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Salvation Crystal Clear

—By Curtis Hudson

God Does Not Count Good Works

God does not count good works in any form or fashion. The Bible says in Titus 3:5, *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.* And the Scripture declares in Ephesians 2:8-9,

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

There is not one verse in all the Bible that says anything about working to go to Heaven. The truth of the matter is, a man could go to church Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night every week of his life and still die and go to Hell. One does not become a Christian by getting into the church any more than one becomes an automobile by getting into the garage. Joining the church has nothing to do with going to Heaven. Once a man is born again, he ought to join a good church, a place where he can attend, enjoy the fellowship of other believers, and learn from the Bible what God expects of him, a place where he can be involved in helping to get out the

gospel. But church membership comes after salvation, and no one should ever join a church until he is first sure that he is born again.

If salvation were by works of any kind, then somewhere the Scripture would have to tell us exactly how much one must work in order to be born again. Would Sunday morning and Sunday night church services be enough, or must one go to every service, including Wednesday nights? And must one also tithe his income and give to the poor? Exactly how much work is required before a man can go to Heaven?

There is no passage anywhere in the Bible that answers the question. If a man worked in order to be born again, then the motive for the work would render it ineffective. According to I Corinthians 13, any work not motivated by love for Christ is not acceptable. Paul said in I Corinthians 13:3, *And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity [love], it profiteth me nothing.* If a man worked in order to be born again, the motive for his service would not be love, but fear. He would be working because he was afraid he was going to Hell, not because he loved God.

Thus the motive would render the work unacceptable.

Matthew 7:22-23 makes it very clear that no one goes to Heaven because of his good works. Here the Scripture says,

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Here is a judgment scene where people tell the Lord all about their good works, thinking He will let them into Heaven. But in verse 23 the Lord says, *I never knew you: depart from me.* And then He calls their good works *works of iniquity.*

Once we receive Christ as Savior, we should set out to serve Him and do all the good works we can. Ephesians 2:10 says, *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.* But we work because we love Him, not in order to be born again. When it comes to salvation, good works, no matter how good or how many, are absolutely futile.

Romans 11:6 says, *And if by grace, then is it no*

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more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

No, God doesn't count our good works. Salvation is not a result of what we do for Christ, but rather a result of what He does for us.

James Proctor, who died in a cheap hotel room in one of our great western states left a poem behind, part of which said,

**I've tried in vain a thousand ways,
My fears to quell, my hopes to raise;
And all I need, the Bible says,
Is Jesus!**

He went on to say,

**Though some will mock, and some will blame;
In spite of fear, in spite of shame,
I'll go to Him because His name
Is Jesus!**

The man who wrote the above lines had squandered a fortune in search of peace and happiness, but he never found either until he realized that Jesus Christ was all he needed and accepted Him as Savior.

God, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And God replied in verses 20-23,

Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.... Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.

The average Christian lives and dies and never has the foggiest idea of how holy and righteous God really is.

In Isaiah 6:1-3 the prophet said, *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.*

According to these verses, the seraphims in Heaven are flying around the throne of God singing, "Holy, holy, holy!" They could be singing, "Justice, justice, justice!" for God is just. They could be singing, "Love, love, love!" for God is love. They could be singing, "Mercy, mercy, mercy!" for God is merciful. They could be singing, "Longsuffering, longsuffering, longsuffering!" for God is longsuffering. But, no, they are singing, "Holy, holy, holy!" And the seraphims that sang, "Holy, holy, holy!" have their faces covered with two of their wings. They are not even looking upon the God they are singing about.

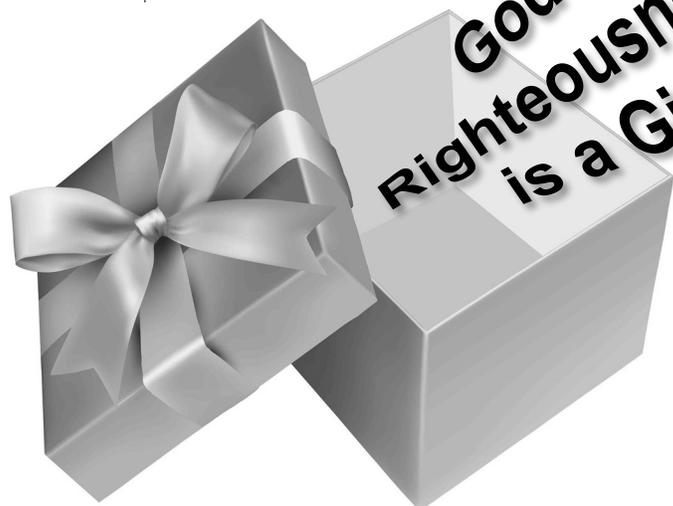
John 3:3 says, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* Verse 5 says that he cannot enter the kingdom of God, but this verse says that he cannot see the kingdom of God. If I go to Heaven, then I must be as holy and righteous as God Himself. And I cannot be that righteous.

Isaiah 64:6 reminds us, *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.*

In Romans 10:1-4 Paul says, *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every*

God Does Not Count Our Righteousness

If a man went to Heaven on his own righteousness, he would have to be as holy and as righteous as God Himself. And no man except Jesus Christ has ever been that righteous. God is so righteous that no man can look upon God and live. In Exodus 33:18 Moses said to



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one that believeth.

Here Paul speaks of religious folks, zealous folks, but folks who do not know the way of salvation. They were trying to establish their own righteousness, not knowing that all **our righteousnesses** are as filthy rags in God's sight. How sad that multiplied millions of people throughout the world are trying to qualify for Heaven by living right, not knowing that their righteousnesses are as filthy rags in God's sight! They, like the people Paul wrote about, are going about to establish their **own righteousness**, not realizing that *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth* (Romans 10:4).

Heaven is not a reward for those who behave; it is a gift for those who believe.

My son Tony and his friend Melvin, who recently trusted Christ as Savior, have been trying to win an older man to Christ. The man keeps insisting that he has to get better first. Melvin, a brand new Christian, demonstrated great wisdom when he said, "Pastor Hutson, the man wants to get well before he goes to the hospital."

I said, "You're right, Melvin. A man doesn't get better to get saved; he gets saved to get better." No, God doesn't count our righteousness.

God Does Not Count Baptism

Contrary to the teaching of many when it comes to salvation, God does not count baptism. Baptismal regeneration was first taught by the Catholic church and later picked up by several other denominations. Those who think that God requires water baptism as an entrance into Heaven teach that the water washes away sins. The only thing that remits sins is the blood of Christ. Hebrews 9:22 says, *Without shedding of blood is no remission.*

If one had to be baptized to have his sins remitted, then what would he do with the sins he committed after he was saved? Suppose a man was baptized twenty years ago. Since then he has committed many sins. Remember, no one lives absolutely perfect and above sin. First John 1:10 says, *If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.* Now if baptism were necessary to remit sins, then this man would need to be baptized again in order to have remitted the sins he had committed since he had been saved. But if he is baptized the second time, then what will he do with the sins he commits after the second baptism?

Of course, if water were necessary to wash away sins, then he must be baptized again and again and again. Every time he commits a sin, he would have to be baptized again to have his sins washed away. If baptism is really necessary to remit sin, then a person not only should be baptized but he should get into the baptistry and refuse to ever get out lest he commit some sin after he gets out of the baptistry and die before he can get back into the water.

If baptism does remit sins, then Jesus Himself never remitted or forgave any man of his sins because the Bible plainly says in John 4:2, *Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples.* Suppose a man believes in Christ, confesses Him, repents, is baptized, and joins the church of the preacher who teaches baptismal regeneration. Then, according to this preacher, he is born again. After a few years, he goes back into sin and loses his salvation. Being disturbed about his condition, he goes back to the church and wants to be saved again. Does that same church insist that he be baptized again? No, they do not. If water baptism were necessary for salvation the first time, then how could he possibly be saved the second time without being baptized?

That is just one of the contradictions and inconsistencies of those who teach that water baptism is necessary for salvation.

If water baptism were necessary for salvation, then none of the Old Testament saints were saved, because baptism was not mentioned one single time in the Old Testament, and there is no record of a single individual ever being baptized before John the Baptist began baptizing converts in the New Testament. Those who argue that baptism is necessary for salvation teach one plan of salvation for those in the Old Testament and a different plan of salvation for those in the New Testament. But the Scripture teaches that all men are saved the same way in every dispensation or age.

Acts 10:43 says, *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.* Now notice very carefully: this was the message of *all* the prophets. The Old Testament prophets preached remission of sins by faith in Christ. The New Testament prophets preached remission of sins by faith in Christ. And those who preach the truth today are still preaching remission of sins by faith in Christ. When it comes to salvation, God did not count baptism in the Old Testament. He did not count baptism in the New Testament, and He does not count baptism today. The message today is the same message all the prophets witnessed: *that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*

What Does God Really Count?

It would be almost impossible to discuss in this article the multitude of things which people believe are necessary for salvation. The Roman Catholics believe you must receive the sacraments. The Seventh-

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day Adventists believe you must keep the old Jewish Sabbath, along with the other nine commandments. The Muslims think that if one dies defending his religion, he goes straight to Heaven.

The Scripture warns in Proverbs 14:12, *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.* And the Bible says in Isaiah 55:8, *Neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.* God's way of salvation is made clear in the Bible. Ephesians 2:8-9 settles the matter once and for all:

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of your selves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Here the Bible says it is not of ourselves: *Not of works, lest any man should boast.* It is by grace through faith. Grace is the undeserved favor of God. Someone gave this acrostic for GRACE:

God's
Riches
At
Christ's
Expense

Grace and works cannot be mixed. To add any works to grace destroys grace completely. It is all of grace, or it is not grace at all. Jesus Christ came to the earth and lived a perfect, sinless life. Hebrews 4:15 says, *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

Second Corinthians 5:21 says, *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.* While Jesus Christ was being crucified between two thieves, one thief said to the other in Luke 23:40-41, *Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done*

nothing amiss. The word *amiss* means "wrong." Even the thief on the cross recognized that Jesus was the sinless, spotless Son of God.

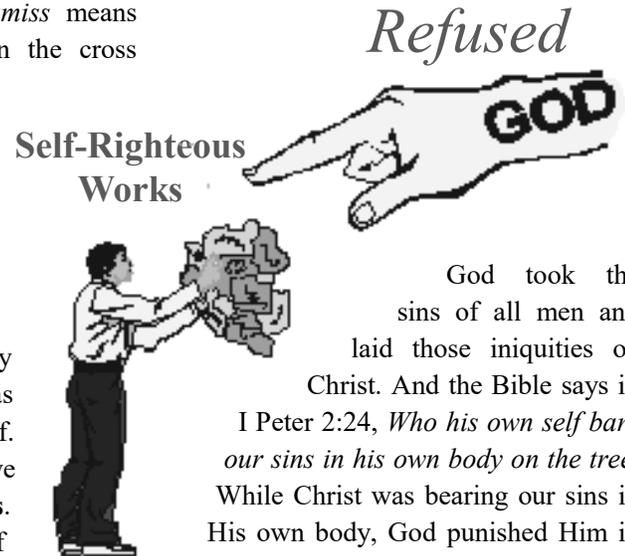
Before Pilate turned Christ over to the angry mob, he said in John 19:6, *I find no fault in him.* Jesus Christ was the only person who ever lived as righteous as God Himself. And when we trust Christ, we are given **His righteousness.**

That is the clear promise of the Bible in Romans 10:4 where the Scripture says, *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* God does not count **my righteousness**, but He does count the **righteousness of His Son.**

The Bible says in Romans 4:3, *Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.* And then the Scripture further promises in Romans 4:5, *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*

The only way anyone can ever be righteous enough to go to Heaven is by receiving **God's righteousness** by faith. Not only did Jesus Christ live a perfectly righteous life, but He died a substitutionary death. Two thousand years ago, God took every sin we ever have committed and all we ever will commit, and He placed those sins on Christ. Isaiah 53:6 says, *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity (sins) of us all.* And Titus 2:14 says, *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.*

**What
blessed truth!**



God took the sins of all men and laid those iniquities on Christ. And the Bible says in I Peter 2:24, *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.* While Christ was bearing our sins in His own body, God punished Him in our place to pay the debt we owe, so that when we die, we won't have to pay it. That's what the Bible means when it says in John 3:16, *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

The other day I received a letter from a dear Jewish friend here in Murfreesboro, who reminded me that it wasn't the Jews who killed Christ. Rather, he said, *"It was the Roman soldiers."* Of course, this dear Jewish man was both right and wrong. He was right when he said it wasn't the Jews, but he was wrong when he said it was the Roman soldiers. It was neither the Jews nor the Roman soldiers. It was God Himself.

The Scripture says in Isaiah 53:10, *Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin."* It was God Himself who made Him (Jesus) an offering for sin. Romans 8:32 says, *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* The Scriptures further explain in Romans 5:8, *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

The death of Jesus Christ on the cross was an

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expression of God's love for us. He loved us so much that He didn't want us to go to Hell, so He punished His Son in our place to pay the debt we owe so that we can go to Heaven on a free pass.

My beloved friend Dr. Rice used to say, "Every man who goes to Heaven goes on a free pass, but he who goes to Hell pays his own way." And then he would quote Romans 6:23: *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Before Adam and Eve ever sinned, God demanded the death penalty. He said in Genesis 2:17, *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* God's payment for sin is death, the second death in the lake of fire. Revelation 20:14 says, *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

If we are to satisfy the just demands of a holy God, we must go into Hell and stay there forever and ever; but Jesus Himself satisfied God's demand. The prophet said in Isaiah 53:11, *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.* Here the Scripture plainly states that God was satisfied with the payment Jesus made on the cross for our sins. He further showed that satisfaction by raising Jesus Christ from the dead and taking Him back to Heaven. If Christ had not accomplished what He came to do—that is, die for our sins—He would have never gone back to Heaven. But praise the Lord, He did the job!

While He was hanging on the cross He uttered seven things. The sixth utterance was, *It is finished* (John 19:30). Dear friend, you can count on it: it was finished. There is nothing else to do but to accept Jesus Christ by faith, to trust Him, to depend on Him.

The man was right: God does not count Wednesday nights. He doesn't count Sunday mornings or Sunday nights or

20% GOD's righteousness

80% OWN righteousness

N
O
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D

any other nights. God does not count our own righteousness. He does not count our good works. He does not count baptism or any other ceremony or ritual. He only counts one thing: the death of His Son, Jesus Christ. The Scripture plainly says in Isaiah 53:11 that He was satisfied with the sacrifice His Son made for our sins. If Jesus Christ said it was finished and God Himself said He was satisfied, then why can't we be satisfied with Christ's death and not add anything to it?

100% GOD's righteousness

A
C
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D

The only way to show that you are satisfied with Christ's death for your sins is to trust Him and Him alone for salvation. If you trust anything else, then it is evident that you are not satisfied with Christ and what He did at Calvary. If you trust Jesus Christ plus your baptism, then you are not satisfied with Christ: you must add to Him baptism. If you trust Jesus Christ plus your good works, then you are not satisfied with Christ: you must add to Him good works. If you trust Jesus Christ plus your church membership, then you are not satisfied with Christ: you must add church membership. If you trust Jesus Christ plus your heritage, then you are not satisfied with Christ: you must add your heritage.

Now, I am a church member. I have been baptized. I try to live right. I have been preaching since I was twenty years old. I travel every week of my life going from church to church throughout this country to preach the Gospel. As I dictate this

sermon, I am driving to Lowell, Indiana. Next week I will be in Wadsworth, Ohio.

But I do none of these things to be saved. My only hope of Heaven is the fact that Jesus Christ died for me. He paid my sin debt. I am trusting Him alone for salvation. I am not trusting my good works, my church membership, my baptism, or anything else. When we stand before God, the only thing that He will count is what His Son did at Calvary.

When the children of Israel were in Egyptian bondage, God sent plagues upon Pharaoh. Finally God said, "The firstborn in every house is going to die." But He gave the Israelites instructions to kill an innocent lamb and sprinkle the blood on the doorposts of the house. And God promised in Exodus 12:13, *When I see the blood, I will pass over you.*

He did not say, "When I see your church membership, I will pass over you." He did not say, "When I see your good life, I will pass over you." He did not say, "When I see your good works, I will pass over you." He did not say, "When I see your baptism, I will pass over you." No, no, no! He said, *When I see the blood, I will pass over you.* The only thing that counted with God was the death of the lamb.

And when it comes to salvation, the only thing that counts with God today is the death of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. If you are counting on anything other than Jesus Christ to take you to Heaven, then you are counting on something that God doesn't count. Won't you trust Christ today? If you are not absolutely sure that there was a time in your life when you knew you were a sinner and made a definite decision to trust Jesus Christ completely for salvation, then we urge you to trust Him now.

—Curtis Hudson

End

I have a question for you today. If you had the choice between hearing the truth that could save your life and change your world, or hearing what feels good even though the implications could destroy you or kill you, which would you choose?

It sounds really simple, when you think of it that way, but what many people do not realize is that every day they persecute people who are trying to save them. Every day they reject people who are trying to give them truth that will change their lives forever for the better, trying to show them true love. This love doesn't always feel like love. Sometimes real truth hurts, but in the long run, we ought to be grateful for it.

Let me give you an example. I have what doctors call an incurable disease. It causes weight gain, inflammation, stiffness, pain, digestive issues, diabetes, cancer, etc. You could tell me that my weight gain isn't my fault, that I should just submit to God's will, that I just need to try to get as comfortable as I can until I die. That might make me feel good. That might seem like I would bear no responsibility at all, but that I could just feel like a victim of circumstances; after all, it must be God's will that I am sick.

That would have been my stance on this subject a few years ago.

Before I go any further, I want to tell you what I am NOT saying.

1. I am not saying we should not submit to God's will.
2. I am not saying God cannot use sickness for my good.
3. I am not saying it is my fault or because of any sin that I got sick.
4. I am not saying I don't have enough faith.
5. I am not saying I will not need to

die someday.

6. I am not saying that if someone is too tired to fight, they are in sin.

That being said, what I AM going to tell you is this:

1. Sickness was not created by God, nor was it ever part of His plan or will.



2. Sickness and death came into being through the devil and through sin.
3. God can and does use bad things for good in our lives.
4. Jesus never told anyone that He could not heal them. He healed everyone He was able to who asked for healing in the time frame He was given to work with.
5. God's perfect will does not include sickness or death.
6. Jesus already healed you. We don't always see that healing manifested on this side of heaven. We need to receive what He has done in faith.
7. God has given us a free will.
8. Life and death are in the power of the tongue, so we must be careful what we say.

Now, at one point in my life, I wanted to be told that things were not my fault, that I could not do anything about it, but that I just needed to submit. In many ways, this is the easy way. In other ways, it is the hard way; but I do not

believe it is the right way.

God has mercy and compassion for me and He saw fit to bring people into my life who loved me enough to dare to tell me truth that didn't feel good. They told me I was making agreements with the enemy of our souls. They told me sickness is connected to my emotions. They told me that when I make my emotions line up with God's truth, my physical body would in turn line up with that. They showed me the truth so I could choose for myself what I wanted.

Did you know you were created in God's image? Did you know His DNA is on the inside of you? Did you know you are made up of three parts, just like He is? Spirit, soul, and body are the three parts that make us up. Each of those parts is made of three parts, too, and each of those parts connect with each other, and as a result, affects those parts.

What does this mean? This means, simply, that I cannot go through life bitter or angry without my health being affected. If I take care of that anger or bitterness, it releases my body to receive healing in that area, too. I cannot go through life afraid without it affecting my health, but if I repent for that fear and choose to trust God to protect me and I receive His love, my body can also heal.

The good news is that God always wants us to find healing. We do not always find that healing, but that doesn't mean it is His will. At first this might not sound like good news, especially if it means I need to change something. But in reality, this can give me so much hope if I receive the truth, even though it goes against all I was taught my whole life. That's the really scary part, isn't it? But let me ask you this, would you rather go through life believing a lie

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or would you rather be presented with the truth, come out of agreement with the enemy, and line up with God's truth? I know which way I want, even if it is scary and even if it hurts.

So, I have faced the reality of the fact that I have a disease that doctors say is incurable, but I was presented with the truth that Jesus said, "By My stripes you are healed." I was presented with the truth that my emotion of not feeling loved was not the truth, and I am choosing to make my emotions line up with God's Word, which says, *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.* What great truth is that? How much He loves me!

I am doing what I can to feed my body healthy vitamins and food and supplements and to feed my spirit with things that will be good for me. I still have trouble and suffer pain, but I believe what God said. He said I am healed. This is the truth. I am doing what I can for my body to heal, and I am feeling better and stronger. I believe someday I will see complete healing in my body, even though the facts say it is not evident yet.

There are others who are in remission of this same disease which doctors say is incurable. When a human says it is incurable, let us remember to go back to God's Word and allow Him to heal us from within. —Norma Miller

End

A Willing Servant

—By Andricus

Thank you, Jesus, for forgiving me. Thank you for your redemptive work on Calvary's cross. Thank you for loving me when I couldn't love myself. Thank you for defeating me in my rebellion, conquering me in my sin, winning my heart, and capturing my mind. Thank you for being my hope and my best friend. Thank you for welcoming me into your presence, working on me, reshaping me, and molding me. Thank you for providing for my family, shielding and guiding me and all your people.

Thank you for my pastor; build him up where he is torn down, and strengthen him where he is weak. Thank you for every church door that opens up in your Name, the name above all names. I pray have mercy on all your people.

Thank you for giving me the privilege of being your servant. I cannot go back and I will not go back. Continue to allow the message and gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to be spread across the world. You are so

deserving of our praise.

When I thought I was garbage and full of guilt and didn't want to live, you thought I was worth saving and worth fighting for. When I had a mindset of "I'm going to do what I want," you still were right with me. When I wasn't a friend to you and was ashamed to be with you, you were still a friend to me, always right by my side loving me unconditionally.

You encouraged me to go on, and I'm forever grateful. Help me never to play church again. Forgive us of our many sins.

I will never apologize for being serious about my faith, because Jesus was serious when He died for all of our sins. Continue to do what only you can do, King Jesus.

God, we know you are still on the throne, always have been, and always will be. Have your way, Lord. Thank you for the blood of Jesus, our resurrected King who will reign forever.

Don't Strike!

Gentleness often wins when harshness fails. There is a story told of a philosopher who was walking along a road one day when he saw a young man vainly trying to get a calf through a gate. The man pulled the calf and failed. Then he tried to push it, and he also failed. He was angry by this time and was ready to thrash the calf, when a gentle voice behind him said, "Oh, don't strike it." The speaker came forward, put his finger into the calf's mouth and led it through the gate while it contentedly sucked his finger. Whether we are dealing with animals or people, gentle ways are often the best. —Author Unknown

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As the world continues to turn its back on God, we want to take a look at what the future holds according to the One who is the Beginning and the End—God! We hope you enjoy and benefit from this series, courtesy of Middletown Bible Church. Follow along, fill in the blanks, and look up! May we all be ready for the return of Jesus Christ!

You will need a Bible for this lesson.

Let Thy Kingdom Come!

For a long time people have dreamed of a better world. They have hoped for and longed for a world that would be free from the problems of war and crime and hunger and disease. The Bible teaches that a better world is coming. After Jesus Christ returns to the earth, He will set up His Kingdom and He will rule over all the earth. What will this Kingdom be like? How will conditions on earth be different? What will life be like in the future Kingdom?

1) Christ will be King over all the world.

When Christ rules over the earth, He will not rule over just part of the earth. He will rule over all of the earth: "And the LORD shall be King over _____ the _____" (Zechariah 14:9). According to Daniel 7:14, who will serve this King? (circle the correct answer):

- a. Some of the people and some of the nations
- b. Most of the people and most of the nations
- c. All of the people and all of the nations
- d. None of the people and none of the nations

Yes, Christ will be King over "the whole earth" (Daniel 2:35). There will be a worldwide kingdom. Those who live in Africa and those who live in North America and those who live in Asia will all have the same King! Jesus Christ will be President of the World!

The capital of the United States is Washington, D.C. The capital of Russia is Moscow. Can you think of the capitals of

other countries? What city will be the capital of Christ's Kingdom? In Isaiah 2:3 we learn that J _____ will be the capital. Jesus will rule as King from this city. Even today, Jerusalem is a very important city. If you were to look at a globe of the world, you would see that Jerusalem is at the center of three important continents: AFRICA, EUROPE, and ASIA.

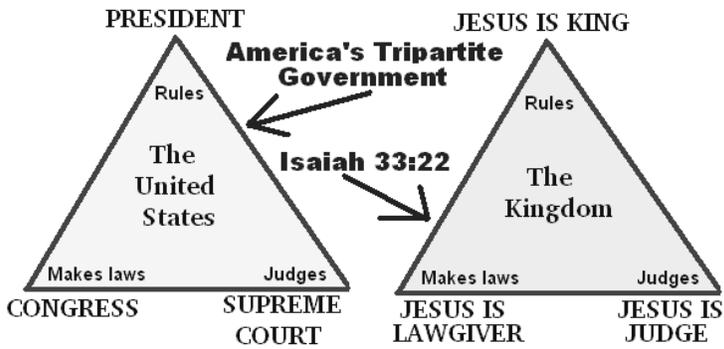
And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:3)

2) Christ will be the perfect Ruler.

The government of the United States has three branches:

1. The Legislative Branch (THE CONGRESS);
2. The Executive Branch (THE PRESIDENT);
3. The Judicial Branch (THE SUPREME COURT).

The CONGRESS passes laws. The PRESIDENT, as the nation's leader, guides our nation, upholds the Constitution and serves as the chief commander over all the branches of the military. The SUPREME COURT makes sure that the laws are being carried out and interpreted correctly, in light of the Constitution, etc. (It is not the job of the Supreme Court to make laws.) In the Kingdom age, Jesus Christ will be the SUPREME COURT, the CONGRESS and the PRESIDENT all in One Person: "For the LORD is our _____, the LORD is our _____ the LORD is our _____" (Isaiah 33:22).



He is the perfect Judge, the perfect Ruler or President, and He will make perfect laws! Three functions will be perfectly executed by one Person!

3) Christ will rule in perfect fairness and righteousness.

There are many things wrong in our world today. There are rulers who are dishonest and unfair and at times even cruel. Sometimes innocent people are punished and guilty people are allowed to go unpunished. Sometimes laws are made that are unfair. Sometimes people get away with doing what is wrong or even what is against the law. Can you think of other wrongs in our world today?

In the Kingdom age, that which is wrong will be made right and that which is crooked will be made straight. The King will not be an imperfect, sinful human being. The King will be the perfect, sinless, holy Son of God. The King will have perfect wisdom and understanding (Isaiah 11:2-3). He will do that which is RIGHT (righteousness—Isaiah 11:4-5) instead of that which is WRONG. He will be a RIGHTEOUS KING who will rule in a way that is fair and just and right (Jeremiah 23:5).

The world has never had a perfect Ruler, but Jesus Christ will be a completely perfect King. Will He allow wrong to be done in His Kingdom? _____ Will He allow crime? _____ Will He make unfair laws? _____ Will He let innocent people be punished? _____

4) There will be peace on earth.

Is there peace on earth today? _____ Can you think of two countries that are fighting each other somewhere in the world today? Many people would love to live in a world where there is no more fighting and no more killing.

When the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) comes to set up His Kingdom, there will be no more war. "He maketh wars to _____ unto the end of the earth" (Psalm 46:9).

And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Isaiah 2:4

5) There will be one and only one religion on earth.

Today, there are hundreds of religions in the world. Can you think of the names of some of these religions? There are all kinds of different temples and shrines and churches and synagogues throughout the world. Men have all kinds of different ideas about who God is and what God is like.

In the Kingdom age, things will be much different. The Lord Himself will be ruling on the earth and teaching men the truth about God (Isaiah 2:3). No false religions will be allowed. The only religion that will be allowed is the worship of the one true God. Everyone on earth during the Kingdom must worship the King! What will happen to people who do not come to Jerusalem to worship the King? How will the King punish them (Zechariah 14:17)?

Today, there are people in many parts of the world who do not know the good news about Jesus Christ. This is why missionaries are sent forth. During the Kingdom age, things will be quite different. Will missionaries be needed to tell people that they need to know the Lord (Jeremiah 31:34)?

_____ Will they all know the Lord? _____

In Isaiah 11:9 we read that "the earth shall be _____ of the knowledge of the _____, as the _____ cover the _____."

How much of the ocean floor is covered by water? _____

During the Kingdom, how much of the earth will be covered with the knowledge of the Lord? _____ Just as the oceans are filled with water, so the earth will be

filled with the knowledge of the Lord!

Today, in our country, it is not usually necessary to tell people who the president is. Most people already know who he is. During the Kingdom age, people will know who the King is and they will not need to be told.

6) Satan will not be around to cause trouble.

In Revelation chapter 20, we learn that the Kingdom age will last for 1,000 years (see verses 4-6). This is why the Kingdom age is often called THE MILLENNIUM (the word simply means "a period of a thousand years").

Where is the devil during these 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-3)? _____

The devil will be put in prison during the entire millennium! Will 1 Peter 5:8 be true during the Kingdom age? _____.

Satan has been around causing trouble since the days of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-6). The world has never known a time when the devil has not been around. But the Kingdom age will be different. Satan will have no influence upon the earth.

7) The barren lands will become fruitful.

Today there are many areas of the earth that are very dry and barren. There are vast deserts in the world today that stretch out for hundreds of miles. These areas are so dry that very little can grow.

When Christ rules over this world, even the earth will take on a new look! In Isaiah 32:15 we learn that the wilderness (desert) will be a F_____ F_____. This new look is also described in Isaiah 35:1-2. How can deserts blossom and bloom? A desert cannot become fruitful unless there is plenty of water. Will God provide plenty of water for the deserts (Isaiah 35:6-7)? _____

8) Sickness and disease will be cured.

Sickness and disease are very much a part of our world today. Our hospitals and nursing homes are filled with people who are suffering with sickness and disease.

Will the King be able to take care of the problems of disease? Is there any disease that He is not able to cure (see Matthew 4:23-24)? _____

The person who lives in the Kingdom will not say, "I am S _____" (Isaiah 33:24). In that day the deaf shall hear and the blind shall see (Isaiah 29:18). Some of the amazing healing miracles that will take place are described in Isaiah

35:5-6. During the Kingdom, people will enjoy wonderful health.

9) People will live on and on, even for hundreds of years.

If you were to meet a man who was a hundred years old, would you call him an old man or a child?

In Isaiah 65:20, we are told that a child will be 100 years old. Today we would probably consider a nine-year-old to be a child. If you take a nine-year-old child and multiply his number of years by 8 ($8 \times 9 = 72$) you will have an age of 72 years, which today is considered to be an average lifespan (see Psalm 90:10). If the hundred-year-old child described in Isaiah 65:20 were to live to be 8 times as old, then he would be 800 years old ($100 \times 8 = 800$)! In Isaiah 65:22, we are told that the days of people will be like the days of a TREE. Did you know that many trees live to be hundreds of years old? People living in the Kingdom will live on and on and on.

The oldest recorded age of a man is that of Methuselah. How old was he when he died (Genesis 5:27)? _____ There will be people in the Kingdom who will live all the way through the Kingdom (all the way through the 1,000 years). In the Kingdom, Christ will sometimes punish sinners with the death penalty (see Isaiah 65:20). However, if people follow Christ's laws and don't get in trouble with the King, then they will live on and on. The only people who need to fear death are those who get into trouble with the King.

10) There will be a change in the nature of animals.

This amazing change is described in Isaiah 11:6-9 and 65:25.



Wild animals will no longer be wild. Ferocious beasts will no longer be ferocious. Meat-eating animals will no longer eat meat (compare Genesis 1:29-30). Today what would happen if you put a wolf and a lamb together? What will happen then (Isaiah 11:6)?

These wild animals will be so gentle that even a child can be with them and not have to be afraid of ever being harmed. What would happen today if a young child were to play near the home of poisonous snakes

(see Isaiah 11:8-9)?

The story is told of a Russian zookeeper who made this boast, "In our zoo here in Moscow, the wolf dwells with the lamb in the same cage, something which you Americans do not have." But what he failed to mention was that a new lamb had to be put in the cage every day!

A man living in New Mexico once heard a strange sound coming from the front room. Something seemed to hit something else, and then his little child would laugh with glee. Again he heard the sound of hitting, and then the child would laugh again. Finally he glanced into the room to see what was going on. He found that the child would hit his hand against the screen door. The door would fly partly open. A large rattlesnake outside the door would jump at the door. The door would shut with a bang. The child would again hit the screen with his hand and it would fly open a few inches and hit the snake.

The child had no fear whatever of the beautiful snake which kept striking at the screen. Only the thin screen protected the child from the deadly venom of the snake. The father's blood nearly froze with fear that the screen might break and let the snake harm the child. How different is this verse in Isaiah 11:8! This verse is talking about a time when a parent will have no fear if his innocent child is playing with a snake. In the Kingdom age there will be no danger of being hurt or harmed by animals.

Jesus Christ will be the world's King tomorrow, but He wants you to make Him your King today! **The Lord wants to rule your life today.** He wants to tell you what to do and how to live. He wants to be on the throne of your life.

Many people do not want God to be their King. They say, "We will not have this Man to reign over us" (see Luke 19:14). These people want to be their own king!

END



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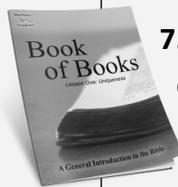
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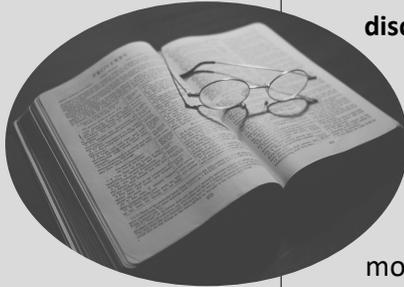


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February—Sam Troyer Testimony—Hear how God has changed Sam’s life.

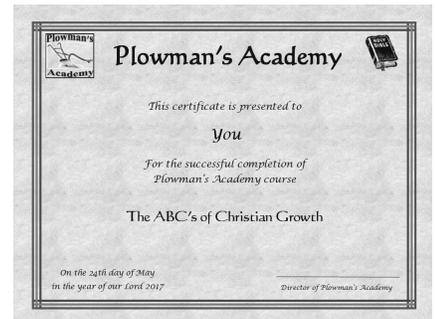
December—Witnessing: Are we supposed to keep the truth of the gospel to ourselves, or are we to share it with others all around us? How do we tell others about the truth and love of Jesus Christ?

UPCOMING DISCUSSIONS

- ◆ **Sunday Night, April 02:** Ephesians 1
- ◆ **Sunday Night, May 07:** Ephesians 2
- ◆ **Sunday Night, June 04:** Ephesians 3



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March

Discovering Your Love Style 1, 2

Counselors Milan and Kay Yerkovich offer helpful insights on learning how you show love to others, particularly your spouse, and explain what steps you can take toward loving like God does and breaking negative patterns to create a deeper, richer marriage.

How to find Eternal Life 1, 2

(1) Everyone wrestles with loneliness, emptiness, and guilt. Pastor Greg says those needs can only be filled by a relationship with Christ. (2) When we feel emotional pain, we tend to isolate and insulate ourselves. Pastor Greg helps us understand how to let down our defenses and let God in.

Do You Have a Grudge With God?

Have you ever been resentful, angry, pouting at the way God is running our universe? Find out the four ways many of us become offended at God. We ask, "Where is God?" That happened to John the Baptist. We all have this tendency. In this message, Adrian Rogers tells you what causes it and how to deal with it.

April

When You Don't Like Yourself 1, 2

Do you have a problem with YOU? There are many reasons why people don't like themselves. Pastor Jeff Schreve, teaching from Galatians 5:13-15, will help you discover the causes and cures for a bad self-image and poor self-worth, painting a fresh portrait of yourself that is biblical and true. Erase that bad self-image and bring you biblical understanding to allow you to love yourself again.

Doing Right When You've Been Done Wrong 1-3

Chuck Swindoll teaches from James 5:7-12. We have all experienced the hurt of mistreatment and misunderstanding.

Such hurts come in a variety of packages: an intolerable working situation, domestic conflicts, a parent, child, or relative who takes advantage of us, a friend who turns against us, a neighbor who entertains untrue opinions of us, and dozens of other painful circumstances. Our natural tendency is to retaliate by returning evil for evil—to “get back”—to hold a grudge and become bitter in our souls. God has a better idea! James reveals this alternative in the passage we’re considering within this message. James not only tells us what to do in place of retaliation; he tells us how to do it.

May

The Simplicity of Salvation

Pastor Adrian Rogers explains that God makes the way to be saved so simple, even a little child can understand. So why do some theologians make it sound complicated? Listen to this account that makes it clear how a person can know beyond any shadow of doubt that he or she has been saved.

How You Can Be Sure

Pastor Adrian Rogers teaches from Acts 10:33-40. Many Christians go through their daily walk with a cloud over them—a cloud of doubt. They believe God, trust in Jesus to forgive their sins, but they just don't FEEL God's love for them.

Dealing with the Difficult Child 1, 2

Do you struggle to connect with one or more of your children? Maybe she's strong willed and every day is a battle, or maybe you don't share his interests or hobbies. Dr. Tim Clinton joins Dr. Dobson in the studio to talk about the “extra effort kid” and what you can do to strengthen that difficult relationship.

Our Mate's Three Driving Needs

Are you loving your mate as God loves you? Tim and Darcy Kimmel define love as “the commitment of my will to your needs and best interest, regardless of the cost.” They explore the three driving inner needs in marriage: security, significance, and strength.

I am an Amish man; we have much history,
In Switzerland, France, Holland and Germany,
Religious freedoms were denied in those nations,
So some fled to America to escape the situation.

I am an Amish man; my roots run deep,
Blood was spilled in this heritage that I reap,
My ancestors suffered persecution for Christ's sake,
Many were burned alive while tied to a stake.

I am an Amish man; today we are free,
To worship our God in this land of liberty.
It would be a huge loss and bring us shame,
If we ever forget about from where we came.

I am an Amish man; plus I'm your brother,
All of us humans need to respect one another,
While striving to be friendly, meek and kind,
And loving God with our heart, soul, and mind.

I am an Amish man; some think we're odd,
By the way we live and die to serve our God.
But God does want us to be a peculiar people,
There's more to faith than a tall church steeple.

I am an Amish man; it is a great challenge,
To live a simple life that is perfectly balanced,
And to always let our lights shine before men,
Until our Lord returns in the clouds once again.

I am an Amish man; we do love to farm,
And work with nature without doing it harm,
It's fun to have a few horses and some cows,
Along with our chickens, goats and the sows.

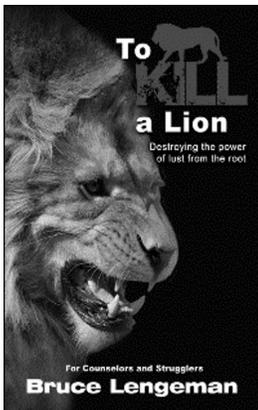
I am an Amish man; our life is grand,
As we sweat and toil to live off the land,
It's kinda hard to explain just exactly how,
Our food tastes better in the sweat of our brow.

I am an Amish man; it brings us great joys,
To have families with lots of girls and boys,
They make life as interesting as it can be,
While watching them grow up to be just like we.

I am an Amish man; we are very blessed,
But would we be faithful if put to the test,
To give up everything we have for our Lord,
Instead of trying to defend yourself with a sword?

I am an Amish man; sometimes we're sad,
Things have changed a lot since I was a lad,
This world is moving at a much faster pace,
And it would like to drag us into its rat race.

I am an Amish man; after we are gone,
Others will reap from the seeds we have sown,
And hopefully Christ will take us home with Him,
To a place where there won't be any more sin.



Do you Struggle With LUST or other SINS and addictions?

To Kill a Lion, written by Bruce Lengeman, is designed to help men find the roots of their sexual addiction. The theme is, "Men cry out, 'I know it is wrong, but why can't I stop!'" The book is for both counselors and strugglers. *To Kill a Lion* will help men understand their own sexuality and what makes it operate "out of alignment" with God's design. You'll learn why it is healthy to be sexual as a man, but in a

pure and Godly way. Though this book was not written for women, many are reading it and getting understanding of things they never knew about sexuality.

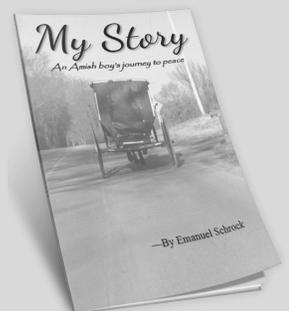
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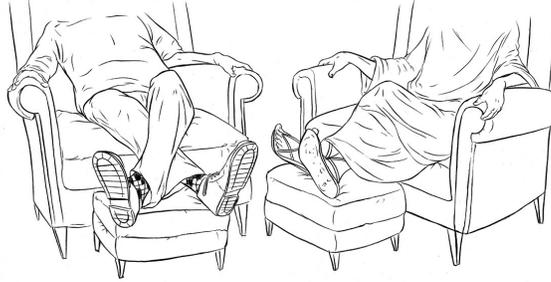


hand — the Living, Breathing, and Eternal Word of Almighty God. Throughout the ages of time, these words of eternal life have changed the lives and direction of men and women in a moment, and they will continue to do so for ten billion eternities to come! The writer of Hebrews explains the Word of God as being *quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow*” (Hebrews 4:12).

But then I suddenly realize the cold, harsh facts! The multitudes don't want God's truth. They'd rather eat vomit on the floor than enjoy food from the King's table. My heart begins to sink and a real, deep sorrow begins to flood my soul. "Oh Lord, it's nearly unbearable—I feel so helpless...so powerless! They must know that God loves them and wants to save their soul from black rotten sin and the stench of burning hell."

Two thousand years ago, Jesus looked down over the city of Jerusalem and proclaimed: *O Jerusalem...how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!* (Matthew 23:37).

O reader, if God has led you to these words of mine, and you have not yet found your way to God, let me quickly point you to the way by sharing the cry of Jesus. He said, *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me* (John 14:6). It's not the Amish way that saves, nor is it the Baptist way; these are only labels that



men have given themselves. Jesus is the way! He is the only way.

The Bible states, *For He (God) hath made Him (Jesus) to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him* (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The unlimited, matchless grace of God, through Jesus Christ, is drawing near to you and wants to remove your sin-stained, rotten, stony heart with a brand new one. Listen to the words of God – read it out loud: *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put*

within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Will you accept the Lord's invitation and let Him give you a new heart? Go ahead. You can take a moment and talk with Him; **He's right next to you waiting.** Our great God, Creator, and Sustainer of the universe wants to hear you talk to Him like you would talk to your best friend. He wants you to let Him take all your sins and your old heart and cast them as far as the east is from the west. He's ready to hand you a new heart and the gift of eternal life – life without end.

See Romans 6:23 and Ephesians 2:8-9. The free gift of eternal life can be received right where you are sitting. You don't have to beg or yell, but just ask in faith, believing that God meant what He said: *For **whosoever** will call upon the name of the Lord, **SHALL** be saved* (Romans 10:13).

I hope you said yes to God's invitation. If you did, Jesus makes a promise to you: *He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, **hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life*** (John 5:24). —by Joe Keim

The 6,000 Year Old Race

By Joe Keim

This morning, the Lord has been speaking to my heart.

Joe, all those who have been born of the Spirit are in a race, a race that began 6,000 years ago in the Garden of Eden.

In this race, your top goal is to pass the *Message of Faith* on to the next generation. Do not get distracted by the world and all of its temporary possessions. Do not get distracted by the runners next to you. Keep your eyes on the goal!

As I thought about this very important task at hand, I couldn't help but think of those before me - Abel, Noah, Moses, Ruth, Joseph, Paul, Lydia, and so many others who passed the *Message of Faith* on until it got to you and me.

In order to pass the *Message of Faith* on, many of our forefathers hid in dungeons, were beheaded, sawn in two, drowned, or burned at the stake. They refused to get out of the race or drop the *Message of Faith*. Their goal was to pass it on so it would get to you ...to me.

This challenges me to do the same. This causes me to challenge you. We must not lose focus. We cannot give up. It is the most important thing we do in life.

The apostle Paul wrote: *let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*

May we all be able to say, with Paul, at the end of our race: *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.* (2 Timothy 4:7). —by Joe Keim

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What is Your Life?

—By Joe Keim

Through His Spirit, God wrote: *For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away* (James 4:14).

When I was young, I thought fifty years of age was old – very old; I thought it would take a long time to get there. But as I write, I must tell you, I am just seven days away from turning fifty. It all happened so quickly!

Just like a vapor that rises and evaporates from a tea kettle, so our life appears, and then it is gone and vanished away. This fact is not often recognized until one hits forty-five to fifty years of age. It is then that many go through what's referred to as a "mid-life crisis." Signs that one is experiencing a mid-life crisis include mood swings, depression, shift in sleeping patterns, the blaming of others, and thoughts of death and dying. Much of this is brought on when people begin to realize that their children are raised, they have everything they need in life, and the only thing that really matters is a relationship with God and preparation for eternity.



King Solomon in his day had everything this world could offer. Not only was he the richest man alive, but he was also the most popular and well-known king in all the land. He ruled and reigned as the wisest and most powerful man on earth. And yet, in all his worldly splendor and glory, he cried out, *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* Soon, he thought, "I too will die, and my body will turn back to dust. Then, someone else will take over my kingdom and riches."

Solomon eventually concludes, "*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments:*

for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:7, 8, 13).

Regardless of where you are in life, I urge you to take a long look at the minute hand on the clock! Notice that time continually moves forward with full force toward eternity—that incomprehensible, breathtaking moment when each one of us will come face to face with God, our Creator and Judge. Try as hard as we may, we cannot stop the clock, and it refuses to turn back.

Multitudes of living, breathing souls are wandering the earth in search of true meaning and purpose. Many are caught up in their own pride, manmade religion, social media, technology, money, and the passing fads of this world. Many are utterly lost and blinded to the truth. Isaiah 53 states it this way: *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way.*

I think about the fact that we have the truth; it provides all the answers in life and beyond, and it's right here in my

Continued
page 15