places of a forest (Micah 3:12).”

One hundred years later Jeremiah also

and prophecy



warned that Jerusalem would be destroyed (Jeremiah 7:12-15). Speaking for the Lord, Jeremiah declared, “I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals; and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation, without inhabitant (Jeremiah 9:11).”

When the people refused to believe his words and even sought to kill him as a traitor, Jeremiah reminded them of the previous prophecy of Micah (Jeremiah 26:18). But the people still refused to repent, and the prophecies were fulfilled in 587 BC when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city and its temple.

Consider one of the saddest statements in the Bible:

“And the Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, until there was no remedy (2 Chronicles 36:15&16).”

Gentile Jerusalem

After 70 years of captivity in Babylon, the Jews returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt their temple and their city. But they refused to receive their Messiah, and so the Lord gave a second group of prophecies relating to a period of time when Jerusalem would fall under Gentile control.

Jesus Himself delivered these important prophecies during the last week of His life. As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives talking with His disciples, He pointed at Jerusalem and its temple and said: “As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down (Luke 21:6).”

Later, in the same discourse, Jesus stated that the city would be surrounded by armies which would proceed to desolate it (Luke 21:20). Referring to the Jews in the city at that time,

He said, “they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations (Luke 21:24a)...”

These prophecies were fulfilled 40 years later when the Romans, under Titus, completely destroyed the city, including the Temple.

But notice, Jesus made another prophecy about the city in the same speech: He said, “Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (Luke 21:24).” The Romans were followed by the Byzantines, and they were succeeded, in order, by the Muslims, the Crusaders, the Mamelukes, the Turks, the British, and the Jordanians.

Just as Jesus prophesied, the city suffered under a long period of Gentile control until June 7, 1967 when – for the first time in 1 897 years – the Jews regained sovereignty over the city. It was on that day that Rabbi Shlomo Goren went to the Western Wall and cried out: “I proclaim to you the beginning of the Messianic Age.”

The third group of prophecies about the city explain why he said these words.

End-Time Jerusalem

Four hundred years before Jesus, the prophet Zechariah gave a remarkable series of prophecies about the events that would affect Jerusalem in the end times, right before what we call the Second Coming of the Messiah. These prophecies are recorded in Zechariah 12:1-6. Specifically, the prophecies are as follows:

*The Jews will be back in the land of Israel.

*The Jews will be back in the city of Jerusalem.

*The Israeli army will be like a “firepot among pieces of wood.”

*Jerusalem will become the focal point of world politics.

*All the nations of the world will come together against Jerusalem.

Please note that these are prophecies that have been fulfilled! The Jew is back in his land and his city. Despite the minuscule size of the nation, its military forces are considered to be among the most powerful in the world. They have truly been like a “flaming torch among sheaves” in war after war.

Israel became the focal point of world politics in 1973 during the Yom Kippur War. When the West came to the aid of Israel, the Arabs pulled an oil boycott, bringing the Western nations to their knees. The result was that all the nations of Western Europe withdrew their support from Israel and either took a neutral position or else lined up with the Arabs in their determination to annihilate the Jewish state.

Concerning the last prophecy cited above, in just the past few years, all the nations of the world, including the United States, have come against Israel, forcing her into a suicidal appeasement policy of trading land for peace.

Zechariah lists some other end-time prophecies regarding Jerusalem that have not yet been fulfilled. These exciting prophecies are contained in Zechariah 12:8-10. They state that the Lord will defend Jerusalem against its enemies and that the result of all the end-time battles will be the repentance of a great remnant of the Jews “who will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born (Zechariah 12:10).” In response, the Lord will save this remnant by opening a fountain of salvation in Jerusalem “for sin and for impurity (Zechariah 13:1).”

In chapter 14, Zechariah describes in detail how the Lord will rescue Jerusalem at the last moment when there appears to be no hope: “then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle (Zechariah 14:3).” He will speak a supernatural plague that will kill all the enemy soldiers in their tracks (Zechariah 14:12). Verse 9 tells us that the outcome of this momentous day will be the coronation of Jesus as “king over all the earth.”

This wonderful promise introduces us to the fourth category of prophecies that relate to Jerusalem.

Millennial Jerusalem

A glorious day is coming for Jerusalem, for when the Lord returns, He is going



Continued...

to reign over all the world for a thousand years, and His reign of peace, righteousness and justice will be based in Jerusalem: “For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3 and Micah 4:2).”

Jerusalem will be the political, economic and religious centre of the world (Micah 4:1-7).

The city will be very different from the one we know today. The great worldwide earthquake that will occur when Jesus returns will radically change the earth’s topography, including that of Jerusalem (Isaiah 40:4, Revelation 6:12 and Revelation 16:18). The Bible indicates that Jerusalem will be greatly expanded in area and will be lifted up higher, perhaps becoming the highest point on the earth (Zechariah 14:10).

The city will be considerably enlarged and greatly beautified, and the most magnificent temple in history will be built in the midst of it under the personal supervision of the Messiah. That temple is described in detail in chapters 40-48 of Ezekiel.

The glory of Jerusalem in those days is best summarised in Isaiah 62:1-7 where we are told that the city will be “a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord (verse 3).” The prophet also says the city will be “a praise in the earth (verse 7).” For the first time in its long bloody history, it will be a refuge of peace (Joel 3:16&17 and Zephaniah 3:14-20).

It will also be the greatest wonder on the earth. Think about it – it will house the Prince of Peace and will contain His temple. It will also serve once more as the home of God’s spectacular Shekinah glory. But that glory will not be contained within the Holy of Holies. Incredibly, Isaiah says that the Shekinah will hover over the whole city of Jerusalem as a cloud by day and a fire by night, providing a canopy to protect the city from heat and rain (Isaiah 4:5&6).

Zechariah says the nations of the world will send delegations to Jerusalem each year to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. And the last verse of Ezekiel says that in that day the name of the city will be

changed from Yerushalyim to Yahweh-Shemmah, meaning “The Lord is there (Ezekiel 48:35).”

Eternal Jerusalem

Finally, the prophets tell us that the millennial Jerusalem will be replaced by a new Jerusalem which Jesus is preparing in Heaven now.

At the end of the Millennium, after the earth has been renovated by fire, the new Jerusalem will be lowered down to the new earth, and the Redeemed, in their new glorified bodies, will live in this new city in the presence of Almighty God, who will come down from Heaven to live forever with His children (Revelation 21:1-3). This very clear teaching from the book of Revelation comes as a shock to a lot of Christians who have always been taught that they will live eternally in an ethereal world call Heaven.

What an amazing city this new Jerusalem will be! The Apostle John devotes 24 verses to its detailed description in Revelation 21 and 22. It will be a 1 500-mile cube with 12 foundations made of precious stones – each one named for one of the 12 apostles. Likewise, there will be 12 pearly gates, one named for each tribe of Israel. The walls will be made of jasper. The city itself will be pure gold, like clear glass.

Have you ever stopped to think about the shape and size of this phenomenal city? For example, why will it be 1 500 miles high? The reason, of course, is that in our glorified bodies, we will be immune to the laws of gravity. We will thus be able to utilise all the space of the city, and not just the ground floor.

And how much space will we have? Will there be enough for all the Redeemed? Henry Morris, founder of the Institute for Creation Research, has calculated the space that would exist for each person, assuming that at least 50 percent of the area would be used for common purposes (streets, parks, recreation centres, etc.) and assuming that 20 billion people have been saved in the course of human history. The result is astounding: each person would have a cube with 75 acres on each surface! That’s certainly more space than most of us have now.

But the best part of this city will not be its beauty or its spaciousness. The best part will be the personal presence of Jesus our Lord and Almighty God, the Father. Revelation 22 says we will eternally serve God in this city and that we will “see His face.” I think that means we will have

intimate, personal fellowship with our Creator eternally. And that causes me to stand in awe.

The Message for Us

What does all this mean for you and me? Does it have any relevance to Gentile Christians today? The answer is that it certainly does.

First, it means that God is faithful. Just as He has fulfilled prophecies about Jerusalem in the past and is doing so now, we can be confident that He will continue to do so in the future. There is going to be a millennial Jerusalem and there is going to be an eternal one, and we, the Redeemed, are going to be richly blessed by both – beyond anything we can imagine.

Second, the record of Jerusalem in prophecy means that God is sovereign. He is in control. Even when everything seems to be out of control here on earth, we can be assured that God has the wisdom and power to orchestrate all the evil of Mankind to the triumph of His will in history.

Third, God is calling you and me to live with an eternal perspective. In Hebrews 11 we are told that Abraham lived by faith as “an alien” in this world, “looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11:9&10).” Isn’t that interesting? Abraham did not consider his arrival in the Promised Land to be the fulfilment of God’s promises to him. Rather, he lived yearning for his ultimate reward, namely, life with God in an eternal city – the new Jerusalem.

In Hebrews 11:13 it says that all the heroes of the faith who are listed in that chapter lived their lives as “strangers and exiles on the earth” because they desired the city which God had prepared for them. The book of Hebrews concludes with a reminder to us that in this world we do not have a lasting city. Instead, we are to seek “the city which is to come.”

Jesus is adding rooms to that city right now to accommodate the members of His body (John 14:1-4). Let us therefore live as aliens and strangers in this world, never becoming comfortable with it. Let us live looking for the coming of the Lord (2 Timothy 4:7&8).

And let us live praying for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6), realising that in doing so we are really praying for the return of the Lord, for Jerusalem will never experience true peace until the Prince of Peace returns.

Maranatha! 



Humble Origins of Revival

by Sarah Foulkes Moore

A. T. PIERSON writes, “From the day of Pentecost there has been not one great spiritual awakening in any land which has not begun in a union of prayer, though only two or three; no such outward, upward movement has continued after such prayer meetings have declined; and it is in exact proportion to the maintenance of such joint and believing supplication and intercession that the Word of the Lord in any land or locality has had free course and been glorified.”

The day of small beginnings in revival should not be despised. A survey of church history shows that almost every great revival that has swept the world with its power had a humble beginning. In a study of the promotion and progress of revivals, it is evident that the urge, the impulse to pray for revival was first begotten in the hearts of a few who had been aroused by the deep sense of need in the church and in the world. As they have yielded to the Spirit and given themselves up as channels of intercessory prayer, revival fires have been fanned into flame, the church has been purified, and sinners converted.

The first revival in church history had its beginning in a 10-day prayer meeting. It was a small company in an Upper Room in Jerusalem, but it was a mighty union of hearts and voices continuing in one accord, steadfastly in prayer.

Every genuine, heaven-sent revival from that day to this had its humble origin in the fervent prayers of a godly few. The mighty spiritual upheavals of the great Reformation came out of the strong crying and tears of the bold Reformers, Luther, Huss

and others.

The tide that turned the terror and bloodshed of the French Revolution from the imperiled shores of England and precipitated, instead, a glorious work of the Spirit of God, was the heroic work of the praying, pioneering Methodists, under Wesley, Whitfield, Bramwell and their associates.

John Knox, viewing the spiritual needs of Scotland, cried in an agony of prayer to God, “Give me Scotland or I die!”

D. L. Moody, seeing the cities of America in the deadly grip of vice, immorality and corruption, prayed, “O God! Stir the cities of America once again.” The great need of Christendom today is for giants like these of faith, prayer and vision.

The Day of Revivals Is Not Past

The Holy Spirit is waiting to be poured out when we humbly go on our knees and ask for it. “How much more,” reads the promise, “shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him (Luke 11:13)?”

In the early part of the 19th century, a great spiritual awakening swept the cities of Ireland. For two years previous, four young men had met in a schoolhouse near Kells and wrestled day and night with God for the salvation of the ungodly. Their prayers turned a profane nation into a veritable holy land, for when the revival came it swept everything before it. Multitudes flocked to the churches. Buildings were not large enough to hold them. Hundreds were under the conviction of sin in every service. Criminal courts and jails were closed for lack of occupants.

Cannot these past spiritual awakenings be matched today?

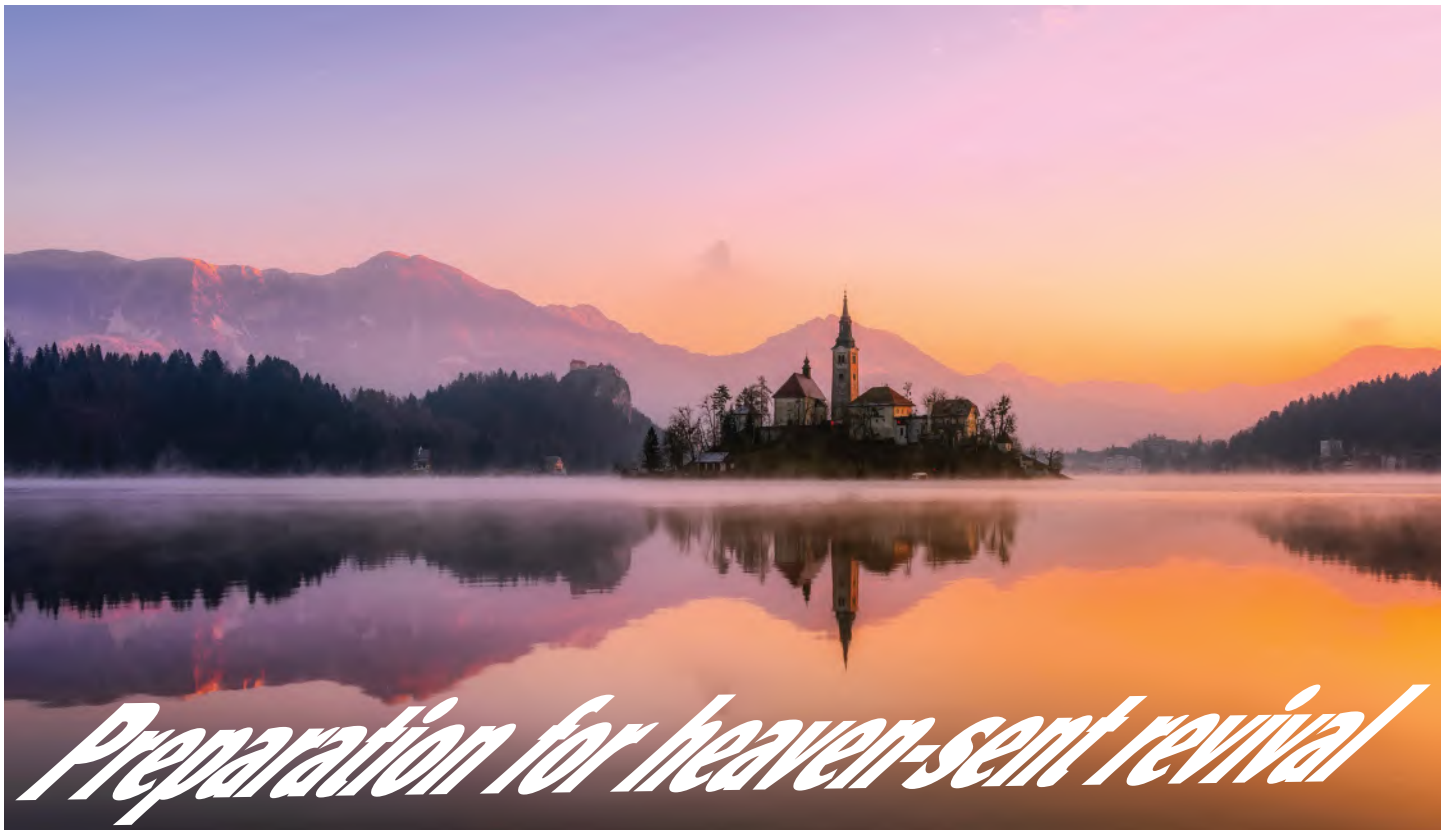
A study of the Word of God makes it plain that any group of seeking Christians may receive the full blessings of Pentecost for their church if sought by earnest, persistent, believing prayer. Church history amply substantiates this fact.

In 1903, all Wales was ungodly, impious. Crime was rampant. In 1904, Wales was aflame with a heaven-sent revival. For years, Evan Roberts had prayed himself, and had stirred others to pray definitely, believingly for revival. When it came, it went through Wales like a blaze.

Incidents such as these might be multiplied to show that it is not necessary that the whole church takes to its knees to begin with. These past religious awakenings have started in the hearts of a few men and women whom God has succeeded in arousing by His Spirit to believe Him as a God who hears and answers prayer, and upon whose hearts He lays the burden from which no rest can be obtained except in crying out to Him for the greatly needed revival.

Before the great revival came to Wales over 300 extra prayer bands were formed throughout the land. Wales became one great prayer meeting. If only the church today would take to its knees, what might happen?

Witnessing the peril of spiritual indifference, worldliness, compromise, defeat and barrenness in the church today, seeing the appalling intemperance, licentiousness and vice in the nation, and realising the imperative need of united intercession for a widespread spiritual awakening in our land, let every man and woman of God covenant to stand in prayer at this crisis hour between the nation and its great peril and God and His great power to deliver. ☞



by Al Whittinghill

THOSE today who understand the alarming situation in the world and who are honest in their evaluation of the true spiritual condition of the visible church cannot deny that there is an urgent need for heaven-sent revival among God's people. There is no way that the church, as she is today, can answer the challenges of this dark hour or meet the desperate need of this generation to hear the Gospel. The church must first experience the glorious touch of the Lord in fresh resurrection life and revival power.

It is truly remarkable how many great movements of the Spirit of God have taken place throughout the history of the church, all over the world, as the people of God have turned to Him in desperation and spiritual need and dared to act upon and claim the wonderful promises of God *"If My people, which are called by My Name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:14)."*

Every true believer realises and knows in his heart that God has called each Christian into a deep, rich, pure, and unbroken fellowship with Him. We are called by Him to share in the glorious life that is in His Son!

But every believer also realises, to some degree, how frequently his true spiritual

life is interrupted or diminished by our giving over to some distraction or yielding temporarily to the old nature of selfishness. The Bible calls this independence from God "sin!" There are yet foes within, and on every side, that each of us must face in the unfailing name of Jesus if we are to enjoy the constant joy of His presence and the assurance of His manifested, abiding Life.

God is calling to our hearts

Our God is a jealous God, and He wants His people to love Him without a rival. Sin must be dealt with. Whenever the people of God allow unjudged or unconfessed sin to remain in their lives, or if they begin to allow idolatry to creep into their hearts, there is a loss of the sense of His presence.

This is God's mercy to us; He is calling to our hearts.

We will begin to experience a sense of bondage and heaviness, or an unexplainable "loneliness," that will grow and soon begin to wreak havoc in many areas of our lives. It will get harder and harder as the chastening of the Lord continues in the life of the one whom He loves, until we come to our senses and turn to Him with all our hearts.

God may lean on us in our circumstances, or even our health, just to get our attention and strongly say to us that He wants us to repent and return in faith

to Him. Such is the sense of the timeless truth given in 2 Chronicles 7:14.

2 Chronicles 6 (a very helpful background) is a prayer that Solomon prays as he kneels before all the people of Israel. He is asking God to have mercy upon them in the future if they fail to worship Him supremely and when they foolishly allow other things to control them.

Even in the midst of chastening that would come because of sin, Solomon asks God to have mercy upon them and call the people back to Himself. Later at night God appears to Solomon and confirms to him that if His people would fulfil His gracious conditions, He would restore their intimacy with Him, and forgive their sin. Also, the land that had been experiencing hard times because of the people's sin would be healed.

God promises that there will be blessing on every level when His people respond to Him appropriately and fully. So many of God's people have found these promises to be true as they have taken them to heart and looked to Him for revival.

"If My people" means the church... the people who are known by His name. *"If My people will do something... then I will do something,"* says God! How often we tend to think that if we can just change the world, then things will get better.

It is the church that holds the key to the future, not the world!

The world cannot reform itself; it is incurably corrupted. God will use His

redeemed people, the ones whose hearts are truly His, to usher in revival when they finally become willing to face His conditions and act on His promise. Once we realise our great need, we must also see that the Lord has placed the initiative for His remedy with us.

We can count on His response as we fulfil His conditions for revival. The desire of our covenant-keeping God is to restore and bring His people to the place of true blessing in Him, but we must be willing to face the real issues. Only then will He pour out His Spirit on the church and restore her to the place of spiritual beauty and power.

This verse sets before us some areas of our lives that we must deal with individually, and as His church, if we expect to see Him move in revival and in the restoration of spiritual blessing:

1. We must humble ourselves

Of the ten different Hebrew words for “humble” this one means “to subdue, to vanquish, to humiliate.” It comes from a root word meaning “to bend the knee.” It suggests our coming before Him in complete and voluntary subjection to Him.

This is a fresh dealing with His Cross... or brokenness! We must turn from our pride. As we get real with Him and allow the Holy Spirit to bring our whole lives before Him, He will plough through our hearts and show us a revelation of our pride and selfishness.

Our pride has been the great hindrance! The question is “Who shall be our God? Ourselves or our Saviour?”

Do we want God enough to be truly honest? We must bend the knee before Him in united authentic submission to Him. The “I” must be subdued and vanquished, and we must choose for it to be so. We must deal with our self-confidence and pride in the light of the Cross.

This will mean taking off our masks, coming into His light, and abandoning ourselves to Who He is. We must ask ourselves, “Have we ever shed tears together concerning our pride?” This is the place that God says the process of revival must start.

He will wait for us to come before Him and humble ourselves in a broken and contrite way. It is humility that draws the heart of God (see Isaiah 57:15).

2. We must pray

This is the next great condition that flows

right out of, and builds upon, the first. Of the 12 Hebrew words for prayer, this one means “to judge oneself habitually in the presence of God.” In 1 Peter 4:17 we read that “The time is come that judgement must begin at the house of God.” What is this but a fresh dealing with His crown... or truthfulness! We must turn from our prayerlessness. This may be painful, but it is essential.

We cannot pray for revival unless we are willing to be changed forever. We must be specific about His lordship in our lives as we come before Him in humility.

What needs changing in our lives in the light of His Word? As we submit to Him in brokenness and honesty, God will search us and show us areas in our lives that He wants to change. We must agree with God and take sides with Him against any place of resistance in our lives.

A contrite heart that is confessing a genuine willingness to be changed by God is irresistible to Him.

We must allow God to search us with His eyes of fire. Throughout the Book of Acts and the history of the church, it is always brokenhearted prayer by a desperate people of God that has brought revival. Zion must travail and give herself to effectual and fervent prayer before her fruit will come.

The question that we must answer is, “Would we rather just *feel* right or *be* right?”

3. We must seek His face

This is the third condition in this way of grace. Perhaps we have been seeking His hand, His help, His gifts or His blessing; but this condition demands that we seek God for Himself... to know Him. “Face to face” is how we get to know someone.

In the Hebrew this “seek” is a very intensive word. This is a fresh dealing with His calling... or intimacy! We must turn from our passivity. “He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).” This is an attitude of holy desperation for God Himself, gripped with a sense of urgency and a zeal for communion with Him. We have a desire to know and honour Him.

He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and He cannot look on sin (Habakkuk 1:13). We must get radical and seek Him with a heart that is desiring to “draw near to God with a true heart in full assurance of faith (Hebrews 10:22).” We must long to “walk in the light of His countenance” and to know the blessing of His approval and communion.

Knowing that our Lord cannot tolerate sin in His presence, we must seek to “cleanse

ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit (1 Corinthians 7:1)” and to dwell in His sweet approval. The church must become desperate for God Himself and not just what He can do.

4. We must turn from our wicked ways

Fourth, in this divinely inspired order is this great practical step involving action. Most of us would not call our ways “wicked” because we are “church people” and fairly respectable. But once I begin to honestly humble myself and truly, prayerfully seek His face, I will surely discover that many of the things that I have been justifying and calling mere “weaknesses” are, in reality, “wickedness.”

The Word tells us that the wicked man must forsake his way and the unrighteous man, his thoughts. In the light of God’s holy character many things we thought were harmless, suddenly, in His presence, must be dealt with as sin. This is a fresh dealing with His character... or holiness!

We must turn from pollution. Small things now loom large and “pet indulgences” will become loathsome to us in the light of who He is. No more excusing ourselves; no more blaming others; no more “playing dumb.” We must act on the truth that God has shown to us.

The conviction of the Holy Spirit must be responded to practically. We must become available to His will. This truly is the reality of what repentance means, and the presence of His holiness is the truest test of whether or not a work is genuinely from God. Does it produce holiness and bring glory to Him?

Until we take this passage seriously and seek to respond with our whole hearts to these divinely given requirements, we will remain far from heaven-sent revival!

No one wants revival for the church more than He who gave Himself for her that she might be a spotless Bride unto Him! Wherever and whenever God’s people have gone to their knees and taken this verse to heart, God has never failed to keep His promise of blessing.

This is the great need of the hour in which we live. May each of us give ourselves fully to being part of the preparation of the church for real revival. “O Lord, may the world become astonished by Your glory and want to know You as they see the people of God clothed once again in the beauty of Your holiness and filled with Your love.” 🐟

Al Whittinghill is an itinerant preacher/teacher of God’s Word with Ambassadors for Christ International (<http://afci.us>)

Shame!



by Judith MacNutt

WEBSTER defines shame as “a disturbed or painful feeling of guilt, incompetence, indecency, regret, or embarrassment. A painful emotion caused by consciousness of guilt. A condition of humiliating disgrace.”

There is true shame and there is also false shame.

Shame that is based on confessed personal sin is forgiven. If you have confessed your sin, you have been forgiven, and you should be free of shame. ¹ John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

True shame comes when we make a mistake and we feel guilty.

False shame says, “I am a mistake.”

If I have sinned against someone and have committed a sin, I feel guilty. Guilt is not bad – it is an appropriate response when we have wounded someone or sinned against them. Guilt’s voice whispers, “I have made a mistake. I can be forgiven.”

False shame is a tool of the enemy – the lie we accept when we are caught in the fear of being found out, exposed, rejected, abandoned, or deemed unworthy. Abandonment is the deepest wound we carry. When we are abandoned, in essence the message is: You have no value, you are

meaningless to me.

A friend of mine was sitting with her husband. She looked at him (I will call him John) and said, “John, you look unhappy tonight. What can I do to make you happy?” What she meant was something along the lines of, “Can I get you something to drink, or a pizza?” He said, “You can give me a divorce.” There was no warning.

I have watched friends struggle for years to climb out of that pit of abandonment that comes with divorce.

The sin of shame entered the world in the Garden of Eden. Poor Eve is assigned all the blame for this; but you know they both ate the apple! This is where blame started. “The man said, ‘The woman you put here with me – she have me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it (Genesis 3).’” Then Eve said (my paraphrase), “The snake made me do it!”

Adam and Eve tried to cover their own shame. God still came in the cool of the evening, but they were hiding in the bushes, trying to cover up. God knew. He came and called them by name, not because He couldn’t find them, but to bring them out of hiding. God calls us out of shame and back into relationship with Him.

Abandonment is not the only source of shame. Shame may come through the family, trauma, society, and even the church.

In home environments shame is a normal

experience. It can feel normal because people are often shamed every day. “Why can’t you be like your sister?” “Why can’t you be better?” “Why can’t you be prettier?” “Why can’t you be smarter?” “Why do you have to say such stupid things?” “Shame on you!” These words can create what I call “the shame of being.” As children, we can’t change ourselves, so we feel shame in existing.

Another source of shame comes from trauma; it could be verbal, physical, or emotional trauma, or sexual abuse. You may experience shame through the avenue of society: ethnic shame, class shame, or the shame of poverty.

Another place we experience shame is in the church, including what I call gender shame.

How do all these avenues of shame affect us? Self-rejection, self-hatred, a victim mentality, excessive anger, or depression can enter. We may have identity issues. “I don’t know who I am, and I don’t know my value. I don’t know God’s love for me.”

When we are truly loved by other people, the shame begins to erode and be healed in our lives. This is the work of the Holy Spirit; God comes to us and shows us unconditional love. He transforms us and shows us our worth in Him. He will show you the truth that you are a very valuable part of the body of Christ. ☩



How I found healing from sexual abuse

by J. Lee Grady

WHEN I was a boy, something shameful happened to me that I never planned to talk about publicly. During a summer visit to a youth camp in Alabama, an older boy took me into the woods and abused me sexually. He then brought me inside a boathouse near the camp's lake for more experimentation.

The abuse wasn't physically painful, but it inflicted a deep emotional scar. It was as if my 7-year-old soul were branded with a hot iron. I never talked about the incident with anyone after it happened. I buried the trauma.

I was glad when my family moved from Alabama so I would never have to see that camp or the boathouse again. Yet the memory followed me like a shadow. It produced self-loathing, fear of exposure and deep inferiority. As a teenager, I spent lots of energy trying to convince my friends I was OK – yet I still feared I was hopelessly broken.

Thankfully my healing began at age 18, when I asked Jesus to fill me with the Holy Spirit. God stripped layers of shame off me as I experienced the Father's unconditional love. By the time I got married and started a family, the shadow of abuse had grown faint.

I found more healing when I told some mentors and friends about the abuse. I was afraid they would recoil in disgust and reject me (most abuse victims expect that response), but they expressed only love and affirmation.

Transparency brought freedom.

Yet a thin layer of shame lingered.

Even though I was involved in full-time ministry by that time, I battled thoughts of disqualification. I seemed confident and successful to others, but I didn't like myself.

Then last year, after I relocated to Georgia, I realised the camp where the abuse happened was only 150 kilometres from my house. When I told this to my friend James, he suggested we go there to pray and find more closure.

As we drove on to the camp property I felt uneasy. It had been 50 years since the incident, yet the place looked exactly like I remembered it – except for two things: The ranger's house, where the older boy lived, was gone, and so was the wooden boathouse. Only a faint outline of the foundation of that building was visible next to the lake's edge.

James and I stood on the grass and prayed in the Holy Spirit. No one else was on the property. James asked me to remember again what happened on that spot. Then he added: "The Lord was there when this horrible thing happened. Ask the Lord what He is saying to you."

My arms were folded in a defensive posture. Maybe after all these years I was still protecting my heart from the pain. But in that peaceful moment, I could see the inside of the dark boathouse, with life jackets and canoes hanging on the walls. I saw Jesus standing near a frightened little boy. He said: "I will not let this stop you."

Those words lifted a huge weight off my mind. Jesus wasn't scolding me or scowling at me with disapproval. He had come to my rescue. He was promising me that the enemy's plan to destroy my life would

not prevail.

I knew from that moment that my experience with abuse had absolutely no control over me. The sting had been removed.


I basked in His presence for a few moments, looking out over the lake and remembering that I had learned to swim there during my summer visits. Then I asked James if we could visit one other location. We got in my car and drove to a church in Montgomery, where I gave my heart to Jesus at age six.

When we pulled into the parking lot of Dalraida Baptist Church, my heart leapt. Unlike the old camp boathouse, the church was still there. In fact, a huge new sanctuary stood in front of the old building where I was baptised. The old sanctuary was now the youth ministry centre.

"This is amazing," I told James. "The place where I was abused is gone. But the place where I began my relationship with Jesus is thriving."

God spoke to me powerfully that day in Montgomery. He showed me that what defines my life is not the ugly blemish on my past but the precious faith I embraced when I chose to follow Him.

And he reminded me of Isaiah 54:4: "Do not fear, for you shall not be ashamed nor be humiliated; for you shall not be put to shame, for you shall forget the shame of your youth."

What about you? If you've experienced sexual abuse, you don't have to hide your secret or drag the shame around. Jesus knows your pain. He does not reject you or keep you at arm's length. Bring your shame into His presence and let His strong embrace heal your wounded soul. 

The commandments of Jesus

BY these words take inventory of your allegiance and obedience to Christ

REPENTANCE

1. Repent Matthew 4:17; Revelation 2:5
2. Come to Me Matthew 11:28
3. Seek first God, and His righteousness Matthew 6:33
4. Forgive if you have anything against anyone Mark 11:25
5. Deny yourself Matthew 16:24
6. Ask, seek, knock Matthew 7:7
7. Strive to enter in through the narrow gate Luke 13:24

BELIEF

1. Believe the Gospel Mark 1:15
2. Believe in God, believe also in Me John 14:1
3. Believe in Him whom (God) has sent John 6:28-29
4. Believe I am in the Father, and the Father in Me John 14:11
5. Believe the works I do John 10:37&38
6. While you have light, believe in the light John 12:36
7. Believe that you receive Mark 11:24

THE NEW BIRTH

1. You must be born again John 3:7
2. Cleanse first that which is within Matthew 23:26
3. Make the tree good, and its fruit good Matthew 12:33
4. Abide in Me, and I in you John 15:4
5. Have salt in yourself Mark 9:50
6. Labour for that which endures to everlasting life John 6:27
7. Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven Luke 10:20

RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Receive the Holy Spirit John 20:22
2. Let the children first be filled Mark 7:27
3. If anyone thirsts, let him come and drink John 7:37&38
4. The Father shall give another helper John 14:15-17
5. Ask... with persistence John 16:24; Luke 11:5-13
6. Tarry... until you are endued with power Luke 24:49
7. When the Comforter has come... bear witness John 15:26

FOLLOWING JESUS

1. Follow Me John 12:26
2. Be baptised Matthew 3:13; 28:19
3. Take (communion) and remember Me Luke 22:17-19
4. You ought to wash one another's feet John 13:14&15
5. Take up your cross daily Luke 9:23
6. Learn of Me Matthew 11:29
7. Continue in My love John 15:9

PRAYER

1. Pray always Luke 21:36
2. Pray that you don't enter into temptation Luke 22:40-46
3. Pray... that He would send forth labourers Luke 10:2
4. Pray for those who spitefully use you Luke 6:28
5. Pray to the Father... in My name Matthew 6:6; John 16:24-26
6. Pray: Our Father in heaven Matthew 6:9-13
7. Do not use vain repetition Matthew 6:7&8

FAITH

1. Have faith in God Mark 11:22

2. Do not be faithless John 20:27
3. Neither have an anxious mind Luke 12:29
4. Take no thought for your life Matthew 6:25-34
5. Let not your heart be troubled John 14:1-27
6. Be of good cheer Matthew 14:27
7. Do not be afraid Mark 5:36; Luke 12:4-7

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

1. Search the Scriptures John 5:39
2. Remember the word that I said John 15:20
3. Let these sayings sink down into your ears Luke 9:44
4. Take heed therefore how you hear Luke 8:18
5. Take heed what you hear Mark 4:24
6. Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees Matthew 16:6-12
7. Beware of false prophets Matthew 7:15-17

LETTING YOUR LIGHT SHINE

1. Let your light shine... glorify the Father Matthew 5:16
2. Take heed that your light is not darkness Luke 11:35
3. Go bring forth fruit... much fruit John 15:16, 8
4. Be merciful, as your Father Luke 6:36
5. Tell what great things the Lord has done for you Mark 5:19
6. Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields John 4:35
7. Walk while you have the light John 12:35

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

1. Hold fast till I come Revelation 2:25; 3:2&3
2. Be ready, for the Son of man comes Luke 12:40
3. Be girded, lights burning, waiting Luke 12:35&36
4. Don't be overwhelmed with cares of this life Luke 21:34
5. Remember Lot's wife Luke 17:31-32
6. Do not be deceived Luke 21:8; Mark 13:5&6
7. Watch Mark 13:34-37

SUPREME LOVE TO GOD

1. Love the Lord with heart, soul, mind, strength Mark 12:30
2. God alone shall you serve Matthew 4:10
3. Worship the Father in spirit and in truth John 4:23-24
4. Call no man your father upon earth Matthew 23:9
5. You shall not tempt the Lord your God Matthew 4:7
6. Fear Him who has power to cast into hell Luke 12:5
7. All men should honour the Son John 5:22&23

OUR DUTY TO GOD AND MAN

1. Give to Caesar what is his and to God what is His Mark 12:17
2. Do not swear at all Matthew 5:34-37; Mark 4:22
3. What God joined, do not put asunder Matthew 19:5&6
4. Agree with your adversary quickly Matthew 5:25
5. One cast out devils... do not forbid him Mark 9:38-40
6. Eat what is set before you Luke 10:8
7. Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost John 6:12

OUR DUTY TO OUR NEIGHBOUR

1. You shall love your neighbour as yourself Matthew 19:17-19
2. You shall not murder Matthew 19:18
3. You shall not commit adultery Matthew 19:18
4. You shall not steal Matthew 19:18
5. You shall not bear false witness Matthew 19:18
6. Honour your father and your mother Matthew 19:19
7. Do to others as you would have them do to you Luke 6:31

COVETOUSNESS

1. Take heed and beware of covetousness Luke 12:15
2. Do not lay up treasures upon earth Matthew 6:19
3. Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven Matthew 6:20
4. Pay tithes... and not leave them undone Matthew 23:23
5. Give to him who asks... turn not away Matthew 5:42

- 6. Give alms of such things as you have Luke 11:41
- 7. When you give a dinner, call the poor Luke 14:12-13

HYPOCRISY

- 1. Beware of the leaven, which is hypocrisy Luke 12:1
- 2. Beware of scribes, who desire long robes Luke 20:46&47
- 3. Do not do according to their works Matthew 23:2&3
- 4. Do not make My Father's house a marketplace John 2:16
- 5. Do not let your charitable deeds be seen Matthew 6:1-4
- 6. Do not pray to be seen of men Matthew 6:5&6
- 7. When fasting, do not appear to fast Matthew 6:16-18

MEEKNESS

- 1. Take My yoke upon you, for I am meek Matthew 11:29
- 2. Gentiles lord it over you, but not you Matthew 20:25&26
- 3. To be be greatest, be a servant of all Mark 10:43&44
- 4. Do not be called Rabbi (teacher) Matthew 23:8
- 5. Do not sit down in the highest room Luke 14:8-11
- 6. Do not rejoice that the spirits are subject to you Luke 10:20
- 7. Say, we are unprofitable servants Luke 17:10

OUR LOVE TO THE BRETHREN

- 1. Love one another as I have loved you John 15:12
- 2. Do not despise one of these little ones Matthew 18:10-14
- 3. Be reconciled to your brother Matthew 5:24
- 4. If your brother sins against you, tell him Matthew 18:15
- 5. If your brother sins seven times, forgive Luke 17:3&4
- 6. Don't judge according to appearance John 7:24
- 7. Do not condemn Luke 6:37

PERFECT LOVE

- 1. Be therefore perfect Matthew 5:48
- 2. Sell what you have, and give to the poor Matthew 19:21
- 3. Love your enemies Matthew 5:44; 26:52
- 4. Do good to those who hate you Luke 6:27&28
- 5. Lend, hoping for nothing again Luke 6:35
- 6. Do not resist evil Matthew 5:39-41



- 7. By your patience possess your souls Luke 21:19

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

- 1. Be faithful unto death Revelation 2:10
- 2. Hold that fast what you have Revelation 3:11
- 3. When men persecute you, rejoice Luke 6:23
- 4. When they persecute you, flee Matthew 10:23
- 5. When they deliver you, take no thought Matthew 10:19
- 6. Do not murmur among yourselves John 6:43
- 7. Look up, and lift up your heads Luke 21:28

PREACHING THE GOSPEL

- 1. Preach the Gospel to every creature Mark 16:15
- 2. Repentance should be preached Luke 24:46&47
- 3. Baptise disciples Matthew 28:19
- 4. Teach them Matthew 28:20
- 5. What I tell you... speak Matthew 10:27; Mark 4:22
- 6. Feed My sheep John 21:15-17
- 7. Heal the sick Matthew 10:8

WISDOM

- 1. Be wise as serpents... innocent as doves Matthew 10:16
 - 2. Beware of men Matthew 10:17
 - 3. Let (the blind leaders) alone Matthew 15:12-14
 - 4. Do not cast pearls before swine Matthew 7:6
 - 5. He who has a purse, let him take it Luke 22:35-36
 - 6. Inquire who is worthy and abide Matthew 10:11
 - 7. Who will not receive, shake off dust Luke 9:5; 10:10&11
- "If a man loves Me, he will keep My words (John 14:23)."* ☩

Will you help us be a blessing?



Did you know that *Prepare the Way* is sent free of charge to church leaders in many African countries, as well as overseas missionaries and prisoners? But this **only** happens through the support and donations of people just like you. If you have a heart for the nations and a desire to see churches built up through sound, Biblical teaching, then please would you consider supporting this ministry?

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

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

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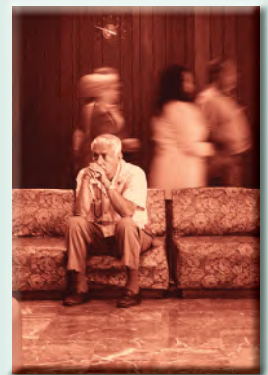
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God's goodness leading to repentance

a testimony by Charles Spurgeon

WHEN I really came to know the Lord Jesus Christ, I discovered that He loved sinners. Before I made that discovery, I thought He loved only the good and the righteous. But when I read His Word, I found that He came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

I thought, for a long while, that He wanted my good works, and I had none to bring to Him. But, as I read His Word, I found that He gave Himself for our sins, not for our righteousnesses!

Then I understood, as I read His Word that whoever believed in Him would not be condemned. I believed in Him, and I knew at once, from His Word, that I was not condemned – that He had died for me, and that my sins were all pardoned.

And, let me tell you, I never repented before as I repented then!

It seemed to me if it was really true that He had forgiven me all my sin, and suffered, and died that He might be able to justly forgive me – that I must have been almost as bad as the devil himself, to have sinned against Him as I had done. Even while I rejoiced in being pardoned, I felt almost ashamed to look Him in the face and claim His mercy.

To think that I should have sinned against such a Friend who was so ready to forgive



me my guilt, made me ready to hide my head in the very dust. If He had bidden the thunders of His wrath to roll around me, I would not have been surprised. But when, instead of thunders, He gently said, "I love you, and I forgive you," then was my heart broken
*"Dissolved by His mercy
I fell to the ground,
and wept to the praise
of the mercy I'd found!"*

After that, I found that He was not only willing to pardon me, but that He had come to robe me in His own righteousness, that I might stand accepted in His place. At this,

I wondered much. But when I saw that He really did impute to me His own righteousness, and that I, a sinner, stood before God, "accepted in the Beloved" – that pulled the sluices up, again, and I repented more than I did before as I realised that I, whom He had ordained to bless with such a wondrous righteousness as that, would ever have been a lover of sin instead of a lover of the Lord!

Then a voice whispered to me that, being pardoned and justified, I was also adopted into the family of God, whereat I wondered, more than ever,


how it could be that an heir of wrath should be able to say, "Abba, Father."

As I understood this, I said, "Father, I did not know that You were my Father, or I would not have trespassed against You, and gone away from You as I have done." My voice was almost choked, my heart was full, and my tears freely flowed as I grieved that I had so long offended my Father and my God.

To make a long story short, I find myself – I thank His name – repenting more and more every day I live. I am more and more angry with myself to think I should not have kept my Father's commands in my mind, and served Him with my whole heart.

I expect that as I learn more of His goodness, it will always continue to lead me to repentance – and I trust, beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, you can bear me witness that I do but speak what is also in your mind.

The dearer Christ is to us, the blacker is sin in our sight. The sweeter the love of God is to us, the bitterer is the thought of having so long sinned against it.

The more you see, in these shoreless, bottomless deeps, what divine grace has done for you and to you, the more you smite upon your breast and cry, "How could I ever have sinned against the Lord as I have done? And how can I sin against Him as I still continue to do?" 

WATCH & PRAY

Thanks to
Elizabeth Kendal

Cathedral massacre in CAR

PK5 is a Muslim enclave in the Central African Republic's capital, Bangui. It has been thoroughly infiltrated by Islamic militants who harass, abuse and extort the Muslim residents with impunity. After the militants refused to disarm voluntarily, UN peacekeepers and CAR troops entered PK5 on April 8 to dismantle the militia bases. Days of fighting ensued, with civilians among the dead.

Islamic militias vowed revenge. On May 1, after a militia leader was arrested, PK5 militants retaliated, targeting Bangui's Catholic Cathedral where some 1 500 Catholics were celebrating an anniversary. Armed with firearms and grenades, the militants killed at least 24 and wounded more than 100. On May 4 a convoy of Islamic militants was arrested while en route from rebel-held territory to Bangui. Please pray for CAR and its Christians.

Ethnic cleansing of Kachin in Burma (Myanmar)

Since November, 2017 the Burmese military has been using ground forces, aerial bombardments, heavy shelling and helicopter gunships to drive the Kachin Independence Army out of Kachin State's most resource-rich regions. Violence escalated further in early April, confirming that a war of ethnic cleansing is underway as the Burmese military seizes

control of Kachin State's jade, amber and gold mines.

According to the UN, some 5 000 Kachin became displaced in April alone. About 120 000 Christian Kachin are displaced in total. While thousands of the newly displaced are being sheltered in churches, thousands more remain trapped in the jungle without food, medical care or shelter. The region is closed to humanitarian aid, so all food and clothing is provided by churches. Please pray for Burma and for the Christian Kachin.

Turkey: Church increasingly anxious

President Erdogan continues to exploit US-Turkey tensions to further fuel the rise of Islamo-Turkish nationalism, which, as history demonstrates, is an exceedingly dangerous phenomenon. Sources report that Christians in Turkey are increasingly being accused of supporting "terrorists" (code for "Kurds"). It must be noted that Erdogan revived the language of the Armenian Genocide on national television when in June, 2016 he described Turkey's Christian Armenians as "separatist terrorists." According to local sources, apprehension and anxiety are growing in the churches. Yet, despite the escalating sense of crisis, Turkish Christian ministries continue to witness courageously, fully aware that spiritual transformation through Jesus Christ is ultimately Turkey's only hope.

Manna for mahala!

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

Please pray for Turkey and for her threatened, yet witnessing, remnant Church.

Islamic State targets Christians in Quetta, Pakistan

Christians comprise a mere two percent of Pakistan's population. Intolerant, fundamentalist Islam is ascendant and Islamic State – which is growing in Afghanistan – is making inroads. In December suicide bombers targeted a church in Quetta, killing nine worshippers and wounding some 50. On Easter Monday gunmen on a motorbike targeted a Christian family in Quetta, wounding a young girl while killing her father and three cousins. On Sunday, April 15 gunmen on two motorbikes targeted Christians in Quetta's Isa Nagri (a Christian neighbourhood), killing two and critically wounding three others.

After each deadly attack, Islamic State Khorasan Province claimed responsibility. Please

pray for God to intervene in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pray for the Church in Pakistan and especially for Quetta's grieving and imperilled believers.

India: Impunity in Firozabad

On April 23 Morning Star News (MSN) reported the horrific case of Pastor Rakesh Kumar Masih (42) from Firozabad District in Uttar Pradesh State. On March 19, a mob of some 35 Hindu militants dragged Pastor Masih from his home and beat him unconscious in the presence of police. When MSN investigated on April 13, the police denied knowledge of the incident. MSN subsequently forwarded the police a copy of the original complaint first filed on March 20. Now we watch and wait. It was the fifth such assault against a pastor in the district since January. Please pray for an end to impunity in India.

Prepare the Way days 2018 June 3, November 4

These are the dates for this year's *Prepare the Way* days at Mount Zion Church, Merrivale (near Howick, KZN). Please come and join us as we bring the ministry of this magazine before the Lord. Peter Pollock will be ministering at all three events, and you're welcome to stay for (free!) lunch.



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A prayer to be like Christ and to live ever for Him

by J. R. Miller

OLORD, You have called us with a holy calling. We desire to be worthy of the honour which You have put upon us. You have redeemed us by Your blood. You have taken us into fellowship with Yourself. You are not ashamed to call us brethren. You have made us heirs of God, joint heirs with You.

You have given us eternal life!

Make us indeed worthy of this exalted honour. Cleanse and purify us, that we may be like You in spirit, in disposition, in character. Give us the same desires that are in Your heart – that we may hate what You hate, and love what You love. May we be partakers in Your work for the upbuilding of Your cause and the extending of Your kingdom.

Give us this day, the same mind that was in You. You left Your heavenly glory and became man, that You might be our Redeemer. You lived to serve – giving out Your life in unsparing service, even dying in love for Your people. We desire to have the same spirit.

Save us from all selfishness, which would lead us to withhold ourselves from serving others with the best that is in us.

Save us from all pride, which would lead us to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, and may we ever be

clothed with humility. Lead us into Your ways of service.

We desire to do Your will – not our own. To please You – and not ourselves. So fill us with Your grace and love that we shall be gentle, humble, submissive, and in all things in accord with You.

Strengthen us with all spiritual strength, and enrich us with all grace so that we may not fail in our obedience.

Preserve us from any feelings that would mar the beauty of our disposition. Keep us from any hurtful influences on those with whom we shall mingle. Keep us from envy, jealousy, bad temper, and irritability. Keep us from behaving ourselves improperly, so as to dishonour You or injure Your cause.

Help us to carry sunshine and good cheer wherever we go so that all who see us shall get a little brightness from our faces and from our words.

We want to make this a beautiful day. Help us to be diligent. Let us not lean to our own understanding, nor follow the devices and desires of our own deceitful hearts. May we live today in You and for You – honouring You in all that we do and say.

Sanctify our influence so that we may be a blessing to all whose lives we touch. Let us not be hinderers of the good or the joy of any other.

Let us not be discouragers of those who are struggling with hardship or trial or

temptation but may we rather be encouragers of all whom we meet.

Make the way plain to us, and let us not wander from the paths of Your commandments. In our worldly affairs, may we have wisdom and grace. Preserve us from harm of every kind. Let us not be careless in our duty, nor neglectful in our tasks of this day.

Let us not waste a moment of precious time. It is Your day, not ours; ours to use for You. May we be able to spend it so that not a moment shall be left without something to bear as a record of good.

In our conversation may we speak only words that shall minister grace – kind words, true words. Keep us from all complaining and grumbling. Teach us the lesson of contentment, that we may never murmur nor brood.

May it please You to preserve us, too, from all speech that would be disheartening to others. May we ever speak cheering and heartening words, which will make it easier for others to live. Forbid that we should speak any sentence which will make any one's burden heavier, or any one's path rougher.

So may we live ever for You, serving You faithfully, and at the last may You receive us unto Your heavenly glory, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

Amen. 🐟