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Signs of the New Birth

—Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899)

There was a lady came into the inquiry-room, this week, and wanted to have me tell her if she was a Christian. I told her I would be very happy to tell her if I knew, but I did not know. I would have liked to have had time to tell her how she might

know, how it was her privilege to find out whether she was a child of God or not; because I think the Scripture is very plain about it and does not leave us in the dark, if we are determined to find out whether we have been born of the Spirit or not. This afternoon, I want to call your attention to nine new things, if we are born of God.

The first is a new heart: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"—born from above, born of the Spirit. Three different ways the Scripture has put it—born again, born from above, born of the Spirit. Now this new birth is not the work of man; it is the work of God. God alone is the author of life. A great many people tell us that this is a great mystery; that they do not understand about this new birth. It is a

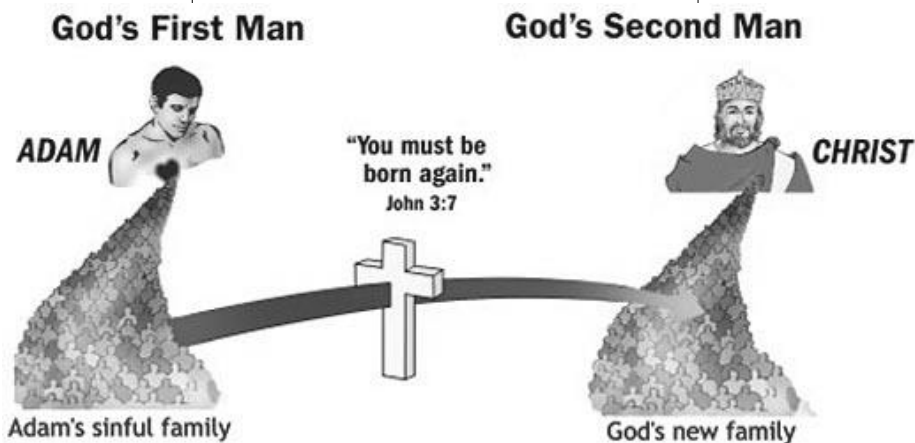
mystery, they say. Well, there is no doubt about that; Christ says so himself. We will admit it is a mystery; but, nevertheless, it is one of the most important there is in the Word of God. I have no doubt but every person in this

another. A man may be a leper and cover up his leprosy; but he is a leper still. A man may be a beggar and put on a new suit of clothes; but he is a beggar still.

We are told here, in the 1st Epistle of John, 5th chapter and 4th verse, what will happen if we are born of God: "For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Now if we overcome the world, it is a sign that we have been born of God; but if we are all the time fighting and striving to overcome it and being defeated, it is a good sign we have not been born again of the Spirit. For in the 6th chapter of Galatians, 15th verse, it says: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

Now forms and ordinances are very



assembly has met some one who has been changed by the Spirit of God: they have been born again; they have received a new heart. They were not the same that they were once.

It was not a mere profession. It was not their being confirmed on Easter Sunday, or being baptized in some church on some Sabbath morning; it was not their partaking of the communion. These are all right in their place, but they are not the new birth. Let us keep that in mind. Profession is one thing; conversion is

good; but they do not make a new creature. If we are born of God, then we have power, and will overcome the world. Now I find there are a great many people that, the moment we touch on regeneration and the new birth, say: "I have heard people tell the day and the hour when they were converted; but I never had that experience. I cannot point to a day or an hour when God met me, and when old things passed away." Therefore they are in great trouble, for fear they have not been converted. Let me say, right here, that it is of little account when or where it took place, and you can soon find out whether it has taken place or not.

Some people are converted like the flashing of a fireball; with others it is like the rising of the morning sun, and you cannot tell the minute it was light. But if they have passed from death unto life, they can soon tell by reading the Word of God whether they have been born again or not.

So it is not necessary for us to be able to tell when or where this birth took place; but it is very important that we should be able to say that we are new creatures in Christ Jesus; that we have been born of the Spirit, because Christ gave no uncertain sound about this thing. He said, Except a man be born again, except he be converted, except he become as a little child, he cannot see the kingdom of God. We have to come like little children into his kingdom. So it is very important to search the Scriptures, and see whether we have been born again or not.

The next new thing we get is a creation.

It says in the 5th chapter of 2nd Corinthians, 17th verse: "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

There was a man converted when we were in New York. He was an awful hard case; he had been drinking a great many years. He was a Frenchman, came from Canada. He had been brought up from his childhood to drink; and he never saw any harm in it till he drank his family all



away from him; and there he was, a wanderer. He came into one of the meetings, and some friends talked with him, and got down and prayed with him. The moment he began to ask God for mercy, God blessed him right there. When he got up, he did not know himself. He was a new man in old clothes. He has held on ever since; his appetite for strong drink is gone; and he has become a new creature in Christ Jesus. It takes away the love we have for this world, and the desire for sin.

We cannot receive the spiritual blessings

that God wants to give us, if we are not born of the Spirit. It says in 1st Corinthians, 2d chapter, 14th verse: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned?"

The moment you begin to talk to some people about spiritual things, they say, "I don't understand them;" and it is a sign they have not been born of God. I can

tell, when I am preaching, that they do not understand a word I say. The Word of God is all a myth to them, it is all foolishness to them. They do not believe the word of God. But the moment a person is born of the Spirit, he receives the Word of God into his heart, and so gets strength. *The natural man receiveth not spiritual things.*

Then, the next thing that we get with this new birth is a new nature. We become partakers of the Divine nature.

If we have a nature that is Godlike and Christlike, a nature that longs for God and spiritual things, it is an evidence that we have been born of the Spirit. The old nature may remain, does remain, but we get a new nature; we serve God, and we cannot serve him without that nature. This new nature must have a new God. Everyone in your neighborhood has some god; if not the God of heaven, some idol that has been made into a god. We have new hopes, new aims, new desires, new aspirations then. Old things have floated away; and we have something better. The new

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things are just as separate from the old as day from night. The moment we get that new nature, then the warfare begins.

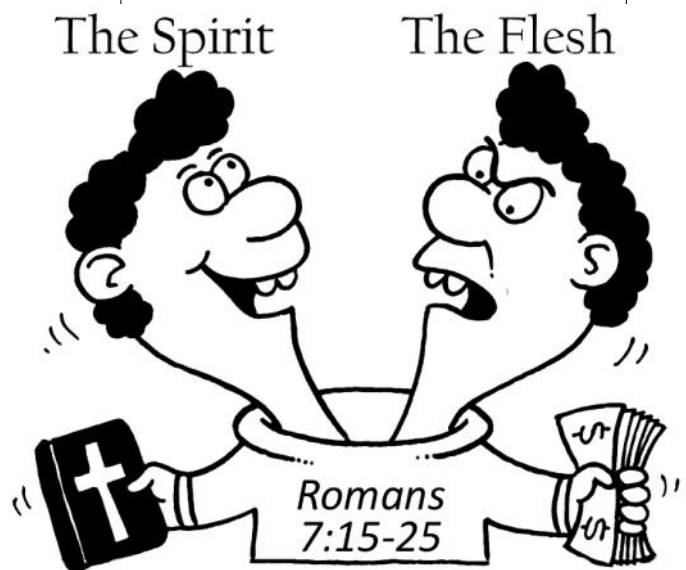
I never had any conflict with myself till I was born of God. I had a pretty good opinion of myself, till I got a new nature. But then the warfare began, and it has gone on ever since; though, thank God, He can give me the victory. If a man says he is not at war with himself, it is a pretty good sign he has not a heavenly nature. When you find a man with a bad nature, a mean, contemptible disposition, a mean temper, and he is praying to Christ to overcome it, you may know that he has become a partaker of the Divine nature, and he can get strength from God to get victory. I have more respect for a woman with a mean, contemptible nature, who is trying to overcome it, than I have for those who are naturally pretty good and do not want to become any better. You do not know the struggle some of these people have that you look down upon. They come into this world with a mean, contemptible nature; and Christ has overcome them, so that you can get along with them. I do not know how we could live with a good many people, but for this grace of God. The natural man lives for himself; but when he is born of God, he lives for God; he gets outside of himself, and God calls out the noblest part of his nature. Then we are following in the footsteps of our Master, and we receive his Spirit. We live like him, and talk like him, and act like him; and then we are in harmony with God, and live as God would have us live.

In the 7th and 8th chapters of Romans, you find the conflict going on between these two natures. Paul had that conflict. He was not freed from the old nature when he was converted. Read those chapters carefully, and you will find that he had the same conflict with the flesh that most of us

have. Often we do the very thing we hate.

Perhaps we have let our tempers get the better of us, and then have had to apologize. We ought to reckon ourselves dead, not say we are dead. Some have an idea that the old man is dead and cast out, and they are not going to have any more trouble with him. Satan so blinds us. If the old man were dead, we would not have to watch him; and yet, over and over again, Christ tells the disciples to watch. You do not know when the old nature will come up, like a tiger let loose. If the old nature were dead, you would not have to watch it. Now if we keep the old man crucified, as we ought to, and put on the new man, we can walk in the light of the world; we need not have any dark ways. But we have to keep our eyes on the Master, and watch and pray. Then it is all the time peace and joy. You know it is impossible for a man or woman to walk in darkness that follows Christ.

I want to call your attention to this one truth of the two natures; and I would like to ask if you would take time this week, any of you who are troubled about your conversion and look up this subject. The first ten years of my Christian experience, I had a good many conflicts with myself; and the question often came up, have I been converted? If so, how is it that my old temptations and desires come back? How is it I long sometimes to do the things I once used to do? I found,

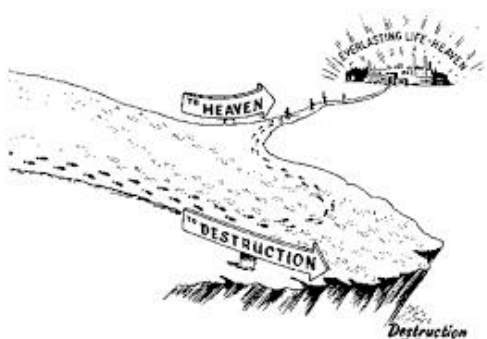


after I had been a Christian ten years, that God never took away my old nature. God gave me a new one, and the two remain. If I don't keep down my old man, he will come up and lead me into bondage and darkness. The question is, Have you got the new nature? Have you become a partaker of the Divine nature? If you have, it is a sign you have been born again.

The next thing we get is a new name; and God gives us a name. When we are brought into the family of God, the household of faith, we get a new name. We are no longer lost sinners, but the sons of the High God. We are made perfect in Christ, clothed in his garments; we are made sons and daughters of God. We have a birthright, and it is a name. We are not only born into the family of God, but adopted. When we are born into the family of God, and become partakers of his nature, we take his name. The only way to get into that family is to be born in; we cannot educate ourselves in or work our way in. It is the work of God that takes us in. No man, until he is born of God, can say really that he is a Christian.

Another thing we get is the new way. We do not walk in the same way as before we were converted. A man or woman who professes Christianity and yet goes on in the old way has not been born again. When we are born again, We are born in a new way; and Christ is that way himself. We give up our way, and take his. The old way leads to death, the new way to life everlasting. In the old way, Satan leads us; in the new way, the Son of God leads us. We are led by him, not into bondage and darkness, but into the way of peace and joy. A great many people tell us that they do not believe in the Old Testament, or in much of the New; but they believe in the Ten Commandments, and the Sermon on the Mount. Some

say this because they have heard others say it; and I have met people who could not tell what they believed, except that it was what their ministers believed. They have no time to read the Word of God, though they have time to read all the novels of the day. Let me say to you people who believe in the Sermon on the Mount and nothing else, that we are told of a broad and a narrow way; the broad that leads to death, and the narrow to life eternal. Which way is yours, my friend? Are you in the narrow way that leads into life eternal, or in the broad way that leads to death?



There are a great many that do not want to give up the broad way, because they like their own way; they do not like to give up the amusements of the world.

There are plenty of churches in the broad way, for you can get almost any kind of preaching now-a-days. They want men that will tell them everything is going on smoothly, that everybody will be saved, and the Lord is going to take them all into heaven. They can find that kind of preaching. A good many say: "I don't like that narrow, bigoted man that preaches the narrow way; I believe we will all be swept into heaven, whether we want to be or not." But some shake their heads and say they think they will be put into purgatory, and be punished perhaps a million of years. I would rather bow to Scripture. I can find no chance of repentance in the grave. But even if it were so, why not repent here?

Is sin so sweet that you cannot give it up? The broad way is filled with unhappiness. God does not want us to do that which

will bring ruin upon ourselves and upon others. If we live as God would have us, we mount higher and higher every year. That is taught in the Word of God. How is it with those who serve Satan?

There is no praying down the broad way, though they may say prayers. They do not believe in conversion. Look down the two ways and decide to-day which way you will take.

With the new birth, we also get a new tongue. There is, perhaps as much trouble caused in the world by slandering as by drinking. That question was brought up at the dinner table to-day and we came to the conclusion that there were about as many dark and miserable homes resulting from slander as from drink. If a person is born of God, he has a new tongue, and he will not go out and slander people.

If you love a person, you cannot slander him. Many a man has gone to his grave with a broken heart, because he has been slandered and lied about, perhaps by those who professed to be friends. When we are born of God, we get a new tongue, and there will be no slandering with it. The tongue that is blaspheming to-day may be praising God tomorrow. We get a new tongue when we get a new heart; and then we get a new song.

No one can sing the song of the redemption till he has been born again. I do not know but a man can sing a lie as well as speak it. Now, though I have heard "Rock of Ages," perhaps once a day for twenty years, I could not start it; but I can sing in my heart just as well as Mr. Sankey, or anybody else. I cannot get it through these thick lips, but it is in my heart; and, by and by, I want to sing around the throne the song of Moses and the Lamb. I want to sing of him who redeemed me with his precious blood.

Every true church is a singing church. Such a church won't hire three or four women to do their singing; they burst right out singing. And by and by you will

see them on resurrection morning, coming from their graves singing. This is the only thing we have heard of that they do in heaven.

The next thing we get is new food. If a man is converted, he is not going to live on the New York Ledger, and dime novels. I believe that one of the things that are poisoning the people is this miserable stuff. If we are born of God, we want better than that. When we have read the Bible through three or four times—and when we have done that, we will find it has spoiled nearly every other book for us.

Another thing that a man gets is new friends. I thank God every day for the friends he has given me. I cannot go into a city or town but the best people in it gather around me. Thank God for Christian friends. My friends, if you want true friends, you want the friends of Jesus Christ. When I received Christ, I thought I got a great blessing. I thought it was the best gift I ever received; and I used to wonder if he would continue that precious to me. But I can say without exaggeration that he has been a thousand times more to me than I thought he would be. If you want to know how to become a Christian, just receive Christ; and you will get everything in him.

If you will let him into your heart, he will bless you and save you. This is the new birth, the new creation, the new nature. Have you got them?

Then the new name—have you got that?

Can you say you are a child of God?

Have you got into the new way?

Have you got the new song in your mouth?

Are you living on this heavenly food?

Have you got new friends?

Romans 10:13 says: *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

END

150 Questions Answered From the Bible, Part 3 of 3

101. **What is the seventh commandment?** The seventh commandment is "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:14)
102. **What does the seventh commandment teach us?** The seventh commandment teaches us to be pure in heart, language, and conduct. (I Corinthians 7:2; Ephesians 4:29; 5:3-4)
103. **What is the eighth commandment?** The eighth commandment is "Thou shalt not steal." (Exodus 20:15)
104. **What does the eighth commandment teach us?** The eighth commandment teaches us to respect the property of others and to be honest and industrious. (Proverbs 20:4; Romans 12:11, 17; Ephesians 4:28; I Thessalonians 3:10-12; I Timothy 5:8)
105. **What is the ninth commandment?** The ninth commandment is "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." (Exodus 20:16)
106. **What does the ninth commandment teach us?** The ninth commandment teaches us to tell the truth. (Proverbs 14:5; Zechariah 8:16; I Peter 3:16)
107. **What is the tenth commandment?** The tenth commandment is "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's." (Exodus 20:17)
108. **What does the tenth commandment teach us?** The tenth commandment teaches us to be content with what we have. (I Corinthians 13:4; Galatians 5:26; Philippians 4:11; Hebrews 13:5)
109. **What use are the Ten Commandments to us?** They teach us our duty and show us our need of a Savior. (Deut. 29:29; Joshua 1:7-8;

Galatians 3:21-26; James 2:10)

110. **What is prayer?** Prayer is thanking God for what He has done and asking Him for things which He has promised to give. (Psalm 10:17; John 16:23; Phil. 4:6; I John 5:14)
111. **In whose name should we pray?** We should pray only in the name of Christ, our intercessor. (John 16:23)
112. **What guide has Christ given us to teach us how to pray?** Christ has given us the Lord's Prayer. (Matthew 6:9-13)



113. **Repeat the Lord's Prayer.** "Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." (Matthew 6:9-13)
114. **How many petitions are there in the Lord's Prayer?** There are six petitions in the Lord's Prayer. (Matthew 6:9-13)
115. **What is the first petition?** The first petition is "Hallowed be thy name." (Matthew 6:9)
116. **What do we pray for in the first petition?** We pray that God's name may be honored by us and all men. (Psalms 67:1-3; 145:1-13; Isaiah 64:1-2; Romans 11:36; II Thessalonians 3:1)
117. **What is the second petition?** The second petition is "Thy kingdom come." (Matthew 6:10)

118. **What do we pray for in the second petition?** We pray that the gospel may be preached in all the world, and believed and obeyed by us and all men, and that God's Kingdom may be established on earth. (Psalms 67:1-3; 68:1; Romans 10:1; II Thessalonians 3:1; Revelation 22:20)
119. **What is the third petition?** The third petition is "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10)
120. **What do we pray for in the third petition?** We pray that men on earth may serve God as the angels do in heaven. (Psalms 103:20-22; 119:34-36; Acts 21:14)
121. **What is the fourth petition?** The fourth petition is "Give us this day our daily bread." (Matthew 6:11)
122. **What do we pray for in the fourth petition?** We pray that God would give us all things needful for our bodies and souls. (Proverbs 10:22; 30:8; I Timothy 4:4-5)
123. **What is the fifth petition?** The fifth petition is "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." (Matthew 6:12)
124. **What do we pray for in the fifth petition?** We pray that God would pardon our sins for Christ's sake and enable us to forgive those who have injured us. (Psalm 51:1; Matthew 6:14-15; 18:21-22, 35; Luke 11:4; Romans 3:24-25)
125. **What is the sixth petition?** The sixth petition is "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." (Matthew 6:13)
126. **What do we pray in the sixth petition?** We pray that God will keep us from being tempted and will keep us from sin when we are tempted. (Psalm 19:13; 51:10; Matthew 26:41; I Corinthians 10:13)

Turn Page...

127. **What is an ordinance?** An ordinance is a way of remembering Christ's death and resurrection. (Romans 6:3-10; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)
128. **How many ordinances are there in the Bible?** There are two ordinances in the Bible. (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)
129. **What are the two ordinances?** The two ordinances are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. (Matthew 26:26-28; 28:19)
130. **Who appointed these ordinances?** The Lord Jesus Christ appointed them. (Matthew 26:26-28; 28:18-19)
131. **Why did Christ appoint these ordinances?** Christ appointed these ordinances to distinguish His disciples from the world and to comfort and strengthen them. (Acts 2:38-41; Romans 6:4)
132. **What sign is used in Baptism?** The sign used in Baptism is water. (Matthew 3:6, 11, 14-17)
133. **What does Baptism mean?** Baptism is an outward sign of our union with Christ and our decision to follow Him. (Romans 6:3-11; Galatians 3:27)
134. **In whose name are we baptized?** We are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)
135. **What is the Lord's Supper?** The Lord's Supper is a remembrance of

Christ's death for us on the cross and a looking forward to His return. (Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)

136. **Who is to partake of the Lord's Supper?** All those who have trusted Christ as their Saviour and are living for Him may partake of the Lord's Supper. (1 Corinthians 11:28, 29)
137. **What are the elements used in the Lord's Supper?** The elements used in the Lord's Supper are bread and the fruit of the vine. (Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-25)
138. **What do the bread and the fruit of the vine symbolize?** The bread symbolizes Christ's body which was crucified for us, and the cup symbolizes His blood which was shed for us. (Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20)
139. **Did Christ remain in the tomb after His crucifixion?** No, Christ rose bodily from the tomb on the third day after His death. (Matthew 16:21; 28:1-6; Romans 6:4; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4)
140. **Where is Christ now?** Christ is in heaven, interceding for us. (Acts 1:9; Eph. 1:19-21; Heb. 4:14-16-7:25)
141. **Will Christ come again?** Yes, Christ has promised to return to take us to be with Him. (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11)
142. **When will Christ return?** No one knows when Christ will return. (Matthew 24:42, 50; 25:15)
143. **What are the two parts of the**

Second Coming? The Second Coming consists of the Rapture and the glorious appearing. (1 Cor. 15:51-52; Revelation 19:11-16)

144. **What will happen at the Rapture?** At the Rapture Christ will bring to life all Christians who have died, change those who are living, and give them an incorruptible body. (1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:15-17)
145. **What will happen at the glorious appearing?** Christ will return to earth, remove all the wicked, and establish His Kingdom. (2 Thess. 1:7-10; Revelation 19:11-16)
146. **What becomes of man at death?** The body returns to dust, and the soul goes either to heaven or hell. (Genesis 3:19; Romans 6:23)
147. **What will become of the wicked in the Day of Judgment?** The wicked shall be cast into the lake of fire. (Psalm 9:17; Revelation 20:11-15)
148. **What is hell?** Hell is a place of dreadful and endless torment. (Matthew 25:41, 46; Mark 9:43; Luke 16:19-26; Rev. 20:10, 13-15)
149. **What will become of the righteous?** The righteous shall be taken to heaven. (Matthew 5:11-12; 25:46; John 10:28; 14:1-3; Colossians 3:4)
150. **What is heaven?** Heaven is a glorious and happy place, where the saved shall be forever with the Lord. (John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:17; Rev. 7:15-17; 21:3-4, 22-27; 22:1-5)

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| 1. Missions | 4. The Holy Spirit |
| 2. The New Birth | 5. God the Father |
| 3. The Family Altar | 6. Jesus Christ |



Persecution of Christians

What is Christian Persecution?

Christian persecution is any hostility experienced from the world as a result of one's identification as a Christian. From verbal harassment to hostile feelings, attitudes and actions, Christians in areas with severe religious restrictions pay a heavy price for their faith. Beatings, physical torture, confinement, isolation, rape, severe punishment, imprisonment, slavery, discrimination in education and employment, and even death are just a few examples of the persecution they experience on a daily basis.

According to The Pew Research Center, over 75% of the world's population lives in areas with severe religious restrictions (and many of these people are Christians). Also, according to the United States Department of State, Christians in more than 60 countries face persecution from their governments or surrounding neighbors simply because of their belief in Jesus Christ.

Theology of Christian Persecution

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Matthew 5:10-12

Believers around the world stand strong, despite the many obstacles that they face. What are some of the things that we can learn from their faith? There is something about hardship that allows us to know God deeply. When times get really tough, we discover more about who God is and

how He works. Christians who have endured persecution for their faith know this well.

There are no easy answers for why God allows his followers to face suffering. However, the lives of persecuted Christians reveal that even when things



look out of control, believers can rest secure, knowing that God is still in control. He is able to give courage, peace, and even joy to stand strong through the storm. It is through these storms that believers discover God's love in new and powerful ways.

One ministry that reaches out to persecuted Christians has a study with six lessons to help persecuted Christians.

1. Sometimes you need to build yourself a cell.

Be still, and know that I am God (Psalm 46:10).

One Chinese church leader who spent 23 years in prison once said this to Christians who did not face persecution: "I was pushed into a cell, but you have to push yourself into one. You have no time to know God. You need to build yourself a cell, so you can do for yourself what persecution did for me—simplify your life and know God." It is vital that we spend time with God, to grow in Him, so we are prepared to stand strong in the face of persecution.

2. God keeps secrets

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9).

There have been countless stories of persecuted Christians who have died without seeing the fruits of their labor. However, God knows all that has been and all that is to come. Our labor is not in vain; it is in His hands.

3. Weakness is a direct path to power.

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong (2 Corinthians 12:10).

An Egyptian Christian reflected on the way he was treated when he converted to Christ: "In great suffering you discover a different Jesus than you do in normal life.... Pain and suffering bring up to the surface all the weak points of your personality. In my weakest state, I had an incredible realization that Jesus loved me even right then." True empowerment does not come from human means, but through Christ alone. It often takes being at our weakest point to realize this.

4. Overcoming is greater than deliverance

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21).

Persecuted Christians, no matter what country they are from, do not ask us to pray that persecution would end, but rather ask us to pray that they stand strong through the persecution. They do

Continued on next page

Persecution, continued

not wish to be delivered from the persecution, but rather ask us to pray that they would be able to overcome the trials that they are facing in a way that is honoring to God.

5. Extreme hurt requires extreme forgiveness.

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots (Luke 23:34).

A Christian widow from Iran said:

“I only had hatred in my heart for my enemies who had murdered my husband. But one day a miracle happened. God taught me how I could love my enemies... I had been praying for this, even though on the deepest level I didn't want it to happen. Gradually, through a process of ups and downs, God answered

this prayer.” The only way we can get through extreme hurt is by forgiving people as Christ did.

6. Prayer is the ultimate fellowship.

Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body (Hebrews 13:3).



Many persecuted Christians often feel isolated and alone, since they are unable to fellowship with other believers. However, prayers from Christians half a world away have brought the same amount of encouragement that fellowship would have for these persecuted

Christians. Prayer is vital—not only as a direct line to God, but as a way to encourage our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world.

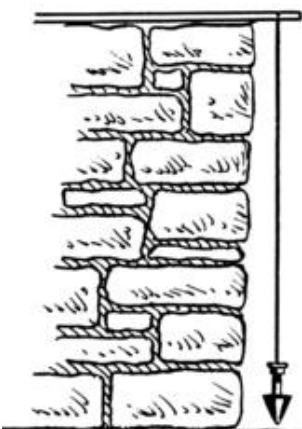
1 Corinthians 12:26 tells us that we are one body—when one member suffers, we all suffer. When one member is lifted up, we all rejoice. Persecuted Christians and Christians in the free world are not two separate entities, but rather are one body.

The persecuted church needs the free church to support them, and most importantly, to lift them up in prayer. The church in the free world learns lessons from the persecuted who have stood strong in the face of persecution. Christ is the head of the body and uses the church (both free and persecuted) in unique and powerful ways.

The article was adapted and used with permission from Open Doors, a ministry that helps persecuted Christians around the world.

The Plumb Line of Judgment

—Rich Carmichael



A Bible prophecy teacher whom I greatly respect recently wrote: “The America I grew up in is gone. It is dead. And there is no

hope of its resurrection.” Do you agree with that statement? Is there any hope for the U.S.?

I understand the pessimism (or realism) concerning the U.S. Without any doubt, this nation is in open rebellion against the Lord and His ways. Not only is our society marked by the love of money, the love of self, the love of pleasure, and other sins such as immorality, impurity, anger, pride, and

disobedience, but we are guilty of the innocent blood of over 57 million unborn babies through legalized abortion and also guilty of violating the sacred institution of marriage by legalizing same-sex marriage.

While all sin is terrible and of great consequence, these latter two sins are especially disconcerting as both are in direct violation of the very essence of God's character and of His creative order. In regard to abortion, children are His gift (Psa. 127:3), woven together in the mother's womb by His hand (Psa. 139:13-16). He is a God of life, and His call to mankind is to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28). As a God of justice who cares deeply for the vulnerable and innocent, the shedding of the blood of the unborn is a sin most grievous to Him.

In regard to the sin of homosexuality and same-sex marriage, at the very heart of God's creative order is the truth that “*God created man in his own image, in the image of God*

created he him; male and female created he them” (Gen. 1:27).

He then clearly established marriage as between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:18-25). These are vital truths echoed by Jesus Himself (Mark 10:6-9). Because these truths are so foundational to God's design and purposes, whenever mankind deviates from them, the consequences are profound. In fact, according to the teaching of the Apostle Paul, the prevalence of homosexuality is an ominous marker that a culture is openly rejecting the Lord and is under His wrath (Rom. 1:18-32).

God's Judgment

The U.S. and every nation that defies the Lord should be humbled by the truth that the Lord makes nations great and He destroys them (Job 12:23). He does not allow a nation to go on indefinitely in sin. Even His own

continued next page

chosen people suffered the consequences of their rebellion and fell into captivity.

God's heart, of course, is not to bring destruction. Consider the encouraging story of Jonah in which God worked to bring the wicked city of Nineveh to repentance in order that the people might escape His imminent judgment. In fact, it is the nature of the Lord to give warnings before judgment so that people may repent and judgment be averted.

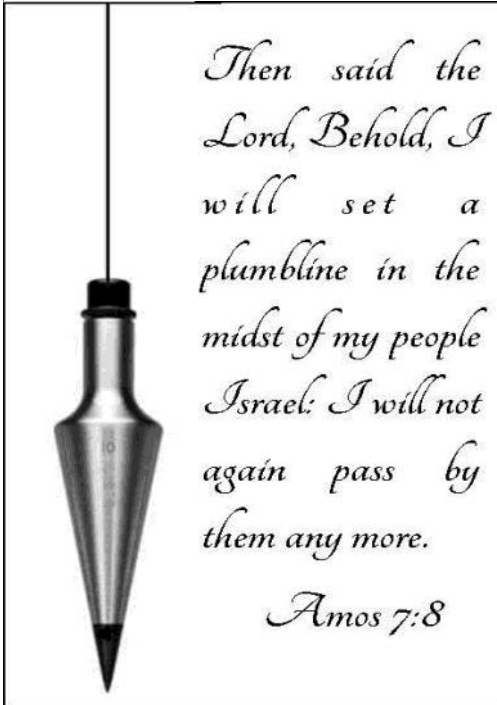
In keeping with this, the Lord has in recent years given the U.S. any number of warnings, including natural disasters, acts of terror, financial woes, cultural breakdown, political dysfunction, and the loss of prominence and might. Along with this are prophetic warnings calling America to repentance. Sadly, however, there has been little response at this point.

Lessons from Amos

The message of the prophet Amos is one that our nation would do well to take to heart. The message begins with a series of proclamations of judgment on various nations and cities because of their transgressions. The prophet then focuses on the punishment awaiting Israel, whose sin is even greater because of the privilege she had enjoyed as God's chosen nation. The Lord had sent remedial judgments to bring her to repentance (Amos 4:6-11), but she would not return to Him. He then gives this solemn word: "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (4:12).

Even with the declaration of certain judgment, Amos yet calls the people to repentance. "Seek the Lord, and ye shall

live; lest he break out like fire. ..." (5:6). "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph" (5:15).



At the same time, Amos has strong words for those who are complacent: "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion...that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches,," those who "... anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph" (6:1-6).

Judgment Delayed Through Intercession

When the Lord showed Amos one picture and then another of devastating judgment approaching the land, Amos interceded both times and the Lord relented (7:1-6), but the third picture was final: "I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more" (7:7-

9).

In other words, the people had fallen so far from God's standard that no further reprieve would be granted; and, indeed, horrible judgment did come and the nation was taken into captivity. Thankfully, however, Amos' message ends with the Lord's glorious promise of the restoration of Israel! (9:11-15).

Is There Any Hope?

So back to the original question: Is there any hope for the U.S.?

While some people may argue no, and others argue yes, one truth is clear: If there is any hope, the only hope is in wide-scale repentance and returning to the Lord. While the promised end-time outpouring of the Spirit and revival is coming, that does not necessarily guarantee the U.S. will be part of it. The Lord has been incredibly patient with this nation, but without repentance, judgment may suddenly be upon us.

Of course, judgment begins with the household of God (1 Pet. 4:17), and He calls His people to lead the way in turning back to Him (2 Chr. 7:14).

Given the lukewarm state of many in the church, it is up to those who still have any sensitivity to the Lord to lead the way in humility, prayer, and repentance. As we turn our attention fully toward Him, may He have mercy upon our land and send the revival that is so desperately needed!

2 Chronicles 7:14 says: *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

END

What Is a True Relationship?

A true relationship is based on two people putting 100% of their trust in each other. Anything less than 100% trust is not a perfect relationship. As much as that statement is true, it is also true that perfect relationships are not build overnight. It takes months,

sometimes years. And lastly, let us not forget that years and years of trust can crumble in a moment of time. So let us stay focused today and truly value and appreciate the trust that has been built between me and God, between me and my spouse, and between me and my friend(s). Hold on to it! Consider it precious! and value that trust like you do your own life. —Joe Keim



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.

True Peace And False Peace

Today there are many people who are crying out for peace. They would like to see an end to war and an end to fighting.

War is not a very pleasant subject. Most people do not like to think about soldiers dying on battlefields or bombs being dropped on cities that are filled with men, women, and children. Most people long for the day when there will be no more war and when there will be truly "peace on earth."

The Bible tells us that someday the Lord Jesus Christ will be KING and He will rule this world from the city of Jerusalem (see Isaiah 2:1-5). He will be called "the PRINCE OF P _____ (Isaiah 9:6). When Jesus is KING OF THE EARTH will there be any war (Micah 4:3)? _____ Jesus Christ will make "wars to _____ unto the end of the earth" (Psalm 46:9).

Yes, peace will come to planet earth; but is Jesus Christ ruling on earth today from Jerusalem? _____ Do we have peace on earth today or do we have war on earth today? (see Matthew 24:6-7)

Today the PRINCE OF THIS WORLD is the devil (John 16:11) and we know that

he is **not** the PRINCE OF PEACE! The Bible tells us that there will be peace on earth, **but not yet!** There can be no true and lasting peace without the PRINCE OF PEACE!

Weakness Leads to War; Strength Leads to Peace

Most people do not want to fight unless they think they can win. Only a foolish person would go into a battle that he knows he will lose. Would it not be foolish if you tried to box against the heavyweight champion of the world?

Goliath was a CHAMPION (see 1 Samuel 17:4), and he was so BIG and so TALL and so STRONG that no one wanted to fight him! The men of Israel thought that Goliath would win and that they would surely lose, so they did not dare to fight. Why did David fight the giant? Did David think that Goliath would win? _____ Did David believe that his God was greater and stronger than mighty Goliath? _____

People do not like to fight against a strong army. The enemy will be afraid to attack if they know the opposing army has greater power than their own. Joshua had an army that had the power and might of God behind it. God gave Joshua and the Israelites many great victories.

It would be wonderful if all the nations of the world would destroy all their weapons and decide to live in peace, but we do not live in this kind of a world. We live in a sinful world described by James in James 4:1-2. We live in a world where people want to have what is not theirs and they are willing to fight and kill to get it.

Suppose the nations of the world were to meet together and decide to disarm and destroy all weapons, but two of the nations just pretend to do this. Instead of destroying their weapons, they secretly begin making even more. Soon all the nations of the world will be weak and these two will be strong. These two nations can then attack and conquer any country they wish. No one would be strong enough to stop them. Disarming will not lead to peace unless every country does it.

It would be nice if we could live in a world where there is no stealing. But is this the kind of a world we live in? Suppose the President of the United States were to make this announcement:

Fellow Americans, from now on we are all going to live in peace with each other. Let's all leave the doors to our houses unlocked and let's leave the doors to our cars unlocked. Let's all

Continued on next page

decide to love each other and never steal what is not ours.

If people really started leaving their houses unlocked, do you think other people would take advantage of this? Fifty people in your neighborhood might try to be honest and try to follow the President's advice, but all you need is one crook to ruin it for everyone!

REMEMBER, WE ARE NOT IN HEAVEN YET!

There is enough stealing that goes on even when people lock their doors! Just think how much stealing there would be if people made it easy for thieves to break in and steal! Should a country make it easy for another country to invade and to conquer?

It Pays To Be Prepared

In Nehemiah chapter 4, the children of Israel were building the wall around the city of Jerusalem. Why did they need a wall? Was it for decoration? Was it to keep young children from wandering away? No, **the wall was for protection and for defense**. The Jews knew that they were surrounded by enemies and they wanted to build a wall to protect their city.

Their enemies did not want them to succeed in building this wall. Was the enemy planning to come and attack (Nehemiah 4:11)? _____

What weapons did they have (Neh. 4:13)

Were they PREPARED to fight? _____

As it turned out, the Jews did not even need to fight (see Neh. 4:15). The enemy knew that they were PREPARED and ready to fight and so they did not dare to attack them! The Jews then went back to work building the wall. Were they still ready to fight (Neh. 4:16-18, 21)? _____

A long time ago, a similar situation took place. In the days of Esther there were

people who were afraid that the entire Jewish race would be destroyed, and they had good reason for thinking this would happen (see Esther 3:13). But if the people had believed their Bibles, they would have known that this was impossible. God had promised that the nation Israel would never cease from being a nation (Jeremiah 31:35-37; 33:24-26). If the Jewish race had been destroyed, then God would have been a liar!

The Coming Holocaust

The word "HOLOCAUST" means a thorough (complete) destruction. It refers especially to destruction by fire (to be burnt whole, to be completely burned up). Many people are afraid of a nuclear holocaust. They fear that someday nuclear weapons will be used and mankind will be completely destroyed by the nuclear fire and fallout.

There is a time of great destruction coming upon planet earth and millions of people will die, but this destruction will not be caused by man. This will not be a destruction caused by the Russians, by Iraq, by China, or by any other country. This will not be a destruction caused by certain countries having a nuclear war. This destruction will be caused by GOD HIMSELF!

God is going to send great judgments and plagues upon the earth during the Tribulation Period. This will be a DIVINE HOLOCAUST (caused by God) as a result of man's sinfulness. The entire unsaved population of the world will be removed from the earth by the time God is finished with His work of judgment.

The book of Revelation tells us about these judgments and plagues that will come upon the earth in the future. For example, in Revelation 6:8 we are told that the f_____ part of the earth will be killed. This is one fourth of the world's population!

In Revelation 9:15 we learn that the

t _____ part of men will be killed. This is mass destruction!

You can read about more of these plagues in Revelation chapters 8 and 9. When the Lord Jesus Christ returns at the end of the Tribulation, there will be another great destruction and slaughter of the enemies of God (see Revelation 14:14-20; 19:11-20).

In the days of Moses, God sent some terrible plagues and judgments on the land of Egypt. You can read about these in the early chapters of the book of Exodus. In the future, God will send plagues and judgments not just on the land of Egypt, but on the entire world. Those who are caught up into heaven will be kept from this terrible time of trouble that will come upon all those who remain on the earth (Revelation 3:10). What happened to the land of Egypt long ago is a miniature picture of what will happen to the entire world in the Tribulation Period. God's holocaust is coming!

Man should not be feared. Russia or China or some other country should not be feared. The Bible indicates in Ezekiel chapters 38-39 that God will take care of that great power from the north (RUSSIA and its allies). Satan is not the one we should fear. The One that we should really fear is GOD HIMSELF (see Matthew 10:28). If we really want to have PEACE, then we need to make sure we have PEACE WITH _____ (Romans 5:1).

The most terrible war of all is when a person is at war with God in his heart. The worst and most destructive kind of fighting is when a person fights against God in his heart. The Bible clearly teaches that an unsaved person is an ENEMY of God (Romans 5:10). The Lord Jesus died on the cross so that this war could be over (Romans 5:6-10).

Those who believe on Christ and those who have received Christ as their Savior have peace with God

Turn Page...

(Romans 5:1). Those who reject Christ and refuse to trust Him are still at war with God. If they refuse God's mercy, there is nothing left but God's judgment and wrath (John 3:36 and 2 Thess. 1:8-9).

Have you surrendered your life to the living God or are you still fighting against Him?

False Peace

Today there may not be peace in the world, but Christ has made it possible for us to have peace in our hearts (John 14:27). The Bible teaches that before Christ comes to the earth there will be a false "PEACE MOVEMENT." There will be people saying "P_____ and SAFETY" (1 Thess. 5:3) when there is no real peace and no real safety at all!

Long ago, people cried "PEACE, PEACE," but was there really peace (Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11)? _____ Don't be fooled by this false peace movement.

Many people want peace on earth, but remember this: **only God can bring real peace to planet Earth!** Only God can bring real peace to the human heart. Even

in the middle of this sin-troubled world, God says that the believer can have PEACE (John 16:33). **Wherever Christ rules, there is peace.**

If I let Christ rule in my heart, then I can have peace in my heart. Someday Christ will rule on this earth and at that time there will be PEACE ON EARTH (see Isaiah 9:6-7 and Luke 2:14)!

Be Ready For Attack

These are days when we need strong soldiers for Christ. The enemy would love to attack us. Satan would love to find us weak and unprepared for his attacks.

Is the devil roaming the earth looking for those that he may attack (1 Peter 5:8)? _____

Does God want us strong or weak (Ephesians 6:10)? _____

Does God want us to disarm or does God want us to be armed (Ephesians 6:11-17)? _____

Does God want us to be ready to stand against the enemy? _____

Who is the real enemy (Ephesians 6:12)? _____

When believers stand strong in the power of God, what does the enemy do (James 4:7)? _____

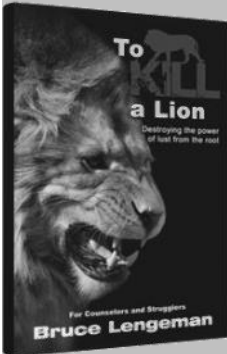
God has never lost a battle! Those who stand with Him stand in complete victory! He has even promised to do the fighting (Exodus 14:14; Nehemiah 4:20)! God is more powerful than any nuclear weapon.

Romans 8:31 says: What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

The answer of course is:

No One!

Do you struggle with lust or other sins and addictions? \$15



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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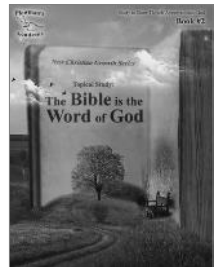
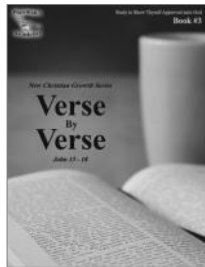
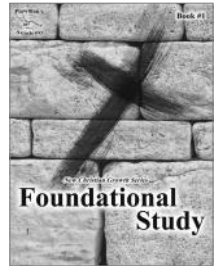
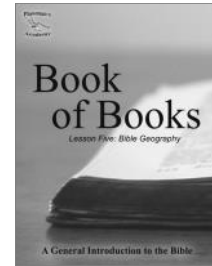
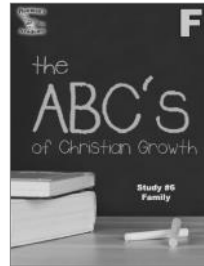
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Do you believe in angels? If you've never given much thought to this topic, you need to approach it with an open mind. The first thing to do is to have a reasonable grasp of the main teaching in the Bible. Here is a Bible study about angels.

Angels:

- ◆ Created by God and Christ: Nehemiah 9:6; Colossians 1:16.
- ◆ Worship God and Christ: Nehemiah 9:6; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:6.
- ◆ Are ministering spirits: 1 Kings 19:5; Psalm 68:17; 104:4; Luke 16:22; Acts 12:7-11; 27:23; Hebrews 1:7, 14.
- ◆ Communicate the will of God and Christ: Daniel 8:16, 17; 9:21-23; 10:11; 12:6, 7; Matthew 2:13, 20; Luke 1:19, 28; Acts 5:20; 8:26; 10:5; 27:23; Revelation 1:1.
- ◆ Obey the will of God: Psalm 103:20; Matthew 6:10.
- ◆ Carry out God's purposes: Numbers 22:22; Psalm 103:21; Matthew 13:39-42; 28:2; Revelation 5:2.
- ◆ Carry out God's judgments: 2 Samuel 24:16; 2 Kings 19:35; Psalm 35:5, 6; Acts 12:23; Revelation 16:1.
- ◆ Praise God: Job 38:7; Psalm 148:2; Isaiah 6:3; Luke 2:13, 14; Revelation 5:11, 12; 7:11, 12.
- ◆ The law was given through their ministry: Psalm 68:17; Acts 7:53; Hebrews 2:2.

Angels Announced:

- ◆ The conception of Christ: Matthew 1:20, 21; Luke 1:31.

- ◆ The birth of Christ: Luke 2:10-12.
- ◆ The resurrection of Christ: Matthew 28:5-7; Luke 24:23.
- ◆ The ascension and second coming of Christ: Acts 1:11.
- ◆ The conception of John the Baptist: Luke 1:13, 36.

The Activities of Angels

- ◆ Are subject to Christ: Ephesians 1:21; Col 1:16; 2:10; 1 Peter 3:22.
- ◆ Will carry out Jesus' wishes: Matthew 13:41; 24:31.
- ◆ Will come with Jesus at His second coming: Matthew 16:27; 25:31; Mark 8:38; 2 Thessalonians 1:7.
- ◆ Know and delight in the gospel of Christ Ephesians 3:9, 10; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 1:12.
- ◆ Minister as a result of prayer: Matthew 26:53; Acts 12:5, 7.
- ◆ Rejoice over every repentant sinner: Luke 15:7, 10.
- ◆ Guardian angels protect God's "little ones," Matthew 18:10; but this does not exclude this ministry being extended to all of God's children: Psalm 34:7; 91:11, 12; Daniel 6:22.
- ◆ Belong to different "orders." For example, the "seraphs" mentioned in Isaiah 6:2 are not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. See also 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Peter 3:22; Jude 1:9; Revelation 12:7.
- ◆ Are not to be worshiped: Colossians 2:18; Revelation 19:10; 22:9.
- ◆ Do not slander people: 2 Peter 2:11; Jude 1:9.

- ◆ Are wise: 2 Samuel 14:20.
- ◆ Are mighty: Psalm 103:20; Are holy: Matthew 25:31; are elect: 1 Timothy 5:21; are innumerable: Job 25:3; Hebrews 12:22.

Messengers

The Greek word for angel is angelos and means "messenger." The word "messenger" is occasionally used of people, as in Luke 7:24 where it refers to John the Baptist's "messengers." But generally, angelos refers to a separately created order of heavenly beings.

1. Angels live in God's presence Isaiah 6:1-4.
2. Angels act on God's behalf for the benefit of men and women
 - A. Angels protect: Matthew 18:10; Hebrews 1:13, 14.
 - B. An angel came to Hagar's assistance: Genesis 16:7-14.
 - C. An angel strengthened Elijah after his contest on Mount Carmel: Kings 19:1-8.
 - D. An angel told Joseph to escape with Mary and Joseph into Egypt: Matthew 2:13.
 - E. An angel rescued Peter from prison: Acts 12:7.
 - F. An angel stood by Paul in some of the critical moments of his life: Acts 27:23.

Satan, an Angel:

It seems that Satan is a fallen angel: Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 25:41; 2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 12:9.

END

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heaven will not only be enlarged, but will also intervene on their behalf, whereby multitudes will eventually be saved. These are the unnamed and unheralded heroes who are often counted as obstacles to the elite circle of leaders in the churches, lest they mar their high status.

What often outwardly appears as abject failure in the lives of these people is, in fact, very often the ravages, the spoils, and the “fog of war” surrounding intense ongoing spiritual battles, wherein they are often storming heaven on behalf of whole people groups. God will often allow these men and women to be battered and assaulted by the enemy’s vile and deceptive tactics, while at the same time advancing His kingdom through the same, impacting the nations (“. . . as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”). He places these men and women in the same category of authority in which the Father had placed Him, for they have proven themselves faithful, following their commission. Not unlike elite soldiers, these have been groomed through trial and travail, and always stand at attention to their Master’s call—paying little heed to any other voices, however desirable.

As His coming becomes more imminent, so the battle rages. We are in an epic moment; many young men and women are now being quickly groomed and prepared for this Last Day’s battle. They are joining the ranks of older generations, forming a unified family rarely seen before in history. The harvest is in full-swing; all the generations are moving forward simultaneously with one voice—one song—as they advance toward their heavenly reward (see Malachi 4:5-6).

In recent years, I have been amazed to see the accelerated growth within the younger generations. In my travels, which have been many, and even in very recent times, I have happened upon those within the extended Anabaptist family, whom I can hardly recognize, as their

spirits have grown so rapidly. There is without question a remarkable work unfolding in the hearts of youth — especially in this hour.



I look back upon what Anabaptist youth were thinking and doing just three decades ago, and recall that in general they were preoccupied with a general combination of wishing to grow in the Lord and finding their place within the Church, finding the right vocation, and finding the right mate. All of these combined are certainly noble pursuits. However, in recent years I have never before seen such overarching passion and fire among the youth—a combination of a remarkable awareness of the severity and gravity of the times, and remarkable maturity—as they fully embrace the cost of the Cross.

Hundreds of years ago, our forefathers faced the tragic combination of the deepest depths of humiliation, followed immediately by martyrdom—in what can be summed up in one word: Muenster.

The saints who willingly forfeited their lives to martyrdom, did so in order that a generation to come would accept the fiery baton of an uncompromising faith—a brand of faith not unlike that chronicled in the book of Acts. They undoubtedly saw visions of prayed for the fulfillment of such, far into the future, as they breathed their last. It is my belief that this generation is now among us: young people who have fire in their bellies. Not “the fire of youth,” but the fire of the unquenchable gospel and the associated mandate to take such to the ends of the earth.

My life to date has comprised, ongoing, a

paradox of unspeakable suffering on one hand, and glimpses of unspeakable glory on the other. As I look to my eternal reward, I’ve already begun to see glimpses of eternal glory which have been given to me. One of these glimpses is that of the Anabaptist nation taking its rightful place in Kingdom ambassadorship to a globe that is now spinning out of control as the earth contracts and heaves with End-Times tumult. Within such tumult, I am dully reminded of the Apostle Paul’s promise of Romans 16:20: “*And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*”

It is His peace, as the result of His victory on the cross, that is available to all for the asking, and by the hour. I pray God’s blessing of peace upon the warriors who are now taking their stations and preparing for spiritual conflict which has never before been seen. It is as we keep the cross of Christ central to all that we do hereafter, that we will, in the end, be more than conquerors. Without you—the younger generation—the rest of us will not prevail.

Hebrews 11:36-40 says: *And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Chapter 12:1 goes on to say: Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*

END

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The Glory of the Cross

—Ben Girod

And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly....He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night. Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him (John 13:27, 30-32).

It was here, at the “last supper,” where Jesus not only identified His betrayer, but also encouraged him to act upon his intents as well—a mystery born in heaven. It was at this moment, that cosmic reactions were spawned in both heaven and hell.

The cross revealed the highest point of Jesus’ glory, together with the throne of His sovereign Sonship, while at the same time taking Him to the lowest depths of humiliation—from the height of His glory, to the depths of His shame. Dark thunderclouds were rolling and rocks were being rent in two at the moment of

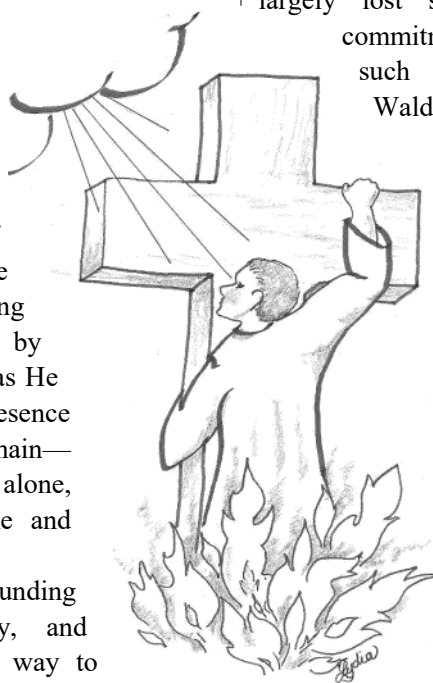
crucifixion, yet with the same stroke, He was crowned the Prince of Life Eternal—two streams converging into one river.

This glory being intertwined with AGAPE love shrank from no sacrifice or fiery baptism—creating convulsions within the gates of hell, whose inhabitants were being buffeted and shaken by the Prince of Peace, as He was making His presence known in their domain—not by force or might alone, but by untold shame and suffering—forever upsetting and confounding the devil’s strategy, and thereby opening the way to the portals of glory, and God’s presence for all mankind.

Those of us who are mature are expected to carry this same banner of glory which

often incurs the shame, mockery, and humiliation, with our Lord and Forerunner. The western church has largely lost sight of this level of commitment. Historical groups such as the Huguenots, Waldensians, Moravians, and Anabaptists, on the other hand, all understood this principle—to carry this glory, resulting in severe reactions, persecutions, and martyrdom, while yet impacting nations and even whole civilizations.

There are but few personal benefits for those who carry this glory; they have nothing to gain, but everything to lose, including their credibility. Yet they do this without offense, knowing that



Continued, inside back cover