



By Gene Hawkins

“And there came one of the seven angels..... and talked with me, sayingCome hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon

many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication,.... So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:” Rev. 17:1-4

Due to the recent phenomenal growth of Islam, we have been asked whether or not the ungodly Muslim religion could be the above mentioned harlot rather than Catholicism. The answer is an emphatic NO!, for several reasons. First and foremost is the fact that the great whore is actually an imposter, a counterfeit of the true bride of Christ, and Islam makes no such claim since this wicked ideology will not even mention or acknowledge the Name of Jesus. Catholicism however, does claim to be the True Church as is evidenced in Pope Benedict’s declaration shortly after he became “head” of that Church, a place that belongs only to Jesus if she truly does hold the place she claims. The Pope, however, angered many evangelicals with this statement: “Christ established here on Earth only one Church. The other communities cannot be called churches in the proper sense because they do not have the ability to trace their bishops back to Christ’s original apostles and therefore their priestly ordinations are not valid.” Pope Benedict is absolutely right in asserting that only Catholicism can trace her roots to the very beginning of the Church Age. History also proves without doubt that she has been “sitting” on the beast, influencing the political systems of this world since the early days of The Church. However, her words and her deeds prove conclusively that she is in no wise true to Jesus, for while she claims to be The Bride of Christ, declaring, “I sit a queen, and

am no widow,” (Rev. 18:7) she constantly robs Him of His Glory. She emphatically affirms that there is no salvation apart from “The Church,” yet scripture plainly asserts “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name (Jesus) under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12 She robs Him of glory giving His earthly mother Mary superiority over Him with “hail Mary Mother of God.” The Catholic confessional, proclaiming that priests can forgive sins, is a total denial of the scriptural fact, that only God can accomplish that. Though they refused to give Jesus His place as God, even the Pharisees accused Him of speaking “blasphemies,” saying: “...Who can forgive sins, but God alone?” Luke 5:21 Catholic coffers have been filled down through the ages because men have been instructed to “buy” a clear conscience through the Catholic confessional. Such a practice cannot work, and is an insult to the grace of Jesus Who says “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will **give** you rest.” Matt. 11:28

According to our text the golden cup held by this false claimant to the throne is full of abominations. We have mentioned but a very few of them, but suffice it to say that only Catholicism satisfies the profiles listed here in Revelation and throughout scripture. Islam, is in no wise the false church, but is this idolatrous “kingdom” a part of end time prophecy, and is there any way it is connected to Catholicism?

Zechariah, along with news reports of our day may indeed provide this answer. Zechariah 5 relates the prophet’s seventh vision, which describes a woman in the midst of an ephah under the judgment of God. V. 6,7. That woman is none other than the woman of Revelation 18, who claims to be the caretaker of God’s true ephah of wheat. Rev. 2:20 identifies her as “.....that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.” Zechariah’s vision further unfolds as two more women came forth with wings of a stork, an unclean bird. V.9 “Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: (Babylon) and it shall be established, and set there

upon her own base.” V. 10-11 These two women could well correspond with the ten horns of Rev. 18:12 where we read of “ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.” The modern jihadists of our day fit the description perfectly. They have no kingdom as yet, meaning they are a political force to be reckoned with, but are in no wise a nation. The nations of our day are sometimes frustrated as to how to deal with them because they are not a part of the Geneva Convention. It is also noteworthy that these ten horns are indeed a part of the beast upon which the great whore sits, and there are numerous reports that Catholicism is “reaching out” to Islam. We are told that these ten kings will eventually destroy the harlot and are not at all surprised that God would use religion to bring about the demise of this false religious system.

Zechariah, however, describes this same group as “helping” this woman, and his vision must of necessity refer to an earlier time than that of John, whose account shows only devastating destruction. Though we have wondered how and why such a group as Islam would “help” Catholicism, recent news items do record many, who are trying desperately to accommodate this Muslim religion, and indeed make a comfortable place for it. It was reported some time ago that a Catholic Priest in India was teaching his parishioners to pray to Allah. A subsequent report from Malaysia says that the Muslims of that country resent such a practice. Pope Benedict was severely criticized for his comments in his Regensburg University address, before he became Pope, when he asked “if Islam lacks reason, making it inherently prone to violence,” but he too has seemingly made every effort to voice his “deep respect” for Islam and has made no secret that he supports a Palestinian State, undoubtedly to appease the Muslim community. In fact many Catholic “Christians” of the Middle East, along with the Israelis, felt that the Pope was much more interested in building bridges to Islam than he was in their own causes. This, however, has been a pattern with Catholicism down through the ages. Proverbs 5:6 tells us that this strange woman’s “ways are moveable,” meaning that she will do whatever is necessary to further her own interests. She is not

beyond compromise; such as many confused and even outraged Catholics saw back in the 60's when "The Church" suddenly declared that it was no longer a sin to eat meat on Friday.

At present, there is great outrage among many New Yorkers, and others around the country, because of the proposed Islamic mosque to be built very close to ground zero. Some are defending the decision to grant such permission to the Muslims as a "right of the constitution," and we heard one defender of this proposal simply put forth the idea that this religion should be applauded for trying to live side by side with Christians. We quite frankly do not know anymore what people mean when they say Christian. There was a time when it meant specifically that one had been born again, having been washed in the blood of The Lamb, but it seems that the world consensus of the term is now simply synonymous with Catholic, despite the aforementioned facts in regard to this system or the many sex scandals in recent years surrounding her.

Claremont School of Theology, a Methodist University, "will try an unorthodox approach in cross-training the nation's future Muslim, Christian, and Jewish religious leaders in classrooms scattered around Southern California as they work toward their respective degrees." They explain that, "Educating people in a segregated environment is not a way to teach them to be peacemakers. It only steeps them in their own religion and with their own people." K.C. Star.

These same three groups also made news in 2009 when Adnan Oktar, a famous Turkish Muslim leader, suggested that they all collaborate in rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem. "Jewish Rabbi Hollander explained, 'The building of the Temple is one of the stages in the Messianic process.' But another possibility that has been presented is that the Dome of the Rock that sits so prominently on the Temple Mount be used as 'a place of prayer for all nations.' This title is found in the book of the Prophet Isaiah.

'This should be fairly simple,' explained Rabbi Hollander. 'It is said that the structure of the Dome in Haram E-Sharrif (the Temple Mount) was originally meant by (Caliph) Omar to be a House of Prayer for Jews, and the Al-

Aqsa for Muslims.’ However, he also explained that religious Jews would not be able to enter the Dome of the Rock unless they had first been ritually cleansed according to Jewish halakhic regulations.” This same article from ‘The World Net Daily’ goes on to report that “Yoav Frankel, an Orthodox Jew who has been deeply involved in interfaith dialogue with Muslims, also envisions a shared Temple Mount. This project is called ‘God’s Holy Mountain’ and is an effort of the Interfaith Encounter Association, a group dedicated to promoting peace in the Middle East. What is unique about the ‘God’s Holy Mountain project’ is that it envisions the day when the Jewish Temple will exist side by side with the Dome of the Rock.”

Just how and why these “two women” in Zechariah’s vision will help “the woman in the ephah,” is rather unclear at this time, but the foregoing accounts attest loudly to the fact that religionists on this earth are trying desperately to unite with one another for the cause of peace. Whether or not all this “reaching out” to one another will help usher in the “peace and safety” era, destined to come before the sudden destruction, we simply do not know.

We are assured of the fact that none of the efforts of men, either politically or religiously, is going to stop God’s prophesied judgment at the end of this Church Age. The admonitions for those who are truly looking for Jesus to come in these last days is found in Ephesians 6:13. “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” While so many are being rather aggressive in trying to reform this world, our commission is simply to withstand, or “let” (hinder) the forces of darkness till we be taken out of the way. II Thess. 2:7. We do that by taking the whole armour of God as described in this chapter, where our loins are to be “....girt about with truth, And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;” V. 14,15. All of these pieces of armour are directly related to the Word of God, but these two are especially applicable in standing our ground. It is our own loins, our own lives, our own testimony, wherein God’s Word must become extremely personal and we become living

examples of Truth, walking in the most practical manner, setting a shining example to those around us, of the Light that will reprove darkness. Rather than spend our energies trying to correct all the evils of this world and save it, let us rather look full into the face of Jesus, our Head, seeking His fellowship and desire for our lives, both in us and through us, until He chooses to catch us away.

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### **PERHAPS THIS YEAR!!**

**It may be that during this year we shall see the King  
In His beauty, caught up to meet Him --  
The longing of our hearts fulfilled at last!  
Is it too much to desire that when we see our  
Wonderful Lord in His glory, when trials, toils,  
And sacrifices are all at an end,  
Is it too much to desire that He should say  
Something like this:  
*“Thy love to Me was wonderful”?***

**It will make all seem as nothing to hear such words  
From the Savior, and to hear Him say to the one  
Who has sought to be faithful to Him at all costs,  
Well done, You were never popular on earth,  
And no one knew much about you. The life you**

**lived**

**To My glory in your quiet sphere of duty  
Seemed to be wasted, and your sacrifice and denial  
Worthless in the estimation of those who knew it,  
*But your love to Me was wonderful!***

**Men said you made mistakes, and were narrow-  
minded,**

**And did not catch the spirit of the age.  
They thought you were a fanatic  
And called you so.  
Men crucified you as they crucified Me.  
*But, oh! Your love to Me was wonderful!*  
WELL DONE!”**

# **PENTECOSTAL UNITY**

Mary M. Bodie

“BEHOLD HOW GOOD AND HOW PLEASANT IT IS FOR BRETHREN TO DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY! IT IS LIKE THE PRECIOUS OINTMENT UPON THE HEAD, THAT RAN DOWN UPON THE BEARD, EVEN AARON’S BEARD: THAT WENT DOWN TO THE SKIRTS OF HIS GARMENTS; AS THE DEW OF HERMON, AND AS THE DEW THAT DESCENDED UPON THE MOUNTAINS OF ZION: FOR THERE THE LORD COMMANDED THE BLESSING, EVEN LIFE FOR EVERMORE” - Psalm 133:1-3.

There has been much said and written about the unity and one accord-ness of the early Church. The Protestant churches have been especially interested in the subject, because there seems to be a concentrated endeavor among them for unity. They say they want Pentecostal unity; but we notice they do not want Pentecostal signs. There were marvelous happenings recorded of those early days. These supernatural events startle and amaze us as we read, and we are surprised that people do not desire these things. But they do not see all that the one accord-ness of those days signifies, neither are they willing for that unity to be manifested today, as it is written in the Scriptures.

We have found seven one accords relating to the early disciples in the Acts of the Apostles. Seven, being the number of completeness and perfection, is very significant. It is not accidental, but purposeful, and inspired by the Holy Author of Scripture. The perfect unity of the Church in its ministries is set before us. It was a Divine one accord, that was beautiful and heavenly. The Church as a whole cannot attain to that oneness now; but each separate believer in each local assembly may seek with purpose of heart to attain to that

perfection, and thus will be one in spirit with every other Christian and every Christian assembly.

The word "accord" has diverse meanings, all of them are most expressive and interesting and show different phases of harmony and oneness. Let us notice some of these meanings. First, "To adjust a difference between two or more parties." Second, "Agreement, between independent minds; harmonious feeling or action prompted by one common impulse." Third, "Agreement, fitness, just correspondence of things one to the other." Fourth, "Concert, concord, harmony of musical sounds." These meanings may all be applied to the unity of the Church. They show forth the oneness that was manifest in the beginning of her career; and, would be in evidence today, if the order of the Scriptures had been followed and the Holy Spirit allowed to guide.

Let us look at these seven "accords" in the order that they appear in the Acts of the Apostles.

**One: ONE ACCORD IN PRAYER.** "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" - Acts 1:14. Is that not beautiful unity? "These" included all the apostles and the brethren of those early days. There were one hundred and twenty of them, as we learn later when the Holy Spirit fell upon them on the day of Pentecost and they were baptized into one Body, thus actually coming into spiritual oneness.

These early disciples prayed, and they prayed in unison - with one mind and one voice - they called upon the Lord. It was no dry formal prayer meeting; but a real getting together in spirit. This pattern teaches us such one-accord-ness in prayer will surely bring results. They brought heaven and earth together. God's throne was touched by these feeble folk, and He was moved by their united cry to Him. Power was in their hands through the unity of prayer, and they wisely took advantage of the opportunity. It is a place of authority, this one-accord-ness in prayer. All that was afterward accomplished in that halcyon time of victory was due in great measure to that union prayer meeting.

**Two: ONE ACCORD IN ONE PLACE.** “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place” - Acts 2:1. Emphasis is upon the one place and one purpose. The one-accord-ness of the disciples was manifested in the fact that they had one gathering center, and that they were all of one mind in the one place. They had one desire and one purpose for being gathered there. They were all waiting for the advent of the Holy Spirit. “The promise of the Father” was due to come upon them. They were all of one mind in expectancy. All were looking for Him, all in one place, all with one desire. Hence, none were disappointed. “There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire....And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

**Three: ONE ACCORD IN CONSECRATION.** “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart” - Acts 2:46. It is astounding, this absolute devotedness to God, which the record proclaims. They sold all their possession and distributed the money among the poor. The oneness was not only spiritually defined and experienced, but it was practically demonstrated. They did not talk unity, but acted it. The power of the unseen eternal things swayed them. The coming kingdom and glory was so real to them, that they had no thought or desire for the things of the present kingdom or system of this world. It was wonderful! It is the only ideal condition of the kind that has ever been a success. It speaks of the unity of the people in heart and life. It is Divine unity, and cannot be imitated nor counterfeited. There is no substitute for the power of the Holy Spirit to gather the saints together and mold them into one-accord-ness. Note Acts 4:32.

Men have sought many times to bring to pass that ideal socialistic state which characterized those early days. Religious men as well as irreligious men have determined that they would follow and cause others to

follow the example of the unity, the social equality, and the all-things-common, which was the order evinced by those disciples; but they never have been successful. The leaders have simply been enriched at the expense of the others. Those who sold their goods and distributed to the needy were themselves needy in a short time. Inequality soon ruled instead of unity, strife and division quickly showed up; and the socialistic all-things-common condition departed. The thing has become a failure whenever mentioned. But the reason for the failure of these schemes was that they were the undertaking of men. God was not in their ordering. That ideal state will never be a reality again in the world until the Lord Jesus Christ is King. Then all people of God will again have all things in common. They will all "eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart," and none will say that the things that belong to him are "his own." Unity will again be the order of the day. It will not only continue until the leaders have passed away; but for one thousand years, that ideal social community will continue on earth, while the Church will be in one accord in heaven. Their unity will be manifested in the glorious eternal conditions in Paradise above.

**Four: ONE ACCORD IN PRAISE AND WORSHIP.** "And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord" - Acts 4:24. This praise-meeting was held subsequent to the marvelous deliverance of several of the apostles from prison, where the religious leaders had put them because of the mighty conviction that had fallen upon the people after the lame man had been healed at the gate of the temple. Immediately upon their release, they sought the company of their own people whose joy was unbounded at the goodness of the Lord. This one-accord-ness in praise was not a dry formal affair, called for by the apostles because of the exigencies of the situation, as they are today. It was not worked up nor put on; but rather a spontaneous bursting forth of the thanksgiving that was filling the hearts of the people. His Presence was real.

His grace so marvelous, His protection so manifest in the deliverance of the apostles, that they were constrained to give vent to their overflowing hearts and praise their God and Father who had so openly demonstrated that he was with them and for them.

Such oneness of praise and gratitude is a mighty leverage with God. It moves Him to a greater display of His power in behalf of His saints, as witness the record here. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness." - Acts 4:31. Maybe if the saints had more of this unity in praise they would have more of such displays of His might. But the majority of Christians are afraid of the supernatural. They run away from the manifestation of signs and wonders. They do not expect God to show Himself in any visible manner with His people. They have become so accustomed to a form of religion that the real and manifest experiences which they had in the early days are strange and fearsome. The convictions which they bring are unwelcome. They desire to continue in their man-made religions; hence, turn away from reality and power. They talk about Pentecost, but, when it is really present, they call it wildfire and fanaticism. Every open display of God's power is so termed in these evil days. Think what would happen if the Lord would shake some of these places today where so-called Christians are gathered. They would immediately become panic-stricken and run for their lives. They could not get away fast enough from the supernatural display. They know God so very little, they have no consciousness of His Presence. It is so different from those wonderful one-accord days of the beginning.

**Five: ONE ACCORD IN FAITH.** "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people: (and they were all in one accord in Solomon's porch)" - Acts 5:12. Those signs and wonders by the apostles hands, were simply the manifestation of the unity among the believers, as the

Spirit clearly intimates. When the saints, even a small gathering, are in fellowship and harmony is ruling - signs and wonders are the order. It is easy to believe God when all are talking faith. What a mighty host the Church would be, what a front we would present to the enemy, if all were of one accord in any one place! We would make Satan flee; and humanity would be delivered from the shackles wherewith they have been bound these many years. But, confusion reigns instead. There is so little harmony exhibited; hence our prayers are hindered. We appear to have so little faith. There are few of the mighty miraculous signs of Pentecost in the Church of today. Those who trust God absolutely are in the minority, and are termed impractical and foolish. What will be the reckoning for such unbelief? They are losers now and will be for all eternity, because they do not believe Him and stand together in unity and harmony.

**Six: ONE ACCORD IN HEEDING THE WORD.**

“And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did” - Acts 8:6. Was that not wonderful? Oh, for such a condition today! Oh, for such a city, where all are in one accord in respect to listening to the Word of God and heeding it. It is no marvel that there was a great revival there. Salvation from sin and sickness always follows attention to the Scriptures. Miracles abound in every such place. Satan is defeated when the people all together give heed to the Word of God. Nowadays the Word goes in one ear and out the other, as the saying goes. Inattention and shallowness abound! It is seldom that Christians are found in one accord listening to the Word. They prefer lighter religious fare. Illustrations, stories, and spectacular stunts draw the people; but seldom is the Scripture the moving power. It is not surprising that so few are saved or even convicted of their sins.. When the saints are in one accord to heed the Word, sinners are likewise moved to listen.

**Seven: ONE ACCORD IN DECISION.** “It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul” - Acts 15:25. This is the seventh and last mention of the “one accord,” as relating to the Church. It is truly significant that it is found in this chapter where we have the account of the first and only conference (as far as we know) of the leaders of the early Church. They were called together by the Holy Spirit. Paul writes later, relative to this conference, that he went up by Revelation - Galatians 2:1-2. This meeting together was to settle the important question of the way of salvation. The question of salvation was discussed from every point of view - whether it was by law or grace, faith or works. It was a most momentous occasion, a purposeful divinely ordered gathering. The apostles as well as all the leaders of the Church were present, and they were in one accord in deciding that men were saved by faith in the grace of God. There was not one contrary voice. The verdict was unanimous. James, as well as Peter and John, leading apostles of the circumcision, with Paul and Barnabas, leaders among the Gentiles, all agreed as they signified with one consent, “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved” - Acts 15:11.

There was unity at that conference and harmony prevailed. the fullest fellowship was enjoyed by the brethren of those early days. If brethren these days would heed and yield to the voice of Scripture, there would be some hope of unity. But men dare to raise their puny voice in denial of the grace way of salvation. Legality rules the day. It is the greatest hindrance to the one-accord-ness of the brethren, with the exception of organization, which divides brother from brother. How small they appear by the side of the Word of God. The Church cannot have even the semblance of Divine unity nor any true scriptural oneness, until they all agree upon the order for the Church - the pattern laid down in the Bible. God has not changed His plan, and never will. The Church must yield to Him, He will not yield to the

Church. But they never will. It is too late to expect such a glorious consummation. The Scriptures do not harbor any such hope. The end of that which began fair and holy in that upper room, so divinely equipped on the day of Pentecost, though small and despised of men, has failed dismally. Jehovah will judge the departure from His ordained plan and purpose. He will burn the false system with fire - Rev. 18. But, out of all this pretense and ecclesiastical confusion, He is gathering His Church. This was His plan from the beginning. "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name" - Acts 15:14. He never expected to convert the world, or even one entire city. But, He will have a people in one accord. The true Church will soon be gone. They are waiting the summons, listening for the trumpet blast to call them Home. Unity will prevail in heaven, and afterward on earth also. Discord, strife and division will go with Satan's descent to hell. He is the author of confusion; but Jesus is the Author of peace and unity.

#### **THE EMBROIDERY WORK OF GOD**

My life is but a weaving,  
    Between my God and me  
I do not choose the colors,  
    He worketh steadily.  
Ofttimes he weaveth sorrow,  
    And I in foolish pride  
Forget He sees the upper,  
    And I the underside.  
Not 'til the loom is silent  
    And the shuttles cease to fly,  
Will God unroll the canvas  
    And explain the reason why.  
The dark threads are as needful  
    In the weaver's skillful hand  
As the threads of gold and silver  
    In the pattern He has planned.  
                                    --Author Unknown

## GIVING THANKS ALWAYS

***“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” - Ephesians 5:20.***

This well known verse is the prelude to the daily duties of the child of God, which are enumerated from Verse 21 onwards: a holy walk between husband and wife, between children and their parents, and between servants and masters. In this way it becomes clear that thankfulness is the foundation of a holy life, just as soldiers march in time to music, so ought our hearts to walk in holiness to the music of thankfulness.

Even if we cannot always thank the Lord in words, we can nevertheless always have thankful hearts. However, it is good to express our thankfulness in words -- yet words alone are questionable thanks if they are not accompanied by deeds of thankfulness. The best expression of thankfulness is obedience towards the Lord. The angels do not only praise the Lord but also obey Him and are always ready to move at His command. It says of them in Hebrews 1:7, “Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire.”

Therefore when we fulfill a difficult duty or suffer and pray with suffering brethren it is good expression of thankfulness to our God.

-- U. Senn M.D.

### *THE TWO PRAYERS*

*Last night my boy confessed to me  
Some childish wrong  
And kneeling at my knee  
He prayed with tears;  
“Dear God, make me a man,  
Like Daddy--wise and strong;  
I know you can.”  
Then while he slept  
I knelt beside his bed,  
Confessed my sins,  
And prayed with love-bowed head,  
“Oh God, make me a child  
Like my child here--  
Pure, guileless,  
Trusting Thee with faith sincere.”*

*--Andrew Gillies*

# REFLECTIONS

*. . . From the Editor*

The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

This is the season when many across this land and around the world are returning to various institutions of learning. Solomon tells us here that there is no end to the books or resources available but it is imperative that men realize not all these books will produce the desired results represented by the goads and nails. Not all knowledge will goad or prompt men to walk in godly paths. Nor will all teachings bring forth the security and steadfastness depicted by the nail.

The preacher exhorts: “by these,” that is the aforementioned, words of truth, words of the wise, words from masters of assemblies, which emanate from One Shepherd, are we to be admonished.

Solomon, the preacher, knew whereof he spoke. He was the wisest of men, having received his wisdom directly from God. He also gave priority to “that which was written,” a direct reference to the Word of God, and put a great premium on such wisdom, declaring: “Wisdom is the principal (first, in time, order, or rank; beginning, chief) thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.” Prov. 4:7 Proverbs 8:17 further announces the high priority we must give to such acceptable, upright words of wisdom. “I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.” Wisdom and Jesus are exactly the same, according to this entire chapter. Thus Jesus does have a special love for those who are obsessed with wisdom and such love is reciprocated. We are

admonished to seek Him early, that is, early in our lives, early in time of trial or need, early in the day.

Proverbs 2 also presents a beautiful outline for those who would truly seek wisdom. Verses 1-4 record desire: “My son, if thou wilt receive my words,.... if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments.....incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;...if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;” The little oft repeated word “if” indicates that the pursuit of these words is completely left to our own choice.

Verse 5 guarantees the result of that pursuit: understanding the fear of the Lord, while verses 6-8 promise specific gifts of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, a buckler (shield) of protection, and preservation for his saints.

Verses 9-12 detail a number of great benefits afforded us by wisdom such as understanding (discerning) righteousness, judgment, equity, every good path, pleasantness to the soul, preservation, protection, deliverance from the evil man (defined V. 13-15) and the strange woman. (portrayed V. 17-19)

Finally, verses 20,21 present the goal of wisdom “that thou mayest walk in the way of good men” keep the paths of righteousness, and have a permanent place in the land of blessing.

All these blessings are tremendous examples of the effects, typified by the goads and nails, promised by Solomon’s true wisdom. GH.

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### **Bible School**

**Classes are scheduled to begin September 20, 2010 at our new location in Belton, Missouri. We would also announce that if you are unable to attend the classes in person, all of them are available on CD. Just write, call, or e-mail us and we will be glad to send as many as you may desire.**

## COMFORT ... IN TIMES OF SORROW

Ruth E. Smith

"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." I Thessalonians 4:13.

Death comes to all of us because it is part of the life process, but it IS not the end of life! Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14.1-3).

Jesus' words bring such comfort and hope; why then, is there such misunderstanding and fear of death, even among Christians? Fear was not known until Adam and Eve disobeyed God; neither was death known. They came as a result of their disobedience to God's command: "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:17)

Jesus' death and resurrection took the sting out of death, even as the Apostle Paul states: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Cor.15:55-57). The latter part of verse 54 reads, "Death is swallowed up in victory," or utterly vanquished forever!

God does not intend for any of the natural processes to be terrible experiences. He is a God of love and everything He does reflects HIS love. Before we came out of the womb and into this world, we were unborn babies. Also, in going from this world, by death, into another world, we are as unborn babies, so far as the next life is concerned. A baby, not yet born, still tucked under his mother's heart, might say, "This is a warm place. I'm taken care of. I feel secure. I like it and want to stay." The natural birth process replies, "You cannot stay here, you are going out of this world into another." That baby would look upon the process birth as if it were death, since it would be the end of its previous state. He could very well say, "I don't want to die; I understand the way of existence here."

What to us is a birth; to that baby may seem like death. But the day comes when he does die to that life, and is born into this present one. What happens to him? The newborn IS cradled in loving arms. Soft hands hold him gently. A kind face looks down upon him, and he loves that face. Everyone who comes near him, ooh's and aah's. He is king of the world he surveys. As he grows, he finds that life is good. He has some hardships and disappointments, that's for sure, but they toughen his fiber. He learns the meaning of love; hopefully, he will love God and people will love him. His life cycle comes to a close eventually and the doctor may have to tell him, "You are going to die." He protests, "I don't want to die. I love this world. I enjoy feeling the warm sun on my face and the cool rain also. I like my life. I want to continue looking at the faces of my loved ones. I know I have lived a long time, but I don't want to die."

But he does die to this world and is born into the next life. The person who has faith in Christ; though he dies physically, will awaken to find himself young again. Loving faces will greet him. Loving hands will touch him. More beautiful sunlight than he has ever seen on earth beams fully upon his face. Sweeter music than he has ever heard will flow through his whole being. He will say to himself, "Why was I so afraid of this which is called 'death' when, as I know now, is life?" He will know the meaning of Jesus' words in Revelation: "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death." (1:17-18) So when our mission is completed, our spirits which came from God will return to God.

On the other side of the picture, there are those who reject Jesus Christ, as Savior. The foregoing thoughts concerning their coming into the world can be applied to the sinner as well as the believer. However, the unbeliever's exit from this life and entrance into the next, is not one of smiling faces, joyful greetings and joy forever more. He chose his future home while in his sojourn on earth. Also, we know that not all babies are welcomed into loving arms and caring parents; but instead, may find an early death in a trash can, or they may be mistreated for a life time. This harsh treatment is but a

small sample of what the Christ rejecter will experience for eternity. (Luke 16:19-31)

I would like to insert a happy note concerning the millions of abortions which take place each year and of the many abused infants who die. They go home to be with their Creator, forever to be loved. Heaven is a happy place and children will be forever praising Him (II Samuel 12:23). Nothing is wasted as far as God is concerned. We read in Psalm 76: 10: "Surely the wrath of men shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain." Although wicked men and women are causing the death of millions of infants, yet these same infants will inhabit heaven and bring glory to God; and who knows what suffering in their natural life they may have been saved from?

My aim in this article is not only to show the other side of death, but to put us at ease, so that we may help others through their times of sorrow. Anyone who is terminally ill knows, without being told, that he is going to die; therefore, it is a subject of great importance, but very few people want to listen. Most often, the subject is changed and the issue evaded.

If we are getting ready to go on a trip, there are certain things we need to finish before going. There are definite plans to be made, and inquiries about the places we will visit, etc. It is the same with those who know they are dying. They have business here they may want to finish with family and friends. They want to know more about the land where they are going, and perhaps even about the transportation to that land (Revelation 21 & 22; Psalm 23:4-6).

The big question is, How do we deal with the survivors of the departed loved one? The inclination of most people is to send a sympathy card and then avoid the persons, mainly because they do not know what to say or how to act. If all our friends took this approach, how horrible for the grieving person! One need not say much. A "I'm truly sorry" will mean a lot, along with a hug, a touch, but most of all, genuine concern for their welfare.

We may want to go further and ask, "How are you doing? Is there some way I can help?" Then name some obvious things that need doing and let them choose. Don't push

yourself on the grieving ones, but let them know that you are available any time they need help. Help comes in many sizes and shapes. It may be to talk, or to take a walk. At times, words are not even necessary. The sorrowing one can draw strength from the loving presence of a companion.

Some other things that are important to know are that grief manifests itself in many ways. Oftentimes, anger and hostility are present. The bereaved may be angry with the one who has died because he is left alone. There may be anger directed towards God for allowing the loved one to be taken, even if the one who died was almost 90 or 100. The anger may be directed toward a doctor, or family, friends, or even at themselves. Those sorrowing may go the route of denial and refuse to accept the fact of the loved one's death. All people experience shock, especially at a sudden death. Numbness sets in for a period of time, perhaps four to six weeks, before the reality of the loss hits them and the grief process begins.

It often happens, when most people think that the bereaved should be getting over the worst part of the loss, they cease to call, or visit, or include them in activities. In reality, this may be the worst time in their grieving. They may be in deep depression. There are several levels of depression, and all of us have experienced depression to one degree or another. It is a feeling of helplessness or hopelessness. We can be of great help to one who is grieving at this time. Try to encourage them in little thoughtful ways -- take a favorite food, or take them out for a meal, a ride, a walk. Encourage, but don't push. Don't give advice, and above all, don't make statements as, "Oh, you'll get over it. You'll find someone else and remarry." At that time, such a thing is most unthinkable and disgusting. We should never say to a couple who has lost a child, "You can always have another one to replace this child." No one can ever be replaced. We are all different, and usually a parent feels that some how they were not a good parent, or their child would not have died.

The statements may be true, but the timing is bad. Quite often, widows or widowers will remarry. Grieving parents may have another child. Our loved ones will die, but the love we shared with them will never die. Why? Because they left an

impact on our lives. We are not the same as we were before we met them. My husband and I have lived together for 33 years. His love and tenderness have helped to mellow me. His strengths and weaknesses have also helped to build other vital qualities in me. If he should die, those things are an integral part of me forever.

The same is true of children and parents. They all affect our lives, and some things never die. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." (Romans 14:7) If we focus on the joy these loved ones brought to us and the time we had to enjoy them, we will be grateful. If we focus instead on the amount of time we think we should have had with them, we will probably become bitter and depressed. Last, but not least, tears and crying are an important part of the healing process. Sometimes, we try to be brave and strong and withhold tears. This is especially true of men, but tears release tension. We are told that if a person refuses to cry, the acids brought about by the pressure and tension of the grief, or anxiety, will cause ulcers. The tears will relieve this situation.

Remember that Jesus wept at the death of His beloved friend, Lazarus. (John 11:35)

### **LET ME LOVE**

*Love that brings a warmth and softness to the heart,*

*And a quiet spirit and a gentle peace,*

*A sweetness that sets the one beloved apart,*

*And grants to each in turn a calm release.*

*A love like this that brings its own reward,*

*Is a gift from God that mortals may receive.*

*Let none refuse this grace, nor disregard*

*Its wonder-and the Holy Spirit grieve.*

*So, let me gather a sweet child in my arms,*

*Firmly clasp the hand of a lonely friend;*

*Let me speak the word that a sad heart warms*

*And comfort to the weary traveler lend:*

*Let me be a friend and to all a good neighbor:*

*On the work of the Lord bestow more abundant labor.*

*- Ruby Lain Tow*

## *IN THE SONG OF SOLOMON*

### THE ESPOUSAL

3:1-11

**3:1-2. “By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broadways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not.”**

This shows one who had been taking it easy. The “bed” speaks of ease and comfort, and “night” speaks of sorrow and separation from the Lord. She found that she had lost communion with Him again. Once before there was a lapse, in chapter one, where she was occupied with service through which she lost sweet fellowship and communion with the Lord. Now again, because of her indifference to the Holy Spirit’s revealing power and truth, she has lost fellowship with Him. She feels the loss now and begins looking for Him.

3:3-4 “The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth. I held Him, and would not let Him go, until I had brought Him into my mother’s house and into the chamber of her that conceived me.” The Holy Spirit is God’s Agent, not only in the conviction of sinners in their need of a Savior, but also in stirring up the saints and drawing them away from the flesh and the world unto Christ. As Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, went searching for a bride for Isaac, so the Holy Spirit is searching among believers today for one who has an ear for His voice, that He might reveal more of the truth concerning Christ to that one.

The one who is aroused from sleep, even inquires of the watchmen (ministers) if they can tell her where she can find her Beloved. She continues her search until she finds Him. She brings Him into the house of Mother Grace. That is the only basis upon which she can have fellowship with Him.

Sarah is a figure of the covenant of Grace and of Jerusalem above "which is the mother of us all" - Galatians 4:26.

In Titus 2:11-13, we have a most precious lesson which Mother Grace teaches us: "For the grace that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and Godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." Grace does not allow us to be lax in our walk, but she surely teaches us to walk in a wholly separated way. Unless we judge our flesh and walk in a holy manner in this world, we will miss this wonderful Prize that is set before us, and will not be chosen as a member of the Bride of Christ. That one will be a holy person, one who walks Godly in this world, one who really is transformed into the image of God's Son. That is the purpose of the Holy Spirit in our lives, to lead us into a separated walk. He reveals Christ in us, and there is no place for worldly lusts in this training that we receive from Mother Grace.

While this woman is in fellowship with her Beloved, she learns the truth that is taught in II Corinthians -- the book of worship, the book of priestly ministry. The first five chapters teach us the marvelous results of Christ having offered Himself on the Cross.

II Corinthians One. This chapter sets forth the BURNT OFFERING aspect of Christ's redemption, which speaks of Christ as completely devoted to do His Father's will even unto death. He was both able and willing to make atonement for those who were neither able nor willing to do the will of God.

II Corinthians Two. The PEACE OFFERING phase of redemption is shown here. Christ has brought God and man together through His sacrifice. He has made peace by "the blood of the Cross," and has reconciled us unto God. Our fellowship with God and our fellowship with one another depends upon the reconciliation which Christ has made. Only as we walk in the Spirit, can we maintain this sweet relationship with God and with other believers.

II Corinthians Three. This shows Christ as the MEAT (MEAL) OFFERING. As a man, Christ lived under the law and was tested by the law. He was proven to be perfect in all His ways, which is symbolized by the fine flour of the meal offering. Only a handful of the meal offering, with oil and

frankincense, was burnt upon the altar of burnt offering. "And when any will offer a meat (meal) offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon. And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests: and he shall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord" - Leviticus 2:1-2. The result to us of this offering is that the law of commandments was done away in Christ and that the law of love is now written in our hearts through the ministry of the New Testament or the Gospel of the Grace of God. This chapter shows the contrast between law and grace. It shows the greater privilege which we have under the New Covenant. The righteousness of the law is "fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" - Romans 8:4. We are changed from "glory to glory" into the image of Christ, as we continually behold Him and what we are in Him.

II Corinthians Four. Here we have the TRESPASS OFFERING aspect. Compensation is the chief thought in this offering, under the law, the one who robbed was required to restore one-fifth more than what he had taken. But under grace, the repayment is five times more than the loss sustained, and Christ has made that restitution. Five is the number of Grace. Christ has restored to God, through redemption, MUCH MORE than the loss sustained through Adam's transgression - Romans Five. Man has also received much more than he lost in Adam. Through redemption, man has received a Divine-human righteousness which can never be lost. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us" - 4:7. God has obtained a whole new creation through Christ, the last Adam.

II Corinthians Five. The results of the SIN OFFERING are given here. Christ was "made sin for us.....that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" - 5:21. Through that sin offering, we will receive a new and glorified body. Because we have been made the righteousness of God in Him, through His death for us, we should live no longer unto ourselves but unto Him who died and rose again.

II Corinthians Six. Here we have the pattern of the Apostle Paul's dedicated ministry as a spiritual priest, and the

SEPARATION UNTO GOD which such a priesthood demands. God can have no spiritual fellowship with unbelievers, and neither can we.

II Corinthians Seven. The CLEANSING OF THE PRIESTS is earnestly implored in this chapter. This cleansing is accomplished by heeding the Word of God and judging ourselves by the Spirit. Defilement breaks our fellowship with God. Self-judgment restores and maintains that fellowship.

II Corinthians Eight and Nine. The MINISTRY OF GIVING is taught in these chapters, both by word and example. Giving is a part of our worship. We give ourselves first to the Lord, and then all that we have belongs to Him. Some people say that we should give until it hurts. Rather, we should give until we enjoy giving. Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" - Acts 20:35. We find this is true. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" - 9:8. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" - 8:9.

II Corinthians Ten. The OBEDIENCE OF THE PRIESTS is very important. Under the Old Covenant, disobedience to God's Word brought death to the sons of Aaron. Obedience to the Word of God brings victory over the power of Satan, commendation from the Lord and great reward to the spiritual priests.

II Corinthians Eleven. The SUFFERING OF THE PRIESTS is taught in this chapter by the example of the Apostle Paul. Verses two and three are the announcement of the betrothal of the Church, the Body of Christ. "For I am jealous over you with Godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

The whole Church has been espoused to Christ, but not all the Church will hear the Word of the Lord. They are not willing to be separated unto the Lord, neither are they willing to suffer the reproach which a consecrated life will bring. After we have accepted this espousal and are walking with the Lord, then come persecutions and sufferings, not only from the devil,

but even from other believers who think that we are too extreme.

II Corinthians Twelve. The GLORY OF THE PRIESTS is in their close association with Christ the High Priest. This glory was revealed to the Apostle Paul in visions and revelations. These revelations to the apostle also brought suffering to him. Nevertheless, suffering will bring future glory to all who suffer for Christ's sake: "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen"- 4:17, 18.

II Corinthians Thirteen. This chapter shows the POWER OF THE PRIESTLY MINISTRY. Jesus "was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God" - 13:4. Christ's priestly ministry will never cease, for it is written: "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec" - Hebrews 5:6. Paul also lived and ministered by the power of God, so do we. Neither will our priestly ministry ever cease, for in Revelation 5:10 we read: "And has made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign on (over) the earth."

-- Alice S. Mooneyhan

(To Be Continued)

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IN JESUS

***In Jesus! How safe and secure is the place
That He has provided to save a lost race;
What marvelous, loving, unreachable grace!
All praise to His wonderful Name.***

***What matter if winds of adversity blow?
Or billows of trial my soul overflow?
In Jesus no gloom of despair can I know--
To lift me from darkness He came.***

***E'en though earthly sorrows may compass me
round,
My fellows forsake me and trouble abound;
A resting place under His wings I have found--
And He is forever the same.***

--Carlan S. Messler

STEP BY STEP.....IN OBEDIENCE

Velma Elliott

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. Hebrews 11:6,8.

Some of the most beautiful lessons in life come from the experiences of those who walked with God many years ago - men who believed the promises of our Father and obeyed every instruction from Him. Such is the lesson we learn from Isaac in the 26th chapter of Genesis.

Let us keep in mind the text in verse 24 as an important thought - “And the Lord appeared unto him the same night.” The beginning of the chapter informs us that there was a famine in those days as well as the one in Abraham’s time. Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech, king of the Philistines.

“And the Lord appeared unto him and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of; sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father.” God made Isaac to know that it was because of the obedience of Abraham, that these blessings would come upon him and his seed.

Isaac considered these things, and decided to dwell in Gerar, according to God’s command. This is an important step in the life of a believer - to hear God and obey Him. Isaac “sowed in the land, and received in the same year an hundredfold; and the Lord blessed him.” vs. 12. He became great and had many possessions of flocks and herds and a great store of servants.

This must have been an encouragement to Isaac, but then, as now, all things cannot always be good; for while God was blessing him, the Philistines, who were not obedient people, saw these blessings from God and they envied him.

All the wells that Isaac's forefathers had digged, as they too, passed this way, had been filled with earth by the jealous Philistines. Even the king said unto Isaac, "Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we." So, good-natured Isaac, who was being obedient yet, just moved farther down the valley and pitched his tent. Remember that he was traveling with his herds and flocks and all his servants, as well as his family.

They needed water, and when they digged wells, there was always water available. But, soon, the Philistines came and claimed one well after another, until after the fourth move that Isaac and his company made. He called this well "Rehoboth," and said "Now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." Afterwards he went up to Beersheba ("well of an oath"). "And the Lord appeared unto him the same night," reassuring him of His protection and blessing. There Isaac builded an altar and prayed.

Such a relationship between God and any of His people, is so beautiful, and brings peace, with which nothing can compare. Why did this revelation come to Isaac in the night on which he reached Beersheba? Because that was the place and the time wherein he found rest. His former locality had been one of torment. There had been a whole series of petty quarrels about the possession of the wells; the servants fussed, and there was strife. There are no worries like little worries, especially when there are an accumulation of them.

Isaac felt this deeply. Even after the strife was over, the place retained a disagreeable association. He determined to leave. He sought a change of scene. He pitched his tent away from the former strife, and Beersheba was like home to him. His heavenly Father came to him there and reaffirmed His oath made to Abraham. It was like a homecoming - out of the trouble and disturbance that tormented him. That very night the revelation came.

God spoke when there was no inward storm. He could not speak to Isaac when his mind was so filled with worries and frets. God's voice demands the silence of the soul. Only in the hush of the spirit could Isaac hear the garments of his God sweep by.

Have you taken time to go out at night and study the sky, with all the stars and the moon; even the thunderclouds and lightning? When a child, much of our entertainment was

out on the lawn in study of these heavenly sights and sounds. There is nothing so beautiful as a clear night with the thousands of stars sprinkling the sky. It gives a peace and a feeling of the close presence of God.

And so it was with Isaac: his still night was his starry night. It was as though the stars said to him, "Hast thou pondered these words, Be still, and know?" AND KNOW. In the hour of perturbing thoughts when you cannot hear the answer to your prayer, how often the answer seems to come long after! Our heart receives no response in the moment of its crying - in its thunder, its earthquake, and its fire. But, when the crying ceases, then the stillness falls. When the fist desists the knocking on the iron gate, when the interests of other lives break the tragedy of our own, when almost without noticing, we are praying for someone else, then we find the answer to our own!

Now God does not open paths in advance of our coming. He does not promise to bring help before we need it. He does not remove obstacles out of our way before we reach them; yet, when we are on the edge of our need, God's Hand is stretched out. Isaiah 43:2 proclaims, "When thou passest through the waters.....they shall not overflow thee."

Many times we forget this and worry about problems we foresee in the future, as if we expect God to make the way plain a long way ahead. This is not the way God does things. He has promised to do only as we need -- step by step. We must get to the waters and step into them before we can claim the promises of God. Oh, that men would trust God and believe His promises, obeying His Word! How blessed they would be!

Though Isaac lived many years ago (Eucelusus, the historian, fixes his time two ages before Moses. 1800 years before Christ, and 600 years after the flood), yet he loved and obeyed God. He realized that for his own good and for the blessings upon his family and those who would be coming after, that he needed to obey God.

We too, need to follow the paths of those worthies of faith, one step at a time. Then we will also have a close relationship with our heavenly Father. It is only through Jesus Christ His Son -- in Him and Him only -- that we have the eternal blessings from God.

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# JESUS HAS THE ANSWER

(Luke 8:49-56)

Answers are plentiful. Parents have them. Children have them. Preachers, teachers and politicians have them. Everybody has answers. Some are right on target and others miss it. The answers Jesus gives are the best. He is always right on target! Consider some of the answers He gives.

When the seas were raging, he did not give a dissertation on the atmospheric pressures of the sea. He simply said "Peace be still." To a questioning heart that sought Him at night, He did not give a complicated answer. He only said, "Ye must be born again." To a weary crowd He did not give a variety of reasons for their weariness. He simply said "Come unto me...."

The answers that Jesus gives are never complicated, complex or confusing. They are answers that start life toward solution, toward hope, and toward salvation. They are simple, but ever so meaningful.

Notice one of the answers He gave to the crisis in Luke 8:49-56, "Fear not, only believe ....." - vs. 50. This is the King James translation, the Living Bible says, "Just trust Me." The great and meaningful answers are never complicated.

Jesus gives us simple answers amid the crises of life, and what He says can be understood and followed. What He says, if heeded, always makes a difference. The answer that Jesus gives is an assurance that life has possibility: "She is not dead, but sleepeth: - vs. 52. Without Jesus we are dead, but when he speaks to us He brings life. When we accept the gift He has to offer we awaken to life everlasting. Death is not the last word for a Christian. Death and hell were defeated on Calvary. The great plus of the gospel is that we can have life regardless of the abounding sin in the world. We have been delivered from sin. Romans 5:20 assures, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." And that grace is limitless.

Out of the Watts holocaust of 1965 came a story that speaks to this point. A Teacher gathered burned timbers, twisted metals, disfigured objects and various items of debris left from the burnings, and made some striking beautiful sculptures from them. He did it, he said, to teach young people that even life that has been warped and twisted can be

put right and something beautiful can come of it. If a natural man could bring usefulness and beauty out of death and destruction, how much more can our Savior take twisted, warped, desolate and sinful lives and turn them into something beautiful.

This is the assurance that Jesus would have us hear. Lives broken by sin and burdened with the claim of death can be lifted up to life everlasting by the power of God through Jesus Christ. The answer that Jesus gives reflects authority over all life's predicaments and problems. "Maid, arise" - vs. 54. Jesus is the great authority of life. He had a part in its creation, so He knows what is necessary for life.. Where His words are heeded, solutions appear for the issues that confront us on a daily basis. Remember it makes a difference who or what has authority over us.

Charles Kingsley has said: "There are two freedoms -- the false, when a man is free to do what he likes; the true -- when a man is free to do what he ought." Jesus speaks to this second freedom -- the true freedom. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" - John 8:36.

"Maid, arise." This is the word He speaks to us, "Arise," He says, death and sin have no more dominion over us. We arise to a newness of life in Him. He who has all authority speaks words of life and hope to us. And, if we listen and obey his Word, it becomes the solution for our lives. He has the answers for everything.

--C. Neil Strait

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* A person with a closed mind can get along all right if he also keeps his mouth shut.

* The kindness planned for tomorrow doesn't count for today

* An open mind and a closed mouth are a winning combination.

* Love does not keep a ledger of the sins and failures of others

* Doubt builds the mountains which faith can move.

